



January 28, 2002

IBM iSeries Joins zSeries With a Dedicated Linux Offering

David Mastrobattista

Catalyst

Vendor announcement

Question

How can clients best differentiate between IBM's recent eServer zSeries and iSeries Linux-only server offerings?

Answer

Now that **IBM** has announced new Linux-only zSeries and iSeries server models, choosing the appropriate platform to deploy enterprise-class Linux applications will depend largely on the level of server consolidation required, as well as customer size.

As we have noted in previously published research, VM is the virtualization technology that enables hundreds of Linux "virtual server" images to be deployed on zSeries and System/390 computing systems. And since VM is currently exclusive to zSeries and S/390 server models, mid- to large-scale enterprises (i.e., those with growing distributed server farms as well as current mainframe customers) will most likely find zSeries to be their platform of choice for consolidating large numbers of distributed Unix and **Intel** servers running e-infrastructure workloads. With the latest zSeries for Linux offering, the estimated price-point (including hardware maintenance and z/VM licensing and support for three years) is slightly under \$400,000 for the entry-level model, approximately one-half the cost of the earlier entry-level zSeries hardware purchase component alone (see IdeaByte, [IBM Targets Sun, HP and Compaq With Its Latest zSeries Dedicated Linux Offering](#), David Mastrobattista).

However, for relatively small-sized businesses, including IBM's large and very loyal iSeries (former AS/400) client base, the iSeries Linux solution may be the best fit. Naturally, VM doesn't enter into the iSeries Linux arena. So, consolidation onto iSeries servers is handled strictly on a logical partition (LPAR) basis, currently limited to 15 Linux "virtual server" partitions as compared to the several hundred Linux images available on zSeries with z/VM. Initial pricing for the iSeries Linux server model is around \$50,000, a very attractive price point for small- to midscale Linux deployments.

Another important point to keep in mind here is that, by design, "Linux is Linux is Linux." Smaller businesses that initially deploy Linux applications on the iSeries platform can transport those applications to zSeries quite readily, if business requirements necessitate a larger computing platform in the future. However, in general, we see the iSeries and zSeries as two distinct markets in IBM's eServer family of servers.