THE Open GROUP

Making standards work™

Uniting the Linux Market: The LSB Certification Program

Diligent project management backed by expertise has enabled a unique certification program for Linux to thrive long before anyone in the business expected it to succeed.

A Case Study on the Linux Standard Base Certification Program

November, 2002

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Executive Summary

The Free Standards Group hired The Open Group certification team to develop and manage an innovative, web-based program for Linux Standard Base (LSB) certification. The Open Group was six weeks ahead of schedule in preparing the program and immediately began taking companies through a meticulous certification process that is advancing the presence of Linux in the marketplace.

Efforts such as this that move the market toward greater acceptance of open source solutions support The Open Group vision of **Boundaryless Information Flow™**.

Linux gets a Certification Program

"They know what they're doing. They're very experienced, professional, and they follow through with excellence to the completion of a project."

Scott McNeil, Executive Director of the Free Standards Group, states unequivocally why the Free Standards Group hired The Open Group certification team: "They know what they're doing. They're very experienced, professional, and they follow through with excellence to the completion of a project." The team is led by Andrew Josey, Director of Certification and, among other things, responsible for management of development of the Single UNIX Specification and the associated test developments.

McNeil, who has been involved with the Free Standards Group since its inception in 1998, has guided the effort to "standardize the Penguin". The Linux Standard Base (LSB) specification standardizes the core functionality of Linux including the primary libraries, giving Linux distributions the opportunity to create a rich stable foundation and reach a wider market while allowing application developers to work on increased functionality.

A Short Timeline, A First-Class Project

A mere six months after the initial release of the Linux Standard Base 1.1 (LSB 1.1), Free Standards Group launched certification for the LSB with the help of The Open Group. "Good project management," says McNeil, "is what enabled the launch to occur six weeks ahead of schedule."

The LSB certification program is built upon the foundation of the LSB Certification Policy. Development of this policy included influential members of the open source community. The program is operated using an innovative web-based certification system that allows applicants to upload their submission over the Internet. The system is designed by The Open Group to assure users and customers that certified software has the highest-possible runtime adherence to LSB. The Open Group has also made significant contributions to the test program for LSB certification providing approximately 97% of the tests for the runtime environments. The contributions have been made under an open source license. The LSB test architecture utilizes The Open Group Test Environment Toolkit and the VSXgen framework. It provides a foundation that ensures a certified application will work with any LSB certified runtime environment.

"It's clear, it makes sense, and it reflects The Open Group's long-running expertise in the area of certification," McNeil notes in describing the program.

The Free Standards Group announced the LSB certification program on July 1, 2002. Three months later, seven products from MandrakeSoft, Caldera International, Red Hat, and SuSE Linux had earned the distinction of being LSB certified and a number of other companies are pursuing it.

"Many members of The Open Group are also members of the Free Standards Group," notes McNeil. "There was a natural confluence of the needs of collective members, and because of that, the relationship with The Open Group took shape quickly."

About the Free Standards Group

Supported by industry leaders, the Free Standards Group is an independent, vendor-neutral, non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating the use and acceptance of open source technologies through the development, application, and promotion of standards.

Headquartered in Oakland, CA, the Free Standards Group fulfills a critical need in the open source development community to have common behavioral specifications, tools, and APIs, making development across Linux distributions easier.

More information on the Free Standards Group is available at www.freestandards.org.

About The Open Group

The Open Group is a vendor-neutral and technology-neutral consortium, whose vision of Boundaryless Information Flow™ will enable access to integrated information within and between enterprises based on open standards and global interoperability. The Open Group works with customers, suppliers, consortia, and other standards bodies. Its role is to capture, understand, and address current and emerging requirements, establish policies, and share best practices; to facilitate interoperability, develop consensus, and evolve and integrate specifications and Open Source technologies; to offer a comprehensive set of services to enhance the operational efficiency of consortia; and to operate the industry's premier certification service, including UNIX® system certification.

Further information on The Open Group can be found at www.opengroup.org.