

Jumping on the Linux POS (Point of Sale) Bandwagon- Finally, a Choice for Hospitality & Retail Providers

Date: 04-20-2007 01:05 PM CET

Category: [IT, New Media & Software](#)

Press release from: [Volante POS Systems](#)

Agency: **Meade Internet Services**



In a never ending battle to ease costs, many businesses today are looking at Linux as a server operating system. Issues such as cost and flexibility make Linux an attractive choice. However, just as many operators may be asking, “what exactly is Linux anyway?”

Linux is a free Unix-type operating system originally created by Linus Torvalds. Developed under the GNU General Public License, the source code for Linux is freely available to everyone. According to IBM, Linux is currently the fastest growing server operating system.

Once businesses have chosen their operating system, the next task is usually sourcing out a POS (point of sale) system. At the best of times, sourcing out a POS system for your business operation can be a confusing, time consuming and arduous job. Throw in the added obstacle of having to select point of sale software that can actually run on your operating system, and it's easy to see why business owners shy away from this difficult and often expensive task.

Interest in Linux point of sale solutions has grown dramatically in the last few years. The reason why is simple; Linux, as an operating system, is more cost effective, flexible, and allows for greater freedom of choice in software than more mainstream operating systems. Linux is also very cost effective in regards to licensing, installation, administrative and support costs. Linux can offer all these features without sacrificing functionality. For retailers and restaurant/hospitality operators alike, cost and ease of use are king, and reasons such as these can make the difference between a business that succeeds and a business that fails.

POS software providers have been slow, however, to jump on the Linux bandwagon. Currently, there are few well-known or enterprise-wide POS software packages available for Linux. One company, however, has seen a niche in the market and has embraced it head on. Volante POS Systems of Toronto, Canada, offers a POS solution that has been developed entirely in Java. Java is cross platform compatible and operates in multiple environments – this gives the user freedom to choose Linux, Windows 2000/XP, or Windows and Linux. For many operators, having a choice is key.

Not only does Java provide cross platform compatibility, but like Linux, using Java POS solutions can be cost effective as well, as Java allows users the opportunity to save on additional Windows license fees, as an example. Java's open standard architecture allows the entire system to be compatible with third party industrial applications. Users are free to choose their operating environment and are not bound to costly proprietary restrictions.

Volante also offers integration with Windows-based back office applications. This flexibility is rare in the POS industry. More information on Volante's Linux & Java POS solutions can be found at www.volantesystems.com.

From a retail perspective, Linux is definitely catching on. Burlington Coat Factory, for instance, has already rolled out Linux

in all of their locations, both as a desktop and POS system. Other retailers/restauranteurs currently using Linux in their stores include: Papa John's, Garden Fresh, Mark's Work Wearhouse, Home Depot, and Gap, to name a few.

The push for Linux isn't just in North America, either. Asian governments are looking closely at Linux, hoping it will lead to the development of a domestic software industry that isn't hostage to foreign licenses. According to Linux Insider International, "Asia is emerging as a key battleground for the open-source movement. The Japan-China-Korea (JCK) partnership, announced last month in Osaka, is the latest in a string of initiatives to promote Linux. Two weeks earlier, Singapore hosted the second annual Asia Open Source Symposium, where 20 Asian countries discussed closer collaboration in standardization, localization and interoperability of Linux software."

So, when choosing an operating system and subsequent point of sale system, consider Linux. Discover for yourself why Linux is the fastest growing server operating system.

Since 1993, Volante Systems has been providing leading edge point of sale solutions to the Hospitality industry. Developed entirely in Java, Volante POS Software is cross platform compatible, and will run on the operating system of your choice. (Windows/Linux/Unix). Wireless hand held and enterprise version are also available.

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