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## **Get the Facts Microsoft**

Microsoft just doesn't seem to "get the facts." The company, according to news reports, is at it again — paying companies to produce FUD for them. It is doing a disservice to some really top-notch products it produces by continuing to try to discredit Linux and other open source projects. The company should just let its products speak for themselves. The Get the Facts program Microsoft initiated a couple of years ago that consists of hiring various organizations to produce studies that make Microsoft Windows a big winner over Linux in just about any way that two operating systems could be compared is an embarrassment. No single operating system dominates another in every possible way that they can be compared.

The real problem is that Microsoft is scared and is finally beginning to realize that Linux is going to replace Unix in the enterprise and Windows is not. Technology-wise, Microsoft has some excellent products. But the business value of Linux and open source is so overwhelming that it will become more difficult for a proprietary-only software company to compete over the long term. Just about every major software supplier today, with the exception of Microsoft, has some open source software in its software stack. There are many reasons for this strategy and much of it is related to economics and business values.

Customers want choice along with increases in flexibility and lower TCO. Open source provides all three. Most customers that I have spoken with believe that the biggest value of open source is choice: choice of hardware platforms and choice of software applications. Customers can buy hardware from many vendors, and they no longer have to run applications just available on a particular proprietary operating system. This business value permits customers to put together an infrastructure that has a high level of performance at a very low cost. This is a dynamic that has never been available before to customers. Some customers are seeing higher levels of performance via their infrastructures than they were ever getting on much more expensive proprietary systems.

My suggestion to Microsoft is to begin including some open source software in its software stack in order to take advantage of the economics of open source. Many other software suppliers are benefiting from it. The SCO lawsuit appears to be falling apart

and Linux is growing at a hefty rate each year so it does not appear that Linux is going to be derailed. The big fight over Unix market share is just beginning.

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