

## Re: Need Advice on Linux vs. Windows for a Database-Driven Web Application

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**From:** CBFalconer (cbfalconer\_at\_yahoo.com)

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Curious Pete wrote:

>  
> *Hi there. I am hoping that someone here can offer me some database  
> advice.*  
>  
> *I work at a small company that makes frozen products that are sold in  
> supermarkets. We recently hired sales reps in several cities in the US  
> and Canada to maintain our displays in stores and to take orders from  
> those stores. Each rep visits 12 stores a day and take a digital photo  
> of our display at each store. Then they go home, write up an email to  
> us about the situation at each store, attach the digital photos to the  
> emails, and send it to us. Then they write emails to the local  
> distributors containing their orders for the day and send them,  
> cc'ing us.*  
>  
> *The system is working well, except as we add more and more sales reps,  
> the flow of information into the Head Office is becoming a raging  
> torrent, and frankly we can't keep up with it. So, we came up with  
> the great idea to automate the entire process via a database-driven web  
> application. The idea is that the sales reps should be able to log into  
> a site, enter a user name and password, then enter and upload their  
> report, photos and orders for the day, which would thereafter be stored  
> in a database that we could access from the Head Office.*  
>  
> *There is a lot of data to input: Store Name, Street Address, City, Zip,  
> Store Contact etc. etc., plus all our various distributors and  
> individual products. We figure that the system should be robust enough  
> to handle at least fifty sales reps covering a total of 3,750 stores.*  
>  
> *We sent RFPs to several software companies and received several bids  
> back. Okay, here comes the question part: Roughly half the bidders want  
> to use Linux/Apache/MySQL/PHP while the other half wants to use  
> Microsoft/IIS/MS SQLServer/.NET. (We are currently running a Microsoft  
> server in the office, but if it was cheap enough, I suppose we could  
> add another server running LINUX.)*  
>

comp.programming: Re: Need Advice on Linux vs. Windows for a Database-Driven Web Application

- > *My question is: Which solution is "better", and, from my (user's)*
- > *point of view, do I even care? (The software-building costs are about*
- > *the same for both types of system.)*
- >
- > *I am looking for a robust system that will last our company for several*
- > *years, that can be added to as we think of more bells and whistles, and*
- > *that will need minimum maintenance.*

No question – the Linux based one. Since you are having this built for you, you should ensure you have source and the ability to compile etc. (regardless of what OS it runs on). However the Linux based system will still be viable some years from now, while the MS system is unlikely to continue. The MS systems are designed to force you into buying and licencing new software at regular intervals. MS systems are security nightmares.

You might consider that even having a server for this is redundant. e-mail can also serve as input to the database, the principal disadvantage being that there is no immediate error feedback. This could be handled by creating a portable e-mail generator, that would provide feedback to your agents and run on their machines. The advantage to you is that the processing can now be batched and run at convenient times. Similarly the agents can operate at times convenient for them.

I am a believer in changing one thing at a time.

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