

Q&A: IBM's Bob Sutor sees interest in open-source mounting

He expects the financial services and retail industries to embrace it more in 2006

News Story by Eric Lai

JANUARY 24, 2006 (COMPUTERWORLD) - **Bob Sutor**, IBM's vice president of standards and open-source, sees 2006 as the year when a number of industries will move to embrace open-source software -- and he expects IBM to play a role in many of those efforts. Sutor, who spoke with Computerworld yesterday, also weighed in on the role of Linux and offered his thoughts on Massachusetts' OpenDocument plans. Excerpts from the interview follow:



Bob Sutor
VP of Standards
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IBM

[Excerpts from the article only]

What markets will embrace open-source this year? I think there will be a continuation in health care and education. Those industries have tremendous social relevance and also have significant amount of work to do. We will see a lot of government policy related to that.

We're also starting to see more open-source projects that are very specific to a particular industry. The Sakai project in education is a good example. It is basically an ERP system for universities. Instead of managing customers, it manages students and courses and allows information sharing between colleges and universities. IBM has been advising them.

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Do you still hold out hope that we'll someday see an open-source Java? You may remember we made a big to-do about this two years ago, with an open letter to Sun. I think the way things are going on Apache, we're getting there little by little. We said what we said two years ago because we wanted to get the issues out there and have Sun respond. In different ways, they have responded.

I think people have to realize that certain programming languages are optimized for certain activities. There are still billions of lines of Cobol out there. There's a lot going on with PHP. Ruby is coming along. There are new programming methods such as Ajax. The positive thing is that there looks like there's a lot of innovation going on in the programming language and tools space.

Recommended by Dr. Charles Severance, The Sakai Foundation