



Key Facts

- The FSG is a non-profit organization devoted to the ongoing success of Linux
- Growing membership includes all leading Linux vendors and many influential non-profits in the Linux community
- Workgroups cover key Linux standards issues such as a binary standard and internationalization
- Board members include an assortment of Linux experts and senior representatives of the Linux community
- Headquartered in San Francisco

THE FREE STANDARDS GROUP

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Safeguarding the Future of Linux Through Standards

“Through the definition and testing of operating system interfaces, the LSB creates a stable platform that benefits both developers and users.” - Linus Torvalds

The Free Standards Group is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the use and acceptance of free and open source software by developing and promoting standards. Supported by leaders in the IT industry as well as the open source development community, the Free Standards Group fulfills a critical need to have common behavioral specifications, tools and ABIs across Linux platforms. The Linux Standard Base offers an answer to the most pressing issue facing Linux today: fragmentation.

A well supported standard for Linux is the necessary component to Linux's continued success. Without a commonly adopted standard, Linux will fragment, thus proving costly for ISVs to port their applications to the operating system and making it difficult for end users and Linux vendors alike. By adopting the Linux Standard Base, the Linux community provides this crucial portability so that applications can be used on more than one distribution of Linux with little or no change. With the LSB, all parties – distribution vendors, ISVs and end users – benefit from a commonly supported version of Linux.

The Free Standards Group is supported by major players in the Linux Community including IBM, Hewlett-Packard, AMD, Dell, Intel, Conectiva, MandrakeSoft, Red Hat, Sun, Novell's SUSE LINUX, and Turbolinux. FSG has developed the LSB along with a number of tools and test suites to facilitate the creation of a standard Linux.



"I have often said that the most important Open Source project today is the Linux Standards Base." - Jon "Maddog" Hall, Linux International

Contact Information

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Why are Linux Standards Important?

A well-supported binary standard is essential for ensuring the long-term market competitiveness of Linux against Windows. Without it, writing applications to multiple flavors of Linux becomes costly. Linux distributions that comply with the LSB achieve interoperability with application software written to the standard. This is crucial for the on-going success for Linux as it simplifies the development and porting of applications by ISVs and guarantees end users will not get forced behind proprietary distributions of Linux. Most importantly, support for the LSB standard ensures Linux will not fork and will continue to be the fastest growing operating system in the industry and will be open for everyone.

What the Free Standards Group Does

The Free Standards Group develops standards and tools that help developers focus on adding value to their software, rather than spending time dealing with verification and porting issues. The group also coordinates testing and certification programs that verify software compliance with existing standards.

By working to ensure that Linux applications and platforms work together seamlessly, the Free Standards Group also helps corporate IT users migrate to -- and expand their use of -- Linux. The Free Standards Group thus serves as a key facilitator between the needs of the open source software development community and the IT industry, which relies increasingly on Linux as a solutions platform.

All standards produced by the Free Standards Group are available for free and are distributed under open source licenses.

The Linux Standard Base

The Linux Standard Base specification contains a base set of APIs, libraries and interoperability standards. It also includes test suites, development environments, sample implementations and developer documentation. Version 2.0 of the LSB is currently under public review and will be released in late 2004. More information on the LSB can be found at www.freestandards.org

Other Projects

Currently the Free Standards Group is focused on two key initiatives: the Linux Standard Base and the Open Internationalization Initiative (OpenI18N), the globalization specification for the language internationalization of Linux.

How You Can Get Involved

The Free Standards Group has issued a call to action to the Linux Community. We need your help. Whether it's financial support, time to volunteer on a workgroup or end user feedback on what you want in the standard, please get involved.

Members enjoy many benefits including:

- Greater influence in the standards creation process
- The ability to run and/or to vote for members of the Board of Directors
- First-hand knowledge of the latest developments for each of the Free Standards Group's projects

In addition, as a member you can enjoy the prestige and satisfaction that comes with being able to say that you or your organization is directly contributing to the creation and advancement of Linux standards.