

Linux Watch

Mainsoft Empowers Microsoft Developers To Crank Out Linux Apps

Mainsoft, the cross-platform development company and Microsoft source code partner, has just delivered Visual MainWin for J2EE Developer Edition, aka Grasshopper, a freely available Visual Studio .NET plug-in that's supposed to let Visual Studio developers develop web applications for Linux quickly.

It's the first time that Mainsoft, which usually services ISVs and IT establishments, is chasing volume and the individual developer in an attempt to scale its business.

Mainsoft CEO Yaacov Cohen said in an interview that he's doing it to prove the validity of the methodology underneath his commercial Visual MainWin for J2EE, which was greeted with a certain amount of skepticism, except among more forward-thinking early adopters, based on the bias of the segregated Java and .NET clans.

Mainsoft understands the influence of the developer and is hoping that the freebie Grasshopper touches off a run on the \$5,000 Visual MainWin for J2EE. See, apps developed with Grasshopper can only be deployed on the Apache Tomcat application server. So apps for WebSphere and WebLogic would need Visual MainWin for J2EE. As a corollary, development shops would increase collaboration and simplify their production environment.

Mainsoft says it's also extended its own collaboration with Mono, the open source project that's developing an open source version of .NET.

Mainsoft's engineering team has worked with Mono for the past two years, contributing to the development and testing of Mono's ASP.NET, ADO.NET, XML, Visual Basic and .NET core class

libraries.

Grasshopper exposes Mono's open source ASP.NET and ADO.NET class libraries to the VS developer.

With it, the first Visual Studio-based IDE for Linux, VS.NET developers can contribute enhancements, class libraries and fixes to Grasshopper's and Mono's shared open source runtime.

Those enhancements will be incorporated into both the Mono project and Visual MainWin for J2EE, Mainsoft's commercial kit, the company said.

As one might expect, Mono's project leader Miguel de Icaza figures, "Forging a direct line of communication with Visual Studio developers is essential to building a robust open source community."

Mainsoft quotes a recent study by Evans Data that was seminal in its strategy that says that one in five developers using Visual Studio .NET as their primary IDE have written an application for Linux. The study indicates that more than half of the VS.NET developers surveyed have used open source components in their application development.

In a canned statement, Cohen said, "Already, cross-platform development is a powerful reality among our ISV customers, who use the high productivity of Visual Studio software to develop enterprise applications once and deploy them on multiple platforms. Grasshopper encourages wide-spread adoption of Linux development among Visual Studio developers, who can easily move, or 'hop' across Windows, Linux and other Java-enabled platforms."

Mainsoft says Grasshopper lets developers develop, debug and deploy web applications and web services for

Windows, Linux and any Java-enabled platform using Visual Studio software, C# and Visual Basic .NET. It's designed for individual developers and small user group deployments. Access to enterprise features such as multi-CPU capabilities and fully featured J2EE servers, including WebSphere, JBoss and WebLogic, are available in Visual MainWin for J2EE Enterprise Edition.

Mainsoft is also launching a Linux Zone for Visual Studio developers, populated with how-to articles and interactive forums to make application development for Linux and Java-enabled platforms faster and easier for Visual Studio developers.

Cohen said Thursday the traffic was already considerable.

See <http://dev.mainsoft.com>.

Anti-Microsoft OpenOffice File Format Standardized

Oasis has ratified OpenDocument 1.0, an XML-based file format for desktop applications, as a royalty-free standard.

The OpenDocument format is the default in OpenOffice for text, spreadsheets, charts and graphical documents.

Oasis got RedMonk principal analyst James Governor to remark that "XML doesn't always mean open. You can hide a lot in a file format. OpenDocument represents an opportunity to ensure truly open file formats for productivity applications, which is why it will receive the enthusiastic support of public sector steering organizations on a global basis. The participation of enterprises in vertical industries, such as aerospace, will also ensure adoption in the private sector. One

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