

# The open source experience

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*Our series concludes with a look at where enterprises are using non-proprietary software. Looks like those traditional IT infrastructure projects were just the beginning*

Open source is generally recognized as a platform for infrastructure, the foundation upon which things are built. But the business-specific applications built on top of that are a harder sell.

The jury is still out on whether open source is extending into areas beyond its traditional strengths, said Evan Leibovitch, executive director of CLUE (Canadian Linux Users Exchange). "When you have something in your business that you don't want your competitors to necessarily share, the rationale for open source isn't quite as strong," he said.

Open source has traditionally been a good fit with horizontal, rather than vertical, applications - where it stretches across industries, or where there's a generic function like word processing. But the "high-hanging fruit" is still proprietary, said Leibovitch, and one of the best examples of that right now is Oracle.

While Oracle supports Red Hat Linux, for example, and is comfortable with leaving the creation of the underlying infrastructure to a third party, industry-specific applications are still Oracle's territory.

"The further you get away from the infrastructure, the harder it is to work with open source," he said.

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