

FLOSS Business

Getting involved



EPSON KOWA Corporation

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Company Profile

- ◆ EPSON related company
- ◆ core business
 - ▶ software/firmware development for EPSON products
- ◆ approximately 300 employees
 - ▶ about 20 of which work on Linux related company projects

A Chronology

- 1999/10 started first Linux related project
- 2000/03 initial release of Photo Image Print System, a driver for EPSON inkjet printers
- 2000/08 initial release of GS Laser Printer Driver, a driver for EPSON laser printers
- 2001/10 initial release of Image Scan! for Linux, a driver for EPSON scanners
- 2002/08 GPL/LGPL problems in some of our drivers discovered
- 2003/06 – 2004/03
project lead for development of the "OpenPrinting System" (under auspices of the Information-Technology Promotion Agency, Japan)
- 2003/10 started first Linux related project at AVASYS Vietnam Co., Ltd.

Development Results

- ◆ supported EPSON devices (as of 2004/09)
 - ▶ 80 inkjet printers (46 Japanese market models)
 - ▶ 50 laser printers (32)
 - ▶ 64 scanners (29)
- ◆ freely available at http://www.epkowa.co.jp/english/linux_e/index.html
- ◆ drivers bundled by Turbolinux, Mandrake, SuSE, Miracle(Asianux), JDS, ...
- ◆ customised drivers for KomNas (Malaysian government), Linux TLE (Thai government), ORCA medical prescription system (Japan) and others

Development Results

- ◆ provided a FLOSS printer status monitor based on a vendor-neutral design
- ◆ implemented a vendor-neutral vector data protocol enabling high speed printing
 - ▶ supports both Ghostscript and Xprint
- ◆ involved in standardisation efforts directed by the Free Standards Group

Product Approach

- ◆ why adopt FLOSS?
 - ▶ reduced development cost
 - ▶ increased popularity means business chance
- ◆ thorough licence evaluation
 - ▶ required when using “closed” source
- ◆ “no support” stance

Observations

- ◆ FLOSS business is not easy
 - ▶ vendors insist on keeping their sources "closed"
 - ▶ hard to find qualified personnel
 - ▶ the old business model does not work

Strategy

- ◆ Linux/FLOSS market activation and standardisation
 - ▶ continuation of the "OpenPrinting System" project
- ◆ focus on the Asian market
 - ▶ secure a development foothold (AVASYS Vietnam Co., Ltd.)
 - ▶ secure FLOSS specialists
 - ▶ reinforce support structure
- ◆ embedded Linux
 - ▶ information household electronics

Business Models

- ◆ contract development
 - ▶ customisation and integration
- ◆ support and training
 - ▶ documentation
- ◆ licence consulting
- ◆ security consulting

References

EPSON KOWA Corporation

<http://www.epkowa.co.jp/>

EPSON KOWA Corporation Linux Drivers

http://www.epkowa.co.jp/english/linux_e/index.html

OpenPrinting Project

<http://www.epkowa.co.jp/linux/OpenPrintingProject/>

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