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Sunday, 18 July, 2004

NGIT unveils Linux Matrix for SMEsby [Maddy Reddy](#)

Network Gulf Information Technology (NGIT), a Dubai based company has launched Matrix, a new Linux-based one box solution, which offers ready to use integrated mail, proxy, file, fax, SQL database, router and firewall services targeted at the region's cost conscious small and medium enterprises (SME).

"Matrix is a complete out and out open source. The suite was designed and developed on Red Hat 9.0 by the NGIT team locally. It integrates the industry level requirements for an organisation and provides the easiest user level interface," says Dileep, director of technology, NGIT.

"Commercial apps from most vendors are based on the number of users where licensing costs are very expensive both on the client and server side. Users also have to pay additional costs for implementation, maintenance, support and upgrades. With Matrix, whether you have five or 500 users, our pricing is fixed and comprehensive. The basic costs go into implementation and customisation and not unnecessary software licensing," says Dileep.

The Matrix suite is priced at US\$950 onwards depending on the solution. The three-year old open source vendor is targeting its Linux solutions at small and mid sized enterprises with five to 500 employees.

Matrix File Server runs Samba as a cross platform file server. Samba being open source follows industry standards and emulates any existing file system. It can co-exist with Windows, Mac OS, Novell and Unix flavours such as Sun Solaris, HP-UX, IBM-AIX on the same network.

To a Windows machine Samba behaves like an NT/2003 Server and the user will not notice the difference. It provides all the functionalities and security of any advanced file server available now, at a fraction of the price. As with all typical open source applications, Samba promises to consume less hardware resources as compared to the other popular files servers claims NGIT.

Matrix print server facilitates network printing and resource

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"Open source eliminates complex and expensive software licensing costs," says Dileep, director of technology, NGIT.

utilisation thus bringing down the cost. Matrix e-mail server runs Postfix as the MDA (Mail Delivery Agent). Matrix runs both POP3 and IMAP services, so that the clients have a variety of options to access their mails. Further the mail server can be integrated with a centralised address book using LDAP.

Matrix comes with a full function Squid-based proxy and web cache server as well. The proxy server is capable of Caching, user authentication, load balancing of traffic and logging and reporting of internet usage says the vendor.

Matrix also comes with Firewall security using masquerading. Masquerading is a technique, which allows employees to access the internet, without allowing outsiders in and automatically rewrites the IP headers of internal packets going out, making it appear that they all came from the firewall.

“Due to the open nature of Matrix and it’s modular construction, it can be ordered as an integrated suite of applications or can be custom designed for your specific requirements. We can also install and configure the servers on the hardware provided by the clients,” adds Dileep.

The web e-mail client is developed in PHP 5 and is implemented to run on Apache, the industry standard web server. For securing Apache, Matrix implements open SSL, an open source implementation of SSL. Apache can be configured to run on the secure port 143 and not the standard port 80. This effectively makes Apache hack-proof claims NGIT.

The fax server acts as a central fax gateway for the entire organisation and can handle unlimited users and unlimited number of fax lines. It integrates seamlessly with the mail server for delivery of faxes and interaction with the users. The fax-client installed on the workstations enables faxing directly from any application.

Matrix also comes with MySQL, a full featured open source SQL server. This provides the complete LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP) framework for any intranet, internet application development and deployment.

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