

Platform for promoting open source software soon

It will be available to academia and professionals

Staff Reporter

CHENNAI: A platform for open source community development, a place where people can come together to create and promote open source software, will be launched in early 2009. Open source, unlike proprietary software, gives the user freedom to modify the source code and does not have licences.

This platform will be launched by Computer Society of India, Chennai chapter and IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Computer Society, Madras chapter, in collaboration with C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing) and NIC (National Informatics Centre).

The platform would be provided and supported by Essentia Soft Solutions, said H.R. Mohan, chairman of

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IEEE Computer Society, Madras chapter, here on Wednesday.

Rajesh Iyer, vice-president, IT, Essentia Soft Solutions, said that the platform would be available to academia and professionals. Commercial products could also be developed, he said.

Giving a presentation on 'Open source: myths, facts and opportunities,' Jordi Mas, director of community development, Openbravo, an open ERP firm, described how they used community development in their business model. Instead of direct

sales and marketing, they allow for free downloads so that customers are given a chance to use their product. "When customers come to us for customisations, they know exactly what they want," he said.

But one million downloads of their product does not translate to a million customers, he said. Most people download the product to tinker with and develop further, an advantage provided by community development. Only few would be potential customers. Customers who did not have an existing product were more open to adopting an open source product as it did not involve migrating data from one system to another, he added. He added none of this would work without a fundamentally strong product. "Your product has to rock," he said.