

DB/C Newsletter

February 2005

News and Comment

The choice of operating system is very important. Choosing well will result in happy users and reduced costs.

For the desktop, most will choose Windows. Choosing your server operating system is not that easy. There are real differences between Windows Server products and the various UNIX/LINUX options. There are pros and cons on both sides of the Windows vs. UNIX decision. Some of the complexity of choosing a UNIX or LINUX is to figure out which one to use. That's what this month's article is about - which UNIX system to choose for your server.

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Which UNIX?

So you've decided to go with a UNIX or LINUX server for your DB/C DX based application. Which UNIX or LINUX should you choose? There are lots of choices. Here is a list of some of the choices:

- LINUX (various distributions for x86, AMD64, Itanium, and PowerPC)
- Solaris (for SPARC and x86)
- AIX (for PowerPC)
- HPUX (for PA-RISC and Itanium)
- Tru64 UNIX (for Alpha and Itanium)
- SCO OpenServer (for x86)
- SCO UNIXWARE (for x86)
- Mac OS X (for PowerPC)
- FreeBSD (x86, AMD64)

There are various criteria that you might use in making your decision. Some of your evaluation criteria might be:

- Technical features, capabilities and performance
- Cost of purchase
- Cost of maintenance and support

Cost/performance ratio
Availability of third party software and hardware products
Confidence in vendor
Future availability of software and/or hardware

Here are several points to consider.

1. SCO's products might not be a good choice. The company's primary focus today is suing IBM and others, not technical advancement of their software products. The company also recently announced that it faces de-listing from the NASDAQ for failure to file certain financial statements in a timely manner.
2. HP's PA-RISC chip and Alpha chip are being discontinued, so choosing those platforms might not be a good choice. Printers still provide HP with 80% of its profits. There is a real possibility that future leaders of HP will scale back their foray into areas where they shouldn't be.
3. IBM is putting a lot of resources into LINUX on the same hardware that runs AIX. One implication is that AIX might not be available in a few years. Another implication is that LINUX is a good choice, regardless of hardware platform. Also, IBM is in the process of selling its commodity x86 business (ThinkPads, etc.) to a Chinese company.
4. Sun has tried to keep its SPARC chip competitive, but because of vastly smaller numbers, from a price-performance perspective it hasn't been able to compete with x86 and PowerPC based computers. Solaris on SPARC continues to compete well in the larger systems space (8 or more processors per box), but below that level, Sun has come to the recognition that it must offer Solaris for other chips.
5. Mac OS X is technically advanced and runs on the PowerPC architecture. Although the press has been focused on Apple's success with its iPod, the Apple Xserve G5 and Xserve RAID rack-mounted server products have good performance and are very cost competitive. And many hard-core computer techies are now buying Apple Powerbooks for their own use. The combination of a rock-solid UNIX operating system, a really good graphical interface, and the absence of worms, viruses, etc. is very attractive for those who aren't locked into Windows for other reasons.
6. For some, the myriad of LINUX distributions and options is a negative. So far, OSDL, IBM, Redhat, Novell and others have been successful in keeping the various LINUX distributions binary compatible with each other.

LINUX on x86 would appear to be a good choice for many. However, special considerations may bring you to a different conclusion as to what is the best for your organization.

If you do choose LINUX, you will still have to decide which LINUX distribution to use, where to get it, and whether or not you want to pay RedHat, Novell, IBM or another company for support. We will look into these choices in a future newsletter.



DB/C DX Class Schedule

Class: DB/C DX Fundamentals
Date: May, 2005
Location: to be determined

For information, send email to admin@dbcsoftware.com.



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