The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine

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Welcome From The Chief Editor

I know I've said this before, but there is a lot going on, and a lot of it within the last month or so. First, the maintainers of the various PCLinuxOS desktop remasters are preparing for the next round of quarterly releases of updated ISOs of the Live CD. Second, there has been a lot of speculation about the future of Mandriva, and PCLinuxOS is starting to see a lot more users taking another look at PCLinuxOS. Face it. Linux users everywhere are in pursuit of stability and want to use something that has a more stable, certain future.

Google continues to alter the range of services they offer, ending the files and pages features of Google Groups, with no opportunity for discussion or input from those who utilize the features (just as they did previously with Google Wave, after its short run). Xmarks, the very popular browser add on that allows for synchronization of bookmarks and open tabs across multiple computers, is closing their doors and ending their service, unable to find a business model that works to provide them with sufficient funds to continue operation with a free browser add on. Speculation abounds about Xmarks future, ranging from possibly making the Xmarks code open source, to making Xmarks a pay service with a nominal yearly fee.

But have no fear, good things are also happening with The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine. This month, we continue our coverage of the LXDE desktop environment. Andrew Strick presents a duo of articles, with **LXDE: Get To Know Obconf** and **LXDE: Configuring LXPanel**. I follow that up with my **LXDE: Adding Wallpapers, Panel Decorations** article. Meemaw continues her series of articles on the free OpenOffice Office Suite, with her **OpenOffice 3.2, Part 5: Draw** article.

Darrel Johnston reviews another PCLinuxOS original, with his **Repo Spotlight: Know Your System With Systeminfo** article. Gary Ratliff, Sr. continues marching through the alphabet of computer programming languages, with his **Computer Languages A to Z: Pascal** article. Peter Kelly, coming off of his long and popular Command Line Interface Intro series, gives us some tips on how to best get assistance in the PCLinuxOS forum, with his **Getting Help In The Forum** article. Leiche reviews another recent and new addition to the PCLinuxOS repository, with his **DeaDBeeF: A Lightweight Linux Audio Player** article.

I take a look at another Firefox add-on in my **Firefox Add-ons: Rain or Shine, Forecastfox Tells All** article. DeBaas reports on his efforts to help sow the seeds of Linux, in the **PCLinuxOS Takes Center Stage** article. Patrick Horneker shows us how to **Read Barnes & Noble eBooks on PCLinuxOS**, and shares his parody of Joni Mitchell's Big Yellow Taxi song, **Big Linux Laptop**.

We also have two new testimonials this month. We also have our regular columnists, ms_meme and georgetoon, back with more. Ms_meme shares a couple of different, new Forum Foibles, as well as two new songs. Georgetoon returns with another Double Take, as well as another of Mark's Quick Gimp Tips. This month's cover, celebrating fall, comes from Timeth.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the magazine, and that it gives you plenty to read until the next issue. Until then, I wish each and every one of you peace, tranquility, serenity and success.

LXDE: Get To Know Obconf

by Andrew Strick (Stricktoo)

Introduction

Obconf is a GUI utility for configuring the Openbox window manager. Many of its options are difficult, if not impossible, to explain in words, and so the reader is encouraged to "play at home," as it were; launch Obconf and play with each setting as it is described.

Note: Both the LXDE and Openbox versions of PCLinuxOS use the Openbox window manager. This article uses LXDE, but most of the discussion is applicable to both.

Launching Obconf
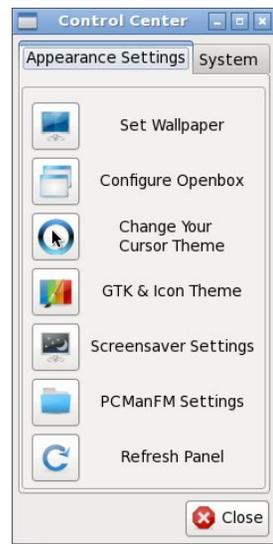
There are several ways to launch Obconf. In the menu, it is found under **More Applications > Configuration > Openbox Configuration Manager**. In the LXDE Control Center, it is the **Configure Openbox** option under the **Appearance Settings** tab. And it can be launched from the console or run dialog with the command **obconf**.

Fig. 01. The LXDE Control Center.

The second option ("Configure Openbox") launches Obconf.

Overview

Obconf has eight tabs. Each controls a specific Openbox component: Theme; Appearance; Windows; Move & Resize; Mouse; Desktops; Margins; and Dock.

Theme

The Theme tab lists the available Openbox themes. Each theme changes the way that Openbox looks. On a default LXDE install the most obvious effects
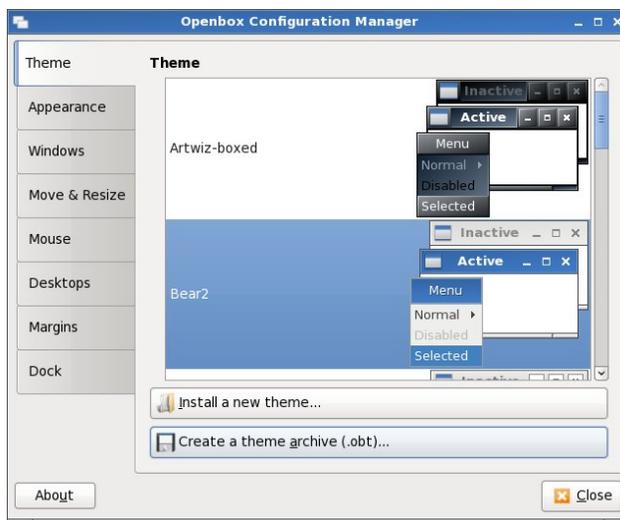
Fig. 02. The Themes tab, with the Bear2 theme selected. Notice that the window decorations change as soon as the user selects a theme.

are seen in the window decorations. The theme also affects any on screen displays (such as the desktop-switcher) and the Openbox menu, if the user has turned off the LXDE right-click menu.

The Themes tab also has buttons for installing and exporting Openbox themes.

"Install a new theme": launches a file brower window for navigating to the desired location. Once there the user can select any .obt archive and Openbox will install it.

"Create a theme archive (.obt)": also launches a file browser. The user can use this window to select a directory containing an Openbox theme, and that directory will be compressed into Openbox's own .obt archive format.

Note: *I could not get either of these options to work. Most themes downloaded from the internet come in a more standard archive type (e.g. .tar.gz) and are not seen by the install utility. And the creation utility refuses to recognize any file or directory as an Openbox theme. An easier method is to extract themes from their archives and move them into the ~/.themes directory (which does not exist by default and must be created by the user)*

Appearance

There are three subsections to the the Appearance tab.
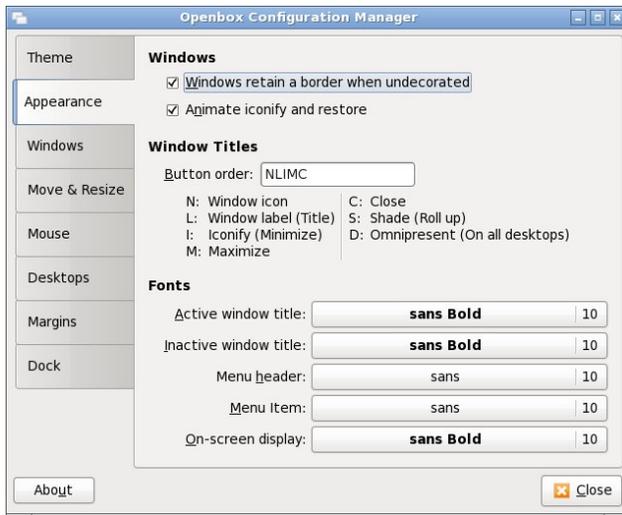
Fig. 03. The Appearance tab with default settings

Windows

"Windows retain border when undecorated": if the user launches an without any window decorations, this option then allows the user to decide whether that application window should still have a border

"Animate iconify and restore": when checked, the act of minimizing an application to, or restoring it from, the taskbar will show a simple visual. When unchecked application windows essentially appear or disappear when minimized or restored

Window Titles

By rearranging the listed options in the "Button order" input box, the user can change the layout of the window decoration's buttons and title. The default has the window icon (N) on the left edge, the window title (L) in the middle, and the minimize/iconify (I), maximize (M) and close (C) buttons at the right edge.

Note: *the Openbox theme determines the position of the window title. Thus even if the window title (L) is the first variable listed in the box, it will still display in the middle of the window decoration, offset only by buttons on the right edge. See Fig. 04 for an example.*

Fig. 04. The Appearance tab, with all the window buttons added. Notice how the window title (L) remains centered - despite being the first variable listed - and is offset only by the other buttons

Fonts

This section contains options for setting various system fonts.

"Active window title": the font for the title of the currently active window

"Inactive window title:": the font for the title of any currently inactive windows

"Menu header": the font for the heading of the Openbox menu

"Menu item": the font for items in the Openbox menu

"On-screen display": the font for any Openbox notifications (such as the Information Dialog during a window resize)

Note: *"Menu header" and "Menu item" are not generally necessary because the Openbox menu is only used if the user enables the it in the PCManFM settings.*

Windows

Focusing Windows

"Focus new windows when they appear": when checked, any newly opened windows will come to the foreground. When unchecked, newly opened windows will remain inactive until the user selects them (although they still appear on top of any currently opened windows)

Fig. 05. The Windows tab

Move & Resize

Fig. 06. The Move & Resize tab

Fig. 07. Resizing the Obconf window with the "Update window contents while resizing" option turned off. Notice that the window contents remain at the previous size, even though the window has been expanded.

Placing Windows

"Place new windows under the mouse pointer": when checked, any newly opened windows will be placed under the mouse pointer. This option does not have a consistent orientation. That is, there is not one specific part of the window that is always aligned with the cursor; instead the window will align itself to fit on the desktop while keep a portion under the cursor.

"Center new windows when they are placed": all newly opened windows will be placed in the middle of the desktop (unless they are maximized)

"Prefer to place new windows on: The active monitor/The monitor with the mouse": which monitor new windows should appear on, if the system has multiple monitors attached

Moving & Resizing Windows

"Update window contents while resizing": when checked the window contents will update to match the new window size as it is being resized. When unchecked the contents will remain static and will only update to match the window once the resizing has finished

"Drag threshold distance": the number of pixels a window must be resized before the new size is displayed. For example: if this value is set to 85px, a window will maintain its current size until the cursor with the resize handle has moved 85px away. The minimum value is 1. The maximum value is 100.

"Amount of resistance against other windows": a window that is being moved will stop this distance away from other windows and will not overlap them unless the user continues to move the mouse. The minimum value is 0. The maximum value is 100.

"Amount of resistance against screen edges": a window that is being moved will stop this distance away from the edges of the screen and will not pass them unless the user continues to move the mouse. The minimum value is 0. The maximum value is 100.

"Switch desktops when moving a window past the screen edge": if checked, dragging a window past the edge of the screen will move it to the next virtual desktop

"Amount of time to wait before switching": the length of time, in milliseconds, that a window can be held past the edge of the screen without being moved to the next desktop. The minimum value is 100. There is no discernible maximum.

Information Dialog

The information dialog is a small on-screen display that shows the current size of a window while it being resized.

Fig. 08. Information dialog

"Show information dialog: When resizing terminal windows/Always/Never": whether the information dialog should always appear (when any window is being resized), never appear or appear only when the window being resized belongs to a terminal

"Information dialog's position: Centered on the window/Above the window/Fixed position on the screen": controls the location of the information dialog. If **"Fixed position on the screen"** is selected, the user can set that location using the **"Fixed x position"** and **"Fixed y position"** controls.

Mouse
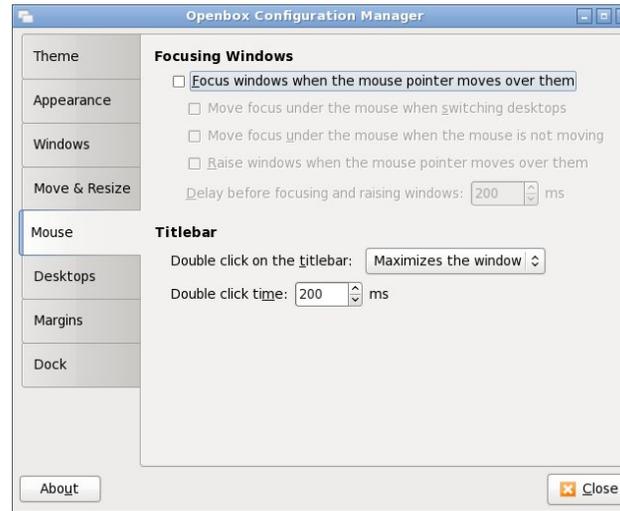
Fig. 09. The Mouse tab, with default settings

Focusing Windows

"Focus windows when the mouse pointer moves over them": simply placing the cursor over a window will focus it; clicking is not necessary

"Move focus under the mouse when switching desktops": normally, when switching desktops, the last window on the desktop to have the mouse focus will have the mouse focus when you return to that desktop. With this setting, the focus will default to the window that is under the mouse cursor when you change to the new desktop. If there is no window beneath the mouse cursor on the new desktop (e.g.,

only your desktop background), then the last window that had the mouse focus will retain the focus.

"Move focus under the mouse when the mouse is not moving": passing the cursor over a window will not focus it; the cursor must pause on that window to focus it

"Raise windows when the mouse pointer moves over them": moving the cursor over a window will bring that window to the front, in addition to focusing it

"Delay before focusing and raising windows": the delay, in milliseconds, before a window will be focused and/or raised when the cursor passes over it. The minimum value is 0. The maximum value is 10,000.

Title Bar

"Double click on the title bar: Maximizes the window/Shades the window": sets whether double clicking on a title bar will maximize that window or shade it

"Double click time": the allowable delay, in milliseconds, between clicks. The countdown begins with the first click. For example: if the value is set to 4000, the action will occur if the user clicks the title bar twice, and the second click is within 4000 milliseconds of the first. The minimum value is 0. The maximum value is 10,000.

Desktops
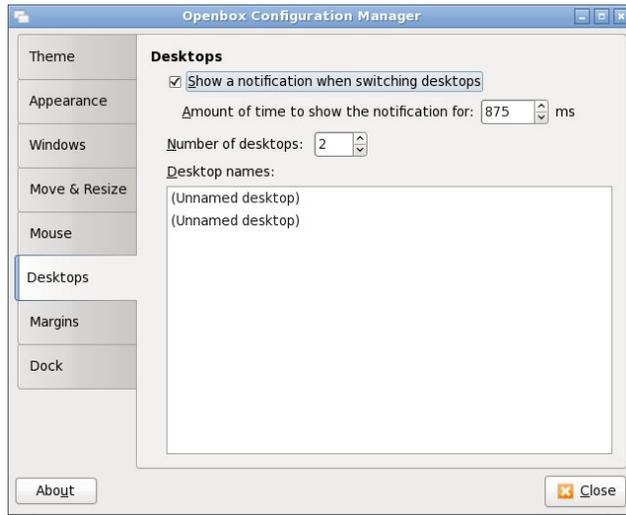
Fig. 10. The Desktops tab

"Show a notification when switching desktops": when checked, a small notification will be shown when switching desktops

Fig. 11. The desktop-switcher on-screen display

"Amount of time to show the notification for": the time, in milliseconds, in which the notification will be displayed. The minimum value is 1. The maximum value is 10,000

"Number of desktops": the number of virtual desktops employed by the user. The minimum value is 1. The maximum value is 100

"Desktop names": the user can rename a desktop by double click on it within the list. This name will be displayed on the notification when switching desktops

Margins
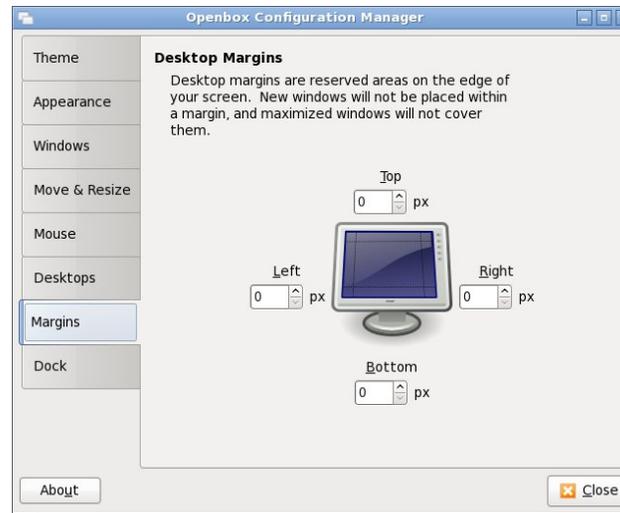
Fig 12. The Margins tab

The Margins tab provides its own apt explanation: "Desktop margins are reserved areas on the edge of your screen. New windows will not be placed within a margin, and maximized windows will not cover them."

Margins are useful if, for example, one wishes to have a constantly horizontal conky instance along the edge of the screen

Dock
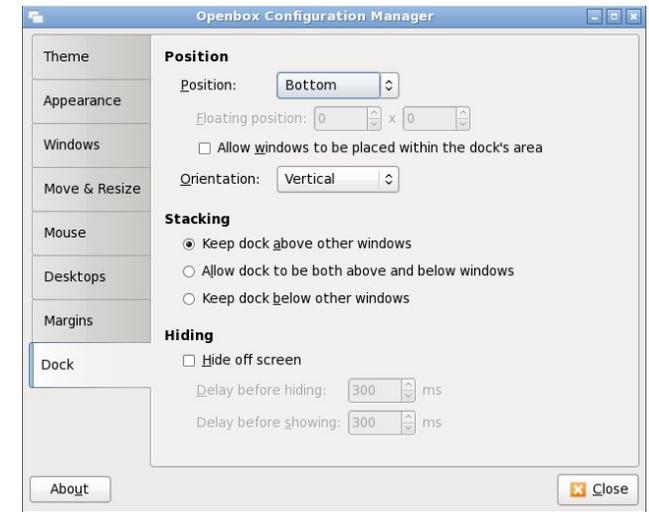
Fig 13. The Dock tab

The dock is an area of the screen for certain stand alone windows. For example, if the user eschews the LXPanel in favor of another task manager and system tray, those applications need a place on which they can "anchor" themselves. That place is the dock

Note: *I cannot get the dock to function as advertised. Consequently the above description comes from my research and not first-hand knowledge.*

Conclusion

Openbox is an incredibly versatile window manager, and it is impossible to catalogue all of the possibilities. This overview is intended to get the reader started; it is by no means exhaustive. The best method of leaning is to get one's hands dirty, and the reader should do just that - fire up Obconf and start tinkering with the settings. One never knows what one might find!
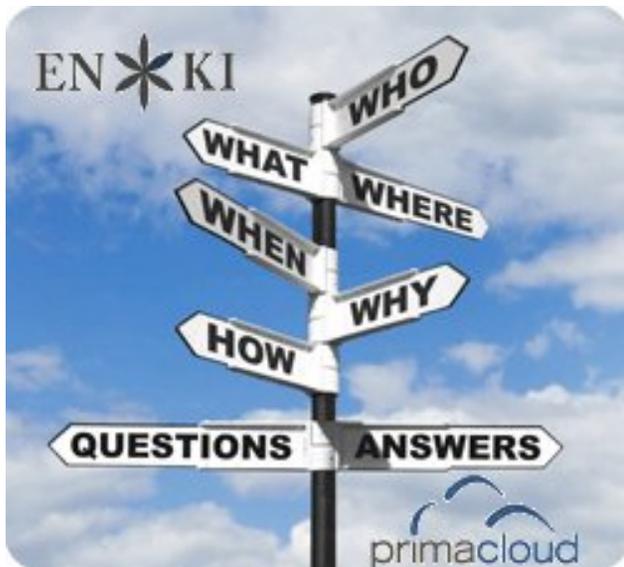
Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Ramchu, September 20, 2010, running KDE 4.

PCLinuxOS Takes Center Stage

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Move over Microsoft. We don't need no stinking "launch parties." It's time to be shown how it's done right.

At least, that's how it was in The Hague, Netherlands on September 18, 2010, at the Digital Den Computer Club. Traditionally, the club has pretty much restricted itself to exclusively showcasing Microsoft products, but PCLinuxOS user DeBaas has been regularly showcasing the various flavors of PCLinuxOS since 2007. The 50 or so members of the club meet monthly to discuss their computers and operating systems.

Since he has began showcasing PCLinuxOS, along with other popular versions of Linux, he now has members coming from Amsterdam, Leiden, Maassluis, Vlaardingen and Hoek van Holland. The goal is to spread the word about Linux, and to show off its capabilities. They meet to help one another with any problems they may encounter, as well as offer to install Linux (mostly as a dual boot with Microsoft Windows) on all types of computer hardware, from netbooks to notebooks to desktop systems.

At the meeting on September 18, 2010, the "Linux wall" of seven computers featured PCLinuxOS, in one flavor or another, on four of the computers. In the image, from left to right, were computers running Ubuntu, PCLinuxOS Gnome, PCLinuxOS-LXDE, PCLinuxOS 2010-7 (KDE 4), PCLinuxOS Full Monty, Linux Mint KDE, and Suse. Club member Chris Duijndam took the photo after the meeting.

International Community PCLinuxOS Sites

PCLinuxOS.nl
Netherlands

PCLinuxOS Daykonun mekanı
Turkey

PC Linux OS
Denmark

Czechoslovakia
PCLinuxOS síla jednoduchosti

PCLinuxOS.it
Italy

PCLinuxOS Polskie Centrum
Poland

Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

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Find at least seven differences between cartoons.

Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

The Gimp, like all graphic applications, has a wealth of tools for editing images. And Gimp, like those big name apps, offers the user many different ways to carry out the same operation. For instance, in Gimp, you can zoom in and zoom out in many different ways. Using the keyboard, zoom in by using Shift +. Zoom out by using the minus key. You can also select **Zoom>View** from the main menu. Or, you can use a navigation tab in the right hand dialog box. You can also use what I like to call the **QuickZoom tool** located the in the lower left of the image pane. Simply click on Quickzoom and select your zoom level. You can also select the zoom tool in the right hand toolbox. With the magnifying glass selected, simply drag it across any area of the image to zoom right in. Zoom out by holding down the the Ctrl key. Or, just left click with the mouse to zoom in and, again, to zoom out, hold down the Ctrl key and left mouse click. Gimp gives you many different ways to do the same thing.

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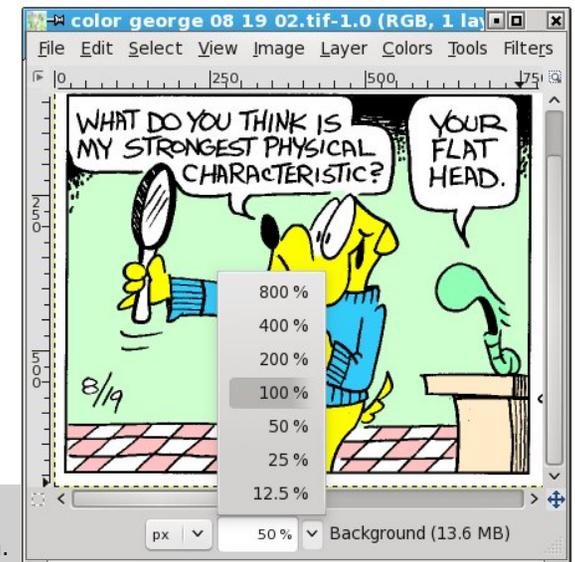
-Mark Szorady is a nationally syndicated cartoonist with georgetoon.com. He blogs at georgetoon.com/blog. Email Mark at georgetoon@gmail.com.

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

There is an excellent system tool for PCLinuxOS users named systeminfo. It is a Zenity script written by forum member Leiche. It encapsulates many command line tools into one easy to use graphic user interface. It can be launched from the Monitoring section of the menu, or started from a terminal with the command systeminfo. Once launched, a warning window appears stating that errors may occur.
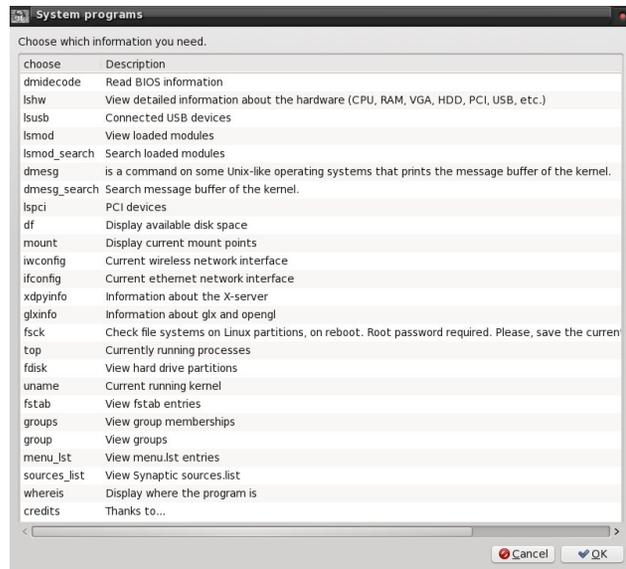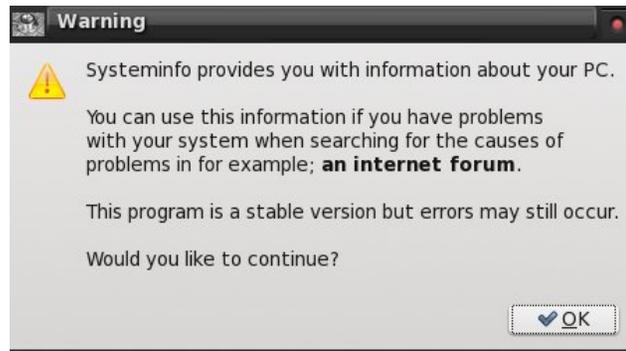
Once you have pressed the OK button, the main interface window appears.

To select an item to run, either double click the item name or select the item and click the OK button. If the item selected needs root privileges to run, you will be prompted in a separate window for the root password.

dmidecode needs root privileges to run, and shows BIOS information.

lshw shows an extensive list of hardware interfaces and devices associated with and connected to your system. The output is shown in whatever web browser you have chosen as your default. Some of the other choices in the main systeminfo window are included in the output of the lshw window.

lsusb (not shown) lists USB devices connected to your system, as well as the USB interfaces.

Warning

Systeminfo provides you with information about your PC.

You can use this information if you have problems with your system when searching for the causes of problems in for example; **an internet forum**.

This program is a stable version but errors may still occur.

Would you like to continue?

✔ OK

System programs

Choose which information you need.

choose	Description
dmidecode	Read BIOS information
lshw	View detailed information about the hardware (CPU, RAM, VGA, HDD, PCI, USB, etc.)
lsusb	Connected USB devices
lsmod	View loaded modules
lsmod_search	Search loaded modules
dmesg	is a command on some Unix-like operating systems that prints the message buffer of the kernel.
dmesg_search	Search message buffer of the kernel.
lspci	PCI devices
df	Display available disk space
mount	Display current mount points
iwconfig	Current wireless network interface
ifconfig	Current ethernet network interface
xdpyinfo	Information about the X-server
glxinfo	Information about glx and opengl
fsck	Check file systems on Linux partitions, on reboot. Root password required. Please, save the curren
top	Currently running processes
fdisk	View hard drive partitions
uname	Current running kernel
fstab	View fstab entries
groups	View group memberships
group	View groups
menu_lst	View menu.lst entries
sources_list	View Synaptic sources.list
whereis	Display where the program is
credits	Thanks to...

Cancel   OK

su

Password: ▮

BIOS Information

```
# dmidecode 2.10
SMBIOS 2.5 present.
49 structures occupying 1758 bytes.
Table at 0x0009F400.

Handle 0x0000, DMI type 0, 24 bytes
BIOS Information
     Vendor: American Megatrends Inc.
     Version: V9.2
     Release Date: 09/05/2008
     Address: 0xF0000
     Runtime Size: 64 kB
     ROM Size: 1024 kB
     Characteristics:
          ISA is supported
```

Close

localhost.localdomain - Mozilla Firefox

id:	localhost.localdomain
description:	Desktop Computer
product:	MS-7309
vendor:	MSI
version:	1.0
serial:	To Be Filled By O.E.M.
width:	32 bits
capabilities:	smbios-2.5 dmi-2.5 smp-1.4 smp
configuration:	chassis = desktop
	cpus = 2
	uuid = 00000000-0000-0000-0000-0021859F5979

id:	core
description:	Motherboard
product:	MS-7309
vendor:	MSI
physical id:	0
version:	1.0
serial:	To be filled by O.E.M.
slot:	To Be Filled By O.E.M.

id:	firmware
description:	BIOS
vendor:	American Megatrends Inc.
physical id:	0
version:	V9.2 (09/05/2008)
size:	64KiB
capacity:	960KiB
capabilities:	isa pci pnp apm upgrade shadowing escd cdboot bootselect socketedrom edd int13floppy1200 int13floppy720 int13floppy2880 int5printscreen int9keyboard int14serial int17printer int10video acpi usb ls120boot zipboot biosbootspecification

Done   Google Sharing Disabled   (unknown)   68.97.66.179

lsmod shows what kernel modules are loaded.

View loaded modules

```
af_packet          14022 2
ata_generic         2315 0
binfmt_misc         5570 1
button              4681 0
cdrom              28700 1 sr_mod
cpufreq_conservative  8144 0
cpufreq_ondemand    7009 0
cpufreq_powersave    698 0
crc_t10dif          1195 1 sd_mod
dm_mod             55179 0
ehci_hcd           28453 0
evdev               6409 11
exportfs            3055 1 xfs
f71882fg           19936 0
forcedeth          43014 0
freq_table          3091 1 cpufreq_ondemand
fuse               49456 0
hid                55898 1 usbhid
i2c_core           17928 2 nvidia,i2c_nforce2
i2c_nforce2         4958 0
```
Close

lsmod_search can be used to search for the presence of a certain type of module.

lsmod

Charged Kerlnelmodule Search ...
If you do not the name for a special kernel module can think
you have the option with a keyword to search for it.
(e.g.: audio, video or bluetooth ...)

Cancel   OK

dmesg shows the kernel messages (top, next column).

Display the message buffer of the kernel

```
Linux version 2.6.33.6-pclos1.pae (root@localhost.localdomain) (gcc version 4.4.1 (GCC) ) #1
SMP Tue Jul 6 14:25:11 CDT 2010
BIOS-provided physical RAM map:
 BIOS-e820: 0000000000000000 - 000000000009f000 (usable)
 BIOS-e820: 000000000009f000 - 00000000000a0000 (reserved)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000000e6000 - 0000000000100000 (reserved)
 BIOS-e820: 0000000000100000 - 00000000bffc0000 (usable)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000bffc0000 - 00000000bffce000 (ACPI data)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000bffce000 - 00000000bffff0000 (ACPI NVS)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000bfff0000 - 00000000bfffe000 (reserved)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000fec00000 - 00000000fec01000 (reserved)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000fee00000 - 00000000fef00000 (reserved)
 BIOS-e820: 00000000fff00000 - 0000000100000000 (reserved)
 BIOS-e820: 0000000100000000 - 0000000140000000 (usable)
NX (Execute Disable) protection: active
DMI present.
AMI BIOS detected: BIOS may corrupt low RAM, working around it.
e820 update range: 0000000000000000 - 0000000000010000 (usable) ==> (reserved)
last_pfn = 0x140000 max_arch_pfn = 0x1000000
MTRR default type: uncachable
MTRR fixed ranges enabled:
```
Close

lspci (not shown) shows PCI slot bus addresses and any devices in the slots.

df shows the amount of disk space used for all mounted drives.

Display available disk space

```
Filesystem       Size  Used Avail Use% Mounted on
/dev/sda5        42G   8.1G  34G  20% /
tmpfs            2.0G  12K  2.0G   1% /dev/shm
/dev/sda6        190G  83G  108G  44% /home
/dev/sdb1        373G  1.1G 372G   1% /mnt/Vault
/dev/sdc1        299G  118G 181G  40% /media/Storage
```
Close

mount (not shown) shows all currently mounted file systems and their associated mount points.

iwconfig (not shown) displays information about your wireless connection.

ifconfig displays information about your ethernet connection.

View an ethernet network interface

```
eth0    Link encap:Ethernet  HWaddr 00:21:85:9F:59:79
        inet addr:192.168.0.13  Bcast:192.168.0.255  Mask:255.255.255.0
        inet6 addr: fe80::221:85ff:fe9f:5979/64 Scope:Link
        UP BROADCAST RUNNING MULTICAST  MTU:1500  Metric:1
        RX packets:948025 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 frame:0
        TX packets:664349 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 carrier:0
        collisions:0 txqueuelen:1000
        RX bytes:1288029087 (1.1 GiB)  TX bytes:77141570 (73.5 MiB)
        Interrupt:27 Base address:0x8000

lo      Link encap:Local Loopback
        inet addr:127.0.0.1  Mask:255.0.0.0
        inet6 addr: ::1/128 Scope:Host
        UP LOOPBACK RUNNING  MTU:16436  Metric:1
        RX packets:6239 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 frame:0
        TX packets:6239 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 carrier:0
        collisions:0 txqueuelen:0
        RX bytes:3535631 (3.3 MiB)  TX bytes:3535631 (3.3 MiB)
```
Close

xdpyinfo shows extensive information about your X server configuration (top, next page).

Information about the X-server

```
name of display:   :0.0
version number:    11.0
vendor string:   The X.Org Foundation
vendor release number:   10605000
X.Org version: 1.6.5
maximum request size: 16777212 bytes
motion buffer size: 256
bitmap unit, bit order, padding:   32, LSBFirst, 32
image byte order:    LSBFirst
number of supported pixmap formats:   7
supported pixmap formats:
   depth 1, bits_per_pixel 1, scanline_pad 32
   depth 4, bits_per_pixel 8, scanline_pad 32
   depth 8, bits_per_pixel 8, scanline_pad 32
   depth 15, bits_per_pixel 16, scanline_pad 32
   depth 16, bits_per_pixel 16, scanline_pad 32
   depth 24, bits_per_pixel 32, scanline_pad 32
   depth 32, bits_per_pixel 32, scanline_pad 32
keycode range:   minimum 8, maximum 255
focus:  window 0x1400003, revert to Parent
number of extensions:   31
```
Close

glxinfo shows extensive information about glx and opengl associated with your graphics card.

Information about glx and opengl

```
name of display: :0.0
display: :0  screen: 0
direct rendering: Yes
server glx vendor string: NVIDIA Corporation
server glx version string: 1.4
server glx extensions:
   GLX_EXT_visual_info, GLX_EXT_visual_rating, GLX_SGIX_fbconfig,
   GLX_SGIX_pbuffer, GLX_SGI_video_sync, GLX_SGI_swap_control,
   GLX_EXT_swap_control, GLX_EXT_texture_from_pixmap, GLX_ARB_create_context,
   GLX_ARB_create_context_profile, GLX_ARB_multisample, GLX_NV_float_buffer,
   GLX_ARB_fbconfig_float, GLX_EXT_framebuffer_sRGB
client glx vendor string: NVIDIA Corporation
client glx version string: 1.4
client glx extensions:
   GLX_ARB_get_proc_address, GLX_ARB_multisample, GLX_EXT_visual_info,
   GLX_EXT_visual_rating, GLX_EXT_import_context, GLX_SGI_video_sync,
   GLX_NV_swap_group, GLX_NV_video_out, GLX_SGIX_fbconfig, GLX_SGIX_pbuffer,
   GLX_SGI_swap_control, GLX_EXT_swap_control, GLX_ARB_create_context,
   GLX_ARB_create_context_profile, GLX_NV_float_buffer,
   GLX_ARB_fbconfig_float, GLX_EXT_fbconfig_packed_float,
   GLX_EXT_texture_from_pixmap, GLX_EXT_framebuffer_sRGB,
```
Close

Selecting fsck will run a file system check on all connected devices after reboot. You are prompted to save your current session by closing all programs and saving all data. You can opt out by clicking the No button in the Question window that appears.

Question

Reboot, for partition file system check.
Did you save your current session?

✖ No   ✔ Yes

Warning

Save your current session!
The author assumes no liability!

✔ OK

top (not shown) will show all currently running processes. fdisk will list all attached disk partitions, and is the same as typing fdisk -l in a terminal (top, next column).

View hard drive partitions

```
Disk /dev/sda: 250.1 GB, 250059350016 bytes
255 heads, 63 sectors/track, 30401 cylinders
Units = cylinders of 16065 * 512 = 8225280 bytes
Disk identifier: 0x00000000

   Device Boot    Start      End    Blocks  Id System
/dev/sda1  *       1      261   2096451  82 Linux swap / Solaris
/dev/sda2        262    30401 242099550   5 Extended
/dev/sda5        262     5634  43158591  83 Linux
/dev/sda6       5635    30401 198940896  83 Linux

Disk /dev/sdb: 400.1 GB, 400088457216 bytes
255 heads, 63 sectors/track, 48641 cylinders
Units = cylinders of 16065 * 512 = 8225280 bytes
Disk identifier: 0xa6a1a6a1

   Device Boot    Start     End    Blocks  Id System
/dev/sdb1  *       1     48641  390708801  83 Linux

Disk /dev/sdc: 320.1 GB, 320072933376 bytes
81 heads, 63 sectors/track, 122504 cylinders
Units = cylinders of 5103 * 512 = 2612736 bytes
Disk identifier: 0x44fdfe06

   Device Boot    Start     End    Blocks  Id System
/dev/sdc1         1    122505 312571192+ 83 Linux
```
Close

uname shows the running kernel name.

Current running kernel

```
2.6.33.6-pclos1.pae
```
Close

fstab (not shown) will display the contents of the file /etc/fstab, which is a file executed when you boot.

The fstab file instructs the system which partitions to mount or not mount, what file system is on each partition, and any security options associated with each file system. The fstab file also contains options to run a file system check before mounting a partition.

groups (not shown) displays all group names.

group, shown below, shows the group names, the group number, and any members of that group. The "x" indicates that a password is required to access the group or account.

View groups

```
root:x:0:
bin:x:1:
daemon:x:2:
sys:x:3:
adm:x:4:
tty:x:5:ups
disk:x:6:
lp:x:7:mysql,darrel
mem:x:8:
kmem:x:9:
wheel:x:10:
mail:x:12:
news:x:13:
uucp:x:14:
man:x:15:
floppy:x:19:mysql,darrel
games:x:20:
tape:x:21:
cdrom:x:22:mysql,darrel
utmp:x:24:
shadow:x:25:
```
Close
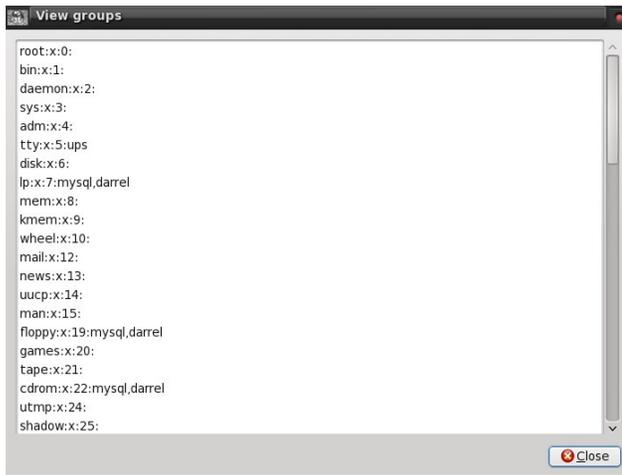
menu_lst (not shown) displays the contents of the file /boot/grub/menu.lst, which is the configuration file for the GRUB boot menu.

sources_list (not shown) displays the contents of the file /etc/apt/sources.list, which is the configuration file for your Synaptic repositories.

whereis will find the location of a given file name.

whereis

Determine the location of a program ...
Depending on the application under Linux systems programs stored in different places.

You have the possibility to determine the location of any program
(eg firefox, bash, grep, ...)

To continue, please enter the program name:

firefox

Cancel   OK

firefox is found under...

/usr/bin/firefox

Close
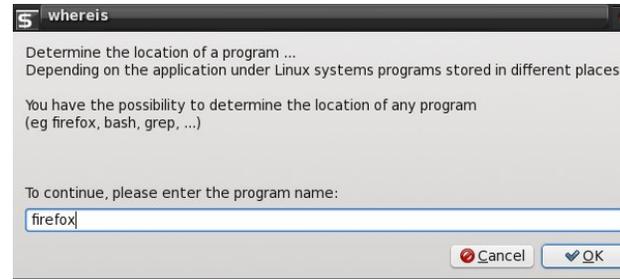
Last, but not least, selecting Credits from the main window will show who is responsible for this fine piece of work.

Information

systeminfo.sh
System information is just a click away
Idea: D.M-Wilhelm aka *Leiche*

kellerleicheorig@aol.com
License: General Public License Version 2

Special thanks to Pardus and PCLinuxOS communities:
==

PCLinuxOS Community:
angel02_de
maik3531
rogaven
Old-Polack, Moderation of **www.PCLinuxOS.com**

==

Pardus Community:
Alaska, Moderation of **www.PardusUser.de**
LinuxFanatic, Founder and community manager of
www.PardusUser.de

==

Special thanks to translators
Dejan Spasić Serbian
musonio Spanish
stephen46710 corrected English
angel02_de German
leiche German

==

For more informations visit
http://kellerleiche.bplaced.net

OK

Press the Cancel button in the main window to exit the program.

Informa...

Exit program

OK

MP3

OGG

My prayer is to boot up with you at the end of the day
We will meet here on line

My prayer is a desktop in blue PCLOS array
You'll have yours I'll have mine

Tonight with the icons aglow
Oh tell me your password I'm longing to know

My prayer we will keep it alive just as long as we have
An external hard drive

Log on now be there
At the end of my prayer

PCLinuxOS
Radically Simple

LXDE: Configure LXPanel

by Andrew Strick (Stricktoo)

Introduction

LXPanel is the default panel for the LXDE desktop environment. Like the rest of LXDE, LXPanel is still young (the currently PCLinuxOS version is 0.5.5, though 0.5.6 was released in late July and will hopefully soon reach the PCLinuxOS repos). Yet, LXPanel delivers the essentials with plenty of tweakability to spare.

Configuring LXPanel

LXPanel can technically be modified by editing the underlying configuration file, located at `~/.config/lxpanel/LXDE/panels`. This method is not advisable. The first line of the config file gives ample warning:

```
# lxpanel «profile» config file.
Manually editing is not recommended.
# Use preference dialog in lxpanel to
adjust config when you can.
```

Instead, LXPanel should be configured using the built-in GUI tools, which are accessed by right-clicking anywhere on the panel and choosing Panel Settings from the context menu.

1. The default LXPanel
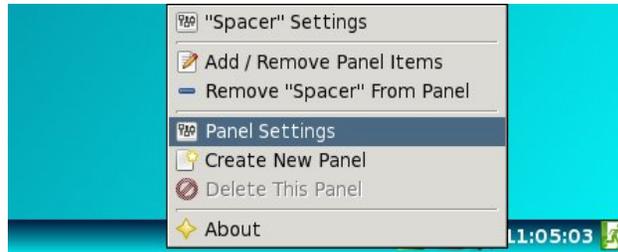
2. Opening the Panel Settings dialog

A window with four sections (Geometry, Appearance, Panel Applets and Advanced) will appear. Each will be explained in turn.
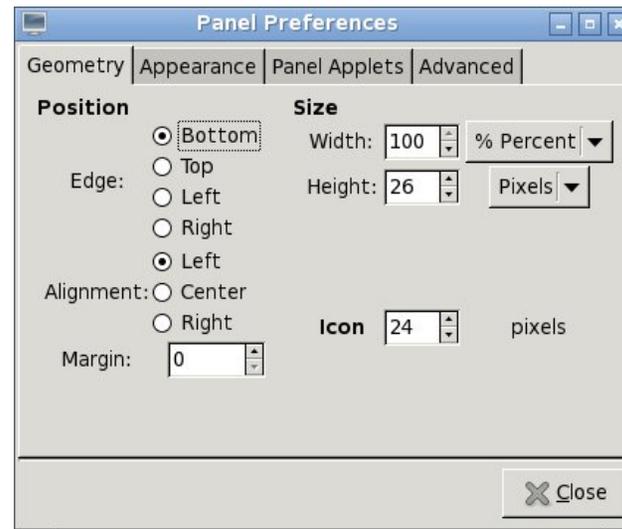
3. The Geometry section

Geometry

The Geometry section governs the panel's "footprint". Options in the Position column control placement of the panel, while Size column settings establish the dimensions of the panel.

Position

Edge: sets the screen edge on which the panel will be displayed.

Alignment: determines where the panel will be located on the edge: right, left or center (if the panel displayed horizontally is on the top or bottom screen edge), or top, bottom or center (if the panel is displayed vertically on the right or left screen edges).

Margin: offsets the panel by the specified number of pixels. A margin of 50 pixels ("50px") for the default panel will create a 50px gap between the left screen edge and the left end of the panel. However Margin has no effect if the panel is center-aligned.

4. The panel, offset from the left screen edge by a 50 pixel margin

Size

Width: defines the width of the panel. The width can be percentage of the screen, a specific pixel size or

dynamic (the panel automatically expands or contracts to be just large enough to contain all of the currently loaded applets).

Height: defines the height of the panel. The minimum is 16px and the maximum is 200px. Items on the panel do not scale to fit the new height of the panel, and under 20px they get cut off.

Icon: defines the size of the icons on the panel. This includes application launchers, the taskbar and the system tray.
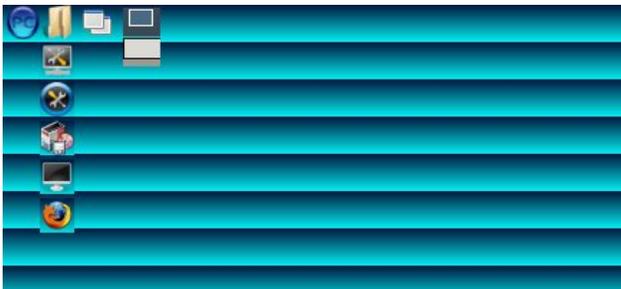
5. The panel at the maximum height (200px). Note how the icons have spread across rows rather than scaling

Appearance

The Appearance tab, funnily enough, is home to the options controlling the panel background.

Background

System theme: the background will be a solid color from the GTK theme (specifically, the window color).
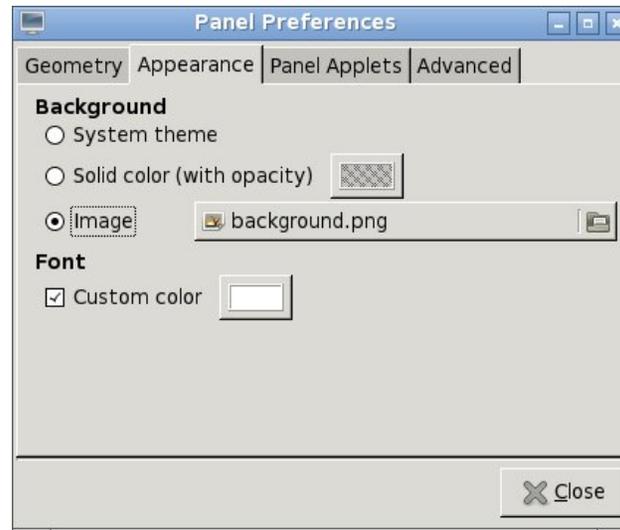
6. The Appearance section

Solid color (with opacity): clicking on the small box launches a dialog box the color panel may be fixed, by defining the Hue, Saturation and Value levels or the Red, Blue and Green levels, or manually entering a hexadecimal color value (note: the value is limited to six digits; LXPanel does not support an alpha channel). The opacity of the panel can be changed by either moving the slider or by manually entering a value between 0 and 100.

Image: set a background pattern for the panel. The default is `usr/share/lxpanel/image/background.png`, but LXPanel will accept any PNG or JPEG image. For best results, the image should be 1px wide and the same height as the panel. When a different image is selected the background updates automatically, but application icons and the system
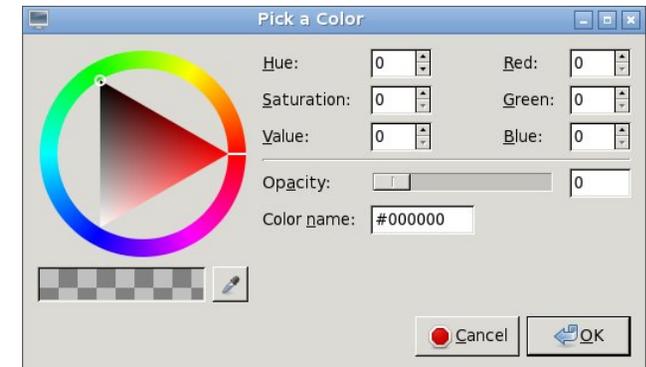
7. The color picking dialog box

tray will still retain the old background, and will only assume the new one when LXPanel is restarted (e.g. at login).

8. The panel with a different background image

Font

Custom Color: changes the color of fonts of panel plugins, such as the clock (the task bar will remain unaffected). The dialog box is identical to that of Solid Color (with opacity). If the box is unchecked, the affected text will assume the color of menu items as specified in the GTK theme.

Panel Applets

A note on terminology. The dialog itself refers to panel components as both "plugins" and "applets". For the sake of simplicity I will refer to them only as "applets".
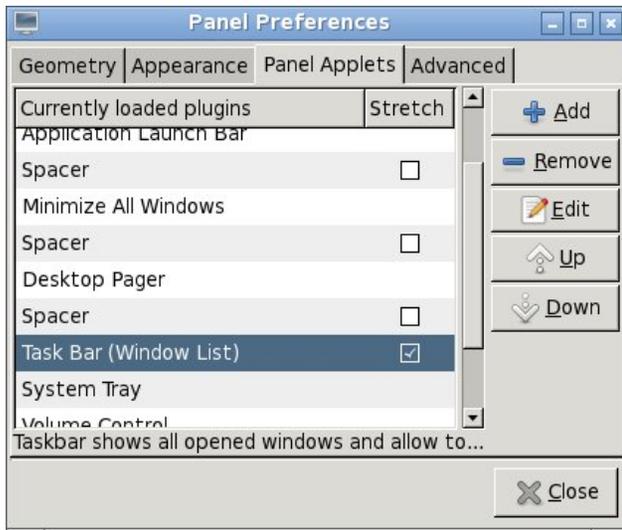
9. The Panel Applets section

The Panel Applets tab controls which applets or plugins are currently displayed on the panel, along with their individual options. On the left, a two-column inset window displays the active applets, in the order they appear on the panel (the top of the left equates to the left of the panel).

Applets that are "streched" (spacers and the taskbar, which have checkboxes in the right-hand column) will take up all available space on the panel. This is not desirable for spacers, because they then waste

space, but it is necessary for the taskbar. If unchecked, the taskbar will then consume the rest of the panel, and running tasks will not shrink so as to fit new tasks.
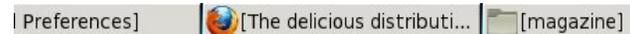
11. The unspaced taskbar consumes the entire right side of the panel

On the right are five buttons used to control the currently displayed applets. (Note: "currently selected applet" refers to the applet selected in the list in the Panel Applets window).

Add: launches a dialog box listing applets that can be added to the panel.

Remove: removes the currently selected applet.

Edit: if the currently selected applet can be configured, the Edit button will launch the corresponding dialog box. If the Edit button is greyed out, that applet does not have any configurable options.

Up: moves the currently selected applet up in the list (and left on the panel).

Down: moves the currently selected applet down in the list (and right on the panel).
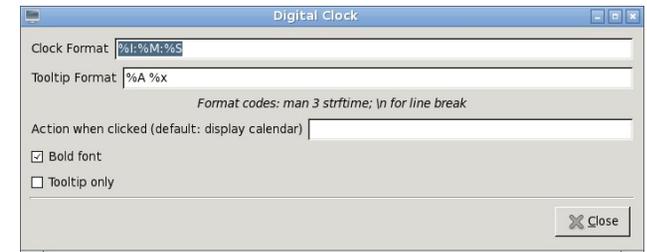
12. Configuration settings for the clock

Advanced

Despite the title, the settings in the Advanced section aren't really all that technical. Rather, it's more of a catch-all for options that did not fit anywhere else.

Set Preferred Applications

File Manager: the file manager that LXPanel will use to open directories. By default it is set to PCManFM, but can be changed to the user's desired file manager, such as Thunar. However this change will not affect an application launcher in the Application Launch Bar.

Terminal Emulator: the terminal emulator used by LXPanel. The default is LXTerminal, but it can be set

10. A diagram of the default applets and placement
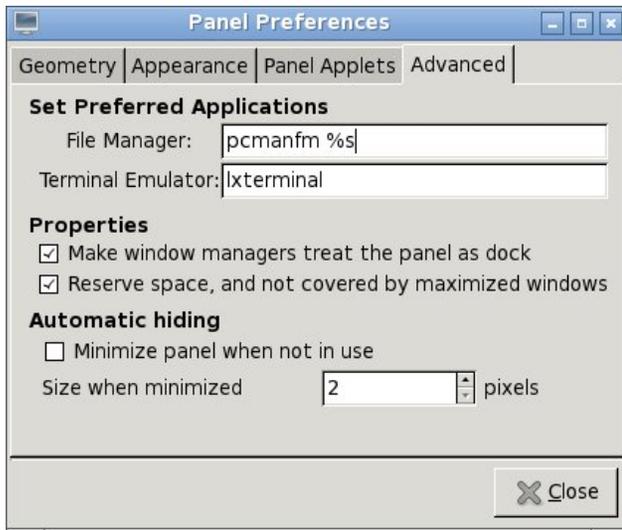
13. The Advanced section

to the user's prefered emulator (e.g. mrxvt). Again, this will not affect an application launcher.

Properties

Make window managers treat the panel as a dock: when checked window managers will see the panel as a dock and not a window. It will not be displayed on a list of open windows (e.g. the Alt+Tab window switcher) or the pager.

Reserve space, not covered by maximized windows: maximized windows will abut the panel instead of covering it.

Automatic Hiding

Minimize panel when not in use: hides the panel unless the mouse hovers over it

Size when minimized: unlike other desktop environments, which completely hide the panel until the mouse touches, say, a certain screen edge, some piece of the panel is always in view, even when hidden.The minimum is 2 pixels, and the maximum is 10.

14. The very small dark-blue line is the visible portion of the (mostly) hidden panel

Conclusion

LXPanel is fairly robust despite being both lightweight and young. Even with this early release there are plenty of goodies and lots of room for customization. As LXDE matures LXPanel will also evolve, and doubtless become even more full-featured.
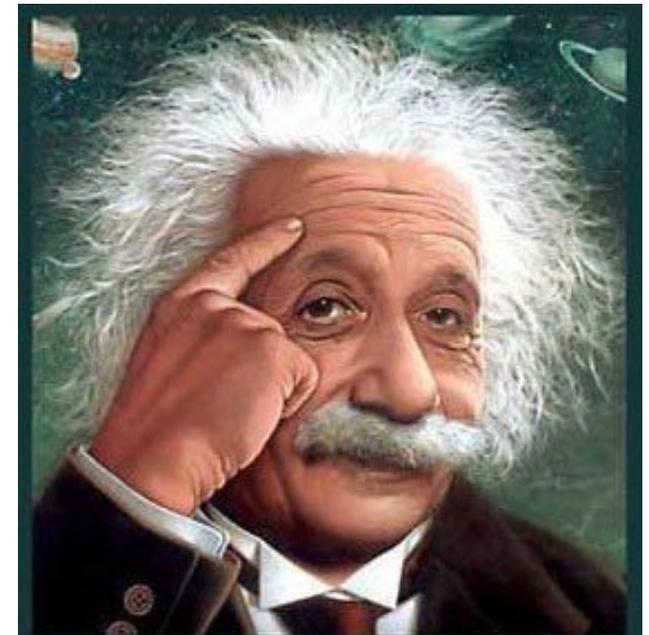
It's easier than
E=mc²
It's elemental
It's light years ahead
It's a wise choice
It's Radically Simple
It's ...

by Peter Kelly (critter)

When you start out with Linux, you will almost certainly encounter some problems. Not that Linux is difficult to use; it isn't. It is different, just as any unfamiliar software is different.

If you came to Linux from Microsoft Windows or even a Mac system, then you may remember your first few weeks when you wanted to hurl your **'stupid'** computer through the window. The problem though wasn't the computer, it was you, or rather your lack of experience with the software that was running on the computer.

Working with Linux is the same. When you first experience a hair-tearing problem, you'll blame Linux. You won't blame the computer this time because it was all working just fine before you put that 'stupid' Linux on it. Sound familiar?

Fortunately, help is at hand and one of the best sources of help is the PCLinuxOS forum. The folks who frequent the forum are some of the friendliest you will find anywhere, and with their help you can usually solve most Linux related problems.

Ask your question and rest assured that nobody will laugh and snigger or think that you are stupid. Everybody on the forum has experienced the same rite of passage.

Before you do start posting, there are a couple of things to do.

1. Register. This isn't compulsory but it does mark you as part of the community and gives members a point of contact in the form of personal messages, should they need to pass information to you. You might also consider introducing yourself in the Welcome Center section.

2. Read any usage rules in the sections and subsections. You may also want to read the stickied post, entitled How To Ask Questions The Smart Way. This post is a very well written guide to help new users get the answers they need in the shortest amount of time possible.

That's it.

When you've scratched your head over your problem for long enough and Google isn't being any help, then head over to the forum. I've provided a link above.

Most of the questions asked by new users have already been asked by other new users and duly answered, so the first thing to do is search.

Click the home button on the menu bar. This will make sure that you are not in any sub-section, so that your search will be in the whole of the forum.

Next, in the search box at the top right, (the one with the little magnifying glass next to it), type in your query or try using the search button on the menu bar - 2nd over from the home button. This will give you more options, such as in which sub-section to search.

What you type in here is taken literally, so if you type in something like "screen looks wrong" then that is what will be searched for. If nobody else has typed that, then your results will be disappointing. Instead, your query should be more specific and include the name of the hardware or software component that is causing you difficulty. "Nvidia 8500GT set at wrong resolution" would yield better results. I'll show you later how to gather this relevant information.

Your search is on the phrase you type into the box within quotation marks, and the results are sorted with the most relevant result at the top.

If the entry has the word 'solved' in the title, then this would be worth looking at. In any case, read the first few results until you find what it is that you are looking for. If you don't find it, then it should be pretty obvious that you are heading down a blind alley.

Try rephrasing the search term and see if that brings better results. Often, the results from the first search will give you a clue as to what to add or remove from the search term.

When you can find no satisfactory answer from previous posts, then it is time to ask the members.

As you are looking for help, try to post your question in the most relevant sub-section of the help section. Members with expertise of those particular subjects visit them regularly. If you can't decide in which sub-section to post, have a look in each of them to see if the types of questions being asked are similar to the problem that you are experiencing.

If you do post your question in what turns out to be the wrong place, then often a moderator will move it for you.

The title of your post is as critical as the search term. You'll want to phrase it to try to catch the attention of somebody who has experience in the area of your problem and to reflect the type of problem that you are having.

If you get no replies, don't think that you are being ignored. Have another look at the title of your post. Does it read as a request for help? Does it correctly show the essence of the problem? Try re-phrasing it slightly. Remember that the person that may be be most suited to help you may be in a completely different time zone and may be at work or asleep.

The main body of the text should describe your problem accurately. If you have received an error message, then repeat its content as closely as you can remember it. "I got an error that said something about..." is not very helpful. What was the something?

Try to include as much information as possible. The people that you are asking to help you don't have the benefit of seeing the problem on your machine.

There is a lot of information that you can provide that will enable more people to help you more quickly, such as your hardware specifications and the Desktop Environment. (Is it KDE4, LXDE or another?) These facts can be displayed in your signature if you have registered.

Example:

Motherboard   ASUS M2A-VM Phoenix BIOS**
Hard Drives   2 x Maxtor STM350032 500GB SATA
Memory   4 x 1GB DIMM 800 MHz
Processor   AMD Athlon 64 X2 4800+
Video   nVidia GeForce 8500 GT
Sound   Creative Soundblaster CA0106
PCLinuxOS 2010 KDE 4.4.5

The above is sufficient to give people an idea of the hardware that you are working on.

Once you have made your post, you may be asked for other information that baffles you. This is how to get that information. Don't try and remember too much of this, but use it as a reference when you need the information.

Software problems
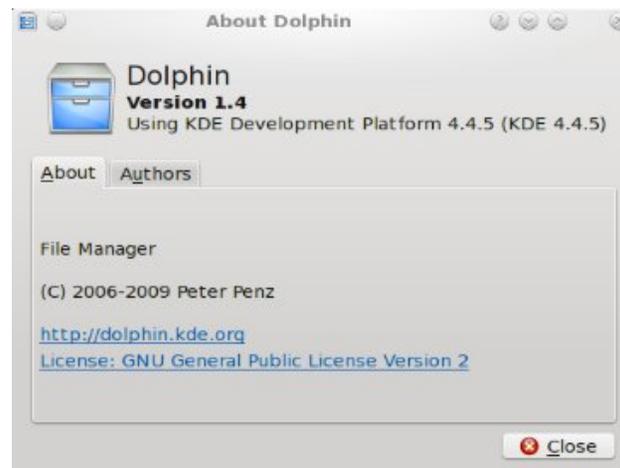
If your problem is software related, and I don't mean the operating system, but an application that is not doing what you want.

Apart from the description of what you experienced here, the most important information you can give is the software version number. To get this, click on the Help button and then on the option that usually reads 'About Application'. Of course *application*will actually be the name of the application.

If this fails, then open Synaptic, the package manager, which is what you use to upgrade your system or to add and remove software. There is usually a short-cut icon to this on your panel or in the drop down menu that appears when you click the menu button on the extreme left of the panel. If you can't find it, then hold down the Alt key and press the F2 key (if you are running KDE 4; other desktop environments may use a different keyboard shortcut).   In the box that appears, start typing the name synaptic, then click on the icon when it appears below.
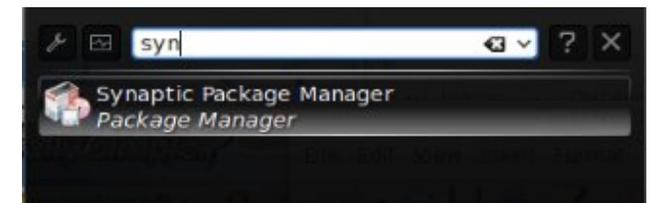
With the application opened, select Search from the menu, and type in the name of the application that you want the version number of. Click on 'Description and Name' and from the displayed list select 'name'. Click search.
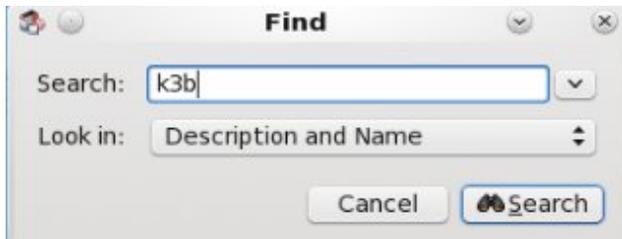
In the results, anything with the little square on the left, coloured in green, is installed on your system. The installed version is the number that you need.

S	Package	Component	Installed Version
■	k3b	kde4	2.0.80-1pclos2010
☐	k3b-devel	kde4	

If the application is to be executed from the command line, (and if you don't understand this, you can safely skip this bit) then follow the command name with a space, then enter

-v
--version
or **--help**

will usually get the information that you need. Please don't do anything on the command line as the root (administrative user) unless asked to so by a more experienced user.

As all applications are different, that is about all the information that you can supply in the first instance. When somebody responds, you may be asked for more or different information. If you don't understand what they want, then ask politely for clarification. There are many people on the forum from many different backgrounds, and your language may not be their first language.

Hardware problems

Hardware problems are rarely actual hardware problems, but difficulties in interfacing the hardware with the operating system. This used to be a real deal breaker for Linux, but nowadays most hardware works just fine, and the situation is improving rapidly.

There is a lot of hardware available, so identifying it as accurately as possible is vital. The drivers required for last year's model may be alien to this year's model. You may have a real hardware problem, such as a hard drive nearing the end of its life, and accurately supplying the make and model number may trigger a response from somebody who has experienced this.

Where do you find this information?

The first and easiest step is to look at it. If it is an external piece of hardware, such as a printer or scanner, then pick it up and have a look around it. Write down anything that might be relevant. You may even be able to use this information to get a solution from the manufacturers website. If the hardware is internal, then look at the documentation that came with it or look on the case or ask the store that sold it to you.

PCLinuxOS has its very own built-in hardware detective. You'll find it in the PCLinuxOS Control Center, otherwise known as PCC, by clicking on this icon on the panel

or in the menu under more applications then configuration then configure your computer. (Not configure your desktop, that's something different). If you still can't find it, press Alt + F2 and type in pcc in the run box. That should find it for you. If it doesn't, then type in harddrake.

You will be asked to supply the root (administrative) password. You will have a lot of control in here and could damage your installation. But as we are only querying, and not changing things, you should be fine. Most common system settings can be altered here, so by all means, have a look around but don't touch.

Click on hardware then click on browse and configure hardware. This will interrogate your system and provide a lot of information about all manner of things, probably some that you didn't even realise you had. Note that if you had to type harddrake above, then you will already be at this screen. PCC is a sort of graphical menu for lots of things with the word drake in them.

If you want information about, say a hard drive, then click the triangle next to 'Hard Disk' in the left hand panel, then click on one of the drives. The right hand panel will show lots of information about that drive
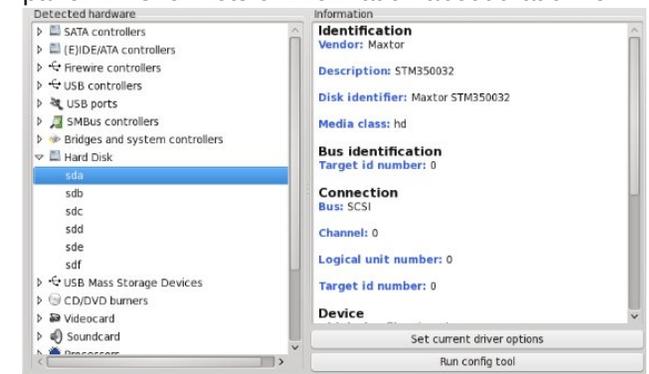
including make and model and what partitions it contains. You may need to use the scroll bar on the right to see all of the information.

There are dozens of utilities available in Linux for getting information about your hardware, but many of them are command line based. This usually scares the bejeebers out of new users. So it is fortunate that there is a graphical solution to this available to PCLinuxOS users called systeminfo.

It was written by forum member and magazine contributor Leiche. Systeminfo will provide most of the information that you, or anybody, will ever need. If not installed by default in your version of PCLinuxOS, you can install it using Synaptic. Some system critical information will require the administrative password to be able to view it, but you will not be allowed to change anything. This makes it ideal for new users who need to provide this type of information.

If that is not enough information, then there are also a couple of tools named hardinfo and hwinfo which you will probably have to install using Synaptic. The first one, hardinfo, is graphical and can be used in the same manner as any of the other tools that we have discussed. However hwinfo is command line only and produces vast amounts of information about your system (no personal details). If you have to use this, then I would suggest sending the information to who ever needs it as a file, maybe in a personal message.

To do this is simple, but you need to open a terminal which you will usually find in more applications then terminals. Select a basic terminal, **not** a root terminal.

Which terminal you choose doesn't matter, but avoid Yakuake, for now, if it is offered. Once you have installed hwinfo and have a terminal open, you are good to go.

You will have in front of you an almost blank screen with the cursor blinking at you. This is known as the prompt.

Type in the following line exactly. You don't have to understand it yet.

hwinfo > ~/hwinfo.txt

That will place a plain text file named hwinfo.txt into your home directory. Open your file manager, Dolphin, Konqueror or whatever, and you should see the file. Open it in a text editor such as kwrite and you will see the output. If you understand all of it, then you have a very bright future in Linux.

You can use the above method to capture the output of any command by simply substituting the name of the command from hwinfo to the new command, then changing the name of the captured output file from hwinfo.txt to something more appropriate. Some commands will not run as an ordinary user and you will need to gain administrative permissions.

In this case do the following.

Open a terminal, and when you see the prompt, type cd and press enter. This will place you automatically in your home directory.

Type su and press enter. You will be prompted for the administrative password. Enter it. Nothing will appear on the screen as you type. This is normal.

Press enter and the $ in the prompt will change to a #. Probably the whole prompt will turn red to remind you that you now have administrative powers, and that you should be extremely careful about what you type. When you have administrative powers, as now, remember this golden rule.

If you are unsure that what you are about to do is what you should be doing: **_Don't do it_**!

When you have doubts like these while in a terminal emulator such as konsole, with administrative power, use the mouse and the left button to drag - select the text that you are about to execute, or even the entire screen of text that is visible, and press and hold both the control key and the shift key. Then press c to copy the text. Copy this into a reply to your helper (control -v achieves this), followed by an "Is this correct?" plea. Then wait for a reply.

Only when you are both happy that this is what you want, should you press return. Time doesn't matter. As long as you are logged in and the computer is on, your terminal session will wait for your confirmation, even if this is a matter of days!

Examine it carefully for errors and only press enter when you are satisfied that it is correct.

Hold down the control key and press d. This will leave the terminal open but return you to the safer normal user role.

There are many more tools we could discuss, and you may be asked to use some of them by respondents to your questions. Take guidance from them to ensure that you supply the correct information.

Other information

You may well be asked for information that the hardware interrogating utilities cannot provide. Usually, this is the content of system configuration files, and you may not have permission as a normal user to access them. You may also not know how to find them.

One of the files often asked for is your grub boot menu file, which is a file named menu.lst and is kept in the /boot/grub directory or folder. In linux-speak it is known as /boot/grub/menu.lst. When this file gets corrupted, you may not be able to boot into the system normally.

To get this information into a reply, do the following:

(Note: This procedure is the same as for capturing the output of a command but is so important that I will repeat it here).

Open a terminal, and when you see the prompt, type cd and press enter. This will place you automatically in your home directory.

Type su and press enter. You will be prompted for the administrative password. Enter it. Nothing will appear on the screen as you type. This is normal.

Press enter and the $ in the prompt will change to a #. Probably the whole prompt will turn red to remind you that you now have administrative powers, and that you should be extremely careful about what you type.

Type this in exactly as shown below:

cat /boot/grub/menu.lst > ./menu.lst.txt

Examine it carefully for errors, don't miss the period before the slash in the second part, and when you are satisfied that it is correct press enter. You can do no damage with this line of text - the worst that can happen is that it doesn't work.

Hold down the control key and press d. This will leave the terminal open but return you to the safer normal user role.

You now have a plain text file in your home directory named menu.lst.txt that you can copy and paste into your reply. This is also a useful backup should the original file go bad.

Some files will allow you to do this without using the su command, but this method will work for all.

For any other file, you can repeat the above just changing /boot/grub/menu.lst for the required file, and ./menu.lst.txt for whatever you want your copy to be named.

Here's a few of the most commonly requested files that you can use to copy and paste into your information queries:

~/.bashrc
/boot/grub/menu.lst
/etc/fstab
/etc/mtab
/etc/hosts
/etc/sudoers
/etc/modprobe.preload

/etc/printcap
/etc/X11/xorg.conf
/etc/sysconfig/network

And a few of the most common utilities that you will be asked to provide output from:

alias
env
df
du
fdisk -l
free
hostname
ifconfig
ls -l ~
ping {ip address}
ps aux
top
uname -a

These are very brief lists, but are some of the items that you may be asked to supply information from/about.

Responding to a reply

When you get a response to a cry for help, read the reply very carefully.

1. Have they understood your problem?

2. Are they requesting more information or clarity over the problem?

3. Have they suggested a course of action that you don't fully understand?

4. Has the problem been resolved (fully or partially)?

If the answer to any of these questions is anything but number 4, then go back through my suggestions and try to get a resolution.

If the answer is that you have a satisfactory solution, please thank the people that have helped you and mark the thread as (solved) to assist people looking for an answer to a similar problem. You mark your thread as solved by going back to your original post and editing the topic title to include the word "solved" in it (or added to it). This helps others who may come along later with a similar problem find the solution for their problem.

Conclusion

These steps should, hopefully, assist you in getting an answer to most of your queries.

Please bear in mind, though, that not every problem has an easy or obvious solution.

One of PCLinuxos' most respected and capable members, Old-Polack, has a scanner that just will not work under Linux due to the lack of Linux driver support by the manufacturers. He has found a work-around to this through a version of Windows running as a 'virtual machine'.

If he can't get it to work, then just look for a kludge like this or replace the hardware. There's no sense

in banging your head against the wall. Fortunately, situations like this are becoming steadily rarer.

Whatever your experience is in seeking help on the forums, I hope that you can remain patient and polite and, if you are helped, thank the people involved.

If you like the forum, don't forget to visit the Sandbox. Here you can meet other members and discuss all manner of things, Linux related or not.

The general idea here is to have fun and relax.

Go enjoy!

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by coffeetime, September 29, 2010, running e17.

OpenOffice 3.2, Part 5: Draw

by Meemaw

We can do word processing documents and spreadsheets now. We've even gotten proficient at presentations... well, at least I have, and I hope you have as well. The next part of OpenOffice to explore is Draw. OpenOffice.org's website says:

"Draw anything from a quick sketch to a complex plan. **Draw** *gives you the tools to communicate with graphics and diagrams. Manipulate objects, rotate in two or three dimensions; use sophisticated rendering to create photorealistic images. Smart connectors make short work of flowcharts, organisation charts, network diagrams, etc."*

As before, I'm no expert, but this summary can get you started.

Notice when you open Draw, the appearance is similar to Writer, and also to Impress because it has a pane at left showing your pages. You can right click in the pane to add pages, and even add a page between two existing pages, just as you can do with Impress. The top toolbar is similar to Writer, with Open, Save, Print and so on, being in the same places. The toolbar below it is different depending on what you are doing. The text formatting items are right there IF you have chosen to add text to your drawing. When you are adding graphics, the toolbar has Line and Fill so you can alter the border and color of your graphic. The toolbar that is at the bottom is where all your drawing tools are located. From there you can insert rectangles, circles, lines, arrows, speech boxes (called 'callouts') and various other shapes. With the tools there, you can do some interesting things.

Notice that to the right of many of these tools, you can see a down arrow... meaning there are many variations of that particular tool. If you click on it you get a pop-up showing all the designs included.
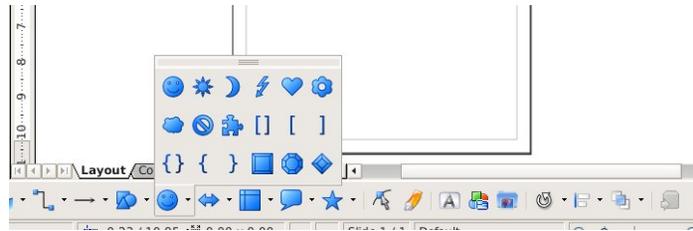
This set is called **Symbol Shapes**. You can put any shape from this box, or any other. The box on its left is **Basic Shapes**. The box to its right is **Arrows** of all sizes and designs, and then moving to the right, we have shapes for **Flowcharts** followed by **Callouts** and **Stars**.

At the right end of the toolbar, you will see a few tools that help you manipulate your drawing. For example, you can use any of the tools from the **Align** box below to center your object or align two objects just the way you want them. To its left is the **Effects** tool, and at the right of the Align tool is the **Arrange** tool and the **Extrusion** tool.
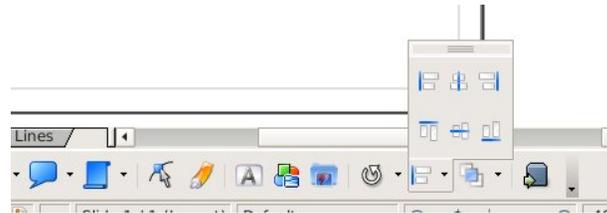
Opening a blank drawing, you can add a rectangle or anything else you desire. The default is to make the boundary of each item black and fill it with blue, but if you go to the second row of tools at the top of your window you can change the fill to another color and the boundary (line) to something else as well. You can also set the fill to 'none', which will take all the color out of your object and leave just the outline. You could leave the color and change the line to invisible, or make it thicker or dotted. The dropdown shown changes the style of the line and the one to the right of it sets the line thickness. My outline is black as you can see, but the next dropdown allows you to change the line color or make it invisible.
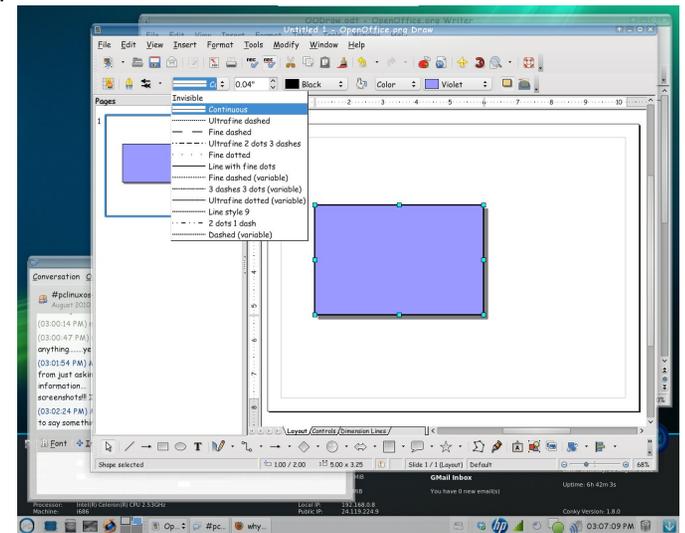
The dropdowns for fill are as follows:

The one that says **Color** (above) gives you the option to fill your object with **Color**, a **Gradient**,

Hatching, a **Bitmap**, or for the fill to be invisible.

The one that says Violet (above) gives you the option different choices for the fill type you selected. In the examples below (left to right), the fill is the color violet, a blue to white gradient, blue crosshatches, and a rose bitmap.

Color	Gradient	Hatching	Bitmap
Violet	Blue to White Gradient	Blue Crossed 0 Degrees	Roses
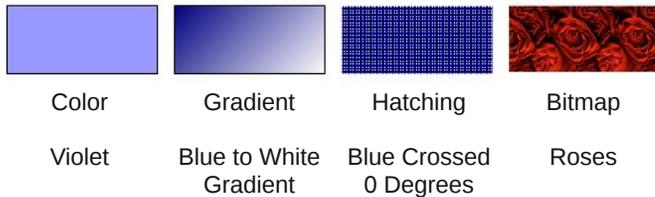
Sometimes you want to use a certain effect on your object. I wanted to make sign that had a rose background and a rectangle in front that was partially transparent. The first rectangle I placed was filled with the rose bitmap, and the second one I added was filled with a light grey. Choosing one of the objects, then going to **'Format' > 'Area'** gives you a window that contains several tabs (Area, Shadow, Transparency, Colors, Gradients, Hatching and Bitmaps.) Notice the last four are the same as in the dropdown we looked at earlier.... of course this is the alternate way to edit your object. It is an even more detailed editing box. The Transparency tab is what you use to set the fill from visible to almost completely transparent. I set the roses at 25% and the grey box at 45% (remember, the higher number makes it more transparent.). Now you can see the grey box (and I could put text on it), but you can see the roses through it.

On most versions of OODraw, the tool next to the fill color is Shadow. You can put a drop shadow on most of your objects. On the screenshot below, you will see a shadow to the right and below the object on the left. In the **Format > Area** box you can select the Shadow tab and set the direction, color, transparency and extent of your shadow. In the example, the shadow is down and right, color is a shade of grey, no transparency, and it is about 0.10" from the original object.
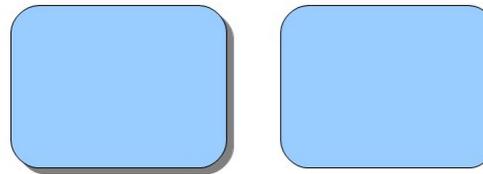
Notice the yellow dot on some of your shapes? They will allow you to make changes to those shapes. You can draw a rectangle with rounded corners and if you grab the dot and move it, you can change the amount of curve on the corners far enough to even have an ellipse instead of a rectangle!!! On the shot below, the shape is a ring, but the 'grabber' can make it thin or thick.
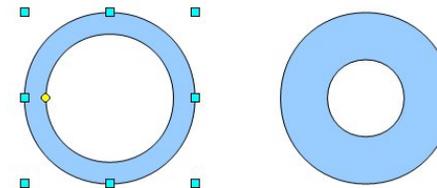
If you draw a star, the grabber will let you adjust the points on the star so they are shallow or deep. On the stars below I started with the 8-point star on the left. The star on the right was made by grabbing the yellow dot and moving it toward the center of the star, which pulls the 'inside corners' of the points inward.
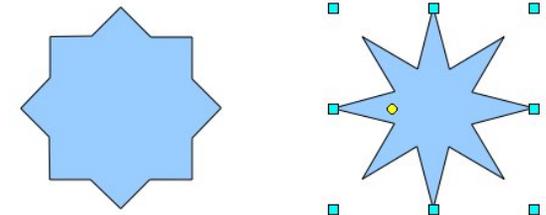
I haven't covered some of the other tools: From extreme left to right on the bottom toolbar is the **Selection Tool** (you will do you resizing and moving with this), **Line** (only straight lines), **Arrow** (only the one arrow), **Rectangle** (rectangles with no variation), **Ellipse** (ellipses and circles with no variation) and the **Text Tool**, which you will use for all text. After that, the special groups of tools start with the Line Tool (straight lines and freehand lines are here), **Connector Tool** (for constructing flowcharts or connecting two gluepoints) and **Arrow Tool** (with an assortment of arrows including a dimension tool, which draws a double headed arrow and gives you a measurement as well.)

Another tool that I should mention is the **3D** tool in the top toolbar (it may not show by default, but you can choose it by editing your toolbar.) In

the screenshot I have circled the 3D tool. With a little messing around you can convert some of your two dimensional objects to 3D ones. The tools can change the depth of your object, how round you make the edges and even the direction of the light.

As with other drawing programs, you can layer objects to make other designs. I made a gradient background, with two rounded rectangles. The bottom rectangle was a border and shadow, and the the top one was a semi-transparent gray rectangle with no border. Then I added Dobie on top of the other layers:
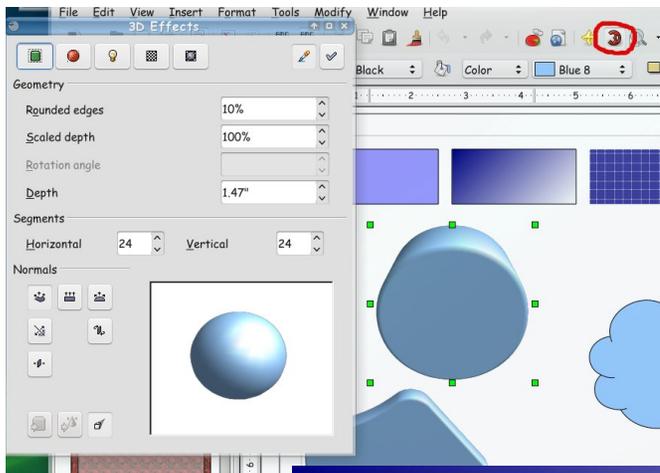
I experimented with another tool I found called an **Image Map**. From OpenOffice Draw's Help section:

"An ImageMap is a reference-sensitive graphic or text frame. You can click on defined areas of the graphic or text frame to go to a target (URL), which is linked with the area. The reference areas, along with the linked URLs and corresponding text displayed when resting the mouse pointer on these areas, are defined in the ImageMap Editor. The Image Map Editor allows you to attach URLs to specific areas, called hotspots, on a graphic or a group of graphics. An image map is a group of one or more hotspots."

You can insert a graphic, then go to **Edit> Image Map**. You will get another window with your graphic in it. You can then draw a simple shape over your graphic (I used an ellipse), and assign a web address to it. You can even add text that will show when you pass your mouse over it, and when you click on it, you are taken to the assigned web address.

Since my graphic was Dobie, you should know which website I used and my text shows at right!!!

Make sure you click the "Apply" checkmark before you close the editing window.

It can be saved in html format to be used on a website.

I haven't covered everything, but I hope you know more now than you did before. It was fun exploring OO Draw! With a little practice, I'm sure you can make something wonderful! Enjoy!

Answers to Mark Szorady's Double Take:
(1) Bowl different; (2) Bat smaller; (3) Hair shorter in back; (4) Teeth missing; (5) Forehead crack different; (6) "The" changed to "my"; (7) Sleeve button missing

**In last months Forum Foibles
I featured names of users
All of them were really neat
And most of them were doozers**

**The topic was a popular one
It was read through and through
Since then more folks have come forth
So here is User Names Part 2**

ms_meme

I had run across the Village of Osmar while researching my name, They have a winery there, and I would love to get some to try, and really just to have the labels. One of these days, when I have money. Anyone know the winning lottery numbers? My mother had traced it (the name) to Belgrade Serbia, but all records before that were lost (wars and such). It is also possible that it is of German decent. Interesting, but irrelevant. I am just another American Mutt. **pcosmar**

I'm nearly 39 years old and still skateboard. Mostly longboards, downhill carving and flatland 'pumping'. Anyway the email address "oldmanskates at gmail.com" shortened to "omskates". I'm glad to be here with you guys. **omskates**

"malspa"
M.A.L.'s Pa.
I'm M.A.L.'s dad, and that's the most important thing I am. **malspa**

Schtufbox is the name I make music under, can't remember why it popped into my head. I also go by the names Asharin and Zacharin in online games. Asharin because it sounded apt for a half elf in neverwinter nights...and it just stuck, Zacharin..well it rhymes with Asharin. **schtufbox**

My nickname is my first name Robert shortened to Rob, then add birthday month and day. So **rob0917**.

Well the Pendragon part goes back to CB radio. Here in the UK, CB radio was illegal for a long time. Even today, the type used in the US still is. So back in the late 70 early 80's, if you used a CB, you were breaking the law. Strangely, you could buy one, own one, but using it would get you in trouble. Because of this, no one used there real names or talked in plain English. It was all codes and such. Most of the code came from the US. So as a 17 year old in his old Ford Escort, whippy aerials and all I had to come up with a name for myself, a handle. Due to my Cornish heritage, I came up with **Pendragon!**

My nick is not related to any linux distro... **slax**

I couldn't come up with anything that sounded classy or very original and everyone I have worked with has either called me a beast or animal because of my work pace so I picked one of those. Besides, I really dig Animal from the muppets.. **animal**

My first and last name scrunched up. Plus it sounds like something out of a Louis L'Amour book. **Joble**

It is my Amateur Radio call sign. Amateur Radio license is issued by the Federal Communications Commission. The call signs issued by the FCC are in alphabetical order. I will use my call sign as an example. There is K, KA, KB, KC and so on. That is for the first part of the call sign. Now for the second part of the call sign, YHD. There is AAA, AAB, AAC, ABA, ABC and so on. Now for the region code, the "9" in my call sign shows which region I am in. The United States is divided into 9 different regions. **ka9yhd**

meme was the name of a make believe childhood friend. I still like make believe stuff. And I suppose we all do a bit of made up stuff here.

When I joined the forum I needed a user name
Something not too wild something not too tame
Wanted you to see me and never ever miss me
That's why I made my user name **ms_meme**

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Testimonial: My Sidekick

by longtom

Some of you might have been aware that a new, young member has joined us. It's my sidekick – no, not Robin – longtom jr.

Junior is 12 years old, my youngest son and has been interested in technical matters from a very early age. If you imagined you would walk through our house with a screwdriver in your hand without being noticed by Junior you are – wrong. He will attach himself to you and he will stay there, your shadow. The difference to a shadow, though, is the soundtrack:

"Where are you going? What are you doing? Why are you doing this? How does that work? Why does it work that way and not different? Can I do this as well? Why can a four year old not install lights to the ceiling or work an electric planer or do this wonderful stuff with a table saw or ….?"

You get the drift. He is just there, relentless. So you either get worked up or you know all the answers. I tell you what, I don't know all the answers but he keeps me on my toes – which is wonderful.

Since February last year I am dabbling with Linux. Needless to say, from my very first borked Ubuntu install he was at my side, through thick and thin, for better and for worse – chattering away, asking questions I haven't even thought of, never mind that I could answer. So we learnt, so we went on, trying distros, reinstalling, hacking code we barely understood, copying and pasting bash we hoped would improve – well – something. And all the time he was there, stealing with his eyes and asking and chattering away.

He also followed what was happening in the forums I was attending at the time. However, I soon found that some forums were not quite suitable for 11 or 12 year old boys, even though they were, in effect, technical forums. The tone and way people would treat each other was not something I would have liked being associated with Linux. I also didn't want him to think these are the kind of people his dad likes to hang around with. Well, I don't, but in most of these places you have to take the good with the bad, and anything really bad gets excused by some or other "human rights" or a gross misinterpretation of the freedom of speech. So I didn't do much forum stuff with him present at all.

Since February this year I am with PCLinuxOS (oh – just stop the groaning, will ya) and checking out the forums and loving it. Junior could sit next to me while I interacted with it, could sit next to me while being on the IRC channels and enjoy (and giggle away at) all that was going on there.

So some days ago, I opened his very first forum account at the PCLinuxOS Forum. It was an event of some magnitude, I might tell you, which stirred quite a bit of excitement. He won't be here too often since the life of a 12 year boy in our quarters means a lot of non-PC activity and his computer time available for after our surfing is regulated, but he'll be around.

The reason I am waffling on about all this is to thank all members of the community who gave him such a great welcome. He loves the attention and has even made his first steps in asking for help, even though his English is not as fluent. He doesn't have admin rights yet, but he is learning python and bash script when he feels like it, and it'll take probably only a little time until he tells me how this all works. I can't wait for it; he'll be a great teacher! (I hope …)

So, thank you all for the welcome of our possibly youngest member, and thank you for this environment where I can let him roam around with impunity.

Oh – and should you need some help with scripting – don't ask me.

DeaDBeeF: A Lightweight Linux Audio Player

by Daniel Meiß-Wilhelm (Leiche)

Another audio player? Yes indeed, but a lightweight player with support for many audio file types.

I use DeaDBeeF on PCLinuxOS-LXDE, and it's a great add-on for it. It is available in the PCLinuxOS repository, and is only 2,637 KB in size. Seamless and light, it allows me to configure my own hotkeys, which works great. DeaDBeeF is built using Gtk+ 2.0 libraries, and requires no KDE or Gnome dependencies to be installed. It also supports many features you expect to find in a modern audio player, including ID3 tags (various versions), a drag-and-drop interface, playback control from the command line, gapless playback, and radio and podcast support. You can go to the DeaDBeeF web site to view a full list of features.

I can even set the volume louder with the use of a hotkey, defined as "Super" (a.k.a. the "Windows" key"), and the "+" or "plus" key. To set the hotkeys, open Global Hotkeys under the Edit > Preferences menu. Click on the Add button, double click on the entry, and select the action you want. To set the key combination, click on the section to highlight it, and double click under the "Key combination" column. Now, simply press the keystroke combination you want to assign to that function. Congratulations, you just set your first hotkey for DeaDBeeF.

Also included is a built-in equalizer, allowing you to tailor the sound output to your tastes.

When you run DeaDBeeF, it will place an icon in your system tray. It will display the current song title when you hover the mouse over the icon. You can also control the volume level by scrolling your mouse wheel while your cursor is hovered over the icon in the system tray.

The DeaDBeeF player will also support automatic gain of playback volume, as well as sporting an OSD mode. You can find these items, as well as quite a few other options, under the Preferences menu.

What else can i say? Nothing, only that I like it, and that Zip-Player supports DeaDBeeF Player. Try it out. I'm sure you will like it, too.

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Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Texstar, September 15, 2010, running KDE 4.

LXDE: Add Wallpapers, Panel Decorations

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

In today's computer world, it might seem that changing desktop wallpaper might be a rather simple task. And, it is. But did you know that there are multiple ways to manage your wallpapers and panel decorations on PCLinuxOS-LXDE? Depending on how you choose to set it up, wallpapers and panel decorations can remain exclusive to each user, or they can be set up so that all users have access.

Wallpaper Method One: All Users Access

First, you need to open up PCManFM in the superuser mode, and move to /usr/share/lxde/wallpapers.

Next, open up another instance of PCManFM as a regular user. Move to the directory that contains the wallpaper(s) you wish to add.

Drag and drop the wallpaper(s) you wish to add into the /usr/share/lxde/wallpapers directory.

Right click on the file(s) you just added, and make sure the permissions are properly set. Both the owner and group should be set to "root." Permissions for the owner should be read and write. For group and other users, the permissions should be set to read.

Close both copies of PCManFM.

Now, under the "Appearance" tab of LXDE Control Center, select "Set Wallpaper." Alternatively, you can

right click on the desktop, and select "Configure Desktop."

Your new wallpaper will now appear as a choice in the selection window. Choose it, and close out of the LXDE Control Center.

Advantage: All users will have your new wallpaper as a choice for their desktop.

Disadvantage: If you add too many graphics, you may start to crowd your root partition, which is typically much smaller than your /home partition. Requires root privileges to add/remove wallpaper graphics.

Wallpaper Method Two: Local User Only

In your /home directory or partition, there is a hidden directory called .local. Beneath that is another directory, named share. Create a directory in the $HOME/.local/share directory called wallpapers, if it doesn't already exist.

Now, copy your selected wallpapers to the $HOME/.local/share/wallpapers directory.

Go to the LXDE Control Center's "Set Wallpaper" button (which, by the way, is the same as choosing PCManFM's Edit » Preferences menu, then the Desktop tab). Click on the folder icon to the right of the selection box, then traverse to the $HOME/.local/share/wallpapers directory. Select your wallpaper, and click OK.

Alternatively, you can create an "Images" folder in your /home directory, and within it, create folders named "wallpapers" and "panel." Actually, you can create any folder you want in your /home directory, and use the steps above to display your wallpaper on your desktop. The advantage to the "Images" folder is that it helps keep you, and all of your wallpapers and panel graphics, organized.

Advantages: doesn't take up unnecessary space in your root directory (if your /home directory is on a separate partition). Wallpapers can be added by the end user, without the need for root privileges.

Disadvantages: wallpapers stored using this method are not available to other users of the same computer.

Panel Decorations

You can also perform similar actions with your panel. Just as easily as you can apply custom wallpaper to your desktop, you can also dress up your panel with custom graphics.
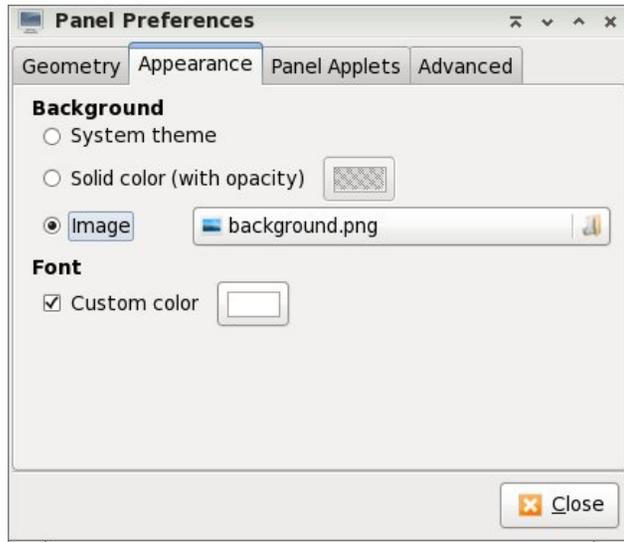
Right click on an empty spot on your panel, and select "Panel Settings" from the context menu that appears. Go to the "Appearance" tab, and you can select the background appearance of your panel. You can select from using the system theme, a solid color with user-selectable levels of opacity, and an image.

In a default installation of PCLinuxOS-LXDE, many of the graphics used to display the panel are stored in /usr/share/lxpanel/images. But just as we were able to change to another location when we changed our wallpaper, we can also change the location where lxpanel looks for the background images it uses. It's exactly the same procedure.

Conclusion

As you can see, it's very easy to customize the appearance of your LXDE desktop. You can be as creative as you like. It is, after all, Linux. Your Linux. Your desktop. Your choice.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by nmark, September 25, 2010, running KDE 4.

Firefox Add-ons: Rain or Shine, Forecastfox Tells All

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Mankind has forever been intrigued with the weather. Crops are planted according to the weather. Plant at the wrong time, and you risk wiping out an entire crop. Outdoor events are planned with regard to the weather. We get dressed in the morning, according to the weather. The weather permeates so many aspects of our lives, and has done so since the dawn of civilization.

Even into the 21st Century, weather continues to be a focal point in our lives. Enter **Forecastfox Weather 2.0**, a Firefox add-on that provides not only the current weather conditions, but also a five day forecast of expected weather conditions. Also, Forecastfox Weather 2.0 will provide a live, on-demand animated weather radar for your registered location. Forecastfox Weather will display the weather information not only for the United States, but also for international locations, as well.

A little history

Originally, I had planned on writing about Forecastbar Enhanced 0.9. It contained all of the features of Forecastfox Weather, plus a lot of extras, including the live, on-demand animated radar image. When I first went to the add-on's download page, you can imagine my horror when it prominently stated that Forecastbar Enhanced 0.9 was no longer being developed.

Forecastfox Weather originally debuted in December, 2004, and was available for Firefox versions 0.10 through 1.0+. It was originally named

Weatherfox. After 38 more subsequent releases, we now are up to Forecastfox Weather 2.0.1. To date, more than 21,000,000 users have downloaded the vastly popular add-on.

After a little further investigation, I discovered that Aaron Sarna, the developer who added all the extra features and whistles and bells to Forecastfox Weather to create Forecastbar Enhanced 0.9, has joined the Forecastfox Weather development team. As a result, Forecastfox Weather 2.0.1 contains all of those enhancements that were formerly in Forecastbar Enhanced 0.9.

What you get

When you first install Forecastfox Weather 2.0, it will add its display to your menu bar (at least it did on my computer, and I cannot be certain if that is the default position, or because that's where I had the previous version of Forecastbar Enhanced appear). You can move it with the gray icon that depicts a 4-way arrow (far left side of the data displayed). You can choose to place it in your status bar, on the main toolbar, on your tab bar, or on your bookmarks bar. Basically, you should be able to place it wherever find it most convenient to use.

By hovering your mouse over the green radar icon will cause a popup window to be displayed, complete with an animated radar image of your registered area. The radar image, along with all of the other weather data and forecasts, is supplied by AccuWeather.com. Simply clicking the left mouse
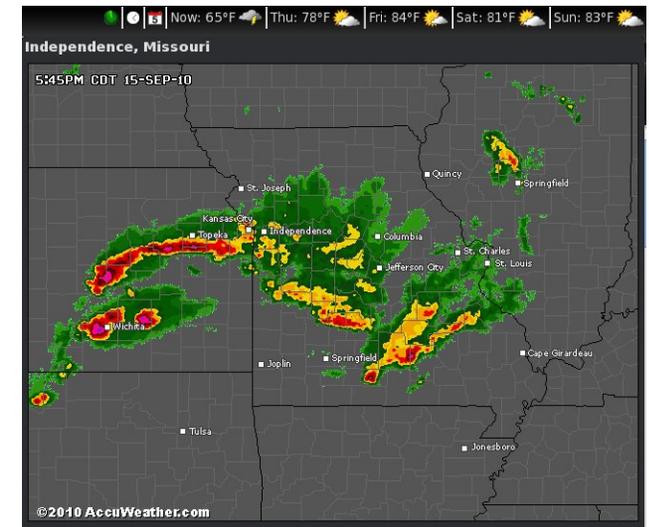
button over any part of the Forecastfox Weather add-on will open the AccuWeather.com page for your area, providing more in-depth weather information.

By clicking your right mouse button over the Forecastfox Weather add-on, you will get the context menu that provides you several options. From there, you can give feedback to the Forecastfox developers for future improvements, visit the Forecastfox home page, visit the AccuWeather.com home pate, or recommend the add-on to your friends.
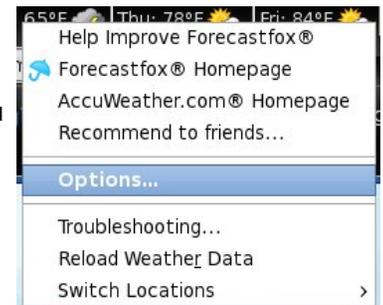
You can also access information on how to troubleshoot any problems you may be having in getting Forecastfox set up. The "Reload Weather Data" is useful if you have lost your network connection for an extended period of time, or if you want to update the weather information earlier than the routine weather updates you have set. You can also switch locations, since Forecastfox allows you to monitor the weather at multiple locations. This is a very handy feature if you are going on vacation, or if you have family living in locations other than your own.

When you select "Options" from the context menu, a new tab will open in Firefox, and allows you to make various settings related to how Forecastfox displays the various weather data. You can choose the units of measure to use, select from several different icon sets to use when displaying your weather data, whether or not to display severe weather alerts, the size of the radar or satellite image to display (or none at all), the number of days to include in the forecast, and many other settings that dictate what information to display, as well as how to display it.

Conclusion

For me, Forecastfox Weather is one of those "must have" Firefox add-ons. I can't even begin to tell you how many times I look at it during the course of the day. There is also a version available for the Google Chromium browser, although it lacks many of the features of the Firefox version. But if you like to keep track of current weather conditions, as well as keep your eye on the weather forecast, you will fall in love with Forecastfox Weather.

Reading Barnes and Noble eBooks on PCLinuxOS

by Patrick G Horneker

There have always been applications for creating and viewing e-Books (mostly in PDF and various word processing formats). In recent years, a new generation of devices specifically for reading e-Books entered the consumer market.

Among the most popular devices are the Amazon Kindle and the Barnes and Noble Nook (the latter now available at Best Buy), the subject of this article.

Yes, the Nook can be used with PCLinuxOS as a USB mass storage device. What I am talking about is Barnes and Noble's software version of the Nook.

In addition to the Wi-Fi and 3G enabled device, Barnes and Noble has free downloadable applications for Mac OS-X and Windows, as well as the popular iPhone, iPad, iTouch, Android, and Blackberry. (Yes, Android is a Linux variant designed for smart phones and other hand held devices such as PanDigital's Novel, now available at Kohl's.)

You're probably wondering, where is the Linux version? The bad news is there is no official Linux version. The good news is the Windows version actually runs on PCLinuxOS!

Prerequisites

Since the Nook is a Windows application, you will need to make sure you have Wine installed. (For those of you who do not know, wine is a compatibility layer that allows Windows applications to run on Linux.)

If you do not have Wine installed, open Synaptic, then click on Search, type in wine, click on OK. wine should appear in the package list. Double click on "wine" to select that package and any of its dependencies for installation. Click on Apply to install wine on your PCLinuxOS system.

Also, you will need to be connected to the Internet to install and use this application as the eBooks are downloaded from the servers at Barnes and Noble.

Now, download the Nook application

When you surf to the Barnes and Noble homepage (http://www.barnesandnoble.com), you will notice an advertisement for the Nook prominently displayed at the right side of the home page.

You can click on that to get to the applications page. For PCLinuxOS, you will need to click on *"NOOK for PC"*.
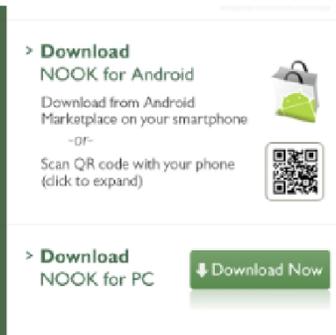
*   Near the bottom corner of the page you should see the link to download the installation file. This is a Windows executable file, and when prompted by Firefox or whatever browser you are using, you should save the file to the Downloads directory rather than opening it with File Roller or some other archiver that supports Windows executables.

*   If you are using KDE, open *Dolphin* and then select the *Downloads* folder. The Windows
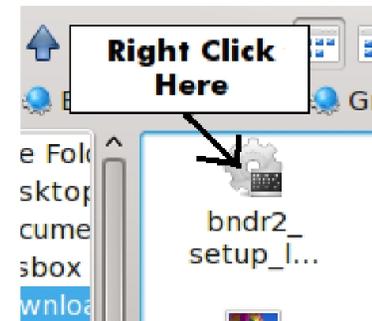
executable should be named bndr2_setup_latest. Right click on the executable, then select *Open with...*, then select *Wine Windows Program Loader* to start the installation of Nook.

If you are not using KDE, open a terminal, then type:

**cd Downloads
wine bndr2_setup_latest.exe**

to start the installation of Nook. Follow the instructions given in the installation wizard. Nook will install into **~/.wine/drive_c/Program Files/Barnes & Noble/BNDesktopReader** and icons will be created for the KDE and GNOME desktops. When the installation is finished, Nook will automatically start (unless you uncheck the box that tells the wizard to start Nook) and you should see something like this:

You can also start Nook for PC by selecting *Wine -> Programs -> Barnes & Noble -> Nook for PC -> Nook for PC*.

This initially appears as you will need to sign in to download and access your books. If you do not have an account at Barnes and Noble, you may create a user account from this screen.

You can get to this screen at any time by clicking on *Settings*, then selecting *Account Settings*.

Note: Though the application is called *Nook for PC*, it really should be called *Nook for PCLinuxOS* as this actually works here. :-)

Of course, we should take a look at the *User Guide* to Nook for PC.
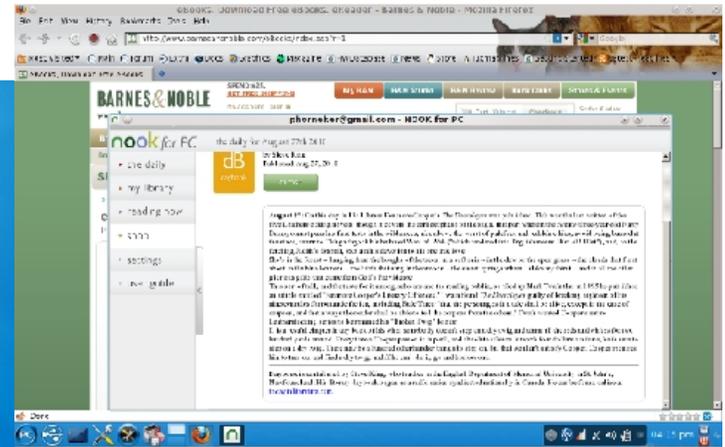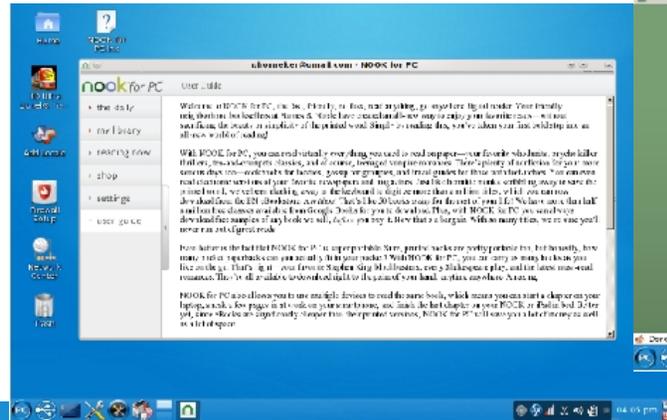
The *My Library* tab is where you can see what is in your library. e-Books are downloaded to

~/.wine/drive_c/Program Files/Barnes & Noble/BNDesktopReader

For each item in the list, you can choose to read a sample, download the e-Book, move the book to your archive, or show details about the book.

Of course, to get these e-Books, you would have to go to barnesandnoble.com to get these books. Clicking on *Shop* will open Firefox to the page where e-Books can be purchased for about $9.95 each for most titles (top right).
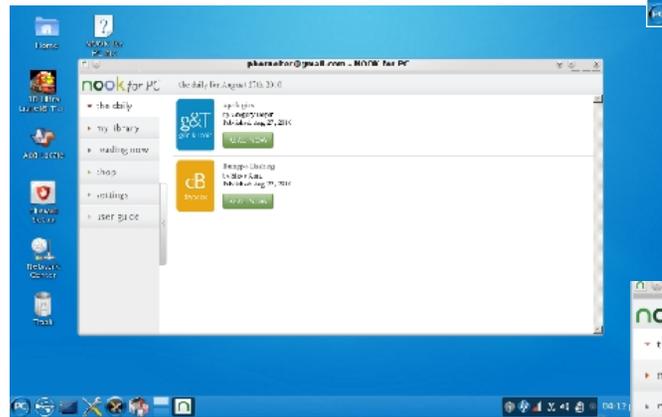
Once you have logged into the Barnes and Noble servers, this is what should appear on the screen. What you will find here are the most recently published e-books. Clicking on any of the *Read Now* buttons will show you a sample of the contents of the e-Book you can purchase. For example, clicking on the *Read Now* button under *Bumppo Bashing* by Steven King will give you this: ---->

If you have downloaded a copy of the e-Book, the *Download* button will now say *Remove Local Copy*. Clicking here will remove the local copy of the book from your hard drive.

To log out of the servers, you will need to select *Settings -> Account Settings* and click on *Logout* to close the connection to the Barnes and Noble servers. After that you may close the application as with any other window (usually with Alt-F4 or by clicking on the close button).

About the e-Books

I went to the e-Bookstore, logged into my account from Firefox, and then discovered that the books are downloadable in the standard ePub format, so any tools you may have that support the ePub format can also be used to read e-Books purchased from Barnes and Noble.

This means you can install and use Lucidor to read e-Books, and Sigil to edit them. Both of these applications are installable from Synaptic. Open Synpatic, click on Search, type *epub* and press Enter to find these packages, then select the packages and click on Apply to install.

Lucidor can be launched from the *Office* menu.

This is Dracula as rendered by Lucidor. If Nook does not work out, you can always use download your e-Books from any bookstore website such as

Barnes and Noble that you can download in ePub format.
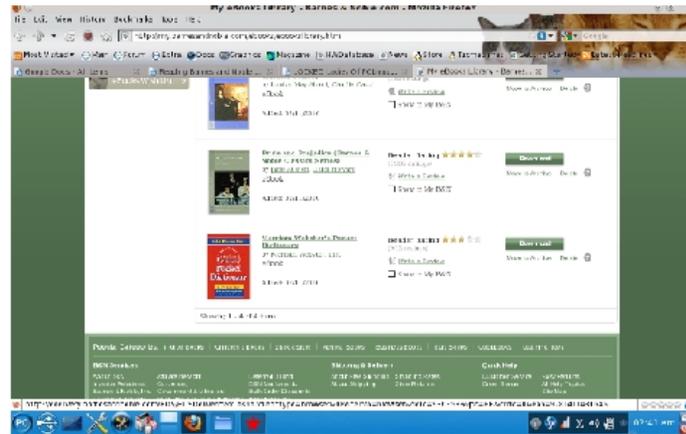
In this example, I am logged into the Barnes and Noble e-Book store where I can download the *Merriam Webster's Pocket Dictionary* in ePub format. Unlike some places such as iTunes, once you have purchased titles, you can download the

same file as many times as you need to. This is very useful if you have to restore e-Books for a replacement reader, or if you purchased a new e-book reader, or if you wish to read e-Books from your PCLinuxOS machine. Think of this as a restore from backup plan for e-Books.
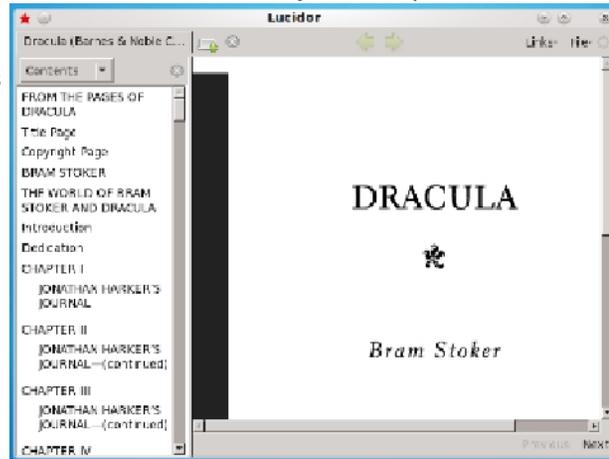
Since this is Firefox, e-Books are downloaded to the Downloads directory. On my laptop, I have e-Books stored in Documents/Lucidor directory. Once I download the books, I transfer the books from the Downloads directory to the Documents/Lucidor directory before opening them with Lucidor using any file manager or a command line from a terminal window. (Lucidor uses the Documents/Lucidor directory by default.)

Sigil can be launched from the File Tools menu. This is intended for publication of your own e-Books, you can use this to open any book downloaded from the store to see how the book was structured and created. (Sigil will be used when I do an article on creating and editing ePub files.)

Other e-Book Readers

As I mentioned earlier, the Nook, Amazon Kindle and Sony's line of e-Readers are USB mass storage devices to PCLinuxOS. To store these e-Books, the gadgets use internal flash memory (or depending on the device, SD/MMC and Memory Stick cards as well.)This means you can transfer ePub, PDF, and ASCII text files to these devices for reading the same way you would with a memory card reader or a flash drive.

PanDigital has a e-Book reader called the PanDigital Novel (appropriately named) that uses the Barnes and Noble servers for its e-Books. This is an Android device (read that as a commercial product running an embedded Linux kernel and running applications written in Java) that is a much better alternative to the iPad. The device operates off a Wi-Fi connection, with no provision for a 3G or 4G connection.

The PanDigital Novel is available from any Kohl's department store, or you can order online here (Kohls.com). Regular price is $259.99, but more often than not, it can be purchased at a sale price. I mention Kohl's as it is the place to get this device without having to order it online.

Amazon Kindle can be purchased locally at Target.

The Nook can be purchased locally at Best Buy, as well as Barnes and Noble.

Viewing e-Books with Firefox

In addition to the gadgets and the E-Book readers, you can also view e-Books (in the ePub format) with Firefox. Select *Tools -> Add-Ons* from the Firefox menu. Then the Add-ons dialog box appears, type *epub* in the search box.

Here, the EPUBreader extension is highlighted as it is the first item to appear in the search results. Click

on Add to Firefox... to install the ePub extension. After installation, you will be prompted to restart Firefox for the extension to be active.
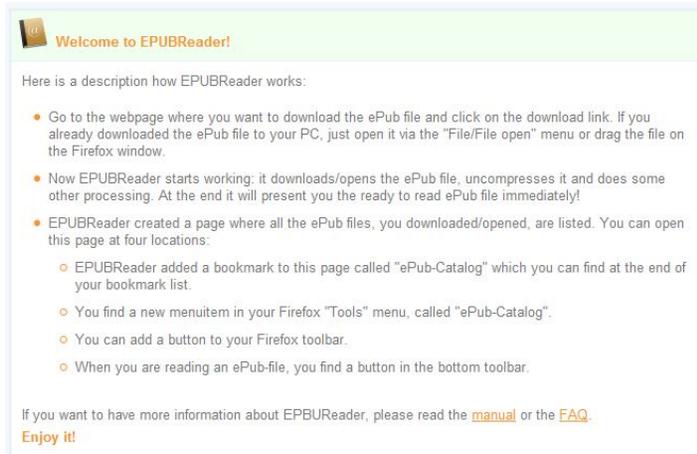
After you restart Firefox, the above page should appear in Firefox in a new tab. You may close the tab to get rid of the message. Firefox is now ready to display e-Books in the ePub format.

If you have this extension active, downloading books from the Barnes and Noble account will cause the books to be displayed in Firefox rather than downloaded to your hard drive. To download e-Books with EPUBreader active, hold down the Shift key and click on Download to download the file to the Downloads directory.

The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine

Created with Scribus 1.3.7
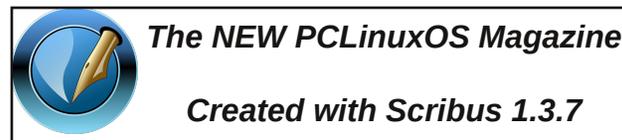
Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Crow, September 25, 2010, running e17.

Forum Foibles: Linux Tarot Cards

PCLinuxOS TAROT

Are you brave
Are you bold
Come and have
Your fortune told

II HIGH PRIESTESS

THE HIGH PRIESTESS controls that inner energizing force of intuition, revelation and inspiration. She is passive and wise. Use her force to quietly observe and watch before pressing *ENTER*.

V HIEROPHANT

THE HIEROPHANT gives us the traditions of the Linux culture. He teaches us the ancient mysteries of the console and watches over the code. He urges us to put it into our daily routine and warns us not to misplace those spaces.

0 THE FOOL

THE FOOL is innocent and eager. We may seem foolish as we start our journey as a Linux user with our pet Tux. Some think we are lunatics. But our hearts are open and our minds are carefree as we begin our adventure.

III THE EMPRESS

THE EMPRESS gives us that warm fuzzy feeling we get when we look into the Panel Tool Box and see the abundance of widgets. She is like a generous mother offering us tasty cashews and applets.

VI THE LOVERS

THE LOVERS card is all about choices. As new Linux users we must decide if we want to sit on the Window sill or soar to new heights. Do we want the stagnation of the old or the excitement and challenge of the new.

I THE MAGICIAN

THE MAGICIAN keeps the tools of the trade. He is the Root Master ready to instruct us in the ways of Linux. The Magician is very powerful and can bend us to his will. Tread carefully in his presence and be in awe of his potential. Call upon him with forethought and caution.

IV THE EMPEROR

THE EMPEROR rules the physical world. He uses his will and logic to build a Linux Empire. His creative energy sustains us. He exerts a benign and strong influence over all who come to his realm. He is a STAR, a father figure and wielder of authority.

VII THE CHARIOT

THE CHARIOT is pulled by Dobie the bull. We are off with confidence to all the applications. We love to configure desktops. We are pulled this way and that. Enjoy this triumphant journey but take time to master the elements.

VIII STRENGTH

STRENGTH gives us patience and tolerance. After the wild ride in the Chariot, the Fool is confronted with conflict and new challenges. Mistakes are made. Strength is needed to keep going despite setbacks.

XI JUSTICE

JUSTICE is not about punishment. It is about adjustment. Do what is necessary to have a great Linux experience. An OS should fit your needs and not the other way around. Make it accountable to you.

XIV TEMPERANCE

TEMPERANCE tells us to go with the flow. Find the right mix to get the most out of your Linux system. Try some new applications. Balance your computer use with fun and business. Look for enlightenment.

IX THE HERMIT

THE HERMIT advises us to step away and calmly reflect. The HERMIT looks for deeper truths. Seek out a guide or teacher who can give you advice or look for those who might need your insight and direction.

XII HANGED MAN

THE HANGED MAN indicates you might be hung up on some of the commands. You know what you want to do but can't get to the root of the problem. Calm down, be still, quit struggling. You'll get the hang of it.

XV THE DEVIL

THE DEVIL reminds you that you might be ignorant about your OS. Get out the MANual and look for the light. The konsole may scare you like the devil but get rid of that negative attitude. You will make errors but hold fast to that high vision of yourself.

X WHEEL of FORTUNE

THE WHEEL of FORTUNE means that Linux is on the move. Roll with the good times. Feel the power. There may be ups and downs but you are in control. Don't forget to do that updating. The choice is yours.

XIII DEATH

DEATH brings transition. You reformatted the wrong partition. You lost data. You forgot your password. You are definitely due for a change. Death is an "in your face" reminder that something new needs to happen.

XVI THE TOWER

THE TOWER can mean sudden disaster. Maybe a crumb in the keyboard, dust in the tower or a crinkle in a cord. The disruption can be a learning experience if time is taken to understand the why. Put things back together and change a few routines.

XVII THE STAR

THE STAR brings harmony and balance and an emotional Linux high. Now is the time to inspire others. Show your positive side and your star qualities. Volunteer your time in the forum.

XX JUDGEMENT

JUDGMENT encourages us to look for new opportunities. Assess accomplishments and work toward improving Linux skills. Try a remaster. Help with packaging. Contribute to your favorite distro.

XXI THE WORLD

MISS WORLD

THE WORLD heralds fulfillment and triumph. It also signifies new Linux friendships. By joining the PCLinuxOS forum you have met users from around the world who have the same goals and ambitions. Well done!

XVIII THE MOON

THE MOON stimulates our imagination. You may feel a bit lost and bewildered or have an attack of the plasmoids. Time to get mental clarity. Read a few tuts and stop your whining.

MP3

AGE of LINUXIUS

When the daemon is in the seventh shell
And grub aligns with root
Then peace will guide the bios and man will steer the boot

OGG

XIX THE SUN

THE SUN gives you total confidence. With PCLinuxOS you can achieve all you want. It gives you energy and vitality. Boot it up. Feel the potential. Set an example and share your success with others.

This is the dawning of the Age of Linuxius
The Age of Linuxius Linuxius Linuxius

Logging in you'll find so easing GUI so very pleasing
A bit of bashing and some swapping but no more distro hopping
Mystic mounting and formatting no virus for combatting
Linuxius Linuxius

Let PCLOS shine Let PCLOS shine PCLOS shine

Programming Languages A to Z: Pascal

by Gary L. Ratliff Sr. (eronstuc)

The language Pascal was developed by Niklaus Wirth. He has already been mentioned as developing other languages, Modula 2 and Oberon 2. Were this not enough, he was also instrumental in developing the language ALGOL. However, there was quite a bit of difficulty in developing compilers for it, so it remained a language to formally state the algorithms for solving various computer problems, instead of a language used to develop software.

However, I remember that a system for ALGOL was available back when I was using a Kaypro and CP/M. Here it was possible to purchase, for very low fees, libraries from Sound Potential and other companies. Also, using NZ and the Z systems, it was possible to run the applications from a system in which the files were compressed on the hard drive and only expanded when the file was run. While serving as moderator on the CP/M group of the Intelec Network, one of the great debates was that Borland denied writing a Turbo Pascal for the CP/M operating system. So I loaded my CP/M CDROM from Walnut Creek and performed a search on ALGOL and Pascal, which verified that there was a version or two of ALGOL available for this system, and yes, there were many many systems developed for CP/M using Turbo Pascal.

Now Wirth was writing the specifications for the language Pascal at about the same time I was taking my first computer language course in Fortran at Delta State. The language was introduced to the computer world the same year I got married and earned my BBA degree, and the language was introduced by Wirth in 1971. It was easy to learn and was used mainly as a device to teach students to program. The back cover of one of the text books I used in researching this article: Introduction to Pascal and Structured Design, Second Edition by Nell Dale and Chip Weems © 1987 D. C. Heath and Company states that: "Over a quarter of a million students have been introduced to problem solving and good programming techniques with the first edition of Pascal."

Wirth received the A. M. Turing Award in 1984 "for developing a sequence of innovative computer languages: EULER, ALGOL-W, MODULA, and PASCAL." The Turing award has been awarded annually since 1966, and is the "highest distinction in Computer Science the Nobel Prize in computing." Since 2007 this award has been accompanied by $250,000 cash provided by cosponsors Intel and Google. Other persons who have received this award who have also been mentioned in this series were John Backus, who won in 1977 for Fortran, and Ken Iverson, who won in 1979 for APL.

Getting a Compiler and Other Tools

The PCLinuxOS repository has several tools which will enable you to compile and develop software in the Pascal language. Also, many of the tutorials mentioned will have links to enable you to download compilers for Pascal and other development tools for this language. Many of these will be specifically for Windows. However, my stance on the matter is that there is a good chance that your computer also has Windows installed (or you have access to a computer running Windows), so why not go ahead and use this part of your computer to develop your programming skills and knowledge.

The tools will be obtained using the synaptic package manager. As always, you will become root to perform the install task.

The systems we will be installing from the repositories are: FPC (the Free Pascal Compiler), Lazarus (a graphic IDE for developing Free Pascal code), and the gtk editor scite. This editor is useful for its ability to correctly indent and color code the syntax of a Pascal program as it is entered. It is not only this language for which this editor provides these services, but also a vast assortment of many computer languages and shell programming languages.

Forum member and magazine staff member Patrick Horneker adds that if you have a version of DOS running inside VirtualBox or QEMU, you can use that as well. On his laptop, he has an old copy of Turbo Pascal that he obtained when he took a course in Pascal in his college days. Free Pascal is somewhat compatible with Turbo Pascal, if you do not implement any libraries with Turbo Pascal's UNIT concept, nor use any low level extensions such as the DOS specific interrupt functions. Also, Borland's Delphi is a Turbo Pascal variant designed for database development. Free Pascal is somewhat compatible with Delphi. Patrick knows this, since his first on the job experience with programming was with Turbo Pascal.

Tutorials: We have Tutorials

There are a vast number of tutorials available, and they may be found by entering Pascal Tutorial into the search window of your Firefox browser. So we will just present an array of snapshots taken from the web pages of some of the best tutorials found:

this is a zip file and will download to your Download folder in My Documents under Windows. This is not where the install.exe program will want to use it. So first, move it to the root directory and let the install create the TP directory. It would be run by opening a command prompt in Windows, and then changing to the root directory and then to TP.
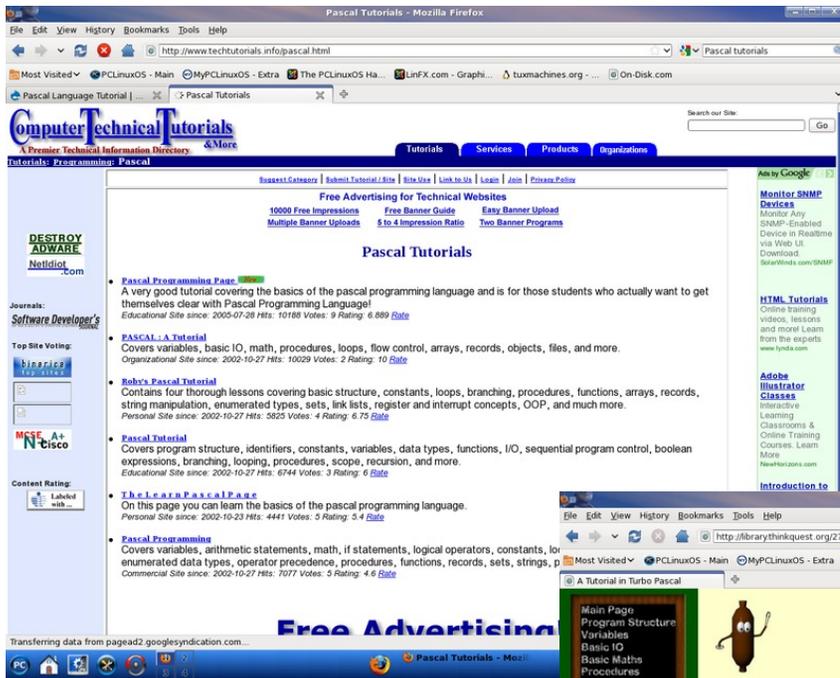
The above page shows links to several tutorials, which aid one in programming with the pascal language. The version of the language which is regarded as the king of the hill is the Borland Turbo Pascal compiler. This is the one which the Free Pascal Compiler tries to closely adhere to.

This page as stated is devoted to teaching you programming using Borland Turbo Pascal. It offers to download the most recent version, which Borland has made freeware. However,

This page (above) shows that it covers Free Pascal, Turbo Pascal and Pascalite. I was able to download this but later attempts to further study this site only produced the Error 404 for site not found.

for the folks at freepascal.org. The book I was using was written before some rather large changes were made. So as long as I did not try to use text files, these would compile, or they would show me my typos and I would try again. But even with the program typed in perfectly, the program would compile but report an error 102 when run. So I emailed my problem to michael@freepascal.org and had a reply with the remedy within hours.

The files used as text first required an Assign and then also needed to be closed before the program finished. Here is an example (below right), which was saved in the scite editor to also show the indentation and color coding of the Pascal syntax.

So now, with these corrections supplied by Michael Van Canneyt, the program compiled and the data was stored in the file outmpg for reading, via the command less outmpg. This indicated that the folks at the free pascal site are very helpful. Also, by visiting their site, you can download full documentation for the Free Pascal compiler in pdf format. Simply click on the documentation link.

Some folks think that Pascal has become obsolete. However, Michael assured me in his email that he uses it to create games, databases and other major projects, and that it is alive and well. It has also added some object orientated features. I hope this will encourage you to try to add Pascal programming to your arsenal.

This has been found to be an excellent tutorial. It assumes no prior knowledge of programming and is very easy to follow.

As you can plainly see, there is an abundance of sources for you to learn the language. Now we have the Free Pascal Compiler on our system. The following is an example of code from the text I used, along with some praise
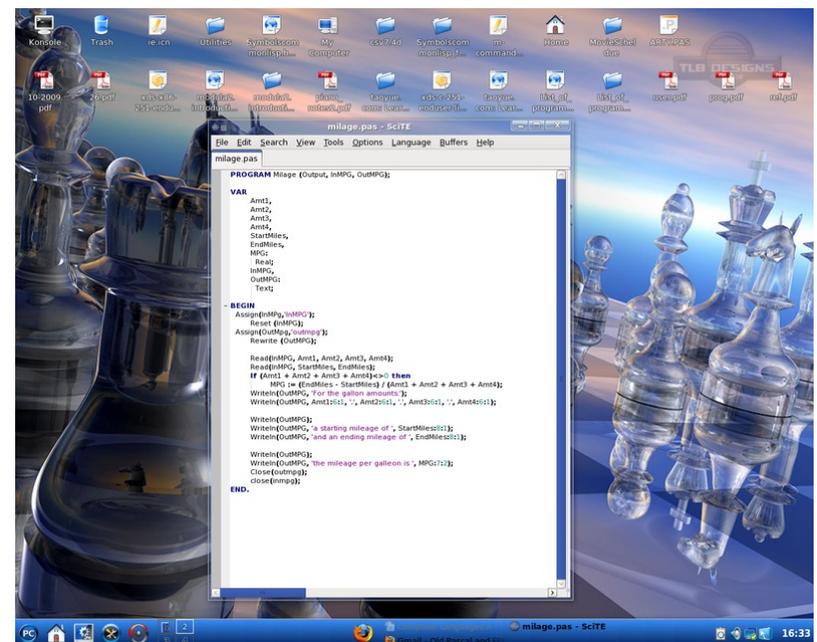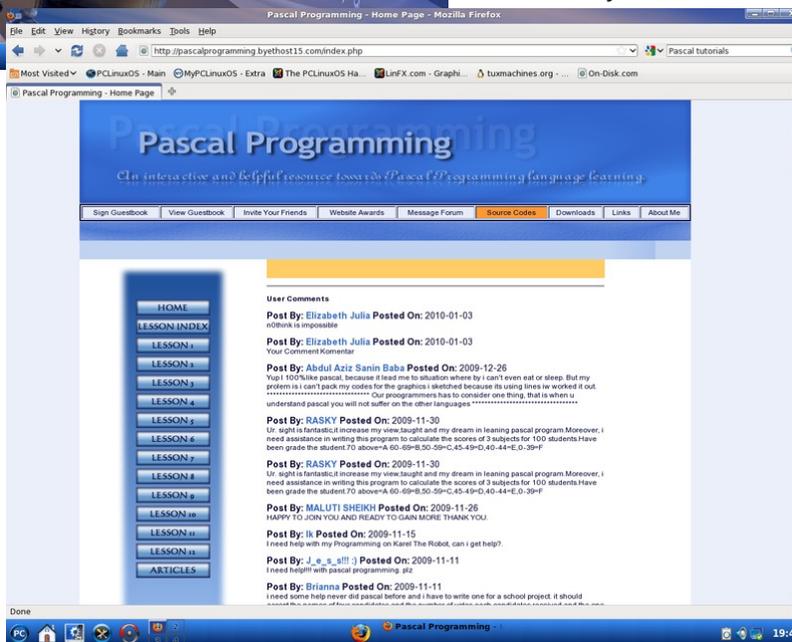
Pascal and Structured Programming

(added by Patrick G Horneker)

Pascal has always been a language for teaching of structured programming and other good programming practices. One of the first things that Pascal forces programmers to do is to think about the design of the program, specifically that the program should be designed from the top down, with the top being the primary objective of what the program is to accomplish. Once that program is broken down into steps, you then break those steps into smaller steps, until you get to the minute details.

Programs in Standard (ISO) Pascal have only one entrance and one exit. This concept is true whether you are implementing the main portion of the program, or a subroutine to access a file on a disk.

One advantage to using Pascal for applications is that a top-down design and a concept of structured programming results in software that is reliable and quality controlled.

If you used only ISO Pascal for your DOS applications, chances are that your applications can be ported to PCLinuxOS with a minimum of work (depending on whether you are using a text-mode application, or are using bindings for Gtk, Qt, or some other graphical interface toolkit.) Windows applications in this language, however, will require some work, specifically rewriting subroutines that call Windows specific functions to subroutines that call functions for X, Gtk, Qt, or whatever graphical toolkits are available for FreePascal.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by MerReady, September 4, 2010, running Gnome.

Testimonial: Arriving To PCLinuxOS By Accident

by rvndmnmt

I guess I should begin with intro.

Hi. My name is Larry and I'm an alcho....er....wrong meeting.

I've been part of the Linux community since about '97. Back then, Xwindows were new. Amongst a whole lot of other goodies that people take for granted now. I kind of gravitated away from Linux back in '04, because it made no sense to have such a wonderful operating system with a wonderful GUI that required alot of time at the command line to interface with. In short, Linux was an interesting toy. I could surf the net with it, maybe even listen to a few MP3's. There was a definite performance advantage over Windows 95/98/SE. But actual usablity, short of a server, was a little harder to attain. I couldn't see the OS going any place in the state that it was in.

Well. I recently tried to get a job in the IT field. This is something I have been doing for some time, butfound out that paper and letters behind the name seem to count for a lot in these days. I went back to school and have/had a few classes in Linux. I figured that with my previous exposure, it would be a cinch. I also figured that not much has changed. Boy, was I wrong.

Back when I got into Linux, the main things going were RedHat, SuSE, Mandrake, Debian, and Slackware to name a few. I had experience in every one of those flavors, including Slackware on a masochistic trip into madness.

I mean seriously, the CLI is a powerful tool, but with as powerful as computers are these days, a GUI wasn't as much as a performance hit as it was, lets say, in 98. And Linux, while functional, wasn't totally functional as an operating system.

Ubuntu was my first descent back into this madness. Nothing wrong with that OS. Actually very usable. I loaded it onto my sisters computer (read zero computer experience), and she uses it to this day two years later. I used to use it a lot myself, until 10.04. I still use it on my PS3 (interesting, but not recommended). But, I have tried out other flavors as well. Fedora was a requirement for school, however I don't like SELinux and configuration is a pain when you have to configure the OS through /etc/pam.d/ to even access the root account in graphical mode. Not that SELinux is complicated, I just get a little leery when the NSA writes security software is all. That, and it reminds me to much of User Access Control in Windows Vista/7.

For the record Microsoft really overdid themselves with 7, even though it is just a slimmed down version of Vista.

So it comes into now. I ran into PCLinuxOS by accident. I was actually pretty pleased with the result. Currently, I have it operating on a 1.8GHz Pentium 4 and a 2000 AMD XP-M at work. I also have it running on my Core2Duo for school (no hardware virtualization allowed on the CPU, and it performs as good or better in X32 mode than X64 mode). I also have it set up in dual boot mode on my latest build (Phenom2 6 core, 8 gig of ram, Crossfired ATI video cards, ect). About the only thing it cant do is play the games I need Windows for. About the only thing I could ask for is a 64bit version of PCLinuxOS. But I guess that is going to be a while.

Anyways, just thought I would say hi. And a sincere thanks to the developers of PCLinuxOS, since it has most of what I would ever want in a Linux OS.

Big Linux Laptop

(sung to "Big Yellow Taxi", original lyrics by
Joni Mitchell)

parody lyrics by Patrick G Horneker

They fixed my laptop
with PCLinuxOS
With a LiveCD, a hard drive
and a Wi-fi Hot Spot
Don't these people seem to know
that Linux has
what you want
and it works
They fixed my laptop
with PCLinuxOS

Buy a new laptop,
install a copy of Windows 7
Microsoft charges people
200 dollars for the upgrade
Don't these people seem to know
that Linux has
what you want
and it works
They fixed my laptop
with PCLinuxOS

Hey Ballmer, Ballmer
put down that big old chair now
Give me CUPS for my printers,
leave me the Wine and Firefox, please
Don't these people seem to know
that Linux has
what you want
and it works
They fixed my laptop
with PCLinuxOS

Late last night,
I heard the hard drive crash
and the big Linux laptop
erased all of Windows
Don't these people seem to know
that Linux has
what you want
and it works
They fixed my laptop
with PCLinuxOS

More Screenshot Showcase

Top left: Posted by pirate, September 12, 2010, running KDE 4.

Top right: Posted by coffeetime, September 8, 2010, running LXDE.

Bottom left: Posted by Maik3531, September 25, 2010, running Gnome.

Bottom right: Posted by omskates, September 3, 2010, running KDE 4.

Want to see your screen shot featured in the magazine? Post it to the Monthly Screenshot thread in the forum!