

1 October 2007

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Hovsepian and
Ballmer
Microsoft

Microsoft Drives Linux Adoption - Vista Didn't Do It!

The Redmond company is good for open source

Microsoft, and Microsoft alone is responsible for the increase in Linux adoption. However, the latest operating system from the Redmond company, Windows Vista, has nothing to do with it, despite the fact that analysts predicted that the operating system will alienate Windows users and convert them to Linux and Mac OS X. In fact, in the perspective of Linux distributor Novell, Microsoft has managed to deliver a beneficial impact on its business involving the open source operating system. Back at the beginning of November 2006, Steve Ballmer, Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft and Ron Hovsepian, president and Chief Executive Officer of Novell, inked a broad collaboration agreement between the two companies focused on Windows and Linux interoperability, support and intellectual property assurance. Just one month short of the one year anniversary of the Microsoft and Novell agreement, it is clear that the move, highly criticized by the open source community, helped in fact drive Linux adoption. Novell might have sold its soul, but it was clearly worth it. In the past three quarters, Novell's business simply exploded, and the Linux distributor is pointing at partnership with Microsoft as a source of its increased sales. According to Justin Steinman, director of marketing at Novell, following the deal with the Redmond company, the Linux business jumped no less than 243%, just in three quarters of the fiscal year. And in this context, Novell of course benefited from the exposure inherent with a Microsoft alliance. While the agreement was both highly publicized and criticized, culminating with the Free Software Foundation releasing the GNU GeneralPublic License version 3 ([GPLv3](#)) in response to the Microsoft and Novell marriage, it is clear that it was all good publicity for the Linux distributor. Microsoft and Novell set up in 2006 to provide joint solutions designed to support heterogeneous environments running mixed operating systems. The partnership centered on interoperability, support and virtualization has produced a Microsoft and Novell Interoperability Lab in Cambridge, Massachusetts, announced in September, an aspect of the initiative delivered to advance the collaboration between the two companies.