

Senator Kate Lundy

Senator for the Australian Capital Territory

Shadow Minister for Information Technology and Sport

e-Government: Open source the key to security and innovation

Open source software can provide greater security and innovation in the delivery of e-Government services, and should be investigated immediately by Government agencies and departments, the Shadow Minister for Information Technology, Senator Kate Lundy said today

Speaking at the "e-Government Australia Summit" Senator Lundy argued that information and communications technology (ICT) systems built with open source software - or software that is freely available for inspection and modification by users - might better serve the needs of Government customers online in a fast changing technological environment.

"Departments and agencies should be immediately required to consider and assess the merits of open source software as part of their strategic approach to sourcing their information and communication technology expertise," Senator Lundy said.

"Labor has always challenged the wisdom of long term contracts capturing government departments and agencies in shrink-wrapped proprietary software solutions at a time when technology is changing so rapidly. Open source also has strengths in crucial areas such as security.

"Open source software is backed by a system of peer review - if security flaws are found, anyone can scan the source code and repair those flaws.

"I would take this occasion to warn the Government against looking at open source software as just another opportunity for cost-cutting in Government information technology systems," Senator Lundy said

"Instead, I see open source software as offering huge potential in rethinking the management of public information and the delivery of e-Government services by using smart and secure technology that will serve now and into the future.

"This is the chance to make a significant investment in updating legacy technology systems that will prevent the effective delivery of e-government services, including access to data that is held in systems that are up to 30 years old.

"As far as e-Government is concerned, what is required is a vision for Australia that understands that software and the internet are central to delivering citizen focussed e-government services," Senator Lundy concluded.

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