

Intrinsyc prepares to launch its new mobile OS, Soleus – should Linux vendors worry?

Tony Rizzo, Analyst

Mobile Software

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

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Event Summary

- Intrinsyc Software has put its Soleus v1.0 mobile operating system into production, and it's looking to take on mobile Linux – especially in Asia – as its primary competitor.
- A WinCE-based platform, Soleus will offer a real alternative to mobile Linux as a development platform for getting differentiated feature phones out the door quickly.
- Intrinsyc has also announced new partnerships with vendors that will contribute to the Soleus development 'ecosystem.' These include Nuance Communications, Implicit Software Solutions and InterVideo.

The 451 take

Although Soleus – at least in its first incarnation – is intended to compete for feature phone business with Linux, primarily in Asia, we're more interested in the possibility that it may also find itself serving as a delivery platform for downscaling Windows Mobile smartphone applications to feature phones in North America. For example, much of Motorola Q's Windows Mobile-based capabilities can easily be converted, via Soleus OS and the platform's associated development tools, for use on Motorola feature phones. Linux will make the same claims, but Soleus may have an advantage, simply because we believe Windows Mobile has a leg up in the enterprise – where Motorola is now focusing.

Details

Intrinsyc Software has now released version 1.0 of its Soleus mobile operating system. The platform – which currently works with mobile phone designs based on **Intel's** PXA 270, **Freescale Semiconductor's** i.MX31 and **Texas Instruments'** OMAP 730/850 processors – provides a one-stop shop for developing reusable and extendable code bases for feature phones. Based on **Microsoft's** WinCE platform, the development tools will also allow smartphone-based applications developed for Windows Mobile to be downscaled for feature phones. Soleus provides pre-integrated and easily ported end-user applications (including, but not limited to, alarm, calendar, contacts, camera management, SMS and media player capabilities).

With the release, the company has also announced new partnerships. **Nuance Communications** will provide voice dialing and handwriting recognition tools. **Implicit Software Solutions** will provide a suite of games. **InterVideo** will provide audio and video codecs that include compression capability. **Ala Mobile** already offers much of this sort of capability, including firmware-over-the-air services and a partnership with **Trolltech** for its substantial development tools platform. We expect Intrinsic to bring additional partners on board fairly quickly to catch up on these fronts.

Competitive landscape

Eight months ago, the entire range of mobile operating systems – including heavyweights (if not in deployed numbers, at least in terms of the companies themselves) **Symbian** and Microsoft Windows Mobile – looked like direct competition for Intrinsic's Soleus platform. Now it is looking far more like the various flavors of mobile Linux – platforms from **MontaVista Software**, **Ala Mobile** and **Access Inc** – are all in Intrinsic's gun sights, in terms of Soleus' business coming at their expense. Soleus offers a clear-cut alternative here.

Trolltech, while not an operating system vendor, provides a suite of tools that will also compete with Soleus. **Savage Technologies** once competed, but the company is undergoing a liquidation and fire sale, and is no longer a player here. Other software development tools platforms – such as **Sky MobileMedia's** platform – also compete.

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