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M$ Surprises with Linux 'Hands-On Lab'

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Is Microsoft toning down its aggressive anti-Linux campaign, or is the software giant realizing that playing nice can have the same effect?

While the answer is unclear, Microsoft Corp. surprised many of the attendees at its annual worldwide partner show here this weekend by allowing a third party to present a "hands-on lab" that allowed attendees to play with a range of Linux desktop software.

Titled "Linux and Open Source: Understanding the Competitive Challenge," and run by Don Johnson, an electrical engineer from Techstream Inc., the lab let attendees, many of whom were not familiar with Linux, experiment with KDE (K Desktop Environment) as well as see the Apache Web server in action.

In addition, Johnson, who has been a system administrator and is familiar with both Microsoft and open-source solutions, gave them an overview of some Linux concepts and what he believed were the key tradeoffs between Windows and Linux.

However, it was clear that his bias lay firmly on the Windows side for the most part.

Johnson did clarify at the start of the lab that he was not anti-Microsoft and offered kudos to the software giant for allowing him to offer the lab.

He also highlighted the difference in emphasis between the two operating systems: Windows, which focuses on integration; and Linux, which is flexible and modular.

There are essentially three key Windows/Linux tradeoffs, "which can be spun either way, depending on the application," he said.

The first is integration versus flexibility.

The second issue focused on whether the operating system is user-friendly or expert-friendly.

The third tradeoff for users is the matter of a proprietary or single architecture versus an open one that runs on several hardware platforms.

"Device driver support is still an issue for Linux and its users," he said, pointing to the fact that it is still hard for some users to install and upgrade Linux device drivers.

Many open-source applications, like Apache, now also run on both Windows and Linux, "which is something to bear in

mind," he said.

Full Article [2].

Is this the same conference referred to here [3]?

Microsoft

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