

SAVINGS, SECURITY, INTEROPERABILITY AND INNOVATION FOR GOVERNMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE RAPID GROWTH OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE DEPLOYMENTS IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS AND IT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS

"Open source software is proving to deliver value and innovation to public sector organisations", says Tod Cury, head of UK public sector business at Red Hat, the enterprise distributor of the Linux operating system and JBoss enterprise strength middleware and integration technology platform. This identifies not only a fundamental shift in perceptions of open source technology, but also an impressive momentum to its adoption by major enterprises – including various bodies from the UK public sector and systems integrators delivering IT services to the public sector. Open source software has proven itself as an enterprise platform delivering lower total cost of ownership when compared to proprietary software options.

Open source vendors like Red Hat have removed any risks associated with deploying open source software by ensuring that it is more reliable and more secure; making it consumable for the enterprise and guaranteeing value and service second to none. In the past, customers would worry about who would support it if it went wrong. It would be down to the user to go and find support, searching through Google, Wikis, or any relevant chat rooms. In an enterprise you cannot work like that: you need something that is more stable, reliable and secure, where you can pick up a phone and speak to an expert on a 24/7 basis. This is what Red Hat provides its customers, as an enterprise distributor for Linux and the JBoss application and middleware platform.

Under its enterprise distribution agreement, the company provides support, maintenance and certification for systems, hardware and applications over seven years from sale. Red Hat works with hardware and software vendors to provide their products in a form that can run on Linux, providing the basis for a large scale roll out of the technology around an organisation. The variety is wide enough to give customers plenty of choice in building their architectures.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux runs on most platforms including x86; Intel and IBM, and is used in a wide range of hardware solutions from Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) partners like IBM, Dell, Hewlett Packard, Fujitsu, SGI, Unisys and Sun. Customers also have the freedom to utilise more than 1800 certified applications from a wide range of industry-leading solutions including BEA, EMC, IBM, Oracle, PeopleSoft, SAP, and VERITAS. This provides the confidence for organisations to make the major investments that will help them obtain the full benefits of open source. For example, if you want to run a large Oracle application you want to be sure it will be certified for the future, it will be with Red Hat. "Oracle's recent announcement that it will support Linux is a testament to this fact," says Tod.

Also, Red Hat offer an Open Source Assurance Program, whereby they will indemnify and protect any of its customers against copyright or patent infringement claims, therefore voiding any threats made by proprietary software vendors.

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COST SAVING AND INTEROPERABILITY

The long term cost savings, largely through a reduced need for expensive licensing arrangements, can make a large positive contribution to an organisation's financial outlook. This combines with the capacity of the technology to improve performance and provide increased control, while remaining stable, portable, and easy to deploy.

In addition, open source fully supports vendor neutral, open standards. This maximises the potential for true interoperability and information sharing between government departments and agencies, while enabling full control of IT investments.

As a result, a growing number of UK central and local government organisations are adopting open source software technologies. There are growing deployments throughout government departments and agencies, such as the Home Office, NHS, Department for Work and Pensions, Network Rail, the BBC, as well as numerous local authorities and police constabularies. Also, many systems integrators are utilising open source technologies in order to deliver innovative IT solutions and services to their government customers. By using open source software, the upfront and ongoing costs of delivering a government awarded contract is reduced, therefore allowing these systems integrators to be more competitive in their bids. The saving made can be invested in other areas of innovative citizen-centric service delivery.

SECURITY

Red Hat has helped the Defense Information Systems Agency in the US adopt open source. Its programme manager, Rob Walker, says it has made a big contribution to providing a more secure environment for the management of highly sensitive information.

"Open source allows us the opportunity to have a proactive and pre-emptive identification of security holes by friendly analysis," he says. "As a result, this early identification and rapid repair of security vulnerabilities has become a major advantage of open source over proprietary approaches to software development." The US government has embraced open source fully, by adopting Red Hat's Open Source Architecture as part of its Federal Enterprise Architecture.

Red Hat's Security Enhanced Linux was developed in conjunction with the NSA and it is the first choice of use by the most secure government agencies, such as military and intelligence agencies. All of the very highest government security certifications are met. On top of this, you will find that most high availability and high performance computing environments are using open source technology.

A COMPLETE OPEN SOURCE OFFER

Red Hat strengthened its capabilities when it acquired JBoss, the global leader in open source middleware, and with its recent acquisition of MetaMatrix, the global leader in data integration services technology. Red Hat is now able to offer a complete open source middleware and integration platform. This positioned it to place a greater emphasis on open source architectures and laid the ground for the next generation of web enabled applications. Tod Cury says, "Red Hat is in the unique position to offer its customers a complete open sourced SOA infrastructure, giving a new meaning to SOA – Simple Open and Affordable."

Governments are choosing Red Hat/JBoss open source architecture to maintain full control of their IT investments, and optimise open standards based integration, thereby enabling vertical and horizontal information sharing. It is also helping them solve middleware issues around serviced oriented architecture, improve network security and consolidate services. This technology also allows government departments to manage and gain access to their legacy technology estates and plan for their eventual migration when ready.

RED HAT WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

As the world's leading provider of open source solutions, Red Hat is in a unique position to offer government customers and their IT service delivery partners high-quality, industry open standard technology enabling government agencies to meet budget constraints, provide interoperability and security second to none, while providing improved citizen services to constituents. Red Hat's continued investments in the Red Hat Enterprise Linux operating system platform, JBoss Enterprise Middleware Suite, MetaMatrix data service management, SOA platform offerings (featuring JBoss and the Red Hat Application Stack) and more make this possible.



Red Hat has won some impressive testimonials for its work with government bodies on both sides of the Atlantic. One of these has come from the London Borough of Camden, with which it worked on the APLAWS open source content management system, one of the national projects for local e-government sponsored by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This led to the development of standards and the establishment of a user group to support the spread of the system. "Programme manager Jeremy Tuck comments: "Red Hat's technology and business model fit well with our objectives. Red Hat Enterprise CMS and Portal Server applications already provided many of the capabilities we needed. Additionally, their reputation as the leader in open source technologies aligned completely with our desire to make the product freely available to all levels of UK government."

DRIVING INNOVATION

Red Hat is ideally suited to support the public sector's efforts to improve performance and increase security and effectiveness of services. Numerous independent studies have verified that Linux on commodity hardware offers big performance advantages while delivering significant cost savings. Others have shown that Linux systems require fewer hardware resources than alternatives such as Microsoft Windows and UNIX. They also give users the ability to select the optimum server to suit the workload, and combined with powerful processors can support government agencies in performing critical functions. In addition, JBoss has a wide feature set and a strong reputation in the open source community, supporting a variety of software.

The complete open source architecture offered by Red Hat helps to harness the full potential of the technology for the public sector. By driving down the costs of IT service delivery, deploying open source technology allows governments and their IT service delivery providers to invest those saving in areas of innovative service delivery as opposed to limited and costly infrastructure technology.

"Open source has now attained a level of maturity in the market, to the extent that it has to be considered for almost any tender for new systems. If any government department goes out to tender to buy a system, the solution needs to be able to run on open source products," Tod says. "It has always been there, but now government departments are adopting open source for all of the reasons we've described."

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