

Wyreless.NET Solutions Case Study

The Wrong Version OS

The Original Assignment:

The Division Manager of the leading fault tolerant computer company wanted to leverage the “multiprocessor architecture” approach for the next generation of their flagship product line for more competitive performance. However, his software team did not have the required skill set to accomplish this task in a timely manner. With our in-depth knowledge and experience in multiprocessor systems, we were contracted to train the software team in the arduous task of “multithreading” their version of Unix™. This version had significant modifications beyond the standard to accommodate their fault tolerant architecture.

What We Discovered:

After interviewing the software team and analyzing their skill sets, it became apparent that the originally conceived plan was high risk and doomed. They were unfamiliar with even the most basic concurrent programming techniques, not uncommon at the time: a fact that was evident to them as well. The team was overwhelmed by the proposed task and felt it was unlikely that they would respond to the challenge in a timely enough fashion to deliver robust software for the next generation products. Furthermore, it would defocus the group from their core competency and the company’s real value: fault tolerant computing.

What We Did:

We proposed that rather than start with their current operating system version and apply multithreading techniques, that they begin with an existing standard multithreaded version of Unix™ and apply their secret sauce: fault tolerant technology. Although it was true that the standard multithreaded version was somewhat immature and still under development, it had an industry consortium behind it and a clear roadmap that meshed well with the company’s plans. We felt this was the least risky path by far and convinced management and the software staff it was the correct approach.

The Results:

The software team was reenergized. They were able to leverage the work of “experts”, focus on their unique core competencies, and deliver the necessary software for the corporation.