

# Inside the Microsoft-Novell deal

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The uproar in the open-source community caused by proprietary poster-child Microsoft's deal with Linux provider Novell shows no sign of abating. For many, it's a betrayal of the fundamental ethos of free and open software ? a pact with the devil. But even though the arrangement is seen by some open-source enthusiasts as on par with wartime collaboration with the enemy, in reality, community-developed providers are only secondary targets.

In line with the old saying that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, experts claim the deal is really about joining forces to pursue Unix and the mainframe. If Novell can gain an edge on rival Red Hat, the leading Linux distributor, then that's all good for Novell.

"Both Novell and Microsoft have one target that they're absolutely dead focused on and that's the data centre. It's where the two have a common enemy and it's about wanting to push the mainframe and Unix out," explains Laurent Lachal, open-source research director at Ovum.

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