

NSA Works to Set A Standard Configuration for Non-Microsoft Operating Systems

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With the February 2008 deadline for federal agencies to comply with OMB's standardized desktop configuration mandate just around the corner, the National Security Agency (NSA) is working to establish similar security configurations for operating systems by Apple, Red Hat, and Sun Microsystems.

OMB's March 2007 memorandum only applies to the configuration of Windows XP and Vista Enterprise operating systems. While it is government policy not to endorse specific products, the fact that OMB is only addressing the security of Microsoft operating systems has raised concerns from Unix/Linux based vendors, most recently at **ITAA's Breakfast Forum on the Federal Desktop Core Configuration, which was attended by GovWin.**

NSA's effort to set standard configurations for this group of operating systems is a solitary effort not currently backed by OMB, or any other federal agency. The willingness of other agencies to follow in NSA's footsteps will depend on how daunting of a process the actual standardization of Microsoft desktops turns out to be, and how willing OMB is to back the effort in the future.