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## Another Visit to Linux Standard Base

I just finished writing my Linux Standard Base (LSB) article for the September 2004 issue of *LinuxWorld Magazine*. The article covers why the LSB was formed, a brief history of the LSB project, and the LSB certification process for Linux distributions and applications. The final section is on the future of the LSB.

For the future of LSB, I spoke with Dirk Hohndel, Director of Linux and Open Source Strategy at Intel, Scott Handy, VP, Worldwide Linux Strategy and Market Development at IBM, Jeff Hawkins, VP, Linux Business Office at Novell, and Stuart Cohen, CEO at OSDL. Dirk is a member of the Board of Directors of FSG, and Jeff is a member of the Board of Directors of OSDL. I was told that all of the members of FSG and OSDL are strongly behind LSB 2.0 and believe that it is important for the success of Linux in the enterprise. I believe that the business case for LSB compliance for Linux distributors and ISVs is so strong that releases of LSB 2.0 and beyond will be successful.

The people that I spoke with said that they believe that LSB 2.0 is good enough for vendors, distributors, etc. to start encouraging their ISV partners to become LSB-compliant. ISVs need to understand the process and the value that LSB-compliance brings to them. This sounds like a slam-dunk. ISVs complained about having to port to multiple variants of UNIX for years. They won't have to do that with Linux because an LSB-compliant application runs on any LSB-compliant Linux distribution. If you visit the LSB Certification Register on the Web, you will find that there are 35 LSB-certified products listed and two thirds of them are Red Hat and SUSE Linux distributions, but no ISV applications are yet listed.

The success of LSB 2.0 begins with the Linux distributors. If they do not adhere to the agreed upon standard, then the primary reason for the standard would be cast aside. ISVs can make all of their applications LSB-compliant, but if Linux distributors do not adhere to the LSB specification, then ISVs would have to make multiple ports to Linux (unless they decided to only work with LSB-compliant distributors). About two years ago, Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB) said that it would not deploy any Linux-based software after 2002 that was not LSB-compliant. While end users are not the focus of LSB compliance, they are the beneficiaries, and it might be the case that statements such as the one made by CSFB will be necessary to make LSB work.

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