The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine

Welcome Back!
All computers
now run
PCLinuxOS

Library

Table Of Contents

Welcome From The Chief Editor

Can you believe that it's September already? Just think of it ... summer is waning in the northern hemisphere, the hours of daylight are getting shorter, school has started up again, and fall will soon be here, with leaves of deciduous trees putting on their glorious annual display of color. Oh, and **T6** just recently made his 10,000th forum post, revealing a heretofore unknown forum user level of "Super Villain." Congratulations, T6. You certainly do help keep us entertained.

Change continues to come to PCLinuxOS, and the rest of the computing world. KDE 4.5.0 was recently released, and 4.5.1 is literally right around the corner. Texstar, true to form, has KDE 4.5.0 released, and is working on KDE 4.5.1 (according to the Twitter posts). Novell is looking to sell out, after battling a foe (SCO) that just wouldn't die. Google grabbed up some of the spotlight as they reneged on their commitment to net neutrality, presumably as a part of their new-found partnership with Verizon Wireless (who has been opposed to net neutrality all along). Meanwhile, Chile has joined the rank of countries officially supporting net neutrality.

This month, The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine starts a series of articles covering the LXDE desktop environment. Just as we did with KDE 4 and Xfce 4.6.2, we'll take a look at LXDE over the next few months. To kick it off, I've written three LXDE articles for this issue, and start is off with my **LXDE: An Overview** article. I continue taking a look at LXDE, with my **LXDE: The Control Center** article. To round out the LXDE articles for this month, I tackle a more advance topic, with my **LXDE: Autostart Apps With .desktop Files** article. As a bonus, Hootiegibbon walks us through his efforts to resurrect an older laptop that many of us wouldn't give a second thought to, in his **Installing PCLinuxOS-LXDE On An IBM Thinkpad 600e** article.

Meemaw continues her series on OpenOffice 3.2, with her **OpenOffice 3.2, Part 4: Impress** article. With the resumption of school, she also takes a look a the use of Linux in education, with her **Educational Linux!** article. Darrel Johnston takes a look at another alternate operating system, with his **Alternate OS: Syllable, Part 1** article. He also

spotlights one of the more recent additions from our talented developers to the repository, with his **Repo Spotlight: Repository Speed Test** article. Muungwana examines the value of Linux's market share, with his **Does Linux Market Share Matter? What Matters?** article.

Pete Kelly wraps up his article series on the command line this month, with his **Command Line Interface Intro: Part 12** article. Ryan Smith joins us again this month to review another game, in his **Game Zone: Battle For Wesnoth** article. Gary Ratliff continues his alphabetical march through computer programming languages, with his **Computer Languages A to Z: Octave** article. Dan Malewski returns with a third installment in his article series, **Beginner's Guide To Gimp: Part 3**. And, ms_meme is back with three entertaining columns this month, as well as Mark Szorady's **Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip**.

To round out this issue, I take a look at one of Google's recent announcements to pull the plug on Google Wave, with my **Google Wave Waves Goodbye** article. We also start a special, bi-monthly series of articles that take a look at some of the **Ladies Of PCLinuxOS**. To start it off, we get to learn more about **Meemaw**.

That's quite a bit. Hopefully, it will give you plenty to read over the next month. So, until next month, I wish each and every one of you peace, happiness, serenity and tranquility.

Open Office 3.2 Part 4: Impress

by Meemaw

Presentations are good to use if you have to give a speech and need visual aids. You can also use a presentation as a slideshow of pictures you want people to see. For that, you need OpenOffice Impress.

This will be a very basic overview of Impress, but it should be enough to get you started.

When you first open Impress, you will get several screens asking you how you want your presentation set up:

Screen 1 asks whether you want to start with a 'blank' presentation, open a template or open one that you already have. I chose blank.

Screen 2 asks you to select a background for your slides, and also designate how it is to be displayed.

Screen 3 asks you to select the transition effect for your slideshow presentation, and also how you want the transitions to take place. (I think the defaults are as shown). From here you should click 'Create' and you will be presented with the standard Impress window, with your presentation already started for you.

This screen is probably the one you will use most. The section at left will show a list of slide thumbnails, much like many of the pdf readers which have page thumbnails.
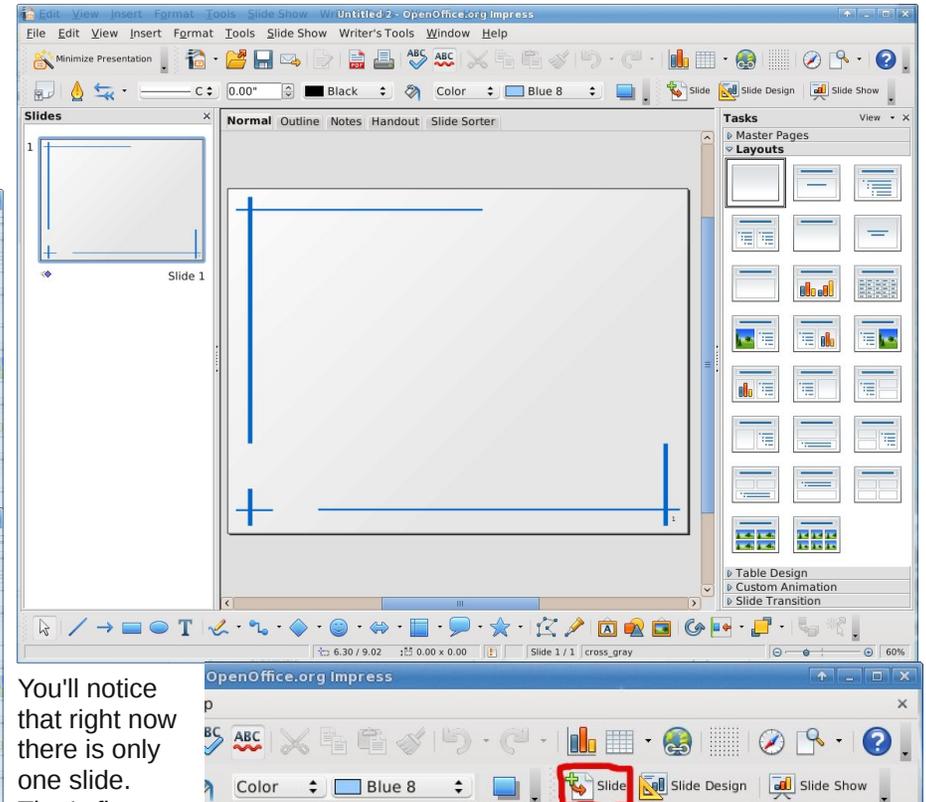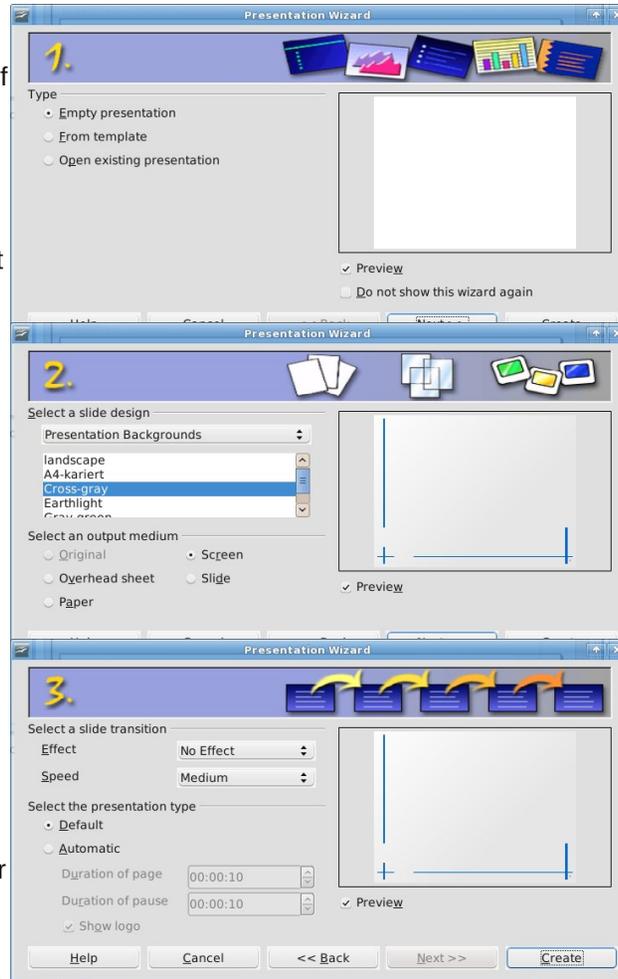
You'll notice that right now there is only one slide. That's fine, because you can add them at any time with the Add Slide button on the toolbar.

Also, in the left-hand column, you can right-click and choose 'Add Slide" from the menu that appears, or you can click Insert > Slide in the menu bar.

The center section displays the slide you are working on, with your background in place. The right section has most of the useful items you are going to need to design your presentation.

At the top of the center section, you will see tabs for **Normal** (View), **Outline, Notes, Handout and Slide Sorter.** Normal is the page that opened first, where

you design each page of your presentation, putting in the text and illustrations for each slide.

In the **Outline** tab, you can type the text you want to appear on your slide. It is generally put in a text box at the top of the slide. However, you can also type information into your slide from Normal view, to make sure it goes into the text box you desire.

In the **Handout** tab, you can choose a layout for an arrangement of slides on paper which you can then give to your audience for their later reference. I have attended workshops where these handouts were used. I usually take extra notes on them so all the notes are together.
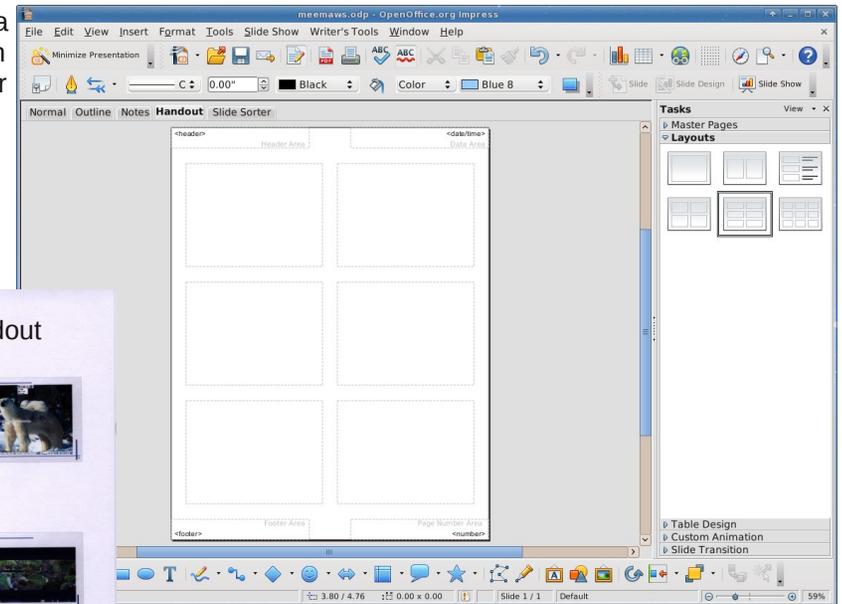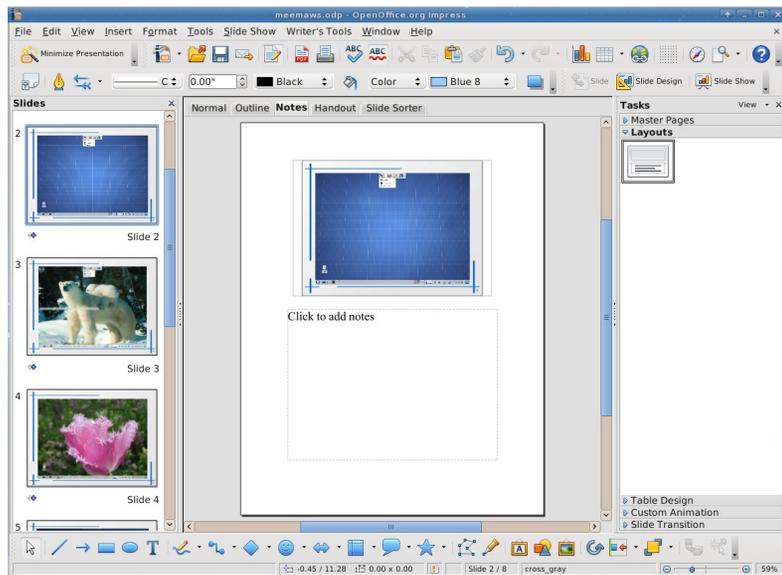
In the **Notes** tab, you can add any other pertinent information you want to tell your audience. This would be side comments that are not included in the slide layout. The notes can be printed out separately for you to use as reference. Each slide will be on a page, with the notes at the bottom, which you can use as reference while you give your speech.

The final tab says **Slide Sorter**. If, in the middle of your presentation, you decide that slide 7 should really be slide 8, you can click and drag the slides to the order you want. Being the wonderful program it is, Impress will re-number them for you.

Moving slide 7 to the end

Layouts

Custom Animation

content, the layout pages have them already set up that way, and they are already spaced similarly, so the slide heading doesn't jump around during the presentation. Besides, with pre-designed layouts, that's less work for you!

The next tab is **Table Design**. You will see several grid thumbnails. When you click on one, the tables toolbar will open so you can configure your table the way it needs to be (number of rows, number of columns and so on.)

Custom Animation - Here is where you can add an effect to a certain object in your slideshow. In your slides panel, select the object on which you want the effect. (I chose to have my title appear and expand to start my slideshow. I chose slide 1 and selected the title). In Custom Animation, you click Add, then choose the animation desired from the box. (I chose Expand). Then you configure how you want it to start, and how fast you want it to go. Clicking the 'Play' button plays a sample, so if you don't like it, you can try something else.

On the right side you will see a list of formatting aids: **Master Pages, Layouts, Table Design, Custom Animation, and Slide Transition.**

Master Pages are the backgrounds available to use on your presentation, just in case you changed your mind when you set it up in the beginning.

Layouts are pre-designed templates for your slide. These are great if you have a certain form in mind and want each slide to be similar or exactly like each of the others. Each page of your presentation can have a heading or title at the top, graphic on the left side and explanation text on the right, or any other design you choose. Depending on your presentation, you may have a different layout on each page. But if each page needs a heading plus

As tempting as it may be to use lots of different animations in your presentation, you'll be much better off to resist the temptation. While the custom animations are all very cool and you'll want to use them all, doing so may make your presentation look amateurish. At the very least, it may make your presentation appear to lack direction, and may distract from the message you are attempting to deliver. The better practice is to limit yourself to one or two custom animations. Three should be the absolute limit, and may be pushing things, at that.

mouse click (maybe to practice your speech) or change the interval you want between slides.

Just as with the custom animations, it's best to limit yourself to one or two slide transitions, and use them throughout your presentation. Again, using too many types of slide transitions can make your presentation appear amateurish, or may distract from the message you are trying to deliver.

It's especially important to consider the nature of your message. If your message is a serious one, or one you wish to be taken seriously, it's best to consider more modest, simple transitions and animations. Whimsical and "fun" transitions and animations will detract from the seriousness of your topic. This may cause your audience to not take your message seriously, make them discount the seriousness of your message, or cause your audience to question the validity of your message altogether.

At the bottom of the window, you will find the Drawing toolbar, along with some of the other formatting aids we've already seen, Gallery, Fontwork Gallery and Insert from File. Layer, alignment and rotation tools are also available and will display here.

Slide Transition - Even though you set your preferred transition when you were setting up your presentation, you still need to configure the transitions. You can change back to transitioning on

While this presentation only has eight slides, your presentation can be as long as you wish. Have fun making your own!

It's easier than $e=mc^2$
It's elemental
It's light years ahead
It's a wise choice
It's Radically Simple
It's ...

LXDE: An Overview

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

One thing Linux users have become accustomed to is choice. And choices abound for almost anything and everything, including desktop environments. Previously, we've covered KDE 4 and Xfce 4.6.2. Now, it's time to take a look at the LXDE desktop.

Lightweight X11 Desktop Environment ("LXDE") is one of the newest desktop environments. It began in 2006 when Hong Yen Jee of Taiwan, better known by his nickname "PCMan", introduced the PCMan File Manager, or PCManFM. Today, the LXDE project is an international collaboration of developers, designers, and contributors from all around the world. Similar to the Xfce and Gnome desktop environments, LXDE is built with the Gtk+ 2.0 libraries.

Living up to the first word in its name, LXDE truly is a lightweight desktop environment. Consequently LXDE thrives on older hardware. On my computer (IBM Thinkpad T23, Pentium III, 1.13 GHz, 512 MB RAM), LXDE uses only 115 MB RAM when it's fully booted, and running a handful of panel plugins, checkgmail, and Conky. LXDE is even capable of running on a Pentium II with only 128 MB RAM.

The "newness" of LXDE shines through, however. Probably the first thing to hit you is the lack of configuration options that are available via a graphical user interface. If you are expecting to find oodles of configuration options, as you would find in KDE or Xfce, you will be disappointed. That doesn't mean that you can't configure LXDE as you might like. It just means that you will have to find the configuration files and edit them by hand. For this reason, the LXDE desktop environment isn't necessarily for new users or the faint-of-heart. It's geared more towards intermediate to advanced users who don't mind digging deep into the configuration files and getting their hands dirty.

Once you figure out how to manipulate and mold LXDE's configuration however, you will be treated to a desktop environment that lives up to its name. LXDE is fast, even on older hardware. Your older computers will feel as if they have been re-invigorated with new life. Many users compare the LXDE desktop appearance to KDE 3.5.x. It does have a lot of similarities in appearance. LXDE adheres to the desktop standards laid out by freedesktop.org.

LXDE is only a desktop environment, and officially relies on the OpenBox window manager to handle the windows on your computer. So, many of the things we'll talk about for LXDE will also apply to the OpenBox version of PCLinuxOS.

Overall, you will probably like LXDE, but you will most likely fall in love with its simplicity and speed.
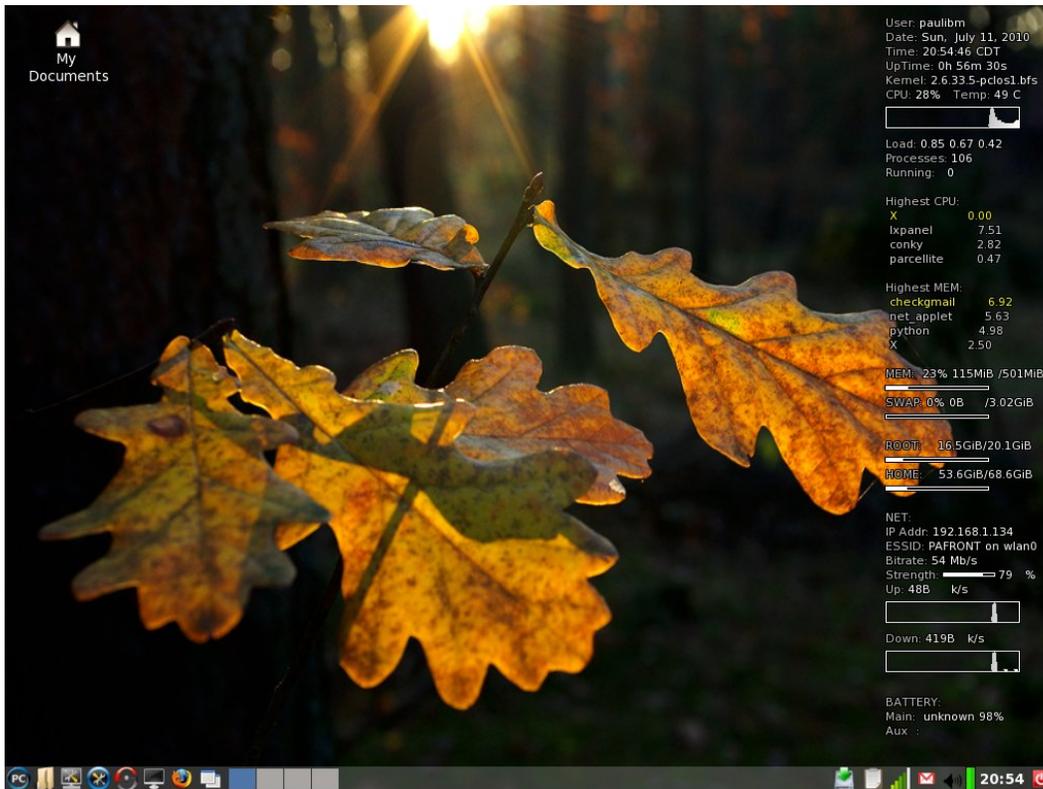
My LXDE desktop, with some degree of customization of the panel and running Conky.

By digging into the configuration files stuffed deep into sub-directories of sub-directories of sub-directories scattered across your hard drive, you may also learn a lot that will transfer to other desktop environments. We will take a look at the basic configuration options, then some more advanced options. We'll attempt to demystify some of LXDE's intricacies, thus improving your ability to tailor LXDE to be what you want it to be.

I am sure of one thing: this old Pentium III Thinkpad T23 has never run so fast. I doubt your results will differ much from mine.

A magazine just isn't a magazine without articles to fill the pages.

If you have article ideas, or if you would like to contribute articles to the PCLinuxOS Magazine, send an email to: **pclinuxos.mag@gmail.com**

We are interested in general articles about Linux, and (of course), articles specific to PCLinuxOS.

Screenshot Showcase
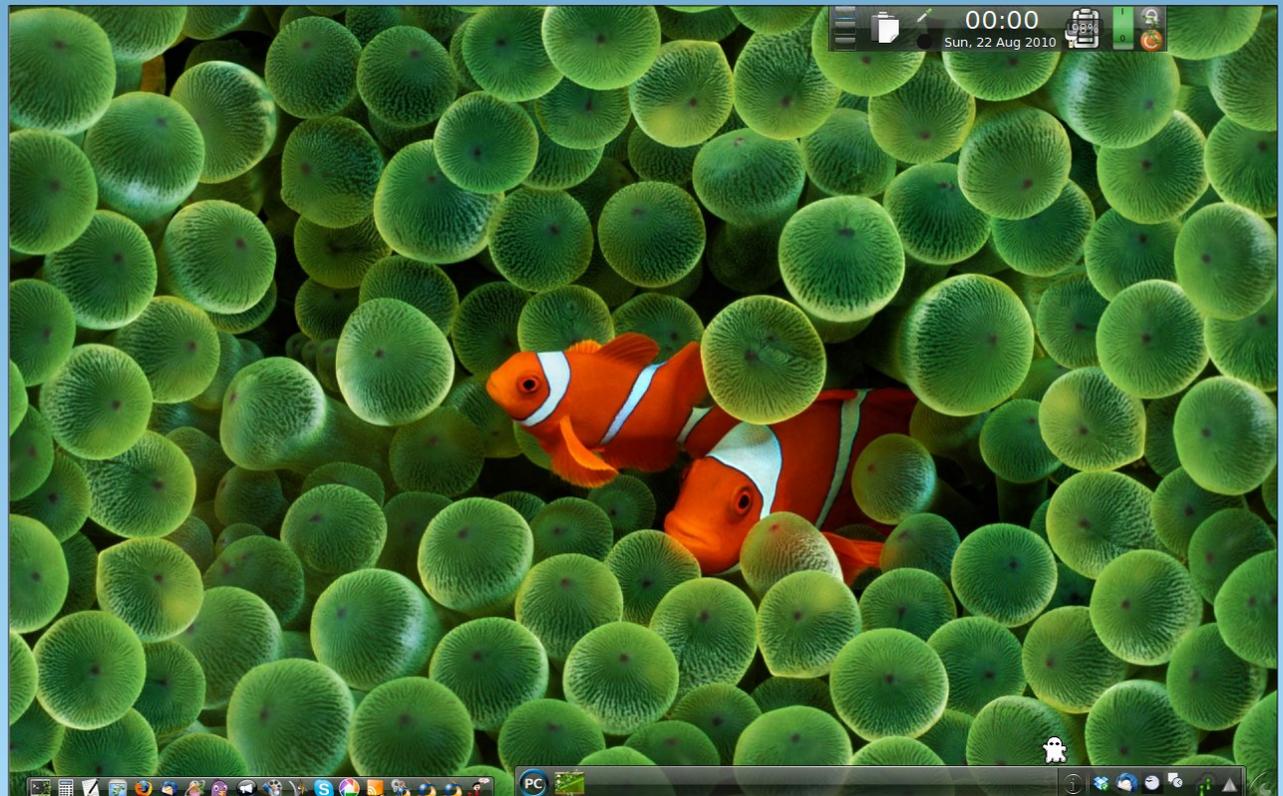
Posted by AndrzejL, August 21, 2010, running KDE 4.

Double Take
by Mark Szorady
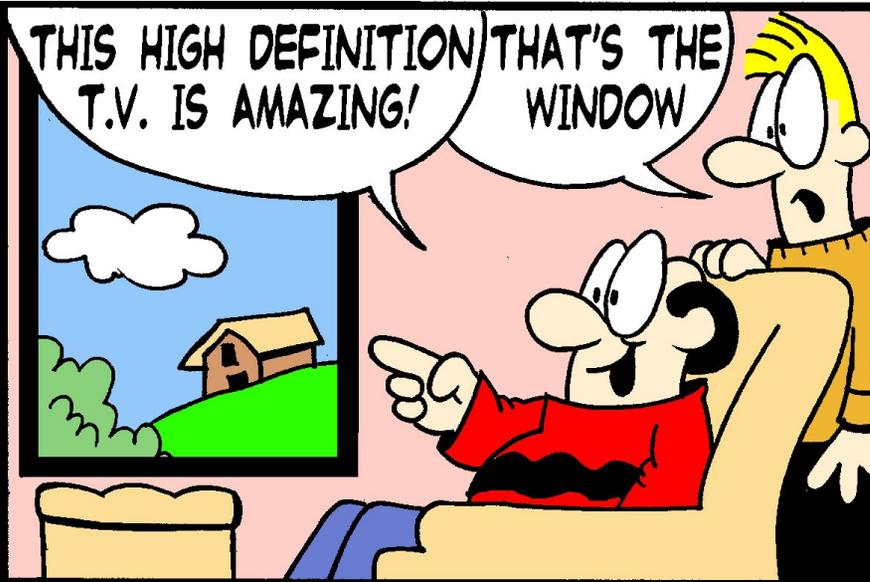
©2010 Mark Szorady. Distributed by georgetoon.com
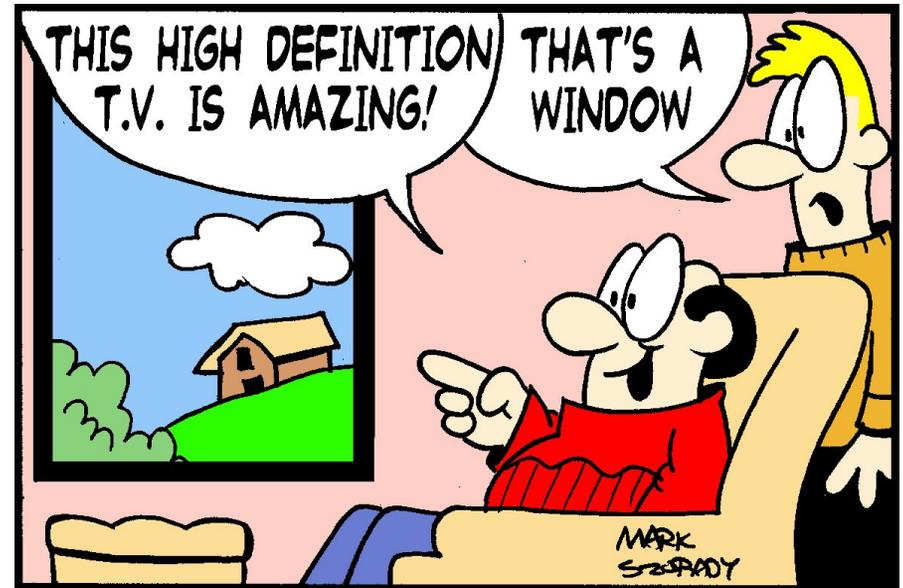
Find at least seven differences between cartoons. *Answers on Page 13.*

Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

When using the Gimp to edit one of my cartoons, the background of the image is usually white. The padding (or background fill of Gimp), however, by default, is usually set to a light gray or white (or follows the KDE color theme.) If it's white or gray, it becomes hard to distinguish where the cartoon ends and the padding of the Gimp begins. The solution is to change the padding color. A quick way to change the padding color is to select View>Padding Color and then make your selection from the pop out menu. You can even select a custom color of your own making. In the example at right, I've made the padding color a light blue. Setting the padding color to something distinctive helps to define the boundaries of the image you're editing and lets you see the exact size of the canvas you're working on.

-Mark Szorady is a nationally syndicated cartoonist with georgetoon.com. He blogs at georgetoon.com/blog. Email Mark at georgetoon@gmail.com.

PCLinuxOS
Radically Simple

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by JohnW, August 2, 2010, running KDE 4.

Ladies Of PCLinuxOS: Meemaw

Can you start off by introducing yourself, and telling us a little bit about yourself? (Real name, where you live, marital status, children/grandchildren, hobbies/interests, etc).

My real name is Pam, and I live in eastern Kansas. My wonderful husband and I just celebrated our 39th wedding anniversary. We have two beautiful daughters and three grandchildren (two girls and a boy), and as you can tell by the amount of time I seem to be in the forums, one of my main interests is computers and Linux, specifically PCLinuxOS. I also love to spend time with my family and read. (Actually, family is first.)

How did you get started in computers?

My first career was teaching. In the 80's and 90's, schools were just starting to use computers, and I was entranced with how they could do the things they did. I knew a tiny bit about computers from taking a class in programing in college (Fortran), but I quickly found out that programming wasn't my 'thing.' Of course, that was also when computers were huge and the program was put into the

computer with punchcards! Using computers in my job was different, and I found that I loved computers. I got my own first computer in 1996, and had a friend who already had a computer. My computer came with Win 3.1, but hers had DOS. I spent many evenings learning how to do things on my computer, and when she was over, she taught me a great deal about DOS and the command line. I found over the years that I could figure out how to use most programs, and even help other people with problems that they had. Since then, I have gotten out of teaching and work as a secretary. At this point, I am the one that some of the other secretaries call if they are having trouble with something or want to know how to do something. (I did an instruction sheet on Mail Merge for all of them several years ago.)

What drew you to Linux?

One of my computers had WinME on it. The second time it crashed, my wonderful older brother was visiting and tried to recover it, but it was not recoverable. (I ended up paying to have it reinstalled.) During our conversations, he asked if I had ever heard of Linux (no) and told me that it was an alternative system to Win or Mac. He was using Fedora at the time and had about 5 computers at his house. He suggested I do loads of research and try several live CD's to learn about it. Thus started my Linux journey. This was in 2003.

What was the first Linux distro that you used?

I downloaded a dozen or more live CD's while I was researching. My first two were Mandriva Move and Knoppix. Each one had its own merits, but I quickly narrowed it down to Kubuntu, Mandriva, Mepis or PCLinuxOS. Each time I would boot up the computer and try new things with whatever CD I was using. I quickly discovered that the printer I was using would not work in Linux, no matter which disk I used, so I decided not to install yet, but to wait a little bit and just keep exploring. Amazingly enough, the printer died within the next 6 months and I replaced it with one that works wonderfully in Linux (still). I installed Kubuntu first. My reasoning was that I was a noob, and since my wonderful brother had recently switched to Ubuntu, he could help me if I had any

problems. For a while I dual-booted Kubuntu and PCLinuxOS, but that was not for me, either. Not too long after that, though, I repartitioned and installed PCLinuxOS only. That's what I've used ever since.

When did you first start using PCLinuxOS? What attracted you?

I installed it in about 2005. It seemed a little more user friendly to me. While I was dual-booting, I found myself using PCLinuxOS more than Kubuntu, and pretty soon not using Kubuntu at all. Also, the PCLinuxOS forums were just so much more friendly!

With Linux having a reputation of being a realm predominately populated by males, do you feel that your being a woman has an impact on your treatment by the rest of the community? If so, in what way?

I can't recall a time when I thought I was treated differently because I was a woman, so I feel very lucky! I think that is because our community is so great. I think the computer industry as a whole is predominantly male, but I could be wrong.

Do you feel that your use of Linux influences the reactions you receive from your computer peers or family? If so, how?

Oh, yes. Any time I mention to someone that I use Linux rather than Windows, they nearly always look at me like I'm crazy. (But sometimes I think it's

because they've never heard of Linux.) The IT guys in the company I work for seemed very shocked that I knew anything at all about Linux! My husband and daughters just shook their heads when I first started mentioning it, but not any more. My younger daughter decided last year that she HAD to have a change of OS, and asked me to install it to her computer. So she uses PCLinuxOS now.

How do you feel you contribute to the PCLinuxOS community?

While I should donate money to this wonderful distro, I haven't been able to yet. My contribution is to help publish the magazine every month, and I always hope everyone gets something they can use out of every issue.

Answers to Mark Szorady's Double Take:
(1) Hair different; (2) Cloud moved; (3) Arm shorter; (4) Hand missing from chair back; (5) Shirt stripe different; (6) Footstool lower; (7) Word balloon different

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PC Linux OS
DENMARK

CZECHOSLOVAKIA
PCLinuxOS
síla jednoduchosti

PCLinuxOS.it
ITALY

PCLinuxOS Polskie Centrum
radically simple
POLAND

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Probably one of the first places you will want to go, once you have installed PCLinuxOS-LXDE, is the LXDE Control Center. Among LXDE users, it's more commonly referred to simply as lxdecc. It is here that you will make or change some of the basic settings for LXDE, allowing you to tailor your LXDE desktop to work the way you want it to, and to better suit your tastes. After all, Linux is all about choice.

When you first open the LXDE Control Center, you will see the above window appear on your desktop, divided into the various categories of settings. Let's explore those categories, and what can be accomplished there.

Under the first category, **Set Wallpaper**, you will be directed to this configuration dialog box, which is the actually the PCManFM Settings dialog box. Under LXDE, the wallpaper and the desktop are under the control of PCManFM by default. So our discussion of these settings will also apply to the PCManFM Settings section of the LXDE Control Center.
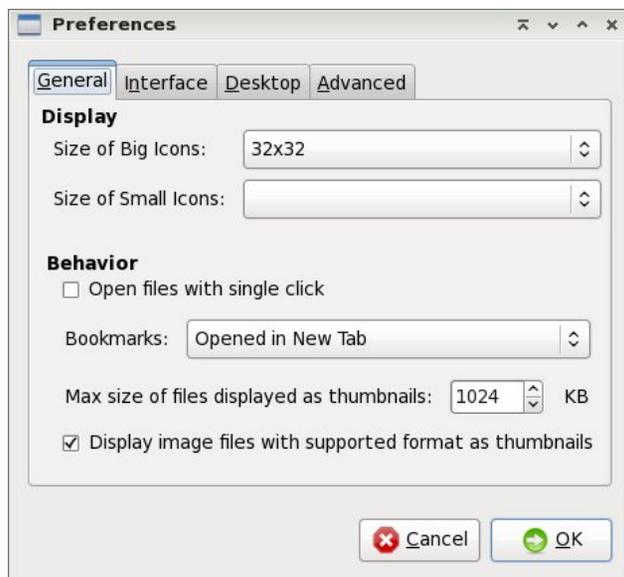
The first section of the first tab, **General**, allows you to set options for "Display." These include the size of "big icons" and "small icons" on your system. Under "Behavior," you can choose to open files with a single click. By default, this setting is checked. Click on the check box (clearing the check mark) if you are more accustomed to opening files with a double click of the mouse or pointing device. You can also select if you want bookmarks opened in a new tab, in the current tab, or in a new window.

The next setting allows you to set the maximum file size of files to display as thumbnail images. The default setting is 1 MB (1024 KB), meaning files larger than 1 MB will not display as a thumbnail image. Finally, you can turn on or off the display of supported image file formats as thumbnails. Simply click on the check box to check or uncheck the setting.
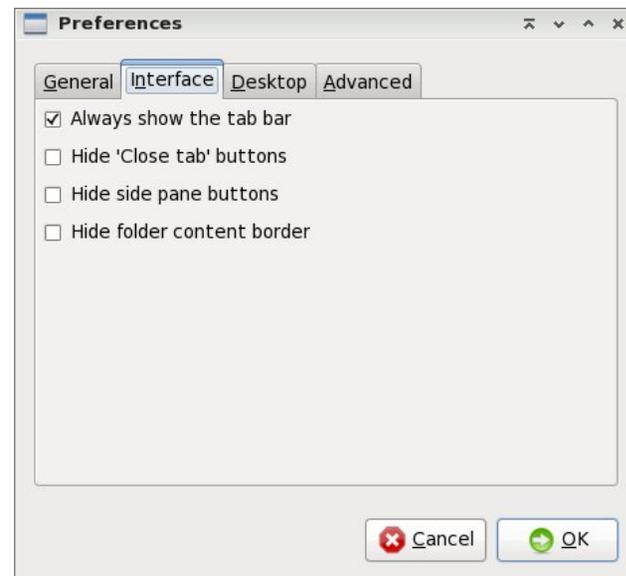
Under the second tab, **Interface**, you can change some settings that dictate a few aspects of the LXDE interface. By default in PCLinuxOS-LXDE, all of these settings are unchecked. "Always show the tab bar" allows for the tab bar in PCManFM to always be displayed, even when you have only one tab open. Personally, I set this to be "on," since, for me, it serves as a reminder that I can have multiple tabs opened. The other options should be fairly self-explanatory, and will do no permanent harm if you wish to play with them. You can, after all, reverse the

setting simply by opening up this tab and clicking on the setting again and revert it back to the way it was. So, feel free to play with the settings here
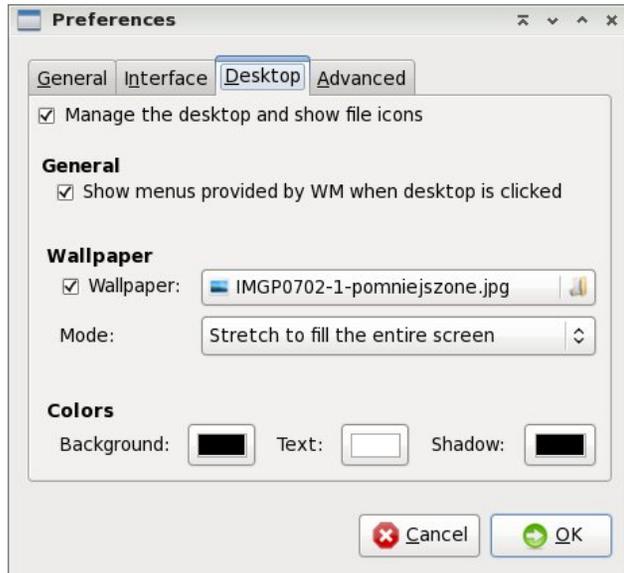
Under the third tab, **Desktop**, you can control various aspect of your LXDE desktop. At the top is the "Manage the desktop and show file icons" setting. This is selected by default, to allow PCManFM to control the desktop. This means that PCManFM will control the display of your wallpaper. Under this scheme, there is a "My Documents" folder placed on your desktop. When selected, it automatically opens up PCManFM, with your /home directory displayed. If you dislike having icons on your desktop, you may not be a fan of this. Due to a "glitch" in the PCManFM code, this icon cannot be removed without taking away PCManFM's ability to manage the desktop.

In the "General" section, you can have the menu provided by the window manager displayed when you right click on the desktop. With PCLinuxOS-LXDE, as well as most LXDE desktops, OpenBox is the window manager employed. This option is selected by default, allowing you easy access to the OpenBox settings simply by right-clicking on the desktop.

In the "Wallpaper" section, you can select the graphic file to use as the wallpaper for your desktop. You can also choose the "mode" by which to display your graphic file. First, you can select to stretch the graphic file to fill the entire screen, which is probably the most common setting. Your other choices are stretch to fit the screen, center on the screen, or tile the image to fill the screen.

Finally, under the "Colors" section, you can select the colors to use for the background, text, and shadow colors.
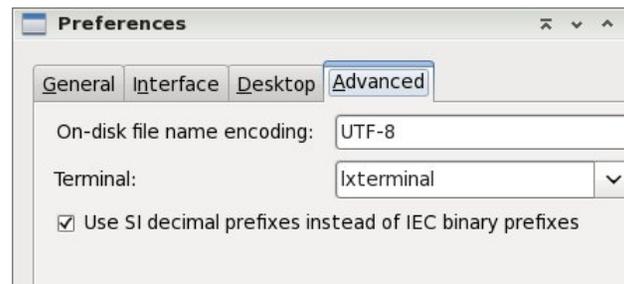
Under the fourth tab, **Advanced**, you can set the character set to use for file names. UTF-8 is the default setting. You can also select which terminal program you want to be used by default.
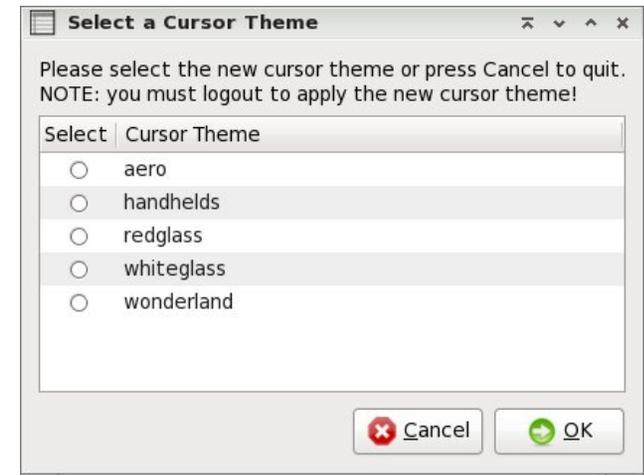
For the next section of Control Center, **Change Your Cursor Theme**, you can select which cursor theme you want to use as your default setting. After you click OK, LXDE logout will open. It is necessary to log out and back in for the new cursor theme to be applied.

For LXDE Control Center's next section, **GTK & Icon Theme**, you can use the first tab, "Window," to select the theme to use to display your windows. Similarly, the second tab, "Icons," allows you to select the icon theme to use with PCLXDE.

Under the third tab, "Other," you can select which toolbar style you want to use. The default setting is to display "text besides icons." Your other choices are icons only, text only and text below icons.

Under the **Screensaver Settings** section of the LXDE Control Center (graphic top of next column), you can make all of the settings for your screen saver. XScreenSaver is the default program for controlling your screen saver's behavior under LXDE.

The next selection under the LXDE Control Center is the **PCManFM Settings**, which we already covered when we talked about **Set Wallpaper**. The last
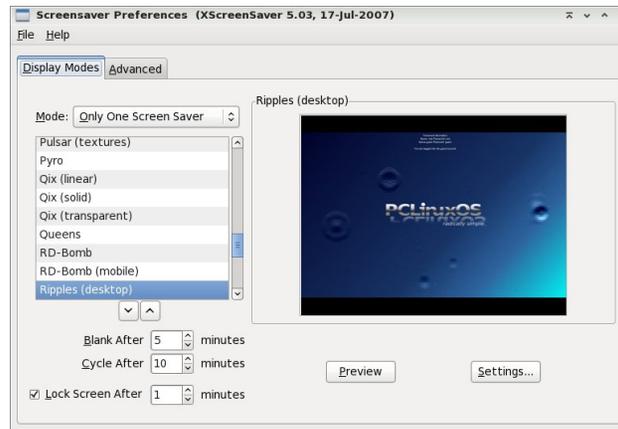
selection under the **Appearance Settings** tab of the LXDE Control Center is to **Refresh Panel**. You may need to do this manually after changing some of the appearance settings.
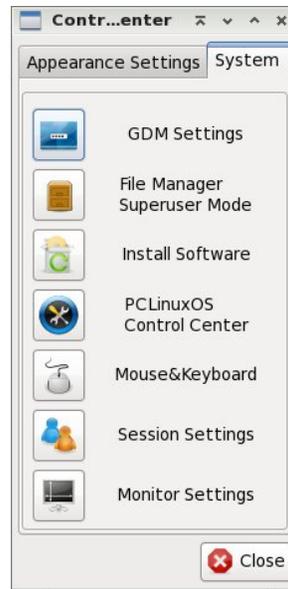
The **System** tab of the LXDE Control Center contains some settings that require root access. In fact, the first four categories require you to acquire root access.

Under the first tab of **GDM Settings**, "General," you can choose to hide visual feedback for entry of the GDM login password. You can also disable multiple logins for the same user (the default setting), select the default session for the GDM (default is "Run

XClient Script), specify a default GtkRC file to use (default is none) or to specify whether or not to use a 24 hour clock (default is set to "auto").

The second tab, "Local", allows you to set several options for the display of the GDM (Gnome Display Manager). First, you can set the "style." The default is "themed with face browser." Your other choices are plain, plain with face browser and themed. Under the "theme" option, you can select whether to
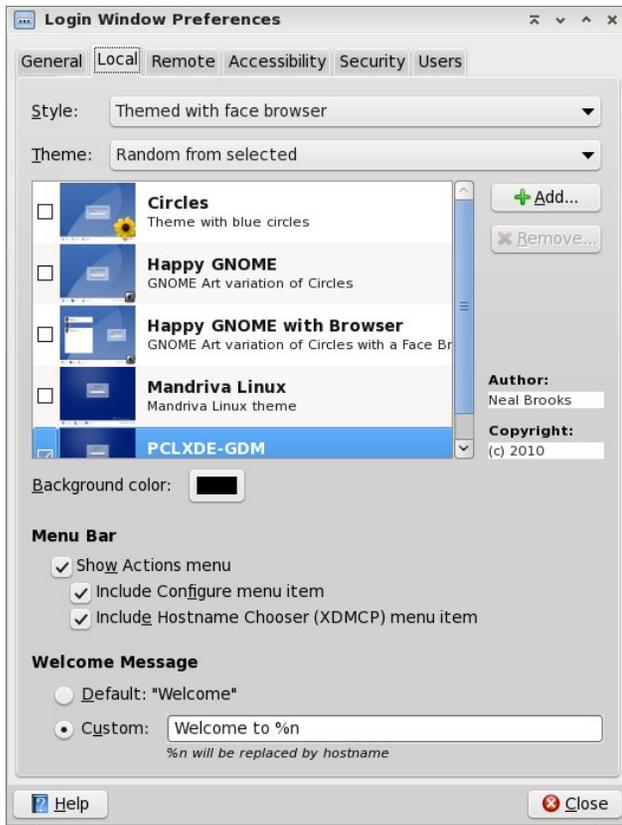
display random, selected GDM themes, or only one selected GDM theme. The default is "random from selected." Since only one is selected, PCLXDE-GDM, only that one will be displayed with either option.

The background color tells GDM what color to use for the background of the GDM theme. Under "Menu Bar," you can choose whether or not to display the actions menu, or if you choose to include a

"configure menu item" or the "hostname chooser menu item." In the last section of the "Local" tab, you can choose the welcome message to display.

Under the "Remote" tab (not shown), you can choose whether to disable remote login (the default), or to inherit the setting from the local user, or to use a plain interface with face browser.

The fourth tab, "Accessibility," allows you to set accessibility options for your GDM theme. First, you can choose whether or not to enable accessible login. The default is for this setting to be turned off. Under the "themes" section, you can choose whether or not to allow users to change the font and colors used in the plain greeter. By default, this setting is checked and activated. Under "sounds," you can specify sound files to be played when the login screen is ready, when the login is successful, or when the login is unsuccessful. By default, only the first option is activated. In the above screen shot, I've customized the sound file to be played, and activated all three options.
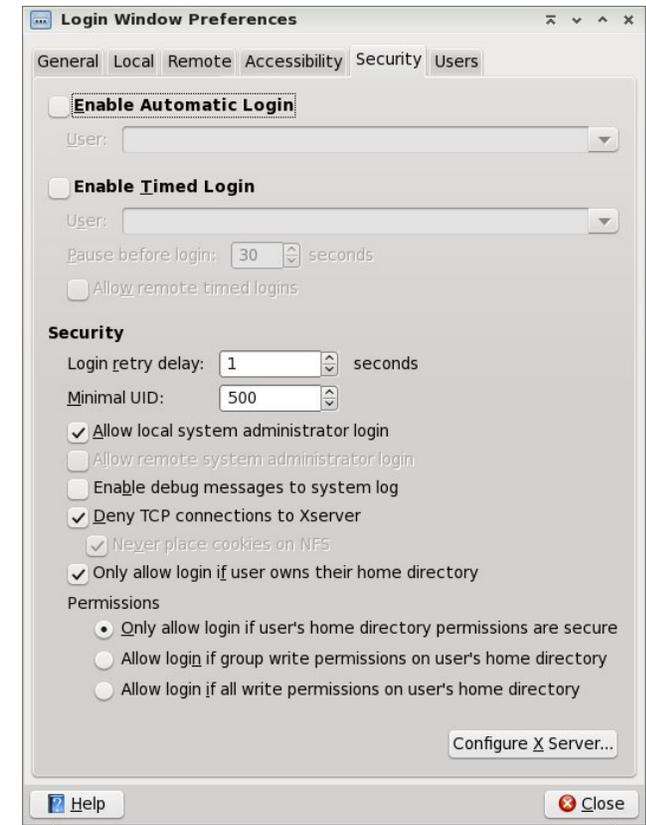
At the top of the "Security" tab, you can determine if you want automatic login for a specified user. While this may be alright for a computer that only has one user, you will be sacrificing some security of your files. Alternatively, the second choice allows for automatic login for the specified user after a set time delay (default is 30 seconds). This gives any other user a chance to login, but if no other user is chosen after 30 seconds, then the specified user is automatically logged in. Again, you will be sacrificing

the security of the specified user's files. The rest of the options under the "Security" tab should be fairly evident.

Under the "User" tab (not shown), you can set options for which users to display in the GDM login screen, the picture to use for that user, and the directory where the user "face" graphics are contained.
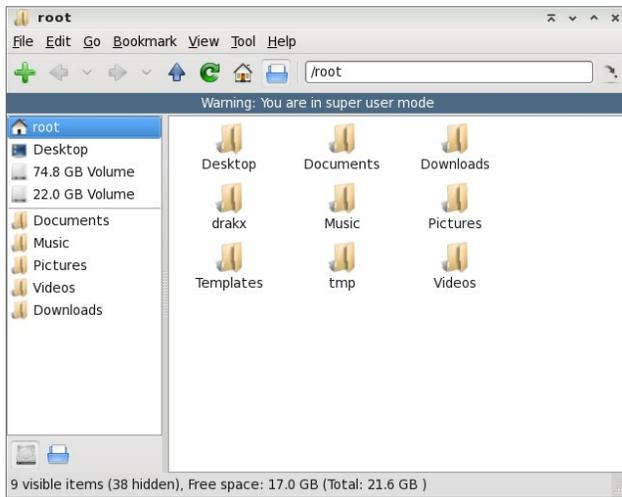
The next three buttons under the "System" tab of the LXDE Control Center offer short cuts to "**File Manager Superuser Mode**," **Synaptic** for installing software and system settings under **PCLinuxOS Control Center**, or PCC. When you select the "File Manager Superuser Mode" button, you will first be prompted for the root password, and if properly supplied, PCManFM will open (as above). Notice that when you open PCManFM with root privileges, there will be a blue banner at the top of the

PCManFM window, just below the toolbar, serving as a reminder of the elevated privilege. Synaptic and PCC behave normally when selected.
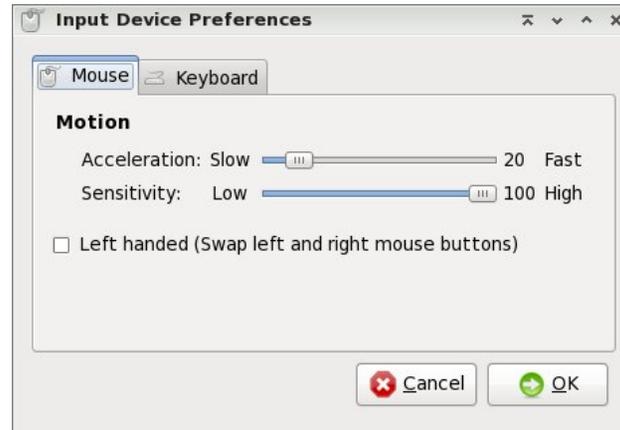
When you select the "**Mouse & Keyboard**" button in LXDE Control Center, you will first have access to the "Mouse" tab. Here, you can control the
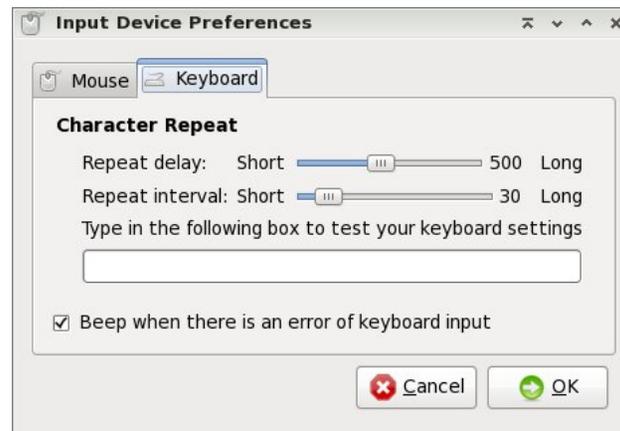
acceleration of your mouse, as well as the sensitivity. If you are a left handed user, you can swap the mouse buttons by checking the box.

Switching to the "Keyboard" tab gives you options to set the repeat delay, as well as the repeat interval for your keyboard. A test area is included in the middle of the window, where you can test your settings before committing to using them. Near the bottom of the window, you can select whether or not there is a "beep" produced when there is a keyboard input error. The default is to have the beep turned on.
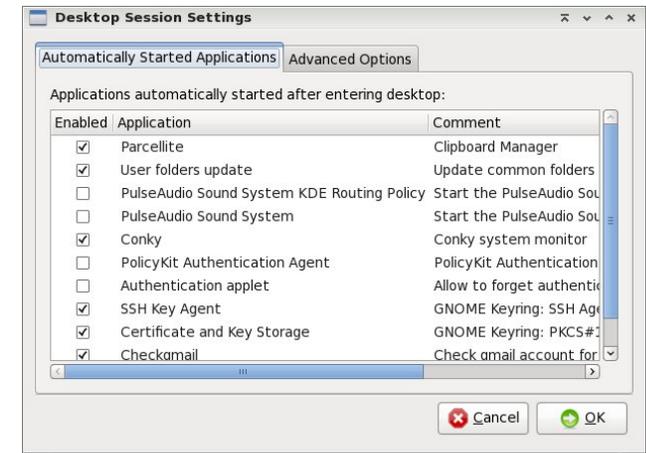
For the next LXDE Control Center button, "**Session Settings**," you can select which applications are automatically started when LXDE is started. We will cover this aspect of LXDE's behavior more in-depth in a separate article, but you can choose which available applications you want to be started automatically at LXDE's boot by checking or clearing the check box next to each item.

Under the "Advanced Options" tab, you are best advised to heed the warning about NOT touching or altering this setting, unless you know exactly what you are doing. Any changes you do make here will take effect on the next login to LXDE.
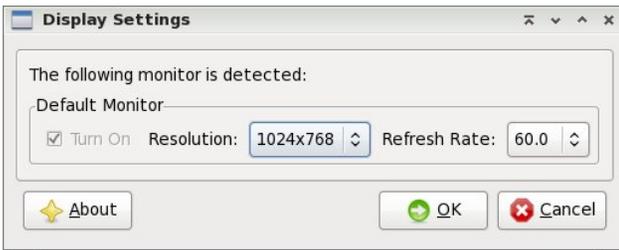
The last selection in the LXDE Control Center's "**System**" tab is "**Monitor Settings**." Here, you can change the resolution of your monitor, as well as the refresh rate.

Conclusion

Despite its relative youth, the LXDE Control Center provides quite a few configuration options. Some more advanced configurations options will be covered in more depth in separate articles. But, via the LXDE Control Center, you can make significant inroads to tailoring LXDE to your liking.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Crow, August 21, 2010, running KDE 4.

Does Linux Market Share Matter? What Matters?

by Muungwana

Each year is declared the "year of Linux" or "the year of the penguin," and every year ends with a disappointment because Linux market share fails to increase significantly in that year. As a matter of fact, Linux market share has been hovering around 1% for a really long time, with no sign of a major breakthrough anytime soon. Is Linux a player in the desktop space with the market share it has? How much market share should Linux have to begin to matter?

Linux doesn't need to have a large market share in order to matter. Large market share will actually do Linux more harm than good, since it will have to compromise on ideas and principles that carried it this far, in order to accommodate new users who have no idea or interest in knowing these ideas. OS X has had the same small market share for the same reasons. Apple chose to stick to its guns, taking a hit on market share, because it wants its users to know what Apple stands for, and only accommodate those who agree with their ideas of how a desktop computer is to be presented and used.

Mac OS X has around 4% world wide, and around 7% in the US in desktop operating systems market share. However, OS X plays a critical part in shaping the present and future of desktop computing. Market share is important, but not that important. What is important is mind share. OS X has a mind share much much larger than the market share, and that is what makes the industry pay attention to what it is doing.

Linux, as an operating system, will not benefit that much from increased market share. It will, however, benefit much more from an increase in mind share of ideas that brought it up and propels it forward, and these ideas are working. The industry is starting to pay attention, and use them as it runs around trying to maximize its shareholder's pockets. Most web browsers today are built around these ideas, and web technologies are moving towards these ideas. Android and WebOS, two of the hottest operating systems powering smart phones today, stand on the shoulders of these ideas. The next generation office file formats are structured around these ideas. The net neutrality debate has some elements of the same ideas. .Net makes up a core of current and future versions of Windows, and core parts of its

specifications are released to the masses to "appease" advocates of these ideas. Microsoft, a heavyweight in the computing world, is starting to cave in to the ideas.

There most likely will never be a 30-second Linux commercial during the Super Bowl, but these ideas are taking hold and gaining strength, sneaking in from the bottom of the corporate world, and going upwards. These ideas are what will shape the future of computing for decades to come, and Linux market share will increase as a side effect of these ideas taking hold. Most likely, Linux will never reach a currently unknown market share upper limit, if it is to stay true to itself, as it should. It will do more harm than good if Linux compromises on these ideas for a few points in market share.

What will be the optimal market share desktop Linux should aim for to keep those who care about it happy? Should it matter?

SING AND SHOUT

My Acer laptop sings with PCLinuxOS! Georgetoon

It is highly addictive! johnmart

WELCOME HOME

I'm just real happy with it. sixthwheel

I am impressed. Truly impressed. marriedman

It's the best yet! gseaman

So Thank you All for this amazing system! Sefy

The distro is great. muungwana

Thank You Tex and the Gang! Sparky

The product speaks for itself. German Tux

I love it, it works great and fast. billy29

Seems radically simple to me! exploder

It's blazing fast. Glocko

Job well done! gungaden

I see it as a most valid alternative to other operating systems. Stan

It is amazing, gorgeous, simple, reliable. Red Leader

fast and stable mantd

PCLinoxOS Revival

I have to say it's fantastic. caf4926

Cozy warm bubble! dubigrasu

PCLinuxOS
Radically Simple

SING AND SHOUT

Thanks Thanks Thanks
seahawk5

I'm impressed.
Xyus

WELCOME HOME

PCLinuxOS Rocks My RAM!
parnote

PC Linux is just all right - OH, YEAH!
MeeMaW

it is truly a excellent piece of work.
verronicathecow

Everything works without fuzz.
Zwopper

PCLinuxOS..the way uh-huh uh-huh I like it!
Rudge

Ridem Cowboy HeeeeeHaaaaw Joble

For me its the only game in town.   Jonesy

PCLOS will deliver lqlarry

PCLinuxOS lifts my spirits.
ms_meme

the distro is fantastic, and the community is really something else
tschommer

penguin dreams are mine
windows infestation gone
let the good times roll
weirdwolf

awesome distro
Stricktoo

I absolutely love it.
mystika1

PCLinoxOS Revival

thunder and lightening is no lark, when PC-LOS users are in the dark
Johnboy

We all love PCLinuxOS here
davecs

like rolling thunder across an evening sky   Neal

SING AND SHOUT

I got a system I'm going to tell you about
I got a system it never will wear out
I got a system about it there's no doubt
Now gather round hear me *SING and SHOUT*

MP3

OGG

PCLOS is the only way to go
PCLOS is for those in the know
PCLOS will make your screen glow
Get the best and go with the flow

I got a system I'm going to tell you about
I got a system it never will wear out
I got a system about it there's no doubt
Now gather round help me *SING and SHOUT*

Boot up your 'puter and see how it will shine
Boot up your 'puter oh everything is fine
Boot up your 'puter so quickly you're on line
PCLOS is all I'll have on mine

PCLinuxOS
Revival

I got a system I'm going to tell you about
I got a system it never will wear out
I got a system about it there's no doubt
Now gather round let's all *SING and SHOUT*

Going to the forum my favorite gathering place
Going to the forum of Windows there's no trace
Going to the forum where everyone's an ace
PCLOS is our saving grace

We got a system we're going to tell you about
We got a system it never will wear out
We got a system about it there's no doubt
Now gather round hear us *SING and SHOUT*

Screenshot Showcase
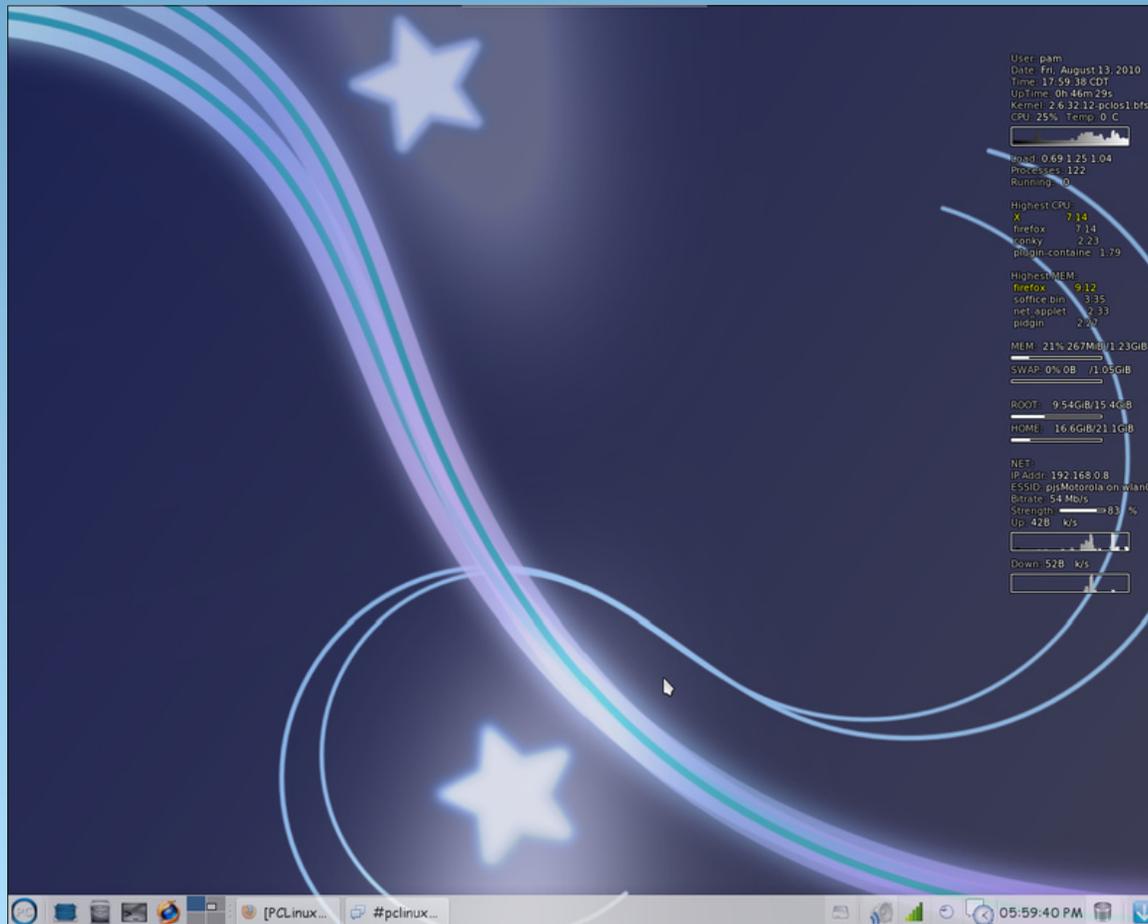
Posted by Meemaw, August 13, 2010, running Phoenix.

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Alternate OS: Syllable, Part 1

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

This month's article is on SyllableOS. It is a little different than either ReactOS or Haiku, in that Syllable didn't have to "re-invent the wheel," so to speak. Quoted from Syllable's main site,

"Syllable Desktop is an original, modern operating system design, in the tradition of the Amiga and BeOS, but built using many parts from the GNU project and Linux. It is designed and optimized for your desktop PC, making it exceptionally fast and responsive and easy to use. It is under development, so it is interesting and even exciting to try out, but you have to decide for yourself whether it fits your needs already. Syllable Desktop runs on industry-standard Personal Computers with a minimum of a Pentium compatible processor and 32 MB of memory. It can make a new computer extremely fast and an old computer usable again."

What that short description doesn't tell you is that they started from an existing base, AtheOS. The original site, (now defunct), can be found here: http://www.atheos.cx/ . From the site:

"AtheOS is a free desktop operating system under the GPL license. AtheOS currently run on Intel, AMD and other compatible processors and support the Intel Multi Processor architecture. I have seen quite a few anouncements of "promising" OSes with "great potential" during the development of AtheOS. The problem is that when I follow the links I normally find a description of the concept, a floppy-bootloader written in assembly, and not much else. AtheOS is a bit more mature, and is already running quite a lot of software. This server for example is running AtheOS. The HTTP server is a AtheOS port of

Apache, and most of the content is generated by the AtheOS port of PHP3 and perl.The native AtheOS file system is 64-bit and journaled.

*AtheOS is not meant to be a new Unix clone (like Linux and *BSD) but a new clean desktop OS. It does support large parts of the POSIX standard and hence are able to run most of the UNIX CLI tools and it comes with a standard UNIX shell (BASH) but this does not compromise anything in AtheOS as a desktop OS. AtheOS have a integrated GUI that works in conjunction with the kernel and various other components to create a complete and consistent system. The GUI is server/client like X11 but communicate through the native messaging system and the protocol is private to the server and client library and entirely hidden from the applications. Both the client library and the server is heavily multithreaded. The fine-grained multithreading and the low latency messaging system make the GUI much more responsive than X11."*

The operating system was written and published on the web sometime in 2000 by Kurt Skauen. Unlike other operating systems of the time, it had support for ATA disk drives, but no support for CDs. The TCP/IP stack was slightly limited. The original operating system can still be downloaded from Syllable's mirror site at: http://atheos.syllable.org/index.html . Here is a screenshot of an AtheOS desktop.

Other screenshots can be found at http://atheos.syllable.org/screenshots.php3.html.

Syllable is available from their website at http://web.syllable.org/pages/index.html. Click on the Try Syllable link at the top of the page, and you have a choice of Premium CD, Live CD, Basic CD, Emulate, or Upgrade. The premium CD is a paid version. The live CD is for hardware compatibility testing. The basic CD is an installable version without the extra frills of the premium one. The emulate version is said to be for VMware, QEMU, Virtual PC or VirtualBox, but only a VMware image is offered. The upgrade CD is to upgrade an existing installation.

Although I am installing this in VirtualBox, I chose to download the basic CD, and install from that.
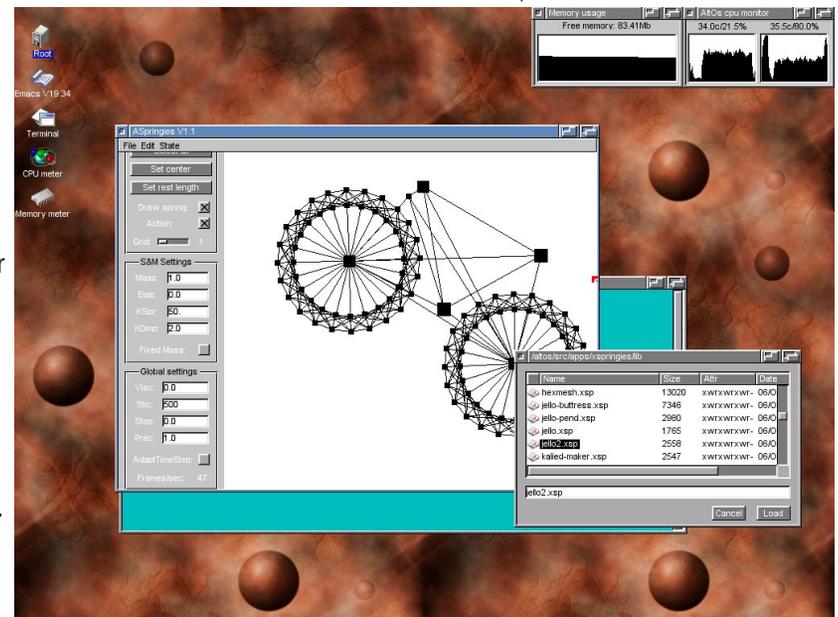
Booting from the CD, we see a familiar GRUB boot menu. There are many choices available, and ours is obvious.
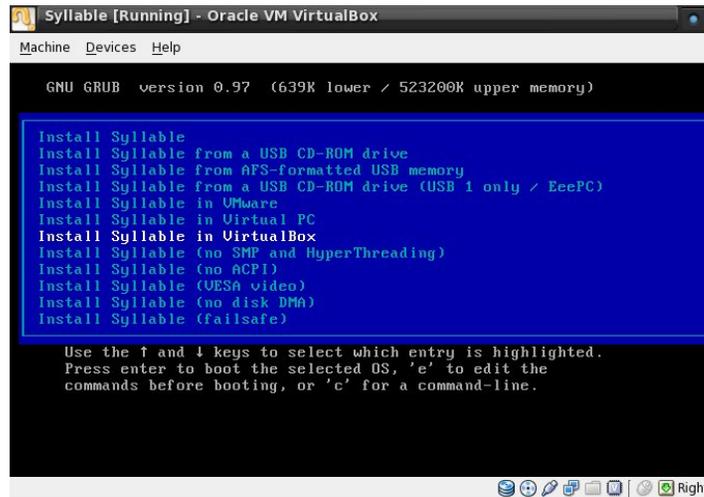
Next, you are given partitioning instructions (below).
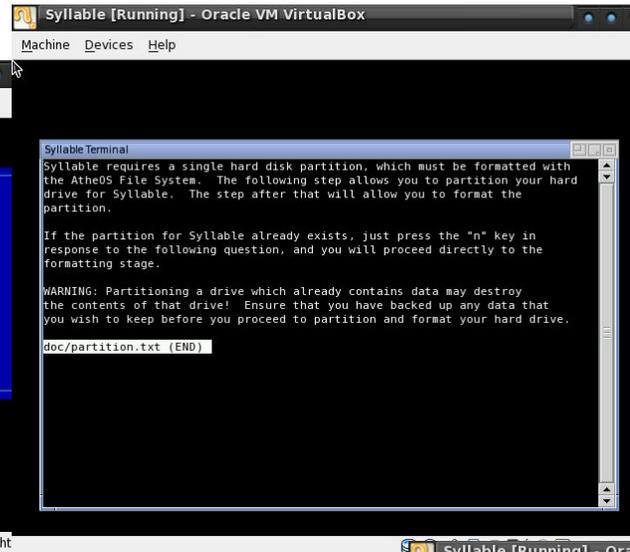
I selected the entire disk space and chose Syllable's partition type (below).
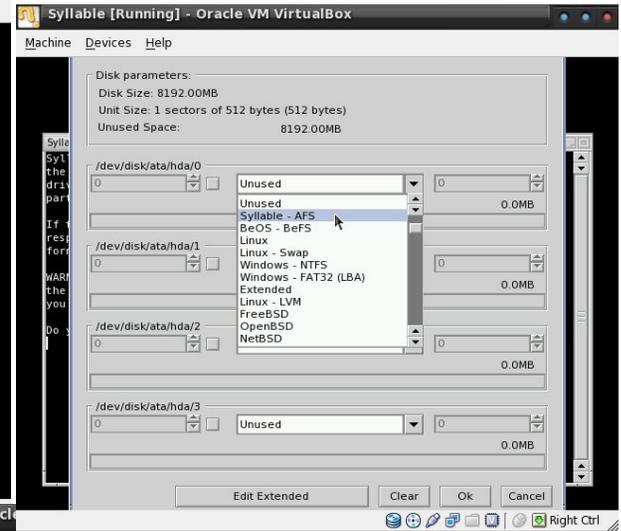
Then you come to the welcome screen (right). Press "i" to begin installation.
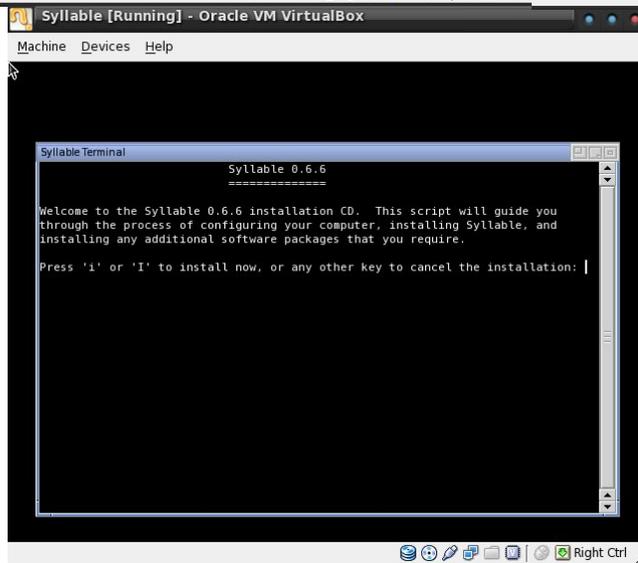
You will then select the hard drive to be partitioned. /dev/disk/ata/cdc/raw is the CD drive (right).
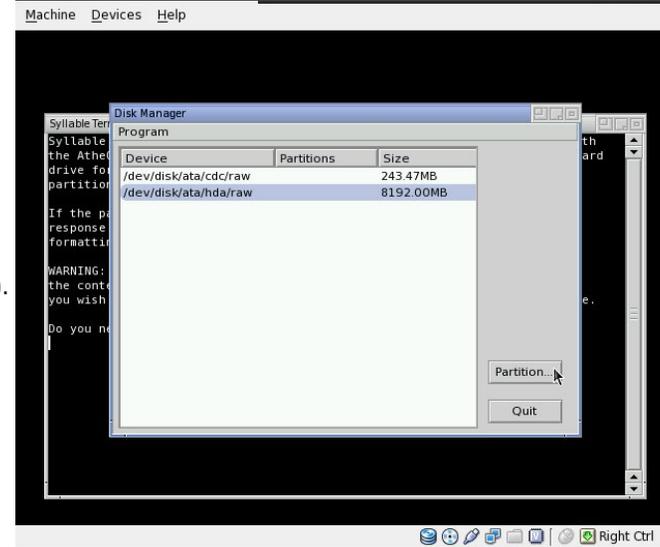
The next screen gives you formatting instructions and partition selection (next page).
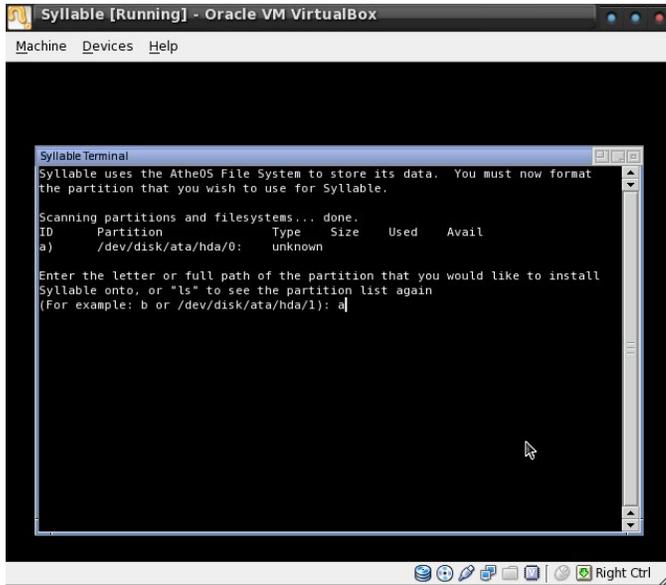
I chose to install the bootloader in the master boot record of the disk (below).

The network device was later changed to PCnet-PCI II (NAT) as shown below.
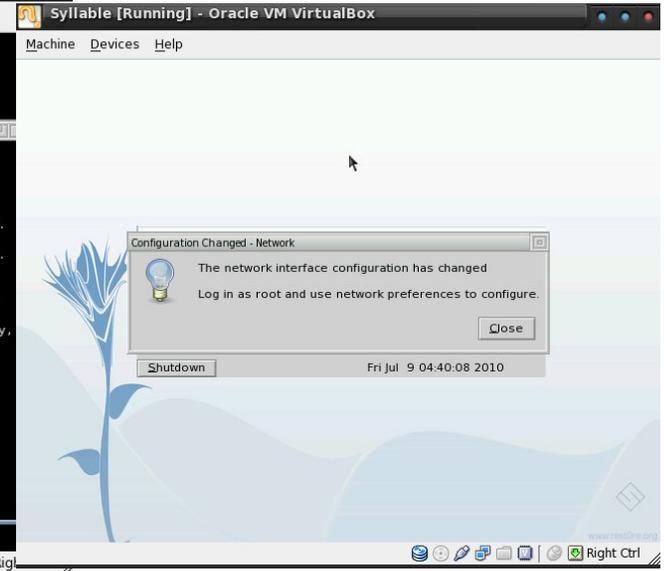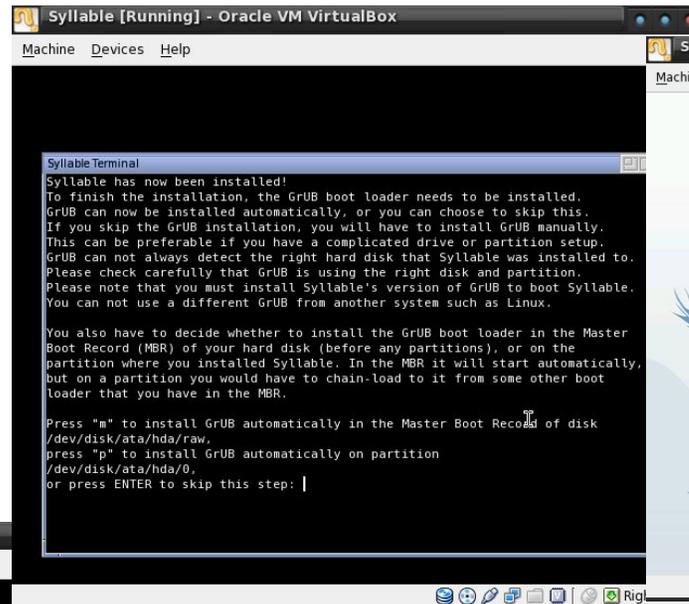
Now that the base system filecopy has completed, I pressed ENTER to continue (right).
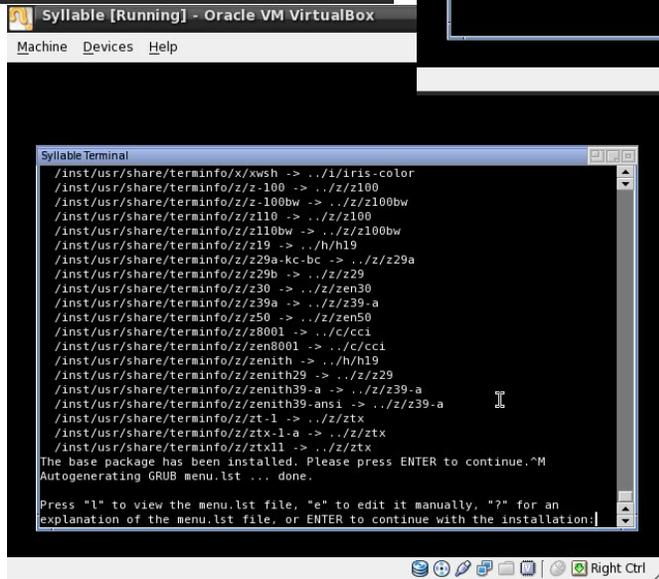
After the bootloader installation, I re-booted the virtual machine from the hard disk instead of the CD (right).
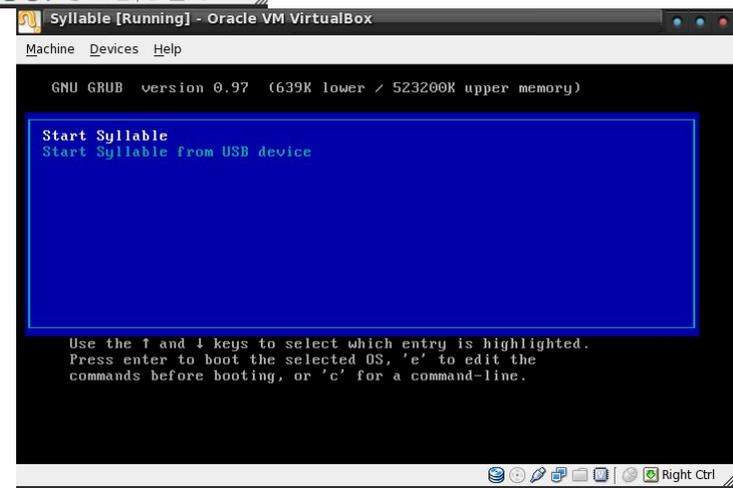
The password for the root user is "root".

The Syllable menu (below).
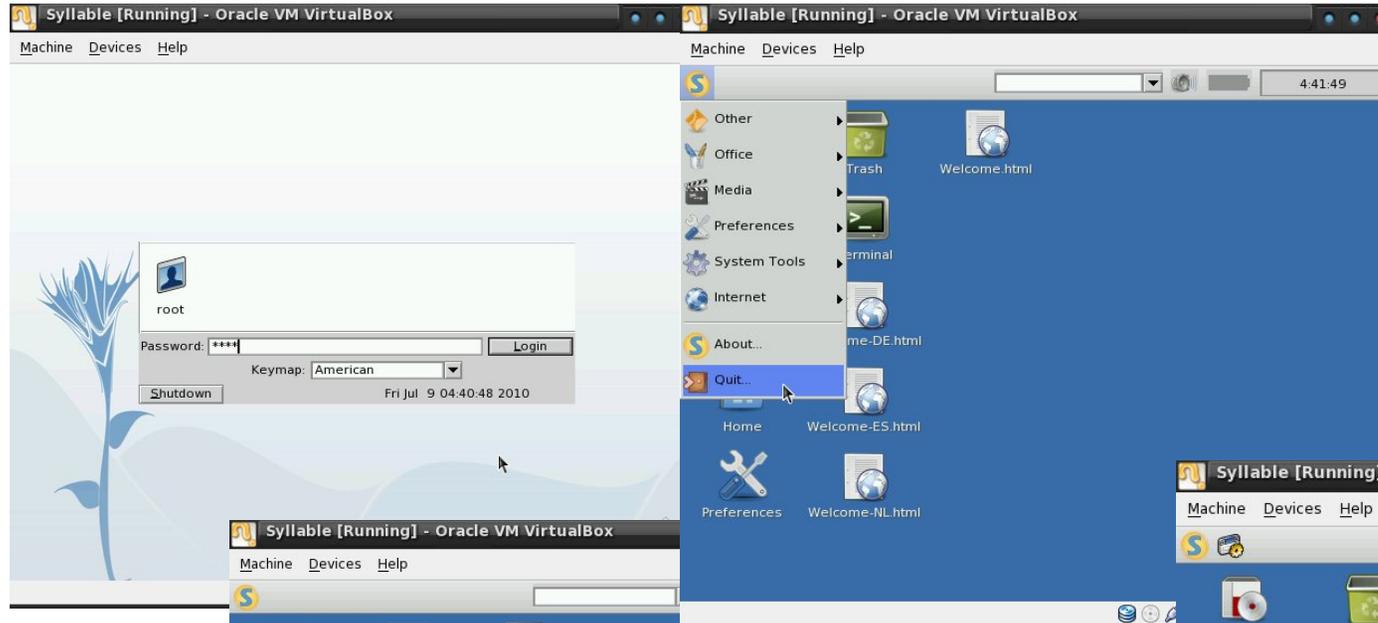
Next month, we will look at creating a new user, resizing and customizing the desktop, capabilities of the operating system, and what programs are included with the basic CD.

First login to the default desktop as root user.
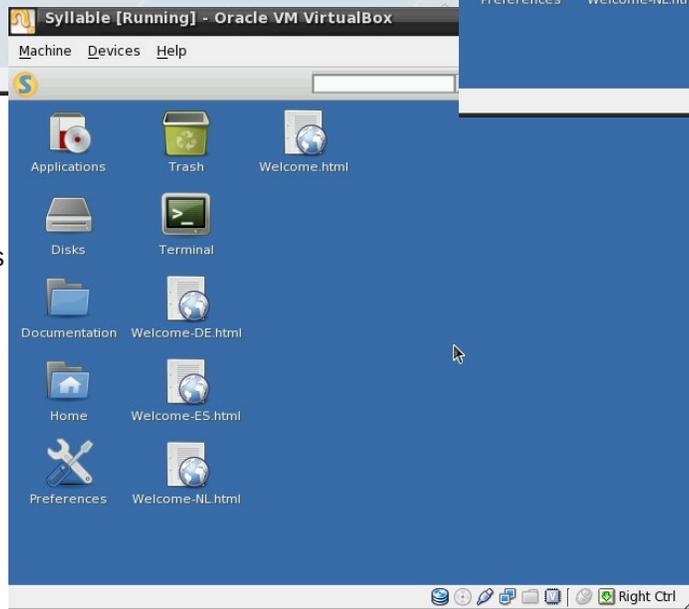
Choices available by selecting Quit from the menu (right).
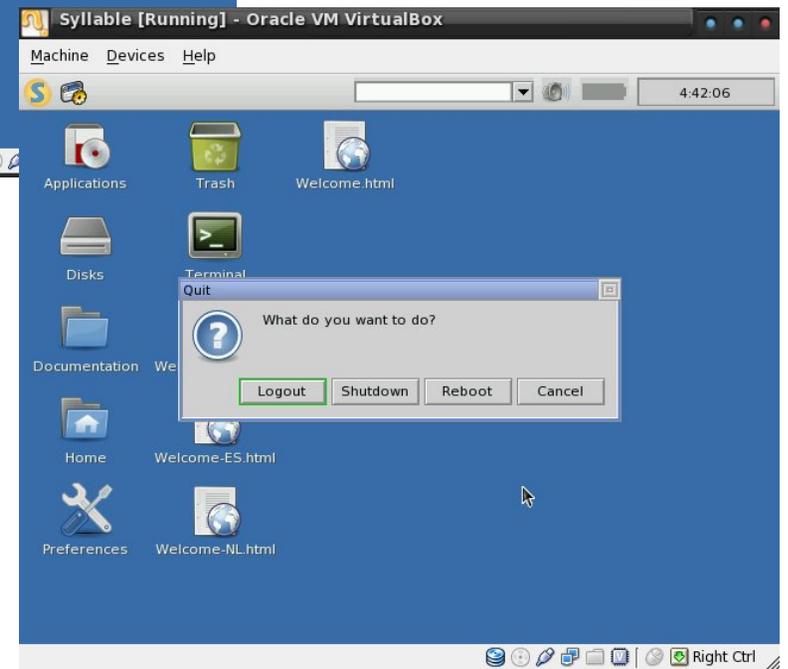
LXDE: Autostart Apps With .desktop Files

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Under almost every other major desktop environment, it's a relatively simple task to set up applications to automatically start whenever you start the desktop. However, this is not necessarily so under LXDE. In fact, LXDE does not natively have an autostart directory, by default. Thanks to Neal Brooks, author of the PCLinuxOS-LXDE remaster, PCLinuxOS users of LXDE do have this feature already set up for them.
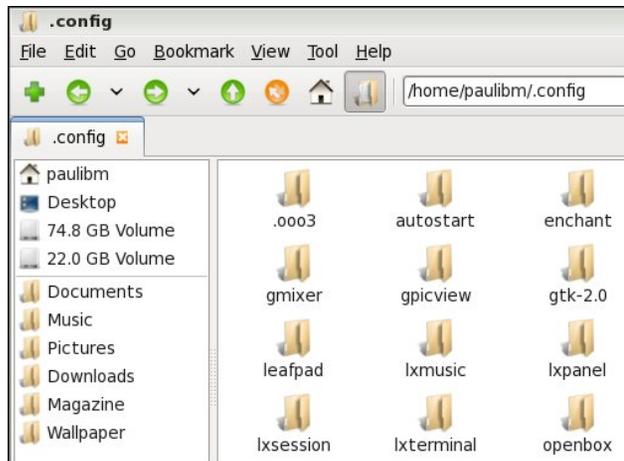
Hidden in the user's home directory, is the .config folder. Under the .config folder, you will find a folder named autostart. Just as with KDE, items placed in the autostart directory will be automatically started when LXDE starts.

You might think it to be as easy as placing a link – either a symbolic link or a hard link – to the application you want to automatically start in the autostart directory. But that is not going to work. Nope. Only actual .desktop files work to automatically start the selected applications when LXDE is started. And no, you cannot create a link to the .desktop files. It has to be an actual, bona fide .desktop file.

Of course, the easiest way to obtain the proper .desktop file is to, (as root), copy the appropriate .desktop file from /usr/share/applications to the /$HOME/.config/autostart directory. But what if the application you want to automatically start doesn't have a corresponding .desktop file? Read on.

Uses for the .desktop file

Before we discuss how to create the .desktop file for the application(s) you wish to automatically start, it's important to understand how .desktop files are used on your system. Obviously, one such use is the main topic of this article: automatically starting applications when you start LXDE. But probably one of the primary uses of .desktop files is to display items in your LXDE menu.

All items displayed in the LXDE menu have a corresponding .desktop file in /usr/share/applications. So much of the information here can also be utilized to customize your LXDE menu. In this aspect, LXDE is not all that unlike Xfce, and the information in the **Xfce 4.6.2: Customize Your Xfce Menu** article (June 2010 issue of The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine) will also apply to your efforts to customize your LXDE menu.

Fortunately, LXDE follows the standards for the .desktop file set forth by freedesktop.org. This link will take you to the page that explains all the recognized "keys" in a compliant .desktop file, as well as specifying whether each key is required or optional. While not an "official" standards organization, the "guidelines" set forth by Freedesktop.org have become defacto standards.

Creating the .desktop file

Just as with many things in Linux, there is more than one way to create a .desktop file for the application you wish to automatically start when LXDE starts. A .desktop file is, as many files in Linux are, a simple text file. Using the .desktop file for AlsaMixer GUI as an example, here is the basic format for that .desktop file:

```
[Desktop Entry]
Name=AlsaMixerGUI
Comment=Advanced Linux Sound
Architecture (ALSA) graphical mixer
Exec=alsamixergui
Icon=sound_section
Terminal=false
Type=Application
Categories=Audio;Mixer;X-
MandrivaLinux-Multimedia-Sound
```

The lines should be fairly self-explanatory, but here's a brief rundown on each. The "Name" entry is, as you might expect, the name displayed for the application. The "Comment" entry contains the information that is supplied when a user hovers their mouse over the entry in the LXDE menu. The "Exec"

entry specifies the application to launch. Although most of the executable files on your computer are stored in the /usr/bin folder, it would be wise to specify the full path to the application. If your application, indeed, has its executable file stored in /usr/bin, you can get away with specifying only the application's executable name, because /usr/bin is in your path. Otherwise, you will need to specify the full path to the application's executable file.

The "Icon" entry specifies the icon to display for the specified application. The "Terminal" entry specifies if the application should be opened in a terminal session. The "Type" entry most likely doesn't need an explanation. Finally, the "Categories" entry specifies, first, the categories that the application should be classified as, and second, where to place the application's icon in the LXDE menu. In our example above, that would be under the LXDE > Multimedia > Sound menu.

So now that you have a basic understanding of what a .desktop file does, and how it's constructed, it's time to discover how to create our .desktop file. The first choice, and probably the most obvious one, is to simply create the file by hand, in a basic text editor such as Leafpad. To prevent the program from appearing in the LXDE menu, refrain from saving the .desktop file to your /usr/share/applications directory. Conversely, if you want the program to appear in your LXDE menu, be sure to save the .desktop file (or a copy of it) in your /usr/share/applications directory. You will need root privileges to save the file there. For setting up an application to automatically start when you start LXDE, be sure to save the .desktop file (or a copy of it) to your /$HOME/.config/autostart directory.

The second choice is to take an existing .desktop file on your system and modify it for your needs. Open up an existing .desktop file, make the changes to the listed keys, and resave it with the same name as your application, but with the .desktop extension.

The third choice is to follow the steps outlined in the Xfce 4.6.2: Customize Your Xfce Menu article (June, 2010 issue of The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine) by running the exo-desktop-item-edit command to create your .desktop file with a GUI.

Regardless of the method you choose to use, don't forget to save the resulting .desktop file (or a copy of it) in your $HOME/.config/autostart folder for those applications you want to automatically start when you start LXDE.

Advanced: A Workaround (Easier) Shortcut

Now, I'm calling this "advanced," but don't interpret advanced as meaning difficult. Actually, this workaround is easier. I call it "advanced" for two reasons. First, it involves making a simple bash script. This fact alone may keep some of you from attempting it. Second, it's a different way of looking at the problem, and offers a different solution that is more flexible.

This method started off as a "proof of concept" idea in my head. I don't know if anyone has tried this before. If so, great. If not, I wonder why. So let me walk you through this method, step-by-step.

Step One: Create a simple bash script, similar to the following:

```
#!/bin/bash

sleep 10
dropbox &
conky &
aumix &
leafpad &
pcmanfm &
checkgmail &
pcc &
```

All I've done here is simply list all the the applications I want to automatically start when LXDE starts. The first line causes a 10 second delay in the execution of the rest of the script. This delay allows the desktop to finish loading before I start launching applications. Notice that each application name is followed by a space, then the ampersand sign. The ampersand tells bash to execute the application in the background, and move on to the next line. Without the ampersand, the script would first launch dropbox, wait for it to finish and exit, and once finished, launch conky. Once conky was finished executing and exits, then aumix would launch. Things would proceed in this manner until all the applications listed had been executed, one at a time.

This list assumes, of course, that I want to launch DropBox, Conky, Aumix, Leafpad, PCManFM, CheckGmail and PCC every time I start my computer. I am certain that I do not want all of these applications automatically started when I start LXDE, as a matter of fact. But I list them here to prove that this technique works, validating my proof of concept.

You can just as easily list other applications here that you may want to automatically launch whenever LXDE starts.

Step Two: Save your new bash script. I called mine autostart-lxde.sh. Sure, you can call it whatever you like. But I have this thing about making the names mean something that makes sense to me six months or a year down the line. I saved my bash script in my $HOME directory.

Step Three: Right click on your new bash script, and select "Properties" from the context menu.
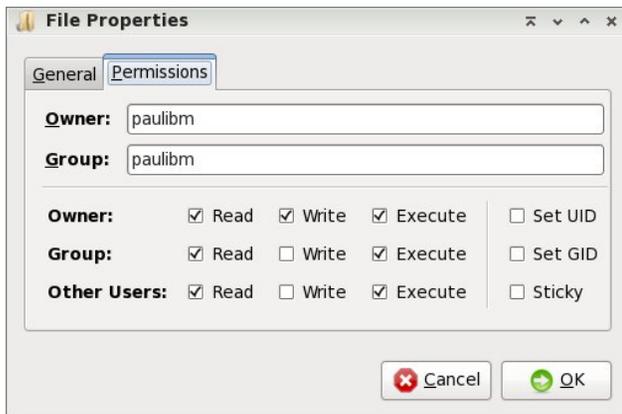
Click on the "Permissions" tab, and check all the boxes that are labeled "Execute." This will allow not only the file owner to run the script, but also all members of the specified group, as well as all other users on the system.

Step Four: Right click on your script, and select "Copy" from the context menu. Open up the /usr/bin directory (as root), and paste your script into that

directory. The /usr/bin directory is most desirable, since it is in your $PATH. When you paste a copy of your script in the /usr/bin directory, root will become the owner and group of the script. An added benefit is that the list of applications to automatically start when LXDE starts can only be changed or edited by a user with root privileges.

If you want to make it possible for any user to edit the script (or easier for YOU to edit the script), you can save it to some other directory of your choice. If you choose this route, you will have to provide the entire path to the script in the .desktop file that you create in the next step.

Step Five: Create a .desktop file for your script. It should look something like the following:

```
[Desktop Entry]
Name=LXDE Autostart
Comment=Automatically start listed
applications when LXDE starts.
Exec=autostart-lxde.sh
Icon=/usr/share/icons/5.png
Terminal=false
Type=Application
Categories=Configuration
```

Save the file to your $HOME/.config/autostart directory. There is no need to save this .desktop file to your /usr/share/applications directory, since its sole purpose is to automatically launch your selected applications when LXDE starts. In fact, I don't have all the proper parameters set up in the example .desktop file above for the script to even appear in your LXDE menu.

Now, when you start LXDE, all the applications listed in your script will be launched automatically. To test it, log out of your current LXDE session, and then log back in. If you've followed all the directions accurately, all the applications listed in your script should automatically start when you start LXDE.

Remember that I said this method is easier and is more flexible? It certainly cleans up your $HOME/.config/autostart directory. Instead of having a lot of .desktop files filling up the autostart directory, you now only have one (or two, since DropBox places one there automatically for us) that replaces them all. It also saves space on your hard drive. Instead of having multiple copies of the .desktop files repeated in your autostart directory, there's only one. Finally, it's more flexible. You can automatically start *any* application on your system with this method, regardless if it has a .desktop file or not.

Also, even though I haven't tried it extensively, this method should work equally well on just about any other desktop environment. As long as it has a provision for automatically starting applications when the desktop environment starts, there should be no problem, since .desktop files are generally seen as being executable files.

Can the script be improved upon? I'm certain of it, since my scripting skills are very, very basic. But as it exists in its current state, it's very functional. It just works. I'm sure that for someone (hint, hint) who is good with creating scripts with a GUI interface (either via Zenity or Gtkdialog), it would be a fairly simple proposition to create a GUI script to help create the autostart-lxde.sh script and .desktop file. This would give PCLinuxOS-LXDE users something

that no other users of LXDE on other Linux distros have: a graphical way to manage the applications to automatically start when LXDE starts.

Screenshot Showcase
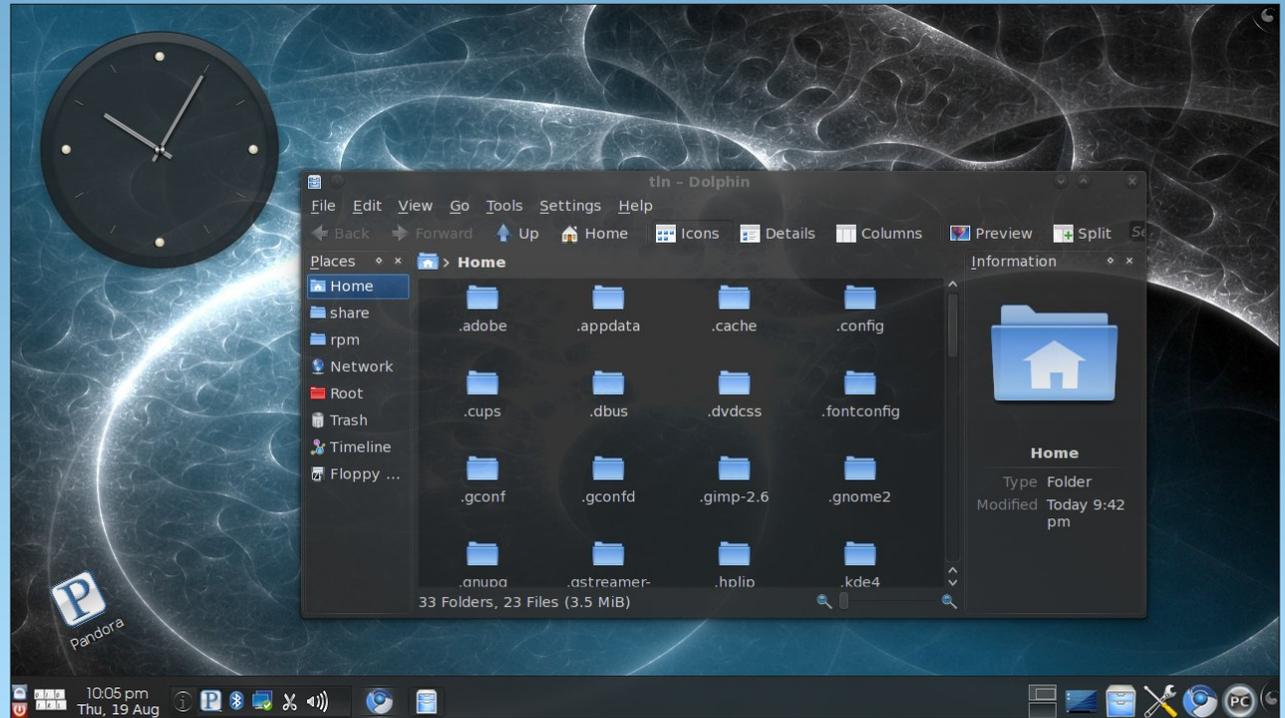
Posted by travisn000, August 20, 2010, running KDE 4.

Beginner's Guide To Gimp: Part 3

by Dan Malewski (Blndsyd)

As I sit thinking about this series on Gimp and a beginner's perspective, I realize in my past articles I may have "jumped the gun" a bit. I will be stepping back a bit and starting from what I believe is more of a beginning to The Gimp.

What is the first thing that happens when we open Gimp? Right off the bat, three "windows" open up. The left one is the Tool panel. The middle is where your images and editing will be. The right is the Layer, Channel, Paths, Undo, Brushes, Patterns and Gradients panel.

5. Graphics

This time around, I will be focusing on the "Tools" window. I will look at what some of those wonderful buttons do. I'm going to let you play with the ones that I don't talk about. The best way to learn, I found, was just going and doing.

 The first one I will look at is the "Rectangle Select Tool"   found in the top left position.

This one will select a rectangle for many different needs. One would be to fill in some color. Let's try it. Open a new file and select the rectangle tool. Pick a spot, left click and drag. You should see something like this.
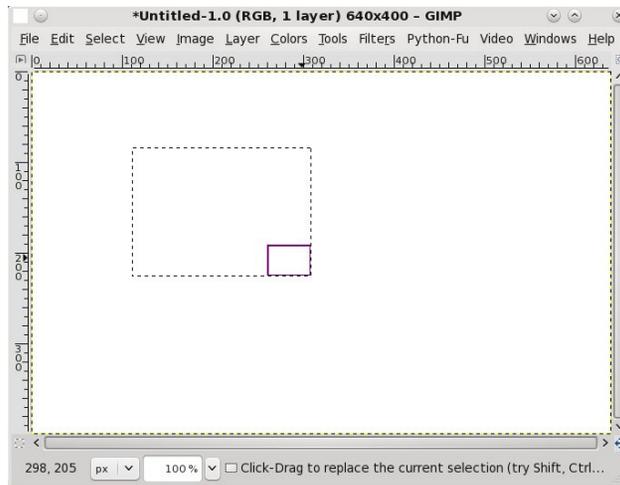
This will lead us to another one of the buttons on the tool window. The fill button. Gimp calls it a "Bucket Fill Tool" and it looks like a bucket of paint. Select it, point inside the rectangle you just made, and left click. Now it has filled the rectangle.

You will also be able to cut things out with the rectangle tool. All you would need to do is make your rectangle > right click>select Edit> then select Cut.
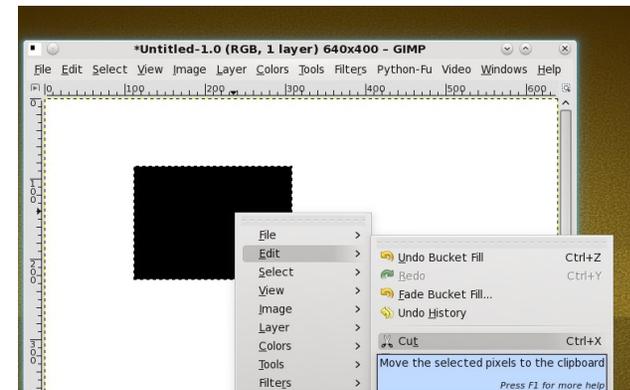
Next time, I will go through more of those buttons on the Tool Panel.

Thanks and enjoy the Gimp.

Want To Help?

Would you like to help with the PCLinuxOS Magazine? Opportunities abound. So get involved!

You can write articles, help edit articles, serve as a "technical advisor" to insure articles are correct, create artwork, or help with the magazine's layout.

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Forum Foibles: A Rose By Any Other Name ...

I see intriguing nicknames here in the forum.
So what do our nicknames mean or why did
we choose them?   uncleV

"V" because my real name starts with it."uncle" because I thought here, like in almost every other forum, I would be one of the oldest... **uncleV**

My nickname = My First name + First letter of my last name. **AndrzejL**

My name is my name. **Neal**

As for the nick, raven was our high school mascot, cuervo is one of my favorite beverages, y los cuervos son mis hermanos. Other stuff, too, and the longer I have kept the nick the more fond of it I've become. **ElCuervo**

Mine nickname came from the first email address I setup for college. I had been given an email for doing some work for a friend who ran an ISP from his home and my wife (now ex) was jealous. So my sister and I setup an email through the university I was attending and choose amoeba (a single-cell organism that only thinks of food and sex). Then years later when I started working for the same university, that was still linked to my name and was made into my 'career account'. **amoeba**

Wayne is my name and 1932 is the year I was born. Simple. **wayne1932**

Mine's easy too..... my grandchildren call me Meemaw. **MeeMaw**

ath are my initials and -aki was just something I tacked on that sounded cool to me. **athaki**

Mine came from some of the antics I did while racing as a youngster! **Wildman**

When I first moved out and got my own internet connection, I had to pick my email address. Every nickname I have in real life was taken. Since I had just got married, I went with Marriedman. Funny thing is, no one ever seems to have that name anywhere I go. Never on IRC or any email places. **marriedman**

my nickname is a play on punctuation. j**aydot**

JohnW is John + William, my birth names   (in English). My real name in Dutch see in my profile.
Using JohnW_57 on IRC and mailing lists (57 is year of birth). **JohnW**

I was born a chimp and raised by penguins that called me JOE. joechimp
I ain't nuthin' but a hounddog so I'm called hounddog. **hounddog**

Since there are four different ways to spell my first name, Eliot, OneL is something I have been saying to people for most of my life. It also happens to be my apartment number. **OneL**

Mine is a semi-futurist rendering of my first name, Ryan(Xyon), which was then partially latinized by inflicting the name with the gender denoting suffix '-us' and removing the '-on'.It's a bit more complicated than that, but that's the summary. **Xyus**

No mystery here.g = first letter of my first name r = first letter of my middle name nich = first few letters of my last name **grnich**

Andy is my first name. And as far as Axnot is concerned, don't ask! **Andy Axnot**

When my kids aged 4 (or 5) I had to sign in on a game site to play against them (I lost)
The kids forced me to a nick, in there eyes I am (was) the Boss of the puter so it should be The Boss, in Dutch, De Baas. Since then DeBaas it is. **DeBaas**

when i was young i required a nickname, maybe for a game so i wanted something simple and fast to write T6 was my choice it has no relation with my real name, age or anything else, it serves very well its purpose keeps me anonymous but recognizable **T6**

My nickname is obvious to car folks..the car of my life, purchased used way back in the 70s. Together we have both aged well...even if we creak and leak a bit. **MGBguy**

Mark is my middle name (and what everyone calls me) and 342 is a semi-random number that was chosen because of the pattern it makes on the keyboard when entering it in. keyboard layout: 1234567890, start at 3 go right one go back to three and go left one. Yeah, its really lame. **Mark342**

Mine means 'No Angel' (zero being the mathematical equivalent of 'none'). When I was a kid, I used to play a video game called Armored Core, where you get to design a combat robot and use it to battle other combat robots in mission scenarios -- you could have 3 in your garage and give them their own names, paint schemes and part loadouts (like generators, FCS, leg parts, arm parts, weapons systems, etc). I made one which was optimized for attacking from the air and called it Zero Angel. I liked the name and it stuck with me. **Zero Angel**

'Padma' is based on the character Padma the Outbond, from Gordon Dickson's Childe Cycle series of stories. Gordie chose his name to reflect Padma Sambhava, an 8th-century Buddhist monk. The connotation intended is 'wise old man'. (Yeah, I know, at 55 I'm merely in the middle of the pack, here.) I started using it nearly a decade ago when I joined the Civilization Fanatics Center (see sig), and correctly assumed that I would be one of the older ones there. In combination with my Basset Hound avatar, it makes me "anonymous, but recognizable". **Padma**

i got my nick from my sweet finnish mother-in-law... she is unable to pronounce my real (and very simple) name. **luikki**

I always figured if I can - YouCanToo   **YouCanToo**

Well, mine's nothing special. First letter is also the first letter of my first name. The rest is my last name. Not very imaginative. **djohnston**

Mine isn't very exciting or interesting. The first 3 letters are also the first 3 letters of my wife's first name. The next 3 letters are the first 3 letters of my first name. And here you most likely concluded that it had something to do with Martial Arts. It also has nothing to do with my avatar. **Ramchu**

My birthright name is Sammuel (Sam will do). I am a pieces, the two fish facing in opposite directions. **SAMmy2fish.**

The "K" is in honor of KDE, and "Storm" is a partial anagram of my real name **KStorm**

I like wolves. I like the concept of the "lone wolf" whether based in fact or not. There was also a movie by that name I thought was fairly decent. That should be "Wolfen" for the movie. **weirdwolf**

Short explanation: Dubigrasu was the name of my dog. **dubigrasu**

I have five brothers. I was third. **ThirdOfSix**

taelti is a mix of my first name and my cousins' name. **Taelti**

My nickname is a reference to my favorite hobby and pastime, a form of percussive dance called clogging. Clogging and Tap are sibling forms, the former being older and a true American folk dance. When clogging "went Broadway" it came to be known as Tap. Clogging remains a folk dance, blending native Appalachian, English, Dutch, and Irish dance. Imagine what "Hillbilly Riverdance" would look like, and that's pretty much an accurate picture. From square dance and reels to smooth and precision line (my specialty), clogging encompasses them all. **Dixiedancer**

Mine changes with every passing season or perhaps a full moon, much to the bewilderment and probable (yet unintended) annoyance of the community members. Google can give you an answer as to the what... Google nor I however, can give an explanation as to why. Just pity the nursing staff who will have to manage me once I get too old to care for myself. **Chuck Chunder**

well - longtom comes from a common translation error we Germans are famous for.   "Lang" in German means "tall" in English. Most Germans not as fluent in the English language would readily translate "land" as "long". Since I am a pretty tall person I reckon long*** would be fine. It also mixed better than "tall". Now where does the ***tom came from. Dunno - just sounded good, I guess.. **longtom**

Mine is due to the fact that I'm a postal mechanic for the last 20 years and I work on LLV's, postal trucks, and 63 is the year of my birth ... not real exciting huh ... **LLVMech_63**

Mine is my name.Since I don't really worry about ID theft (you don't want to be Me) and I am sure I am already on "lists", I am not concerned. I have used the same since I got a computer in 2003. Peter Clayton Osmar. **pcosmar**

Ruel = first name 24 = Jeff Gordon NASCAR baby!!! **Ruel24**

Mine is work related, I am a 25 year veteran of the fire service for a small city in eastern Kentucky. ff for firefighter and 103 is my badge number. **ff103**

A former controller where I worked (~20 years ago) called me this, and it's kind of stuck, since. Yet, it's unique to this forum. For some bizarre reason, I choose different handles on different boards. **pags**

i got that name Sproggy from my dad introducing to people as his Sprog (child) and it has stuck all my life. **Sproggy**

My wife should probably to blame why I started to get interested in computers and especially Linux in the first place. So I guess it's quite natural that my forum name is formed from my first name, my wife's first nam, and my last name. **anlem**

I always liked programming and ever wanted to make my own company. When I was about 14 I first though of BigSoft, but somebody could have copyrathed that alreadt, so I though, nobody can copyright my name, that's where BP are from. software exlpaines itself. Since then I always use those where no anonimity is needed. **BPsoftware**

Mine is my name and the year I graduated High School. I think my brother copied me cause I'm just that cool. **Lee2010**

My nickname comes from my punkband could Kellerleichen. This name was given my mother...Music can you listen under my signature. **Leichi**

I spent 23 years in the U.S. Navy, the last 15 as a Chief Petty Officer or Senior Chief Petty Officer, and

I was called "Chief" during all that time, plus, as MacLeod remarked in Highlander, "There can only be one," so "TheChief." Pretty self explanatory. I also use it almost everywhere. I only wish I could have put a space in it. Didn't think of an underscore, at the time. **TheChief**

My nick comes from the Latin, and English means unbreakable, strong. **Infragilis**

Mine is so people know how to pronounce my name correctly. **GuypronouncedGuynotGuy**

As very young teenagers in the 1950's we all had nicknames, nobby, meggsy, mine was crritter - I don't remember why but it stuck. I'm in my 60's now and still known by a few as critter. **critter**

pull a pint. One of my favorite things to do after a long hard day at the office. Ah who am I kidding. Any time of day is good. It's 5 O'clock somewhere! **pullapint**

I almost hate to post this because it pales in comparison to some of the other stories but...My last name is Bounds. I've had several friends over the years call me Boundzy - some of the other names I've been called wouldn't make it past the censor. boundzy was the first nickname I could think of when I joined my first forum and it's just stuck. At 43 years old, this is probably the only forum I've ever joined and lowered the average age of its members! **bounzy**

I'm share a kinship with djohnston ... my forum "name" is simply my first initial, followed by my last name. But I suppose you already knew that, if you read The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine. Like others

here, I have nothing to hide. I know ... not the most original ... but it serves its purpose, and that's me to a tee ... utilitarian: as long as it works. **parnote**

My first name is Sixth,, and my last name is Wheel, but you can call me Pete. **sixthwheel**

OK I wasn't going to post in this thread. But then I thought " What the heck". I'll state the obvious. My name is Terry and my Last Name begins with a H. **TerryH**

Chose mine when I decided in the year 2000 that KDE would be my desktop of choice and was the year kde 2 was released. **kde2k**

Well, "marno" is an old email name and I wanted to add a linux-sounding name to the end of it. **marnux**

My nickname comes from a 1991 Ford Explorer I used to have. Me and my Wife always called the explorer an exploder. In reality the exploder was the most in-destructible vehicle I have ever owned. When I was trying to think of a nickname I got to thinking about a friend on a hardware forum that had passed away. My friend went by rangeral, his name was Al and he had a Ford Ranger. I put these thoughts together and chose "exploder" for my nickname. **exploder**

g = first initial (Galen) seaman = last name No surprise. I try to keep my comments safe for anyone to see, so I don't need anonymity. As long as we talk about computers and software, it's no problem. The sandbox can be a bit of a minefield, though. **gseaman**

I used to race mountain bikes where I was known to my teammates as Davey Sprocket, "King of the Wild Front Gear" an obvious takeoff on Davey Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier, and yes, they sang it. The "brew" part comes from my active homebrewing hobby. The name of my brewery (yes, there is a brewery in the house), is Davey Sprocket's Brewery (complete with my own custom labels). So combine them, and there you have it. **daveysprocketbrew**

My nick is fairly obvious. I was extremely skinny when I was a kid. All my clothes were too big for me because most of them came from a cousin who was much bigger than me. My alcoholic father thought I looked like Gandhi and started calling me Gandy(pronounced like Randy). He continued to call me that til he eventually drank himself to death. I needed to change my email address because I was getting spammed to death. I use web mail so it was hard to pick one that wasn't in use by someone. I decided to use gandy as the first part and my last name as the last part. My avatar is Captain Kirk(I believe he's screaming Khaaaaaannnnnn!) my hero, along with James Bond, when I was a teenager. **gandy**

I have two younger brothers, one is only a few years younger and as kids we were great friends. When we watched "The Andy Griffith Show" together we used to love when Barny would call Andy "Andge". When learned that we had another brother on the way at about 6 and 8 we were freaked! Except for one thing. Our younger brother was born with Spina Bifida. What does that mean to an 8 year old? NOTHING. All it meant was that we didn't get to meat our new brother because he was in the hospital for the first 3 years of his life. We knew we had a brother but we had never seen him. All we knew about him was that his name was Andy. Um I mean, Randy. Our mistake for 3 years! Randy turned out to be quite a funny guy and we joked with him about our mistake and started calling him "Randge" in dedication to the nickname that Barney gave to Andy because we had mistakenly called him that for 3 years! My real name is Russell, and so "Randge" started calling me "Rudge" in loving return. At birth the doctors that delivered "Randge" suggested to my mom that she let him starve to death as he would never live. He has had countless major surgeries and spent the first 10 years of his life in body casts. He is and always has been my best friend. He is now almost 40 years old and lives a happy life as a popular trivia host at local bars and restaurants. The name Rudge means a lot to me and I have chatted, and created email accounts with it all my life. **Rudge**

I never use my real nicknames online, the ones my Mum gave me are too cutesy and the ones that I got elsewhere would be rather inappropriate. So I came up with my own. I took inspiration from the Psycho/Gothabilly band The Nekromantix and the demented American cousin of Gothrock: Deathrock. And in internet meme fashion I fused the two together and used the Combichrist band logo as my avatar. **deathromantik**

Disclaimer

Screenshot Showcase

It's easier than E=mc2
It's elemental
It's light years ahead
It's a wise choice
It's Radically Simple
It's ...

Uploaded by Sproggy, August 2, 2010, running Phoenix.

by Peter Kelly (critter)

The vi editor

I'll be honest. I don't like **vi**. The newer **vim** (vi – improved) is well named, being an **improvement**, but none the less, still **vi**. I find that the commands are not intuitive and, unless you use it regularly, difficult to remember.

The main reason to learn **vi** is that you must do it if you are going to use the command line in any sort of a serious way. Also, it is sometimes the only editor available, but it invariably will be available. Some system commands, such as **cron**, rely on **vi**, and it will drop you straight into **vi** when editing **crontab**. The **sudo** command insists that you use a special version of **vi** named **visudo** to edit its configuration file /etc/sudoers, although it is not really necessary to do so. Many other system utilities base their commands on this editor.

Although I personally don't like **vi**, I have to admit that it is a very powerful editor. And, once you are familiar with **vi**, it can be a very fast way of editing text files. There is a lot of documentation available for **vi** and **vim**, if you want to learn how to use it as a professional. Here, I will show you the basics that can be learned in just a few minutes, and will enable you to do most of the editing that you need to do to get out of a sticky situation, when **vi(m)** is the only editor available.

You start the application by typing **vi**, followed by a file name. If the file doesn't exist, then it will be created when you save your changes. You may also open a file at a particular line number by typing a plus sign (+), followed by a number, or at the first occurrence of a pattern of characters with a +, then a forward slash (/) and the pattern to be matched. This is useful when editing a script and trying to get a particular section working correctly. Try **vi +/$USER /etc/passwd** to open that file at your entry in it. If working as an ordinary user, the file will open, but as you don't have write permissions, it will be in read-only mode. This fact will be displayed at the bottom of the screen.

The first thing that most new users fail to do is to get out of the application, as there is no easy "quit" or "exit" command. Let's get this out of the way right now. **vi** is bi-modal. This means that it has two different modes of operation: command mode and insert mode. When you open a file, you are placed in command mode, with the text of the file on screen, which you can move around in but not edit directly. To edit the file, you need to issue a command that will put you into insert mode. But you cannot exit the application from here, and that is mostly what confuses new users. To exit insert mode, you press the escape key. If you forget which mode you are in, or just feel lost, then press the escape key and you will always be put back to command mode.

Once in command mode, you can exit the program. To do this, type a colon, which will appear at the bottom left of the screen. **vi** then waits for you to type a command. The command to quit is **q**. If there have been no edits, then the application exits and returns you to the command line. If the text of the file has changed, you will get an error warning stating "no write since last change". Now you can do one of two things.

:wq   the **w** writes out the changes then **q**uits
:q!   the exclamation point tells **vi** to discard the changes and then quit.

In summary, to exit the file, press escape, then type **:wq**.

Moving around in the file can be done with the cursor keys, but was traditionally done by using the **h j k l** keys to move left, down, up or right respectively (l to go right?). To move one full word forward press **w** and then **b** to move back a word, and **0** and **$** to move to the beginning or end of a line. **Ctrl-f** and **Ctrl-b** moves forward or backward a screen at a time. **Ctrl-d** or **Ctrl-u** moves up or down half a screen at a time.

In command mode, you can use the following commands:

c change
d delete
y yank which means copy
p put or place the yanked text at the cursor

When you issue the **c** or **d** commands, the text is removed from the screen and placed in a buffer known as the cut, or yank, buffer. The **y** command places a copy of the text into the buffer, leaving the screen unchanged. You can then re-position the cursor and press **p** to "put" the contents of the buffer at that position. The stored text can be re-used as many times as required, until it is replaced by another operation.

What you change, delete or yank are objects, including words, lines, sentences, paragraphs or sections. But for our simple editing needs, I will limit it to words and lines. You can also specify how many objects you want the command to operate on. To make the whole line the object, you repeat the command **cc dd** or **yy**.

Examples:

5cw   change the next 5 words. this deletes the next five words and allows you type in some new ones.

3dd   delete 3 lines starting with the current line.

2yw   copy the next 2 words starting at the cursor, not necessarily at the beginning of the word.

4yy   copy the current line and the next 3 lines

Insert mode is entered by typing one of the following commands: **a, A, c, C, i, I, o, O, R, s** or **S**. You will then see **- - INSERT - -** at the bottom left of the screen. These commands allow you to **a**ppend, **c**hange, **i**nsert, **r**eplace or **s**ubstitute text or **o**pen up a new line to type in some text. When users had to make do with a rather unforgiving dumb terminal, most of these options would have been welcomed. Today's desktop computer keyboard interface is rather more sophisticated and standardized.

With the movement keys outlined above, we can quickly move to the part of the text that we need to modify, and press **i** to enter insert mode. We can now begin typing new text. Press the insert key on

the keyboard to toggle overwrite mode. You will notice the "**- - INSERT - -**" at the bottom changes to "**- - REPLACE - -**", or use the delete key to remove text.

If you are using the more advanced **vim**, which I would recommend if you have a choice (and PCLinuxOS users do have this choice), you can activate a visual highlighting mode, which can be character-wise, line-wise or block-wise. Press the escape key to get into command mode, and press **v**. You are now in character-wise visual mode, and text under the cursor is highlighted as you move around. Uppercase **V** puts you in line-wise mode and full lines only can be highlighted. **Ctrl-v** enters block-wise mode. Here a rectangle of text is highlighted as you move across and up or down. A simple experiment in each of the three modes will demonstrate this much more easily than I could describe the effects.

With the text highlighted, you can issue the **c**, **d** or **y** commands, with the **c** command automatically putting you in insert mode to type in the replacement text.

This brief introduction to **vi** will allow you to perform almost all of the editing that you will ever need to do on the command line. Obviously, if you learn some more of the available commands, then your editing will become even more efficient. But this is enough to get you out of trouble when things aren't going so well, or to enable you to edit files like crontab or sudoers.

Midnight Commander

One of the most useful utilities for the command line user is Midnight Commander. For those of you who aren't familiar with it, I'll explain. Midnight Commander is a two panel file manager, very similar to **KDE's Krusader**. The main difference is that it is entirely text based and used from a terminal. It provides a graphical interface to most file system management tasks, using elements from the **ncurses** and **S-lang** libraries to provide the text drawn graphics. The application is extremely customizable, and it is installed by default in most full variants of PCLinuxOS. It will also be found in most other Linux distributions. Mouse interaction is supported and works fine in a terminal emulator under a windowing system. But for use in a 'true' terminal, as you will get by typing Ctrl-Alt-F2, you will need to install the **gpm** mouse server from the repositories. Midnight Commander includes a text file viewer and an excellent editor, and can be used over remote connections. Midnight Commander will also let you look inside compressed files and rpm packages by simply pressing enter when the file is highlighted.

Midnight Commander (hereafter referred to as MC) can be started from the command line by simply typing *mc*. It is intuitive enough to be used immediately by even the newest Linux user. You may be wondering why I have not introduced such a wonderful time saving utility before now, and why you have had to jump through hoops in an unfriendly and often unforgiving environment to achieve even the simplest file system commands, such as copying and moving files. Quite simply, you have now seen the interior workings of the Linux system and are

more able to take full advantage of it, and to understand the many advanced features, which many users do not comprehend or miss completely.

By default you will start with a screen like this:

```
 Left     File    Command    Options    Right
<-  ~  ->                .[^]>  <- ~  ->              .[^]>
'n    Name    Size  Modify time  'n    Name    Size  Modify time
/..         UP--DIR Feb  6 09:24  /..         UP--DIR Feb  6 09:24
/Desktop       4096 Mar 26 13:45  /Desktop       4096 Mar 26 13:45
/Documents     4096 Feb  6 10:23  /Documents     4096 Feb  6 10:23
/Movies        4096 Feb 27  2007  /Movies        4096 Feb 27  2007
/Music         4096 Feb 26  2007  /Music         4096 Feb 26  2007
/Pictures      4096 Jun 14 15:33  /Pictures      4096 Jun 14 15:33
/mydir         4096 Nov 11  2009  /mydir         4096 Nov 11  2009
/mydir1        4096 Jun  2 16:20  /mydir1        4096 Jun  2 16:20
~tmp              5 Nov 12  2009  ~tmp              5 Nov 12  2009
 4                0 Feb 26 13:57   4                0 Feb 26 13:57
 contacts-link   39 Nov 10  2009   contacts-link   39 Nov 10  2009
 contacts2       44 Nov 10  2009   contacts2       44 Nov 10  2009
*findit.sh      421 Feb 14 11:42  *findit.sh      421 Feb 14 11:42
 foo.html       142 Mar  4 15:23   foo.html       142 Mar  4 15:23
*for.sh          39 Mar 27 09:17  *for.sh          39 Mar 27 09:17

UP--DIR                           UP--DIR
            3888M/3985M (97%)                 3888M/3985M (97%)
Hint: You can browse RPM files by tapping enter on top of an rpm file.
jane@daisy > ~ $                                              [^]
1Help  2Menu  3View  4Edit  5Copy  6RenMov 7Mkdir 8Delete 9PullDn10Quit
```

The top line is a drop down menu bar, accessible with the mouse or by pressing F9 and then the arrow keys. Directly below are the two panels that are split vertically by default, but can be changed to horizontal from the configuration menu. Then **left** and **right** on the top line will read **above** and **below**. At the bottom of each panel is a status bar, which displays some file information and file system usage (default). Next down is the command line. Anything entered from the keyboard that is not interpreted as a command to MC goes here, and enter sends it to the shell for processing. The bottom line is a set of buttons corresponding to the Function keys, but they are also mouse clickable. The panels are overlaid on the output screen, and can be toggled on or off by pressing **Ctrl-o** (that's letter o, not zero). You may want to do this to see, for example, the output of a command executed from the command line window.

Anything that you type in MC is examined to check whether it is a MC command. If it's not, it is passed to the shell to be dealt with. There are a lot of commands in MC and shortcuts to them are shown in the drop down menus like this:

Ctrl-u   hold down control and press u - this one swaps the panels over
Ctrl-x c   hold down control, press x, release both and type c - brings up the chmod dialog
Meta-?   hold down the meta key, more usually known as the Alt key, and type ? bring up the find file dialog.

Basic configuration is done through a menu found under options on the top menu bar. Drop this menu down and press **Enter** on the configuration entry. You will get a dialog like this:

```
┌──────────── Configure options ────────────┐
│                                            │
│ ┌─ Panel options ──┐ ┌─ Other options ──┐ │
│ │ [█] Use SI size units │ [x] Mkdir autoname  │
│ │ [x] show Backup files │ [x] Verbose operation│
│ │ [ ] show Hidden files │ [x] Compute Totals  │
│ │ [x] maRk moves down   │ [x] shell Patterns  │
│ │ [ ] Drop down menus   │ [ ] Auto save setup │
│ │ [ ] miX all files     │ [ ] auto mEnus      │
│ │ [ ] Fast dir reload   │ [x] use internal edIt│
│ │                       │ [x] Use internal view│
│ │                       │ [ ] coMplete: show all│
│ ┌─ Pause after run... ─┐ [x] rotatinG dash    │
│ │ ( ) Never             │ [x] Lynx-like motion │
│ │ (*) on dumb Terminals │ [x] cd follows linKs │
│ │ ( ) Always            │ [ ] safe deLete     │
│ └───────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ │
│                                            │
│   [< OK >]      [ Save ]      [ Cancel ]   │
└────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Use the arrow keys to move around, and press the space bar to add or remove an option, or hold down the Alt key and press the letter in blue. Most of the

options can safely be left at their default settings. I prefer to not **show hidden files** unless necessary, as they are hidden for good reason. I also recommend checking **Lynx-like motion**. Lynx is a text only web browser which uses the arrow keys for navigation through links, and this option allows you to move up or down through highlighted directories by using the left and right arrow keys. The **shell Patterns** option, when checked, uses search patterns such as wild cards, as you would use in shell 'globbing.' Unchecked, it uses the full power of regular expressions, which makes it an extremely powerful tool. If you need more help on the other options, **F1** will bring up a fairly comprehensive help system.

For most operations, you will want to have the two panels showing the contents of two different directories, perhaps source and destination directories for copy and move operations. Switch between panels with the tab key, and select files by tagging them with **Ctrl-t** or the **insert** key. **F5** copies selected files from the active panel to the other panel by default, but pops up a dialog box to allow you to change this. **F6** moves them across, with the option to rename the file, and **F8** deletes them. While a file is highlighted (not tagged), pressing **F3** displays the contents where practical, and **F4** opens it in the editor, although you must have write permission to save any edits to the file.

If you find that you need to frequently drill down down to a directory buried deep within the file system, you can add it to the hot-list dialog. type **Ctrl-** and select add current (Alt-a). You will be prompted for a name for the entry. The full path-name will already be there if you want to use it. Want

to go home? Type **cd**, (the letters go into the command line box as you type), then press **Enter** and the active panel will show your home directory.

The panels are not limited to displaying a directory listing. By dropping down the **left** or **right** menus (**F9**),
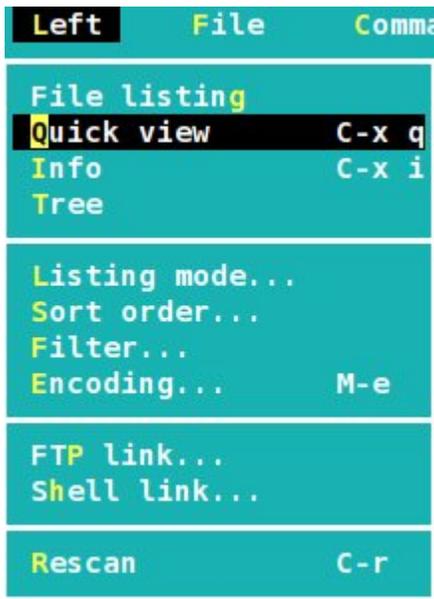
you have the option to change the display in that panel to the contents of the currently highlighted file in the other panel, or to display a heap of information about the file. It can also be set to display the file system in a tree like structure. If you keep the directory listing, the same menu will allow you to select the amount of detail shown similar to the **-a**, and **-l** options of the **ls** command. Or you can set up a custom display to show exactly what you need.

The listing can be sorted in any way you like as shown below.
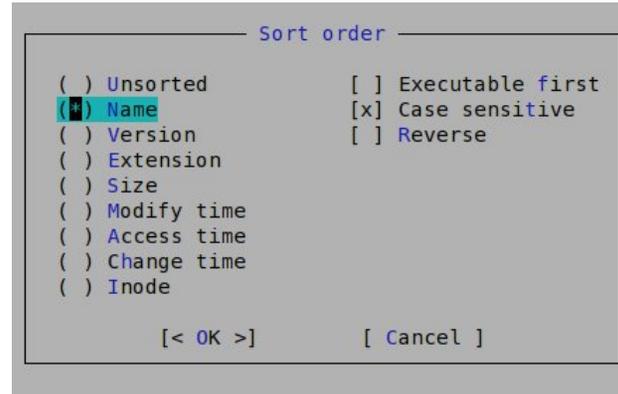
You can set up a filter to show only files that match a pattern. The rescan option, **Ctrl-r**, refreshes the contents of the active panel if the contents have changed since the directory was entered.

The **ftp** and **shell** link options are one of the cleverest parts of MC. They allow you to display the contents of a directory on a remote system, and let you navigate around as though it was on your own hard drive.

Try this:

Set the right panel to quick view.

Tab back to the left panel and drop down the **left** menu.

Select **ftp link ...**

Enter **ftp.nic.funet.fi** in the dialog box that appears.
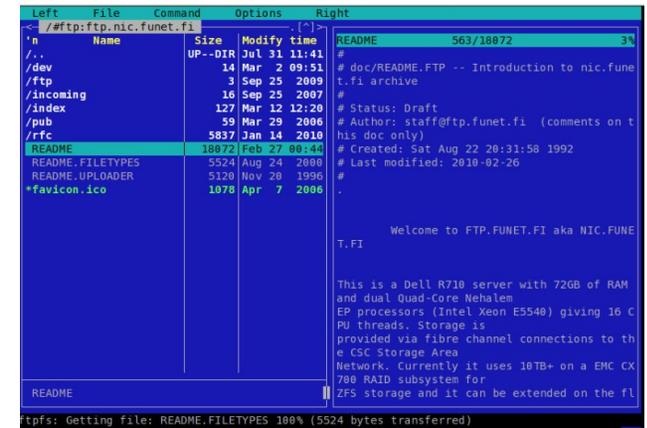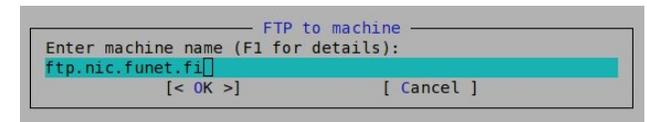
On the right hand panel are displayed the contents of the highlighted file in the left panel. The files shown in the left panel are on a file server in Finland. Funet is the Finnish University and Research Network. You can freely browse any directories for which you have been granted access, and you may read or copy documents to your own home directory. It's a great research tool. Try opening the **pub/** directory. You can even add it to your directory hotlist (**ctrl-**), and give it a nicer name for quick future access.

There are hundreds of free ftp sites that can be accessed in this manner. If you want to download software or a live cd image, I would recommend a dedicated ftp client application, such as **gFTP**, or the ftp capabilities of a decent web browser.

To use the **shell link...** option to connect to another machine on the local network, make sure that the **/etc/hosts** file contains a line with the IP address and host name of the remote computer to allow address translation. In the dialog that is presented when you select **shell link...** from the menu, type in something along the lines of **jane@daisy**. You may then be asked for Jane's password before being granted access to the machine as Jane.

When you enter a directory with lots of files and sub-directories, you can home in rapidly with the quick search function, **Ctrl-s**. Try navigating to the /etc directory and type **Ctrl-s fs**. You will be taken straight to the **/etc/fstab** file, where you can press **F3** to view the contents, or **F4** to edit it.

Under the file menu are options to perform most of the file handling commands that you would normally carry out on the command line. For example, to create a symbolic link in the right panel to a file in the left panel, simply select **Symlink**, and a dialog is shown with the defaults already filled in. Press **Enter** to accept or change the symlinks name to your preference.

At the bottom of the file menu are a group of commands to tag a group of files according to a pattern. As an example, if shell patterns are disabled, then a pattern such as **^\.bash.*** in your home directory will tag all of your (hidden) bash related files ready to be copied to a backup directory.

Pressing the **F2** key brings up the user menu. What this shows depends upon the contents of the file ~/.mc.menu, and you can edit the file to your hearts content to customize the menu. Open up the default

menu, and you will see just how complex you can make the menu commands. But simple commands are also acceptable.

There is a simple find files dialog accessible from the **command** drop down menu or by pressing **M-?** This is pretty easy to use, with a space for the start directory, which can be filled by selecting a directory from the **Tree** option and spaces for the search criteria, which may be either the file name or content. Both can use either shell expansions or regular expressions. When the list of files is displayed, you have the option to 'panelize' them, which means display them in the active panel for further processing. To get back the previous contents of the panel, use the refresh **Ctrl-r** command. This is an excellent place to practice your regular expression skills, with the **Again** option taking you back to the pattern for modification or refinement if the results are not what you expected.

If you need even more power, the **External Panelize** command will provide it. This is activated from the **command** drop down menu, or **Crtl-x !**. This command allows you to execute an external command, and to put the results into the active panel. You can even save regularly used commands under a friendly name.

Also available from the **command** drop down menu is the **directory tree** command, which displays a dialog showing the file system in a tree like structure, and changes the function key definitions at the bottom of the screen. **F4** or **Rescan** refreshes the tree display. **F3** temporarily removes a directory from the display. This useful when there are lots and lots of sub-directories making navigation difficult. **F4**

toggles between **static** and **dynamic** tree navigation. Play around with it and you'll see the difference. Pressing the **enter** key on any directory closes the dialog and switches the active panel to that directory.
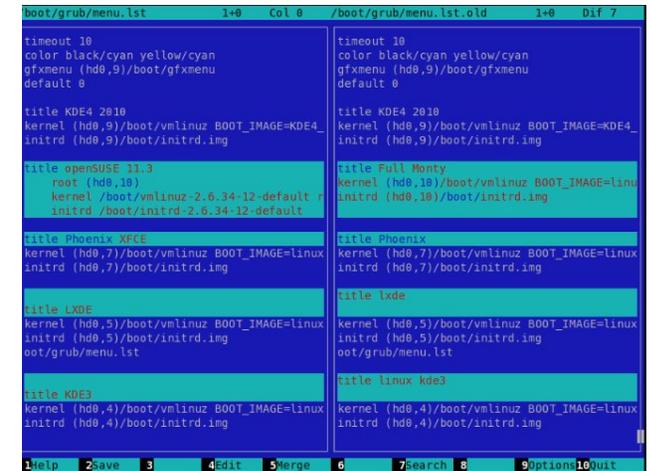
To compare the contents of two files that you have been editing, select one file in the left panel, and the other in the right. Then, from the **command** drop down menu, select **view diff files** and a new, two panel window will open, showing the contents of both files, with the differences highlighted

If you need to keep two directories synchronized, the **Compare directories**, or **Ctrl-x d**, is a boon. With one of each of the directories in its own panel, execute the command, and you will be prompted for the type of comparison to make, and the files that differ will be tagged on both sides. You can then simply copy the tagged files across with the **F5** key.

When you open a file in the editor or viewer, or compare two files, a new screen is shown. MC can have multiple screens open at any time, and you can switch between them as you wish, using these commands:

Alt-}　　　forward one screen
Alt-{　　　back one screen
Alt-`　　　list the open screens (that's the back tick)

Unfortunately, you may only have one file listing screen open at a time.

If you forget to close an open screen and try to leave, MC will issue a warning.

If you think that I have done a comprehensive job of covering the features in MC, then you are not even close. I've only covered the features that I regularly use. Read the help files and you will find a lot more to play with.

Playtime

When you are working in a text only terminal, either because you are trying to achieve a command line oriented goal, are simply locked out of your beloved X windowing system temporarily, or just because you want to, (sadly), you don't have to sit there in monastic silence.

There is a widely available tool known as **sox**, which is an incredibly powerful audio application with a bewildering array of options. It recognizes most audio formats, can play back or record, add effects, split, combine and do just about anything that a reasonable person would wish to do with, or to, an audio file.

If you are so inclined, then please, be my guest. Read the manuals and produce your masterpiece. Personally, I would much rather use a graphical application, such as **audacity**, to perform such magic.

sox can be called in one of three incarnations:

sox　　　the full version
play　　　the play back part and
rec　　　the recording function part.

Let's concentrate on **play**.

To simply have some music while you work, you can call **play -v {number} {song}**. The **-v** option controls the volume and **number** is a real number, the default being 1. Enter 0.5 for playback at half volume, 2 for double the default volume, or normal volume and so forth. Be warned that entering too high of a number may damage your hardware or ears.

Here's a little script that will allow you to have your favorite music playing while you work. It expects a folder containing compatible music files on the command line as a play list. This version looks for mp3 files and plays them back at half volume. Edit it to your own preferences.

Open a virtual terminal with **Ctrl-Alt-F2** and run the script. Use **Ctrl-Alt-F3** to open another terminal to do your work. Enjoy!

```bash
#!/bin/bash
# play-it-sam.sh
# play a folderfull of files consecutively
# while working on the command line

if [ $# != 1 ]
then
echo Usage: you need to pass me a directory
echo        That contains some mp3 files
echo        So that I can play them
echo
exit 0
fi

for song in $1/*.mp3
do `play -v 0.5 "$song"`
done
```

Call it with a command like **~/play-it-sam.sh /data/Music/The-Who/** (so, I like 60's pop, okay?).

The script could use a little more error checking, and has the potential to provide more functions, such as volume control. I'll leave that to you. If you make any significant improvements, and I am sure that you can, I would be interested in seeing them.

Where to next?

If you want to stop right here, that is fine, What I have covered in this introduction is more than enough to lift you out of the 'newbie' class, and will almost certainly cover most of what the average user needs to make efficient use of the command line.

Should you wish to delve a little deeper, there are several ways to do this.

Almost all of the commands include some sort of documentation as part of the installation. As a minimum you can follow the command with **- - help**, which will usually give you some idea of the usage, along with the available options of the command.

Most commands are also documented in the **man pages**, a special type of built in help system. The manual pages are not always installed by default in every distribution, but are almost certainly available from the software repositories, and are well worth installing. If a man page is not available from the repository for a given command, try http://linuxmanpages.com/. It's a great resource.

The manual pages are accessed by typing **man command**, where command is the name of the command you are interested in.

As a reference, they are invaluable. But they are not very beginner friendly, although the information that they contain is usually accurate. If you see a reference to a man page, it is often followed by a number. This is the section number. For convenience, the manual pages are organized into sections, but the number is optional. The sections include:

1. user commands
2. system calls
3. library functions
4. special files
5. file formats
6. games
7. conventions and miscellany
8. administration and privileged commands

When the **man** command fails to provide sufficient information, use the **info** command. The content is similar to the manual pages but often much more detailed. Unfortunately, the info command's user interface is terrible so remember this: type **q** to quit, and type **h** for help.

That should get you by.

There is, of course, lots of information available on the internet, but beware that some of it may be inaccurate. The most reliable source is **LDP** - the Linux documentation project (http://www.tldp.org). Here you will find a wealth of information on all things Linux, in a variety of formats and languages.

Another reliable online source is The Linux Gazette (http://linuxgazette.net/), with all back issues available in the archives. The Gazette has been around since 1995.

If you prefer a good, old-fashioned book, then you will be spoiled for choice, as there are literally thousands of them available. Which to choose can be a headache and a kind of lottery. My personal experience is that you can't go far wrong with the excellent O'reilly series of Linux reference titles. They are usually well written, reliably factual, and durable. I have a 10 year old copy of Linux in a nutshell that shows little sign of wear despite the years of rummaging through its 600 odd pages).

PCLinuxOS users are fortunate enough to have their own magazine, which is an excellent source of distribution-centric information. All previous issues are available for free download.

Last, but not least, there is the PCLinuxOS forum. If you can't find a solution to your problem, then ask there and surely one or more of the friendly resident experts will help. Even Texstar, the distribution's main man, is a regular contributor there.

The only other thing you need to become more proficient is practice. Only you can provide that. The more that you use the methods outlined in this introduction, the easier you will find them to use. Reading about a command is fine. But to understand it fully, you must use it regularly.

Editor's Note: This, the 12th installment of the Command Line Interface Intro article series, is also the last. Critter, a.k.a. Pete Kelly, has provided us, the PCLinuxOS community, an outstanding tutorial on how to use the command line. If you have followed along, I'm sure that you have discovered just how powerful the Linux command line truly is, and how easy it can be.

Critter is not, however, "going away." He has agreed to stay on and write additional articles for The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine. You will be seeing more from him in the coming months.

Meanwhile, we will be publishing a special edition of The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine, containing all of Pete's excellent Command Line Interface Intro articles, in order from the first article, up to and including this final article.

If you are (or get) serious about learning the Linux command line, then the special edition would serve as an excellent starting point, not to mention an excellent reference resource. Watch for it, coming soon.

Thank you, Pete, for all of your hard work in producing this outstanding tutorial series for The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine.

Paul Arnote, PCLinuxOS Magazine Chief Editor

Screenshot Showcase
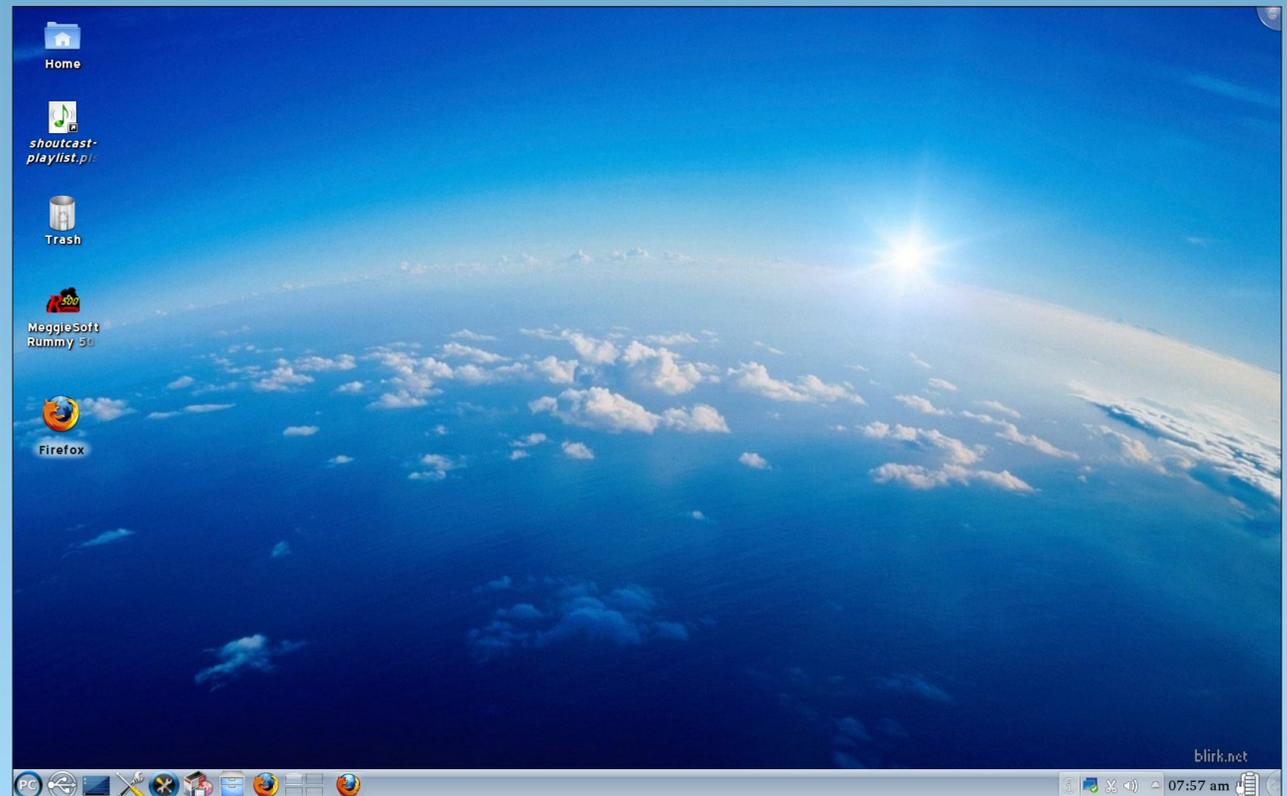
Posted by bones113, August 19, 2010, running KDE 4.

Educational Linux!

By Meemaw

With the arrival of school enrollment, I have started thinking about redoing an old computer I am not using and giving it to my grandkids. I would like to have all the educational software possible in order to help them learn. They range in age from six to eleven, so I need a varied assortment of programs for them.

I started doing research, beginning in the PCLinuxOS community project forum, as they have been talking about a version of our wonderful distro that concentrates on educational programs. I have also read several articles that have appeared on Linux Today. Linux Links does lists of the best programs in many categories, so I read those as well. From there, I saw an article titled "9 of the Best Free Linux Educational Games." The author talked about the best programs for education in Linux. The programs are:

Educational Games	
GCompris	Educational games for small children
Childsplay	Suite of educational games for young children
KDE Education Project	Educational applications from the official KDE 4 release
TuxMath	Math game for kids with Tux
Tux Typing	Educational Typing Tutor Game Starring Tux, the Linux Penguin
Omnitux	Interactive geometry software
Dr. Geo	Educational oriented interactive geometry
Canta	Sing, play and learn songs
Piano Booster	Boost your piano playing skills

By clicking on the links, you are taken to the Linux Links page for that project, which has each project's respective home page. All the Tux programs (TuxMath, TuxType, etc.) have been combined into Tux4Kids, and the SchoolsPlay project is where ChildsPlay is located.

The KDE Education Project includes:

Languages

Letter Order Game (Kanagram) - mixes up the letters of a word (creating an anagram), and you have to guess what the mixed up word is.
Hangman Game (KHangMan) - the classical hangman game. The child should guess a word letter by letter. At each miss, the picture of a hangman appears. After 10 tries, if the word is not guessed, the game is over and the answer is displayed
Japanese Reference/Study Tool (Kiten)
Learn the Alphabet (KLettres) - aims to help to learn the alphabet and then to read some syllables in different languages
Flash Card Trainer (KWordQuiz) - a general purpose flash card program. It can be used for vocabulary learning and many other subjects
Vocabulary Trainer (Parley) - a program to help you memorize things

Mathematics

Graph Calculator (KAlgebra) - a mathematical calculator based content markup MathML language Nowadays it is capable to make simple MathML operations (arithmetic and logical) and representate 2D and 3D graphs
Exercise Fractions (KBruch) - a small program to practice calculating with fractions
Interactive Geometry (Kig) - a program for exploring geometric constructions
Mathematical Function Plotter (KmPlot)
Educational Programming Environment (KTurtle) - an educational programming environment for the KDE Desktop. KTurtle aims to make programming as easy and touchable as possible, and therefore can be used to teach kids the basics of math, geometry and... programming

Chemical
Periodic Table of the Elements (Kalzium) - an application which will show you some information about the periodic system of the elements

Teaching
Blinken (blinken) - Classic Electronic Simon Game
Geography Trainer (KGeography) - a geography learning program
Touch Typing Tutor (KTouch) - offers you an easy way to learn to type quickly and correctly

Astronomy

Desktop Planetarium (KStars) - a Desktop Planetarium for KDE. It provides an accurate graphical simulation of the night sky, from any location on Earth, at any date and time.

Desktop Globe (Marble) - a Virtual Globe and World Atlas that you can use to learn more about Earth: You can pan and zoom around and you can look up places and roads

Interactive Physics simulator (Step) - place some bodies on the scene, add some forces such as gravity or springs, then click "Simulate" and Step shows you how your scene will evolve according to the laws of physics

The thread at mypclinuxos.com lists the following additional educational software packages:

Educational Programs

O   **Gamine**: For children starting 18 months. An educative and interactive game for GNU/Linux designed for 2 years old children who are not able to use a keyboard.

O   **Pysycache**: A program to teach children to use the mouse. Very useful with children that have never used a computer.

O   **TuxMathScrabble** is a math version of the popular board game. It is highly entertaining as well as great educational value. The game challenges young people to construct compound equations and consider multiple abstract possibilities. There are three skill-levels for practice from basic addition and subtraction through to multiplication and division.

O   **OOo4Kids**: OpenOffice.org for children. Beautiful and easy to start with.

O   **TuxWordSmith**: A multi-language word game with obvious similarities to Scrabble. In developing the game, the goal was not to copy Scrabble, but to extend TuxMathScrabble. Historically, TuxMathScrabble came first. Thanks to the language resources provided by the xdxf project, it has been possible to create this "sister application" to TuxMathScrabble, which can be played in many languages.

O   **Littlewizard**: "development environment for children. It is intended to be used by primary school children to learn about the main elements of real computer languages. Using only the mouse, children can explore programming concepts such as variables, expressions, loops, conditions, and logical blocks." The latest version is almost 2 years old, and is not available in Spanish.

O   **Scratch**: Is a programming language that makes it easy to create your own interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art. Looks like a good alternative to Microworlds.

O   **Etoys**: From the project page: an educational tool for teaching children powerful ideas in compelling ways; a media-rich authoring environment and visual programming system; a free software program that works on almost all personal computers. The latest version is from 24-Oct-2009.

O   **FreeMind**: A premiere free mind-mapping (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map) software written in Java. Very useful for organize ideas, make presentations and manage discussions sessions.

O   **XMind**: A mind mapping program. It doesn't appear to have localizations for Spanish or French languages.

O   **TuxPaint**: a simple, easy-to-use drawing program for children ages 2 and up. It provides a fixed canvas size, one-click saving and thumbnail-based browsing and loading. Large icons, simple labels and prompts, and the ability to display only uppercase characters and disable features like printing, quitting, and certain prompts make it easy for very young children and the disabled.

O   **MuseScore**: a free cross platform WYSIWYG music notation program, licenced under GNU GPL. Some highlights: WYSIWYG, notes are entered on a "virtual note sheet; unlimited number of staves; up to four voices per staff; easy and fast note entry with mouse, keyboard or MIDI; integrated sequencer and FluidSynth software synthesizer; import and export of MusicXML and Standard MIDI Files; available for Windows, Mac and Linux; translated in 26 languages.

Teacher's Tools

O   **Clic**: A Windows program to design activities for children, it runs well under wine. Lots of activities in the homepage.

O   **Jclic**: Same as above, but the activities are not compatible. Jclic is based in Java.

O   **Mnemosyne**: You can visit the project home page at http://www.mnemosyne-proj.org/. Built on Python, it uses spaced repetition, which is mentioned as being good for long-term memorization of items. It is part of a research project on long-term memory, and may voluntarily collect data from its users. The current version is 1.2.2.

O   **Ignuit**: a memorization aid based on the Leitner flashcard system. Cards can include embedded audio, images, and mathematical formulae (via LaTeX). It can import and export several file formats, including CSV, jMemorize, and Mnemosyne.

Legend:
O In Repos
O Not In Repos
O It Works (in wine)

So would I just use one of these lists? Or make up one of my own? What is needed for a complete set of educational programs? My own list is as follows, starting with twelve for elementary students:

gCompris
Childsplay
KDE Education Project
TuxPaint
TuxMath
Tux Typing
OOo4Kids
Tux Math Scrabble
Tux Word Smith
Scratch
EToys

As they get older and need more advanced programs. OOo4Kids can be replaced by OOo, and the following can be added:

Dr. Geo
Piano Booster
Mnemosyne
FreeMind
MuseScore

This is only my opinion, however, and almost anyone's list could contain different things.

A more recent article (http://www.brighthub.com/computing/linux/articles/43224.aspx) has the following five distros as best for kids; Qimo for Kids, OLPC/Sugar, Edubuntu, LinuxKidX and Foresight for Kids. Qimo and Edubuntu are Ubuntu based, Sugar is based on Fedora, LinuxKidX is Slackware based, and

Foresight for Kids is based on Foresight. I have looked at LinuxKidX and Edubuntu, (the live cd's anyway), and each has many of the same programs listed above. LinuxKidX's apperarance is geared toward younger learners, but Edubuntu's initial appearance is much like any of the other 'buntu's, and can be altered very easily.
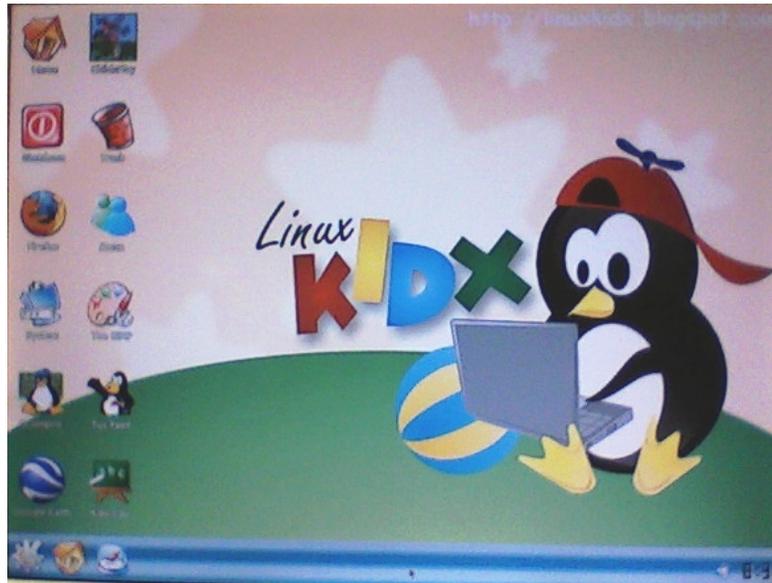
From this article, we see that Russian schools; German Universities, the Phillipines; the Soviet state of Georgia; The Indian State of Tamil Nadu; Switzerland schools; Bolzano, Italy; Kerela, India; OLPC; and in the US, Indiana schools are also using Linux. I'm sure there are more that haven't been listed, and from all the work being done on educational distros, it seems natural that Linux should find its way to most schools. I, for one, sure hope it does.
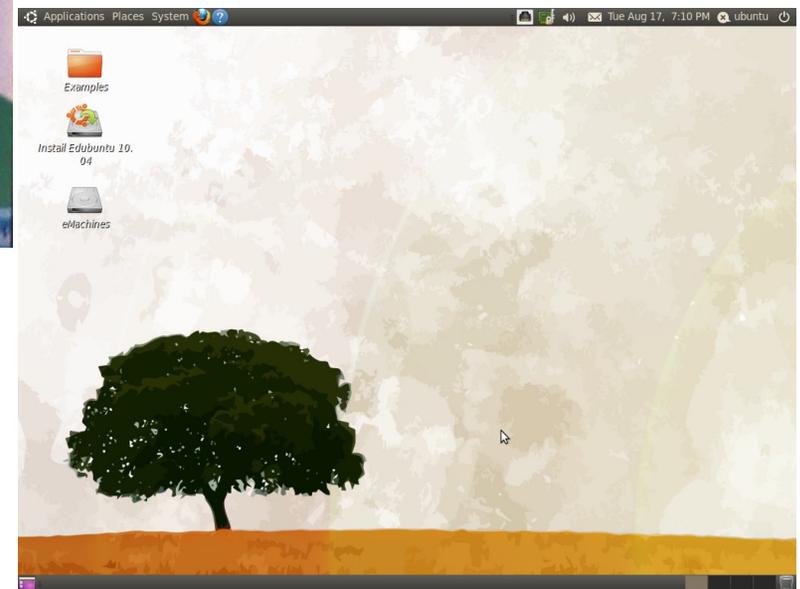
Game Zone: Battle For Wesnoth

by Ryan Smith (Xyus)

"General, I bring grievous news: Oulham and Corkharbor have been sacked by Northerners, the Knalgan war machines have pierced the front lines and are rapidly advancing toward the fortress, and the Necromancer Lords have gained full control over the east. All is not lost, however; the Rebel leader has been slain in battle and his forces scatter before our armies. How should we proceed?"

Such is an average day for the players of the popular open source strategy game, "The Battle for Wesnoth."

Originally created by David White, and now developed by a large group of volunteer contributors, The Battle for Wesnoth is a fantasy tactical strategy game with the design goal of being easy to learn and having simple rules of play while still being challenging for more experienced players.

The objective of the game is usually to "eliminate all foes and be all that is left standing," although this depends on whether a campaign or skirmish map is being played, with different campaign maps having different goals.

Modes of Play

The game has several modes of play, including Tutorial, Campaign, and Multiplayer modes.

Campaign mode is where the 'stories' of the game takes place. In a campaign, you fulfill objectives in order to advance a plot. The campaigns do not need to be completed in any particular order; all campaigns, from the easiest to the most difficult, are available to play immediately from a clean install. Campaigns are divided into several scenarios that act as chapters of the campaign, with each scenario taking place on its own map and having its own winning and losing conditions.

Multiplayer mode is where, as you may have guessed, you can test your strategies against other players. There are three types of multiplayer modes available: Internet play, LAN, and Hotseat. You can also play single player skirmishes here as well.

Gameplay

Selecting a campaign from the campaign menu will take you directly into the battle, while selecting a multiplayer/skirmish game will take you to a setup screen.

The units of the game are divided into several factions. The faction you play determines which basic units you will be able to recruit, and will significantly affect your strategy. The factions of the base game are the Loyalists, the Rebels, the Northerners, the Undead, the Knalgan Alliance, and the Drakes. Most campaigns choose your faction for you, but in skirmish and multiplayer games, choosing a faction will be the first strategic choice you will make.

Loyalists		Rebels		Northerners	
Bowman	14 Gold	Elvish Archer	17 Gold	Orcish Archer	14 Gold
Cavalryman	17 Gold	Elvish Fighter	14 Gold	Orcish Assassin	17 Gold
Fencer	16 Gold	Elvish Scout	18 Gold	Orcish Grunt	12 Gold
Heavy Infantryman	19 Gold	Elvish Shaman	15 Gold	Troll Whelp	13 Gold
Horseman	23 Gold	Mage	20 Gold	Wolf Rider	17 Gold
Undead		**Knalgan Alliance**		**Drakes**	
Dark Adept	16 Gold	Dwarvish Fighter	16 Gold	Drake Burner	21 Gold
Ghost	20 Gold	Dwarvish Guardsman	19 Gold	Drake Clasher	19 Gold
Ghoul	16 Gold	Dwarvish Thunderer	17 Gold	Drake Fighter	17 Gold
Skeleton	15 Gold	Dwarvish Ulfserker	19 Gold	Drake Glider	16 Gold
Skeleton Archer	14 Gold	Footpad	14 Gold	Saurian Augur	16 Gold

The game is controlled completely by mouse. As with most strategy games, you left click on units to select them, then left click at a target location to move or attack with them. The right mouse button is used for things such as recruiting units and quickly accessing the in-game encyclopedia.

The game itself takes place on a map composed of a number hexagonal tiles. Each tile represents a certain type of terrain, such as a desert or forest. The terrain type of a tile affects how many tiles your unit can move, as well as how much environmental protection they receive. For example, it is more difficult to attack an enemy who is in a forest than in an open plain. Some tiles contain villages, which is the source of gold in the game. Gold is used to recruit units, and is the only resource you have to manage in the game.

The most important unit in the game is your Leader. The Leader starts out as a higher level unit and is required to recruit units. If you lose your leader, you lose the game. The most common victory condition is destroying all enemy leaders. Aside from these points, the Leader is a normal unit, and can attack

and move, with all the advantages and disadvantages of any other unit of his type.

Your leader starts out in a fortress, which acts as your headquarters or capital. Fortresses are composed of a number of 'castle' tiles and a single 'Keep' tile, which can be distinguished from the castle tiles by its unique graphic. The fortress provides considerable defense to your units, and plays a central part in the game. Recruiting new units is only possible when your leader is standing in the Keep tile in the center of a fortress, and is done by right clicking on any space of the fortress and selecting "recruit." When you do this, a list of all units available for recruitment opens, and from this list you pick the unit you want to recruit.

The units themselves are varied, with each unit having a unique set of stats and skills. In addition to having a certain amount of Hit Points (for non-gamers, the amount of damage a unit can take before it is killed) and Movement Points. Every unit has at least one type of attack, weaknesses, and strengths against certain types of attack, an alignment that determines how much damage is done during the night and day, possible bonus

abilities, and an amount of battle experience required to advance in level. The tutorial covers these in more detail.

Fighting in this game happens simply by moving one of your units into a space occupied by an enemy unit. The battle window opens, which shows several statistics that may determine how the battle will turn out, as well as a choice between the different attacks the unit possesses.

The attacks you can use in a fight are as varied as the units that use them. During a battle, after an attack has been picked from the menu, units take turns attacking each other. The amount of damage an attack does depends on how many times a unit will use his attack in this fight, how much damage each hit does, and the chance that each hit will connect. Again, these are described in detail in the tutorial.

In addition to normal damage, attacks can also have special abilities, like poisonous attacks that continue to deal damage after a battle, or attacks that can be used by certain Undead units that can turn enemies into zombies under your control.

After every battle, especially battles in which an enemy is destroyed, your unit gains experience. After a certain amount of experience is reached, your unit will gain a level, which will cause the unit to change into a more powerful type of unit, and will have a higher amount of HP, and more powerful attacks.

That's about it for game play: Recruit units, capture towns, and fight until you are the last one standing.

Extras

The Battle for Wesnoth is highly moddable. As such, the game has a strong and proficient modding community. From the main menu, you can access both the add-ons repository and a map editor.

The add-ons repository contains all mods available for the version of the game you are using. In here, you can find many interesting add-ons, including new factions, complete with new units, which are usually packaged into groups called 'Eras', new campaigns, multiplayer scenarios and campaigns, and maps for skirmishes and multiplayer games.

The map editor allows you to easily create your own maps from within the game using the terrain tiles and simple paintbrush style tools. These maps are then available to play in skirmishes and multiplayer games.

Availability

The Battle for Wesnoth is freely available for many operating systems from the main site, but for PCLinuxOS, you won't have to look far; it is in the PCLOS repositories, under Games/Strategy.

The minimal system requirements are uncertain, but from the FAQ on the site:
"For versions 1.1 and up we recommend a computer with at least 1 GHz and 512 MB RAM if you run KDE or Gnome as Windowmanager"

Synaptic should take care of all of library dependencies.

Hints and Tips

Although The Battle for Wesnoth is a relatively simple strategy game, there are a few things worth knowing.

In addition to gold, villages have another extremely useful property: Leaving a unit on a village and ending the turn will heal that unit upon the start of the next turn. One of the simplest strategies involves having units switch between fighting and healing, prolonging the average lifespan of your units.

Though I only mentioned it when I spoke about unit skills, Alignment plays a significant role in battle. Units can have an Alignment of Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic. Lawful units are stronger and are more likely to hit during the day, but are weaker and less likely to hit at night. Chaotic units are the exact opposite, and neutral units are totally unaffected by time of day. Use this to your advantage. You do not want to lose your mighty Undead Legion by launching your massive siege in the day.

Some important unit info is covered in the in-game encyclopedia, including weakness and strength against certain types of attacks, and the number of movement points expended when passing over the different terrain tiles. To view a unit's encyclopedia page, right click the unit and select "description".

Your high level units may be powerful, but they are far from immortal. If things look tough, you should pull your most valuable units from the fray, and let them heal. Believe it or not, a level 0 can still defeat a level 3 or 4 if it is sufficiently weakened. More than

once, I have sent my most powerful unit to take on more than it could handle, only to have it die in a wave of weak units.

If you are stuck on any of the campaigns, the official site has walk-throughs of all campaigns that come with the game.

Conclusion/My Thoughts

My history with this game goes back a few years, so I am a little biased. Having given that warning, I think this game is very good. Though the setting and campaign stories may not win many awards for originality, that does not detract from the game. The graphics are not bad, in my opinion. But, I get a thrill from text-based games. Judge the graphics from the screen shots. The music lends itself to the theme of the game.

With only one type of resource, no diplomacy, no micromanagement of things like cities, and no research or espionage, the Battle for Wesnoth fulfills its promise of simple game play, adding itself to the "more complex than Chess, less than Civilizations" niche.

Overall, I think strategy gamers, and modders, will enjoy it very much. Others may or may not, depending on their style of play, but I urge all to at least play through the tutorial.

Screenshot Showcase
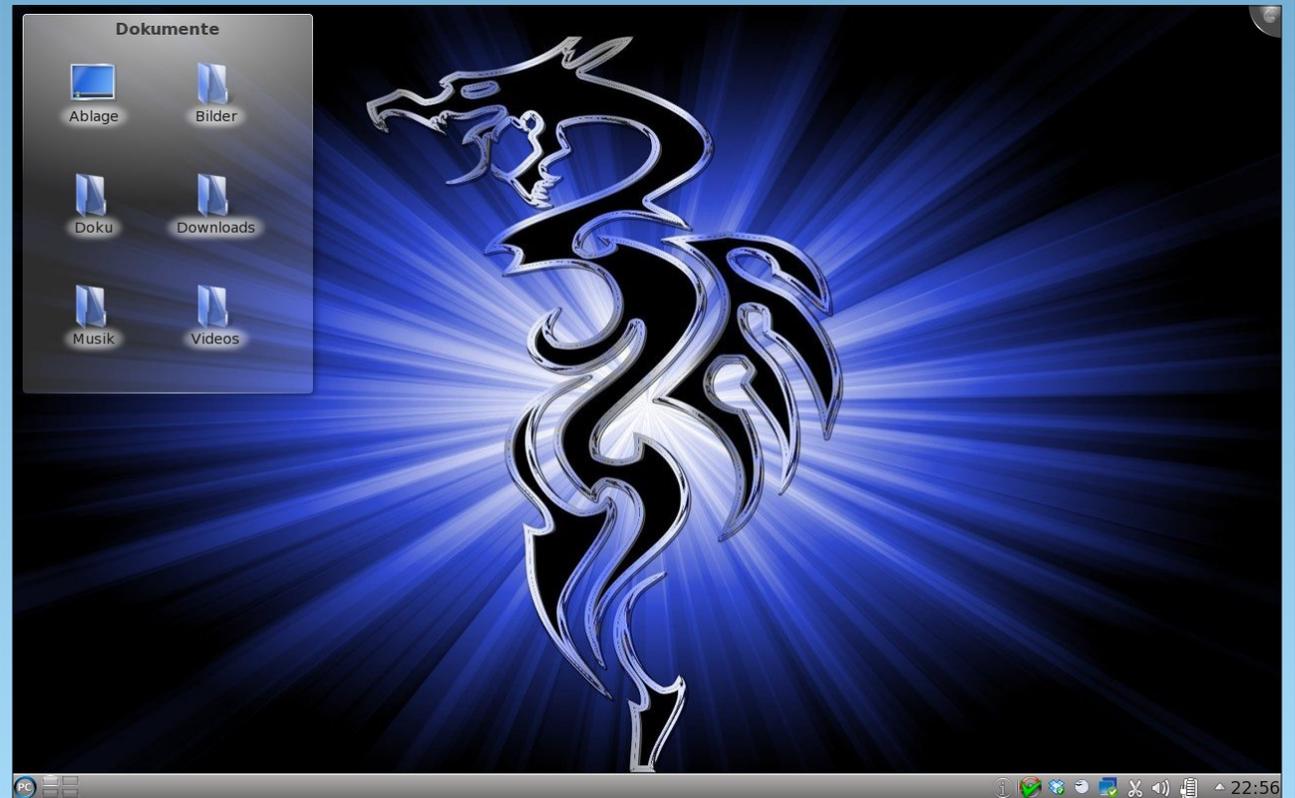
Posted by Leiche, August 25, 2010, running KDE 4.

Installing PCLinuxOS-LXDE On An IBM Thinkpad 600e

by Hootiegibbon

A couple of weeks ago, I was very fortunate to acquire a Pentium II IBM ThinkPad. At the time, the ThinkPad was in a poor state. The HDD was missing, it had no hard drive caddy, and the hard drive cover was missing. It was also missing the charger. I also wondered if the 128megs of RAM were going to be enough to get it up and running.

Despite all of these issues, I had fairly high expectations for this machine. It was destined to run PCLinuxOS.

The first thing I decided to do is search around all the "computer junk" I had lying about, and managed to locate a 64 MB stick of RAM that was suitable.

The ThinkPad itself, as mentioned above, is a Pentium II. The system board came with 32 MB of RAM clocked at 66 MHz. It also has two bays for additional RAM to be added, up to an "official" figure of 288 megs of RAM (32 MB of onboard RAM, plus 2 sticks of 128 MB of RAM, clocked at 66mhz), but more on this later.

So I swapped out a 32 MB stick of RAM for the 64 MB sticks, giving 2 x 64 + 32 on board, for a total of 160megs of RAM, which is enough to run LXDE.

I did have a problem, though. I had no HDD. Well, this was somewhat incorrect, as I had an IBM HDD from another machine, but I had no caddy assembly or plastic hard drive door. This removed the possibility of having a swap partition to take the load off of the RAM.

I eventually found an "ugly" work around for not having a HD caddy. If you take care, you can place the HDD in position and set a screw directly into one of the mounting threads in the HDD itself, holding it securely into place.

So I grabbed a newly burned PCLinuxOS LXDE 2010.7 Live CD, put it in place and started up the machine. I was then faced with an error "unable to read memory size" and a Grub command prompt. I had seen this before, but not in some time.

Now this brings me to a wonderful thing about PCLinuxOS: the community, its peers and its members. Thanks go out to two people who assisted me a great deal with getting this far with this ThinkPad (a 600e) up and running. The first is AndrzejL (who has a similar machine), and the second is parnote. Without their input, it would have taken a lot longer for me to troubleshoot some of the issues that happen as a consequence of having an older machine.

Anyway, I digress. After being reminded that at the command prompt to type LiveCD and enter, the LiveCD booted up slowly, painfully slowly. It took several minutes, but I was eventually able to get online and have a chat on our IRC channels using Xchat. Unfortunately, Firefox killed off the live session for me. It was just too heavy for the machine, and I realized would have to be thrifty with the applications I choose.

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PCLinuxOS *Radically Simple*

After a further reboot, I fired up the installer and chose to repartition. The first thing I managed to do is make a 1gig swap partition and formatted it. I then made two further ext4 partitions, / and /home. After I reformatted, I rebooted so that the swap could be utilized, if needed .

On reboot, I restarted the installer, chose existing partitions, and let it do its thing. Quite some time later, I was met with the Grub installer. I set this to the defaults, finished the install and rebooted.

After it had prompted for user setup, I found myself in a familiar LXDE environment, although, given the RAM situation, it was on the slow side. After speaking to others, I decided to switch from ACPI to the older APM, due to the age of the laptop.

To do this in practice is quite simple. In the Grub boot stanza, you simply have to append the following: acpi=off apm=on and set the system services daemons (Via PCC > System > Services) accordingly.

This left my machine a fair bit quicker and more responsive.

I also did a search of its graphics card, (driven by the neomagic xserver), and located some useful "Options" to add to Xorg.conf. Most options of this type improve the performance of the card. If you want to know what options are available for your card then check online for the "man" page for the xserver you are using. (I have previously, and recently, posted in the Hints and Tips section on the forum for older ATI/Radeon driven cards).

Over the course of time that all the above took place, (a few days), I was able to obtain some additional hardware: an Atheros based wireless PCMCIA card and some more RAM. In fact, I managed to get a 256meg stick of ram. I wondered if it would work, as the machine had a listed maximum RAM of 288 (in the configuration above) .

After some research, I found out that some laptops (including ThinkPads) lie in respect to some of the specs they have, namely in the area of maximum RAM. For the 600e, it appears that if you have a compatible 256 stick and place it in the correct RAM bay, along with stick of 128meRAM clocked at 66 MHz, then the laptop will see the full 415 MB of RAM. This was according to the ThinkWiki pages on the amount of "unofficial maximum ram." This is actually correct. Don't forget that your chosen search

provider is your friend when tweaking your install. It's definitely worth your while looking for "Option" and hardware tweaks.

The following are my specs for this machine now, using "infobash" from the PCLinuxOS repo:

```
CPU[Pentium II (Deschutes) clocked at
265.264 Mhz]  Kernel[Linux 2.6.33.5-
pclos1.bfs (Deschutes)]  Up[-1:50-]
Mem[-111.1/406.6MB-] HDD[-40GB
(6%used)-]  Procs[-107-] Client[Shell]
```

The applications I have chosen to use are as follows:

Browser(s): Dillo, Epiphany and Midori
    (although I have removed the Flash-Plugin)
Email: Sylpheed
Word Processer: Abiword
IRC: Xchat
Editor: Leafpad
Media Player: SMPlayer
Audio Mixer: AuMix
Music Player: LXplayer
PDF Viewer: epdf

As mentioned above, Flash was removed. I feel it's too heavy for a machine of this age.

Well, there it is - a summary of how I managed to get PCLinuxOS onto my Pentium based laptop. I am not too sure if this is of any merit, but I hope it gets you thinking about your older equipment, or that of friends, gathering dust in the back of a closet, that you could get up and running again.

As for this 600e, I love it. It's a great, albeit aged, machine. I hope you pick up that older laptop or desktop and have an attempt of making it useful again.

Addendum

After spending a few weeks with this resuscitated computer, I'd like to update some of the information. First, I have been able to determine that this computer is actually a 600 with some 600e parts. Although it's not an official 600e, it's pretty much the same though.

After using Thinkpad 600 for a while, I decided to follow up on part of what I had read on the thinkwiki site, that the 600 series were capable of using ACPI (Advanced Configuration & Power Interface). So I reinstalled the ACPI packages. I had previously removed them to ensure that APM (Advanced Power Management worked correctly. I then adjusted my menu.lst in the grub boot menu so that ACPI activated correctly for the machine. On most modern laptops and computers this should happen automagically, but with older machines, you some times need to invoke the power of bootcodes (also called cheatcodes by some - although personally I

think that term incorrect as what exactly are you cheating on/with?).

For the thinkpad 600 model you need to use:

```
acpi=force acpi=noirq lapic
```

These are added to the boot line (as root, using your favorite text editor). I placed them after the root partition designation and before the vmalloc=256 entry. In my case, it looks something like this:

```
title linux
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
BOOT_IMAGE=linux root=UUID=48fbf4f0-
e454-4845-91e2-db0bfbd17fe9 acpi=force
acpi=noirq lapic vmalloc=256M
resume=UUID=3fe5acf8-2991-4b15-8cce-
a1a9de007876 vga=788
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/initrd.img
```

After booting with this, it activates ACPI, which you can test using the '**acpi**' command. I would suggest that you use '**acpi -V**'. This will show the most information.

At this point, I also started to wonder about boot times. Due to the fact that its a Pentium2, and even with the RAM super boosted as above, the boot time is still slow.

After much research, I decided to explore rewriting the initrd (initial ram disk). To do this (I advise caution - you can do much damage if you get it wrong) requires use of the following command:

```
mkinitrd -f /boot/initrd-name of your
kernel in use.img  name of your kernel
in use
```

To find the name of your kernel, use the command **uname -r**. In my case, I used:

```
mkinitrd -f /boot/initrd-
2.6.33.5.pclos1.bfs.img
2.6.33.5.pclos1.bfs
```

This command rewrites the initrd, based on the modules 'in use' on your device. For me, it reduced boot time by about 10-15 seconds.

For some further reading/reference about ACPI, APM and Initrd, head on over to the Wikipedia pages listed below:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advanced_Configuration_and_Power_Interface

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advanced_Power_Management

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initrd

Repo Spotlight: Repository Speed Test

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

In the PCLinuxOS menu, under Applications » Software Center, is the item Repository Speed Test. This item is used to download a list of current official repositories for PCLinuxOS, then test each repository for both connectivity, and for the network speed of each repository connection over the internet. To begin the test, select the item from the menu. Once started, the window below will be shown.
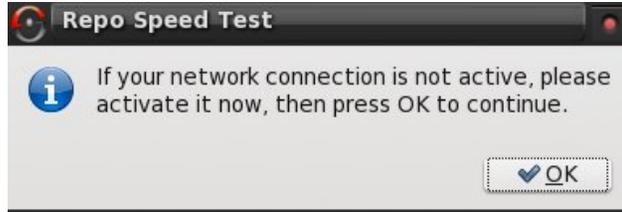

The next window shows that you have a working internet connection and that the repository list was retrieved successfully.
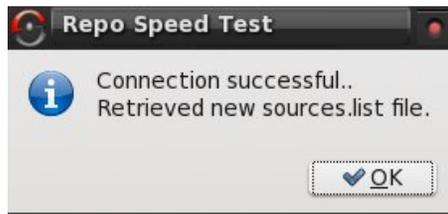

Here you can select the number of days before an update check by moving the slider.
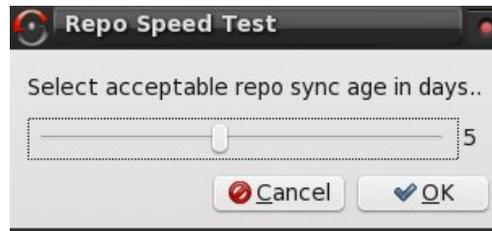

Once the sync age in days question has been answered, the speed test will begin. Do not be alarmed if some of the listed repositories show a status of FAILED.
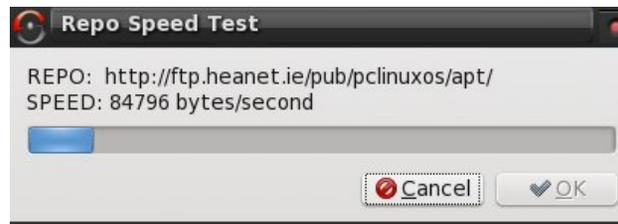

After the speed test has finished, you will be asked to select your preferred repository. As noted, please DO NOT use ibiblio.org.
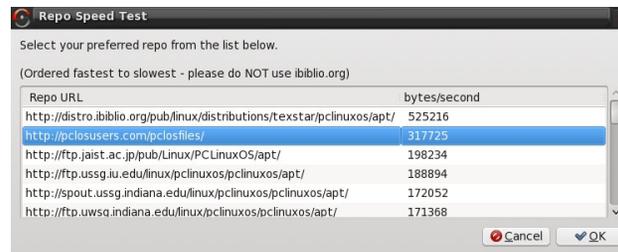
After making your preferred repository selection, you will be asked how many total repositories in the list. The default number is five.
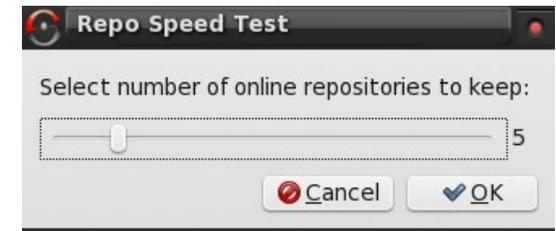

You can elect to keep all the repositories in the list by moving the slider all the way to the right.
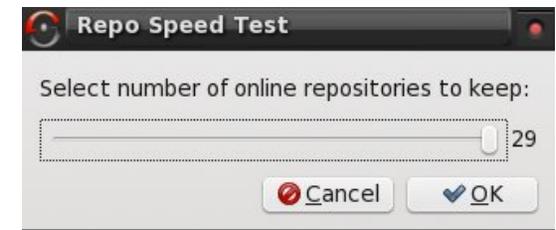

NOTE: If you already have a PASS account, and the information is entered in your Synaptic repository list, an extra window (not shown) will appear, showing your PASS account information. You will be asked if you wish to keep it in the repository list.

Once the speed test has completed, you will be asked if you wish to overwrite your current sources.list. The correct answer would normally be "Yes", as answering "No" would defeat the purpose of running the test.
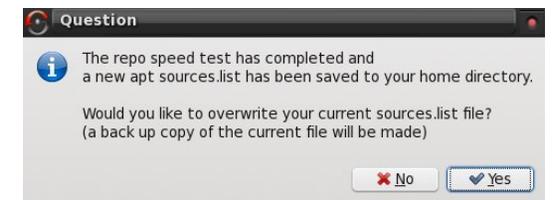
After answering, Synaptic will begin and ask for the root password.
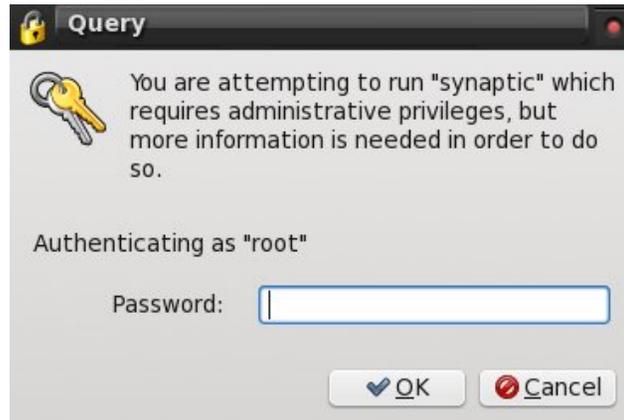
After starting Synaptic, the current sources.list file will be shown in its own window. If you wish to change your preferred repository, you can do so here.
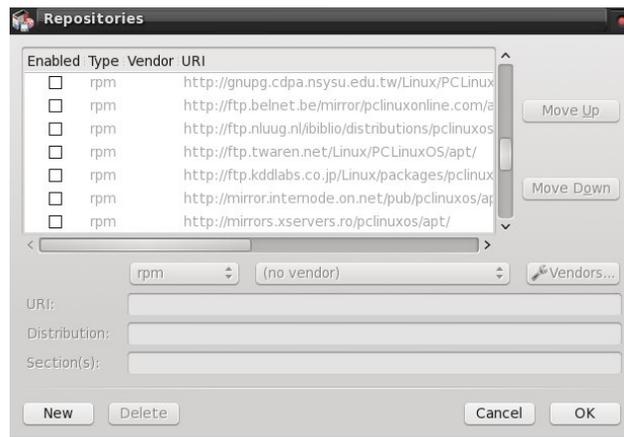
After closing Synaptic, you have the option of keeping or deleting the speed test working directory. After running the speed test, the working directory really serves no purpose. You may, however, have a reason to keep it. The default answer is "Yes".


That concludes the PCLinuxOS repository speed test.

Visit Us On IRC

• Launch your favorite IRC Chat Client software (xchat, pidgin, kopete, etc.)

• Go to freenode.net

• Type "/join #pclinuxos-mag" (without the quotes)
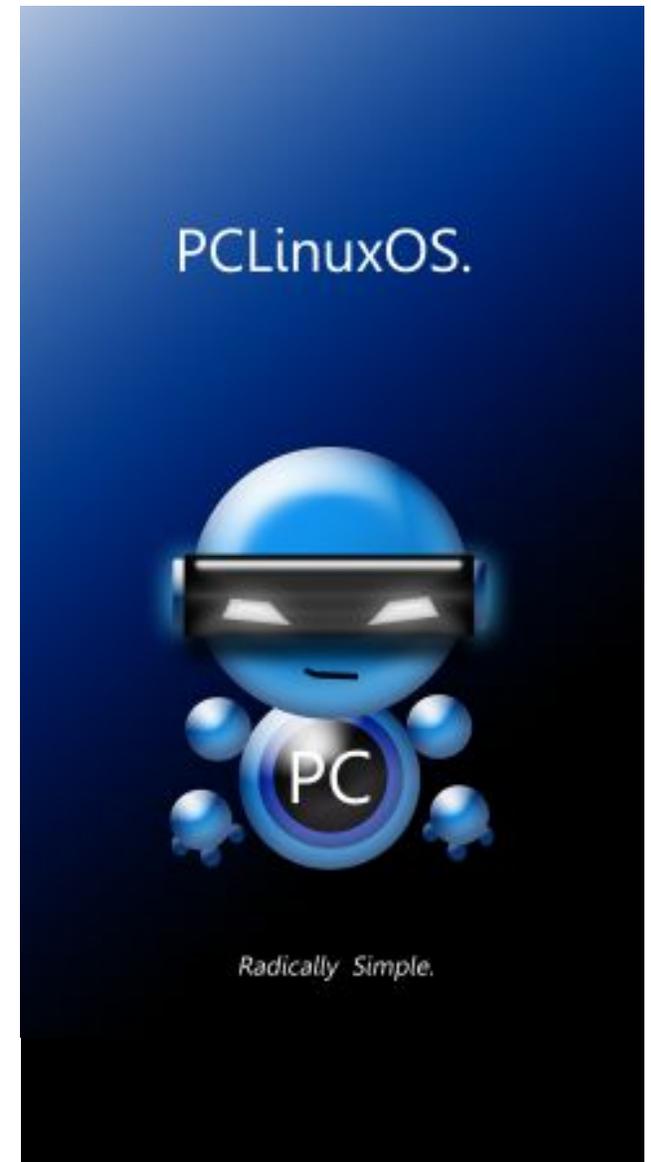
Computer Languages A to Z: Octave

**by Gary L. Ratliff Sr. (eronstuc)**

A Little Unfinished Business

In the last installment, I implied that I would be covering Oberon-2, which like Pascal and Modula-2, was created by Nicklas Wirth. However, on investigation, I learned that Oberon, which he named after one of the moons of Saturn, was essentially a stripped down version of Modula-2. Essentially, it removes any command which he regarded as being able to be dangerous. Later, some simple extensions to allow primitive OOP were added to create Oberon-2.

The XDS package, which was released to the open source community, is able to compile both Modula-2 and Oberon-2 files. If the file ends in "file.mod," then the Modula-2 compiler is used, while if the ending is "file.ob2," then the Oberon-2 compiler is used. The system for Linux comes in two versions. One compiles to ANSI C code, and could then be compiled with a C compiler such as gcc. The other version compiles to native code. Both are obtained from the XDS site. A simple Google search for xds will provide the info. The files would be extracted to the users home directory using the command **tar zxf whatever.tar.gz**, depending upon if you downloaded the C version or the native version.

So now that we've tidies up our loose ends, let's explore GNU Octave, a high-level language that is primarily intended for numerical computations. It is completely unrelated to Modula-2 or Oberon-2.

Obtaining Octave

Octave is available in the PCLinuxOS repositories. However, I could not get the system to install on my KDE version. The system wants to use Gnuplot, which seems to come with the default install of the Gnome version for producing graphs and plots. To install, use Synaptic and search for octave. Select octave, octave-doc and koctave3 for installing. The system will most likely require you to also install many other libraries with these items. So simply approve of these additions, and click the apply icon.
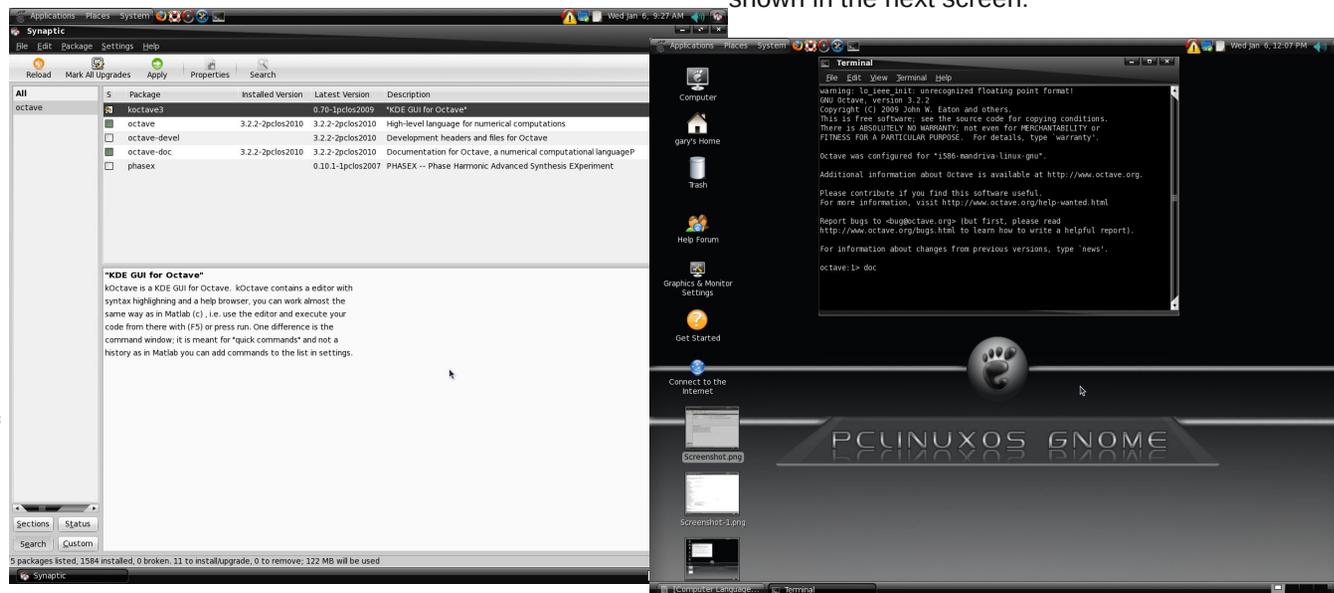

Here you see the Synaptic screen after we have marked the items octave octave-doc and koctave3 for install. The system will also install many other libraries which will be required to use this system. One thing to note is that you will also need to install the info package, if it is not already installed on your system.

Once installed, the system is launched by entering the command "octave" at a command prompt in a terminal session. Or, you may also click on the Applications menu, select Programming and then select the GNU Octave item displayed.

Most likely, the first order of business would be to learn to use the product. So you would enter the command "doc" to view the documentation, as shown in the next screen:

Once the doc command has been processed, you will see that there is quite a bit to learn, as you will be shown from the following screen:
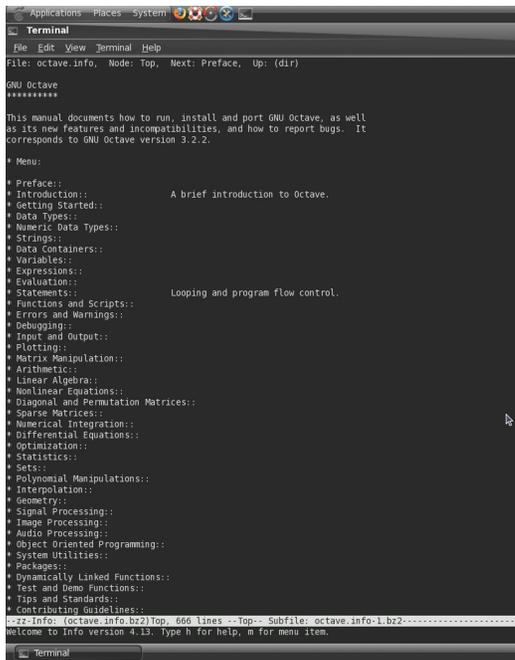
Just as in APL, the main unit is the matrix. Octave is very much like the commercial Mathlab system. The main difference is that it is free under the terms of the GPL license. As you will see, it is able to perform differential equations and integration of functions, which you may have learned back in the days you were sweating out your Calculus classes.

You have a vast language at your disposal, for which you may design functions and explore the world of advanced mathematical operations.

There is also a 575 page manual for Octave,

available online at http://www.octave.org. However, this currently covers version 2.9.12+, while the version installed from the PCLinuxOS repositories is version 3.2.2.

The problem of getting the system to install on the KDE version was resolved by updating the system. Now, there is a graphic interface to the Octave system, called Koctave3. This would install on the Gnome version, but would crash after being opened. Because the KDE version of PCLinuxOS has all the features of KDE, and Koctave 3 is specifically a GUI interface for the KDE desktop, I thought that I would try and see if this worked or crashed on the KDE version. Below is a screen shot of the system using both of the windows provided by the Koctave3 package:
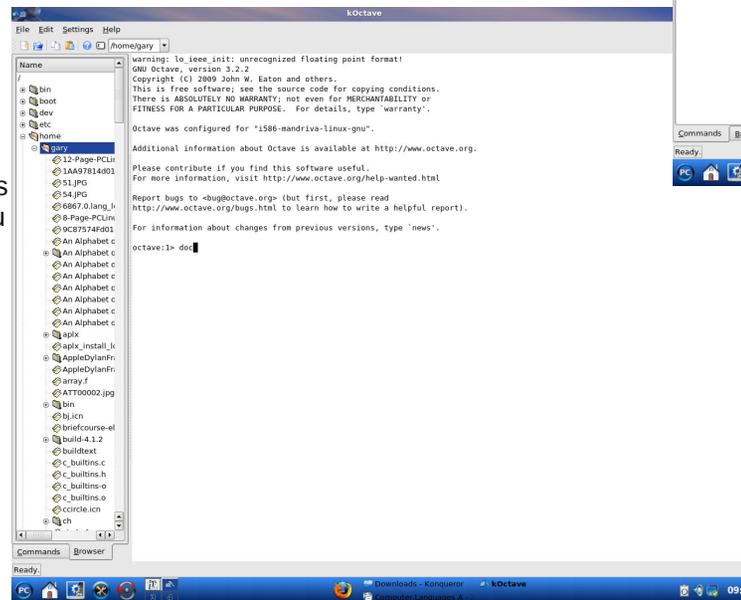
In the bottom left shot, the command doc has been entered into the Graphical interface, and the contents of your files are shown by also selecting the browser window.
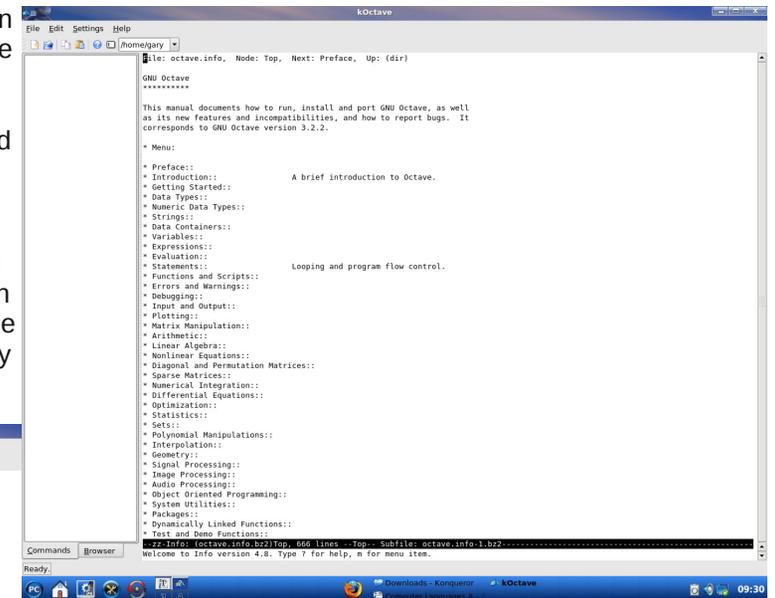
In the above view, the browser window has been closed and the contents presented after the doc command has been run are shown. To view the item presented in the doc file, just move the cursor down to the item of interest and press the Enter key.

So, if you need to do some high powered math, or perhaps your children need to verify their advanced math course homework, you have a powerful tool.

Google Wave Waves Goodbye

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Almost as quickly as it waved hello, it appears that Google Wave will soon be waving goodbye.

Rolled out at last year's Google I/O in May, developers cheered and applauded the advancements and "different thinking" of Google Wave. It promised to revolutionize web-based communication, asking the question "what would email be like if it were invented today?" Google Wave envisioned an interweaving of email, photo sharing, instant messaging, chat, and drag-and-drop file sharing between users.

From the Official Google Blog on August 4, 2010:

But despite these wins, and numerous loyal fans, Wave has not seen the user adoption we would have liked. We don't plan to continue developing Wave as a standalone product, but we will maintain the site at least through the end of the year and extend the technology for use in other Google projects. The central parts of the code, as well as the protocols that have driven many of Wave's innovations, like drag-and-drop and character-by-character live typing, are already available as open source, so customers and partners can continue the innovation we began. In addition, we will work on tools so that users can easily "liberate" their content from Wave.

The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine covered the rollout of Google Wave in the November, 2009 issue, back when Google Wave was only available via invitation from other Google Wave users. While the concept was innovative and fresh, Google Wave may have bitten off more than it could chew. Individual internet applications – email, instant messaging, photo/file sharing, chat, etc. – are so deeply entrenched in the lives of computer users, it would be an exceptionally difficult task to supplant them. Also, many users don't use all of those applications on a regular basis, so for them, Google Wave may have been overkill.

Once users develop certain patterns of usage and habits, it becomes increasingly more difficult to get users to shed or change those habits, the more entrenched those habits become.

Had Google Wave made its debut 10 years ago, or even five years ago, it may well have had a chance to garner the number of users that Google envisioned using Wave. But coming along so late in the "game," when such a large number of users had already developed a pattern of behavior with all the functions and applications that Google Wave sought to replace, the cards were definitely stacked against widespread adoption of a new communication medium.

Despite this, there is a movement under way to Save Google Wave. They even have their own Twitter page. Even though Google Wave hasn't reached the level of usage that Google had envision, it has garnered a very loyal group of niche users. And these users come from all walks of society. Judging from the comments on the web site, those folks range from a theoretical physicist, to novelists, to students and teachers, and everyone in between.

On Twitter, one user makes a very valid point: "I don't understand do we need 5 billion users to keep a product? Why can't it be the perfect tool for a small niche?"

On the web site, comments included this one from a theoretical physicist, who makes a very valid point:

"I am a Theoretical Physicist and I use google wave for collaborating with my colleagues who are in different places around the world. Google wave has to be saved ... it is such a brilliant tool ... unfortunately, badly advertised (not at all ...). A lot of people would quickly realize its potential and the way it can really change collaborative working in a positive way."

Did Google give Google Wave a fair chance? Given the virtually insurmountable task of changing user habits, a little more than a year is hardly what anyone would declare a fair chance. Throw in a quite limited start, where users were only allowed into the Google Wave arena via invitation. Join this with a lack of publicity (other than the hula-balloo when it was launched), and you cut whatever chances it had for succeeding by at least 90%. Folks can't use what they don't know is available. Thus, users had no chance to change their habits.

I know there are many out there who may be quite happy to see any endeavor by Google fail. They argue that Google is too large as it is, and they despair about Google's questionable data collection practices. In fact, some users are so concerned over these issues, that they avoid using any Google service at all. Honestly, their concerns are not without validity and cause for concern, in a time when personal privacy has diminished enormously and is attacked at every turn. However, Google Wave represented, in many ways, a cutting edge implementation and integration of many services that web users routinely use. It simply didn't have the chance to gain the steam to become as large as

was envisioned by Google, in the short time that was allowed.

So Google Wave may have rolled upon our shores, but it leaves us gently, like a slow, low tide. We applaud the innovation, relish in the advances that it showed us was possible with web-based applications, and are sad to see it close shop (providing that the efforts to save it fail, as so many other such efforts tend to do), leaving behind so many unfulfilled promises. ○

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by pirate, August 7, 2010, running KDE 4.

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Top Left: Posted by Lee2010, August 26, 2010, running KDE 4.

Top Right: Posted by daveysprocketbrew, August 2, 2010, running Zen Mini.

Bottom Left: Posted by OrdiDoc, August 22, 2010, running Gnome.

Bottom Right: Posted by escapingsummer, August 20, 2010, running KDE 4.