



Real Software Gives Linux Desktop Apps a Nudge

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Summary

IDE maker Real Software Inc, which started out in the Mac arena, has upgraded its flagship RealBasic kit to create native Linux apps, either newly made or recompiled from existing Windows and Mac programs. The move to RealBasic 5.5 puts the eight-year-old Austin, Texas firm squarely in the vanguard of Linux' march on the desktop, which is being held back by a shortage of software. The widgetry also supports server development now too.

By Maureen O'Gara

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There are supposed to be something like 50,000 applications out there written in RealBasic.

The company says it really doesn't have a competitor unless it's Microsoft Visual Basic, which of course isn't cross-platform. RealBasic is supposed to be very close to and in some cases is identical with Visual Basic, the company said.

VB 6.0, which is what Real supports since it's going for volume, can reportedly claim three million developers. The new upgrade includes a conversion utility to migrate applications written in Visual Basic.

Real also says it's compared to Java, but Real enables cross-platform from a single code base and needs no virtual machine.

Real has only been on Windows for the last year, but president and CEO Geoff Perlman says the company was already preparing to support Linux.

Currently a RealBasic developer, who can target all three operating systems simultaneously, has to be working on a Windows or Mac box. Linux apps can be tested and debugged from either Windows or Macintosh. Real will add a pure Linux development platform later on.

RealBasic 5.5 supports Red Hat and SUSE running on x86 hardware. The company says other Linux distributions with the GTK+ 2.0 and CUPS libraries installed should also work.

The IDE also creates applications for Windows 98, 2000, NT, ME and XP as well as Mac OS X and Mac Classic.

The upgrade includes SOAP and XML support and it can create console applications. There's also a new single-user database engine.

RealBasic Professional Edition, which is what is needed for cross-platform deployment and database server connectivity, starts at \$399.95 and includes and team development capabilities. A Standard Edition, which includes a VB Project Converter, runs \$99.95 and up.

The Linux widgetry took a year to pull together. It should theoretically do wonders for Real's installed base.

About the author

Maureen O'Gara is editor-in-chief of Maureen O'Gara's LinuxGram(TM) - published weekly by G2 Computer Intelligence Inc. and distributed by Linux Business Week.

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