



5 REASONS TO CHOOSE RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX OVER SUN SOLARIS

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INTRODUCTION

Few IT organizations are married to any particular vendor; many components of the typical IT infrastructure are products of vendor lock-in or ancient purchase decisions. In an economic downturn, IT must find new ways to do more with less. Now more than ever, Red Hat® Enterprise Linux® offers considerable benefits over Sun™ Solaris™.

1. A VAST ECOSYSTEM OF CONFIDENT IHVS

Red Hat Enterprise Linux has always been developed for x86-64 commodity hardware and other architectures. Red Hat customers have their choice of many popular independent hardware vendors (IHVs) like Dell, IBM, or HP. If a customer is unhappy with their vendor, they simply choose another.

Solaris, on the other hand, was originally a proprietary operating system developed for Sun's proprietary chip system, SPARC. Then Fujitsu signed a license agreement and began developing hardware for Solaris, giving Sun customers a choice – between two hardware vendors.

Feeling customer pressure to provide real hardware vendor choice, Sun began to develop Solaris for x86-64 commodity hardware. But over the years, Sun delayed the release twice, eroding many hardware vendors' confidence in the longevity of the platform.¹ As a result, the x86-64 UNIX® market is mainly Linux – and more specifically, Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

2. A RESPECTABLE PORTFOLIO OF ISV-CERTIFIED APPLICATIONS

Solaris on SPARC has been around longer than Red Hat Enterprise Linux on x86-64. However, over the last 16 years, the number of independent software vendors (ISVs) certifying on Red Hat Enterprise Linux has grown and leveled the playing field. There are thousands of ISVs and applications that run on Solaris on SPARC and Red Hat Enterprise Linux. The major ISVs (Oracle, SAP, PeopleSoft, SAS, etc.) run on both Solaris on SPARC and Red Hat Enterprise Linux, but many develop their code on the

Red Hat source code base months before porting to Microsoft® Windows® and UNIX code bases like Solaris.²

Solaris on x86-64 has also been around for some time. However, given Sun's questionable commitment to Solaris x86-64, ISVs have been hesitant to devote development time to it. ISVs generally choose to support Linux on the x86-64 hardware first, though they may have a port to Solaris x86-64.

3. THE VALUE OF OPEN SOURCE

All software has source code. Open source software grants every user access to that code. You can see the code, change it, learn from it. Bugs are found and fixed quickly. And when customers are unhappy with one vendor, they can choose another without overhauling their entire infrastructure. No more technology lock-in. No more monopolies.

Open source developers like Linux, because it's open source and it always has been. While parts of Solaris have been open-sourced in the OpenSolaris™ project, there are many proprietary components that remain hidden from developers' view.³ As a result, looking at SourceForge, there are over 10,000 Linux projects and about 300 for Solaris. Sun's site for compiled open source software, Sun Freeware, shows 445 projects for Solaris 10 SPARC and 443 for Solaris 10 x86-64. Open source applications and tools are overwhelmingly available on Linux.

Red Hat is a valued and trusted member of the open source community. Our technology is built in collaboration with a rapidly growing worldwide community. This is where Red Hat can offer value and savings to customers. Red Hat helps drive the direction of many open source projects, and we often partner with customers who have innovative ideas.

1 www.sparcproductdirectory.com/view62.html

2 www.redhat.com/f/pdf/Linux_v_Solaris_Whitepaper.pdf

3 www.opensolaris.org/os/about/no_source/
www.opensolaris.org/os/about/faq/general_faq/#source

The National Security Agency (NSA), for example, is very involved with the computer security research community. Working with Secure Computing Corporation, the NSA developed a strong, flexible mandatory access control architecture based on Type Enforcement. This was used as the basis for Security-Enhanced Linux, known as SELinux.⁴ NSA decided to use Linux as the base operating system to because of the large developer and user community. Over time, Red Hat helped the NSA get the SELinux technology mainstreamed into the Linux kernel.⁵

Unfortunately, customers of proprietary software vendors are more limited in their ability to significantly influence development. Whereas open source software vendors “prop open the hood” of their code, encouraging users and developers to look inside and make improvements, proprietary software is much like a car with the hood welded shut, forbidding access to its inner workings.

4. EXPERIENCE WITH OPEN STANDARDS

J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., the leader in the financial industry, created an open standard application layer protocol for Message Oriented Middleware called Advanced Message Queuing Protocol6 (AMQP), a guaranteed messaging delivery solution. AMQP was designed to be a vendor-neutral protocol to manage the flow of messages. Then, knowing Red Hat was experienced in open standards development and respected within the open source community, the financial services leader partnered with the open source leader to get support for its new standard. Ultimately, this led to the creation of a new offering, Red Hat Enterprise MRG2, and a standards body (AMQP) that now includes vendors like Microsoft and Cisco⁸.

As with the NSA, Red Hat worked with J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. to drive valuable technologies with open standards and to offer the technologies as part of Red Hat solutions. Red Hat takes the role of catalyst between the user and developer community, and Red Hat customers have the power to shape the development roadmap for our solutions.

5. FUTURE VENDOR RELIABILITY

Oracle and Sun reached an agreement; Oracle is going to buy Sun. As a result, Sun customers face some difficult questions:

- What does it mean to you, the consumer?
- What will happen with the SPARC architecture? Will Oracle become a hardware company?
- What will happen with Solaris on SPARC? Will Oracle retain the highly skilled Sun engineers?
- What will happen with Solaris on x86-64? Which parts of Sun will Oracle shed?

In the past when Oracle has purchased a company, they look to consolidate products and raise prices.

No one can tell the future. However, looking at history you can make a reasonable guess at what the future brings. And Red Hat remains committed to open source and choice.

CONCLUSION

At Red Hat, open source isn't a marketing tool. Collaboration isn't the buzzword of the week. Choice isn't being limited to a handful of vendors. These values are central to the way we do business.

A community of developers working together means the best technology wins. And we've found that a collaborative culture is not only the best way to build technology, but also to spur innovation across our industry. We work directly with the community, our partners, and our customers at every stage of development and support, creating solutions that bring value to the enterprise.

Our business model is based on providing real choices to our customers and preventing vendor lock-in. That's why some of the world's largest organizations rely on Red Hat every day.

⁴ www.nsa.gov/research/selinux/index.shtml

⁵ www.redhat.com/f/pdf/sec/WHP001USselinux.pdf

⁶ jira.amqp.org/confluence/display/AMQP/Advanced+Message+Queuing+Protocol

⁷ www.press.redhat.com/2008/06/19/customers-drive-innovation-in-red-hat-enterprise-mrg

⁸ www.amqp.org



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