PCLinuxOS MAGAZINE

Issue No. 12 • **August, 2007**

Cover by Archie

From the Chief Editor's Desk

Well, dear readers, this is our first anniversary issue, number 12. It's a milestone that makes me very proud to have been part of this project. But I didn't do it alone. There are a lot of great people "behind the scenes" that work all month to make this magazine possible. Over that past year we've gained some and lost some, but the project continues -- as it should.

Might I suggest that you take a moment to read through the list of contributors, graphics artists, editors, proofreaders, coders, etc? Then visit the main forum and PM someone from that list and tell them how much you appreciate their hard work.

And it IS hard. We spend a lot of time scouring the main forum and other sources for article material. Then someone writes the article and the proof/edit process starts. It takes two weeks of emailing articles around the world (literally – we are spread from China to USA, to England, to Australia), to get them in clear, readable language that anyone, new to Linux or old timer, can read and enjoy.

Then the articles are sent to layout and prepared visually. That, of course, includes the great covers we've brought you each month. Each one is a creation by our graphic staff, not just some free clip art we grabbed somewhere.

And this month we continue the tradition with thirteen articles on a wide range of topics, including our ongoing KDE User Guide.

Tim Robinson

Starting with the September Issue, Papawoob will take over as Editor in Chief. Because of health problems, I am stepping down from that position. I'll stay on as an editor and occasional writer. It has been a great year and I've learned a lot and developed some strong friendships. I'll still be here, and readers should feel free to email me as previously, but Papawoob will handle the "Letters to the Editor" in future.

PCLinuxOS 2007 FINAL Released

Written by Texstar, Sunday, 20 May 2007

Texstar and the Ripper Gang are pleased to announce the final release of PCLinuxOS 2007. Featuring kernel 2.6.18.8, KDE 3.5.6, Open Office 2.2.0, Firefox 2.0.0.3, Thunderbird 2.0, Frostwire, Ktorrent, Amarok, Flash, Java JRE, Beryl 3D and much much more. Almost 2 gigs of software compressed on a single self bootable livecd that can be installed to your hard drive provided it is compatible with your system and you like the distribution. Over 5000+ additional packages available after hard drive install through our Synaptic Software Manager. Please note PCLinuxOS does not ship with Win32codes or DVD decryption software. Proprietary Nvidia and ATI drivers available after hard drive install.

In addition we'd like to give out a special thanks to the PCLinuxOS community who stepped up last month to help us out and kept us going. Thank you for all your support and we'll keep working hard to bring you a good Linux distribution you can be proud of. We also want to thank Enki Consulting for providing hosting for our website and ibiblio.org for hosting our distribution.

Lessons From Children

by Merlin Whitewolf

Recently, my son and his family moved. They had bought a house and were moving into it as first time home owners. I offered to help and made the drive there to give what assistance I could. My daughter-in-law assigned me the job of "designated babysitter" and refused to allow me to do any heavy lifting. She's a very wise woman.

To be a babysitter means that you must watch out for and take care of children, but it often turns out that they're doing as much for you as you do for them. That was the case for me when I decided to have my granddaughters, ages 10, 8 and 5, learn to use Gimp as a way to entertain them during the move. I have no delusions as to the skill with which I can create graphics. I know next to nothing of this marvelous skill, but I chose to use this as more in keeping with catching the interest of the young.

The 8 year old granddaughter started off. That is, on the morning we started this, she was the first out of bed after me. When her sisters awakened, she was almost done with the wallpaper that she made. This is how things proceeded, as near as I am able to remember:

We opened Gimp and chose "New" and 1600 by 1200. Next she chose a color. I had thought that color choice would be a fairly simple thing, but it isn't really so in every situation. When you're adding effects to it, your color choice may need to be changed as the effects you're going for may alter the color in a way that you do not want. Or as she put it, "That makes the color different. We have to use another one."

Choosing which effects and how to apply them was another lesson for me. The way an effect behaves by default is not necessarily how you want something to appear, so you look for and apply changes until you get what you want. The "undo" under the "edit" menu saw a lot of use as first one color and then another and as first one effect and then another was chosen.

Finally she announced, "That's it, Popa. It is the best we can do."

On the next page is the wallpaper she created:

Lessons From Children
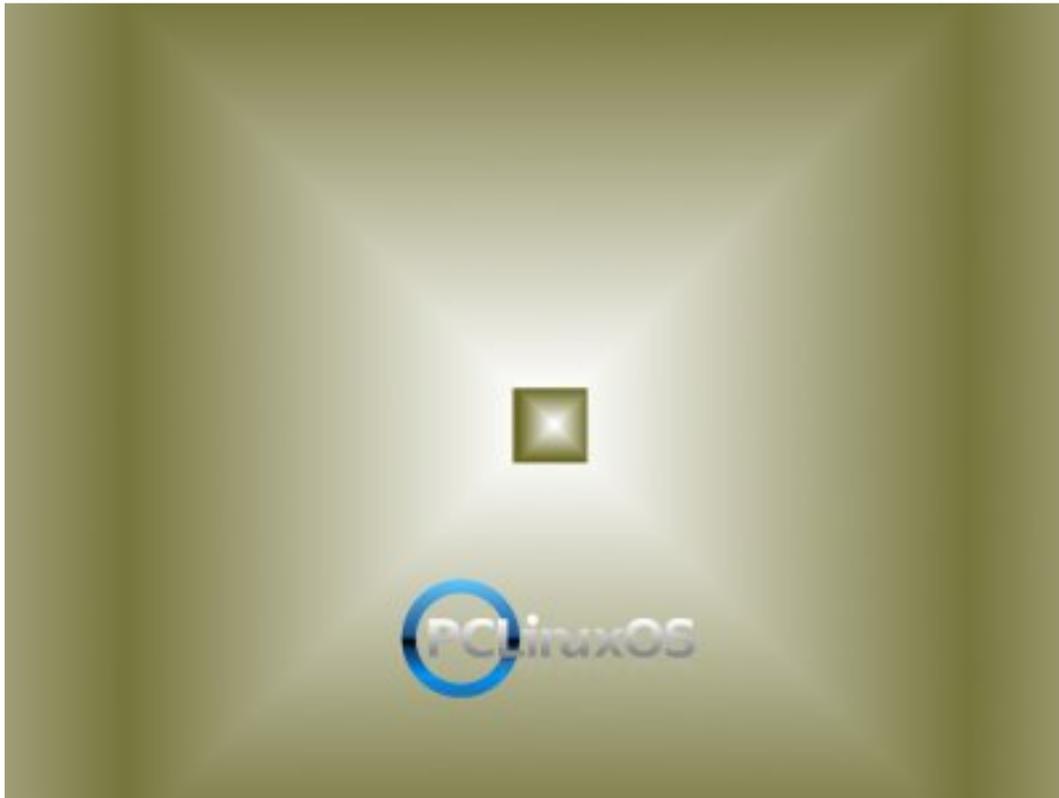
After a long day of moving household items and of course, playing, my youngest granddaughter took her turn at graphics creation. At 5 years old, she is an amazing artist. She was very decisive about which colors to choose and where and how they were to be used. The only difficulty she had was in having Gimp to show the color choices that she wanted. I learned a lot from her about making slight alterations in the color choice menu to get just the right shade of color and the right amount of light or darkness to each color.

Her wallpaper was created in the shortest amount of time. In part, that may be that she had already seen how her sister had made choices, but it is also that she has a natural ability to create art. That is my firm belief.

On the next page is the wallpaper that she created:

Lessons From Children

It has what might be termed a typical 5 year old's 'in-your-face' look, yes, but take a closer look at it. In the main field there are subtle squares of light and dark. In the center there is an eye. The pupil of the eye is a striped egg of many colors. She created three levels of artistic effects in one picture. Each could be taken to be a single creation, but she chose to combine them into one and thus made a more 'advanced' creation. I found this to be very impressive.

Last, but definitely not least was my oldest granddaughter. She took longer than the others to create her graphic. She chose first one combination of color and effect and then another. The "undo" function was used more in her efforts than those of her sisters. When something didn't work for her, she was ready to try another choice. She went through several effects choices for each color before she would change to a different color.

It might be said that she had a hard time making up her mind. I think that she was wanting to see how an option would look before she decided if it was a keeper or not.

Lessons From Children
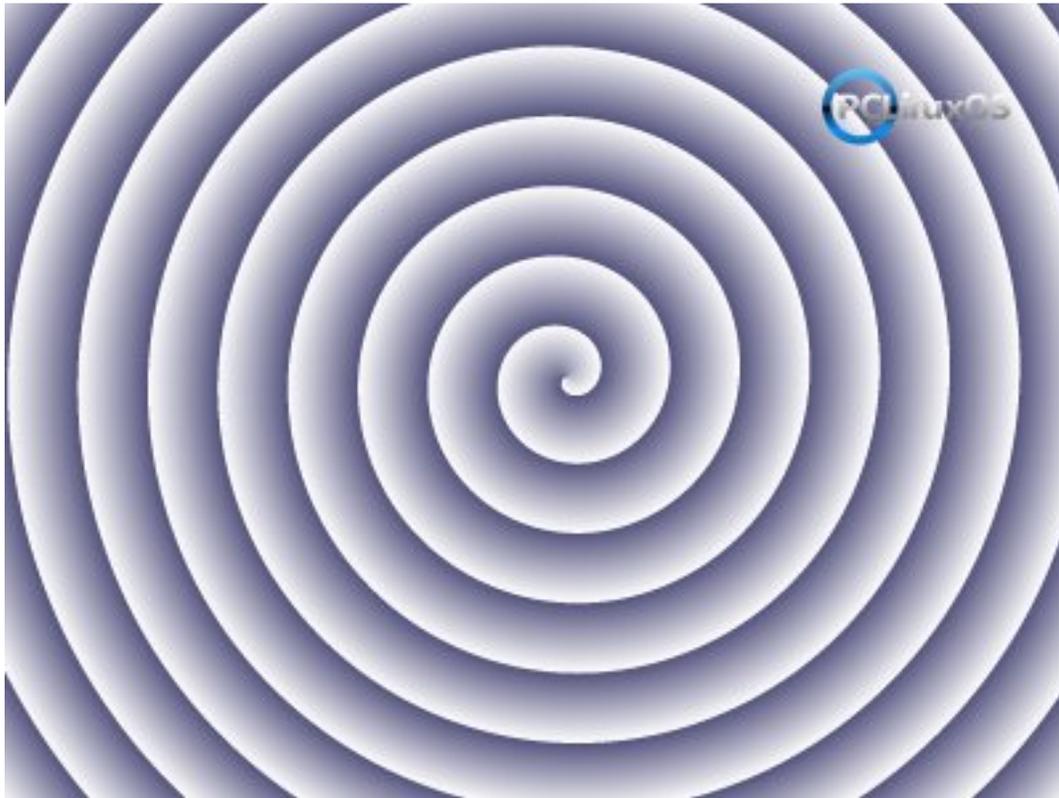
This is the wallpaper that she created:

She took her time in choosing this exact shade of blue and the exact width of each turn of the spiral.

Stare at it for a moment. Do you get the sensation that a subtle movement is going on? What else might you see there? Think on it. A 10 year old chose to create this effect.

My granddaughters are eager for me to return for another visit. I must bring my laptop, of course, as they want to create more graphics. I wonder what they will create next?

Letters To The Editors

I have PCLinuxOS loaded on my 2GB memory stick so it loads from there on ANY PC! I just tried it on my basic laptop and found that configuring the built-in Broadcom wireless card was a breeze. I had previously put the Broadcom BCM43xx files in a folder on my windoze partition which were accessible from root. Using the tools in PCLinuxOS I simply had to type in the WEP key for my wireless modem/router (a Netgear device) and hey presto! The blue wireless LED came on and I am in touch with you. I just have to work out how to save the settings to my memory stick. Just wish a few more games were in the setup by default. Will try the 2007 version soon.

Morrison H

Thanks a lot for your feedback, Morrison. Try PCLinuxOS 2007 Final soon. I'm sure you will be pleased with the changes and improvements that have been made since previous versions.

Tim

Hello all,

As a relatively new Linux user (12 months), I have tried many distros starting with Ubuntu, and then went onto experiment with Fedora, Sabayon, Sam just to name a few. I came upon PCLinuxOS just by accident and wow am I impressed. Whilst the 'community' is not as robust as the Ubuntu community the product speaks for itself.

I keep other distros on my system but now rarely even go to them as PCLinuxOS does it all with gusto!

Thanks to all the developers for a great product!

Tony C

Tony, thanks for those kind words. I'm sure Texstar and the rest of the developer appreciate hearing such praise.

Tim

Letters To The Editors

Great Magazine!!! I'm a Linux noob and found these articles VERY helpful/informative. Keep them coming!

Steve B

Thanks, Steve - we will.

Tim

Hi,

I am an entirely 100% newbie to Linux and wish to both thank you and compliment you on a job well done. Having absolutely zero experience with Linux I am presently trying to go through that oh so painful part of trying to figure out what Linux is all about. The part where you choose a distro to use to see if you can actually like Linux and make it work. I've downloaded nearly 50 different distros in the last couple days to burn to CD and then try at my leisure to see if I'm totally stupid or can convert to Linux. PCLinux was the very last one I downloaded.

While it was downloading I was also trying to make copies of any pertinent paperwork that might apply. Manuals, FAQs, etc, to make things easier as I start out. In the process I came across the link to the PCLinuxOS magazine for July 2007. Lord Bless you for all the wonderful information you included in that issue. I honestly can say that after reading that one magazine I now know more about Linux and how it operates than after nearly 3 months of seeking information online. And it was written in a manner that made it easy for me to understand without making me feel like a total idiot or speaking down to me.

In my mind, the single greatest sin of any computer user is that we forget that at one time or another each and every last one of us was a "NEWBIE" that was begging for help to understand this great new world of computers. We look down or speak down to those newbies like we are God and forget at one time they were us. In your magazine you do not do this and for that I cannot commend you enough. You also have achieved that wonderful ability to be able to write articles that are both helpful to the new and the more wiser and knowledgeable Linux user at the same time. That ability is almost a

God given gift that few of us ever are capable of. Cherish it. And keep right on using it to help those like myself learn about Linux and the great wonders it promises to come. Only good can come from wise use of that gift like you are doing now.

I was brought up on Microsoft Windows from the very first when DOS came out. It is like anything else. A learning experience. And what you learn is learned through years of effort in the computer world. Your magazine and the way it is written takes years off that learning curve for so many and in so many ways I cannot begin to list them all. But this I can tell you. After reading this one copy of your magazine I probably have taken at least 2 years off my learning curve of being able to operate a Linux based computer. That is saying a lot.

It has been years since anything gave me that boyhood thrill to see or receive. Your magazine is the first thing in so many years to do that I can't even believe it. I actually sat here and read the entire magazine page by page until I was totally finished. I didn't skip one detail anywhere in it. It was like one of those thriller books you get into as a young man or woman that grabs you and you can't sit it down until totally finished. And I can't wait to go back and download all the rest of those available back copies you have on your site. I'll probably be up all night long reading your magazine from cover to cover in each issue.

You not once tried to cram something down my throat the way Microsoft has begun doing to their customers. Not once did you try to tell me in certain ways that I wasn't smart enough to know what I want or need on my own computer like so many of the Microsoft crowd do nowadays. And don't get me wrong, I love Windows and how it operates. Except for the security issues that is. And the price of the software you really need. But those issues aside I really do enjoy Windows. However, when Microsoft began forcing people to go out and totally rebuild or replace their computers every three years it began to be to expensive to use Windows. When they began to force people to change operating systems every three years it became to expensive. And when they started forcing people to go out and buy all new software every three years to go with the new computer and the new operating system because they made the new stuff refuse to work with any of your older software it became to expensive. VISTA became the last straw for me. It is nothing but eye candy for Windows XP and yet they try to force me to replace all my Microsoft Office

applications at hundreds of dollars each to go with it. That was when I knew I had to do something else.

And lo and behold there was Linux. I had tried it just as little as about four years ago and could make absolutely no sense of it at all back then. Now Linux has progressed to the point where many distros look and operate very similar to Windows. AND IT DOES IT FOR FREE. PCLinux seems to be one of those distros that does exactly that. It appears at the onset to be one distro that will allow a newbie like myself to make that last jump from the Microsoft sinking ship. And I don't think I'll need a four year course at a college to be able to do it. Many Linux flavors today even have the new 3D GUI that Microsoft says can't be duplicated in any Windows operating system except Vista.

So from the bottom of my heart I wish to thank all of you both at PCLinux and at the PCLinux OS Magazine for assisting me in being able to finally learn and be able to use Linux at home in a constructive manner. I, my wife, and my daughter all have our own desktop computers. My daughter and I both have laptops also. And on top of all that I have been trying to figure out how to afford to set up at least one if not two file servers to keep all our important information on in a safe manner. Plus we have been interested in setting up a new media center edition of a computer for all our shareable files and movies and music etc. The Microsoft cheapest server software is hundreds of dollars per copy plus operating systems to go with each. Not to mention the individual computer copies of all the various software we use and need each day. Linux can basically save me literally thousands of dollars just maintaining my own home computers.

Not to mention the horribly hard part of trying to teach my daughter and wife a completely new way to use computers without Windows. PCLinux appears to nearly take all that effort away overnight. And I dreaded that part the most. You have lifted a horribly heavy burden off my heart with PCLinux and your magazine. Even my daughter who is extremely ADHD and has tremendous times trying to learn new things can understand your magazine. It explains things to her in a way even she can understand and be able to make sense of again without making her feel like someone is talking down to her. We cannot thank you enough for that.

Letters To The Editors

I've taken up enough of your time and will let you go now. Just wanted you to know that what you do is good, that it succeeds where so many others totally fail, and it is so clearly appreciated by so many of us. Give yourself and your team one great big pat on the back. God Bless and thank each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Allen W

Thanks for the kind words, Allan. All the staff work hard during the month to provide articles that are fresh, informative, and in language that those new to Linux, as well as "old-timers" can deal with. Be sure to check out some of the back issues. I'm sure you will find more useful information there as well.

Tim

First and Foremost Hello to all and congratulations on PCLinuxOS!

Here's a little background to my story. I live in Greece and I have been using Linux since 1997. I started with SuSE version 6.0 and had kept updated my lowly PII all the way to version 10.2 of Open SuSE. I was not very happy when I upgraded to 10.2 and lost the ability to use arecord.

A small thing huh?

Anyway, this summer my son and I are visiting my parents in Spring, TX. I should also mention that my 17 yr old son is probably better versed with Linux than I am. My parents asked me to take a look at my mom's computer (PIII with 512MB). When she logged on to her Windows XP box she had to get up and leave for about 10 minutes while the silly thing connected to the Internet. I tried installing SuSE 10.2 on the box but it just kept freezing at odd moments and the response of the computer was not really satisfactory. I then tried Ubuntu but it could not configure the Riva 128 video card properly. So far Linux was 0 for 2.

While I was working on this, my dad was busy spoiling my son with a

Letters To The Editors

new laptop. Since we don't have a decent LUG in our neck of the woods in Greece we decided to take a trip to the Houston LUG and see what kind of information they might have for us. While we were there one of the users brought over a CD of PCLinuxOS final and I tried it on my son's new laptop. Impressive.

When I got home I installed it on my mom's box in less than 30 minutes. I updated the box over night and viola! It works like a champ. No setup problems, no vim /etc/X11/xorg.conf, no vim /etc/fstab. It found the USB wheel mouse (SuSE didn't) and the USB flash drive that I had forgotten to remove was also set up automatically. It even set up the rinky-dink HP multi-function ink jet. I really liked the touch with the NTP daemon. This distro is just great.

My parents were really impressed since they had been prepped by the windows propaganda to buy a new computer. I am now teaching my mom how to use Open Office, Evolution and Firefox.

The only thing I have left to do is set up a backup job in cron and see about doing a little better job with filtering spam. I would be interested in hearing how other users have set up their mailing systems.

Well I think I have about used up my word count.

Thanks again,

Rod C

Thanks for the feedback, Rod. It's always great to hear about people's success with our favorite Linux distro. When you return to Greece, why not try to start a LUG there? Happy computing.

Tim

*This guide has been modified by **Papawoob** to reflect the Linux distribution of PCLinuxOS 2007.*

CHAPTER 7: MULTIMEDIA GRAPHICS ACCESS

Multimedia Access and Players

Apart from being able to view and create graphics and other images, the PC is capable of supporting a wide range of audio and video features and facilities. These include the playing of audio CDs, audio digital files, VCD and DVD as well as multimedia games.

Note:
While support may be available in the software, the necessary hardware has to be available before these multimedia facilities can be used, e.g. a DVD drive is required to be present on the system before you can play a DVD.

By default most modern PCs come with a CD-ROM drive capable of playing audio CDs and VCDs as well as a sound card and speakers.

As such in this chapter we shall discuss how you can listen to an audio CD, play audio digital files and view VCDs.

In the following sections we shall be discussing several media players. Some of these e.g. mplayer and xine are multimedia players in that they can be used as generic players for audio CD, digital audio files, VCD and DVD.

THE VOLUME CONTROL APPLET

Since almost all the multimedia applications require some form of audio production and mixing, it is useful if we know how to control the various channels of audio available from the sound card using the Volume Control Applet on the Panel. This may be launched by right-clicking the Volume Control icon on the Panel and selecting Open Volume Control. If it is not there you can also launch it form the Main Menu:

Main Menu -> Multimedia -> KMix
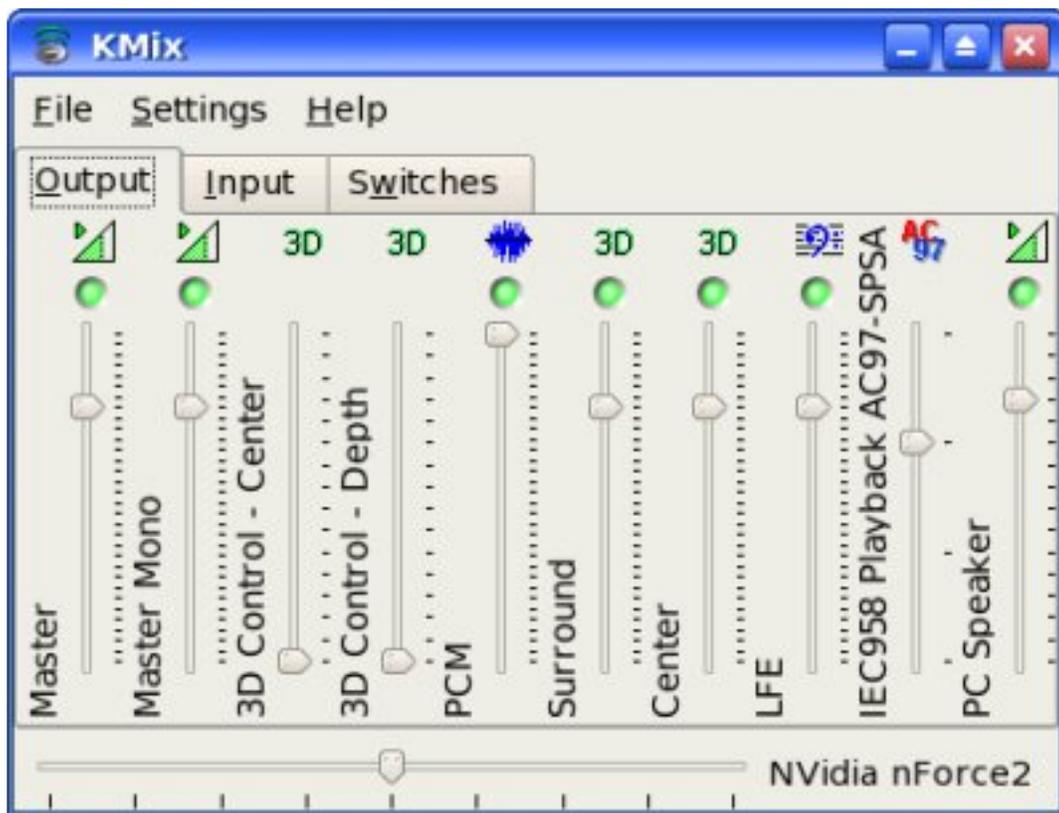
Fig. Volume Control Applet

KDE User Guide, Chapter 7

Kmix is essentially an audio mixer which enables you to mix the audio for a 2-channel sound card. Every mixer control that your sound card provides is represented by a volume slider. Mono controls always have a single slider while stereo controls can have either one or two sliders, depending on your settings. There is also a panning slider at the bottom of the window. If your system has more than one sound card, a list will be displayed at the top of the window.

The Kmix window can have up to three different sections, Output, Input, and Switches. Each section will contain volume sliders, switches for enabling/disabling record or playback functions, and multiple choice selectors.

Output: This tab holds the controls that are most likely related to playback, like the Master volume control.

Input: This tab holds the controls that are most likely record related, like Capture.

Switches: These controls allow you to switch certain functions On and Off, like External Amplifier.

Kmix also features LEDs. The general coloring rule is as follows:

Green: An LED dealing with playback
Red: An LED dealing with recording
Yellow: An LED dealing with special sound card capabilities

A lit LED means On, a non-lit LED means OFF.

In most situations the volume can be adjusted by clicking on the Volume Control applet on the Panel and raising or lowering the slider accordingly.

PLAYING AUDIO CDS

You can play an audio CD by placing the CD into the CD-ROM drive. The CD player application (KsCD) will be run automatically to play the CD. Ensure that your speakers are turned on so that you can hear the CD! You can also manually start the CD Player application from the Main Menu:

KDE User Guide, Chapter 7

Main Menu –> Multimedia –> Sound –> KsCD
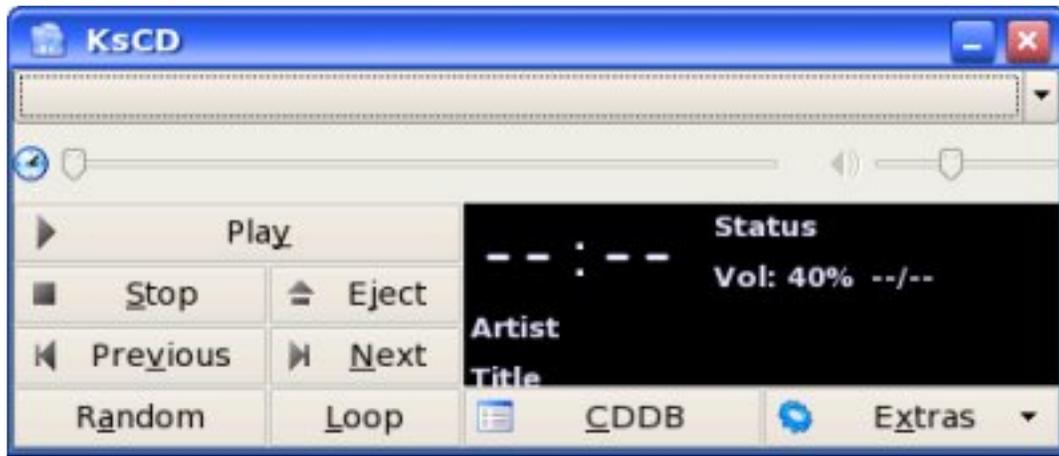
Fig. CD Player

You can control the CD Player just like a normal CD player with the buttons shown on the CD Player screen. These include volume control, track forward/backward, play/pause, stop, eject as well as jumping to any track on the CD directly.

PLAYING DIGITAL AUDIO FILES

PCLinuxOS gives us Amarok which is arguably the most complete music manager available today. Amarok serves many functions rather than just playing music files. For example, Amarok can be used to organize a library of music into folders according to genre, artist, and album, can edit tags attached to most music formats, associate album art, attach lyrics, and automatically "score" music as you play it.

Fig. Amarok

Amarok plays media files in various formats including but not limited to (depending on the setup), Flac, Ogg, Mp3, AAC, WAV, WMV, and Musepack.

Note: Amarok will not play digital music files protected by DRM, such as those purchased from the Itunes Music Store.

It also can Sync, retrieve, play, and upload music to digital music players, such as Ipods or Creative Zens.

Note: To work with Creative Zens or other MTP devices, libmtp0 will need to be installed from the repositories.

One last notable feature is Last.fm support, including submitting played tracks (including those played on some digital music players) to Last.fm, retrieving similar artists, and playing Last.fm streams.

You can find Amarok by going to:

Main Menu -> Multimedia -> Sound -> Amarok

Another excellent player that is in the repositories and can be easily installed is XMMS. The XMMS (X Multimedia System) application can be utilized to play a wide variety of digital audio file formats. These include the popular MP3 as well as the open Ogg Vorbis formats. To launch XMMS, (after it is installed) select:

Main Menu -> Multimedia -> Sound -> XMMS

Fig. XMMS Player

Note: XMMS may need additional plug-ins to be able to play some of the audio file formats. If these are not already installed on your system they can be installed from the repositories using Synaptic.

You can control the XMMS player using the graphical knobs and buttons displayed. In addition, you can select the source of the audio files to play. To do this, right-click on the XMMS player and from the pop-up menu select "Play File" to select the audio file to play. If you want to be able to play an audio file from the Internet select "Play Location" and enter the Internet location of the file.

PLAYING VCD AND DVD

There are several excellent applications readily available for you to use to play VCD and DVD media. Here we shall look at two of them: Kaffeine and Mplayer. These can also play CD and digital audio music files.

KAFFEINE

The Kaffeine application may be used to play VCD and DVD. You can start Kaffeine from the Main Menu:

Main Menu --> Multimedia --> Video -> Kaffeine

The Kaffeine user interface is highly intuitive as it resembles a normal VCD/DVD player with all the basic control knobs and buttons.

Fig. Kaffeine Control Panel

To play a VCD, place the VCD into the CD–ROM drive and click on the Play VCD button on the Kaffeine control panel.

To play a DVD, place the DVD into the DVD drive and your movie should start playing. If it does not then right click on the DVD icon on your desktop and choose "Play DVD with Kaffeine."

The volume control can be adjusted by clicking on the volume control button.

Kaffeine is a very powerful multimedia application with many features. It can also play audio CDs as well as digital audio files. Note: to be able to play encrypted DVDs you will need to install libdvdcss and win32codecs from the repositories using Synaptic. You will need to check to see if the use of these libraries is legal as it is considered illegal to use this in certain parts of the world.

MPLAYER

Mplayer is a popular movie player for Linux. In addition to being able to play VCD and DVD it is also able to handle a wide variety of audio and video files and streaming data formats. Hence it is useful to use Mplayer as the universal multimedia player. The Mplayer GUI can be started from the Main Menu,

Main Menu –> Multimedia –> Video –>MPlayer

On start up, the main Mplayer control screen and the Mplayer video output screens are displayed.

Fig. Mplayer Control Screen

Fig. Mplayer Video Screen

The control screen enables you to control the operations of Mplayer while the video screen displays any video that is being played. In addition, right-clicking with the mouse when it is inside either the control or video screens will also bring up a menu for controlling the use of Mplayer.

The Mplayer control screen enables you to perform the following:

- start, stop and pause play
- go to the next and previous stream
- jump to the first and last tracks
- adjust the sound balance
- adjust the volume and mute
- select files to play
- set up a playlist
- set the video and audio equalizer
- configure preferences

- exit the Mplayer application

All of the functions are represented by intuitive knob, dial, and button icons on the control screen making it very easy to use Mplayer.

To play a VCD, place the VCD in the CD-ROM drive, move the mouse over the control screen or video screen and right-click it. Select, VCD -> Open disk

To play a DVD, perform the above for VCD but instead select, DVD -> Open disk

The size of the video screen can be controlled by right-clicking on the mouse and selecting normal size, double size or full screen. When you are in the full screen mode, to return to normal size, right-click on the mouse and select normal size.

EXERCISES

1. Play an audio CD using the KsCD Player
2. Play an audio digital music track using Amarok
3. Play a VCD or DVD using Kaffeine and MPlayer

GRAPHIC IMAGES ACCESS

Very often it is useful if we are able to view graphic image files on their own, or in thumbnail fashion if there are many of them. It is also useful if there are simple tools available which will enable us to manage these image files, e.g. catalog and classify them and recall them for viewing. In this section, we shall look at several tools available on your system which provide some of these functionalities.

FILE MANAGER

The File Manager itself provides a simple and convenient means to access and view image files. To view an image file from the File Manager, move your mouse pointer over the file and a larger thumbnail picture will appear. To view the file full size double click on it. Another convenient way of viewing when you have a lot of files in a folder is to select the "View Mode > Photobook" option from the View menu selection.
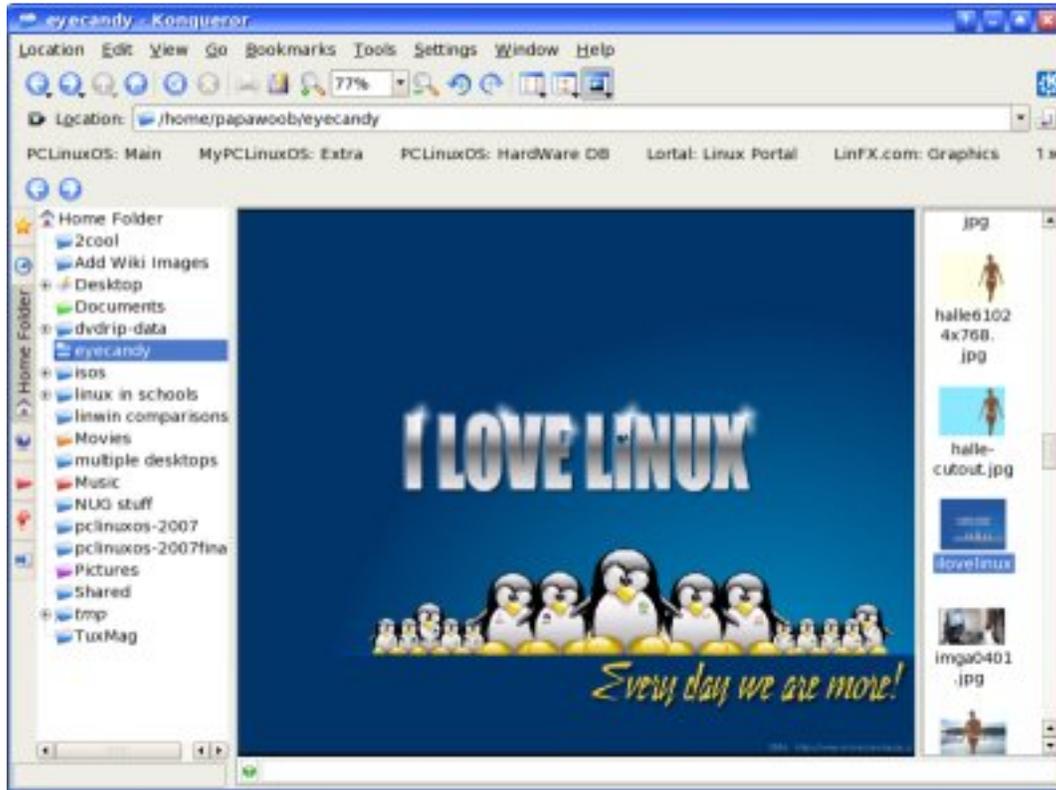
Fig. Photobook View in File Manager

This will result in only the image files present in the folder being displayed. You can then select an individual image to view and also perform zoom in or zoom out views.

DIGIKAM CAMERA ACCESS

Digikam is a simple digital photo management application, which makes importing and organizing digital photos a "snap". The photos can be organized in "albums" which are automatically sorted chronologically. An easy to use interface is provided to connect to your camera and preview images and download and/or delete them.

Digikam uses a folder on your file system as an album library, meaning that every sub folder of this folder will be considered as a photo album and displayed in the album list on the left side of the main window.

Clicking on an album will start showing the thumbnails for the images in the album. You can change the icon size to small, medium,

large or huge from the magnify buttons in the toolbar. Right Clicking on an item will give you a pop–up menu, using which you can view, rename, delete, see the edit information, and add/edit comments of the images. Double clicking on an item will open it up in the image viewer.
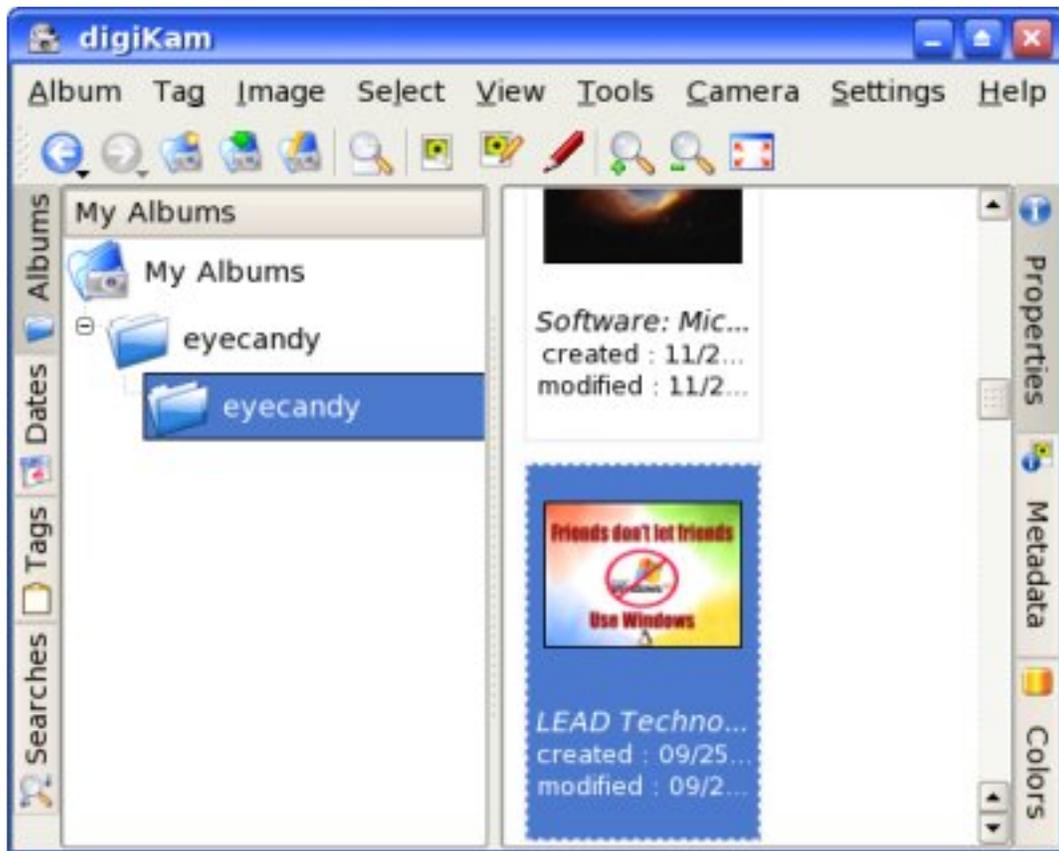
Fig. DigiKam Photo Manager

To be able to use your digital camera with Digikam, connect the camera to your computer, switch the camera to the image display mode and turn it on. If your camera is detected as a mass storage device (ex. sda1) a "New Medium Found" window will be displayed on your desktop along with an icon. If this does not happen when you plug your camera in and turn it on then you will need to setup the camera model and port using the setup interface. Try and see if Digikam can auto–detect the camera; if not, you can set the camera model and port manually.
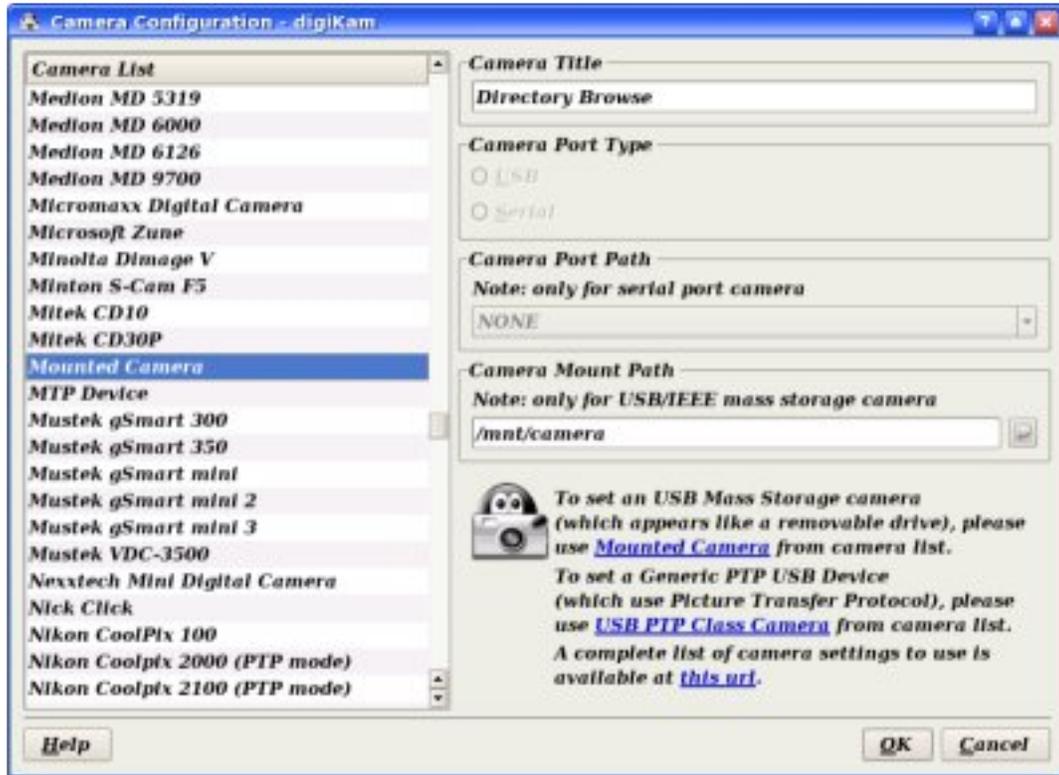
Fig. Camera Configuration

Once you have the camera setup, go to the "Cameras" menu in the main interface and you will see the camera listed in the menu (Note: You can choose any title you like for the camera in the setup and this title will be used in the "Cameras" menu). If you have more than one camera, you can add them throughout the setup interface.

Clicking on the camera item in the menu will pop up a new Camera Interface and this will connect to the camera, and thumbnails (if supported by the camera) will be downloaded and displayed. You can then select the images and download or delete them from the camera. Downloading can be done by using the menu/toolbar buttons or by dragging and dropping them onto an album folder or any other folder that you choose.

Digital cameras nowadays store images on either a CompactFlash card, SD card, or SmartMedia card. The camera internally makes sub folders in these storage media which it uses to save the images. Digikam displays these internal folder trees and also provides a global virtual folder which shows all the images available in the camera.

When you open the camera interface for the first time the folders are hidden and the contents of the global virtual folder are shown (i.e. all the pictures in the camera). You can choose to see the actual folders on the camera by unselecting "Hide Folders" in the "View" menu. This will show the folders on the camera, the topmost folder being the global virtual folder. Clicking on a folder will show the contents of the folder in the thumbnail view.
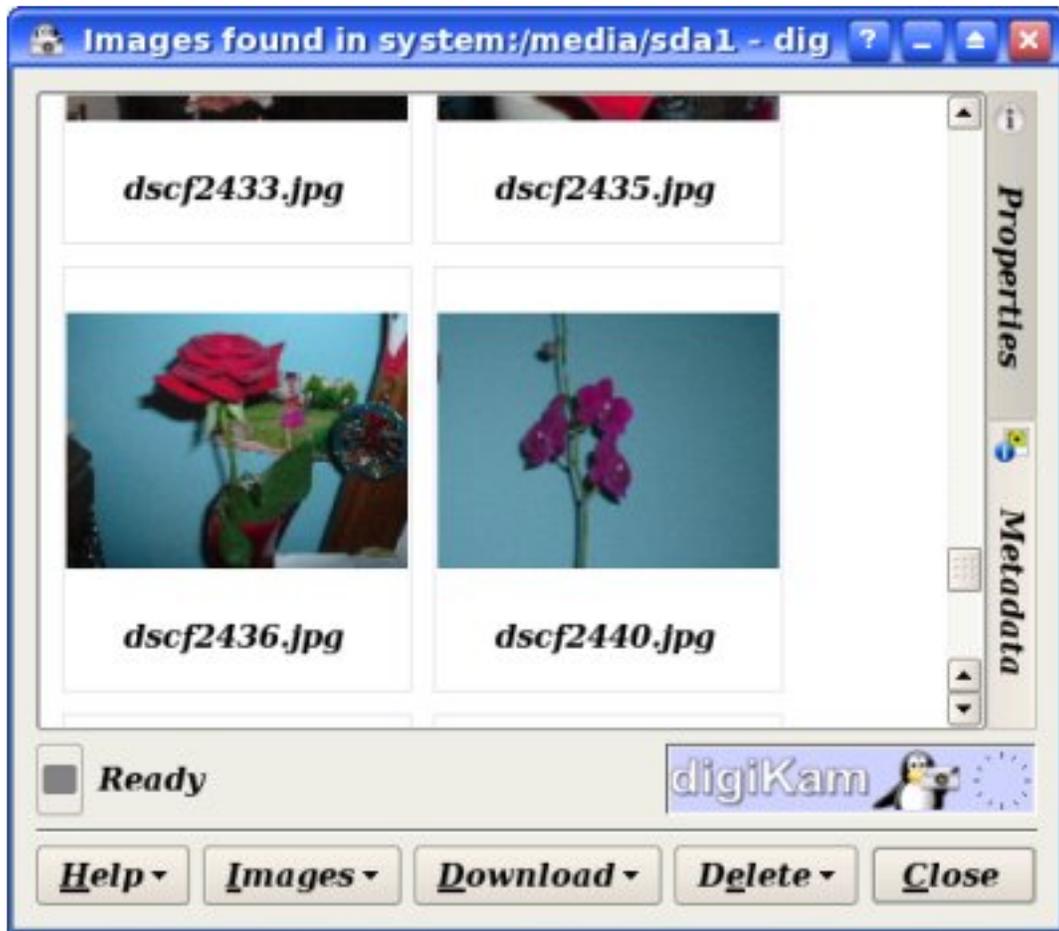
Fig. DigiKam Camera Client

SHOWFOTO IMAGE VIEWER

The showFoto image viewer is a powerful tool for viewing, and organizing graphic image files. To start this application perform:

Main Menu -> Multimedia -> Graphics ->showFoto
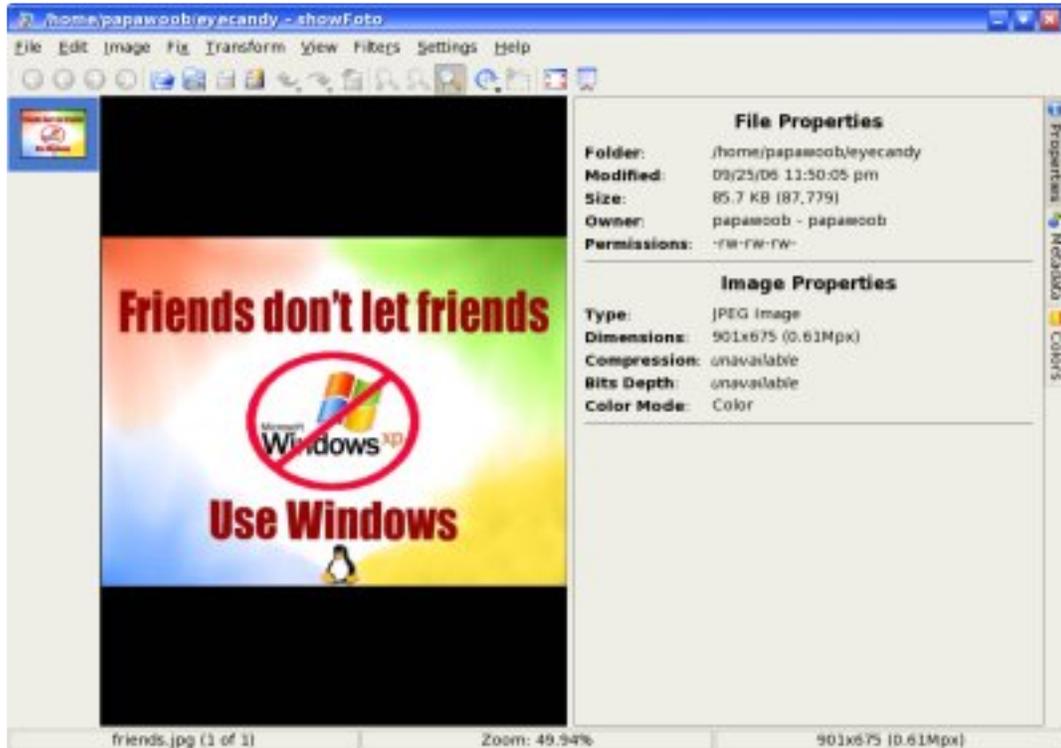
Fig. showFoto Image Viewer

VIEW

The simplest way to view an image is to double-click on the name of the image and it will be displayed in full. You can also navigate to the next/previous image as well as go to full-screen viewing. The Zoom function can be used to zoom in or out of the image currently being displayed. Click on the Folders button at the top of the screen to go back to the thumbnail view. A preview of the image will be displayed in the preview area if you just select the thumbnail.

One useful feature of showFoto is the slide show. After a folder has been opened (File > Open folder), selecting View > Slide Show will start a full screen slide show of the images in that folder.

IMAGE MANIPULATION

You can also manipulate the images under showFoto. Some supported functions include rotation, flipping, resizing, and Blowup. To access these functions select "Transform" from the menu bar at the top. Additional tools for working on your graphics files can be found under the Fix menu.

CONVERT FORMAT

The Save As function of showFoto allows you to convert your image files from one format to another. Some of the 14 supported formats are:

Portable Network Graphics (PNG)
Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG, JPG)
Tag Image File Format (TIFF)
TARGA format (TGA)

To use the Convert function, select an image first and then from the top menu bar, select,

File -> Save As

and choose whichever format you would like to save to from the drop down list.

HELP

showFoto has many other useful features. The online help guide should be consulted for more details on how to use showFoto.

showFoto Handbook

EXERCISES

Use showFoto for the following:
1. View the images in the following folder:
usr/share/backgrounds/images
2. View a slide show of the images in the folder above.
3. Copy one of the images from the above folder into your home directory and scale it down to 25% of its original size and save it.

MS Vista/Linux Dual Boot Tutorial

by Gimlet

Many people and I have discovered that the new MS OS Vista has a new boot loader. Creating a dual boot system can no longer be accomplished with the usual methods. Here is a solution that I have found to be quick and simple.

If you are starting with Vista installed, do a volume defragmentation using the Windows defragmentation tools. When the defragmentation has finished, go to Start/Control Panel/Administrative Tools. Select Computer Management, then Disk Management.
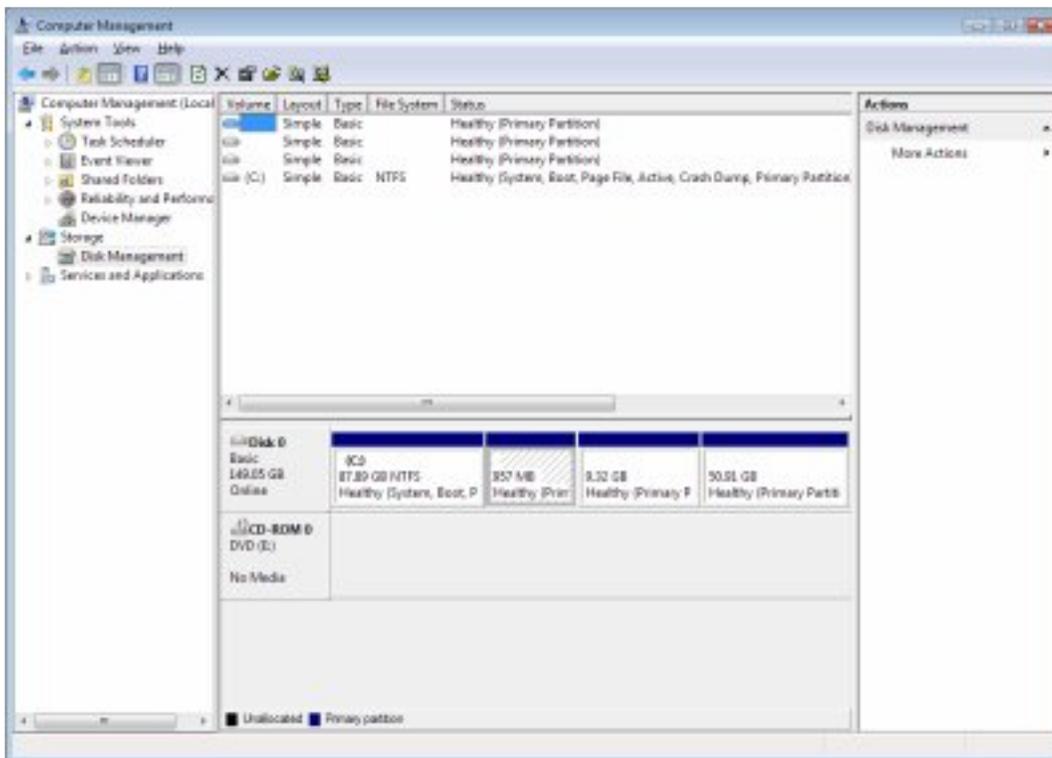
Fig. Disk Management window

Select your Windows hard drive with a right click and select "Shrink Volume" from the sub menu. Shrink your partition to allow for your Linux install. 2 gig swap, 10 gig /, and whatever you want for /home. Close down all open windows.

MS Vista/Linux Dual Boot Tutorial
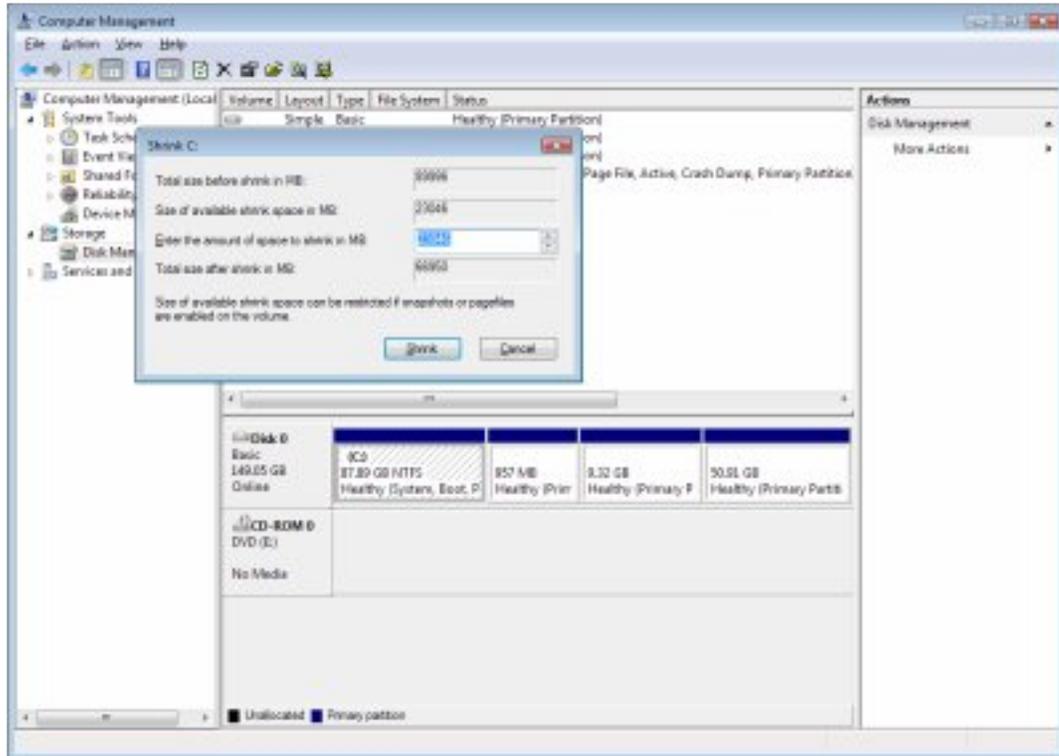
Fig. Shrink Volume

Download and install EasyBCD. It can be found at the link below:

http://neosmart.net/dl.php?id=1

Take your Linux Distro of choice (mine is PCLinuxOS) and do an install. Follow the instructions. When you reach the point where the distro asks you where you want to install Grub/Lilo, make sure you tell it to install to /root. That means the partition you installed Linux to. Make sure it is not installed to the MBR. When you are finished your install, reboot.

Ok don't be surprised when all you see is Windows rebooting. This is where EasyBCD comes into play. Start EasyBCD. It should look like this:

MS Vista/Linux Dual Boot Tutorial

EasyBCD Toolbox

View Settings

Configure Boot

Add/Remove Entries

Advanced Options

Manage Bootloader

Useful Utilities

Display Mode

◉ Overview   ○ Detailed (Debug Mode)   ☐ ¶ WordWrap

There are a total of 2 entries listed in the Vista Bootloader.
Bootloader TimeOut: 30 seconds.
Default OS: Microsoft Windows Vista

Entry #1

Name: Microsoft Windows Vista
BCD ID: {current}
Drive: C:\
Bootloader Path: \Windows\system32\winload.exe
Windows Directory: \Windows

Entry #2

Name: PCLinuxOS
BCD ID: {9d7e9846-ea2d-11db-9fe6-0016d46a178e}
Drive: C:\
Bootloader Path: \NST\nst_grub.mbr
Windows Directory:

Fig. EasyBCD

Select Add/Remove Entries

Then select the Linux/BSD tab on the bottom right. Now click on the Type drop down menu and select the type of boot loader you installed (Grub/Lilo). Next, give it a name in the name box. (PCLinuxOS)

Now here comes the only part that confused me but, that happens a lot. Look to the bottom left again. You will see two entries, Hard Drive and Partition. In my case I have only one hard drive so the hard drive is "0" and the / partition is "3." Here is why. Windows is on the first partition, swap is the second partition, and root (/) was on the third partition. So if you had two hard drives and Linux was on the second hard drive and you setup the drive with swap first, then root, then home, you would select hard drive "1" and partition "2." Click "add entry" and you are done.

MS Vista/Linux Dual Boot Tutorial
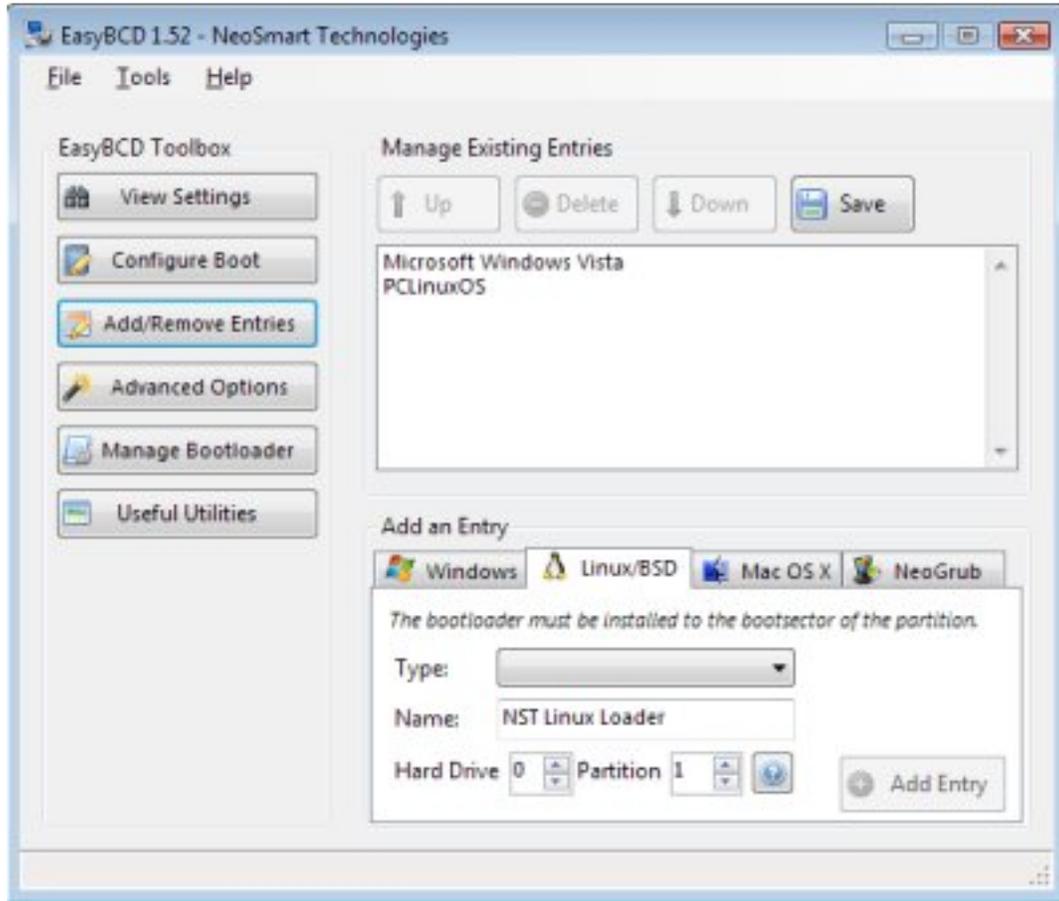
Fig. Add/ Remove Window

Reboot Windows and you should be greeted with a black screen with white text listing the two operating systems. Select the Linux entry and you should see the Grub/Lilo boot loader. Select your OS and away you go.

If for any reason you want to remove Linux and get your Vista boot loader back, just fire up EasyBCD and select Manage Bootloader, set your options, and click write MBR

I hope this is helpful. I am sure there are other ways to do this but I have found this simple and quick. I have been using it for several months with no problems.

A Simple Backup Method Using Grsync

by Iain Jackson (iainrj on PCLOS and MYPCLOS forums)

This article is a simple tutorial on using Grsync as a backup utility, There have been a lot of threads on the main forum from users asking for advice on backup and I have found Grsync to be the simplest and quickest method around.

Grysnc is a GUI-front-end for the command line application rsync. Rsync has many powerful applications, not least for synchronising data to web servers. In fact rsync scripts are used by Texstar for synchronising the repositories as new applications are added.

This short tutorial will show you how you can use Grsync to back up your /home directory to either another hard drive, partition or removable drive.

Your /home directory is where all your e-mails and bookmarks are stored in hidden folders. To view them open home in Konqueror and click on View|Show hidden files. Depending upon which applications you are using you might see a .mozilla folder containing your Firefox bookmarks and extensions; a .thunderbird containing your e-mails and a .kde folder containing your desktop settings and settings from KDE applications such as kmail.

1. Install Grysnc from Synaptic.

Once installed, you will see the application under KMenu-->Internet-->File Transfer. It might be a good idea to create a desktop icon for easy access. To do so, right-click the icon in the k-menu and then choose Add Item to Desktop:

2. a) If you want to backup to a removable medium such as a USB flash drive or external USB drive, insert it now. When PCLOS detects the drive, click on Open in New Window to mount the drive:

   b) It is a good idea to create a new directory on your removable disk to store the backup files. In your new window create a new folder. As an example, home.backup is the directory name I use. To create a folder, click on Edit|Create New|Folder.

Use the panel icon to go back to Grsync once your media is mounted.

A Simple Backup Method Using Grsync

3. CREATE A BACKUP SESSION.

a) When you launch Grsync you will see this screen:

b) Click on Add in the Sessions section and enter a session name. This is just so that once configured, you can quickly run the same backup routine by choosing the session. Type something like "Home Backup" and then click OK:

c) You now need to add your source and destination directories. There are 2 blank boxes in the middle of the Grsync window. The top box is the source – this is where your files currently are. The bottom box is the destination – where you want your files backed up to.

d) Click on Browse next to the source box. This should take you straight to your home directory. Just click on Open to select it:

e) Click on Browse next to the destination box. Your removable drive should have appeared as a link on the left hand side of the file dialog for easy access. Double-click it, then double-click on your backup folder before choosing Open:

4. CHANGE THE BASIC OPTIONS.

a) It's probably a good idea to select Preserve Owner, Groups and Permissions so that if you need to reinstate from the backup, you won't get into any ownership problems.

b) Select Delete on Destination to ensure that you don't end up with any old files in your backup that don't exist in your home directory.

5. ADVANCED OPTIONS.

a) Check the Copy symlinks as symlinks box. This means that if there are any links to files, only the link, rather than the file itself is copied over.

b) Additional options are useful if you want to add other rsync or console commands. The one I use is the exclude command. The example below excludes the .thumbnails directory from the backup:

c) To find out all available rsync commands type man rsync into a terminal.

6. Do a "dry run". Click on Simulation and you'll get a quick run through of what is going to be copied over.

7. When you are satisfied all the correct files are being either deleted or copied, click on Execute. The first time you run the sync it may take a while as it has to transfer all your data. The exact time will depend upon the amount of data you are copying and the speed of your computer. It might take 5-10 minutes to transfer your /home the first time out, longer if you have a lot of large files such as audio or movie files.

Subsequent syncs will be much quicker, perhaps 30 seconds, as it only sends new or updated files for backup:

Grsync makes using rsync easy but doesn't give you the full functionality. If you want to have a go at creating scheduled backups, you can write rsync scripts and use cron or Kcron to schedule the tasks. Here's a good website that takes you through that process: http://www.mikerubel.org/computers/rsync_snapshots/#Rsync

For me, Grsync works a treat. About once a week, I switch on my external hard drive, and run my 2 Grsync sessions – one for /home and one for my data partition. The whole process takes about 5 minutes and I am safe in the knowledge if I need a clean reinstall of PCLOS I have all my application settings, e-mails, bookmarks and more importantly my music and photos backed up.

Not Everyone's Body is Unimpaired

by Heather

Summer arrived with a flourish here in my corner of the world. Its been a hot summer so far, one I must admit I am enjoying very much, probably because the other 11 months are full of snow. However, though my local Pride Parade (a parade put on by our local gay community) got rained on rather nastily, it didn't douse the spirits of the people present and especially not the spirits of Steve, a friend of mine.

I don't see Steve often anymore since I don't go to the bar much now, but when I did I often talked to him and danced with him when possible. My girlfriend introduced us and she said she knew right off I'd have no prejudices against dancing with someone with CP (Cerebral Palsy) even if they were in a wheelchair or needed help seeing their way to the floor. She was right, as she usually is, and seeing Steve since then has been a joy because he is always smiling. Seeing him this year reminded me that I have been meaning to write something for this column that serves what I feel is an under-served section of the community: those with various disabilities or needing aid to use their computers in any way.

Certain people like Steve have less of an issue with their laptops and desktops if they are reasonably able to use a pointing device, but what of others?   What about people who are deaf or hard of hearing (HoH)? Having worked with deaf/HoH people for a year, I became acutely aware of their issues many years ago. It seems their needs are being met more and more but I have to wonder if this is true in the FOSS community or just the commercial realm.

Then there are those who are legally or totally blind. Where do they fit into all of this? How do they access what is, for all intents and purposes, a very visual medium? GUI or command line, it will make little difference to them which they use if they can't see what it is they are trying to access. I've seen a couple of specialist distros that address this (Oralux is the one I tried on my own desktop and I will address it in another column if possible). I have become aware of tools on the major DE's that can also help people who face these challenges. However, I also admit my knowledge in this area is woefully inadequate. Do such tools exist outside of the KDE/Gnome desktops?

Then we arrive at the people whose disabilities are more pronounced than Steve's. People who, for whatever reason, are incapable of using

Not Everyone's Body is Unimpaired

a standard mouse or trackpad or trackball. There are those who can move only their eyes or need to use a mouthstick. Where do they go and what support can be offered to them? Is there specialized hardware available for these people and if so where would one go to access such things? Dare I even hope that the drivers used to tell these devices how to behave on a standard Linux installation work on Linux at all? Where are the developers doing the nitty-gritty work on these kinds of coding problems?

I'm sure I've missed some form of disability or some such thing in there. This is why I am calling upon you, my loyal readers, to help me. If it's possible for you to help me with this small series of articles, I'd like your input on these issues! Write in, give me ideas on where to look for information or name a distro you have tried that uses special hardware or software to help those with disabilities of any kind. If you cannot try a distro but want me (or someone I know) to try it out and give a short synopsis of how useful it might be, write in! I'm looking for readers to point out, as well, where things can be improved when it comes to helping you use the technology we have available to us today. Which companies are doing the R & D to solve these issues? Which businesses have a decent headset for someone with very limited mobility so she can use a head pointer to move a cursor around on the screen? Is it expensive? Does it require special setup or knowledge to set it up on the system? In other words, is it plug and play?

I know that the Debian distro has had, for some time now, Emac-Speak built-in and Braille drivers that allow the blind to use their braille hardware with a regular computer using linux. Do you know of any other distros out there that work extra hard to help all users access their computer? Write in and tell us what you think of that distro or ask us to review it if you like. Heck, review it yourself and write us anyway! Most importantly I want my readers to write in and tell me what they want me to address in the next few columns on the subject of disability and Linux. I want to hear what you have to say and I want to know what aspects of Linux you want me to cover so we can, perhaps, help you to enjoy using your computer instead of having to fight with it to get your tasks done.

Lastly if any of your friends or family wish to write in to point out things we might look at addressing, please tell them to do so. We are happy to receive such emails and I hope we can get to them. With luck we will manage to address the issues they might bring up too.

LinuxTracker, Torrent Seeding and Your Client

by John Coombe

BitTorrent files, colloquially torrents, are the most popular method of sharing files among people all over the Internet now because it is true peer to peer sharing. The servers do not host any files, only the identifying files called tracking files. These are used to enable the servers to keep track of who has what part of which file and to allocate priorities to the packets being sent.

The LinuxTracker site serves huge numbers of distros' torrents and is not exclusively for the use of PCLinuxOS. Because of the large numbers of torrents that are active at any given time, it is not uncommon for individual BT clients to not be able to connect to the tracker sometimes due to the amount of traffic that the site encounters 24/7 x 52 weeks/year.

Usually, if you go back and look at your BT client an hour or two later, it will likely show something different.

An example of what is happening at the LinuxTracker (from bottom of main page) – this changes all the time
Tracking 2,673 Torrents with 237,110 Peers (84,505 Seeders and 152,605 Leechers)
Current Seeder/Leecher Ratio (%) = 55%
Total Registered Users 25,080
Members Online (Now): 13 Members
Members Online (In last 24 Hours): 312 Members
Most Users Online: 594 Members on: 2007–04–20 08:15:41

So you can see it is not uncommon for several thousand torrents to be active at any given time and just look at the numbers of seeds/leeches. All of them have to communicate with LinuxTracker. Due to this fact, it is normal that the SiteAdmin of this tracker (and others) sets the time that the tracker sends out an update request to each peer to around an hour. If the update request was made more frequent than once an hour, the amount of network bandwidth would be humongous, and he would have to pay for that. Also, if it was made more frequent, it could act like a DOS (denial of service) for the site. This aspect of busy sites is well known. There are some sites where the update request has been set at 2 hours to reduce traffic.

If, due to the amount of traffic collisions, an individual BT client

misses getting the update request, then you may have to wait for another hour for it to happen again. It does not mean all the seeds/leeches have vanished, it just means your BT client missed the last update request.

Of course, this is for a torrent that is still active and has a lot of peers using it and so lots of traffic. Eventually everyone downloads the file(s) and has finished leeching. So all the seeds stop bothering to continue to seed. Sometimes a torrent becomes what is called a dead torrent, and if you try to download (leech), you fail unless a seed is kind enough to restart for you! When a seed is 'dead' no matter how long you wait, it will stay dead. Even if you get an update request from the tracker you will never be able to connect to another peer because there are not any left. When a torrent is dead, it is dead. :-(

A snapshot look at the torrent statistics at the LinuxTracker site shows: 4712 completed 368 seeds 132 leeches. Another snapshot look in 5, 15, or 30 minutes would show the number of seeds/leeches higher or lower, depending on the traffic during that time.

I hope that gives some sort of concept as to what is happening.

Our grateful appreciation to MyPCLinuxOS.com and Devnet for making this project possible.

MyPCLinuxOS

The PCLinuxOS Hardware Database

A User's Story

On 6/10/07, s0l1dsnak3123 <s0l1dsnak3123@googlemail.com> wrote:

First of all, I'd love to congratulate Texstar and his gang on their amazing distro. It beats most commercial distros by quite a large distance. I have tried many distros, including SimplyMEPIS, openSUSE, Ubuntu, Kubuntu, and BackTrack, and I can easily say that this one is the best.

Second, I'd like to thank you for this magazine, as it has helped me understand many things about Linux. Linux is a complicated beast, and I am proud to say that this magazine has helped me straighten things out.

I am a 3rd year student at my high school, and I recently had a solo-talk (basically a presentation) on Linux in front of the class. Many people came up with different things, ranging from Elvis Presley to Tom Crean. I chose Linus Torvalds (in part an excuse to advertise PCLOS and Linux in general to my class). I used a Power Point presentation with built-in videos of various functions and (of course) the fanciest bells and whistles that Linux currently enjoys (Beryl, for example). After I showed all of these videos, I showed a diagram I had made of all the different parts of the desktop, noting the transparency and handy features that other, more popular operating systems lack. I showed how easy it was to change window managers and presented some facts and figures on Linux's reliability, and 'customizability'.

My fellow pupils watched in awe at Beryl's beautiful effects. They stared on at the customizations. However, I held one main factor to the end. In fact, a pupil asked me before I got to say it... the price. When I told them it was free, they didn't believe me. When my English teacher asked what was the catch, and I said simply that there wasn't one, nobody believed me still. When I told them about the GPL, they didn't understand what was in it for the programmers, GFX designers, etc. I told them that the main reason is because they want people to use it, modify it, pass it on, freely, without any restrictions whatsoever, and the only way for that to happen would be for it to be free. By this time people wanted to know where to get "it", so I told everybody the addresses for Distrowatch and PCLOS.

People now wanted to know how to burn the disk, but I had prepared

A User's Story

for this question. I gave out copies of PCLOS TR3 which everyone in my class took home with glee. I also gave them instructions on how to start up the disk and install. My class has 20 pupils, 19 of which own a computer. A couple of weeks ago, I asked how many people had tried out PCLOS and 18 out of the 19 raised their hand. I asked how many people used it weekly and I am proud to say that only 1 person put his hand down. That means out of 19 people who have computers in my class, 17 use PCLOS weekly. Is that success or what? I was thrilled to see my English teacher ask how to install PCLOS over his Windows XP install. I think Linux will be a big hit in years to come.

A lot of my friends hated Windows Vista so much they reverted back to XP. Remember, they aren't 'technical' per se, so they didn't know about the performance problems, security problems, etc. While there is a want for an alternative, the Linux community has a chance to go mainstream. First things first though: we need to get rid of the jargon and make Linux more friendly. When I say friendly, I do not mean so that the average newbie will understand. We must remember that the newbie knew how to search Google. He/she also knew how to post on a forum. Many people I know don't even know what a forum is. I also know many people who just use their OS for Runescape.

Linux must stay powerful, but become a more beginner-friendly OS. Take the command line, for example. It is necessary in Linux, but when was the last time the average user used the command line? Probably never. Programs have the GUI built in. Compilers? I doubt the average user knows how to compile a program. Some barely manage installing a program in Windows with the installers such as msi and NSIS. If the Linux community went through something as drastic as this, it would mean a hell of a lot of work... but I believe it would be worth it in the long run.

Just my £0.02,

John AKA s0l1dsnak3123

regards,
John

INSTALLATION AND FIRST USE

Privacy is a big issue in the online world. Big money is made selling our personal information. For those who frequently download using Peer-to-Peer programs, Peerguardian might be a good addition to their system.

Peerguardian runs in the background of your system and is silently blocking a large range of IPs that have been known to do evil things, for instance, IPs from government organisations trying to monitor downloading behaviour, spyware trackers, etc. Whenever your computer tries to make any connection to one of these blacklisted IP's, Peerguardian will prevent it and protect your computer. I consider it a must-have for every computer using P2P applications.

Peerguardian is not (yet) available through the 2007 repositories, so we'll have to download the source code from the main website. http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/peerguardian/pglinux-1.5beta.tar.gz. Save this somewhere on your harddrive and unpack the source where you want to compile it (e.g.: ~/src/pglinux).

I know a lot of you will probably say something like, "Source code?? I've never done that! HELP!!" Trust me, it's not that difficult and I will guide you through the process.

First start Synaptic, locate the `'iptables'`, the `'iptables-devel'`, the `'ipset'` and the `'gcc-c++'` packages and install them. You'll need them to compile Peerguardian.

Now go back to your source directory and open a terminal window. Type '`./configure`' and type the enter key. You'll see a long list being made of things getting checked. This process will check to see that everything is ok and will create the configuration files needed for the compile.

Finally the list will stop running, stating "It's ok to start your make now", do so by entering the 'make' command. Again there will be a lot of gibberish in the terminal window, but if it completes you'll have a freshly built peerguardnf-binary at the ready. As root, copy this binairy to `/usr/bin` using the command '`cp -a ./peerguardnf /usr/bin`'. (Some people may say that '`make install`' is a better

solution for installing the binary. That is absolutely correct, but for some reason, it doesn't work. And the package is no longer being maintained, so we'll stick to copying it instead.)

STARTING PEERGUARDIAN

There are two ways of starting Peerguardian, either automatically by a script which will do all the work for you, or by doing things by hand, leaving more room for configuration.

If you want to do it automatically with a script, you're lucky because I've provided one for you. It updates the lists of blocked IP's from bluetack.co.uk (level 1&2 blocklists) and tells you when Peerguardian has loaded successfully (or not). You can download this script at http://www.xs4all.nl/~dutourge/start_peerguardian. In order for the script to work, you have to make it executable. Do so by typing the command 'chmod a+x ./start_peerguardian' in the directory that contains the script. Now you can just start Peerguardian by double-clicking the script. If you wish to check whether all is going well, you might want to take a look inside the logfile. It'll be located under ~/.pglinux/pglog.txt.

If you want to start Peerguadian manually, here's how.

Pick up some blocklists from http://www.bluetack.co.uk. In the top right corner there is a link 'blocklists' which will lead you to the download page. As you can see, the IPs have been split up under several categories, e.g.: Spyware, Level1, Addons, etc... The Level1 blocklist is the most important one, it contains the largest list with bad IP's everyone ought to have blocked. The others are optional.

You can download one by clicking on it and agreeing to the license. Save the *.zip file to a location of your choice. Unzip it, and you'll find a regular textfile inside. This is useful, because if you download multiple blocklists, you can just paste one underneath. Remember the location of the textfile, since you need it to start Peerguardian.

Now it's time to start Peerguadian itself...

First load the ip_queue module by typing 'modprobe ip_queue', it's needed to run Peerguardian

As an example I'll take my regular command to start Peerguardian (note: peerguardnf must be run as root. If you type 'peerguardnf --help' you'll get a full list of options. I'll use just a few of them in this tutorial.):

```
$ peerguardnf -d -l /home/rick/.pglinux/pglog
/home/rick/.pglinux/level1.txt
```

- '-d' will start the program in daemon mode, it will run as a background application allowing you to close the terminal windows

- '-l /home/user/pglinux/pglog' will write all ouput/errors to a logfile for later analysis

- '/home/user/pglinux/level1.txt' is the path to the blocklist peerguardian will read 'bad IPs' from

If the loading was successful, the log will read something like this:

```
Reading blocklist
detected ASCII blocklist
Entering daemon mode
Blocking 140336 ranges (735355236 IP addresses)
```

Congratulations, you've just started Peerguardian for the first time! If you want to stop it again, open Ksysguard and kill peerguardnf.

tuxmachines.org
Do you waddle the waddle?

DISTROWATCH.COM
Put the fun back into computing. Use Linux, BSD.

Use Amarok To Transfer Music Files To Your Zen

by Papawoob

Just a short How-To that took me considerable time to figure out. Hope this saves someone from the trials and tribulations of having to figure this out for themselves. This will only work on a 2007 install. On .93, either Amarok, or libmtp0 was not quite there yet. You can transfer files but, the names will all appear in Chinese characters which, if you can read Chinese would be great I suppose but, I am not able to read Chinese. In 2007 it works like a charm!

Open Synaptic and install "libmtp0" then close Synaptic.

Open Amarok -> Main menu ->Multimedia -> Sound -> Amarok

If this is your first time opening Amarok it will ask you some configuration questions like where do you store your music so that it can import it and organize it. Unless you prefer some other music manager I would go ahead and let your music be imported.

Go to Settings -> Configure Amarok -> Media Devices ->Add Device
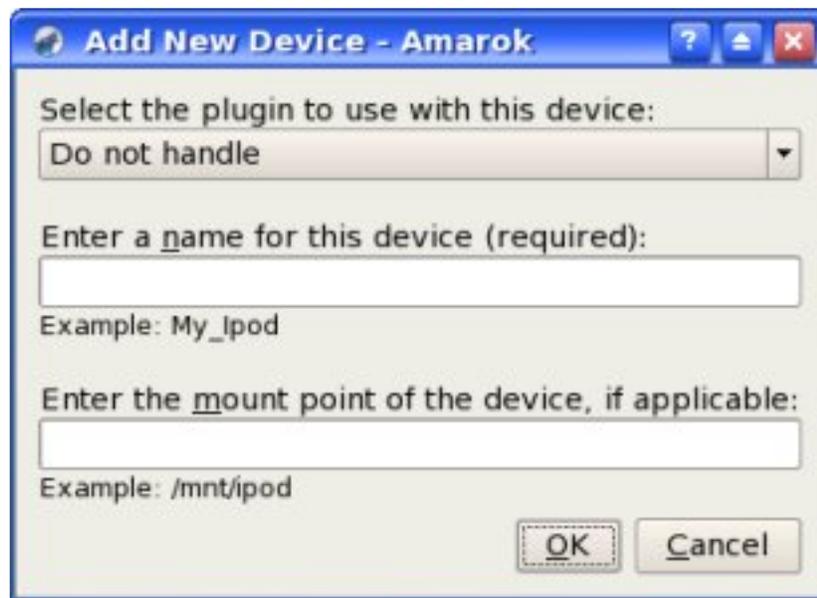
Fig. Add Device

You will see a window with 3 boxes like the one above. Click the arrow to the right of the first box and choose "MTP Media Device." In the second box enter a name for your device like "My Zen." Leave the third box alone and then click "OK."

Use Amarok To Transfer Music Files To Your Zen
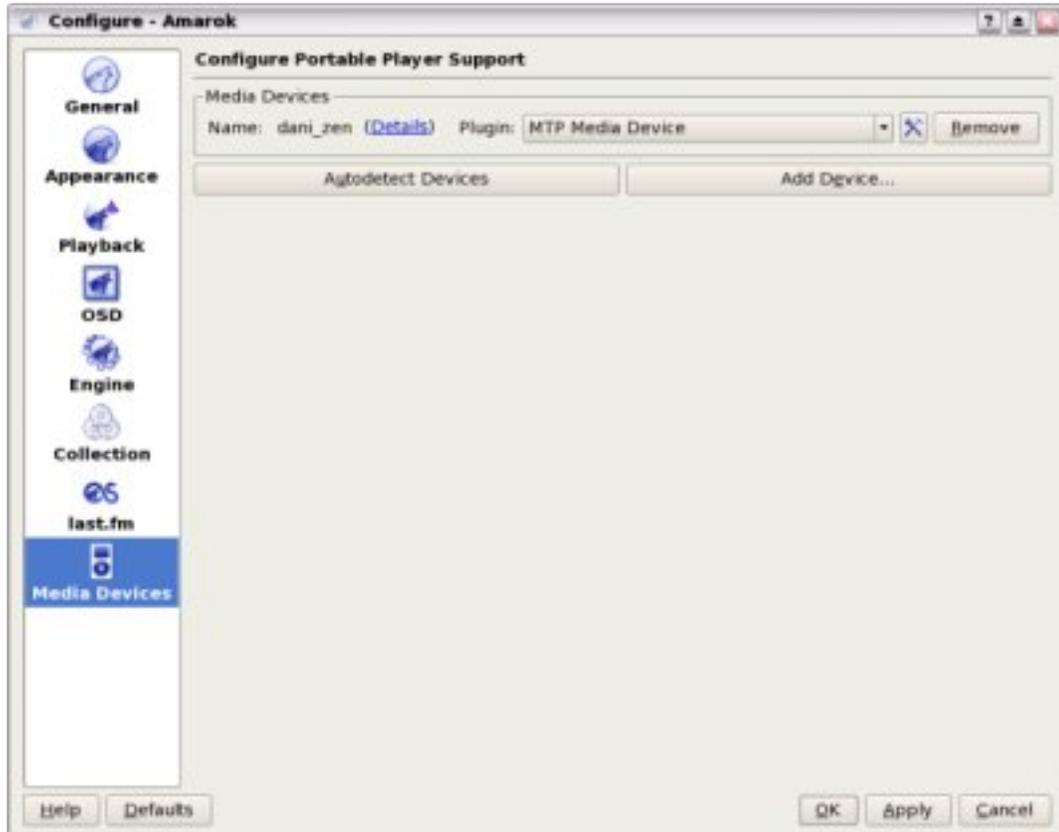
Fig. Configure Amarok

You should now see it listed at the top of the Configure Amarok window. Click "Apply" and then "OK."

You will now be back at the main window. In the bottom left corner you should see a tab that shows the first few characters of the name you gave your Zen (in wy case, "Devi..."). Click this and at the top you should see a "Connect", a "Disconnect", and a "Transfer" button.

Use Amarok To Transfer Music Files To Your Zen

Fig. Amarok main window

At this point you can now plug your Zen into your USB port. Next, click "Connect" and you should see your Zen connect. If you have any music files on your Zen they will appear in the left hand window.

Browse to the folder where you store your music and open it. Move the two windows around so that you can see the left half of the Amarok window and as many of your music files as possible.

Drag and drop all of the files you want to transfer to the left half of the Amarok window. (NOTE: when you drop the first file the window will split in half and you will see the file you dropped in the bottom window. Continue to drop files in the bottom window until you have everything you want to transfer.)

Next, click the "Transfer" button and you should see the files being transferred to your Zen.

When the transfer is complete, click the "Disconnect" button and it will now be safe to remove your Zen from the USB port.

Happy Zenning!

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD

by youcantoo@findmoore.net

INSTALLING PCLINUXOS ON A HARD DRIVE WITH WINDOWS XP ALREADY INSTALLED.

Start by booting your system with the PCLinuxOS Live CD. When you get to the log in screen, select the user name "root" with the password also as root. Once the desk top loads, double click on the package management (Synaptic) icon. It's the one with the red and black circular icon at the bottom of the screen.
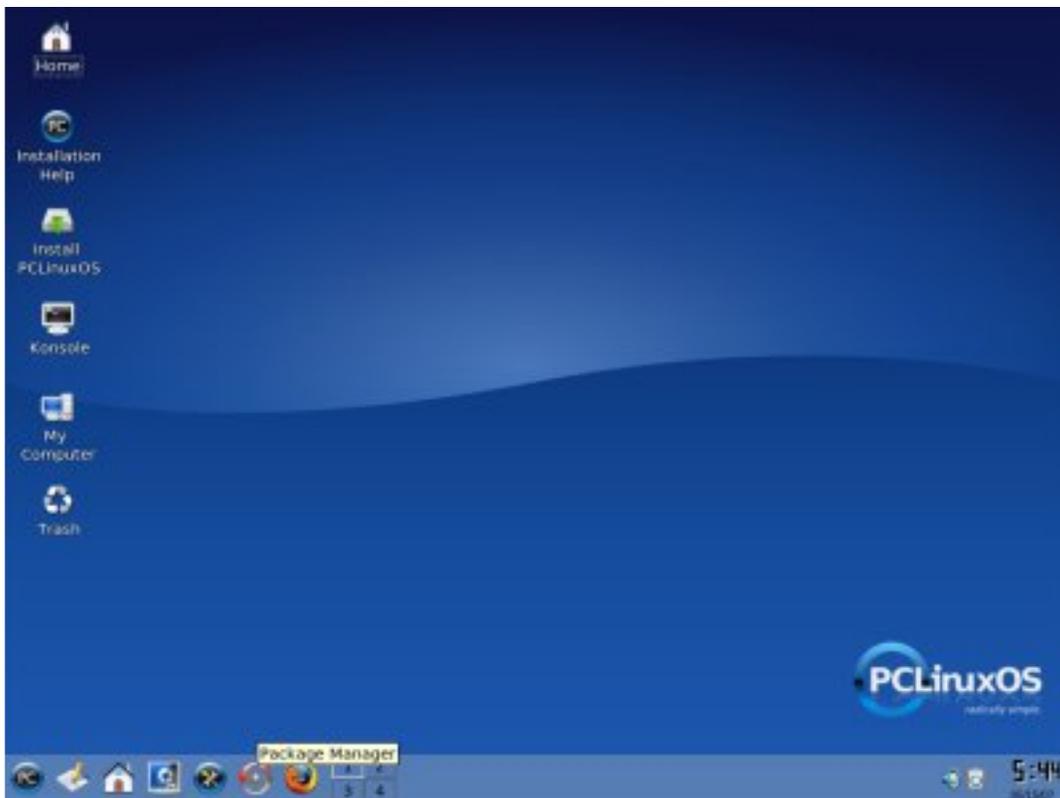
Once it loads, you should now see something similar to the pictures on the next page.

Now, you want to search for and load some software that will allow Linux to read and write to the Windows NTFS file system. At the top of the Synaptic screen, click on the search icon. This will open the search dialog box. In the dialog box, type in "NTFS", and once completed, click on the "search" button.
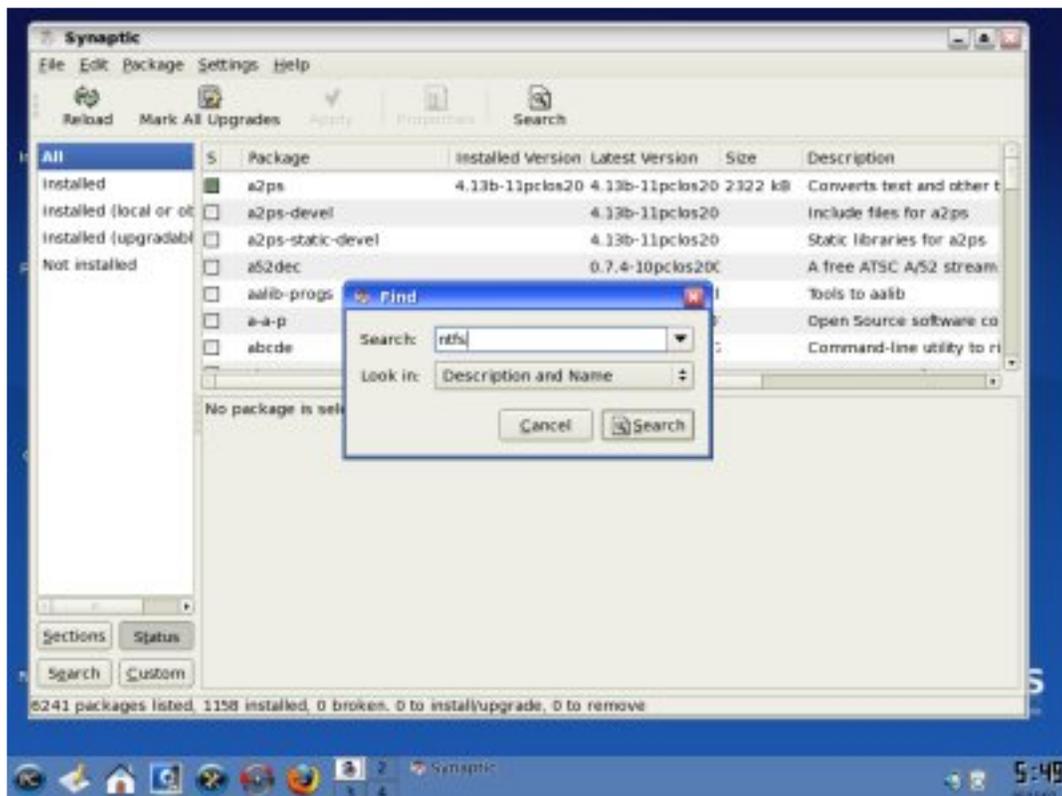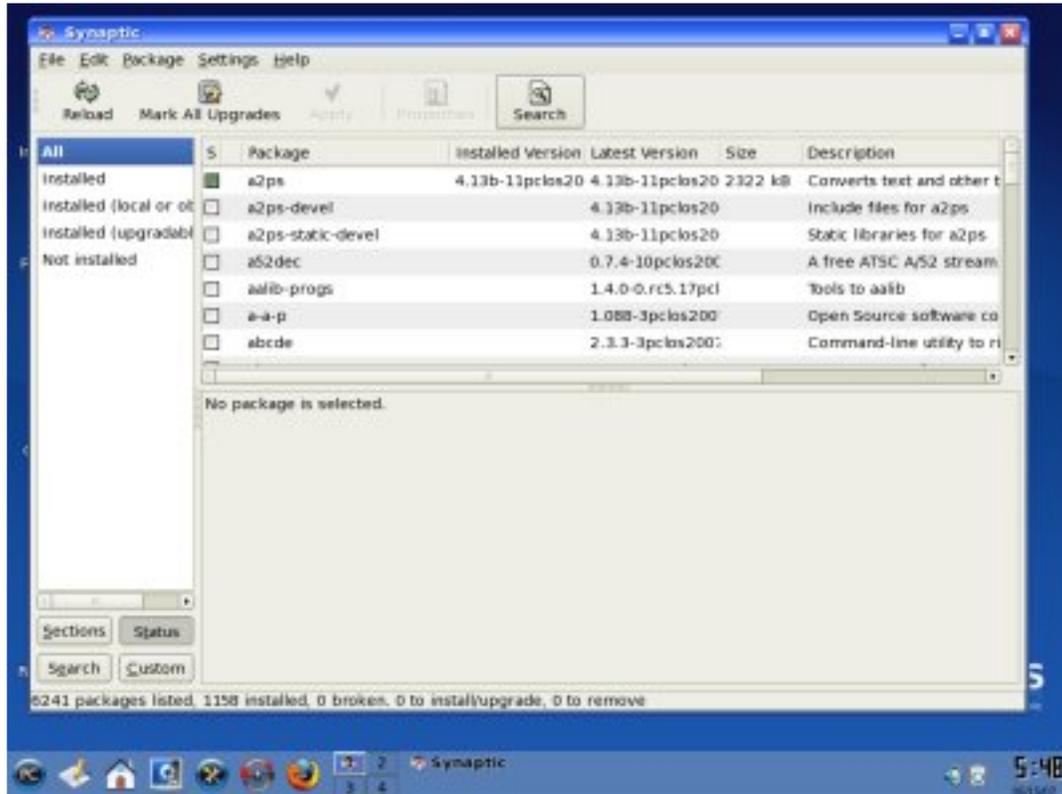
Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD

Now, Synaptic will search for all the programs containing your selected search term "NTFS". You should see something similar to the window below.
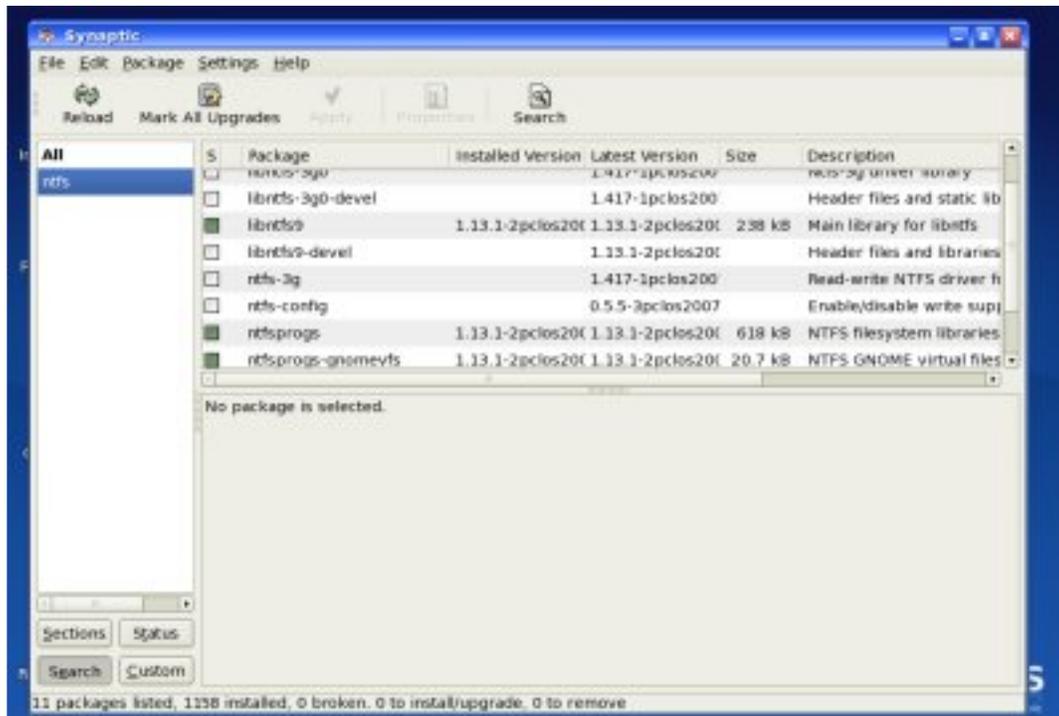
Now click on the little box next to the "ntfs–3g". This will open a dialog box as in the following picture.
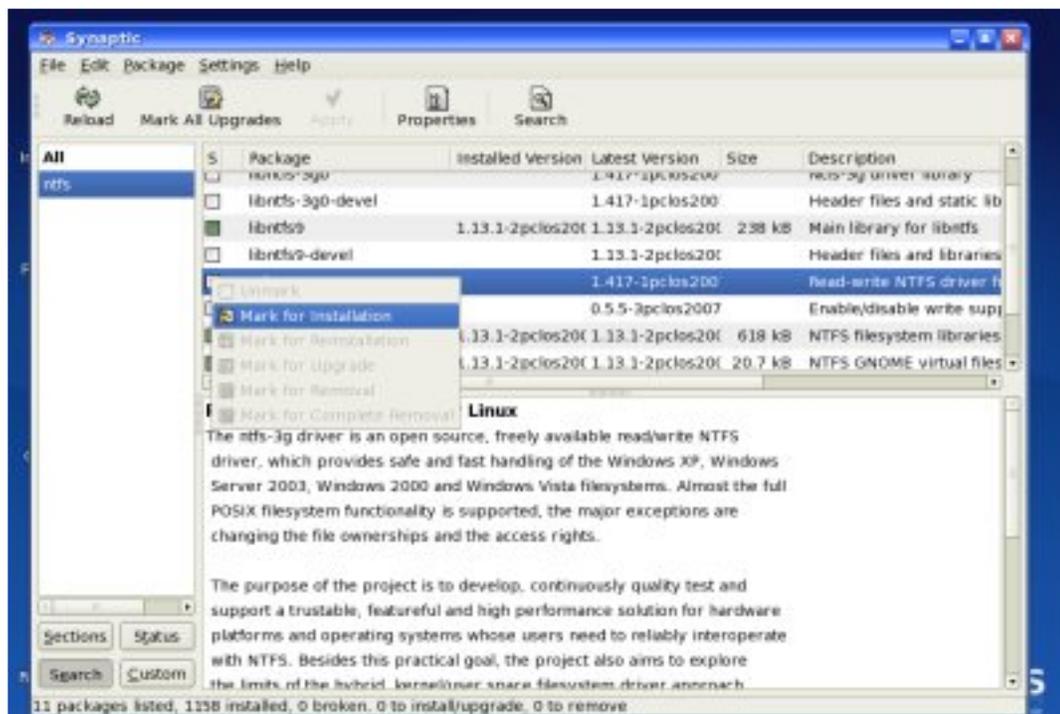
Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD

Click on the "Mark for Installation" line. This will select the "ntfs–3g" file for installation. It now will tell us that we need to mark additional changes. Click on the "Mark" button in the dialog box.
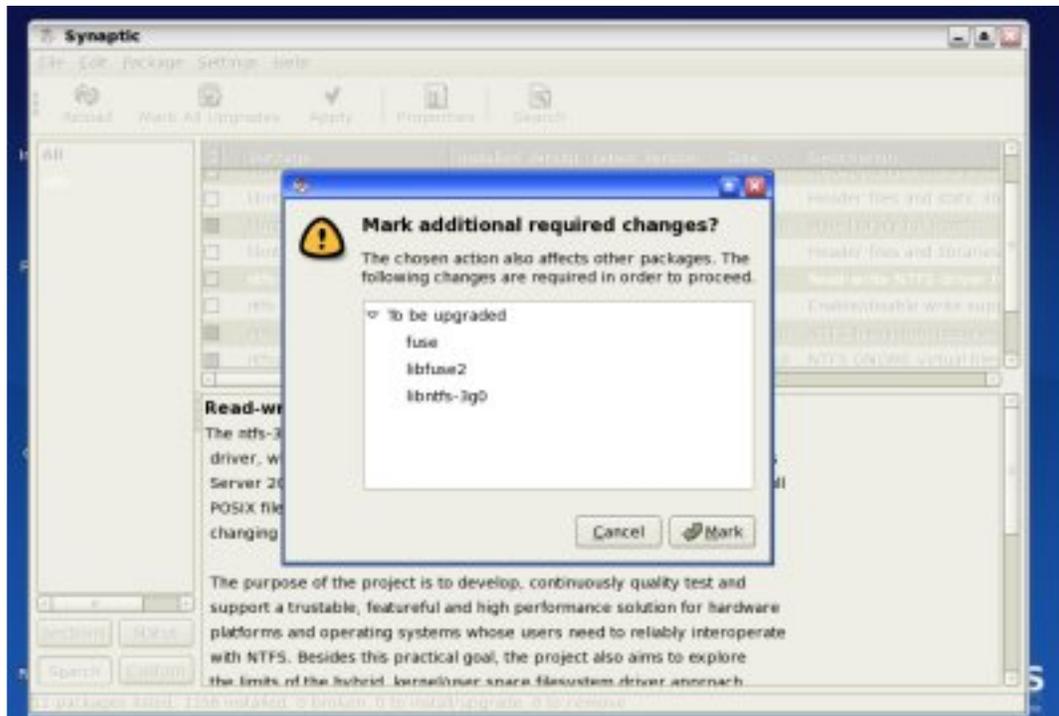
Now you want to apply and install the "ntfs" programs. Click on the "apply" button at the top of the window.
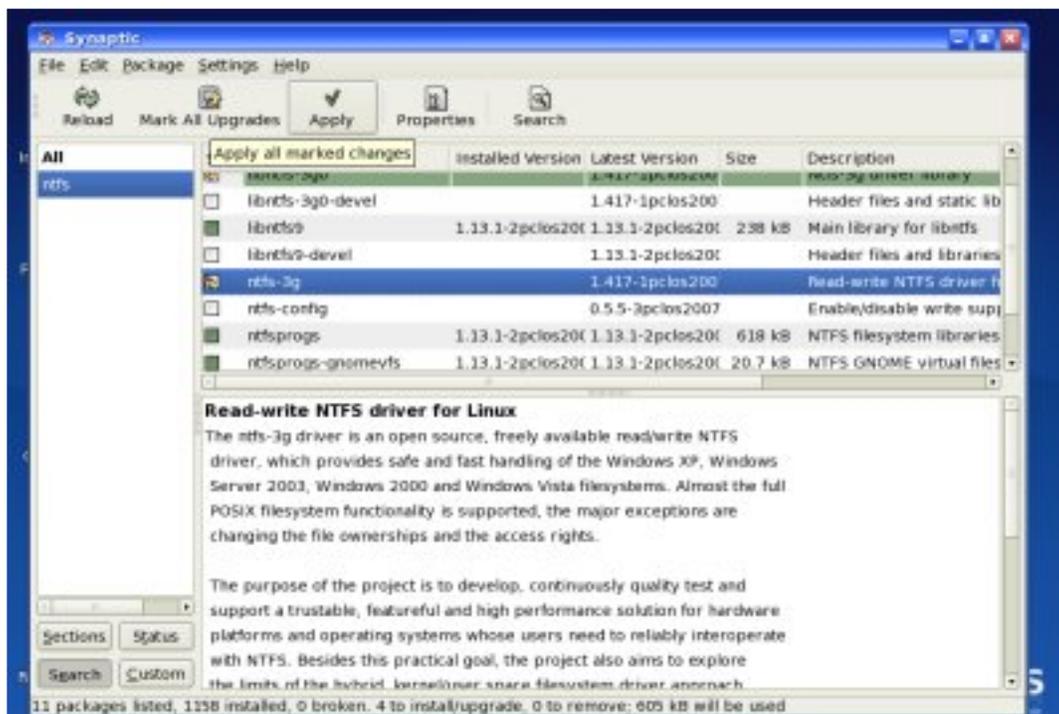
Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
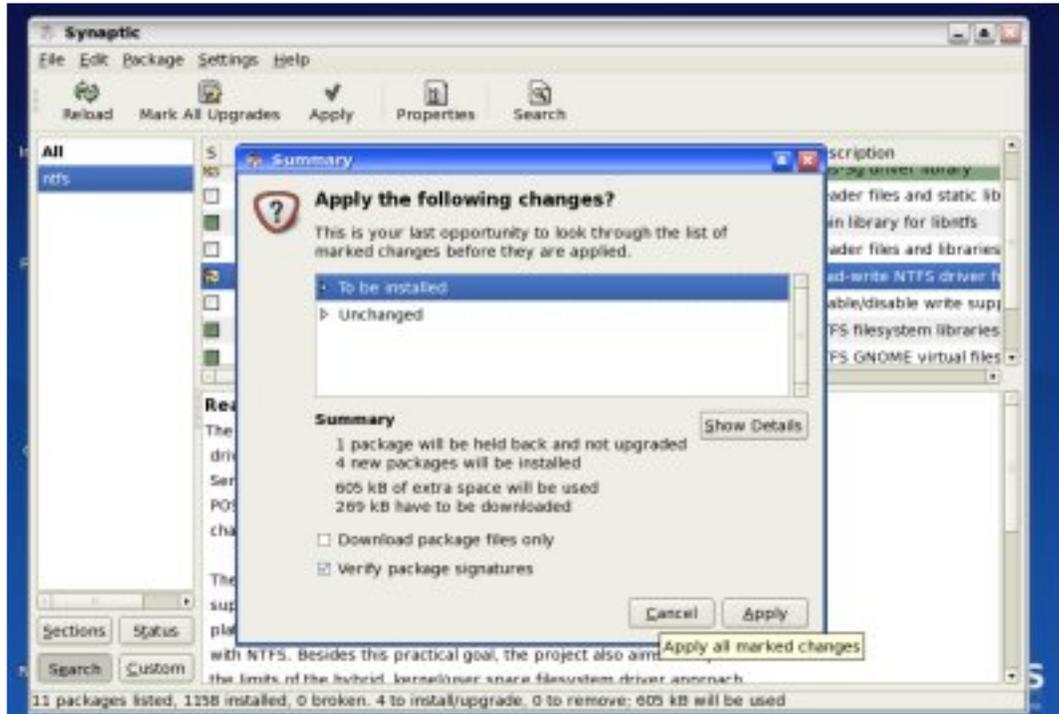
Click on the "Apply" button in the lower right corner of the dialog box. Synaptic will now go about installing the requested software. Once Synaptic has downloaded the software requested, it will install the software and update PCLinuxOS. You will see a screen similar to the following.
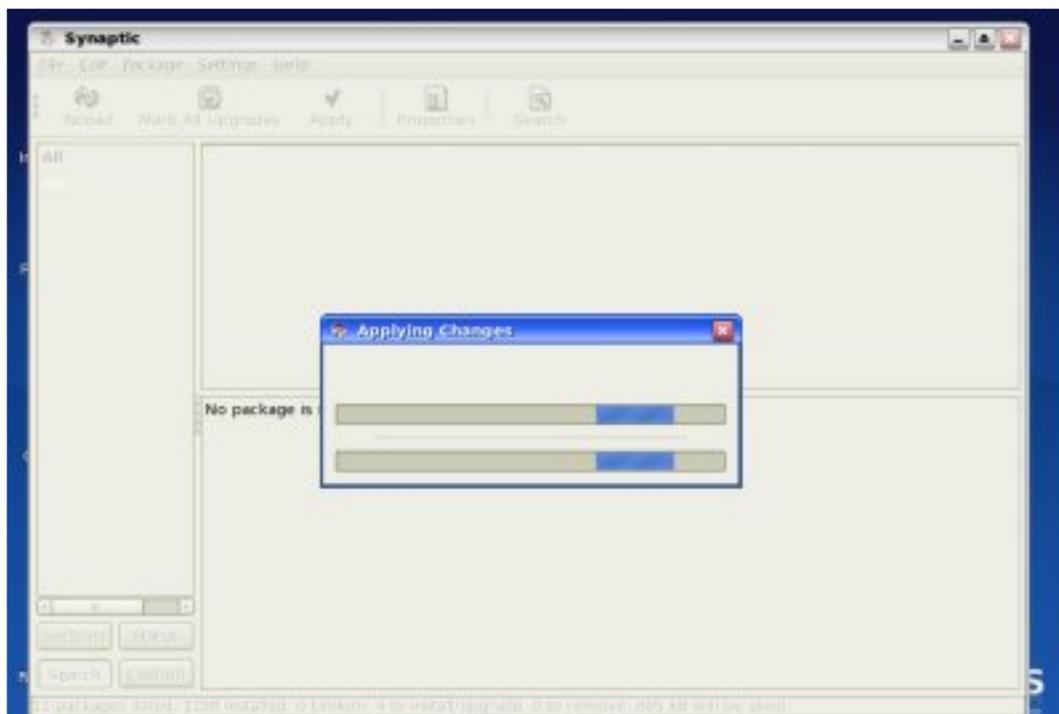
Once Synaptic has finished loading your requested software, you should see a window similar to the one which you started.
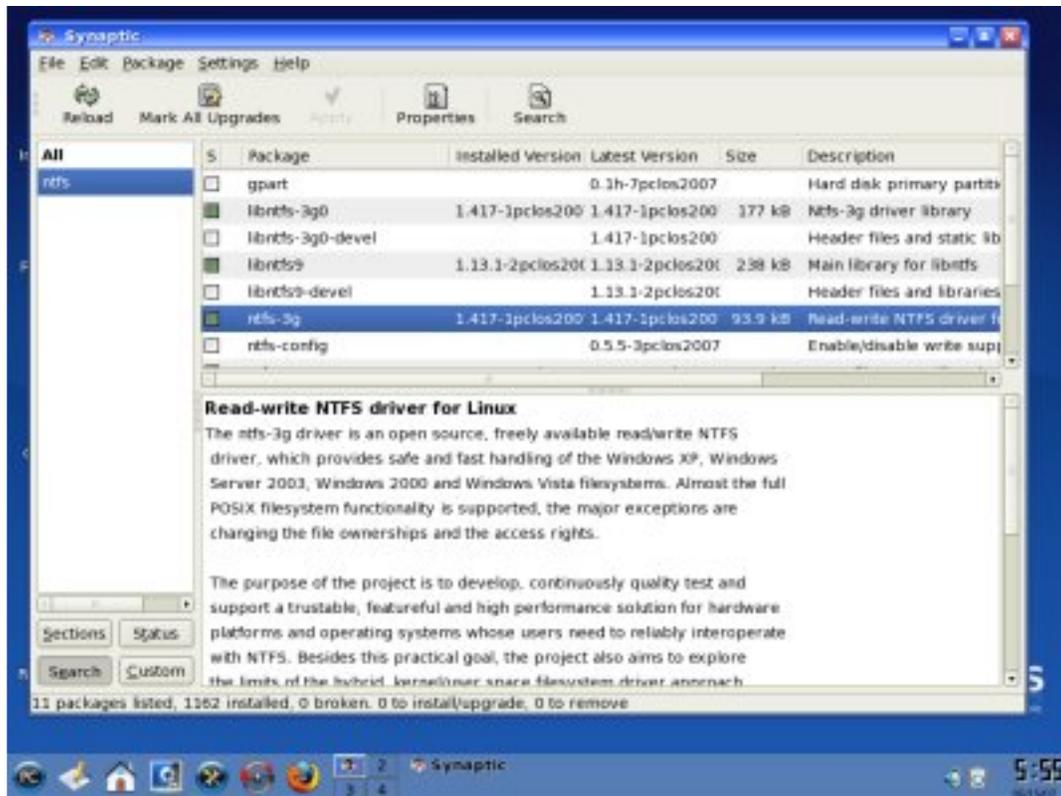
Note that the file "ntfs-3g" now has a green box proceeding it, telling you that this software has been installed on your system. At this point, close Synaptic, by clicking on the "X" in the little red box at the top right hand corner of the Synaptic window. You are now back at the desktop. Now you are going to prepare to resize your hard drive for the Linux installation. Click on the "Konsole" icon.

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
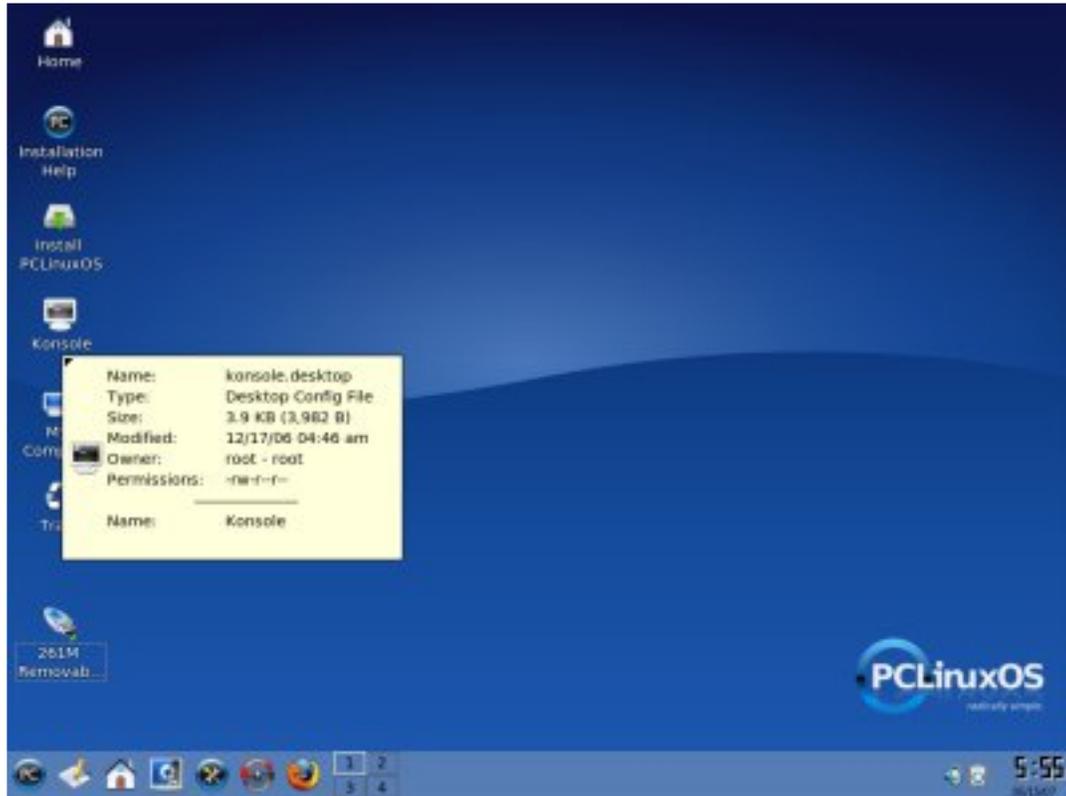
You should now see a "Konsole" window link as in the following picture. In the Konsole window, type "draklive–install", and then press the enter/return key.
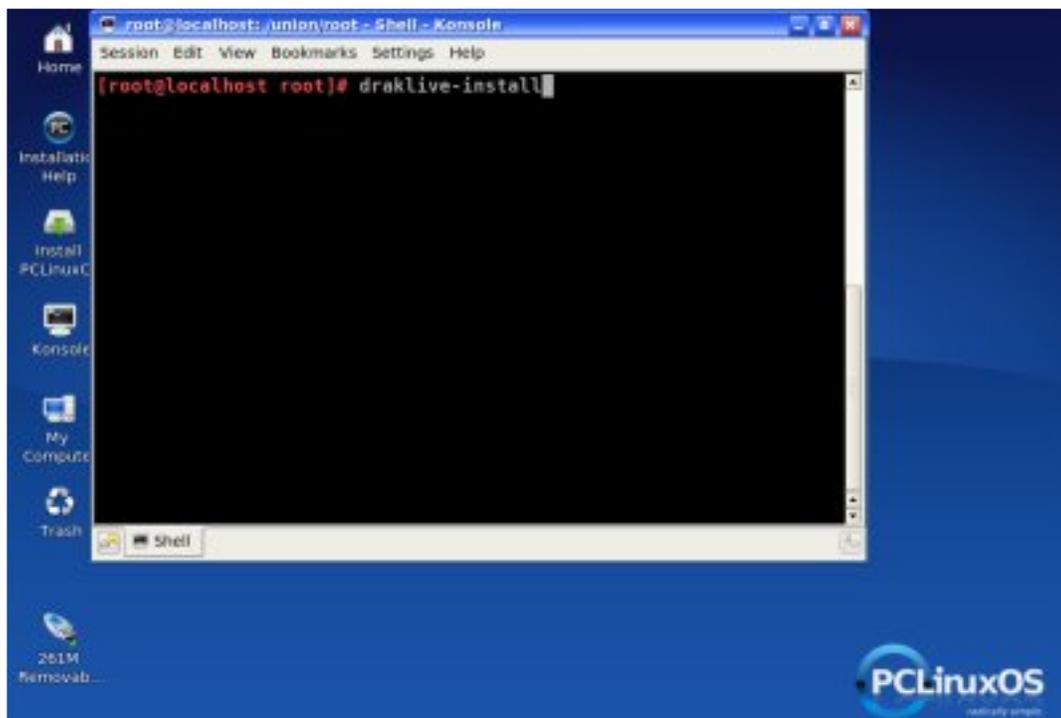
Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD

This will start the partition/install program.
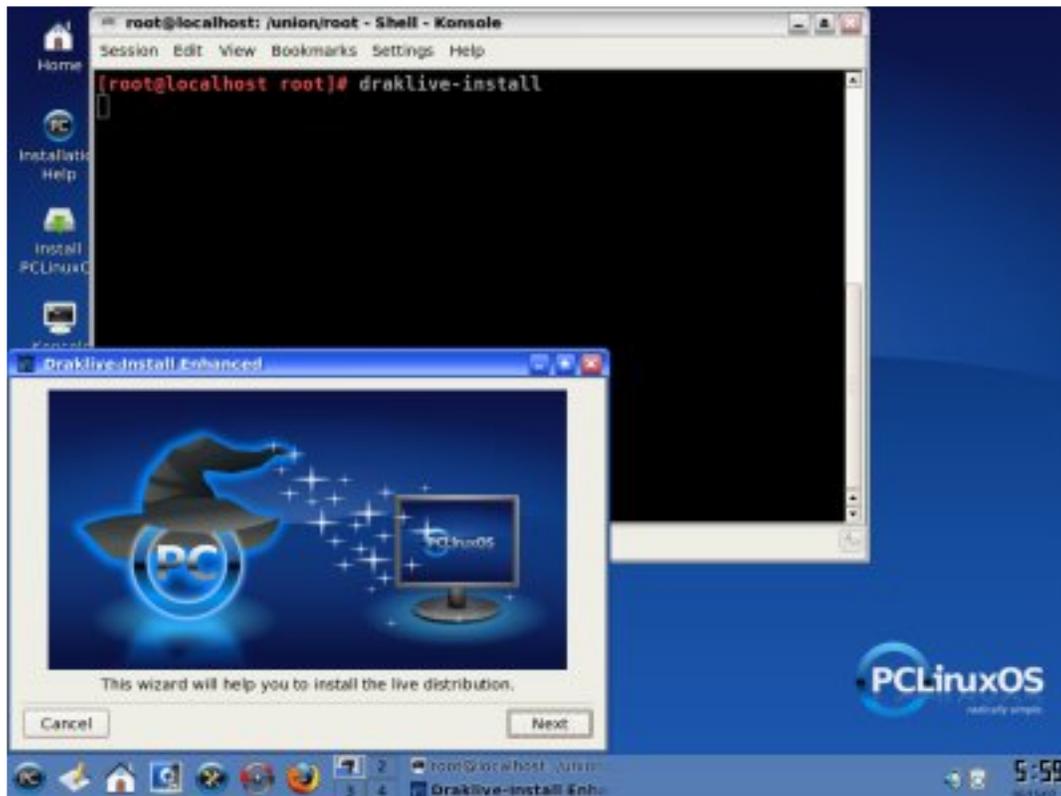
Click on the "Next button in the dialog box.

In the following window, you are going to select the hard drive on which you want to install Linux.
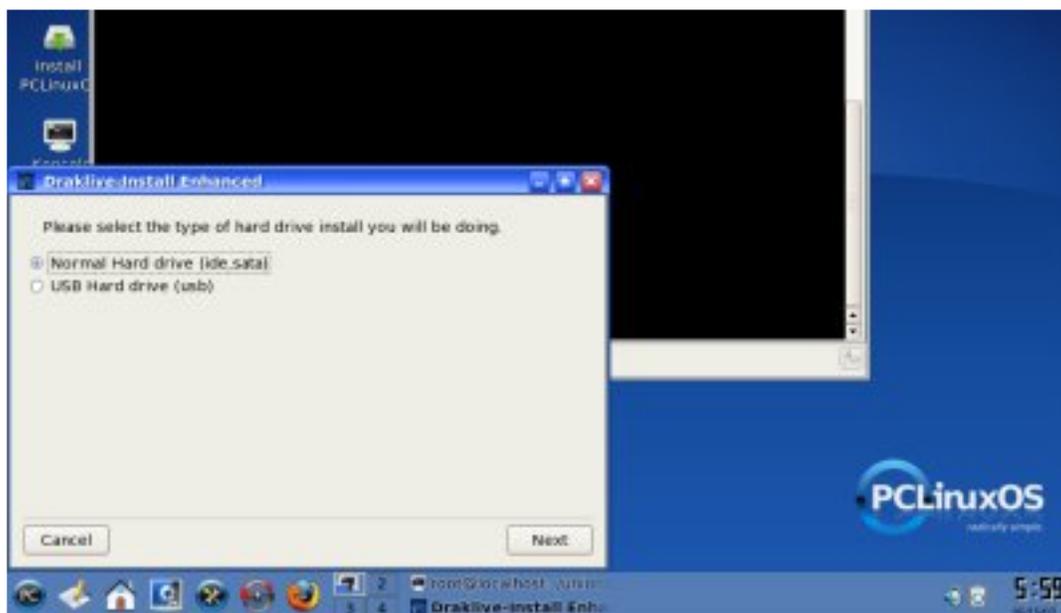
Use the default hard drive, and click the "Next" button. Make sure to select "Use the free space on the Windows partition". Then click on the "Next" button.
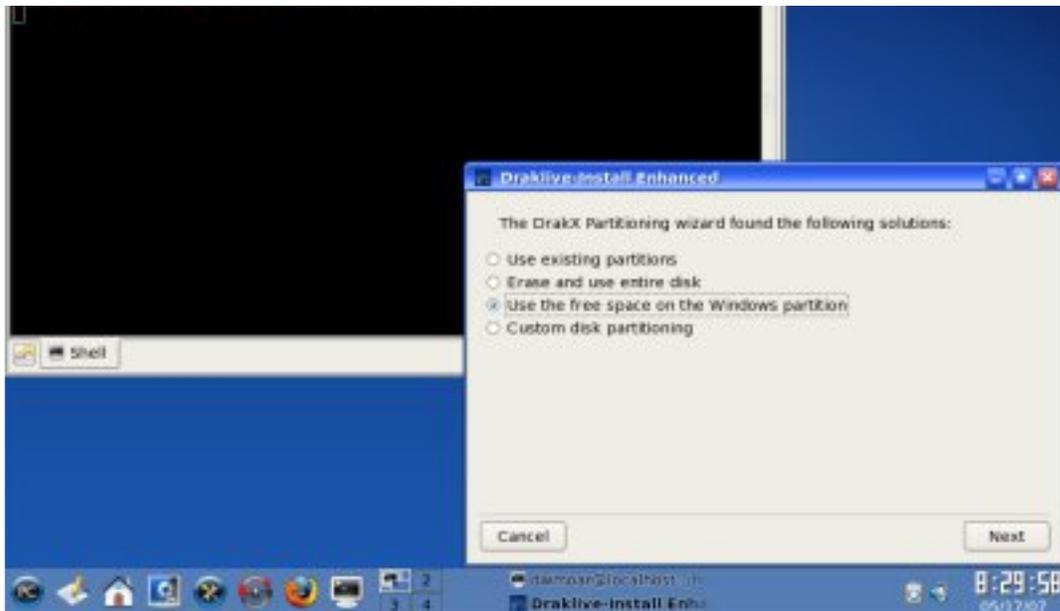
A friendly reminder. You are about to resize your Windows partition. You did defrag your windows drive before starting this, didn't you?? If not, you could lose all your windows setup. If you DID NOT first defragment your Windows Drive, CANCEL now and defrag your Windows system!   Did you also backup your important files? When you are ready, press the "Next" button in the dialog box to continue.
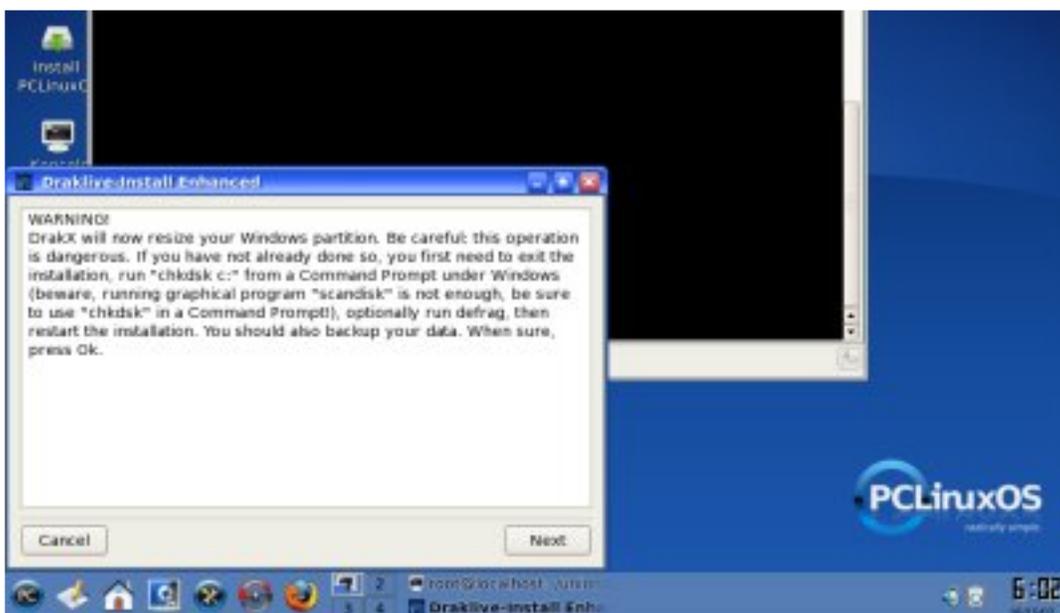
Pick the partition that you want to resize. Note it is normally labeled "hda1" and is usually the default partition. Click the "Next" button in the dialog box.
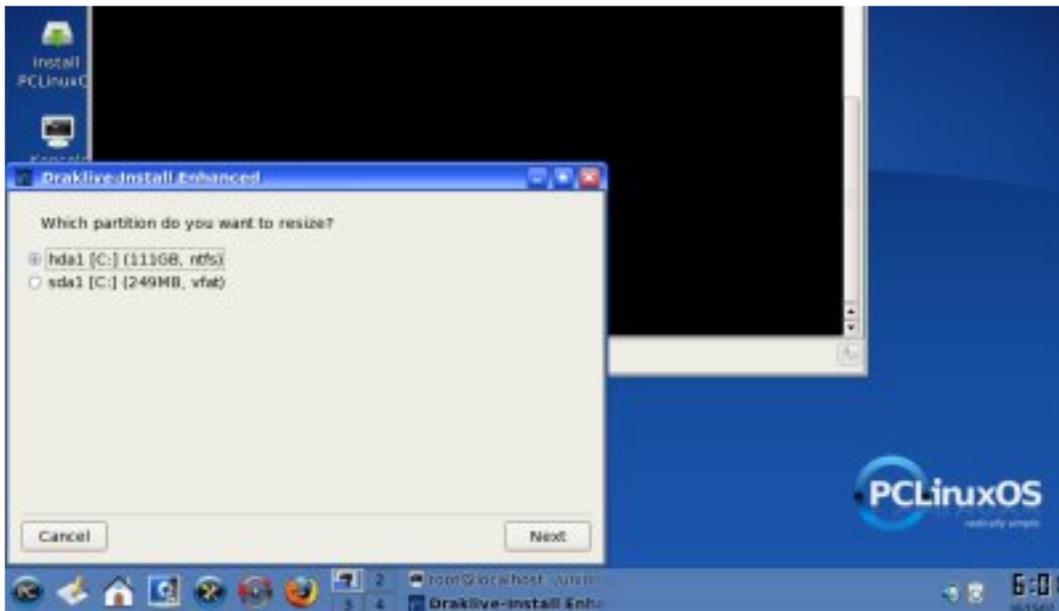
You are now ready to do the actual resizing of the Windows partition. Using the slider bar, select the size that you want the new windows partition to become. To make a 20 gig Windows partition, choose 20480.
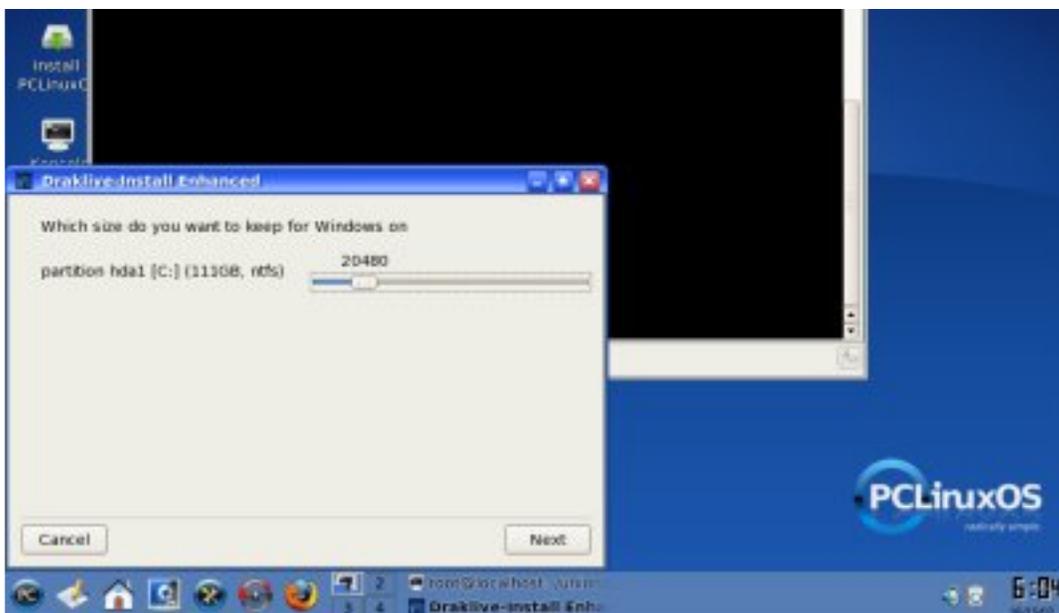
For the following size Windows partition, use the following numbers:

```
10 gigabyte hard drive  use  10240
15 gigabyte hard drive  use  15360
20 gigabyte hard drive  use  20480
25 gigabyte hard drive  use  25600
30 gigabyte hard drive  use  30720
35 gigabyte hard drive  use  35840
40 gigabyte hard drive  use  40960
45 gigabyte hard drive  use  46080
50 gigabyte hard drive  use  51200
```

Use the slider bar to get close to the number you want, then use the "left" or "right" arrow keys for finer control.
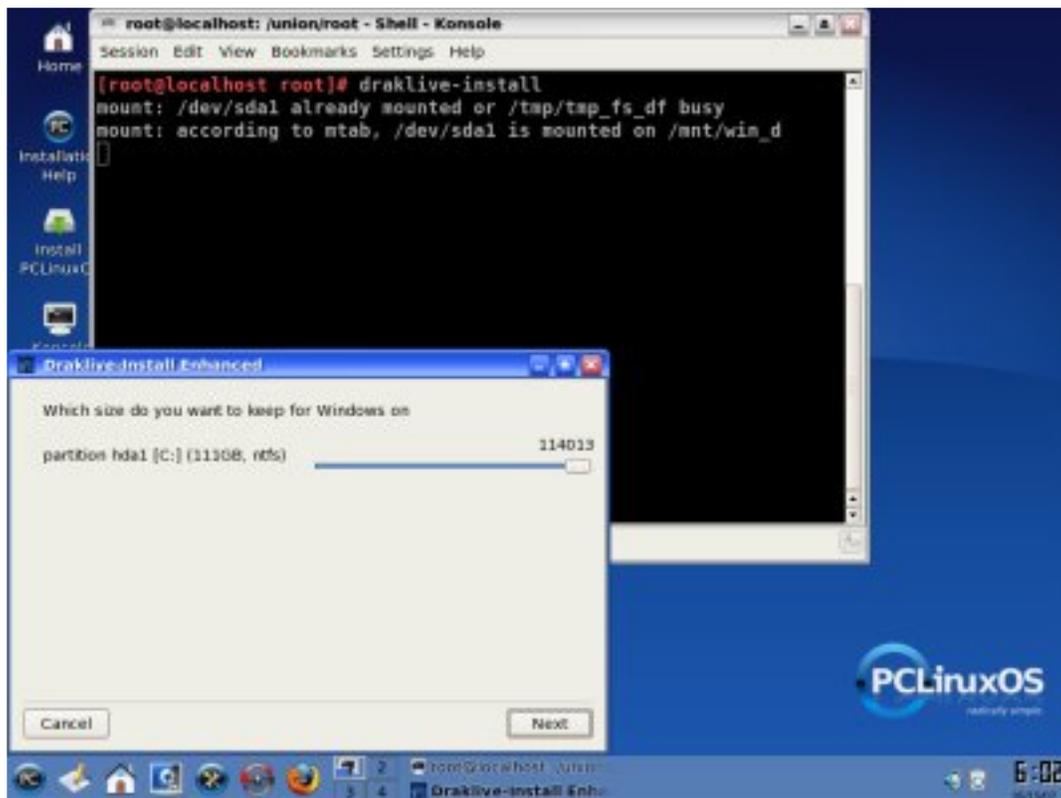
The screen shows a final warning before the resizing and formatting takes place. Click the "Next" button in the dialog box.

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
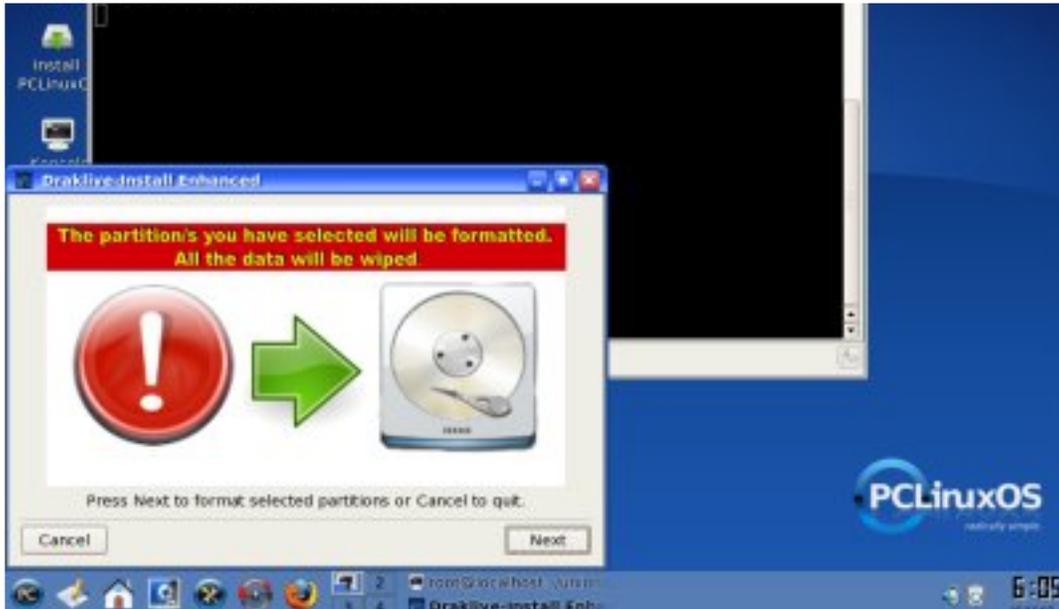
After resizing the Windows partition, Linux will then setup, format it its own partition to use.
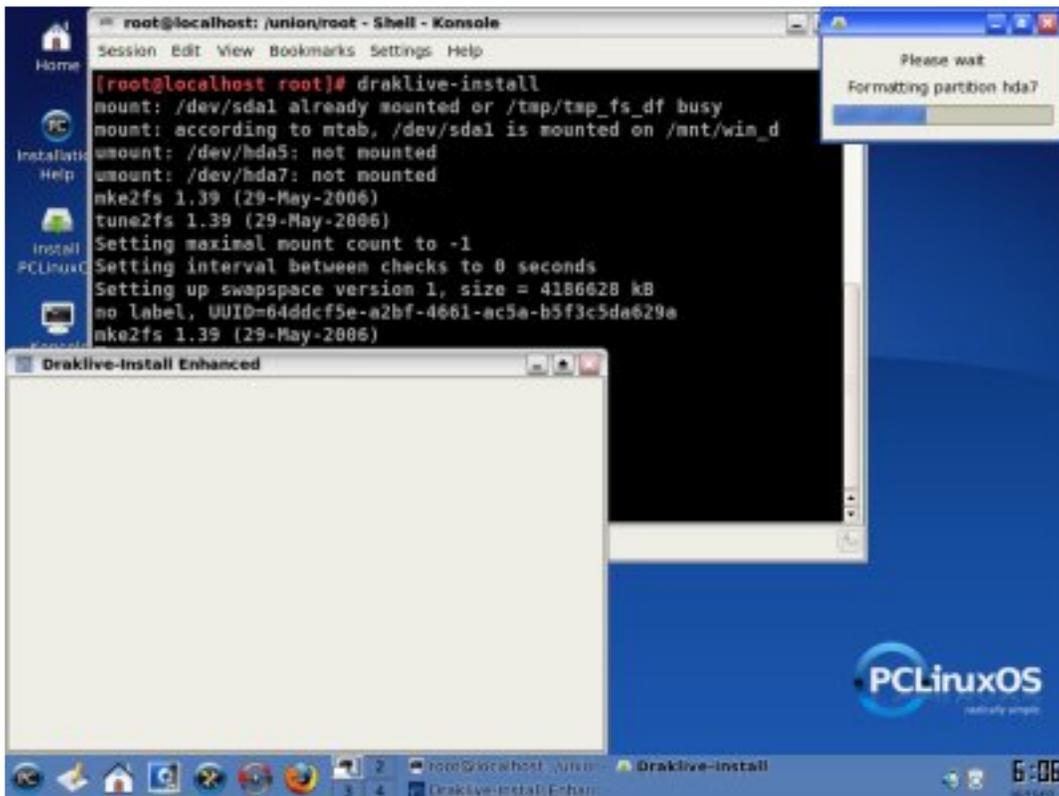
After formatting is completed. you will be notified that the next time Windows is started, it will do a data integrity check first.

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
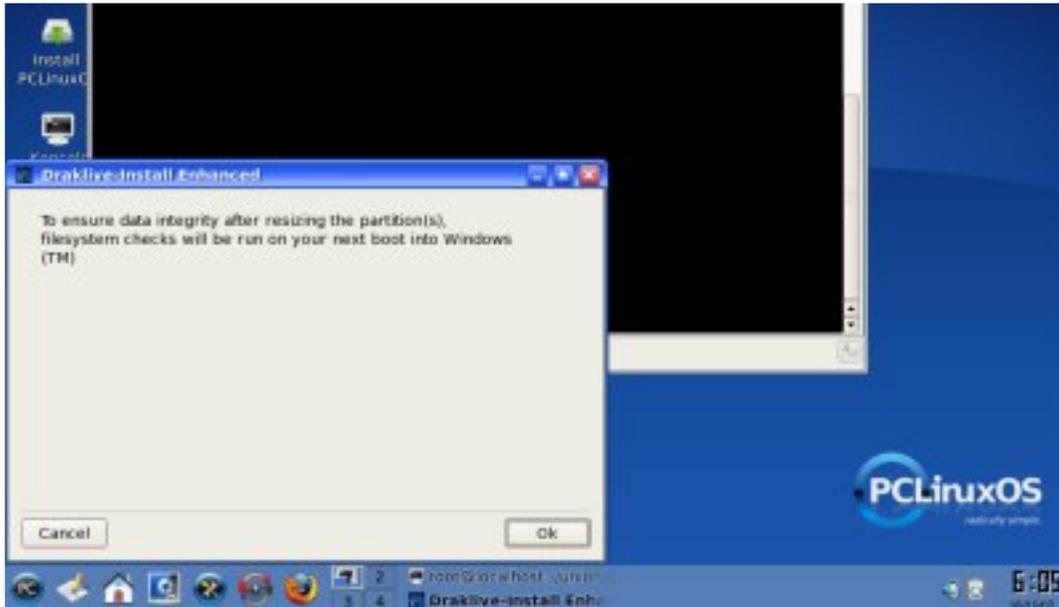
Click the "OK" button in the dialog box.

Now Linux is going to install itself on your newly partitioned hard drive.
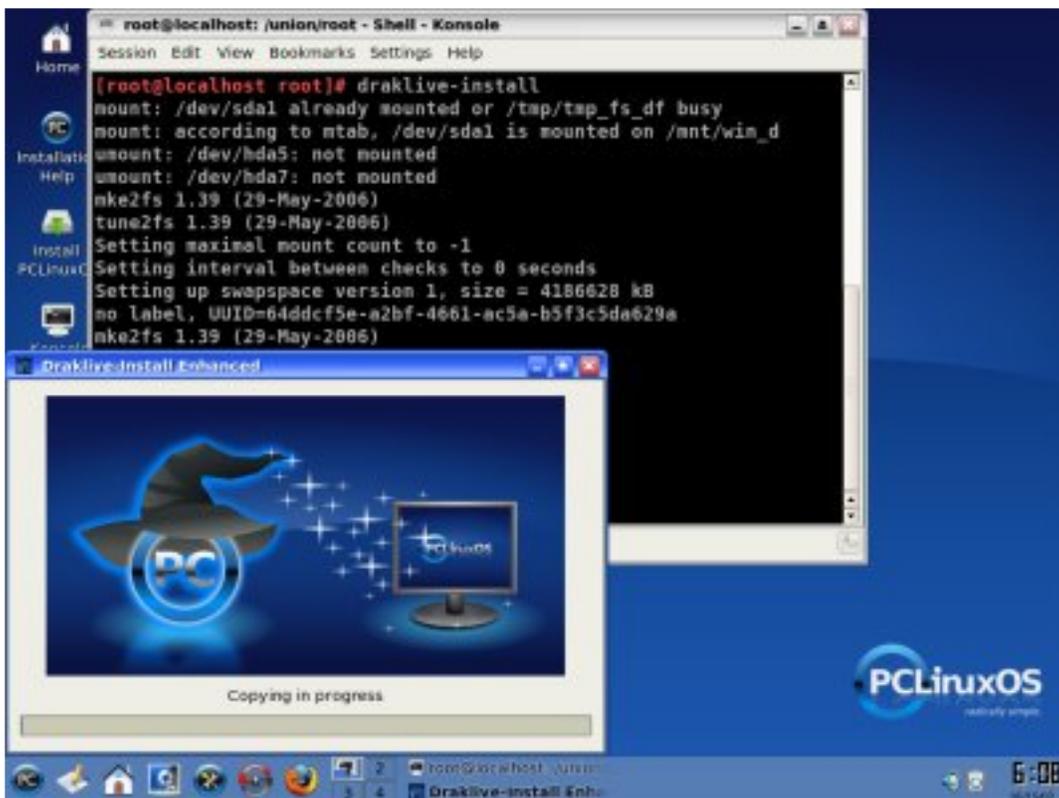
The Linux software installation will take a few minutes depending on the speed of your computer.

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
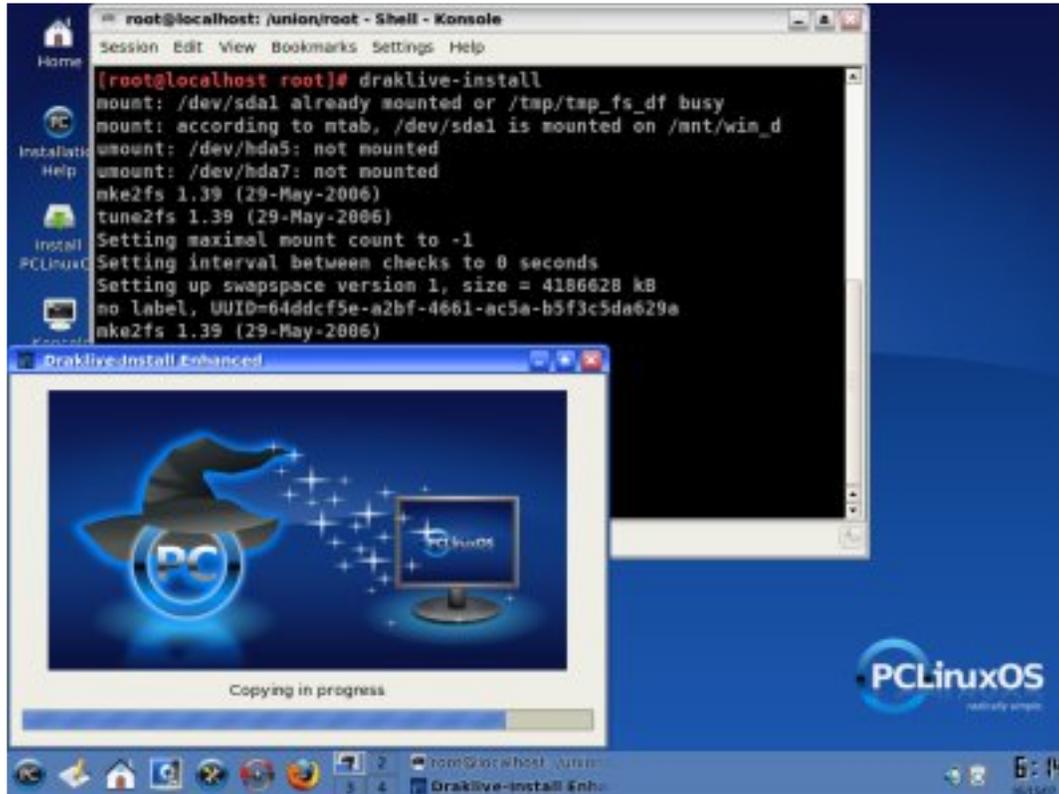
Once Linux has installed itself on your hard drive, it will ask about the booting options. At this point use the DEFAULT settings. Click the "Next" button to continue.
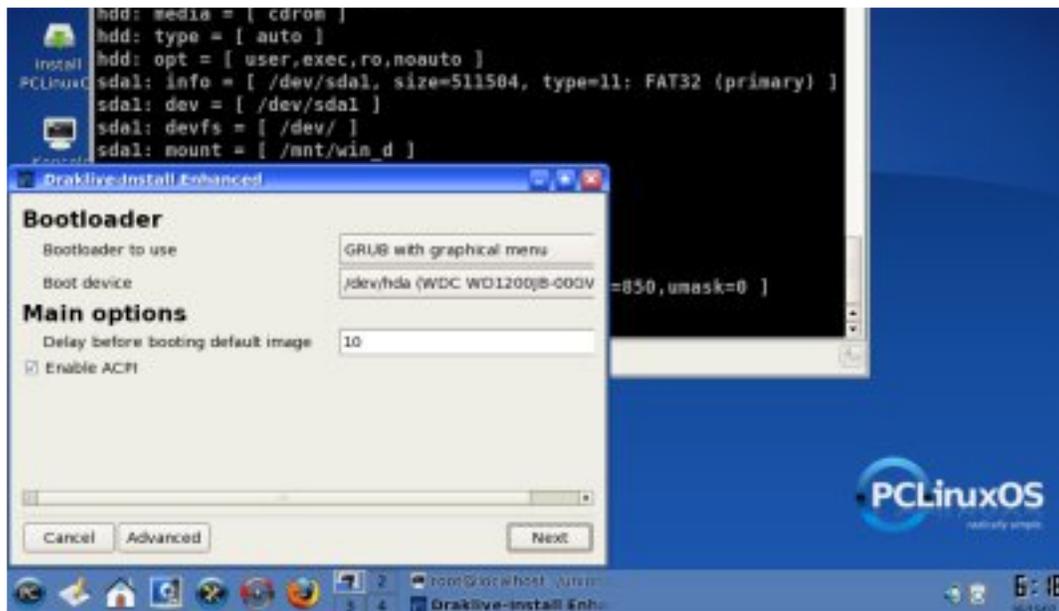
Again, use the DEFAULT settings. Click the "Finish" button in the dialog box.

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
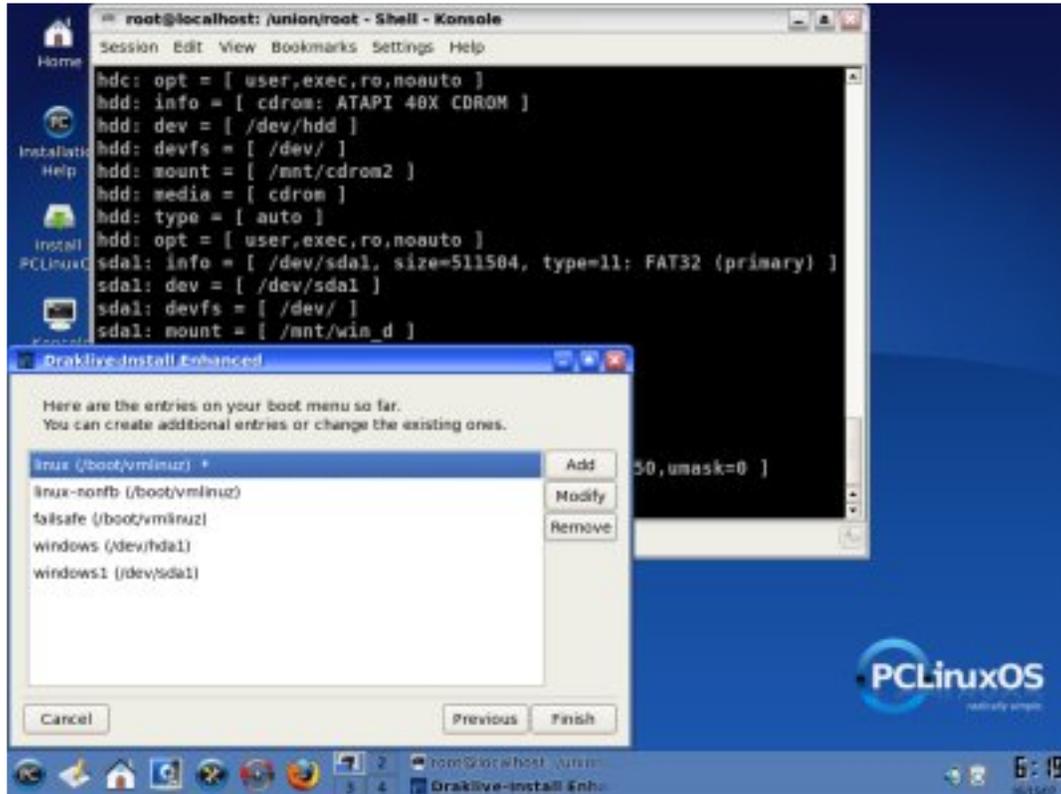
Now it is time to set the "ROOT" user password. Select a password that is difficult enough that it will not be guessed, but also one that is easily remembered by you. Remember that the root password is part of what makes your new Linux system secure. Choose it wisely! After entering your "root" password, click the "Next" button in the dialog box.
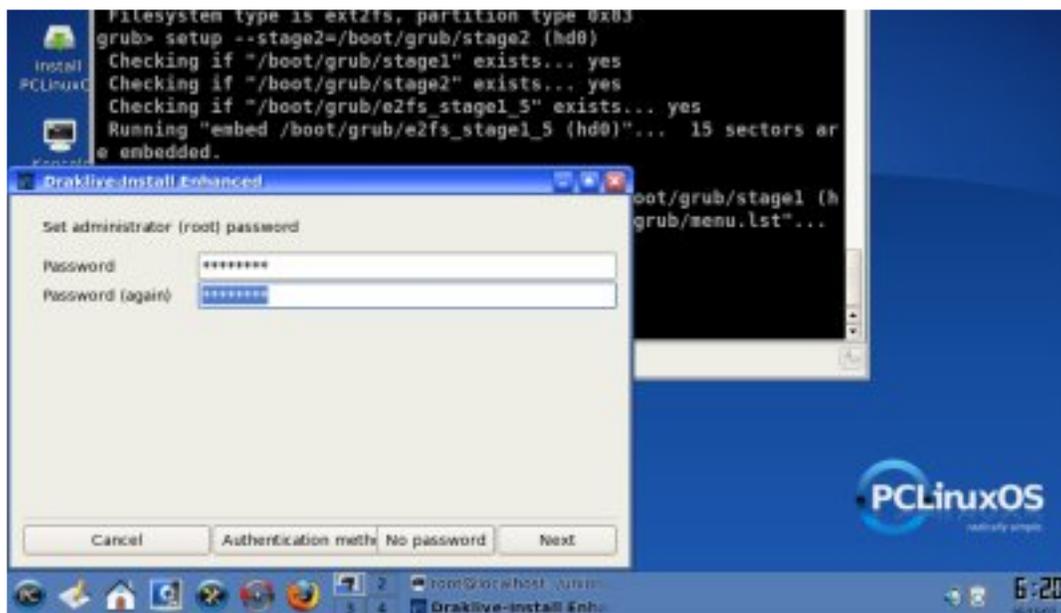
Now, it's time to add the user's names and passwords.
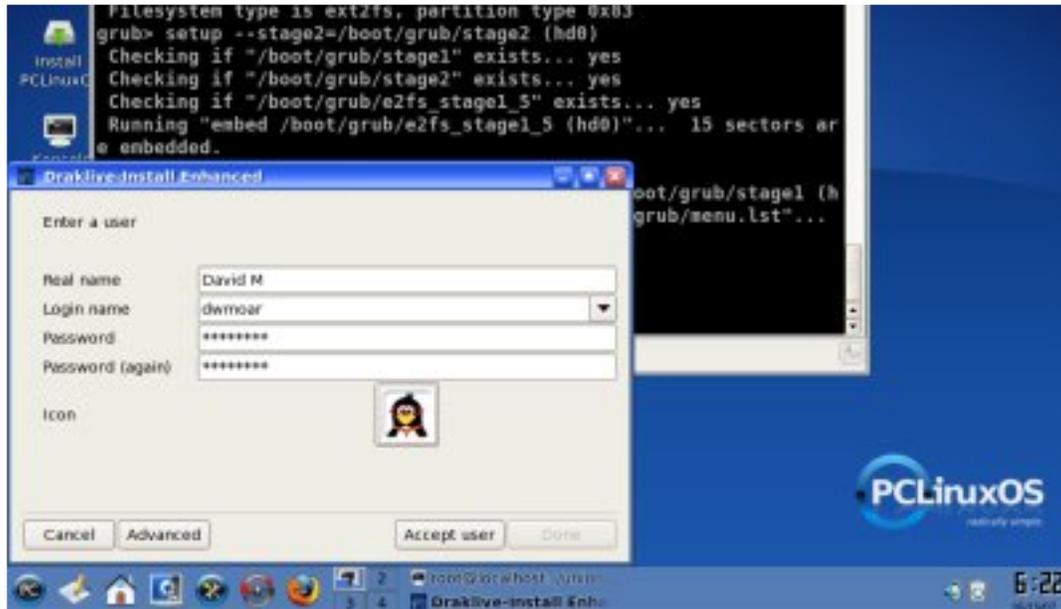
To change the icon, click on the icon picture. When you are finished, click the "Accept user" button. When finished, click the "Done" button.
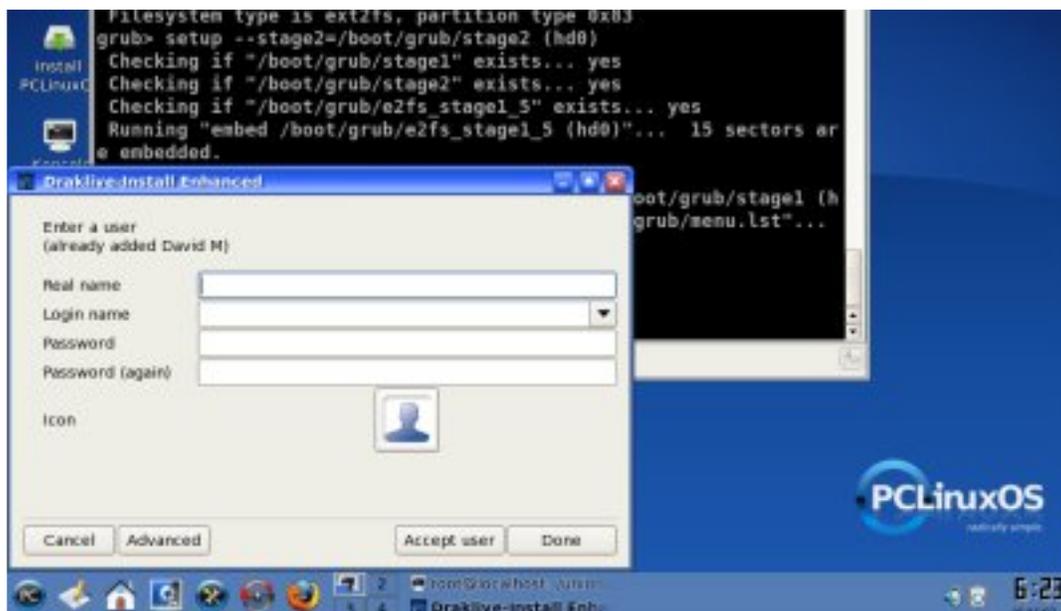
Congratulations, you have managed to resize your Windows hard drive and install PCLinuxOS in a dual-boot configuration. To finish, click on the "Finished" button in the dialog box.

Installing PCLinuxOS on a Windows XP HD
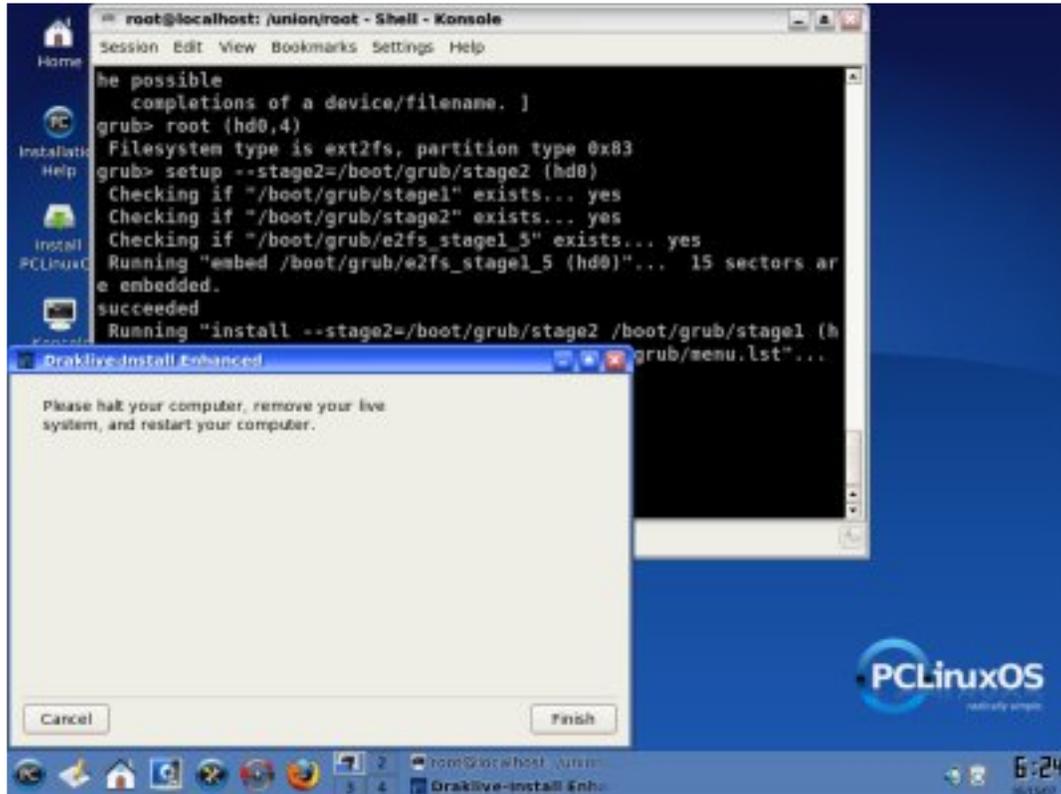
At this point, you should be back to the Live CD desktop with the "Konsole" window open. Close the "Konsole" window by clicking the "X" at the top right of the "Konsole" window. Now it is time to shutdown and reboot your system. At the bottom left corner of the desktop, click on the Linux "PC" logo. From the menu, choose "logout" in the dialog box. Click on the "Restart Computer" button and follow any additional instructions displayed on the screen.

After your computer restarts, you will be greeted with the Grub loader. The default OS loaded will be PCLinuxOS. To change which OS is loaded use the up and down arrows to select the desired OS and than press the enter/return key. This will then boot into the OS you selected.

Commentary

by an Anonymous Volunteer

The Internet is notorious for being extremely amorphous, transitioning from one definitive technology to another. We've witnessed its transformation in its various forums and services. During the later part of the last millennium, a giant grew and built a kingdom; and towards the turn, a (community) challenge was heralded throughout the kingdom. Lately, this challenge is gaining momentum as the giant acknowledges the threat of the community.

I am not a soothsayer who could foretell what will happen after the battle, and I am not going to make presumptions. I've been wrong quite a few times, though I've made a few logical bulls eyes as well. I am one who would not publicly make a statement on baseless audacity.

However, we all notice that there are exciting things happening these days: the Novell and the Xandros pact with Microsoft; the "patent infringements" of Linux; Dell selling Ubuntu machines; PCLinuxOS outranking Ubuntu on the 7 and 30 days page hits at Distrowatch. These are enchanting and unprecedented times in our history. More so, there is a shift, and I am not referring to the migration of Windows users to GNU/Linux. I am talking FLOSS.

Let's try to make one sensible analysis of this. We can agree that the Internet has become the most important feature in any personal computer. PCs request web pages; servers send the code; PCs render the pages. It's the same with all other information and services. Content Management Systems (CMS), from blogs to media, such as music, videos and photos, often work on the same concept. The PCs are the walls that the echo bounces back from.

There was a time when server stacks were considered as the main avenue for transversing the information highway. GNU/Linux and MacOS users have full featured servers hidden behind all the glossy, shiny desktops. Windows users seem to be getting the backhand of things as they struggle with vulnerabilities and security. Even so, Windows clients can also act as servers.

PCs ... yours and mine and the millions (if not billions) of others... are making headway in serving information and services on the very same highway once owned by a few giants. Is this good, or is this bad?

Commentary

Change is inevitable. A sizable fraction of PC owners find themselves with reasonably fast home connections on top of these hidden servers on their OSes with enough power and features to get the job done. They are beginning to realize that there is no point in paying hosting companies the few dollars to have their websites hosted; they can do it themselves. Many will probably read the Linux SAG. However, there will always remain problems, especially in the security section, and those little broken things that one has to sift though – volumes of fix it readme files. None of these problems are new. Many users can just happily live with them.

I'd like to think this is an open door for FLOSS if adequate understanding is acquired by the users. A majority are easy to install through GUI interfaces, and best of all, owners can exercise their right to the freedom that accompanies these softwares.

The often misunderstood "alternative" operating system and its communities of true freedom fighters along with its creative, innovative, inventive arsenal of FLOSS is ready to confront any Goliaths and, in the common belief, will stand strong as the champion of all.

There have been many predictions about the future, and I am not the prophet nor the One. I do know one thing though, there is a revolution going on right now between closed and open source software. And I have decided on my side. How about you?

How to Copy/Clone User Account in Linux

Found at http://www.ambience.sk/user-account-copy-linux

Task: Copy/clone user account, so that both users have the very same settings in their user home directory.

Copying a user's home directory (e.g. olduser) to new user (e.g. newuser) is easy:

1. Create new user: `adduser newuser`

2. Copy all special hidden (dot) files to new user's home directory:
`cp --recursive /home/olduser/.[a-zA-Z0-9]* /home/newuser`

3. Copy other standard files to new user directory:
`cp --recursive /home/olduser/* /home/newuser`

4. Set new user's directory and files owner to new user for hidden dot files: `chown --recursive newuser:users /home/newuser/.*`

5. Set new user's directory and files owner to new user for normal files: `chown --recursive newuser:users /home/newuser/*`

You are done. In some cases you may need to change user group (users in this case).

Now logout and try to login as the new user. All the settings for the programs should be the very same as for the old user. You can for example compare the settings by running KDE and checking the wallpaper and other settings of the new user. If the copying of the user folder was successful, everything will look the same.

Your Friend, The Alias, Part I

First a little history.

A short while ago, someone in the PCLinuxOS forum was asking about apps that would allow mounting an ISO image to his desktop. I've used such apps in the past, but recent installations, using the latest version of my favorite one, (of the two I've used) MountISO, on newer distro versions throws up errors that the ISO image is not really an ISO image, or that it is corrupt. The problem seems to be that the latest version is from Oct. 16, 2005 and needs updating.

The other is a GUI app, AcetoneISO, which will mount various proprietary Windows burner image formats, as well. It works fairly well, but requires a multitude of other packages to work.[1] This is all fine and good, if one needs that functionality. However, I do not run Windows, so my only exposure to image files of a Windows type might be from an occasional download. For those occasional, odd files, I still use AcetoneISO, but I find AcetoneISO to be a rather clumsy way to mount the ISO images I do work with daily. Each mount requires a root password, and a directory choice, as to where the image will be mounted. This gets old rather fast, when one does this many times a day, so I created some aliases to do the job for me, without the hassles.

I suggested using this approach, as an alternative to AcetoneISO, in the forum thread, with instructions on how to do so. KDulcimer, one of the forum regulars, suggested that this might make a good article for PCLinuxOS mag. In further conversation, I wrote:

"I can type 4 letters faster than I can right click the image and navigate through three layers of menus.

"When file browsing with Konqueror, I usually have the terminal emulator window open, which syncs with the navigation, and have, at present 72 aliases for the things I most commonly do. The longest alias is only 6 letters, most are 4, a few are only 3. Some of the aliases are for chains of other aliases that would otherwise require a long script, more complicated than I would know how to write. For instance, I download an item from Usenet binaries that is in split rar files, with par2 volumes for error correction. Both the unrar and par2 apps are command line only, and scare off a lot of users. By creating an alias for each process, and chaining them with other aliases, a single 5 letter entry, at the prompt, runs the par2 integrity test,

makes the repair if it is needed, unpacks the rar volumes, and cleans up the directory so that only the unpacked item remains. I don't have to remember the various commands, arguments, and syntax, for each app, only the alias. If I forget the correct alias for the process I want, typing "alias" gives me the entire list, to remind me."

KDulcimer, responded with:

"Wow. Would you instead consider writing an article about aliases, how to create them, potential purposes, etc? This sounds like neat stuff."

I had already decided that would be the direction to take; Not one article, but a series of articles that would each be a "How to achieve a desired outcome using aliases." So as not to overwhelm the newbies, I will take one desired outcome, or a few related and intertwined outcomes, per article, and explain in detail why an alias would be desired, and then the process of creating it, or them. I will create a step by step set of directions, which the reader can implement, while they read the article.

There are already plenty of sources for this information, but most use boring examples, appropriate for programmers only, whereby most newbies go "deer in the headlights" when reading, and miss the entire point about the usefulness and simplicity of the process. They end up with even more fear of the command line than they started with. I hope that, by presenting the information in a real world context, with a subject they can directly relate to, explained in language that a normal child can follow, the process will be demystified, and the fear dispelled.

Borrowing heavily from the forum article, as I already wrote that in much the same manner as I intend to follow throughout the series, it would seem appropriate that the first should be:

How to mount an ISO image on your desktop, as a normal user, using an alias

Rules and Definitions:

I will assume the reader is using the KDE desktop, and give directions based on that. (For those using Gnome, you will have to find any

Gnome equivalents, if necessary, or use the KDE tools, where there are no equivalents.)

If I write something as `<something>` it means that the reader should substitute the item indicated with that which is appropriate to him. (I refuse to follow the "politically correct" him/her/self stuff when I write. Get over it, life's too short.)

When I say "`open kwrite`" for editing, if you like something else, substitute that and use what you're comfortable with.

`Alt+F2` = Press the Alt and F2 keys at the same time.

`<Enter>` = Press the Enter key

`******` = Root's password

`~/` = Your home directory

`./` = This directory = PWD = Present Working Directory = The directory which you are now in, that contains the file you wish action upon.

`*` = Anything, Whatever = As used here, in the form, *.iso = Any file, by whatever name, that ends with the extension .iso.

`FYI:` = For Your Information. I will use this to explain what a command, or a file entry, does, or means.

INSTRUCTIONS:

First set yourself up as a sudoer. Alt+F2 brings up the "Run Command" box. In the box, type;

`kdesu kwrite /etc/sudoers      <Enter>`

`FYI:` This asks the system to open the file "/etc/sudoers" with kwrite, with the root permissions needed to write to that file. Another box will open requesting the root password. Enter it.

`******          <Enter>`

Your Friend, The Alias, Part I

Read the file, ignore the part that says it MUST be edited with visudo, and in the appropriate section, at the bottom, write;

`<yourusername> ALL=(ALL)    NOPASSWD: ALL`

where you use your own user name in the obvious place. Save the file, and close kwrite.

FYI: You are now a sudoer, and will not be asked for a root password each time your alias uses sudo to mount, or unmount, an ISO image.

Next, create an empty directory on your desktop named "iso", without the quotes. Left click your "home" icon, and from the "View" menu select "Show Hidden Files". Open the file .bashrc with kwrite, and copy/paste into it, this line;

`test -s ~/.alias && . ~/.alias || true`

Save .bashrc, and close kwrite.

FYI: This tells bash, your shell, to test for the presence of a hidden file named .alias, in your home folder, and, if it's present, use it's contents as if it were an integral part of .bashrc.

FYI: The command to mount an ISO image is; "`mount -o loop /path/to/<filename>.iso /path/to/<mountpoint>`" where `<filename>` represents the actual name of the .iso file, and `<mountpoint>` is a directory name. Only root can use the mount command, hence the use of sudo.

Next, open kwrite, again, to create a new text file, and copy/paste these lines;

```
alias imnt='sudo mount -o loop ./*.iso ~/Desktop/iso'
alias umnt='sudo umount ~/Desktop/iso'
```

and save the file as `~/.alias`.

FYI: The name of the file is ".alias" (without the quotes) and it is saved in `/home/<yourusername>`

Your Friend, The Alias, Part I

FYI: I chose "imnt" as a unique, short form of "iso mount" to aid remembering the alias, it's purpose, and to differentiate it from any other command or alias. Similarly "umnt" is a unique shortened form of "umount"

FYI: To break down the alias `imnt;` `sudo=`"as root"; `"mount -o loop"`="mount as if it were a block device"; `./`="from this directory"; `*.iso`="any file with the extension .iso"; `~/Desktop/iso`="to a directory named "iso" located on this users desktop"

FYI: To break down the alias `umnt;` `sudo=`"as root"; `umount=`"unmount"; `~/Desktop/iso=`"whatever is mounted to a directory named "iso" located on this users desktop"

You could just copy/paste the lines into .bashrc, but this way you have a separate .alias file to keep them, and any other aliases you may wish to add in the future, and don't clutter up .bashrc.

Now to use this, open the Konqueror file browser, and navigate to the directory that contains the ISO image you want to mount. From the "Window" menu, choose "Show Terminal Emulator", and simply type, at the prompt;

```
$ imnt
```

Your ISO image is now mounted in the "iso" directory on your desktop, and you can browse it to your hearts content, and copy files from it to other directories, if you wish. Remember it's a mounted image, of a read only file system, so you can't copy files to it, only from it. One caveat to this working is that the ISO image you want to mount must be the only ISO image in the directory. If you have a directory with a number of ISO images, you must first separate them into their own private directories, within the main directory.

To unmount the ISO image, from any terminal window type, at the prompt;

```
$ umnt
```

Now, if you have followed the instructions, as you were reading this, and if you have actually created and used the aliases to successfully

mount, and unmount an ISO image, congratulations. Even if you are a green as grass, newbie, GUI guy/gal, (I know I said I wouldn't do that. Quit your laughing) you've learned how to accomplish a specific, desired, repetitive type task, with a minimum amount of keystrokes, using the dreaded command line, and it didn't even hurt. :)

In this article, I've tried to be a bit overly redundant with the definitions, and the FYI explanations, so that even newbies (Are Linux newbies really "gnubies"?) who are not used to command line shortcuts, and structure, will understand that it's just a way to give a simple instruction to the computer. An alias is used to save keystrokes when entering those instructions. Some of the explanations of what the syntax means might not be precisely correct, but they convey the essence of what one is requesting/commanding the computer to do, hopefully in a way that also conveys why the structure is as it is.

And what, may I rhetorically ask, do we really learn from all this? An alias is a very simple, quick, shortcut used to enter a more complicated command. What is it's true value? Efficiency. The longer, and more complicated the command, the more often one needs to use it, the greater the keystroke reduction, the greater the value of the alias.

Next time, I'll show you how to create aliases to actually accomplish some specific useful tasks, and how to join them to accomplish multiple tasks with a single alias.

Thus ends our lesson for the day.

[1] AcetoneISO2 depends on the following packages :
    – fuseiso, fuse-utils, libfuse2, mkisofs, libqt4-core, libqt4-gui, konsole, konqueror, kdebase-bin, kdelibs4c2a,libfuse-dev, build-essential, cdrecord, cdrdao, dvd+rw-tools, p7zip-full, gnupg, coreutils, libglib2.0-dev

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