

Linux and the Desktop: Will it Jump the Hump?

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Much the same as any other open-source debate, opinions about the future of Linux are about as varied as they come.

On one side you've got the Desktop Linux Consortium with its mission to advance the open-source operating system on desktops everywhere. On the other side you've got software giants adamantly opposed to its spread.

Gartner issued a report recently that has stirred up some debate among industry watchers. In it, Gartner says that Linux is still very much struggling for mainstream desktop acceptance and offers plenty of data to back it up.

According to Gartner, just over 1 percent of companies were running Linux desktops and open-source office products in the fourth quarter of 2004. What's more, Gartner estimates that only 3.2 percent of non-consumer computer users will run Linux and open-source office products by 2008.

Does this suggest Linux-based apps have hit a plateau or standstill? Or might it mean that open-source companies are simply challenged to improve products, marketing, and usability for desktop applications?

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