

competing with exchange (and losing)

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- *From:* "Eric S. Johansson" <esj@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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I had a customer using a Linux based e-mail solution when the issue of calendars, contact lists, and task lists came up. They also wanted the ability to connect with remote devices and connect to their VoIP switch as supplied by their VoIP vendor. Can you tell they are using Outlook for the e-mail client? :-)

So they commissioned me to start a search of Linux based replacements for exchange. after looking at a bunch of them, we tried out a couple (open exchange, and can't remember (sorry)).

The primary failing was that they couldn't provide the same functionality as exchange. Depending on the vendor, there were different limitations with regards to shared calendars, task lists, reminders, remote device synchronization, etc. Most of these systems use plug-ins which has their own shortcomings with regards to stability and cost of rollout and none of them integrated with the VoIP vendor[1].

so, I am disappointed but I must fully support my customer's decision to go to exchange. The Linux exchange replacement market is far too fragmented and is in need of consolidation and funding. I think it probably two vendors and at least \$20 million or \$30 million each could get us to a viable exchange replacement in a couple of years.

the only reason I'm raising this now is because Microsoft has released a new version of exchange which is even easier to manage. If you're using just e-mail, Linux is fine. But as soon as you add all of the other features, open source solutions are literally years away from being business ready.

Just be aware and remember, it's not just about the e-mail.

---eric

[1] VoIP vendor was desktop to switch solution so asterisk is not an option. They were willing to just pay money and get the job done.

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ubuntu-users mailing list
ubuntu-users@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
<https://lists.ubuntu.com/mailman/listinfo/ubuntu-users>