Linux, others are used behind the scenes

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The best-known open-source software includes Linux, the operating system, and Mozilla Firefox, the Web browser downloaded by 25 million people since its launch in November at www.mozilla.org.

Experts agree these two programs are less susceptible to viruses and other Internet ills than Microsoft's Windows operating system and the Internet Explorer Web browser.

More than two-thirds of all websites on the Internet run on the open source Apache software. But Windows still runs on about 96 percent of all desktops worldwide, with Macintosh at 2.5 percent and Linux at 1.3 percent.

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Microsoft chairman Bill Gates once dismissed open source as a geeks-only movement. But now Microsoft has rolled out a "Get the Facts" campaign that touts its software over open-source rivals.

Hundreds of other free programs - some of which can do the same things as Microsoft Office or Adobe Illustrator - are available from sites such as www.freshmeat.net or www.sourceforge.net
"Most Fortune 100 companies use open-source software in one way or another," said Bill Weinberg, who works for the Open Source Development Lab in Beaverton, Ore.

Linux is used locally by Newmont Mining, Level 3 Communications, Hewlett-Packard, Corporate Express and Avaya, along with Denver and Jefferson County.

Linux often runs behind the scenes to manage Web traffic or other internal tasks, while employees use Windows on their desktop computers.

Source [3].

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