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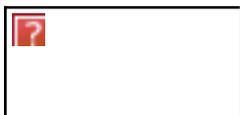
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**Computing systems for business: Linux or Mac?**

Monday, September 11, 2006

**Evi Mariani**, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta

Is there an alternative for original Microsoft Windows to substitute the pirated Microsoft Windows and Office on your office computers?

You must have heard about Linux and Mac. But you're so familiar with the way Microsoft Windows and Office works, you wonder how other operating systems will help your business.

On the other hand, you find buying the original Microsoft could bury you in a neck-deep debt hole while viruses and spam have bugged you for years, they have disrupted your business and peace of mind.

For small and micro enterprises whose first concern is price, Linux with its plenty distributions should probably your first consideration.

However, the downside of Linux is its limited and almost unknown --at least to laypeople-- applications. Your whole staff have to be people with brave and adventurous heart to switch to Linux.

If your office's works rely only on word processor application (like Microsoft Word), mail browser, Internet browser, presentation application (like Powerpoint) and worksheet app like Excel, you can choose Linux, which so far has a number of leading distributions (distros) creating open source (free) projects you can pick: Ubuntu, Fedora Project by Red Hat, Debian, Slackware, Ubuntu and many others.

Some of the projects can run Windows-based or Mac-based applications, albeit with some difficulty.

Another neat option is Mac.

Price wise, Mac might not be the winner. However, for its price-performance balance, Mac could be the best choice, especially for those who run heavy-duty apps for graphic, photo editing, film editing, architecture design and others. Microsoft Office's fans can also buy the app built for Mac.

Apple's decision to use Intel processor now allows Apple computers to also run Windows, therefore run heavy-duty apps that can only run on Windows like AutoCad.

## Associates

After all, Apple computers plus Mac's prices compared to the price of original Microsoft plus branded computers like IBM or Dell is still the same or even lower.



The downside is of Mac is, even though it's not totally community-supported like Linux, Apple Computer Inc. (developer of Mac OS) hasn't opened its office in Indonesia. The nearest office is in Singapore, which is still a hassle for many enterprises.

However, it doesn't mean companies cannot run Mac for their business. There are plenty of IT geeks here in Indonesia who have comprehensive understanding of Linux and Mac you can rely on.

Ruthie Tobing, office manager of equipment supplier PT. Prima Samodra Servindo, said that after few years of mulling and dealing with plethora of virus, spams and pop-up message to update anti-virus protection, her office decided in July to switch to Mac.

"It was annoying, the spams and the virus. It slows down my work, which relies heavily on e-mails. I can get and send 50 e-mails a day, but because of spams my inbox is sometimes crowded with hundreds of e-mails, some carrying virus," Ruthie said.

Her office's IT consultant, Adinoto, recommended her to use Mac, which is attacked by much less virus.

"Mac's record shows that it was only attacked by one or two virus. And I mean really one or two, it's not a figurative speech. It's far more secure compared to more than 100,000 viruses attacking Windows," Adinoto Abdul Kadir, the owner of Adinoto, said.

"So far, we are happy with Mac. My mails are more organized because Mail application native of Apple can filter spams more effectively and the Internet works faster," Ruthie said.

Ruthie added her staff and her boss didn't encounter much difficulty in switching from Microsoft to Mac. She also said that the amount of money her office spent to buy two Apple notebooks (MacBook) and five units of iMac G5 compared to the amount for two IBM Think Pad tablets and five IBM desktop PCs the company previously used was almost the same.

Adinoto, who is also one of the moderators of Mac User Group [id-apple@googlegroups.com](mailto:id-apple@googlegroups.com), said that Mac could cost lower because its Mac OS was free with every purchase of an Apple computer. Mac's word processor and presentation app, Pages and Keynote also cost only US\$79 (Family Pack cost US\$99 for five computers) compared to Windows XP (retail price ranging from US\$90 to US\$150) and Microsoft Office (retail from US\$200 to US\$400).

"Mac also doesn't requires enterprise customers to pay more money like Microsoft does with its Client License Access (CAL). CAL is a considerable amount of money an enterprise has to pay for the service per client. Say you have 300 computers, you have to pay Windows CAL of US\$31 per computer," Adinoto said.

"It's really costly, and many companies didn't know about CAL when they decided to use Microsoft," he added.

Adinoto added that unlike Linux and Microsoft which could run on almost any computer machines Mac only runs on Apple machines.

"But the machines are cool anyway," he said, chuckling.

As for the system support, Adinoto said although Mac didn't have representative office here, a number of IT consultants like his could handle Mac.

So, before you do the lawful thing, first choose which operating system you think can grow your business the most. It's up to you: Microsoft, Linux or Mac.

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