Open Source on the desktop

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Open Source is not new

- Free / Public Domain / Shared / Open

- Part of the research/teaching landscape

- Very common on servers

  - Apache, BIND, Samba, Sendmail, Exim

- All my office work since 1987 on OSS

- Pure OSS GUI desktop now possible

  - OpenOffice.org 1.0 in May 2002

Promoting the OSS desktop

- netproject
  - www.netproject.com
  - Education and consultancy
  - SODA
  - EU work: IDA OSS Migration Guidelines
  - UK Police forces
  - UK Local Government
    - London Borough of Newham in the news

Desktop Issues

- GUI familiarity

  – Good: Gnome and KDE both easy to learn

- File format compatibility

  – Good for common MS Office formats

- Groupware

  – Patchy: group calendars are an issue

- Toys

  – Just different!

Management Issues 1

- Licensing
  - No problem!
  - Some managers need educating/reassuring
- Software support
  - Range of options
  - Prices from zero upwards
- Personnel
  - Training
  - Fear of change / CV dilution

Management Issues 2

- Installation

  – Should include automatic inventory update

- Updating software

  – Automated "pull"

- Configuration management

- Per-user configuration issues

- Transition and co-existence

SODA

- Secure Open Desktop Architecture

- netproject development effort

  - Open Source

  - Scale from 10 to 100k desktops

  - Central management

  - Automated software & configuration update

  - Good security

  - Most components already exist

SODA To Do list

- Build management infrastructure
- Build tools for routine admin
- Fix application configuration process
  - Gnome
  - Evolution
  - OpenOffice.org
- Shared calendars for groupware

Conclusions

- Open Source desktop *usable* now

- Some apps hard to manage in large scale

- Transition from proprietary systems needs careful planning but is quite possible

- Benefits of openness and cost

Further reading

- www.netproject.com

- IDA Open Source Migration Guidelines

- www.opensource.org

- www.cluetrain.org

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