Agenda

• Narrowing down the field
  – Quick overview of what’s available
• What are you looking for?
• Pricing
• Try before you buy
• Turf battles and politics
• Questions (I’ll also take questions as we go along unless time gets short)
Narrowing down the field

• 400+ Linux distributions available
• Only a few have much market share
  – Red Hat
  – SUSE
  – Mandriva
  – Slackware
  – Non-commercial (so, no sales figures)
    • Debian, OpenSUSE, Fedora Core, CentOS
Mainframe market share

- SUSE
- Red Hat
- Non-commercial
  - Debian/390
  - Slack/390
  - CentOS
    - “Work alike” of Red Hat RHEL
  - Fedora Core
Realistically speaking…

• For production use, with commercial support, and ISV certifications needed
  • SUSE Linux Enterprise Server/Desktop
  • Red Hat Enterprise Linux

• For Proof of Concept work, the choices are far more open
What are you looking for?

• Is commercial support important to you?
• Bleeding edge, or system stability?
• Application availability
• ISV certifications
• Hardware support
• Management tools
• Support contract terms
Bleeding Edge vs. Stability

• Bleeding Edge (to a certain extent)
  – OpenSUSE, Fedora Core
  – Debian (testing and unstable)

• Stable
  – SUSE Linux Enterprise Server/Desktop
  – Red Hat Enterprise Linux, CentOS
  – Slackware, Slack/390
  – Debian, Debian/390 (stable and testing)
Application Availability

• Check for the applications you need
• Just because the ISV has a Linux version don’t assume that includes mainframe Linux
Application Certification

• Most ISVs certify only a few platforms
  – Some only certify on one Linux distribution
  – In some cases, this might be a very old version

• Most will certify on SUSE and Red Hat
Hardware Support

• Red Hat and SUSE
  – System x
  – System i
  – System p
  – System z
    - 31 and 64-bit, soon to be 64-bit only

• Slackware
  – System x (32-bit only)
Hardware Support

• Debian
  – System x, System p, System z (31-bit, 64-bit in development)

• Slack/390
  – System z (31-bit, 64-bit in development)

• CentOS
  – System x, System z
Hardware Support

- OpenSUSE
  - System x, System p
- Fedora Core
  - System x, System p, System z (sometimes)
Management Tools

• Check with your suppliers
  – Make sure they have Linux versions
  – Make sure they have mainframe Linux versions

• Smaller companies might be able to use Open Source tools
  – Closer to “health checkers” than full-blown monitoring tools
Support Contract Terms

• For Linux, maintenance is *not* equal to support
  – Maintenance is similar to PUT or RSU
  – Support is similar to calling the IBM Support Center with some consulting

• In general, the more support you want, the higher the cost (no real surprise)

• Support available for Debian, Slack/390
Support Contract Terms

• Red Hat sells three versions
  – WS, ES, and AS
  – The code on the CDs is identical
• Support is bundled with every license purchased
• Your support comes from the seller
  – Red Hat
  – HP, IBM, Dell, Sun
Support Contract Terms

• SUSE sells two versions
  – Enterprise Server
  – Enterprise Desktop

• Built from a common source code base, what gets shipped is different

• You can buy support from anyone, including Novell
Pricing

• Keep in mind SUSE doesn’t bundle support
  – If you don’t, SUSE will *always* look less expensive
• If you need a lot of support, Red Hat may be less expensive
• If you don’t need a lot of support SUSE may be less expensive
Pricing

- Red Hat prices by WS vs. ES vs AS
  - ES is limited in hardware configurations supported, as well as software packages.
  - # of CPUs is counted by physical sockets
- Basic and standard for WS and ES
- Standard and premium for AS
  - Mainframe licenses are for *each* processor

http://www.redhat.com/rhel/compare/server/
Pricing

• SUSE prices by # of processors and architecture
  – 1-2 processors, 3-16, or increments of 8 for non-mainframe systems
  – Mainframe licenses are for each processor, whether standard CP or IFL
    • G5
    • G6, z800 and z890
    • z900, z990 and z9
Distribution “Personalities”

- Mismatches between them and your organization’s style can cause problems
  - Conservative or maverick?
  - Need more than EXT3 for file systems?
  - Need new system z features sooner or not?
  - GUI configuration tools, or CLI & text-based?
  - Lots of changes to software packages?
Try before you buy

• Try several Linux distributions and see which one(s) best meet(s) your needs
  – See the list of URLs at the end

• Nothing anyone says is as valuable as testing in your own environment
Talk to others

• Ask other people what they like and dislike about the various distributions.
  – The Linux-390 mailing list is a good place

• Check out how maintenance/support is delivered, and what people think about both
  – Timeliness, effectiveness, and cost are all important factors
Turf Battles and Politics

• Do you already have Linux in your shop?
• There is a tendency to stick with what is already known or well advertised
• There is a tendency to go with what is popular
• Having some (small amount of) variety is not necessarily a bad idea
Questions?
Additional Information

- DistroWatch  http://distrowatch.com/
- SUSE Linux    http://www.novell.com/linux/
- Red Hat Linux http://www.redhat.com/
- Mandriva Linux http://www.mandriva.com/
- Debian GNU/Linux http://www.debian.org/
- Slackware Linux http://www.slackware.com/
- Slack/390 Linux http://www.slack390.org/
- CentOS Linux  http://www.centos.org/
- Sine Nomine Linux Support  
  http://sinenomine.net/support/linux/debian
  http://sinenomine.net/node/484

- HP Debian Support
  http://h20219.www2.hp.com/services/cache/76815-0-0-225-121.html
Mailing lists and forums

- Debian   http://www.debian.org/MailingLists/
- Fedora Core  https://www.redhat.com/mailman/listinfo/fedora-list
- Linux-390  http://www2.marist.edu/htbin/wlvindex?linux-390
- Red Hat 3  https://www.redhat.com/mailman/listinfo/taroon-list
- Red Hat 4  https://www.redhat.com/mailman/listinfo/nahant-list
- SUSE Linux http://en.opensuse.org/Communicate#Mailing_Lists
- SUSE SLES  http://support.novell.com/forums/2su4.html
Evaluation Software

- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server  http://download.novell.com/index.jsp
- SUSE Linux/openSUSE  http://en.opensuse.org/Download
- Fedora Core  http://fedora.redhat.com/download/
- Slackware  http://www.slackware.com/getsslack/
- Slack/390  http://www.slack390.org/getsslack390.html
- Debian  http://www.debian.org/CD/