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PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CALL FOR PARTICIPATION: THE LINUX STANDARD BASE
(LSB) project (V1.5)

The Linux(R) Operating System's rapid adoption by millions of comput
users everywhere is direct recognition of the quality of the softwar
and success of the freely distributable software development model.
order to ensure that large software application programs, from
binary-only tools sold by the largest software companies, to freely
distributable desktop environments built cooperatively over the net,
run smoothly on as many Linux-based computers as possible - the Linu
Standard Base (LSB) Project is an attempt to define the common core
components that can be expected to be found in any "Linux" system.

The signers of this proposal are most of the leading commercial Linu
distributions, board members of Linux International, and key personn
like Linus Torvalds, the creator of Linux. We propose a set of goals
and the organization for this project, and invite all other Linux
distributions to join us in planning the project and carrying it out

The "base system" is the set of programs, libraries and files that a
essential to every Linux system. These objects and their related fil
formats play a supporting role for every application. Examples of th
include (but are probably not limited to) the C library, the format
placement of system files, and other necessary interfaces. Linux
distributions traditionally do not distinguish themselves on these
interfaces, they distinguish themselves in other categories, such as
the applications on their system, quality and ease of installation,
quality and ease of systems administration as well as support for
users. Linux distributions should maintain the base system
collectively, as the kernel is maintained, rather than individually.

The Linux Standard Base project will provide a vendor-neutral standa
backed by source code, upon which to build Linux distributions, much
the Linux kernel project provides a single kernel that is shared by
distributions. This standard base will be distributed as a reference
platform from which Linux distributions may be derived and which
application producers may use for testing, but it will _never_ be
targeted to be an end-user solution in itself, as that is the role o

the Linux distributions that incorporate the standard.

The application of the standard will be that any program that runs
successfully on the reference platform can be expected to run on all
Linux systems. If they don't, the distribution creator must either f
a problem with their own distribution, or convince us that there's a
bug in the sample distribution which violates the standards. This is
not intended to prohibit distributions from making their own extensi
to the base system, or even to use different source code from what i
supplied in the reference platform - it's only meant to provide a
common set of features that will be known to exist on every Linux
system which ISVs can depend on.

Participation in the base standard will assure the distributions of
compatibility with each other for the set of applications that depen
only on the files and libraries in the reference platform. As time
passes, the standard will expand to include most of the files and
libraries upon which a commercial application might depend.

The Linux Standard Base System will be 100% compliant with the Open
Source Definition. This assures all distributions that they can deri
from it without concern over licensing problems for themselves or th
users. Development will be carried out in the public, with anonymous
access to the CVS archive and the developer mailing lists. The core
group will be a mix of high-quality developers from the Linux commun
and the staff of commercial distributions, with an organization simi
to the tremendously successful Linux kernel development team. Attent
will be paid to standards such as POSIX and the FHS (the successor t
the Linux Filesystem Standard). However, the project goes far beyond
the utility of these standards, because rather than produce only pap
documents, it will provide a complete implementation of the standard,
ready to be integrated into Linux distributions or used as a referen
platform for application developers. This will provide the Linux
distributions with improved time-to-market, lower cost, and much les
duplication of effort than a paper standard which is defined to full
take into account side effects, undocumented issues, etc.

We propose Bruce Perens as the project leader. He has the experience
having run Debian for several years, during which he did extensive w
on Debian's base system. He is a board member of Linux International,
president of Software in the Public Interest, and a member of the
86open steering committee. He is the principal author of the "Open
Source Definition" and its predecessor, the "Debian Free Software

Guidelines". He has been a Unix systems programmer since 1981, and i
currently employed by Pixar Animation Studios, makers of "Toy Story"

The Linux Standard Base System will implement some of the goals of t
86open project, which proposes to establish an interoperability
standard for all Unix-like operating systems.

We, the undersigned, endorse this proposal, and ask that other
distributions and ISVs also join us to help further define this
proposal and then to help implement it:

Linus Torvalds, Creator of Linux
Jon A. Hall, Executive Director, Linux International
Bruce Perens, Director Linux International, proposed Project Leader
Ransom H. Love, Director Linux International, General Manager,OpenLi

Roland Dyroff, Director Linux International, S.u.S.E. Linux

Mark Bolzern, Director Linux International, President Linux Mall and

Phil Hughes, Director Linux International, Publisher, Linux Journal

Larry Augustin, Director Linux International, President VA Research

Kit Cosper, Director Linux International, President Linux Hardware S

Garry M. Paxinos, Director Linux International, Vice President Metro

Cliff Miller, Director Linux International, President, Pacific HiTec

Ted Cook, Director Linux International, President, Enhanced Software

Tom Lang, Director Linux International, President, H & L Software

Eric S. Raymond, open-source evangelist and author of "The Cathedra
Bazaar"

Sam Ockman, President, Penguin Computing, Chairman, LINC: the Intern

Non-Linux Supporters:

Jordan Hubbard, FreeBSD project.