

Building Intranets A Corporate Perspective

Intranet and Internet servers have become necessities for the enterprise segment across Asia. But the fact that Linux drives majority of these servers is not known to many.

In today's corporate world, physical boundaries have ceased to exist. Applications need to be accessed both by people within the organisation, and by people travelling, or stationed outside the corporate premises. There are numerous intranet applications such as corporate intranet, corporate mailing and messaging, which need to be common for people within, as well as outside the corporate office.

Assuming that any high-end corporate will have 24-hour Internet access, it has two options.

- Go for an ASP model for intranet applications, where the intranet server is hosted at some other place. Here the corporate pays for the applications on a pay-as-you-use model.
- Set up an intranet server within the organisation, with restricted access to people outside.

Here, we will cover the second scenario, where there is a corporate intranet server within the organisation. Once you decide to set up a corporate intranet server, you first need to choose the operating system. Linux becomes an obvious choice for this implementation, because of the variety of intranet applications available at very low or no cost.

Any Web-based application you can think of is available on Linux, starting from the e-mail server, to the Web server, messaging server or any other

ELCINA...

Linux systems have worked extremely well with us. Messaging and e-communication—the lifeline for an association like ELCINA, which has to network with corporates across the length and breadth of the country in the shortest possible time—have tremendous advantage with the Linux platform. The system is flexible, with its reliability and scalability factors being an added advantage. More crucially, when we look at the relatively low cost of ownership over a period of time (Linux systems have been installed for the past two-and-a-half years), there have been major gains in terms of cost savings. Building new features and upgradation can also be carried out with greater ease.



Somnath Chatterjee
Director General,
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(ELCINA)

application a corporate might need.

There are two issues, which need to be taken care of in such deployment.

1. Applications should be accessible seamlessly to all those with authorised access.
2. No unauthorised person should be able to access the application, or internal resources, as once you have set up the intranet server, you are opening the internal network to the outside world. For corporates, this issue is critical.

Universal access of applications across the corporates is essential. Today, corporates are looking for solutions where employees within the physical premises, as well as those outside it, are able to access applications.

An Intranet must transparently deliver the immense information resources of an organisation to each individual's desktop at minimal cost, time and effort. This document attempts to explain in simple terms how to set up an intranet using tools, which are readily available, generally cost less or are free.

Choosing the right server is a matter of what you

Pahwa Enterprises...

I think IT infrastructure plays a vital role in building communications and business process applications for the organisation. We had taken a strategic decision of deploying Linux for our communication processes way back in 1998. Since then, this (Linux for communications) environment has played a successful and vital role. We are still to see a significant penetration of Linux in the actual business processes. Yet, Linux has acquired a high level of maturity in a short span of time.



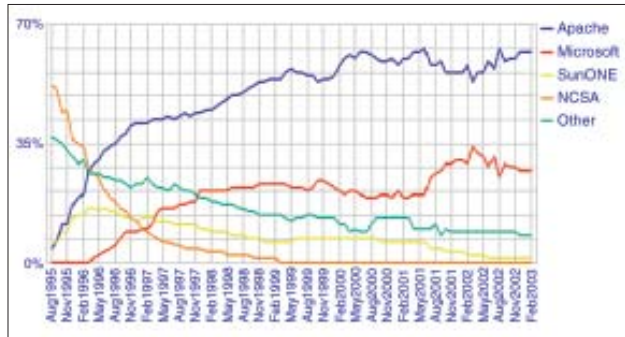
Deepak Pahwa
CMD, Pahwa
Enterprises

Continental...

Continental Device India Limited (CDIL), headquartered in New Delhi, adapted Linux for its mailing and Internet access solution in 1998 and has had no reason to regret the decision. We have found Linux to be a stable, reliable platform, which can be maintained, modified and upgraded with the least problems. Our legacy database will also migrate shortly to a Linux platform. The company, from the top management downwards, is convinced that Linux is the platform for the corporate world and should be adopted by more and more companies. However, in India, the limited number of service providers with Linux expertise has restricted the growth of Linux-based applications—this needs rectification. Linux on the desktop is next on our agenda. It is only competition, which can provide the best solutions and at fair prices to the customers. Linux is doing just that for the benefit of even non-Linux users.



Shishir Mehta,
Continental Device
India Limited



Market share for top servers across all domains: August 1995 - February 2003

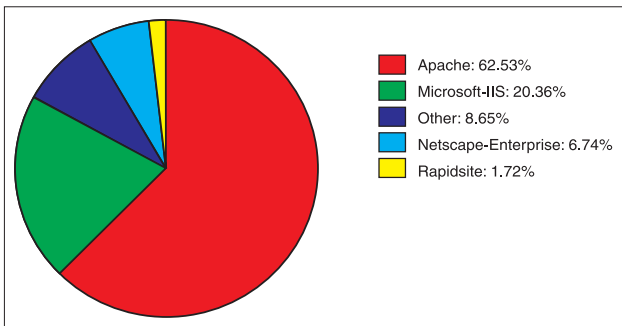
the means to access that database need to be considered as well. How large the database is and how much information will be provided to the customer are two issues that you need to address. If it takes too long to return the requested information, the visitor might get tired of waiting and move on. You have failed in your task of providing information and service to your customer.

Another aspect is security. Others can provide Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) support, certificates, and other security features. Obviously, if the Web server will be connected to your internal network, you should see how well each server integrates into your firewall concepts (i.e., proxy servers).

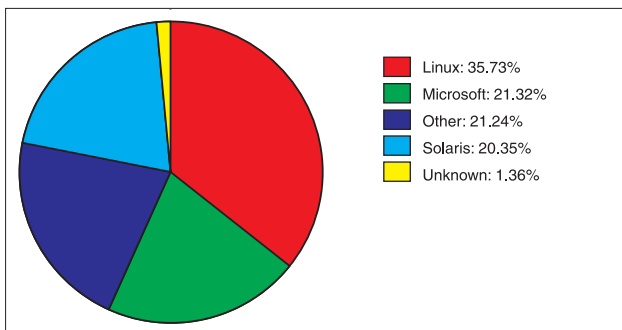
Once the platform is Linux, you can choose from commercially available or the open source Web server. Commercially available Web platforms include iPlanet from

need more than what you want. The single most important aspect is what kind of information (i.e., services) you are going to provide. If you are a small company that will only be providing a handful of pages to keep employees up-to-date on current events or providing easy reference to a handful of documents, performance is less an issue than if you will be processing online orders for dozens of customers at any given moment. Also, more static information puts lesser demands on performance from both the hardware and the HTTP server.

If you are providing information from a databank, then



Web server count by sites



Operating System Count by Sites

Interarch...

Interarch started using Red Hat Linux in 1998 for its e-mail, proxy and other application packages under one operating system. Our cost has drastically reduced on correspondence, transmission time, manpower and on unsolicited messages.

We find Linux as comfortable, cost-effective, and stable as any other operating system. We are in the process of deploying Web-based ERP on Linux.



Shailendra Choudhary,
Manager-IT,
Interarch Building
Products Limited

Sun, and Lotus Domino and Websphere application server from IBM. Among the open source Web servers, Apache is the most stable, and mature. It consistently rates as the world's most popular Web server, according to surveys from Netcraft and other analysts. It has attracted so much interest because it is full-featured, reliable, and free. Originally developed for Unix, Apache has been updated to run on Windows, OS/2, and other platforms. **LFY**

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