

Status of Singapore OSS Movement

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Representatives of Singapore

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Outline

- 1 Status of OSS in Singapore
 - Recent OSS Development
 - OSS Initiatives and Activities
- 2 Extent of OSS/Linux Penetration
 - Web Server Software Share
 - Desktop Browser Share
- 3 Challenges and Difficulties Ahead
 - Barriers/Concerns to Wider Use of OSS



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Recent OSS Development (1/4)

National Library Board of Singapore - August 2004

- Migrated 52 Windows NT Domain Controllers to Samba-based solution in all its 26 sites nationwide¹
- In total, more than 1,000 Windows workstations have been migrated to the new architecture
- Migration took 4 months to complete
 - To counter **impending support end-of-life** for Windows NT
 - To solve existing **issues of non-trusted domains**, due to the blocking of NetBios and lack of centralised control over all the sites

¹<http://www.linuxpr.com/releases/7130.html>



Recent OSS Development (2/4)

Ministry of Defence, Singapore - October 2004

- Introduced OpenOffice.org into all their offices²
- The **decision to go Open Source was made** , said Mr Cheek Beng Teck, Director of the Office of the Ministry's Chief Information Officer, because **"the additional features [of Microsoft Office 2003] could not justify the high cost"** .
- The Ministry did not upgrade their existing Microsoft Office 97, and it will slowly be phased out in stages
- About 20,000 workstations are installed with OpenOffice.org

²<http://www.techweb.com/wire/ebiz/50900190>



Recent OSS Development (3/4)

Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) - December 2004

- At IPOS IP Task Force and Business Software Alliance (BSA) Software Assets Management (SAM) Seminar³, Ms Liew Woon Yin, Director-General of IPOS, remarked that
 - companies must ensure they are **using only licensed and legal programs** within their business environment
 - businesses should note that there are **both Open Source and proprietary products in the market**
 - businesses should **pick software based on their merits**

³http:

//www.ipos.gov.sg/main/newsroom/speeches/speeches_091204.html



Recent OSS Development (4/4)

Apparel Manufacturer Bossini - January 2005

- Migrated proprietary e-mail system to Linux-based e-mail system⁴, and eventually used Linux for more server applications, like file and print servers, firewall and proxy servers, web app servers, database servers and network monitoring
- IT team turned to Linux forums and search engines to get technical help. They felt that challenges posed by Linux were surmountable because they have used IBM AIX systems before

⁴<http://www.asiacomputerweekly.com/PrintArticle.cfm?Artid=25953&catid=8&subcat=79>



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OSS Initiatives and Activities (1/2)

- **Linux Users' Group, Singapore**⁵ - has monthly meetings that cover topics including: Building your own Live CD based on KNOPPIX, Learning the Linux kernel for fun and profit, Linux audio talk, Next generation dynamic web apps using JavaScript to Java remoting, etc
- **BurnaDistro Linux Project (RFC stage)** - aims to be a specialised Linux appliance distribution that can be left with a kiosk appliance that can cut CD-Rs of a range of Linux distributions using its in-built cd-writers
- **The Singapore Linux Meetup Group**⁶ - puts Linux users in a social environment and promotes the community aspect

⁵<http://www.lugs.org.sg>

⁶<http://linux.meetup.com/5/boards>



OSS Initiatives and Activities (2/2)

- **Linux Day 2005 at Nanyang Technological University (NTU)** - an evening of talks on OSS/Linux
- **Free Software Movement and Patents talk by Richard M. Stallman at Singapore Management University (SMU)⁷** - highlights issues regarding patents and generalisation and use of the term IP Rights
- **Identify local websites that are broken when using OSS browsers** - the most recent is the login problem with DBS's Internet Banking service. It doesn't work with Mozilla Firefox, Konqueror, and newer Netscape. Took DBS 7 days before they acknowledged the problem and fixed it

⁷http://www.sis.smu.edu.sg/news_events/news/RichardStallman_0311041.pdf

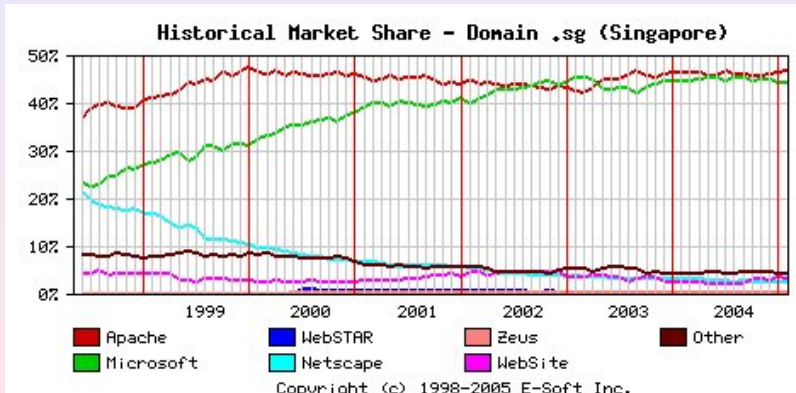


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Web Server Software Share (1/2)

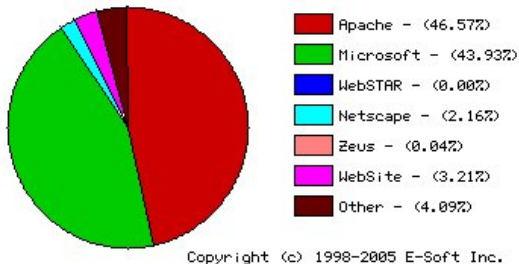


Source: http://www.securityspace.com/s_survey/data/200501/sg



Web Server Software Share (2/2)

Market Share for January 2005 - Domain .sg (Singapore)



Source: http://www.securityspace.com/s_survey/data/200501/sg

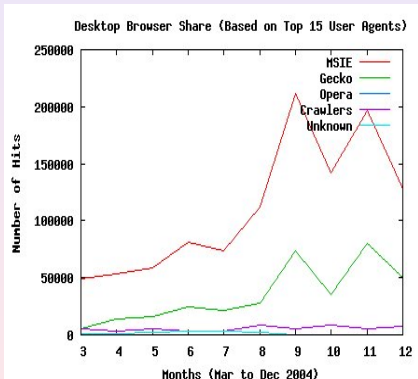


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Desktop Browser Share



- Web access logs were taken from a major local security portal, SIG^{2a}, over a 10-month period.
- Portal is neither OSS nor Linux-specific. Users are a diverse group of people, thus results will not be too biased
- Graph gives a **very rough gauge** of the browsers users use to visit local websites

^a<http://www.security.org.sg>



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Barriers/Concerns to Wider Use of OSS

- Lack of confidence in level of support
- Not knowing where, and how to start using OSS
- Difficulty with the "powers-that-be" is that they do not understand OSS
- Lack of funding sources for Open Source projects, both private and government
- Trend of local companies developing and selling proprietary software on top of Open Source
 - Potential for license violation that needs to be monitored
 - An increasing number of reports of companies creating embedded products based on Linux and not providing access to source code for their modification⁸

⁸<http://www.gpl-violations.org>



Conclusion

- How do we achieve self-determination in this new world of Open Source?
- Should government play a role in the funding of OSS projects, and perhaps reap benefits of its investment?
- What can we do to encourage industry to give back to the OSS community?
- For OSS to gain widespread appeal, technology kinks must be ironed out so that users can see compelling needs to move from using proprietary software to using OSS, and reap rich dividends