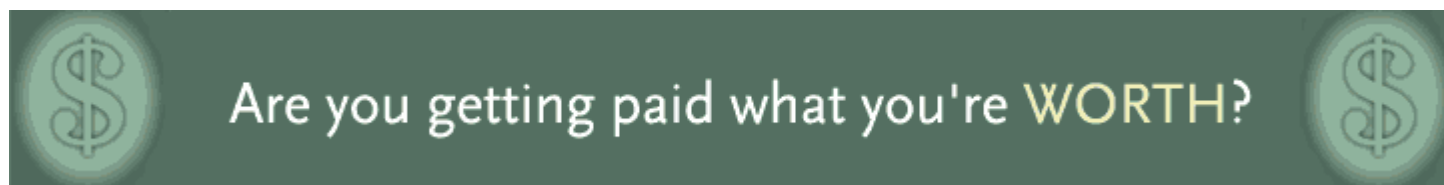


[Home](#) :: [About InfoWorld](#) :: [Advertise](#) :: [Subscribe](#) :: [Contact Us](#) :: [Awards](#) :: [Events](#)



HOME

NEWS

TEST CENTER

OPINIONS

TECHINDEX

SEARCH

NEWS

German mid-size firms go for Linux

Momentum to migrate gains as enterprises react to Microsoft's licensing policy

By John Blau, IDG News Service

October 29, 2003

FRANKFURT, Germany -- Momentum to migrate from Microsoft Corp. products to open source software is rapidly gaining in Germany, where numerous enterprises are reacting to the U.S. software giant's licensing policy.

SPONSOR

COMDEX Las Vegas 2003,
Nov 16-20. Register today!

RELATED LINKS

- [Nine German cities poised to adopt Linux](#)
- [Update: High growth rates for open source in Germany](#)
- [Microsoft's Ballmer fights Linux in Munich](#)
- [PDC - Microsoft Operation Manager opens to partners](#)
- [Japan team reports quantum computing breakthrough](#)
- [Platforms RSS feed](#)

Small and medium-size businesses (SMBs), in particular, have begun to replace as much Microsoft software as possible with open-source software, such as the Linux operating system, in an effort to slash their IT costs, according to IT managers attending the LinuxWorld conference and exhibition here.


"Let me be very frank -- German mid-size companies don't care much about IT today because they're being forced more than ever to focus on their core business," said Lars Kloppsteck, IT manager at Heinrich Berndes Haushaltstechnik GmbH & Co. KG, a manufacturer of cooking utensils in Arnsberg, Germany. "They have two

ADVERTISEMENT

[>> MORE](#)**IDG ENTERPRISE NETWORK**

- [Security considerations when migrating from Unix to Linux](#) (ComputerWorld)
- [Latest Linux 2.6 test kernel released for 'hammering'](#) (ComputerWorld)
- [Gates shows off Longhorn at PDC](#) (ComputerWorld)

TOP STORIES

- [PDC - Microsoft, Vodafone outline services plan](#)
- [Microsoft realigns MSN division](#)
- [DMCA grounds shaken in Lexmark cartridge case](#)
- [Top News RSS feed](#) 

[>> MORE](#)**TOP SITE REFERRALS**

[SCO: IBM Cannot Enforce GPL](#)

(Linux Today)

[SuSE Linux Eyes Middleware Service Market](#)

(Linux Today)

[SIGN UP FOR THE MAGAZINE FREE EMAIL NEWSLETTERS IT SOLUTION SEARCH](#)

primary criteria: IT must perform; and, above all, it shouldn't cost much. That's why open source software is high on just about everyone's agenda."

The potentially lower cost of deploying and maintaining open source software, such as Linux and OpenOffice, "is clearly what prompted us to seek an alternative to Microsoft," Kloppsteck said. "And I know many other small and medium-size companies in Germany are dropping Microsoft for the same reason."

Berndes runs Linux on most of its servers and thin-client computers, although it continues to rely on Microsoft's Windows operating system for its notebook computers. "We know that Linux also works on these machines but it's still not quite as easy to use for our road warriors when they need to install peripheral devices, such as printers and digital cameras," said Berndes. "So for now, we'll stick with Windows on these machines."

Speaking at a forum addressing mid-size enterprises, Alfons Stärk, chief sales engineer at Microsoft GmbH, conceded that the timing of the company's new Software Assurance licensing policy "wasn't probably the best" in view of the economic downturn and the growing need for companies to watch their IT spending. But he was quick to add that move is necessary for Microsoft to cover its huge investments in research and development. The Software Assurance plan, launched in 2001, calls for users to pay a fee per year for software and upgrades.

In addition to cost, the need "not to upgrade every few years to a new operating system" is another reason why increasingly more German companies are dumping Microsoft, said Peter Laubsch, director of IT at ARS Altmann AG. "Companies should decide when they want to add new features and upgrade to another system, not a vendor like Microsoft that forces system upgrades by discontinuing service for older products."

ARS Altmann operates a huge fleet of trucks and trains to transport new cars from manufacturers to dealers around Europe. The company has installed Linux in numerous areas, including its mail server, and on the desktop.

As much as Laubsch would like to see the company move to an all-open source IT infrastructure, formatting issues with some open-source office applications, he said, still prevent this. "We work very closely with the big car manufacturers and many of them use Office products," he said. "So we can't completely drop Microsoft."

Expertise is also an issue when it comes to rolling out open-source products in the enterprise. "When you deploy Linux, you really need to



hp
invent

HP Wireless Solutions
Proof of Concept.
Minimal cost. Minimal risk.
Maximum reward.

» Go wireless

have people who know what they're talking about," Laubsch said. "Our first deployment failed for this reason but our second attempt went much better after we found people with expertise in this area."

In fact, one of the main reasons why open-source software, particularly Linux, is catching on with SMBs in Germany is the support they are receiving from distributors, systems integrators and other software service companies, according to Volker Knittel, account manager with Avnet CMG GmbH, a software distributor based in Leinfelden-Echterdingen, Germany.

"These are the guys who are going in there, installing Linux, getting it up and running and convincing companies to migrate more of their systems to open source," Knittel said.

Berndes, for instance, relied on Gonicus GmbH to help migrate from Microsoft Windows to Linux and has outsourced a huge share of its IT to the service provider. "They were a big factor in our decision to move more of our systems over to Linux," Kloppsteck said.

Henkel KG, a medium-size insurance company that also used Gonicus to help deploy Linux, is satisfied with its switch from a system based largely on technology from Wang Laboratories Inc., and is recommending the technology to others.

"Linux has been more than stable -- we've had no unplanned server downtime since we launched the system in January 2002," said Jörg Schwab, IT manager at Henkel.

Other users agree. "Linux is based on Unix, and Unix, which has been around for years, is a very stable system," said Ralf Pobo, networking manager at Dachser GmbH & Co. KG in Kempten, Germany.

Dachser, a transportation company, has Linux installed on some of its servers but could be looking at a larger deployment moving ahead. The company is big user of technology from IBM Corp., "which is a big supporter of Linux," Pobo said.

"There is definitely a lot of movement behind Linux in Germany," he said. "There is no way a company can ignore it, especially one that is under pressure to cut costs."

SPONSORED WHITE PAPERS

Aventail - SSL VPN or IPSec VPN: which is best for you? Get a free white paper!

CDW - Personal attention. CDW. The Right Technology. Right Away.

Cisco - SAFE: A Security Blueprint for Enterprise Networks

EMC - FREE PAPER: Get "NETWORKED STORAGE BUYERS GUIDE to PAIN RELIEF" now!

Entrust - Manage identities across applications. Improve productivity.

Google - Bring Google search to your intranet and corporate website.

Remedy - Manage Change requests and Cut Asset-related Costs

Stalker Software - CommuniGate Pro - Transform your Email and Calendaring

Search the IDG White Paper Library:

SPONSORED LINKS

CDW - The right technology products and services. Right away.

HP - Win an HP iPaq now on the Business Resource Center!

MCI - The world's first truly converged voice and data service: MCI Advantage.

Sprint - Compare Sprint to AT&T Wireless. Sprint comes out on top.

CA - Unicenter(R) Infrastructure Management Software, ca.com

INFOWORLD MARKETPLACE

Vonage DigitalVoice...The BROADBAND Phone Company - Vonage is a digital phone service that replaces your current phone company, offering unlimited local and long distance calling for \$34.99 per month

Improve Organizational Efficiencies - Gain greater visibility into your projects across your organization to better align resources with priorities. Register for a free Enterprise Project Management webcast today.

FREE Mainframe Data Access White Paper from Xbridge - Access OS/390 and z/OS data with Xbridge Host Data Connect. You can quickly and easily retrieve VSAM, QSAM, DB2 and IMS DB data through applications such as Excel, Word, or Crystal Reports.

Integrate Your Enterprise with iWay Software - Learn the five reasons you should integrate your enterprise applications and data with iWay Software.? ten minute Webcast.

GoToMyPC: Secure Enterprise Remote Access - All the TCO advantages of a managed service with multi-level security and control. Click here for more information and a complimentary evaluation of GoToMyPC.

>> BUY A LINK NOW

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [TEST CENTER](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [TECHINDEX](#) |

[About InfoWorld](#) :: [Advertise](#) :: [Subscribe](#) :: [Contact Us](#) :: [Awards](#) :: [Events](#)

Copyright © 2003, [Reprints](#), [Permissions](#), [Licensing](#)