

A few initiatives for bringing Linux on to the enterprise desktop

- The new OpenOffice suite supports export of pdf files, import and export of XML documents and export of presentations in the Flash format.
 - SoftMaker is about to release its first component in its office suite, the word processor equivalent to Microsoft Word.
 - CrossOver Office 2.0 from CodeWeavers has introduced support for Adobe Photoshop, among other featured enhancements.
 - The Samba Team has announced the release of Samba 3.0. This release focuses on interoperability with Windows clients. New features that are available include Windows NT primary and backup domain controller functionality.
- More initiatives from the open source community are in the pipeline that will make Linux on the desktop acceptable to the enterprise.

user, total cost of ownership including getting updates, fixes and patches—should be low. Costs imply not just the licensing cost of the operating system but importantly the cost of all the applications that the user needs and their recurring costs. It includes the cost of migration from the existing environment, re-training the staff, and any cost involving loss of work because of non-availability of functions in the new system.

Reputation: Enterprises will not adopt Linux on their desktops unless the vendors have a good reputation for providing stable desktop solutions. Today, IT has become a critical area in an organisation. Unless the company is convinced that there are good vendors available who can provide timely support and solutions, the

management will not migrate to a new system.

Hardware support: Unless the solution is available on diverse hardware platforms, mass migration to Linux will not take place. Today, the plug-and-play concept is expected in desktops. As soon as a device is hooked on to the desktop, the operating system is supposed to take over, ask a few questions from the user, and the device is expected to be ready for use. In today's business desktop environment, time and financial constraints do not allow much handholding for device configurations.

Familiarity: End users would like to be familiar with the desktop they use. With so many different interfaces, users are confused about

where the application is located. Standardisation is the key here. Users are not averse to changes, as long as their work does not suffer and time is not wasted.

Performance: For desktop users, the application response time has to be short. On the enterprise desktop, reusability of applications is so high that this feature becomes very important and it directly affects the productivity of a person using the desktop application.

MILES TO GO

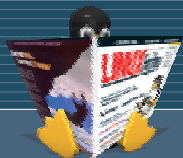
Linux has matured as an alternative desktop operating system. It provides the basic functionalities that a typical desktop user needs. But there are still a lot of applications not available on Linux when compared to Windows. However, in the next one year or so, you will find all major applications being ported onto Linux.

Linux on the desktop is ready for single-use users such as home-users and students. The big challenge that remains for Linux and open source vendors is to get Linux on the desktop of the knowledge worker. **LFY**

The author is director, Tetra Information Services Pvt Ltd, which provides enterprise support in Linux. He can be contacted at mukul@linux4e.com

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