

The Linux Foundation Boosts Its Membership

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The Linux Foundation, which was created in January 2007 out of the merger between the Open Source Development Labs and the Free Standards Group, has signed up three new members: Marvell, Nokia and VirtualLogix.

This brings current membership of the foundation - which has the goal of providing services that are useful to the community and industry, as well as protect, promote and continue to standardize the Linux platform - to around 86.

These newest members are expected to help deepen the foundation's understanding of the issues and opportunities for Linux in multiple environments, and help the membership to push the envelope even further, Jim Zemlin, the Foundation's executive director, said.

The announcement of the creation of the Linux Foundation came just six weeks after the OSDL announced that it had laid off a number of its engineering staff and was changing focus.

Stuart Cohen, OSDL's chief executive, also resigned at the time and Chief Financial Officer Mike Temple took over as chief operating officer.

Zemlin said at that time that Cohen's resignation was "totally unrelated" to the formation of the foundation, adding that Temple would remain on board in an operational role "for the time being" and that running the OSDL was always intended to only be an interim role for Temple.

Among the new members, Marvell brings a focus on the standardization of mobile and embedded Linux and its adoption on a wide range of devices.

For its part, Nokia, wants to work on Linux-based technologies, including its Internet Tablet, in a vendor-neutral environment; VirtualLogix will contribute its real-time virtualization expertise to help device manufacturers incorporate the functionality of Linux into mobile handset and network infrastructure applications.

"We're looking forward to rolling up our sleeves with these new members in the coming months, including at our first member meeting this June," Zemlin said.

Marvell has been seeing strong interest in Linux from its silicon solution customers, said Paramesh Gopi, a vice president and general manager at the company.

"By joining the Linux Foundation, we feel that we can better support this increasing demand and help bring embedded Linux into the mainstream through the foundation's unified resources, services and standards," he said.

Ari Jaaksi, the director of Nokia's open-source software operation, said that it was important that Linux not be controlled by any single company.

"The Linux Foundation's protection mission helps provide that assurance. We also believe the foundation's collaboration role will provide us a good venue to work with the industry's leaders in important areas such as desktop architecture and mobile Linux initiatives," he said.

VirtualLogix hopes that working with the Linux Foundation virtualization workgroup will help speed the adoption of Linux into embedded devices at a lower cost.

"With virtualization technology, manufacturers will be able to reduce bill of materials, manage multiple operating systems within a single hardware environment and increase product performance," said Michel Gien, executive vice president of corporate strategy at VirtualLogix.

But the foundation has had its own controversies lately, especially when it named its new board of directors, which included many Fortune 500 executives from around the world, but not one representative from a purely community-based Linux organization.

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