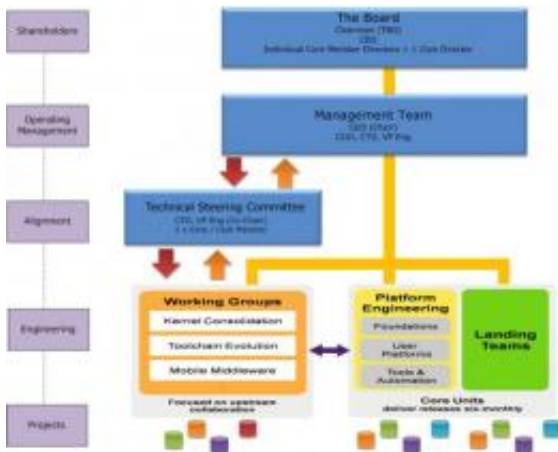


Chip makers start joint venture for improving Linux distribution

7 June 2010, by Lin Edwards



(PhysOrg.com) -- A new software engineering joint venture called Linaro has been set up by six major chip making companies including IBM, ARM Holdings, Texas Instruments and Samsung Electronics, with the aim of dedicating itself to improving Linux distributions for use in devices such as phones, netbooks, tablets, and TVs.

The aim of the [joint venture](#) is to give open-source developers the software and tools they need to accelerate and simplify development of Linux for portable devices using ARM-based system-on-a-chip (SoC) designs. The founders say they will release tools, kernel and middleware software for a variety of SoCs based on the ARM Cortex-A processors every six months, beginning in November 2010.

At present consumer devices use a variety of operating systems such as Apple, Windows, Blackberry, Intel, Palm, and Nokia's Symbian. Linux operating systems in mobile phones are growing, and there are already a number of Linux versions that run on ARM chips, including Ubuntu and Debian. There is also a Red Hat Fedora Linux

version for ARM, but it is not yet commercially available.

Linux is the most popular open-source [operating system](#) available, and is a direct rival of Microsoft on personal computers and the open-source Symbian on phones. Google's [Android](#) and MeeGo, LiMo and webOS are among the Linux operating systems, and the establishment of Linaro should simplify the development of Linux versions and accelerate their uptake, by enabling developers to concentrate on the user interface rather than the kernel and middleware. The inclusion in Linaro's plans of MeeGo, which was developed by Nokia and Intel, suggests Intel will be involved at some stage, but the initial focus of the group will be on ARM chips.

The other two companies that have signed up to the non-profit foundation are ST-Ericsson and [Freescale Semiconductor](#), but other companies are welcome to join the group. The companies have pledged tens of millions of dollars a year to fund the project, according to the interim CEO of Linaro, Tom Lantzsch. The foundation will work with Linux to align their core operating principles, and will contribute to a variety of open source projects.

The formation of the Linaro foundation was announced in Taipei in Taiwan on June 3 at the Computex trade show. According to Ben Cade, co-CEO, the present growth is in always-on, always-connected devices powered by SoCs, and the joint venture is expected to increase the numbers of such devices using [Linux](#) distributions.

More information: Linaro: www.linaro.org/

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