Frequently Asked Questions

Deprecation Notice:

⚠️ The contents of this article is outdated and has been flagged as deprecated.

For updated information see the following resources:

https://www.openindiana.org/documentation/faq/

http://docs.openindiana.org/misc/openindiana/

Is OpenIndiana a "fork"?

Kind of.

OpenIndiana aims to be binary and package compatible with the upcoming Solaris 11 and Solaris 11 Express, and most of the operating system is built from source code that Oracle continues to make available. So in some ways, our relationship is similar to the way the CentOS project tracks Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

However there are differences, for example we intend to use illumos in place of the official OS/Net consolidation which is no longer open source, and we also intend to provide improvements on top.

What is the relationship between OpenIndiana and illumos?

OpenIndiana provides a complete, ready-to-use operating system (distribution) similar to the former OpenSolaris distribution. The illumos project develops the core software for the operating system such as the kernel. As illumos is not a distribution, OpenIndiana will combine the illumos core with additional software that Oracle still develops in the open. This is analogous to how Debian, Fedora, and Ubuntu all use the Linux kernel and software from the GNU Project, but combine them with additional software to produce a complete system.

Furthermore, OpenIndiana will be a member of the illumos Foundation, a not-for profit legal entity within the United States.

What type of releases will you make available?

At the moment we will be producing regular development builds. Later we intend to provide a stable release, suitable for use in production.

Will OpenIndiana provide security and bug fixes to their stable releases?

Yes, absolutely. We view this as one of the key missing features that prevented widescale adoption of OpenSolaris in production environments.

When will OpenIndiana launch?

On 14th September 2010, we announced our project to the press, and made available our first development build.

Will OpenIndiana use the Image Packaging System (IPS)?

This project is a continuation of the OpenSolaris distribution, not of Solaris 10 nor of Solaris Express Community Edition. As such the package manager will indeed be IPS. Using a different packaging system would defeat the purpose of this project.

What if Oracle discontinue providing access to the OpenSolaris source?

Oracle have already discontinued providing real-time access to the OS/Net consolidation (kernel and core userland components). A leaked memo suggests that Oracle will provide updated source for this after each major Solaris release - we hope this will be the case. However, this is not a problem for us as we will be switching to using illumos for these components once the project matures.

In addition, all the other core desktop components such as XNV (X Window System), SFW (Solaris Freeware), JDS (Java Desktop System), pkg (Image Packaging System), Caiman (Installer) are still for now being developed in the open, and OpenIndiana will continue to build these components.

Should Oracle cease providing access to these components, we will continue their development independently, like any other Linux/BSD distribution.

Is there a live CD I can download and try?

Yes, from 14th September 2010 you will be able to download our first ISO - please see http://openindiana.org/download.

We will also make IPS repositories available that you can use to update an existing install from OpenSolaris to OpenIndiana.

What are the hardware requirements?

Disk space: Recommended size is 7GB. A minimum of 3GB is required.

Memory: The minimum requirement is 512MB. Recommended size is 768MB.

Are there any key components missing that represent significant challenges to producing OpenIndiana?

No. Sun/Oracle have made available almost everything the community needs to build the distribution. The Distribution Constructor publicly available is the same tool used by Solaris Release Engineering to produce the OpenSolaris live CD and automated installer CD. However there is no single source of documentation available for putting the whole operating system together. OpenIndiana community members are currently working hard on this.

There are some closed source components (devpro consolidation including tools such as make) or components to which the source is significantly out of date, such as libm. For now, all components in the /release and /dev OpenSolaris.org IPS repositories are redistributable, so we will ship those binary components. Illumos are working on providing replacements, and once these are ready we will use those.

Eventually we hope to replace all closed source components.

Where can I get more info or keep up to date with the project?

Please join our mailing lists – http://openindiana.org/mailman

Communication related to development happens on our IRC channel, #openindiana on irc.freenode.net

We have a Wiki at http://wiki.openindiana.org (Which you're on now!)

Finally we have a bug tracker available at: http://www.illumos.org/projects/openindiana/issues

Is OpenIndiana a desktop or a server operating system?

As a clone of OpenSolaris, the answer is both: OpenIndiana will be a general-purpose operating system. However OpenSolaris contains some amazing enterprise server features, including the ZFS filesystem, DTrace system introspection, Crossbow networking stack, SMF service management, FMA fault management, COMSTAR iSCSI framework, etc. We intend to make OpenIndiana more suitable for use on servers, for example by introducing a minimal /server install option to the Caiman installer.

Why another OpenSolaris distribution when others like Nexenta, BeleniX & SchilliX exist?

None of the other distributions are drop-in replacement for OpenSolaris, nor do they have the market penetration we believe we can obtain with this project. Our aim is to become the de-facto OpenSolaris distribution installed on production servers where security and bug fixes are required free of charge.

What if Oracle discontinue Sun Studio (the closed source and primary compiler for building OpenSolaris)?

The OpenSolaris kernel currently builds cleanly with the specially patched GCC 3.4 compiler shipped with OpenIndiana. Work is under way to allow building using a more recent GCC. There are also various other open source compiler suites to which we could turn, with more effort, should it turn out to be necessary or advantageous.

How do I get involved?

As a community project, we depend on people doing just that! So please do head over to our Getting Involved wiki page! 😄