

Microsoft talks to the enemy

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Bill Hilf runs Microsoft's open source lab at its Seattle Headquarters, overseeing research projects which involve testing Linux and interoperability functions. Formerly a Linux programmer for IBM, Mr Hilf says his role is to give an "objective" view of Linux.

But he has no qualms about making sure Microsoft comes out on top. "My goal is to help Microsoft understand the phenomenon of open source software and improve our products because of that."

Mr Hilf says the lab is "the most mixed environment you can imagine" between various Linux and Microsoft systems. "It frustrates the hell out of the people that work for me but it's the best way to try and replicate what situations we might come across out there."

Mr Hilf says he spends much of his time talking directly to lead developers in the open source community and trying to work out interoperability issues.

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