

12-Krebs on Security-Email Attack on Vendor

February 23, 2014

Greg,

I always try to take responsibility for my words. Ted was compelling me to come up with a way to contend with a Microsoft-less world (I enjoy the mental exercise of contemplating thatâ€™) and one way is to use Linux.

But you would be required to build your own world, so to speak. Yes, Linux supports itâ€™s operating system and at a very reasonable cost. But what resides on the operating system and the programs to interact would have to be built to replace the millions of applications already on Microsoft. I donâ€™t think anyone would content just plopping my database on Linux is going to work. (Ted certainly wasnâ€™t) So I would have to build my own support for that. Not to mention retraining everyone.

Rest assured we love Linux. It gets to play more in cloud based applications and the hardware to support it, than middle-ware applications. We tend to think that we are slaves to Microsoft, but in reality we are slaves to whatever the programmers use. If someone would like to lead a software revolution away from Microsoft, Iâ€™m all for it. But no one can or will spend huge dollars for that.

Other than maybe Targetâ€™. ğŸ™, Hey, there may be their legal defenseâ€™. Build a new POS on Linuxâ€™. It would certainly support their speedy customer experience mandate from marketing.

Ted Mittelstaedt

February 25, 2014

A company the size of Target can go to any POS vendor and tell them “jump” and they will say “how high?” If Target wanted a POS system on Linux a vendor would build it for them.

One of the biggest PC based POS systems used to be Counterpoint. 100% Linux. Then they came out with a very crummy Windows version that was a kind of port of the Linux version. It was not well received. Counterpoint ended up collapsing and NCR bought them and is busily working on killing the product. When you ask NCR about POS they sell you hardware cash registers.

You say you have to build your world but we have to do that with Windows also. And you say there’s millions of apps on Microsoft well no customer is going to buy all of them “ all a small customer cares about is what is the platform the apps they need run on, and all a large customer cares about is how do I want to arrange my IT infrastructure so that my users can’t stick their fingers in it and wreck it, and so that it helps them to do their job “ not to listen to downloaded mp3s or whatever else they do on their home PC “ just so that they use it to do what I am paying them to do.

As for being slaves “ only small customers are slaves to programmers. Large customers who DEFINE THEIR NEEDS SPECIFICALLY are in control of the programmers. They have the money, the programmers want that money to eat, the programmers do it THEIR way, not the programmers way, to get that money.

This is as much about a generational shift in the computer business I think. Right now the CEO’s of companies mostly grew up before computers, so when the IT people came along and told them “your going to do it this way” the CEO’s let the IT people dictate terms because they had no idea how exactly the new technology would help them.

Now however more and more CEO’s are younger and they are saying “hey, I want to run my business a particular way, I’m going to tell IT either they create the system I want or I’ll fire them and find someone else”

You want someone to lead a revolution but it just isn't going to work that way. 30 years ago when the CEOs thought a computer was a misspelling of the word calculator, that was the time for people to lead revolutions. We had Gates and Jobs and McNealy and Gerstner, Jr all those other giants. That is because the public knew nothing about computers and they wanted to be led.

But today, no one person leads. Quick, name the CEOs of Microsoft and Apple – I'll bet you can't without looking them up. No more than you can name the CEOs of Target and Walmart or the CEO of ABC, NBC or CBS. The computer industry has matured. And the only way a mature industry survives is by following the customer.

We have exchanged a handful of leaders for millions of little tiny leaders – the consumers. Just like the automotive industry did when Henry Ford died, just like the electrical industry did when Westinghouse and Edison left the field. Just like the oil industry did. And so on and so on.

And the customers are out there buying tablets, last I looked. Android tablets, not Windows tablets.

It will be the industry workers, the system admins, computer consultants, and so on – who are going to have the hardest time of it, I think. Just like has happened in most other businesses. A lot of us got in when we were regarded as Gods. Today, not so much anymore I think.

When you buy a car today, do you ask a mechanic what car you should buy? No. You might ask him if the car you have decided to buy is a good one – but your mechanic isn't in the drivers seat. And why should your computer consultant be dictating what you should buy? Your mechanic doesn't.

February 25, 2014

Ted and others,

Wow, such hatred for Microsoft. Why? We've been using their stuff for 30 years, as an industry. And yeah, we hate parts of it/most of it/all of it.

But IT is no different than any other part of business. If there is a pervasive reason to do so, companies switch to the most advantageous. This gives them, at least for a while, technological advantage.

So why haven't these systems been moved to UNIX? Why are there still AS-400 boxes running? And probably a few System 38's.

I started in UNIX, have had UNIX servers. But in the 1990's we were forced to switch. The software companies wrote for the platform. And they couldn't write for two platforms in most cases. (Yes, Unix can simulate Windows, but don't you create overhead and services that must be maintained? Basically you create your own Windows. Why do that? Just to escape Microsoft?)

Other countries have had the luxury of starting their systems after the Windows revolution. They can make the analysis of what is best for their business model. And if they don't choose Windows so be it. That's good business.

I repeat. If someone wants to lead the post-Windows revolution, give me a system that makes sense for business reasons. Change for the sake of change is never a good reason. Make it a pervasive reason, and the world will flock to you. Just as someone pointed out about non-American platforms (I apologize for being so American providential. It is all I know.)

But Ted you are wrong about immigration. There are hundreds of thousands of worker permits issued or renewed every year. And they are Canadians, Indian, European, Malaysian, Etc. Oracle couldn't run if you stopped all the programmer integration to this country. Microsoft either.

But it is also people escaping political, economic, and social destitution around the world that makes it a flood to this better place. Of all descents.

This is who we are and have been over 200 years. Is it in need of improvement? By all means. I don't know how HLS does their job with the porous boarder we have and the lax attitude toward proof of citizenship and boarder enforcement. And no one should feel good about citizenship annexation, as proposed. It still should be a controlled process of

immigration and a privilege to be a citizen of ANY country, not a right. Everything else is still a privilege that can be lost, by your own actions or the actions of others. Should be the Bill of Privileges as a Citizen. Rights tend to become entitlements. Whether we are talking about guns or voting.

(Now waving flag and eating apple pie on a Chevy Truck singing God Bless America. In Mandarin!)

Ted Mittelstaedt

February 25, 2014

Wow, such hatred for non-Microsoft. Why?

Come on Robert, that's a straw man argument right out of the Microsoft palybook. You don't like our stuff " must be because you hate us for non-technical reasons. Never because our stuff isn't as good as the stuff from the other guy.

..If there is a pervasive reason to do so, companies switch to the most advantageous!

Wrong. Companies switch for many reasons other than that. What technological advantage does Windows 8 + Office 2013 have over Windows 7 + Office 2010? None that I have seen with any of my customers. In fact it decreases productivity for a while until they get used to the change. Than later productivity is the same as it was before.

So why haven't these systems been moved to UNIX? Why are there still AS-400 boxes running? And probably a few System 38's.

I would say, why haven't the AS400's been switched to Windows? It's the same question with the same answer. The answer is that it's working and MANY people do indeed ignore the marketing BS and use what works. Just like many people will still be running Windows XP for the rest of this year and maybe longer.

“I started in UNIX, have had UNIX servers. But in the 1990s we were forced to switch. The software companies wrote for the platform.”

No, what happened was that this was an era where the UNIX software companies had very high margins, expensive support contracts, etc. And some other newer software companies who had nothing, no customers, saw an opportunity to edge in by selling crummy software for cheap. Since there’s always some customers willing to risk saving money for possibly poorer products that might work OK enough to do the job, those software companies got a foothold.

Fast forward and now the Windows software companies are the ones with very high margins, expensive support contracts, etc. And the Linux people are the New Kids on the Block doing to Microsoft the same thing that Microsoft did to Solaris and Netware years ago. Except that unlike the old UNIX software companies of your youth, Microsoft isn’t stupid enough to not learn from its own roots “and is doing what it can to try to close the openings for people to fly under their radar. But, the only thing that Microsoft could REALLY do is drastically drop its prices “ if they sold Windows Desktop at \$10 a copy, and Window Server for 50 a copy, Linux would be dead. And they ARE doing that in China, by the way, because what keeps them awake at nights is the fear of Linux in China.

“And they couldn’t write for two platforms in most cases.”


That is marketing BS out of Apple, Microsoft & Sun’s playbook “ even today, some of the Linux proponents are stupid enough to say that stuff that runs on Linux (like this blog we are using) can’t be ported as well to Windows.

“Basically you create your own Windows. Why do that? Just to escape Microsoft?”

No, to create viable competition. Competition makes products better. We have none in the US desktop software market, this is a statement of fact from the DoJ Microsoft monopoly lawsuit. That’s the main reason

Microsoft software products like Windows are totally crappy. Products of theirs like the Xbox that have viable competition are far, far better.


“Change for the sake of change is never a good reason”.

Nobody who switched to Windows 8 from Windows 7 can say that without being a hypocrite. DonTMt know if you are one of those people but the statement is often used by people fighting Linux and Unix who donTMt apply it to MicrosoftTMs so-called “upgrades”.


I am just saying, if you can justify switching to Windows 8 from Windows 7 you can justify switching from XP to Linux for the same reasons.


Tom Roche

February 27, 2014

@Ted Mittelstaedt February 25, 2014 at 1:32 pm: “if [Microsoft] sold Windows Desktop at \$10 a copy, and Window Server for 50 a copy, Linux would be dead.”

Really? ITMm not a sysadmin (except for my own boxes “just a 24/7 desktop+cluster linux user), but my impression is that admins who deploy linux do so mostly because itTMs both simultaneously more secure and more efficient and more convenient to work with, not for price.

Regarding the desktop, my question is, canTMt pretty much anyone who really wants a “free windows” get one? And isnTMt the question mostly moot anyway, because most consumer hardware comes pre-bundled with Micro\$oft? And arenTMt people who choose to run windows over linux virtually all people who

place no value on security are smiles-n-thumbs-up for NSA backdoors * think “package management” is done by UPS and FedEx

? ICBW “havenTMt been a fulltime windows user for a decade” but my impression is that the linux-vs-windows decision isnTMt made mostly by price, but by knowledge and inertia.

Ted Mittelstaedt

February 28, 2014

Big businesses save millions if not billions on large scale Linux deployments. Microsoft talks a good game about the cost of Linux being equivalent to Windows once you spend the extra time learning how to deploy Linux but that's mainly window dressing because it is only applicable to small businesses that don't have a dedicated IT person. Sure, if you own a 3 person business and you are your own system admin, to you the tasks of system administration are probably as welcome as getting a tooth pulled, or getting your car tuned up since they detract from your main business that makes money, whatever that is. So the "we save u time" argument will resonate with you.

But it's different with larger businesses that have dedicated system admins.

If you have 1000 Kiosk computers that will be running a web browser to pound data into a database (or get it out of a database) your admin may take a week to learn how to build a Linux kiosk system to work vs a day to learn how to build a Windows kiosk.

But, once he learns how to do it in both instances, you save \$50,000 on the Windows volume licenses for those kiosks. Plenty of money to pay your admin how to "do Linux" or better yet hire another admin who isn't such a stick in the mud and already knows Linux.

Seriously! How can someone working in the computer industry today justify NOT learning something about an operating system that is completely free and will run on any old PC they have laying around? What's a brand new PC at Fry's cost on sale, anyway? Couple hundred bucks. I would expect any system admin I hire to be buying a new machine every couple years FOR THEIR PERSONAL USE. They should have their older systems lying around.

Anyway, Puppet Labs makes millions building software that will do large scale Linux deployments. I don't use their stuff because I don't own

a large scale Linux deployment but someone is, and whoever is, is paying them big bucks. That wouldn't be happening if businesses weren't saving millions and millions on Windows licensing by replacing it with Linux.

February 25, 2014

Re: Robert "

> If someone would like to lead a software revolution away from > Microsoft, I'm all for it. But no one can or will spend huge > dollars for that.

There are ways to do it without spending a fortune. But it's an evolution, not a revolution, so it doesn't create any tension in the board room.

Take a page from Microsoft's own "embrace and extend" playbook. Protect a LAN segment filled with flaky Windows POS systems with a Linux firewall, for example. Or maybe virtualize Windows Servers and put in a bunch of firewall rules in the hypervisors to protect the server(s). Red Hat offers an enterprise class environment called RHEV that does everything you expect from a virtualization environment at a fraction of the cost. Maybe use the virtualization environment for all the clustering and failover and then save a fortune by going to SQL Server Standard instead of Enterprise.

So you keep the same databases and legacy environment everyone is used to and surround it with newer stuff to protect it. And then gradually over time, change out the legacy stuff as newer and better apps come along.

" Greg