

Minutes of the Linux Certification Committee Meeting

Date : 14.11.2014

Place : 31-S-028

Indico : <https://indico.cern.ch/event/353148/>

Present : J. Closier (LHCb), N. de Metz-Noblat (BE/CO), R. Divià (ALICE), M. Dobson (CMS), R. Hauser (ATLAS), J. Iven (IT/DSS), E. Obreshkov (ATLAS), T. Oulevey (IT/OIS), S. Page (BE/CO), J. Polok (IT/OIS), M. Schröder (IT/OIS), R. Schwemmer (LHCb), J. van Eldik (IT/OIS)

Jarek welcomed the participants to the first Linux Certification Committee Meeting since October 2011.

Thomas gave a short introduction into CentOS CERN 7, see <https://indico.cern.ch/event/353148/contribution/0/material/slides/0.pdf> for the slides.

CC7 is essentially a copy of CentOS 7. CERN is participating in developing the CentOS build infrastructure, but we do not rebuild the packages as we used to do for SLC, we take the binary packages directly from CentOS. Any additional packages are in a separate CERN specific repository.

CentOS in turn just rebuilds from RH sources, they do not patch any packages for bug fixes or added features. Bugs found in CentOS are not fixed by CentOS members, but reported upstream. CERN stages the incoming CentOS updates in 'testing' and releases them once per week, on thursdays. The CentOS community is quite open, discussions take place in public mailing lists, special interest groups look after additions for specific needs.

It was questioned whether thursday is the best day for the weekly releases, some projects would prefer to have the release earlier in the week to have more time for fixing issues that stem from the released packages. This needs more discussion.

Some projects are very interested in getting the Software Collections also for CC7.

It was asked whether the close collaboration between CERN and CentOS means that users should report problems directly to CentOS. Jarek replied that it is preferable that issues are being reported to the CERN Linux Support team, which will pass them on to RH if appropriate.

Nicolas mentioned a problem with unlocking the CC7 screensaver, he was asked to report the issue in ServiceNow.

It was asked whether CERN would provide support for a 32 bit version if CentOS does provide the packages. Jarek replied that RH does not provide support for 32 bit builds, so CERN can neither. The main reason for CentOS building the 32bit rpms is the fact that the build system needs them.

Jarek presented the history of the Linux Certification process, see <https://indico.cern.ch/event/353148/contribution/1/material/slides/0.pdf>

He pointed out how the process took longer with every major SLC release, while at the same time its importance diminished as the releases got less and less CERN specific.

Calling a release certified only when the last project sees its requirements fulfilled also means that resources with the new version become available very late. This further slows down general deployment and the discovery of outstanding issues that only get discovered in large scale deployment. These accumulated delays also mean that discovery and reporting of these issues only happens when

the release is already in maintenance phase of its lifecycle, meaning that fixing these issues takes much longer than in the early phase of the lifecycle.

It is thus in the interest of all projects that availability of significant resources and the large scale deployment happen far before the last project has verified that its requirements are fulfilled.

To assure that CC7 can be adopted as early as possible by projects that are ready for it, Linux Support proposes to skip the certification process. The projects are invited to test CC7 as soon as possible, and report any issues they observe in the usual manner. The Linux Support team will investigate the reports, and report upstream as appropriate, just like it is done in the normal lifecycle of a release.

It was asked what the impact of a general adoption of CC7 would have on support for SLC5. BE has ~700 nodes still using SLC5, and it is unlikely that a significant number of these can be migrated before the start of LS2 - in fact beyond the foreseen end of life for SLC5. Jarek replied that supporting three versions of Linux indeed stretches the little resources that are available for Linux Support, namely two FTE. Groups that have requirements like these should report them as early as possible to allow for proper planning.

Marc pointed out that the certification committee is a good place for a general discussion about the state of linux@cern, to see where other projects stand and to identify common problems. It was generally agreed that even without a certification process it would be useful to have regular meetings, like every 3 months, for exactly that purpose. Several questions around lxplus configuration and performance were brought up. The Linux Support team pointed out that they are not responsible for lxplus configuration, but it was felt that the service managers of central linux services and the experiments IT contacts should participate in these meetings.

Nicolas pointed out that some functionality is missing in CC7, like remote access from linux desktops to the Terminal Servers. He has not found any way to configure xfreerdp in such a way that it can be started from the GUI and to pass the kerberos token of the user. This use case is very important for the controls group. The Linux Support team reminded all participants that requirements like these should be reported via ServiceNow, and should be expressed as detailed as possible.

In the past a new SLC release became "Recommended Version" once it was fully certified. Which version will be recommended if there is no certification? The discussion showed that it should depend on a project and its readiness for a new version which version it should recommend - but taking the expected EOL of a version into account. It makes little sense to try to define one recommended version for all of CERN.

Instead of going through the certification process the Linux Support team proposes to consider CC 7.0 as a "test" release. It is expected that CC 7.1 will become available around January/February 2015. If no major issues are discovered with that release it will be considered as 'production' version.

It was agreed by all participants to abandon the certification process and rather use the established reporting lines for issues that are discovered with CC7.

As agreed earlier in the meeting the Linux Support team will organize another meeting to discuss the state of linux. One of the topics to discuss would be the end of life for SLC5.