Year 2005: The year of open source

written by Manoj Khanna | March 1, 2006

The year 2005 was surely of Open Source. Past couple of years of hard work and dedication towards creating something new and challenging has been paying off for the open source developers and the community at large. The collaborative efforts of various teams crossing the borders and boundaries have surely gotten a way with the code they developed and development of systems which are now finding deep roots in an enterprise world.

Today corporate world is focused on acquiring and implementing open source tools and softwares, be it database, application servers, back-end infrastructure software or tools. And in this year 2005 the open source industry has seen some rising numbers of corporate customers confirming this trend.

The way to go today is open source. New business models are taking shapes around open source, and as a metaphor if you have an open source model for a new venture and you go and visit Sand Hill Road, the venture firms will throw so much money at you that you could get bruised! Not likely, but its a thought. Despite all this, the dual licensing process has kicked in fast and is spreading than ever before. New business models based on free for open source usage and charged license fee for a commercial product or free basic software and charge for higher end-version or service is now gaining ground. Venture funding is kicking in for SoA based companies. And in recent move by big corporations, Sun Microsystems was the clear winner, who made its flagship and ailing product 'Solaris' open source. Sun expects to have more demand for its services and servers as it goes open source. Also, later in the year Sun made the the entire gamut of its Java product line open source and also made it available free of charge.

Bottom-line to all this is to have a deeper penetration for a

company’s products and services in the market, and gain a better market share in doing so. And given this scenario, we should be ready to accept that big companies such as Oracle, IBM, Sun, BEA, Google, and Yahoo would not be far behind in acquiring small and valuable companies who develop state-of-the-art open source products either complementing their technology or making them better.

Licensing is another big issue in the open source world. What’s there for free and what’s not still confuses a lot of people and most of all companies who actually want to use and implement these open source products. And with so many licenses floating around this is bound to happen. Until the industry finds a solutions to all this by standardizing the licensing process and come with a manifesto for the benefit of the open source community. This might be a good opportunity for the open-source software legal experts. A better understanding on open source licenses is a dire need today from the corporate customer viewpoint.

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