



# Desktop Sovereignty: A Decision Framework Beyond Windows 11

Engage 2026  
Business strategy session with technical appendix

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# Engage with Linux

## Advanced

adm21 – Linux InstallFest – Part III

adm15 – Linux Round Table

## Foundational

adm04 – Linux InstallFest – Part II

adm01 – Linux InstallFest – Part I



## Strategy

You are here



bus18 – Desktop Sovereignty

& Win 11

## The business problem

Windows 10 end of support can trigger a hardware refresh, a licensing review, and a cloud-assumption review at the same time

For regulated and sovereignty-conscious organizations, the desktop is part of the trust boundary, not just a user preference

- That means the “default upgrade” deserves the same scrutiny as any other strategic dependency

## What this session delivers

A decision framework for when Linux desktops beat a Windows 11 upgrade

Recent public-sector proof this is now an active operating-model discussion, not a fringe topic

- A scorecard, pilot roadmap, KPIs, and a technical appendix for follow-up work

**Abstract anchor: Windows 11 migration is an IT project; digital sovereignty is a business strategy**

# Sovereignty is not a slogan

For this session, sovereignty is a control question: who governs the platform, the data flow, and the dependencies?

## Working definition

**Digital sovereignty** is the practical ability to govern platforms, data flows, dependencies, and jurisdictions in a way that fits your organization's risk, mission, and accountability obligations.

## Why leaders care

Operational control

Vendor dependency and lock-in

Data residency and lawful access exposure

- Security posture and auditability

## What changes the conversation

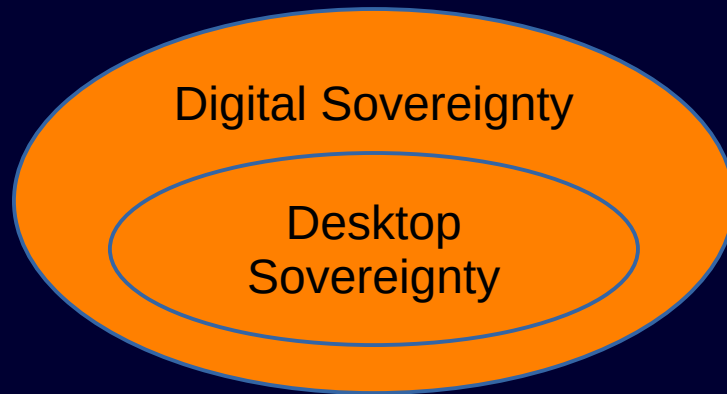
AI and cloud features now change the endpoint risk profile

Support life-cycle decisions can force expensive timing

- The desktop choice increasingly shapes downstream policy choices

# Desktop sovereignty is one layer of digital sovereignty

We are focusing on the endpoint decision because it is one of the most visible and actionable control points



## Digital sovereignty includes

Data residency • identity and access • collaboration stack • cloud and AI dependencies • procurement autonomy

## Desktop sovereignty focuses on

OS control • endpoint telemetry • default cloud paths  
• AI-assisted capture/inference • policy enforceability

## Today's scope

Use the desktop decision as a practical way to reduce dependence, limit exposure, and test a sovereignty strategy without pretending every workload must move at once.

# Why Europe is paying attention

The regional concern is broader than privacy alone

## Recurring themes from the field

Extraterritorial access concerns and dependence on non-European providers

Lock-in, price pressure, and limited negotiating leverage

Fear that critical tools can change direction faster than local policy can react

- A tension between sovereignty goals and perceived productivity gains from hyperscaler AI

## What makes this credible

The same themes surfaced independently in user-provided local interviews from Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, the UK, and Denmark

The wording differed; the pattern did not

- That is exactly why the public proof matters next

## Important nuance

Not every country is moving at the same speed

Public sector often moves first because sovereignty is explicit

- Small and midsize firms may move faster than large enterprises because they have fewer dependencies and shorter decision chains

# Why sovereignty concerns do not stop at the desktop

U.S. extraterritorial access laws shape how many European leaders assess provider risk

## USA PATRIOT Act

Expanded U.S. national-security surveillance authorities after 9/11

Relevant here because provider-held records and data-access questions became part of the legal risk discussion

## FISA

Authorizes foreign-intelligence surveillance under U.S. law

Relevant because it can involve compelled cooperation from providers under lawful process

## CLOUD Act

Clarifies that U.S. providers may be required to disclose data within their possession, custody, or control even when stored abroad

This is one reason European sovereignty reviews focus on the legal reach attached to foreign providers

**European sovereignty decisions are influenced not only by product design, but also by the legal reach attached to foreign providers**

Governments are not just debating sovereignty. They are switching named workloads, in phases, for specific reasons

### **What this section shows**

France — state-led move to reduce extra-European dependencies across workstations and core tooling

Germany — Schleswig-Holstein is replacing named Microsoft workloads with open-source alternatives

Denmark — ministry and agency pilots show both document-sovereignty and workplace-sovereignty moves

South Korea — historical signal, waiting for major public updates

**What matters here is not hype. It is who is switching what, and how carefully they are doing it**

8 April 2026: France moved from rhetoric to a formal interministerial push

## What is switching

Workstations: DINUM announced its exit from Windows in favor of Linux workstations for its own staff

Collaboration: extra-European tools → sovereign tools such as Tchap, Visio, and FranceTransfert

Healthcare-relevant signal: CNAM announced migration of 80,000 agents to sovereign interministerial tools

## Why it matters

Announcement made on 8 April 2026, part of a broader sovereignty push

Each ministry and public operator must submit a dependency-reduction plan by autumn 2026

Scope includes workstations, collaboration tools, antivirus, AI, databases, virtualization, and network equipment

**France is treating desktop and tooling choice as a sovereignty decision, not just an IT refresh**

# Germany — Schleswig-Holstein is replacing named Microsoft workloads at scale

## What is switching

Microsoft Office → LibreOffice

Exchange / Outlook → Open-Xchange + Thunderbird

SharePoint-style collaboration / file sharing → Nextcloud

Microsoft-centric directory dependence → open-source integration with Univention

Windows desktop dependence → Linux phased in across work laptops

## Why it matters

More than 44,000 mailboxes and 110 million emails/calendar entries migrated to Open-Xchange + Thunderbird

80% of the ecosystem moved to LibreOffice

Public reporting says the state remains committed to switching all work laptops to Linux

Schleswig-Holstein is one of the clearest “from → to” government migration stories in Europe

## One document-sovereignty pilot and one workplace pilot

### Ministry of Digital Affairs

Microsoft Office workflows inside F2 → Collabora / open-source document editing

Pilot launched June 19–20, 2025 with selected ministry employees

Pilot checks template compatibility, formatting, tracked changes, tables, and Word conversion

Best reading: a serious pilot with explicit sovereignty intent

### Danish Road Traffic Authority

Publicly reported as the first agency piloting SIA Open

Reported direction: Windows + Microsoft applications → SIA Open, a NixOS-based open-source workplace

Reported scope is partial / phased, not whole-agency all at once

Best wording: pilot with strong intent

**Denmark now shows both office-sovereignty and workplace-sovereignty in live testing**

# South Korea — historical signal, waiting for major updates

A credible long-horizon exploration, but not yet a current milestone slide on par with France, Germany, or Denmark

## What was proposed

Government desktop strategy under review: Windows dependence → Linux desktop exploration

Reported motivation included: Windows upgrade cost, single vendor dependency, and security / compatibility evaluation before wider roll-out

Early reporting offered a pilot-first approach, not an overnight cut-over

## Why this stays historical for now

The public story is meaningful, but the strongest widely cited reporting is still tied to the 2019–2020 exploration period

Large government desktop migrations often take years and may only reappear publicly when a major milestone is reached

Best deck treatment: include as strategic signal, not as a recent completed migration

**South Korea belongs in the story as an early strategic signal — historical, credible, and still waiting for major public updates**

The sovereignty issue is not one feature; it is the cumulative operating model

## Hardware timing

Windows 11 can turn an OS project into a broader endpoint-refresh decision

## Identity assumptions

Microsoft increasingly binds value to sign-in, cloud, and service integration

## Diagnostic data

Windows 11 documents required optional diagnostic data flows

## Cloud defaults

Microsoft 365 apps increasingly default toward cloud save paths, even though local save remains possible – especially after Windows OS updates

## AI layer

Recall, connected experiences, and Copilot features make endpoint governance a policy question

**Executive reading: Nothing here proves Windows 11 is unusable. It proves the default upgrade path now carries governance implications that were easier to ignore in earlier desktop eras**

State the concern accurately: more capture, more connected services, more governance questions

## Recall

Recall is now documented by Microsoft as opt-in, locally processed, and locally stored on supported Copilot+ PCs

That makes the issue less “hidden spyware” and more “do we want this class of capability available at all in a sensitive environment?”

- For managed commercial devices, admins can disable it; they cannot enable snapshot saving on a user’s behalf

## Microsoft 365 and Copilot

Microsoft 365 Apps have separate privacy controls for diagnostic data and connected experiences

Microsoft 365 Copilot privacy guidance points organizations back to those same connected-experience controls

- Which is exactly why controller / processor roles, contractual coverage and feature scoping matter

## Practical sovereignty reading

A sovereignty review should ask what is enabled, where data is processed, which defaults steer users into cloud paths, and which controls exist by edition and management model?

- Consumer, small-business and enterprise setups differ in their control surface offerings

## Use a scorecard, not ideology

### Linux is stronger when...

Work is browser-first, role-based, or application-defined

Tighter control over endpoint behavior, cloud defaults, and lock-in pressure is needed

Hardware refresh costs are hard to justify against actual workload needs

The organization values long support Windows, predictable OS behavior, and lower endpoint complexity

### Windows may remain stronger when...

Critical workflows depend on native Windows-only applications or drivers

The organization is deeply invested in Windows-specific management and identity patterns and needs near-zero change on the endpoint

A regulated / contractual requirement points to a Windows-specific stack

The fastest path is usually selective, not ideological

## **Strong early candidates**

Task workers

Browser-first users

Shared workstations

Developers and infrastructure staff

Thin-client and remote-app users

## **Proceed carefully**

Finance and executive assistants with document edge cases

Users can be tied to specific Office macros or plugins

Teams needing specialist peripherals

## **Usually last**

Legacy Windows app owners

Workflow owners with device-driver dependencies

Users whose success depends on one immovable Windows line-of-business application

## Identity

SSO, directory fit, local vs cloud assumptions

## Peripheral support

Printers, scanners, smart cards, specialty drivers

## Management

Enrollment, patching, logging, backup, rollback

## Training load

How much user retraining is truly required

## App compatibility

Native apps, browser apps, published apps, macros

## Document fidelity

Templates, comments, redlines, exports, formulas

## Support model

Who owns incidents, escalation, and exceptions

## Compliance

Discovery, audit trails, retention, policy controls

## What executives should ask

Can we support the role cleanly?

Can we protect the workflow without forcing a costly hardware cycle?

Can IT operate it consistently?

Can we prove the controls?

If the answer is mostly yes, proceed with the pilot

If not, Windows may still be the right answer for that slice of the estate

Keep the pilot small enough to learn, but real enough to matter

**1. Choose the slice**

Pick one role, one support model, one document pattern

**2. Define success**

Task completion, ticket volume, user sentiment, exception rate

**3. Build the runbook**

Enrollment, patching, office stack, support path, rollback

**4. Validate edge cases**

Printers, scanners, smart cards, macros, SSO, remote access

**5. Report honestly**

Expand, hold, or stop based on evidence

Measure the operating model, not just whether the image boots

## User outcomes

Task completion time

Day-1 / Day-30 satisfaction

Exception count

Document-fidelity incidents

## Support outcomes

Ticket volume per user

Time to resolve

Patch success rate

Rollback rate

## Strategic outcomes

Avoided refresh cost

Lower dependency concentration

Reduced cloud-default exposure

Improved control over endpoint policy

The goal is disciplined adoption, not magical thinking

**Our users do not know Linux**

Most users know workflows, not kernels. Train the role, not the ideology.

**We need Office**

Some roles do. Others need document fidelity, not brand loyalty. Test the actual workload.

**Support will be chaos**

Only if the pilot scope is vague. Clear role boundaries reduce chaos.

**We cannot change everything**

Correct. Do not change everything. Change the slice that scores well.

**Windows is safer because it is familiar**

Familiarity is not the same as strategic fit or sovereignty control.

Do not ask only whether Windows 11 can be deployed...

## Ask whether it should remain the default

### Final test

If your strategy is “upgrade because we have to,” you may be paying for inertia. If your strategy is “evaluate because the desktop is now part of the trust boundary,” you are governing the estate like a leader.

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The Appendix transforms the strategy discussion into concrete platform options and migration tooling

Built for the managers, architects, and admins who need to validate the path after the session

## Separate desktop-first recommendations from enterprise/server-lineage distributions

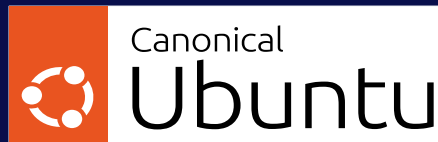
### Desktop-first picks

Ubuntu LTS — the safest general business default

Linux Mint — a strong on-ramp for Windows-shaped user expectations

Pop!\_OS — desktop-focused and productivity-oriented

- Zorin OS — transition-friendly and explicitly aimed at Windows/macOS switchers



### Use selectively

Fedora Workstation — modern, polished, but faster-moving

Alpine Linux — security-minded and lightweight, but usually a specialist pick for desktops

NixOS — declarative and powerful, but a specialist choice for most organizations

SIA Open — Denmark-origin workplace concept built on NixOS for sovereign desktop delivery



### Notation

AlmaLinux, Rocky Linux, and CentOS Stream matter in strategy discussions

- But they are usually better thought of as enterprise/server-lineage platforms than as the default answer for broad knowledge-worker desktops



A pragmatic short-list beats an encyclopedia

Distro	Best fit	Trade-off	Laptop	Desktop
Ubuntu LTS	General business default	Conservative cadence, enterprise-friendly support	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>
Linux Mint	Windows-friendly transition	Smaller ecosystem than Ubuntu proper	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>
Pop!_OS	Power users and developers	More opinionated desktop choices	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>
Zorin OS	Low-friction switchers	Smaller enterprise footprint	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>
SIA Open	State-managed sovereignty workplace	Denmark-specific model, not a broad distro channel	<b>Good</b>	<b>Strong</b>
NixOS Linux	Reproducible specialist environments	Powerful, but a specialist choice for most organizations	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Fedora Workstation	Modern desktop and testing ground	Faster release cadence	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Alpine Linux	Lightweight specialist builds	Minimalist; more specialist than mainstream desktop pick	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b>
Alma / Rocky	Enterprise consistency, special cases	Server-lineage, not default office pick	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b>
CentOS Stream	RHEL ecosystem innovation	Continuously delivered; not classic CentOS Linux	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b>

## Complete data access solutions across platforms

### Messaging and application paths

HCL Notes — desktop mail and application access alternative to Outlook in the right environments

Nomad Web — browser-based access path that reduces endpoint dependency and broadens device reach

Domino / Nomad patterns can fit role-based migration where Windows is not required everywhere



### Why it matters

These options can preserve business application value while changing the desktop operating model

They work especially well in phased migrations, regulated settings, and browser-first role patterns

The practical question is not 'all Linux or nothing' — it is where Linux plus HCL reduces friction and dependency

**Executive takeaway: HCL-aligned options can help turn a desktop migration into a controlled business transition, not a forced disruption**

Linux-friendly options for documents, collaboration, and controlled sovereignty-minded workflows

## Office suites

LibreOffice — broad desktop office coverage with strong document, spreadsheet, and presentation support

Collabora Office / Collabora Online — commercially supported LibreOffice-based offerings, including controlled online editing

OnlyOffice — another office-oriented option for organizations that want broader Microsoft-format familiarity



## Collaboration paths

Nextcloud — file sync, sharing, and collaboration under your control

Collabora Online + Nextcloud — strong sovereign editing-and-sharing combination

Browser-first and published-app models can reduce desktop friction during phased migration



**Executive takeaway: Linux office strategy works best when suites, file-sharing, and collaboration are designed together.**

Controlled delivery models can reduce endpoint friction while preserving Linux-first or hybrid strategies

## Endpoint and OS options

IGEL OS — secure endpoint operating system for controlled desktop delivery

Dell ThinOS — thin-client operating system for VDI, DaaS, and SaaS access

HP ThinPro — Linux-based thin-client platform in desktop and mobile thin-client hardware



## Delivery models

ThinLinc — Linux remote desktop / server-based computing for central delivery

Published-app, browser-first, and VDI approaches can bridge legacy Windows dependency during transition

Use centralized delivery where supportability or data locality matter more than full local-desktop freedom



**Executive takeaway: desktop sovereignty does not require every workload to live fully on every endpoint.**

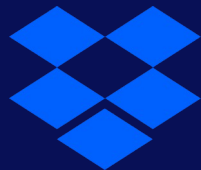
Native-client support exists, but support scope and sovereignty fit vary by platform

## Commercial sync clients

Dropbox — native Linux desktop client, with official support limited to specified Ubuntu and Fedora versions

Use vendor support matrices carefully when Linux desktop standardization spans multiple distributions

Commercial convenience does not automatically equal sovereignty alignment



## Sovereignty-oriented alternatives

Sia — native Linux desktop downloads are available in Debian and RPM variants

Nextcloud remains a strong self-controlled option where data location and policy control matter

Choose storage by legal fit, sync behavior, and manageability — not just brand familiarity



**Executive takeaway: Linux storage choices should be evaluated for support scope, data control, and provider risk together**

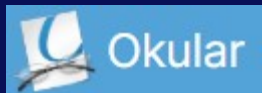
## Practical coverage without overselling it

### Read and review

Okular — strong PDF viewing, annotation, and signature-related support

Evince / GNOME Document Viewer — reliable PDF reading with annotations and form handling

Firefox or Chromium viewers — fast fallback for everyday review tasks



### Annotate and light edit

Okular — highlights, notes, markup, and signing workflows

LibreOffice Draw — useful for simple page-level changes and light edits

Validate exact forms, redaction, and compliance needs before migration



### Browser-based Adobe path

Adobe Acrobat online offers edit, comment, fill & sign, and share workflows in the browser

This is the safest Adobe story on Linux today: browser tools, not a current native Linux Reader path

Use only where browser-based processing fits policy and data-handling rules



**Executive takeaway: Linux can cover many PDF workflows well, but heavy Acrobat Pro dependency should be validated workflow by workflow**

A more explicit decision view for organizations with heavier PDF, form, and signing requirements

## Strong fit on Linux

Everyday PDF reading and review

Annotation, comments, highlights, and markup

Many interactive forms and simple signing workflows

Browser-based Adobe tasks where policy allows cloud processing

## Validate before migration

Heavy Acrobat Pro dependency

Complex form design, advanced redaction, or regulated document workflows

Edge-case fidelity requirements tied to one vendor stack

Offline editing scenarios that assume a native Adobe desktop client

**Executive takeaway: honest PDF planning reduces migration surprises and keeps credibility high**

Vendors offering Linux clients or access, perhaps unexpectedly

## Notes

Remarkable — Upload your notes directly to a Linux desktop/laptop

OneNote – Snap wrapped OneNote web access available in a Debian package

 reMarkable



## Meetings

Zoom — via native client\*, mobile and browser plugin installers

Teams — Microsoft's newest Teams client is available on Ubuntu, via a Snap wrapped installer

 zoom



\* See Reference URLs Page 4

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**Executive takeaway: Linux can cover many PDF workflows well, but heavy Acrobat Pro dependency should be validated workflow by workflow**

# Quick Background



- Co-founder of Linuxfest at Lotusphere/Connect
- Speaker at 50+ Lotus®/IBM®/HCLTech® LUGs/Conferences
- Co-authored two Linux IBM Redbooks
- HCL Lifetime Ambassador
- IBM Champion for Collaboration Solutions  
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