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IBM Announces New SUSE LINUX-based Retail Offering for Point of Sale

New Solution Gives Retailers the Cost and Flexibility Benefits of Open-Source Linux and Reliability and Leadership of IBM POS

Raleigh, NC., January 8, 2004 ... IBM today announced a new Linux-based IBM point-of-sale (POS) solution, based on SUSE LINUX, designed to enable retailers to reduce complexity and realize the low costs and other benefits of the open-source Linux operating system, along with the reliability, expertise and industry leadership of IBM in retail POS.

The new solution, IBM Retail Environment for SUSE LINUX, features a new SUSE LINUX-based product for retail -- including a complete operating system and management solution for point of sale (POS) systems. Retailers can install the Linux operating system software they receive from SUSE and use this optimized Linux platform with IBM SurePOS, IBM eServer and IBM middleware to help provide retailers with a scalable, secure operating environment across the entire retail enterprise – all at a low total cost of ownership

The new solution is designed to help deliver a standards-based, stable and secure infrastructure and a centralized management system for the retail market – helping bring reliability and manageability across remotely deployed POS systems. IBM plans for it to be available in the first half of 2004.

“Point of sale is the moment of truth in retailing, so retailers want to make sure they have the reliability and stability for which IBM is known in retail POS. At the same time, retailers clearly are seeing the benefits of open-source Linux,” said Tom Peterson, general manager, IBM Retail Store Solutions. “This new IBM offering is designed to allow retailers to continue receiving the stability and reliability of IBM POS, along with the benefits of Linux . With IBM providing the support around SUSE LINUX at the POS, retailers can focus on their core business rather than having to take over management of their POS operating systems.”

“The underlying SUSE LINUX technology fits perfectly with the technical needs of this retail solution -- giving customers the stability, security and cost effectiveness of Linux,” said Juergen Geck, CTO, SUSE LINUX. “During the design and the piloting stages of this offering, IBM and SUSE cooperated closely, combining IBM's 30 years of experience as the industry leader in retail technology with SUSE's more than 10 years of Linux leadership.”

IBM Retail Environment for SUSE LINUX is a turn-key offering designed specifically for retailers. Combining IBM's retail expertise and Linux commitment with SUSE's Linux leadership, the two companies will be working together to meet and drive new requirements to benefit retailers.

The new offering is built on SUSE's Linux distribution, which offers simplified installation and configuration, via four optimized Linux OS images for point-of-sale terminals, and an infrastructure for centralized management and distribution of the software. By being tailored for retail, the offering is designed to help reduce the complexity of the Linux operating system for retailers' in-store POS solutions. In addition, the offering provides a single point of contact for support in terms of operating system, drivers, and hardware.

The SUSE Linux distribution can scale across multiple hardware platforms across the retailer's entire enterprise, allowing retailers to consolidate their skilled IT resources and not have to devote resources toward defining, managing and providing ongoing support and maintenance themselves for a distinct POS operating system. Support and maintenance pricing, as well as the technical capabilities of the solution, are designed to scale for the retailer's environment, thus supporting the concept of “retail on demand.” For example, the solution is designed to be able to be tailored from a small console-based system to a feature-rich Java and browser-capable system depending on the needs of the retailer.

The new solution also helps offer investment protection for retailers already running IBM POS systems, as it can be deployed on select existing IBM terminals. It should be particularly attractive for retailers who are currently using older DOS operating systems and need the ability to add new applications and services which require a new operating system platform.

About IBM

IBM, the world's largest information technology company, provides the retail industry with a full range of e-business solutions, including: point-of-sale systems, other hardware and software technology, consulting focused on business transformation, IT strategy and planning, store operations improvement, and supply chain optimization, and with services, such as outsourcing, managed operations, systems integration, and application development and design. IBM has a list of retail customers in 100 countries worldwide that reads like a “Who's Who” of retailing. For more information on IBM retail store solutions, please visit www.ibm.com/industries/retail/store

About SUSE LINUX

Established in 1992, SUSE LINUX is one of the world's leading providers of Linux software and services. With the largest dedicated Linux research and development team, SUSE delivers enterprise-ready software and services that harness the innovation, speed-to-market and independence of the open source community. A privately-held company based in Nuremberg, Germany, SUSE -- together with global business partners -- supports customers throughout the world. For further information on SUSE LINUX , please visit www.suse.com.