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Microsoft and Linux must co-exist

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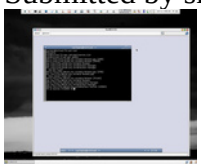

The fact that such a Linux pioneer as Central Scotland Police should rethink its strategy may lead some open source fans to reconsider their opinions.

The Scottish force reviewed its technology strategy and realised a standardised infrastructure was the key to increased integration with other criminal justice agencies. And, as a result, it's replacing much - though not all - of its open source infrastructure with Microsoft technologies.

Of course there is a whiff of 'man bites dog' about any story that involves companies replacing Linux with Microsoft, simply because there seems to be such a general shift towards open source, especially in the public sector.

But at the same time this case illustrates an important point.

Technology decisions are not made in isolation.
Few IT organisations have the luxury of being able to choose an all-Microsoft or an all-open source infrastructure. And even if they could, it's unlikely they would survive by doing business only with suppliers or customers that had the same simple set-up.

Co-existence and integration has to be the name of the game in IT. If you've installed a great technology that won't integrate with the rest of your - or your partner's - systems then you've wasted your money.

The history of tech is littered with the rusting hulks of companies that built great technology that just didn't fit in. Developers have to think broadly about not just what their applications or systems will do but how they will relate to the others around them.

This is likely to be one of the big challenges for open source, as at the moment Microsoft is the de facto standard for many corporate applications - especially when it comes to the desktop.

Open source can bring many benefits for its users. But if businesses that start using open source find it hard to do business as a result they will head back into the Microsoft fold.

silicon.com [2].

OS

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[1] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/37
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