

## **Linux Certification – An overview V 1.1 (Sept 18<sup>th</sup> 2006)**

Linux Training Talk for Hants LUG 5<sup>th</sup> August 2006

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All information contained in this document is believed to be correct at the time of writing, if you find any inaccuracies please email [dbrasher@interlinux.co.uk](mailto:dbrasher@interlinux.co.uk).

\*Bsc(Open) is an Open University Degree – not to be confused with open Source.

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## **Introduction**

After recently gaining RHCE (**Red Hat Certified Engineer**) and holding an RHCT (**Red Hat Certified Technician**) I wanted to give talk about Linux training to my Local Linux Users Group to give a snapshot of Linux Certification in 2006 to those that are considering Linux certification and those that have certification a perspective of other certification routes. Also this document contains details of local Linux training (In Southern Hampshire - UK).

Some of the advice and information I provide you will already use or know, hopefully this will still be a handy guide.

### **Why certification?**

- Break the myth of Linux offering no support.
- Your learning and skills stay focused.
- For your CV's, job interviews and ultimately better paid, quality employment.
- Because it feels good when you pass.
- Your boss can hunt for contracts, gives your employer credence and attract more staff.
- To ease the adoption of Open Source in business, public and non-profit organisations.
- You are less likely to make mistakes without knowing it.
- Can help you know what you don't know.

## **Different types of Linux training available**

This is a brief overview of four popular Linux certification programmes available.

### **Linux+**

CompTIA Linux+ is a vendor-neutral certification, generic across distributions, that validates the knowledge of individuals with a minimum of six to twelve months of practical Linux experience. Professionals holding the CompTIA Linux+ credential can explain fundamental management of Linux systems from the command line, demonstrate knowledge of user administration, understand file permissions, software configurations, and management of Linux-based clients, server systems and security.

### **Red Hat**

As all of you here know Red Hat is one of the most widely deployed Linux distributions. There are free (Fedora) and subscription (Enterprise) based versions and although the certification is based on the latest Enterprise Linux the content is applicable to many Linux and Unix variants.

There are three levels of certification available, Technician, Engineer and Architect. It is advisable to have completed the lower level before moving on to the next higher levels. Each level is comprised of a number of modules that can be studied separately or in blocks which then lead to an exam and certification. Certification is current for two release cycles of Enterprise Linux inclusive of the current release, that could be around 3-4 years depending on release cycle dates and when the exam was sat. There are six training and test centres in the UK and many more around the world.

Red Hat certification is very highly acclaimed due to depth and quality of content, relevance and portability. The exams are considered a real test of the simultaneous application of skills and theory under simulated 'real world' pressure.

## **LPI**

LPI is an independent, non-profit corporation based in Canada which has evolved out of the Linux community focusing solely on setting certification standards. The training is built around the LSB (Linux Standard Base). The group perceived the need for an accepted certification process which will recognize and certify the talent and hard work of Linux users everywhere in the world. The LPI programme is geared towards system administrators. The programme offers three levels of certification which approved training providers can adopt and administer to trainees. Training and self study materials are guided by LPI standards.

## **CLP**

Certified Linux professional and Certified Linux engineer are the two levels offered by Novell on the SUSE Linux platform. The courses can be taken at registered test centres and require a mixture of Novell courses and study guides in order to gain the required knowledge to pass.

## Linux Training at a Glance

<b>Certification</b>	<i>Linux+</i>	<i>RHC*</i>	<i>LPI-*</i>	<i>CL*</i>
Provider	CompTIA	Red HAT	Linux Professional Institute	Novell
Distribution	Neutral	RH Enterprise	Neutral	SUSE
Prep-Courses	CompTIA A+ and Network+	Recommended Red Hat courses + experience.	LPIC-1 for LPIC2, LPIC-1 and LPIC2 for LPIC-3	Recommended Novell courses + experience.
Levels	Linux +	RHCT/RHCE	LPIC-1/LPIC-2/LPIC-4	CLP/CLE
Skills Type	Junior	Junior / Senior	Junior / Intermediate / Senior	Junior / Senior
Exam Price Guide	£154.00	£250 / £485	£86 each level depending on training vendor.	£62/£105
Current	Lifetime, but updates available.	3-4 Years	10 Years	Continuing Certification Requirement (CCR) exams for each SUSE release, 1.5 years.
Experience	Previous knowledge recommended, but not required.	Some knowledge / considerable knowledge.	None to considerable knowledge.	No knowledge / considerable knowledge.

## **Why the RHCE for me?**

On a personal note I should say why I chose the Red Hat certification programme. I have always used Red Hat for personal and work situations so it felt natural to follow a programme which I had a degree of familiarity with. I was, however, pleased by the generic nature of the training which covers Linux and ultimately UNIX in a way that lends itself to skills transfer. Red Hat seemed to teach Linux and Red Hat. The standard is high and to bring myself to speed, even though I had used Red Hat for four years I took the rapid track engineering course then attempted the exam three times before I passed over a period of one and half years. I have two RHCT's on different versions of RHEL however and didn't follow all my advice here until the last attempt. Many people pass first time some never do. High price, not really, when I consider how the material will stay with me for life, this is partly what you pay for.

A mixture of experience, experimentation, Red Hat courses, self-study using study guides, magazines, product documentation, HOWTO's, man pages, on-line documentation, mailing lists as well as mixing with other Linux people gave me the knowledge to eventually pass.

It is important to know the differences between RHEL versions.

RHCE can be expensive, if your employers will pay for it then take this route, even part payment helps, this is what I did.

It has given confidence in presenting a strong argument for the use of Open Source for desktop and server environments and to deploy, administer and maintain these.

I have looked at other certifications and can see a very high standards emerging and these will be a prominent feature for Linux certification where requirements of organisations and individuals differ in long term and short term needs.

I have not gone into any fine details of the RHCE content as this can be a breach of the NDA which is signed when you take the exam. This agreement keeps the quality of the exams high. Some course details are available from Red Hat training websites and pre-course assessments can be taken to gauge the level of course and exam you should aim for. I advise you take these tests and follow the advice as well as your own judgement.

## **Leading up to the RHCE (Or other ½ or 1 day long Linux exams)**

You may find some or all of these tips useful...

### **Weeks before**

- Get experience.
- Practice.
- Stay focused.
- Inform your test centre if you have any special requirements, diet or wheelchair access.

### **Day before**

- Stop revising.
- Rest and do something different that you enjoy.
- Eat and drink well.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Rehearse your overall exam strategy, leave the details for the day.

### **On the day**

- Arrive in good time.
- Avoid long journeys or other personal responsibilities.
- Eat and drink regularly.
- Take time out if you have the opportunity during the exam.
- Read exam papers thoroughly before answering.
- At the beginning of the exam have a coherent strategy.-
- Don't panic, adrenaline can cause anxiety which can stop you from focusing.
- Don't worry about how others in the room are doing, save your mental energy.

## APPENDIX A

### **Websites:-**

#### **Linux+**

<http://certification.comptia.org/>

<http://www.pitmansouthampton.co.uk>

#### **Red Hat**

<http://www.europe.redhat.com/training/>

<http://www.pitmansouthampton.co.uk>

<http://www.linuxit.com/>

#### **LPI**

<http://www.lpi.org/>

<http://www.linuxit.com/>

#### **CLP**

<http://www.novell.com/training/certinfo/clp/>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Linux Training Centres:- Confirmed by phone / email 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

#### **Linux+**

Pitman Training Centre, Southampton, SO14 3HA Phone: 023 80232262

Discount available if you quote this document as your source. £300 + VAT

Pitman - Southampton also provide course called 'Install, set-up, manage and troubleshoot Linux networks' as a prep for the Linux+ exam. Discount available if you quote this document as your source. £250 + VAT

#### **Red Hat**

Red Hat, Guildford, Surrey. GU2 7YF. training-uk@redhat.com, Phone: 01483-300-169 or 01483-734-995

Pitman Training Centre, Southampton, SO14 3HA Phone: 023 80232262

RHCT provided by highly qualified staff. Discount available if you quote this document as your source. £550 + VAT

#### **LPI**

<http://www.linuxit.com>

#### **CLP**

Interquad Learning LTD, Reading RG1 1LX , novell@interquad.com,

Phone: 01753898320

<http://www.interquad.com/search/courseSelector.asp>

## APPENDIX C

### **Study Books:-**

#### **Linux+**

Sybex:- Linux+ Study Guide, 3rd Edition, ISBN: 0-7821-4389-X

#### **Red Hat**

McGraw-Hill Osborne Media, RHCE Red Hat Certified Engineer Linux (Exam RH302), ISBN: 0072253657 and 0072264543

#### **LPI**

O'Reilly:- LPI Linux Certification in a Nutshell, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition ISBN: 0596005288, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition ISBN 0596005288

IBM course material:-

[http://www128.ibm.com/developerworks/linux/lpi/?S\\_TACT=105AGX03&S\\_CMP=ZHPIBM\\_developerWorks\\_LPI\\_exam\\_prep\\_notes.Free\\_to\\_download\\_PDFs\\_of\\_various\\_topics.](http://www128.ibm.com/developerworks/linux/lpi/?S_TACT=105AGX03&S_CMP=ZHPIBM_developerWorks_LPI_exam_prep_notes.Free_to_download_PDFs_of_various_topics.)

#### **CLP**

Novell Linux Certification Practicum Lab Manual, ISBN: 0672328402

**THE END – GOOD LUCK**