Supporting Linux

(I don't think we're in Kansas anymore Toto!)

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Supporting Linux

Topics:

- How support for Linux differs from NT and HPUX
- How the Linux support model was created and implemented
- What we've learned so far.

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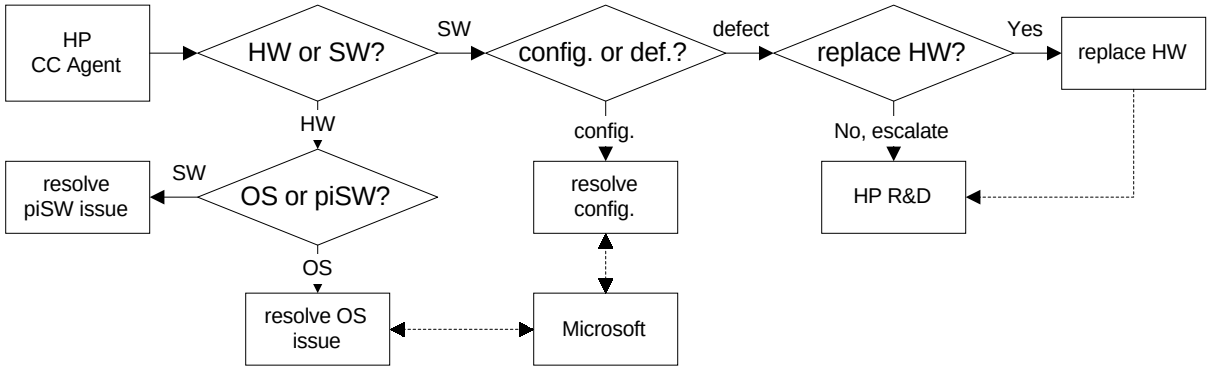
Supporting Visualize NT workstations:

- Different divisions with support organization support different OS's (concentration of expertise)
  - 90-day support on pre-installed SW (industry std.)
  - Microsoft last link in the support chain on SW side
    ("innocent until proven guilty" - style of support)



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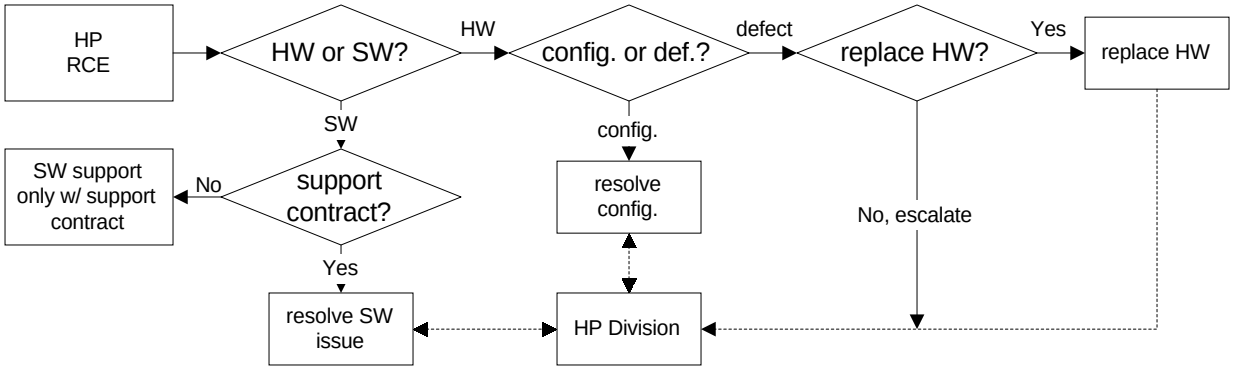
Supporting Visualize HPUX workstations:

- Some similarity in basic structure to NT support with some notable exceptions
  - No SW support without contract (vs. 90-day support on pre-installed SW on NT systems)
  - HP Division last link in the support chain on HW & SW side
  - Only qualified calls for HPUX support (non-qual. on NT)



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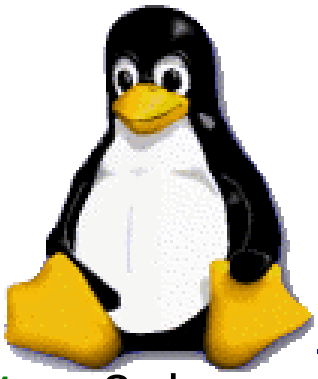

Linux Support Challenges:

- Support split across **two** HP div's and potentially **two** 3rd parties *(Red Hat and Open Source Developer)* for same OS:
  - NT support people takes warranty calls
  - HPUX support people take non-warranty calls (support contract)
  - Red Hat takes level 3 support
- Hardware drivers:
  - NT world: manufacturer written
  - Linux world: usually Open Source developer written
- Responsiveness and Accountability:
  - Expectations with free/open SW products
  - Expectations with proprietary SW products

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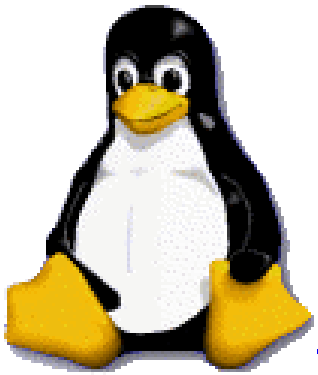
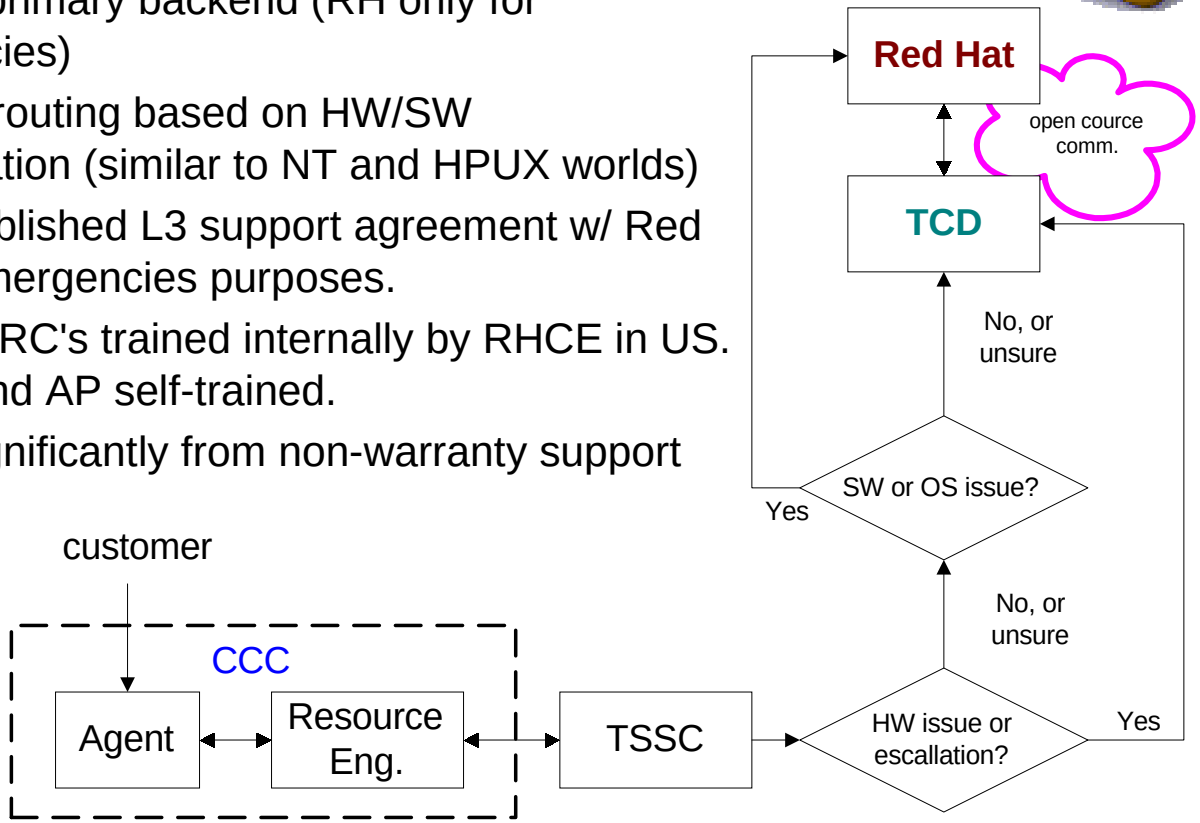


How we address warranty support :

- HP TCD primary backend (RH only for emergencies)
- Backend routing based on HW/SW determination (similar to NT and HPUX worlds)
- TCD established L3 support agreement w/ Red Hat for emergencies purposes.
- Agents & RC's trained internally by RHCE in US. Europe and AP self-trained.
- Differs significantly from non-warranty support



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Warranty vs. Non-Warranty for Linux WS's:

- Warranty
  - HW - similar to NT workstations (3yr.) but only for HW that was shipped with the system.
    - Driver issues: (NT world / written by HW mfg'er vs. (Linux world / written by Open S'ce dev.)
  - SW - similar to NT workstations.
    - Consultation not covered under warranty ("How do I set my Apache server to do …?)
- Non-Warranty / "Extra-Warranty"
  - Support for all Red Hat Tier 1 HW (see www.redhat.com)
  - Requires purchase of support contract
    - Much larger scope of support (networking etc.)
    - options vary based on type and speed of response to support requests

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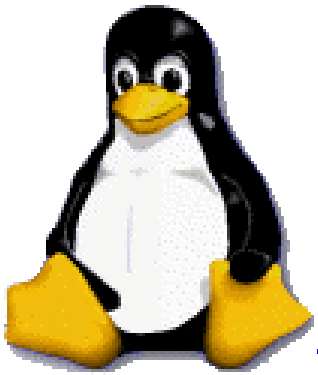

What we've learned:

- Learning how to use www better:
  - Importance of a good www support site (white papers etc.)
- Open Source community is surprising responsive (so far):
  - Pcnet32 story
- Innovative ways of delivering support are emerging
  - www.QuestionExchange.com
  - HP electronic support center (Dell has similar strategy)
- Other stuff
  - quiet on call front - using quite time to "tighten ship" (e.g. call logging issues)
  - Red Hat OS upgrade policy