

## Open source adopted by more than 50% of worldwide companies

Research has shown that an increasing number of organisations are opting to use open source software over proprietary application, driven by open source's competitive advantage, lower cost of ownership, flexibility, innovation, shorter development times and faster procurement processes.

It is hardly surprising that proprietary software vendors love to warn consumers against the potential pitfalls of open source software, stating that it isn't ready for business, either due to a higher total cost of ownership in comparison to their licensed applications or substandard features.

However, recent survey results have countered these claims; on Tuesday 24 th January 2011, US research firm, Gartner Group reported that more than 50% of the companies they contacted have adopted open source software (OSS) as part of their ongoing IT strategy.

Ironically, two of the primary drivers for open source adoption were lower cost of ownership and competitive advantage due to the potential to customise applications.

Of 547 IT leaders from 11 countries surveyed in July and August 2010, 22% were found to be adopting open source software on a regular basis in all of their organisations' departments. 46% of respondents consistently use open source in specific projects and departments, whilst 21% stated that they were in the process of assessing the effectiveness of OSS.

Gartner found that the initiatives most commonly supported by open source software were:

- Data management and integration
- Application development, integration, architecture, governance and overhaul
- Business process improvement/re-engineering
- Data centre modernisation and consolidation
- Security, risk and compliance
- Virtualisation

Whilst cost was a significant driver behind the decision to use open source, it was certainly not the only factor. Nearly one third of respondents stated that they chose OSS due to its increased innovation, flexibility, faster procurement processes and shorter development times.

Based in Gartner's survey results, we are set to see even bigger things from open source in the near future. In 2005, OSS accounted for less than 10% of organisations' total portfolios; within the next 18 months, and largely at the cost of proprietary software, that number will reach 30%.

This rise is due in part to open source's ability to be utilised with internally developed software, which has also increased in prominence.

Gartner research director, Bob Igo, explains, "OSS components and building blocks are utilised together with internally developed software to augment and enhance existing systems through integration and automation, as well as to improve business efficiencies and security."

It's good to see that despite the best efforts of proprietary software vendors to scare customers away, smart businesses are being driven towards the benefits of open source.

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