Happy Thanksgiving

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Welcome From The Chief Editor

November, in the United States, is a time for reflecting on the things that we are thankful for. This is largely due to November being the month when Americans celebrate the landing of the "Pilgrims" at Plymouth Rock, along Cape Cod in Massachusetts, with our Thanksgiving holiday. The founding of the settlement at Plymouth Rock by those fleeing religious persecution started the earnest European colonization of the North American continent.

So what are you thankful for?

As for me, I am thankful for this wonderful OS, called PCLinuxOS. I am thankful for the tireless, selfless work of Texstar and our development team to make PCLinuxOS the best Linux distro around. I am thankful to be a part of the wonderful PCLinuxOS community. I am thankful for the administrators and moderators of the PCLinuxOS forum, for working hard to maintain order and civility there. I am thankful for all the volunteers who freely give their time and efforts to help make this magazine possible. I am thankful for all of the great new friends I've made all around the globe, as a result of this great Linux OS.

On a more personal note, I am thankful for my wonderful wife, Laura. I am thankful for my job, and the good life I live and lead. I am thankful for my friends and family. I am thankful for the ability to help people in my daily job, and all the people I cross paths with as I carry out my job responsibilities. I am thankful that my wife and I have good health. I routinely run across folks from all walks of life that many would say have been dealt a really bad hand, and who, time and time again, muster up the strength to battle back. Many of their stories are inspiring. I am thankful for the companionship of our two cats, Buddie and Kitty, and our dog, Lucky.

This month, we wrap up our coverage of the LXDE desktop environment. First, I cover how to customize the way hardware events are handled on your computer with LXDE installed, in my **LXDE: All Hail The Halo Of halevt** article. I also show you how to customize some of the behavior of the LXDE desktop, in my **LXDE: Meet The Heart & Soul - lxde-rc.xml** article. I finish up with a roundup of items about LXDE that are too short to warrant their own article, but are nonetheless important, in my **LXDE: Tips & Tricks** article.

Meemaw presents her sixth article in her OpenOffice series, taking a look at **OpenOffice Base**, the database program of OpenOffice. Darrel Johnston gives us a close-up view of Syllable, in his **Alternate OS: Syllable - Part 2** article. Pete Kelly reveals the "magic" of xbindkeys, a command line utility that can help customize your Linux desktop, in his **Get Slick With xbindkeys** article. Leiche shows us another lightweight Linux app, with his **Shotwell: A Lightweight Linux Image Handler** article. Gary Ratliff, Sr. continues his trek through the alphabet of computer programming languages, with his **Computer Languages A to Z: Q, R, S** article.

Mark Szorady is back with another installment of his monthly **Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip** column. Ms_meme returns with another installment of **Forum Foibles**, as well as two new entries into **ms_meme's Nook**. To wrap it all up, we have a column celebrating the **7th Birthday of PCLinuxOS**, and I present another game review in my **Game Zone: PopCap Games** article.

In commemoration of the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States, this month's cover features a (public domain) image from American artist Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, depicting the signing of the Mayflower compact by those early settlers who landed at Plymouth Rock.

As you go forth into the day, use this time of year to remind yourself of the things you are thankful for. Until next month, I wish peace, happiness, good fortune, serenity and tranquility to each and every one of you.
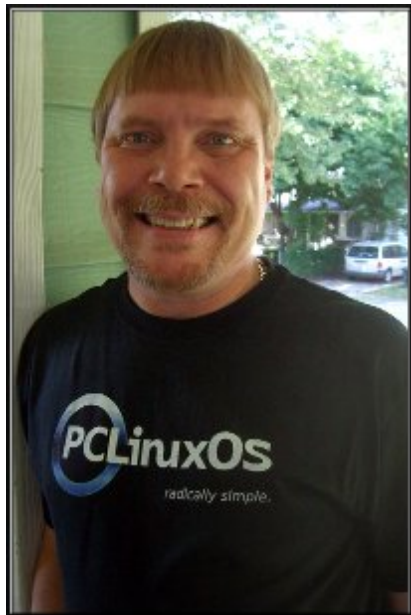
Happy 7th Birthday, PCLinuxOS

Introduction by Paul Arnote (parnote)

October 24, 2003 marked the birth of PCLinuxOS. After seven years, PCLinuxOS is definitely alive and well, with its numbers of users steadily increasing. Regularly, PCLinuxOS is in the top five most popular distros on Distrowatch.com.

Of course, all of this is due to the exhausting and selfless work of Bill Reynolds, a.k.a. Texstar, who branched out from his days of maintaining a custom repository for Mandriva, to create his own distro. Yep. The one we all know and love, as PCLinuxOS.

Today, PCLinuxOS sports virtually any desktop environment you may want to use or try: KDE, Gnome, Xfce, LXDE, Openbox or Enlightenment. And all of those either currently have lightweight "mini" versions already available, or they are currently in the works. These are all maintained by a small but efficient group of dedicated developers, who help with maintaining the remasters and with maintaining the more than 13,000 software titles in the official PCLinuxOS respository.

As most of you already know, PCLinuxOS has garnered a strong following, and has a reputation of "everything working right out of the box." Although the "official" slogan for PCLinuxOS is "Radically Simple," many have referred to it as "The Distro Hopper Stopper," since many users' search for a Linux distro that works with all their hardware ends with their installation of PCLinuxOS. The PCLinuxOS Forum is very active, and has a reputation of being one of the friendliest Linux forums around.

To celebrate the seventh birthday of PCLinuxOS, it's probably best to let its founder, Texstar, lay it all out for you, in his own words.

PCLinuxOS: A little walk down history lane

by Texstar

In the summer of 2003, I became interested in LiveCD technology after looking at Knoppix and a fresh distribution from a fellow named Warren, called Mepis. I was interested in helping Warren with Mepis at the time, but I had no clue how to build Deb files. Coming from 5 years of packaging rpms and not really wanting to learn a new packaging system, I happened to come across a South African fellow by the name of Jaco Greef. He was developing a script called mklivecd and porting it to Mandrake Linux. I, along with Buchanan Milne (Mandrake contributor) and a few others, began working with Jaco to help debug the scripts. I got an idea to make a LiveCD based on Mandrake Linux 9.2, along with all my customizations, just for fun. I had previously provided an unofficial 3rd party repository for the users of Mandrake for many years, but had since parted ways. Since Mandrake was a trademarked name, myself and others decided to name the livecd after our news site and forum pclinuxonline, thus PCLinuxOS.

Preview .3 was my first attempt to make a LiveCD. I initially distributed it to about 20 people to get their reaction and feedback. Everyone who tested it loved the LiveCD, but there was one thing missing. There wasn't a way to install the thing to the hard drive!

srlinuxx from tuxmachines.org came up with a novel way to copy the LiveCD to the hard drive, and posted it on our forums. Jaco utilized this information, along with inspiration from the Mepis installer, and wrote a pyqt script to make the LiveCD installable; thus the birth of a new distribution.

On October 24, 2003, PCLinuxOS Preview .4 was released as a fork of Linux Mandrake (Mandriva) 9.2, utilizing mklivecd scripts from Jaco Greef, a multimedia kernel from Thomas Buckland (2.4.22-tmb) and a customized KDE (3.1.4-tex). Preview .5 through .93 were built upon on previous PCLinuxOS releases. After 3 years of updating one release from the other using the same gcc and glibc core library, we found too many programs would no longer compile or work properly against this aging code base.

In November 2006, we utilized a one time source code snapshot from our friends at Mandriva to pull in an updated glibc/gcc core and associated libraries. We spent the following 6 months rebuilding, debugging, customizing, patching and updating our new code base. We pulled in stuff from our old code base, and utilized patches/code from Fedora, Gentoo and Debian, just to name a few. This is why

you will never see me distro bashing, as it would be hypocritical to do such a thing since we are still dependent in many areas on other distros development processes due to our limited, but hard working, volunteer development team.

On May 20th, 2007 we felt we had reached a pretty stable base and released PCLinuxOS 2007, utilizing our own kernel from Oclient1, KDE built by MDE developer Ze, updated mylivecd scripts, a heavily patched Control Center, graphics from the PCLinuxOS beautification team and many application updates from Thac and Neverstopdreaming. All in all, it has been a great ride and we have made many friends along the way. Some have gone on to other distributions and many are still here from our first release. As I've always said, we're just enjoying Linux technology and sharing it with friends who might like it too. We hope you have enjoyed the ride as well.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by chilly, October 5, 2010, running KDE 4.

LXDE: All Hail The Halo Of halevt

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Many users see LXDE as a replacement for their beloved KDE 3.5.x. In fact, with the right knowledge and skills, LXDE can be easily made to look – and function – pretty much as KDE 3.5.x does/did. Of course, the application of that knowledge and those skills is much easier if you have the right tools.

Meet halevt. Halevt is a daemon that helps monitor changes in your computer's hardware. It stands for HAL (Hardware Abstraction Layer) Events manager. Its job is to execute arbitrary commands when a device with certain properties is added to your system, or when device properties change.

These devices can be audio CDs, blank CDs or CD-RWs, DVD movies, USB thumb drives, or any number of other items supported by your computer. Those are just the ones it comes pre-installed knowing how to handle with PCLinuxOS-LXDE. But what if you want to change those default actions? It's easier than you may think, but first you have to understand how halevt works.

Making it work

Halevt knows what to do with different hardware events, thanks to the halevt.xml file. This file tells halevt what to do when certain hardware events occur. You can take a look at the basics of how halevt works, by checking out this post in the PCLinuxOS Forum.

If you've never looked at an XML file, its structure is actually quite simple. It's a text-based file, and is a superset of HTML. So, if you can read (or have a basic understanding of) raw HTML, you are ahead of the game. While we don't have sufficient room here to give you a basic course in HTML, we can give you some basics. When you open a device with <halevt:Device match="xxxx.yyyy.zzzz = true">, you must also close it with </halevt:Device>. It's sort of like when you specify boldface text in HTML, where precedes the text you want boldface, and turns boldface off at the end of the text you want to display in boldface.

Here is the basic halevt.xml file that is installed with PCLinuxOS-LXDE:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<halevt:Configuration version="0.1"
xmlns:halevt="http://www.environnement.ens.fr/pe
rso/dumas/halevt.html">

<halevt:Device match="hal.volume.disc.has_data =
true">
<halevt:Insertion exec="pcmanfm"/>
</halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.volume.disc.has_audio
= true">
<halevt:Insertion exec="xmms /mnt/cdrom"/>
<halevt:Removal exec="killall xmms"/>
</halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.volume.disc.has_video
= true">
<halevt:Insertion exec="xine dvd://"/>
<halevt:Removal exec="killall xine"/>
</halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device
match="hal.volume.disc.is_videodvd = true">
<halevt:Insertion exec="xine dvd://"/>
<halevt:Removal exec="killall xine"/>
</halevt:Device>
```

```
<halevt:Device match="hal.info.udi =
/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/volume_empty_cd_r">
<halevt:Insertion exec="gnomebaker"/>
</halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.info.udi =
/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/volume_empty_cd_rw"
>
<halevt:Insertion exec="gnomebaker"/>
</halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.info.udi =
/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/volume_empty_dvd">
<halevt:Insertion exec="gnomebaker"/>
</halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.info.category =
storage &amp; hal.storage.bus = usb">
        <halevt:Insertion exec="pcmanfm"/>
    </halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.info.category =
camera">
        <halevt:Insertion exec="gtkam"/>
    </halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.info.udi =
/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/computer_power_supp
ly_ac_adapter_AC">
        <halevt:Property
name="hal.ac_adapter.present">
        <halevt:Action value="true"
exec="notify-send -t 5000 -i
/usr/share/icons/Tango/scalable/status/info.svg
'The AC adapter is connected now ...'"/>
        </halevt:Property>
        </halevt:Device>

<halevt:Device match="hal.info.udi =
/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/computer_power_supp
ly_ac_adapter_AC">
        <halevt:Property
name="hal.ac_adapter.present">
        <halevt:Action value="false"
exec="notify-send -t 5000 -i
/usr/share/icons/Tango/scalable/status/info.svg
```

```
'The AC adapter was removed ...'"/>
        </halevt:Property>
        </halevt:Device>

</halevt:Configuration>
```

While the above halevt.xml file works for many things on my installation of PCLinuxOS-LXDE, there are a few things that didn't work quite right. Yes, my copy of LXDE is fully updated against the PCLinuxOS official repository. So I dug into the halevt.xml file, bound and determined to get those items working properly.

First, look at the eighth line in halevt.xml (count the blank/empty lines when counting the lines). It reads:

```
<halevt:Device match="hal.volume.disc.has_audio
= true">
```

In the ninth line, it uses xmms to open the audio on the CD. The problem is, xmms does indeed open. But it refuses to play the audio CD. Nothing I do can get xmms to play the audio CD, much less automatically play it when I insert the audio CD.

However, PCLinuxOS-LXDE comes with SMPlayer pre-installed (in the base installation), and it is a very capable media player that can handle not only DVDs, but also audio CDs, video CDs and super video CDs. So, why not change halevt.xml to use SMPlayer? It's actually very easy to do. Simply replace the ninth and tenth lines of halevt.xml with the following:

```
<halevt:Insertion exec="smplayer cdda://1
-actions play"/>
```

```
<halevt:Removal exec="killall smplayer"/>
```


Now, when you insert an audio CD, SMPlayer automatically opens and playback starts. Easy enough! Actually, I typed smplayer --help in LXTerminal and figured out the command line from the information presented there, coupled with the information SMPlayer gave me in the title bar of its window when I opened the audio CD from the File menu of SMPlayer.

You can do a similar change for DVD videos. Halevt.xml defaults to using xine to playback videos. Again, SMPlayer will do an admirable job playing back your DVD videos. When I insert a DVD, I cannot get xine to start the playback of my disc. So, replace lines 19 and 20 with the following:

```
<halevt:Insertion exec="smplayer dvd://"/>
<halevt:Removal exec="killall smplayer"/>
```

Doing this causes SMPlayer to automatically launch and start the playback of your DVD video. Again, easier than you might have thought.

Extending halevt.xml: Make it do more

Besides audio CDs and DVD videos, I also have an odd mix of VCDs (Video Compact Discs) and Super VCDs (Super Video Compact Discs). I also want these discs to automatically launch SMPlayer and start playback.

Before I can do this, I have to find out how halevt sees the media, and by what name. After placing a Super VCD in your optical drive, launch LXTerminal, and enter **lshal** at the command prompt. There will be a ton of output. Scroll back until you find the section that lists the hardware attributes for your optical drive. Once you've found the right section, it should look something like the following:

```
udi =
'/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/volume_label_NEW'
  block.device = '/dev/sr0'  (string)
  block.is_volume = true  (bool)
  block.major = 11  (0xb)  (int)
  block.minor = 0  (0x0)  (int)
  block.storage_device =
'/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/storage_model_DW_2
8E'  (string)
  info.capabilities = {'volume.disc', 'volume',
'block'} (string list)
  info.category = 'volume'  (string)
  info.interfaces =
{'org.freedesktop.Hal.Device.Volume'} (string
list)
  info.parent =
'/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/storage_model_DW_2
8E'  (string)
  info.product = 'NEW'  (string)
  info.udi =
'/org/freedesktop/Hal/devices/volume_label_NEW'
(string)
  linux.hotplug_type = 3  (0x3)  (int)
  linux.sysfs_path =
'/sys/devices/pci0000:00/0000:00:1f.1/host1/targ
et1:0:0/1:0:0:0/block/sr0/fakevolume'  (string)

org.freedesktop.Hal.Device.Volume.method_argname
s = {'mount_point fstype extra_options',
'extra_options', 'extra_options'} (string list)

org.freedesktop.Hal.Device.Volume.method_execpat
```

```
hs = {'hal-storage-mount', 'hal-storage-
unmount', 'hal-storage-eject'} (string list)
  org.freedesktop.Hal.Device.Volume.method_names
= {'Mount', 'Unmount', 'Eject'} (string list)

org.freedesktop.Hal.Device.Volume.method_signatu
res = {'ssas', 'as', 'as'} (string list)
  volume.block_size = 2048  (0x800)  (int)
  volume.disc.capacity = 735051776  (0x2bd00000)
(uint64)
  volume.disc.has_audio = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.has_data = true  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_appendable = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_blank = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_blurayvideo = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_rewritable = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_svcd = true  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_vcd = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.is_videodvd = false  (bool)
  volume.disc.type = 'cd_r'  (string)
  volume.fstype = 'iso9660'  (string)
  volume.fsusage = 'filesystem'  (string)
  volume.fsversion = ''  (string)
  volume.ignore = false  (bool)
  volume.is_disc = true  (bool)
  volume.is_mounted = false  (bool)
  volume.is_mounted_read_only = false  (bool)
  volume.is_partition = false  (bool)
  volume.label = 'NEW'  (string)
  volume.linux.is_device_mapper = false  (bool)
  volume.mount.valid_options = {'ro', 'sync',
'dirsync', 'noatime', 'nodiratime', 'relatime',
'noexec', 'quiet', 'remount', 'exec', 'utf8',
'uid=', 'mode=', 'iocharset='} (string list)
  volume.mount_point = ''  (string)
  volume.num_blocks = 1436264  (0x15ea68)
(uint64)
  volume.size = 735367168  (0x2bd4d000)
(uint64)
  volume.unmount.valid_options = {'lazy'}
(string list)
  volume.uuid = ''  (string)
```
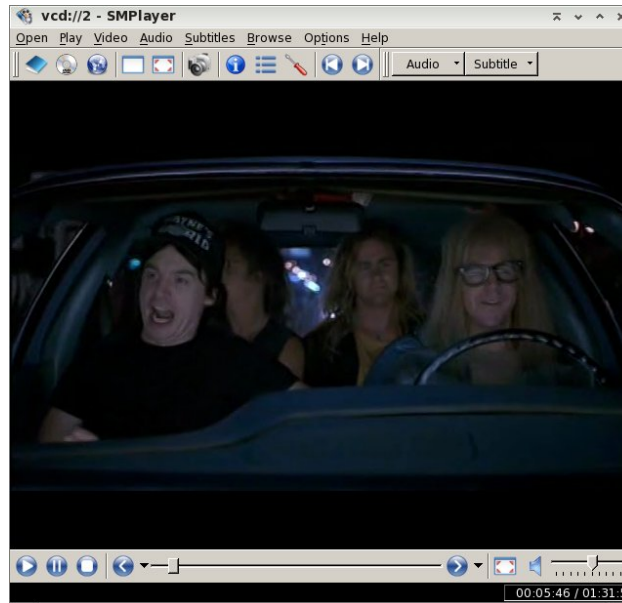
This is only a fraction of the total amount of information supplied. I have changed the color of the text for the section of the output we are interested in.

Notice that the seventh red line down says **volume.disc.is_svcd = true**? This indicates how halevt sees a Super VCD, as svcd.

Armed with that information, I now play the Super VCD in SMPlayer.

On the title bar of SMPlayer, I notice that it says vcd://2. That is important information that I will need to include in the command line that is passed to the exec= parameter of halevt.xml.

Now that I have all the information I need, it's time to add in the ability for halevt to properly recognize a Super VCD. To do this, we need to insert the following lines into the halevt.xml file:

```
<halevt:Device match="hal.volume.disc.is_svcd =
true">
<halevt:Insertion exec="smplayer vcd://2"/>
<halevt:Removal exec="killall smplayer"/>
</halevt:Device>
```

To keep everything together, I chose to insert the above four lines right after the videodvd line. You can place it wherever you want, except at the end. It must be inserted before the </halvert Configuration> line. Otherwise, it won't be recognized at all.
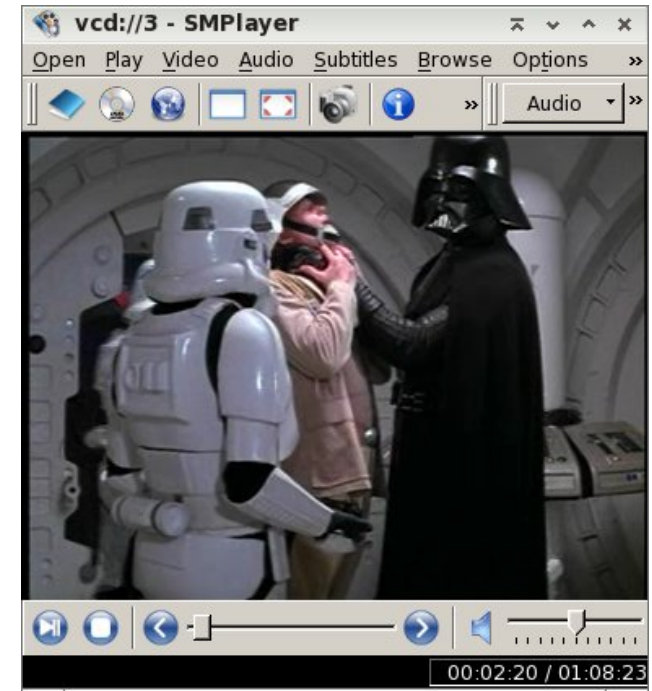
Similarly, I can repeat the process for Video CDs (shown above playing in SMPlayer). Once again, insert the following four lines after the videodvd line:

```
<halevt:Device match="hal.volume.disc.is_vcd =
true">
<halevt:Insertion exec="smplayer vcd://2"/>
<halevt:Removal exec="killall smplayer"/>
</halevt:Device>
```

Did you notice that the "exec" command above says vcd://2, even though the SMPlayer title bar says vcd://3? This is because the content of the Video CD starts on the second "track." With this particular VCD, that content is a 17 minute "behind the scenes" special feature with George Lucas. With most every other VCD, our content starts with that second "track." If you don't want to watch the special feature, just fast forward through it to get to the movie content you want to watch.

Once you've finished making the changes to your halevt.xml file, it's a good idea to reboot your computer. Why? Because the halevt.xml file is cached in memory. Restarting your computer flushes out all of the old values, and reloads all the new values in your modified halevt.xml file.

With VCD and SVCD discs, SMPlayer will automatically launch. But so will PCManFM, because your VCD and SVCD discs are also seen as data discs. I've not discovered a way of preventing PCManFM from launching, so it's just easier to simply close out of the extra session of PCManFM.

Conclusion

As you can see, halevt.xml provides a relatively easy way to customize how your copy of LXDE responds to hardware events on your computer. Like we mentioned previously, the configuration options do exist for LXDE, but only if you are willing to get your hands dirty and manually edit some of the configuration files. As you can see, it's not really all that difficult. You just have to "follow the rules."

Screenshot Showcase

*Posted by witchart, October 14, 2010, running Gnome.*

by Meemaw

As we travel through OpenOffice 3.2, we come to OOBase, which is the database section of the suite. This is the program you can use if you are organizing a detailed collection or you have an address book with more than just names and addresses. Using Base, you can also design a form to go along with your information, so your document doesn't look just like any other spreadsheet. I don't find much use for OOBase, since my use of databases is confined to a list of names and addresses, which can be done with a spreadsheet. However, if you are looking to organize your music collection, and add many types of information so it can be searched many ways, you probably should use OOBase. This will be a very general introduction.

Opening Base, you get a window asking if you want to create a new database, open an existing file, or 'connect' to an existing one. The first two are self-explanatory, but the third, 'connect to an existing database' may be unclear. However, clicking on that will give you an interesting dropdown;

You see here that you can open an email address book in Base, or even use the spreadsheet you started earlier that only has names and addresses. (It keeps you from duplicating some of your work, and helps on some of your other tasks, like mailing labels.)
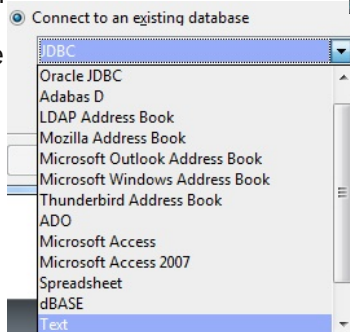
Right now, let's create a new database. So, choosing Create New Database and clicking Next gives you another window with two choices: Register the database (or not) and Open for editing (or create tables using the table wizard). Generally, you always want to register it because that makes it usable in OpenOffice. Also, you want to open it for editing so you can put in your data. You will be asked to save it. Click Finish and you get the following:
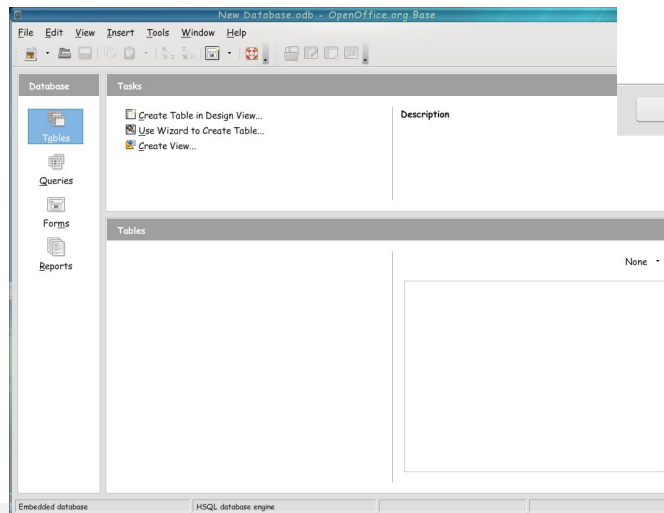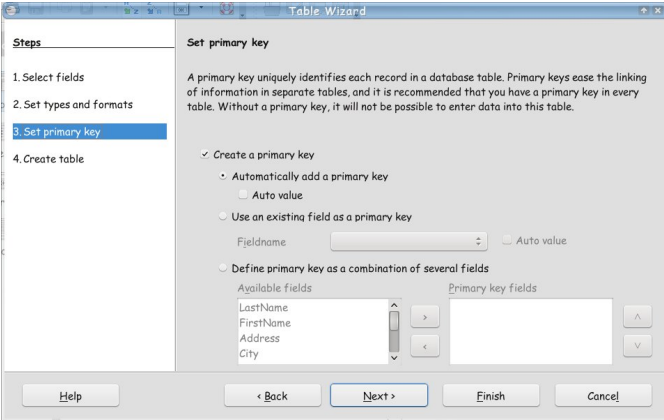
This is the main window for your database, and everything is created or opens from here. The easiest thing to do here is to click on "Use Wizard to Create Table" and you will see the Table Wizard. As you can see, you can choose from some sample tables in two categories, business or personal. One of the personal samples is Addresses and it already contains many fields present in an address book. I'm going to use that for this demonstration.
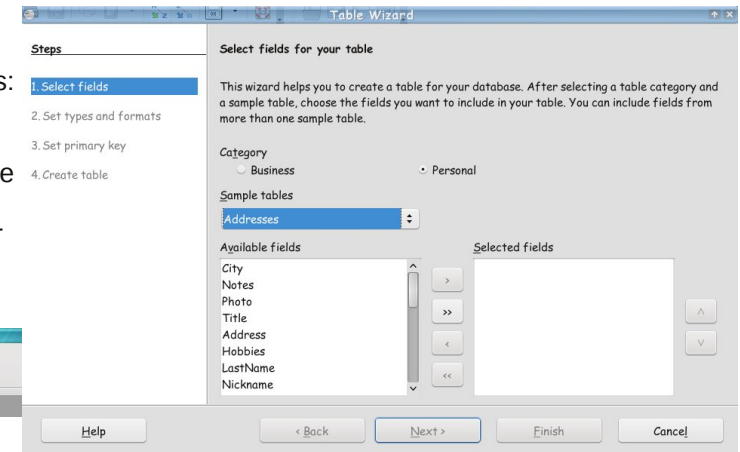
Select the fields you want and click the arrow key (>) to transfer them over to the right column. The double arrow (>>) will transfer all of them at once if that's what you want. After you have transferred the ones you need, or all of them, you can click Next or Finish. The screen you get when you click Next allows you to customize your fields as to whether it should be a number or text field or have a certain type of information. However, if you used one of the samples, they are most likely already configured correctly, and you can click Next again.
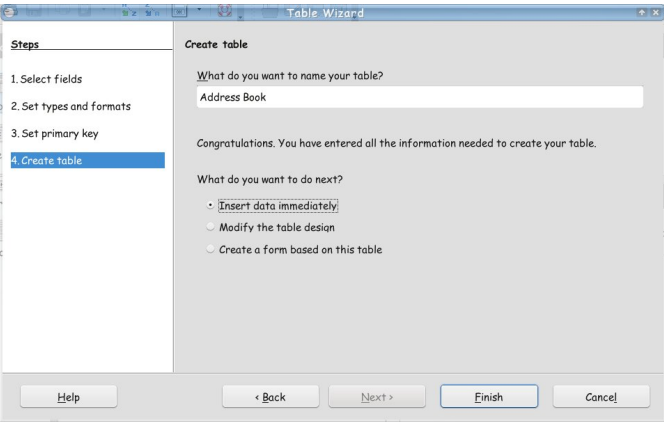
You will be asked about creating a primary key. As close as I can understand, it's a notation that helps Base link tables if you create more than one, and is necessary for every database table. I have left the default "Automatically add a primary key", and clicked Next. I found out later on another database: if you will click "Auto Value", the field will fill automatically. (Next page)
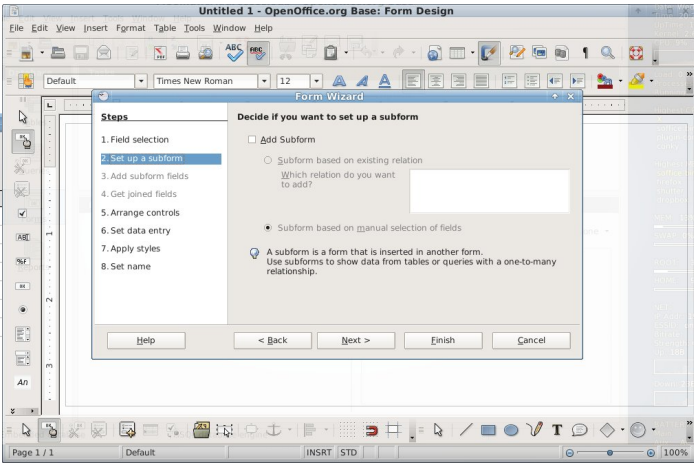
You will be asked if you want to set up a subform. A subform can be used to link information from two different tables. I chose not to, as we're making something more basic.

The last step is to name your table. It will already have the temporary name Table1, but you can change it. I changed mine to Address Book, and left the default "Insert Data Immediately". When you click Finish, the following window will appear, and you can start entering data.

After you get more data in, and have saved it, you can also create a form. For an address book it will look like a book with one record on each page. From your main window, you should click on Forms (in the left column), then "Use Wizard to Create Form". Again you will have to designate which fields you want in your form.
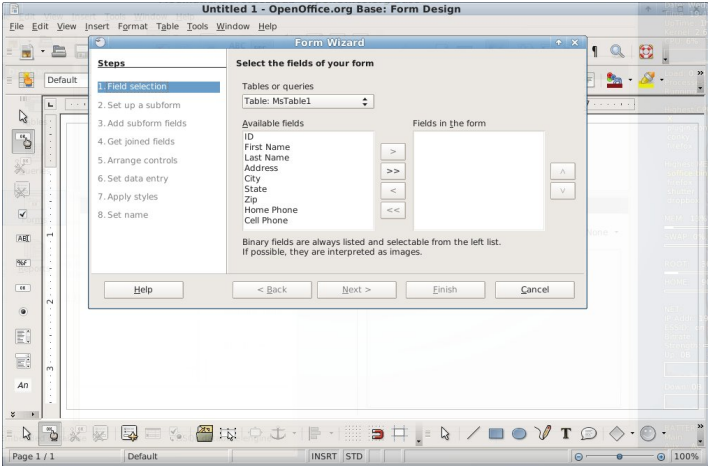
In 'Arrange Controls', you are deciding how you want your form to look. You can decide on one of the arrangements shown, and click next. Bear in mind, you can go back into the form later and move things around if you wish. (Next page)
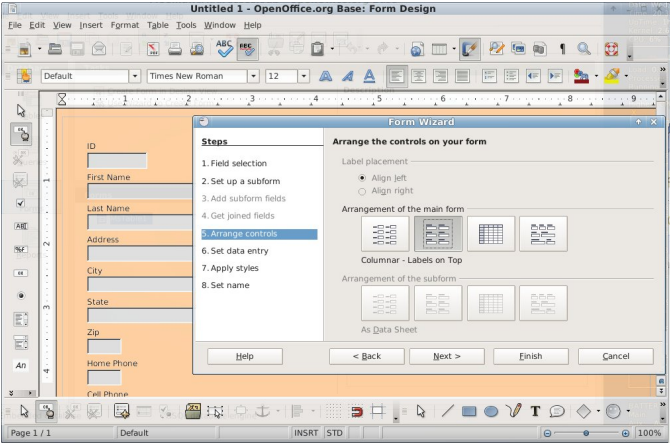
The last window asks you to name your form. When you click finish, you will see your form with one of your records in it.

The next window is 'Set Data Entry.' You are asked whether you want to display all data or just use it to enter new data. I chose 'Display All Data'. Next is 'Apply Styles.' Here, you decide what background color and field border appearance you want in your table.

Notice also that it says 'Read-Only.' That means you can't change the form. You can, however, add more records. (I'm assuming you have more than 8 addresses in your address book!) Note the arrow with the star just to the right of where it says Record 1 of 8. Click on that to add another record. If you 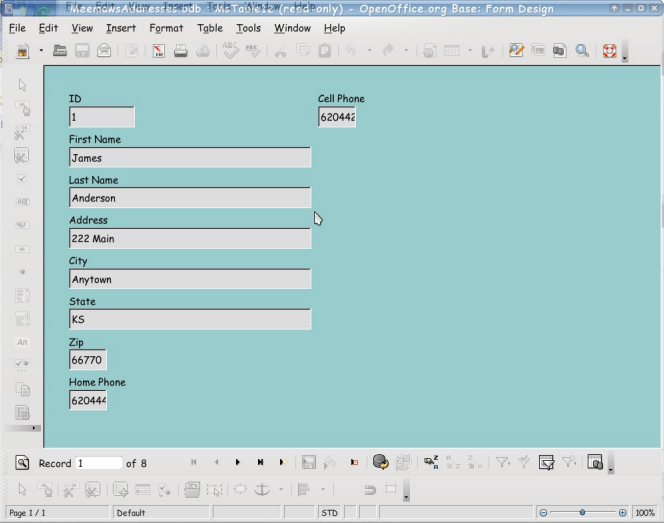want to change the form, you must close this window and open it differently. When you close this, you will be back at your main window. With 'Forms' highlighted at left, right-click the table you want to edit. The dropdown will show as seen here. Choose 'Edit', and your form will be opened in Design View. You can then highlight and move or resize each item if you wish.

Well, those are the basics! I'm sure there are hundreds of questions about what everything else does. To be honest, I am not as adept at OOBase as the other parts of the office suite.

There are plenty of tutorials, though. The three below are for all parts of OpenOffice:

http://www.tutorialsforopenoffice.org/

http://en.flossmanuals.net/openoffice

http://documentation.openoffice.org/

If you want to catalog your extensive movie collection so it can be searched by title, actor, director, or genre, I recommend using OOBase.

The next/last installment will outline a couple of specific tasks in OpenOffice.

Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

Double Take
by Mark Szorady

I WENT THAT WAY!

HE WENT THAT WAY!

MARK SZORADY
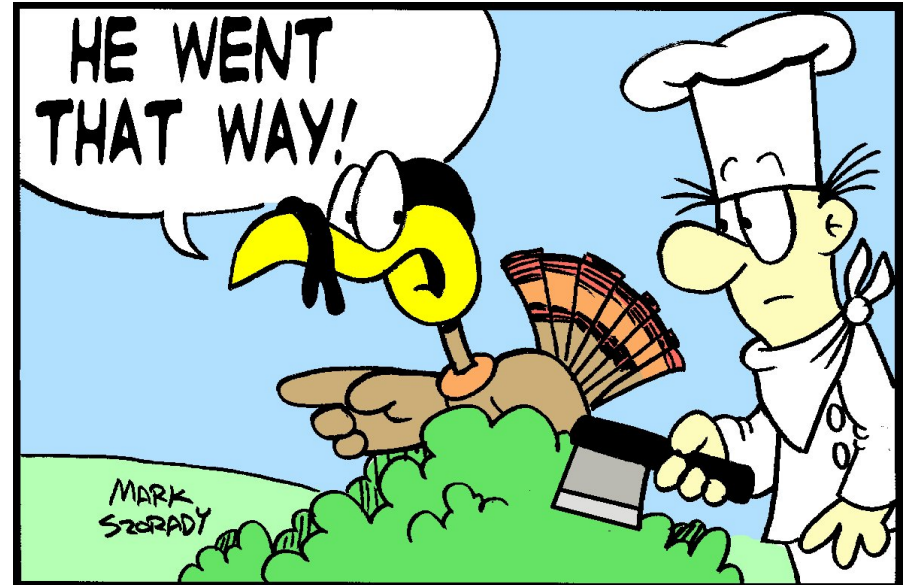
Find at least seven differences between cartoons.

Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

I use Gimp to enhance my photos and edit my cartoons. I also use Gimp to create or modify images I use for wallpapers on my KDE desktops. So, I often play around with the many tools Gimp offers. These tool and filters can add that extra "snap" to the image you're editing/manipulating. One such filter is called "Apply Canvas." This filters places a canvas texture over an image. The texture looks jus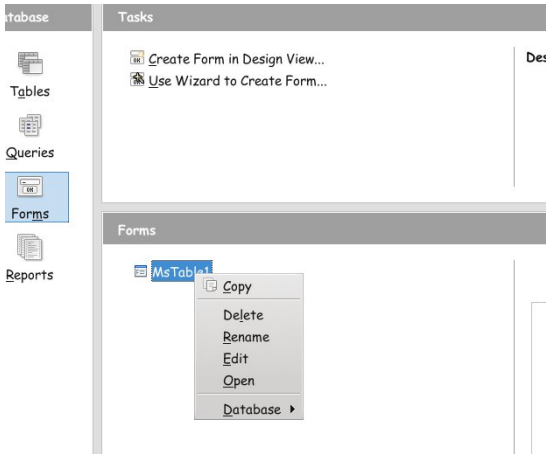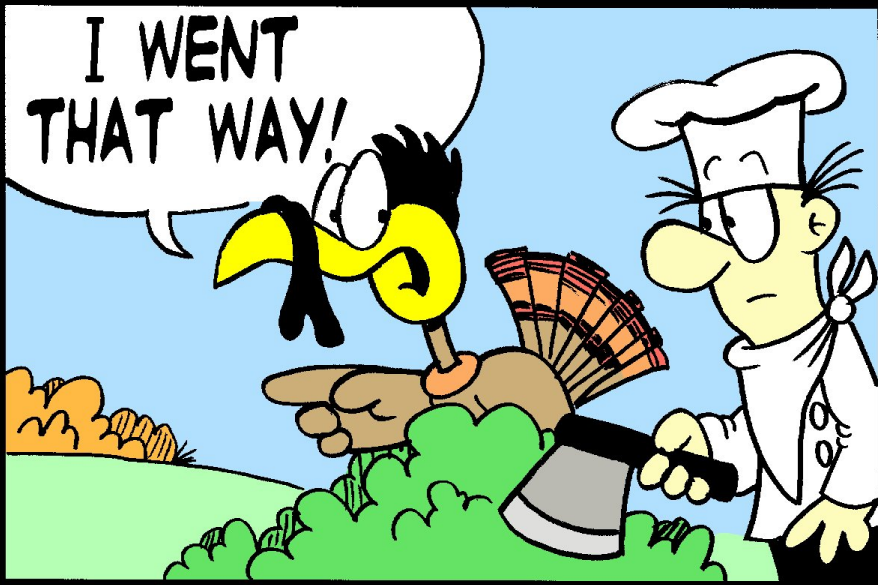t like a woven canvas surface (traditionally used by artists for oil painting). You can control the direction and depth of the texture with the sliders and move the panning tool around various areas of the image while you're in thumbnail mode. Apply Canvas is easy to find. Simply go to Filters>Artistic>Apply Canvas. When selected, a design window pops up where you can experiment and see a thumbnail preview of the image. There are other filters in the Artistic sub menu. Play with them all! (The "Clothify" filter is similar to Canvas.) They're easy to use and quite powerful. They let you change an image with one click of the mouse!

The Apply Canvas filter in action.

Apply Canvas

Preview

Direction
- Top-right
- Top-left
- Bottom-left
- Bottom-right

Depth: 5

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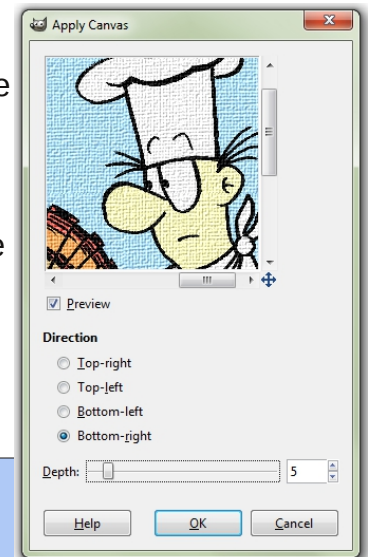
-Mark Szorady is a nationally syndicated cartoonist with georgetoon.com. He blogs at georgetoon.com/blog. Email Mark at georgetoon@gmail.com.

ms_meme's Nook: Linux Town

OGG

MP3

LINUX

Redmond

There is a place called Redmond Town
I went to have some fun
It's been the ruin of many a girl
And God I know I'm one

I met a cool operator there
He goes from town to town
Enticing every gal like me
And then he lets them down

I partook of all his schemes
There were 98 you see
Addicted to his master mind
I fell for that XP

His visions and vistas ruined my life
The virus I could not shun
I am tired of fighting off malware
Oh Lord what have I done

Now mothers tell your lovely ones
That Redmond man to shun
Send them off to Linux Town
Or else they'll be undone

Ladies of PCLinuxOS: tuxalish

Editor's Note: *This month's installment of Ladies of PCLinuxOS introduces us to tuxalish, who's been a member of the forum since March, 2006.*

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

My real name is Pam and I have been living in North Riverside, Illinois (about 8 miles west of "The Windy City") for the past 8 years. Actually, I was born and raised in Illinois up until the age of 19. I got my first real job with Delta Airlines in December of 1968 as a customer service agent at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. That brutal winter at the O'Hare ticket counter for this "rookie" agent propelled me to transfer 6 months later to Delta's home office in Atlanta, GA., where I worked and lived for the next 33 years. Then 9/11 happened. I accepted an enhanced early retirement package in December 2001, sold the house in Atlanta and moved back to Illinois.

How did you get started in computers?

My first Personal Computer was an HP Pavilion 6642D desktop in 1998. Delta partnered with HP to provide deeply discounted PC's for Delta employees. They even paid for PeoplePC dial-up internet service for many years. My Pavilion was loaded (?) with Win98SE (on a 7.5G HD), 64 MB SDRAM, 533MHz Intel Celeron processor, and Intel 810 integrated video graphics which used 11 of those 64MB of memory!

From December 2001, my last day at work before retiring from Delta. I'm sitting in the 'left seat' of a Boeing 777.

What drew you to Linux?

Windows! In 2004, I replaced the old Win98SE HP on dial-up with a new WinXP HP on cable HSI. This was a great improvement, but over time I became weary and paranoid of the constant threat of virus, malware, trojan, (ad nauseum) infections that precipitated the dreaded "Patch Tuesdays." I spent more time updating the OS and the 4 or 5 security programs installed than on any of the fun stuff.

What was the first Linux distro that you used?

PCLinuxOS v. 0.92

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

I first became aware of Linux on the DSLReports website forums in 2005. Since I was running WinXP at the time, I lurked in the security forum so as to learn how NOT to get infected with nasties. I read every "Help! My Windows Computer Has Been Infected" thread because the regular members of that forum were so expert and helpful in solving the posters' problems. There were however one or two members in each of those threads who offered Linux as a permanent cure for infection. I was intrigued enough to head on over to DSL's "All Things Unux" forum to be enlightened. A regular member of that forum suggested PCLinuxOS as one of the easiest distros for Windows migrants, which led me directly to the PCLinuxOS website and the friendliest, most helpful forum on the planet. I was instantly smitten...let me count the ways:

1. LiveCD (What? I can play with this OS before committing??)
2. Synaptic (So long Windows Updates/endless reboots)
3. Security (Buh-bye anti-virus, anti-trojan, anti-nasty programs!)
4. Stability (No more BSODs or cryptic error messages)

5. FOSS (Free and open source software)
6. Community support (The very best)

I purchased a Live-CD from On-Disk in March of 2006. I played with the CD for a couple or days and, with a lot of help and moral support from my forum buddies, installed PCLinuxOS v. 0.92 to hard disk.

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

Absolutely not. The guys know they would be lost without us girls; we have trained them well!

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

Sadly, the only reaction I get from them when I mention Linux is "Huh? What's a Linux?"

How do you feel you contribute to the PCLinuxOS community?

I donate monetarily as often as I can to express my appreciation for PCLinuxOS and to support the selfless, never-ending work that Texstar and the developers put in to keep this amazing distro running so seamlessly.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Crow, October 4, 2010, running e17.

LXDE: Meet The Heart & Soul - lxde-rc.xml

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

If you recall my original **LXDE: An Overview** article in the September 2010 issue of The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine, you may remember me telling you that LXDE is not a desktop environment for beginning Linux users. This is because there is a significant lack of GUI configuration options for LXDE. Presumably, this is because of its relative youth. After all, it has only been out for four years.

To configure and tweak LXDE to your liking, you will most likely have to go in and edit configuration files by hand. If you've been following along with the LXDE articles thus far, then you will know how true that scenario is, as I have already shown how to hand edit various configuration files on your system. You will have to dig into subdirectories of subdirectories of subdirectories of top level directories, and get your hands dirty in the text editor of your choice.

With this article, we're going to take on one of the configuration files that helps control many aspects of how LXDE is displayed on your system. The information in this article will also apply to those users of the PCLinuxOS-OpenBox remaster, since LXDE uses OpenBox as its window manager.

Located in your **~/.config/openbox** folder, the file is named **lxde-rc.xml**. This file controls your keybindings (a.k.a. keyboard shortcuts), menu text size, size of the text on your window title bars, some functions of your desktop pager plug in, desktop names, screen margins, mouse double click speed and sensitivity, and mouse button bindings, among other things. As you can see from this list, lxde-
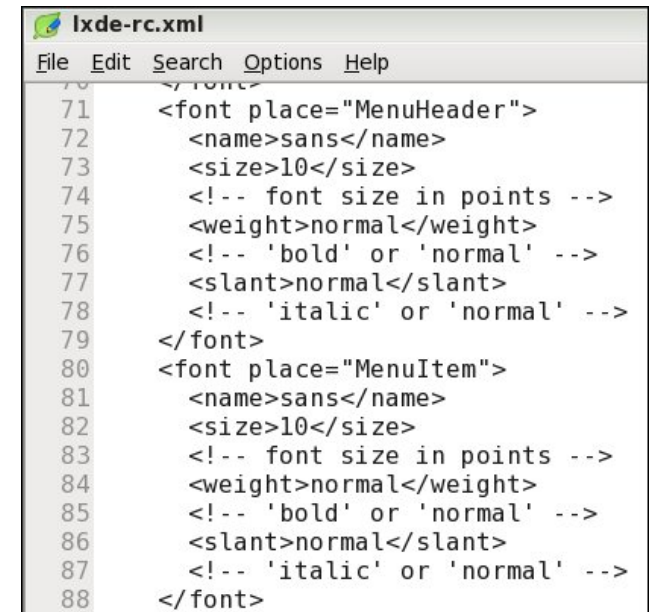
rc.xml is one of those configuration files that controls a lot of aspects of how LXDE behaves on your computer. On OpenBox, the file is named rc.xml, but the contents are virtually the same. While I'm not going to cover every section of the lxde-rc.xml file, I am going to go through some of the ones that I think you will be most interested in tweaking. I'll leave the rest of the sections for you to explore on your own.

Before we get too deep into the discussion of how to tweak and tune lxde-rc.xml, be forewarned that one misspelling or one missed command can make your additions or changes not work properly, and may have farther reaching ramifications by causing other working items to stop working. Also, when you open a command, you must also close it. Remember our previous discussions about the structure of an xml file. With this in mind, it would be an excellent idea to make a backup of your lxde-rc.xml file. I called mine old-lxde-rc.xml. Remember (or write down) where your backup file is stored, just in case you make a mess of things and find yourself having to restore the file from the command line.

Finally, before any of your changes or additions can be viewed, you must log out to the user sign in, and sign back in.

Menu Control

One of the things that lxde-rc.xml controls is the appearance of your window menus. Here is the section of the lxde-rc.xml file from my installation of LXDE that deals with the appearance of my window menus:

The menu appearance lines are under the <theme> section of the lxde-rc.xml file. There are only a few settings available, but these settings can have a dramatic effect on the appearance of your desktop. In the graphic above, "MenuHeader" represents the top level menus that appear directly on the menu bar, while "MenuItem" represents the items that appear under the top level menus. The <name> parameter is the name of the font to use to display the menu. The <size> setting is the size of the text to use, in points. The <weight> setting specifies whether the menu text is displayed in a bold or normal type face, while <slant> determines whether or not italic text is used. As you can see, it's fairly simple and straight forward.

Customize Your Window Theme

Just as we did above with our window menus, we can change other aspects of our window theme. Below is the <theme> section of the lxde-rc.xml file, which includes the menu section we just finished talking about.

```
  <theme>
    <name>oxygenminimalist</name>
    <titleLayout>NLSIMC</titleLayout>
    <!--
      available characters are NDSLIMC, each can
occur at most once.
      N: window icon
      L: window label (AKA title).
      I: iconify
      M: maximize
      C: close
      S: shade (roll up/down)
      D: omnipresent (on all desktops).
  -->
    <keepBorder>yes</keepBorder>
    <animateIconify>yes</animateIconify>
    <font place="ActiveWindow">
      <name>sans</name>
      <size>10</size>
      <!-- font size in points -->
      <weight>bold</weight>
      <!-- 'bold' or 'normal' -->
      <slant>normal</slant>
      <!-- 'italic' or 'normal' -->
    </font>
    <font place="InactiveWindow">
      <name>sans</name>
      <size>10</size>
      <!-- font size in points -->
      <weight>bold</weight>
      <!-- 'bold' or 'normal' -->
      <slant>normal</slant>
      <!-- 'italic' or 'normal' -->
    </font>
    <font place="MenuHeader">
      <name>sans</name>
```

```
      <size>10</size>
      <!-- font size in points -->
      <weight>normal</weight>
      <!-- 'bold' or 'normal' -->
      <slant>normal</slant>
      <!-- 'italic' or 'normal' -->
    </font>
    <font place="MenuItem">
      <name>sans</name>
      <size>10</size>
      <!-- font size in points -->
      <weight>normal</weight>
      <!-- 'bold' or 'normal' -->
      <slant>normal</slant>
      <!-- 'italic' or 'normal' -->
    </font>
    <font place="OnScreenDisplay">
      <name>sans</name>
      <size>10</size>
      <!-- font size in points -->
      <weight>bold</weight>
      <!-- 'bold' or 'normal' -->
      <slant>normal</slant>
      <!-- 'italic' or 'normal' -->
    </font>
  </theme>
```

The first entry, right after the declaration of the <theme> section, is the <name> parameter. This specifies the name of the OpenBox window manager theme to use when displaying the windows. Next is the <titleLayout> setting, which determines the order of the elements that are displayed in the title bars of your windows. A legend is included, to let you know what each letter represents.

The <keepBorder> setting determines whether or not a window border is drawn when the windows are displayed. With the <animateIconify> setting, it determines if the window is animated when you minimize a window to the panel.

With the next two sections, <ActiveWindow> and <InactiveWindow>, there are exactly the same settings as we had when setting the appearance of our window menus. Here, we can set the font, font size, weight and slant of the text that is displayed on the respective window title bars (active or inactive windows). The last section, <OnScreenDisplay>, sets the font characteristics to use when you press the Alt + Tab key, and is formatted the same as the menu and window title bar text.

Desktop Pager Control

While there are settings for controlling your desktop pagers in the lxde-rc.xml file, they mirror the settings you can make using the graphical OpenBox configuration utility, ObConf. The settings in the lxde-rc.xml file are only used at startup. It's best to use the ObConf utility, since it will change your desktop pager settings "on the fly." Changes made to the lxde-rc.xml file require you to log out, then back in, before they take effect.

Customize Your Keyboard Shortcuts

Now comes the fun part, and the reason most users will want to edit lxde-rc.xml. I will admit that LXDE comes with a fairly full compliment of keyboard shortcuts, already installed and configured. But let me give you an example that happened to me. I installed PCLinuxOS-LXDE to my old IBM Thinkpad T23. It does NOT have a "Super" key (a.k.a. the "Windows" key). Some of the keyboard shortcuts are coupled to that very same "Super" key on the keyboard. Hence, they won't work on my copy of

LXDE. I had to change them to a different key stroke combination.

The keybindings are located in the **<keyboard>** section of lxde-rc.xml. They look something like this:

```
<!--keybindings for LXPanel -->
<keybind key="W-r">
  <action name="Execute">
    <command>lxpanelctl run</command>
  </action>
</keybind>
<keybind key="A-F2">
  <action name="Execute">
    <command>lxpanelctl run</command>
  </action>
</keybind>
```

The first line, <!--keybindings for LXPanel -->, is nothing more than a comment line, to help keep you oriented within the file. The second line, <keybind key="..."> specifies the key stroke combination to which to bind the action and command that follow. There are some reserved keys that are used here. The "W" key denotes the "Super" key. "S" specifies the Shift key, while "C" is reserved for the Control key. The "A" key is used to specify the Alt key. These reserved keys are combined with the additional key (with a dash between them) to use to execute the action and command that follows. In the second line, the "W-r" (Super key and "r" key pressed together) will run the "lxpanelctl run" command.

Starting on the seventh line, another keybinding is defined for the same command, giving the user a choice of whether to use "Super + r" or "Alt + F2" to execute the command to bring up the Run dialog box.

The entire <keyboard> section of the lxde-rc.xml file is filled with many keybindings, providing you with a fairly large number of predefined keyboard shortcuts. If some of them don't suit you, or the way you work with your computer, feel free to change them. Just be careful. Just as with any other XML file, one missed ", one misspelled command, or one command that is not closed after being opened, can cause some things to stop working. So double check your work, and always make a backup copy of the unaltered, working copy. This way, you have something to fall back on, should things really get messed up. If you want to *really* uncover the "magic" that can be accomplished with custom keybindings, then read on.

Advanced Keyboard Shortcuts

As you discovered in the last section of the article, LXDE has many keybindings predefined to give you a wide range of keyboard shortcuts. But the "fun" hasn't even begun. With a little imagination, you can make keybindings that take the place of specialized applications, and do things that you may have only just dreamed of. Let me show you one example I stumbled across while writing this article.

I found a real gem that illustrates a fantastic use of keybindings in LXDE, at The IgnorantGuru's Blog. His solution is to create keybindings to take screenshots of the entire screen, the active window only, or only the contents of the active window, without the interactive use of a separate and dedicated screen shot application.

Instead, his method uses ImageMagick, which is already installed in PCLinuxOS-LXDE by default,

and xwd, the X-System window dump program. To make these keybindings work, you will need to install xwd from the PCLinuxOS repository.

```
<keybind key="Print">
    <action name="Execute">
        <startupnotify>
            <enabled>false</enabled>
                <name>Snapshot</name>
        </startupnotify>
        <command>bash -c "xwd | convert -
/tmp/screenshot-$(date +%s).png"</command>
    </action>
</keybind>
<keybind key="S-Print">
    <action name="Execute">
        <startupnotify>
            <enabled>false</enabled>
                <name>Snapshot with Frame</name>

        </startupnotify>
        <command>bash -c "xwd -frame | convert -
/tmp/screenshot-$(date +%s).png"</command>
    </action>
</keybind>
<keybind key="C-Print">
    <action name="Execute">
        <startupnotify>
            <enabled>false</enabled>
                <name>Snapshot Fullscreen</name>

        </startupnotify>
            <command>bash -c "xwd -root |
convert - /tmp/screenshot-$(date
+%s).png"</command>
        </action>
</keybind>
```

His method uses xwd to grab the image, and he then pipes it out the ImageMagick's convert command, and stores it in the user's /tmp directory with the name "screenshot-" with the date tagged onto the end, as a PNG file. You can easily change

the location where the screenshot is stored simply by changing the name of the directory from /tmp, to (perhaps?) /Pictures. I created the directory ~/Pictures/Screenshots to store my screen captures in. Just be sure that the directory actually exists and that the spelling is correct, or the command will fail.

All of the above keybindings are bound to the "PrtSc" (print screen) button on the keyboard. Pressing the PrtSc button by itself will capture just the contents of the active window. Pressing Shift + PrtSc together will capture the active window, with the window frame intact. Ctrl + PrtSc together will make a screen capture of your entire desktop.

You can just as easily change the commands to save your images as JPG files, rather than PNG files. All you have to do is change ".png" to ".jpg."

To enable the keybindings listed above, cut/copy/re-enter the above lines just before the </keyboard> line in lxde-rc.xml. Note that none of these new settings (nor any other changes you have made to lxde-rc.xml) will be available for your use until you log out and log back into LXDE.

Here is another keybinding customization you may find useful. First, here is the excerpt from the lxde-rc.xml file:

```
<keybind key="C-A-Left">
  <action name="DesktopLeft">
    <dialog>no</dialog>
    <wrap>yes</wrap>
  </action>
</keybind>
<keybind key="C-A-Right">
  <action name="DesktopRight">
```

```
    <dialog>no</dialog>
    <wrap>yes</wrap>
  </action>
</keybind>
```

These keybindings allow you to use Ctrl + Alt + Left (left arrow key) and Ctrl + Alt + Right (right arrow key) to move through your desktops. But by default, the <wrap> setting is set to a value of "no." This means when you use Ctrl + Alt + Right to move from desktop 1 to desktop 2 to desktop 3 to desktop 4, it stops after you get to desktop 4, since there is no desktop defined after desktop 4. By changing the <wrap> setting to "yes" (as I did above), once you get to desktop 4 and press Ctrl + Alt + Right, you will now go back to desktop 1. I also changed the <wrap> value for Ctrl + Alt + Left to do the same thing, but in the opposite direction.

Conclusion

As you look through the keybindings, along with all of the other settings in lxde-rc.xml, I'm sure you will find many other items to tweak and change to make LXDE work more like the way you work and interact with your computer. You have the chance to make your LXDE experience uniquely your own.

This article is only meant as a means to introduce you to the things that are possible by tweaking your lxde-rc.xml file. I have left much of lxde-rc.xml file for you to explore. I hope that as you find ways to tweak, tune and alter the lxde-rc.xml file, that you will share your customizations with the rest of the PCLinuxOS community. In this way, we can all learn from one another.
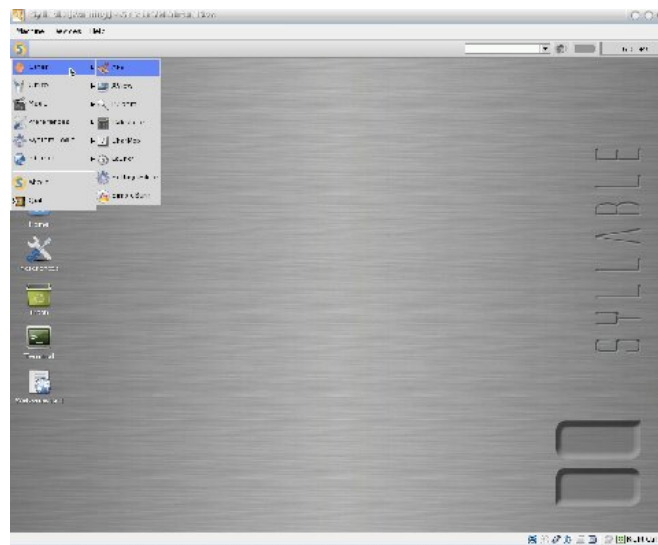
AlternateOS: Syllable - Part 2

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

The non-premium version of Syllable, the version illustrated here, comes with a few applications for doing everyday tasks. The main menu is divided into the sections Other, Office, Media, Preferences, System Tools and Internet, as shown below.

In the "Other" category, we have the applications AEdit, AView, BZoom, Calculator, CharMap, Launch, SettingsEditor and Simpleburn. AEdit is an editor for any file saved as ASCII text, such as a .txt, .xml or .html file. There are no options to change fonts, font size, or to highlight text. AView is a graphics viewer. BZoom is a tool to enlarge the pixel view of the desktop or a window. Character map is an application for viewing the unicode and UTF-8 codes of some 65,533 characters in the Syllable character set. Calculator is capable of trigonometric functions,

as well as calculating in binary, octal, decimal and hexadecimal. For some reason, if I selected the Base function in the menu, without actually changing the base, the virtual machine would lock up. I could select the Logout/Shutdown/Reboot window from the main menu, but none of the functions would respond. Launch is a simple application launcher. You must type the name of the executable or browse for it. Clicking the Browse button opens the contents of the home folder. This is not very useful, since most of the executable files are in /bin or subdirectories of /usr. But you can navigate to those directories within the file browser. Settings Editor reminds me a bit of the Windows regedit tool, although the settings files are all text files.
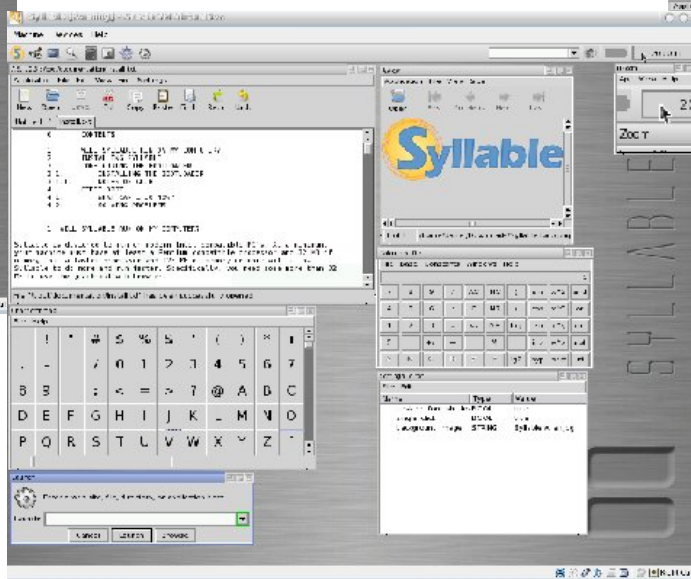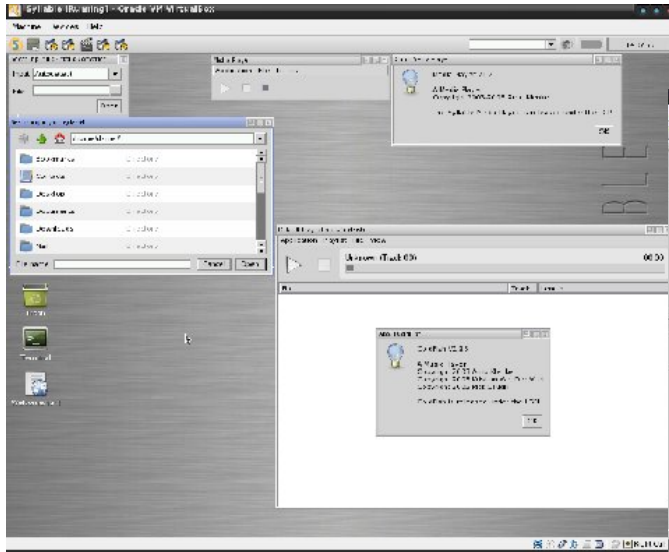
SimpleBurn is a CD burning tool with functions like most others. Unlike most other modern burning tools, SimpleBurn will not burn DVDs. The next

section of the main menu, "Office", contains only Contact and Xpdf. As far as I can tell, contacts entered are not integrated with the email reader application. Xpdf functions only as a pdf reader, and has no editing functions other than copying of text.
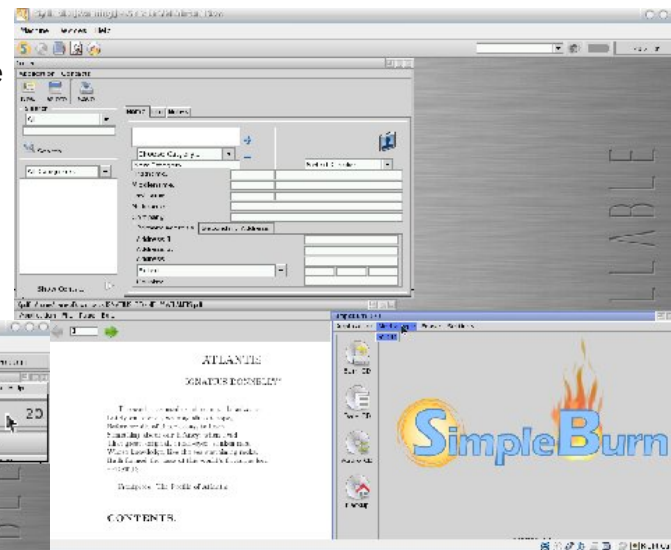
The "Media" section of the main menu contains three applications, ColdFish, MediaConverter and MediaPlayer. (Next page) ColdFish is a music player which can read playlists. The media converter can read CD audio, ffmpeg and Ogg Vorbis files as input. It can convert to ffmpeg or screen video output. The media player will read the same formats as the media converter. I could not get the media player to play a standard mp3 file. It seemed to want to only use playlists. The playlist dialog claimed that selecting a non-existent playlist would result in creating it. I couldn't seem to do that, either.

The "Preferences" section of the main menu has the largest number of applications. They are Appearance, DateTime, Desktop, Dock, FileTypes, Font, Keyboard, Locale, Login Details, Media, Mouse, Network, Printers, Screen and Users & Groups. The window decorator options are everything from Amiga to Windows98. There are no pre-loaded color scheme themes, but the defaults for many items can be altered and saved as a new user-defined theme. Date and time has no network synchronization function. I could not find a way to save the time zone, either. Desktop is basically a wallpaper chooser, which I used to change from the default one. Dock is an application to add or delete some functions to the right-hand portion of the horizontal bar at the top of the desktop. By default, address, sound mixer, battery and clock are shown from left to right. The file types application is used to

define what application will, by default, open a given MIME type.

The font application is used to select what font types and sizes will be used system-wide. Keyboard is used to select the keyboard type and delay settings. Mouse preferences is used to select speed rates and left or right-handed orientation. Media preferences is a bit baffling. The default input options are limited to CD audio or CD digital audio, and output options are limited to media server - OSS or just OSS. Of those four, only the OSS output, when selected as a device, did not result in an error message of either "This input" or "This output" "has no controls." AAC codec was the only other listed device which did not result in an error message. Login allows you to change your user icon and password. Locale allows you to select and change active languages. You can have more than one

active language. Although there is a country tab, there are no countries listed.

Network preferences allows you to change some hardware parameters, localhost and domain names, DNS lookup values and host IP address. Printer options are limited to adding, removing, or setting as default. Screen is used to set screen resolution color depth, and refresh rate. Interestingly, only root user can change any of these values. Users and group settings can also only be altered by root user.

The "System Tools" portion of the main menu includes Disk Manager, CPU Monitor, Memory Monitor, System Information and Terminal. The disk manager is for editing the partition tables of disks, and selecting partition types. Surprisingly, I was able to do this without being root user. The system information application provides a lot of information
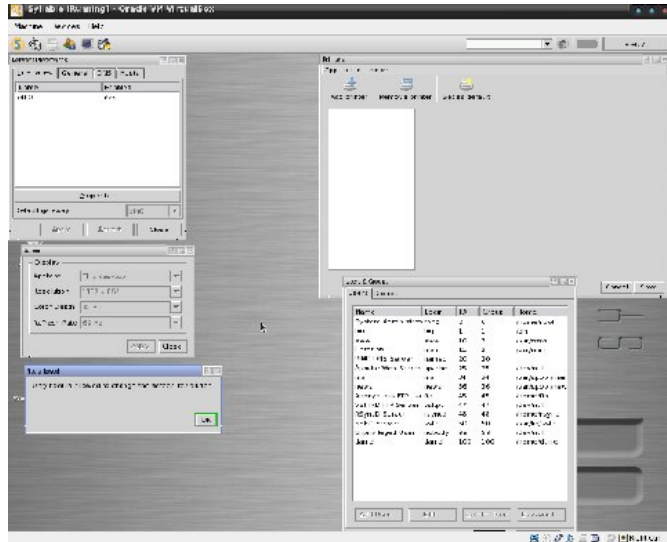
Network Preferences (above)

System Tools (below)
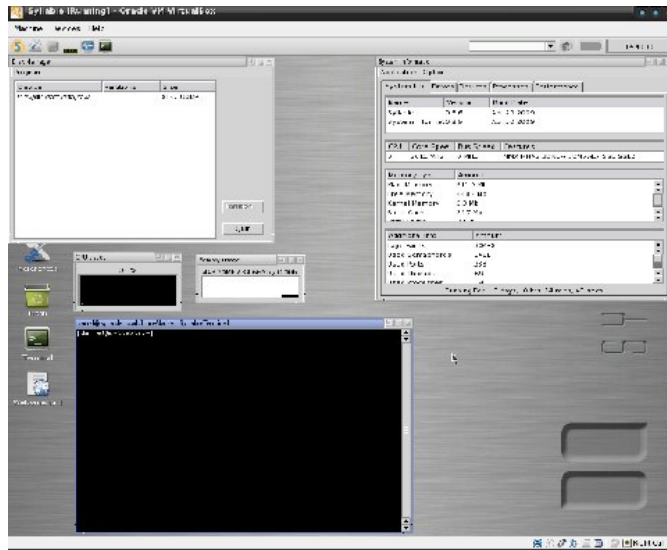
about the operating system and devices used. It also provides a process table, showing the current state of each process and a convenient End Process button. The Performance tab has two tools, memory usage and processor usage. They show the same basic output as the Memory Monitor and CPU Monitor. There is only one terminal provided. According to the set command, SHELL=/bin/bash and TERM=rxvt-16color.
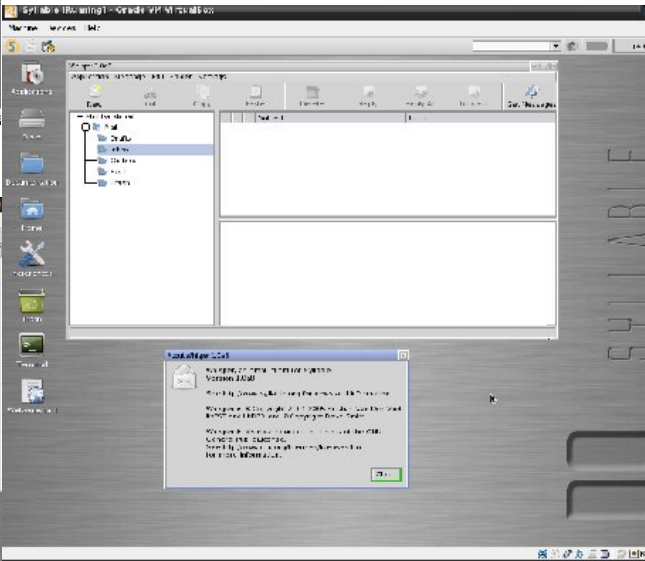
The "Internet" section of the main menu has two items, Webster and Whisper. Whisper is the email client, and is shown below.

Webster is the provided web browser. The browser is very responsive and quickly loads most web pages. On some sites, for example Google maps, the page refreshes several times as all the content is loaded. Right-clicking on some items, for example an image, gives you the option to copy the image to the clipboard, save the image to a file on disk, or open the link in another window. The browser doesn't use tabs. It is also incapable of displaying flash video. The only user-defined settings are for your home page and configuring proxies.

As I mentioned earlier, this is the non-premium version of Syllable. I wanted to see what applications were available to install in addition to the ones already included. The web address for installable applications is http://web.syllable.org/Syllable/downloads.html. I counted 12 individual packages for download. The page also has a link for more software packages which leads to a Syllable SourceForge page. There are many packages listed, each one being in the form of a .recipe file, which is source code intended

for the Syllable build system. The build system requires certain system resource files to be installed. The downloads page has a link for the list of resource packages. Unfortunately, I always got an "access denied" message after selecting the link.

Some packages are provided in zip format. It is a simple matter of unzipping a downloaded package, then installing the package.

I downloaded the package ShellEssentials-1.i586.zip. I changed to the directory where I stored the file and unzipped the package. This resulted in a folder named ShellEssentials being created, as shown at top center.
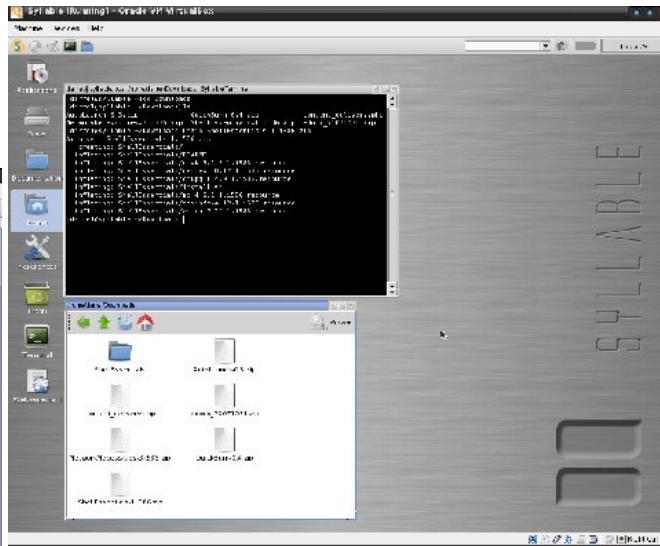
I then attempted to install the package. I received an error message saying I had to be the administrative, or root, user to proceed. I used the su command
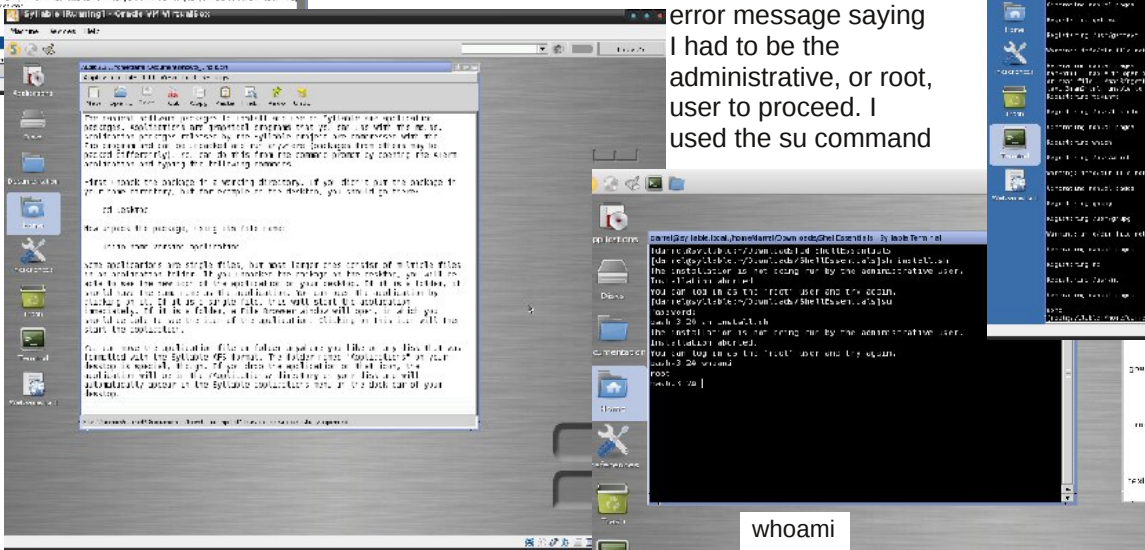
whoami

to become root user and tried again. Again, I received the same error message. The whoami confirms I am, indeed, the root user.

I then closed all applications, logged out, then logged in as user root. I changed to the appropriate directory and successfully installed the ShellEssentials package I had downloaded. According the documentation I had read, the su command should have given me the access I needed. Clearly, logging out and loggin back in as a different user can be a hindrance, and time consuming, to installing packages or doing administrative tasks.
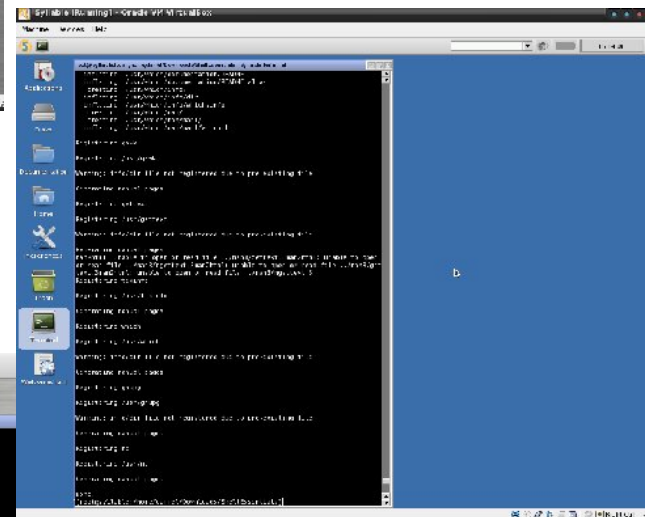
I am once again logged in as my regular user. Below is shown the results of selecting the desktop icons Applications, Disks, Home and Preferences.

Below is shown the result of selecting the Documentation desktop folder, then the man folder in the resulting window, then the index.html file. There is a lot of documentation cross-referenced there. Selecting the Welcome.html desktop file (results not shown) opens a general one page help file in the Webster browser. The help file has some configuration information, information on unzipping downloaded software packages, and links to other information.

Shown below is the result of selecting the Documentation desktop icon, then selecting the file Syllable-logo.png.
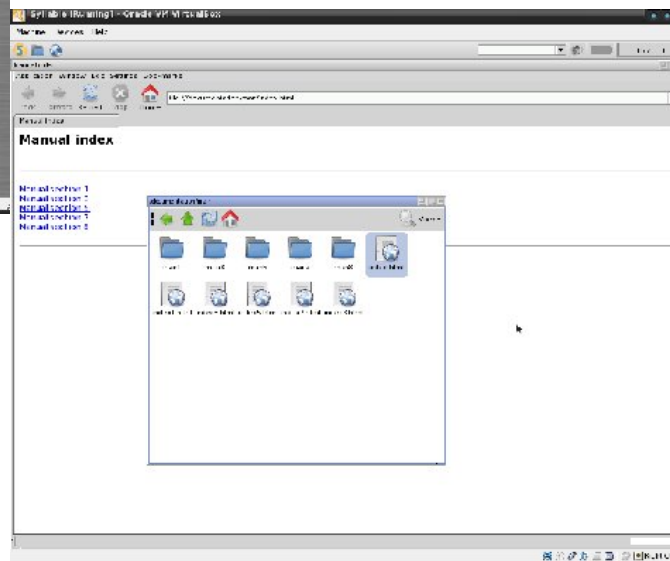
Syllable is a modern operating system with GUI features and sharing common traits and some packages with other *nix type operating systems. It does not have the range of available applications one would find with almost any modern Linux distribution. Some of the system features are more limited than those of UNIX or Linux systems. Compilers, libraries and applications are often the same as found in Linux distributions, but modified for use on Syllable. I can say that the custom Syllable journaling filesystem is rock-solid. Although I sometimes had to do a forced shutdown or restart of the virtual machine, the filesystem never once faltered. Syllable has come a long way since the days when it was its predecessor, AtheOS, which did not even have the ability to read a CD device. The developers have, in my opinion, made wise use of available GNU libraries and applications. But, unless more developers and resources are devoted to the development of Syllable, it will never catch up to the robust GNU/Linux cycle.

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

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

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

LXDE: Tips & Tricks

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

We've covered several topics related to using and customizing PCLinuxOS-LXDE. There are some other things you can do to further customize your LXDE installation, but some of these are simply too short to justify their own article. Even so, they are important enough to cover, so I've decided to collect them here, in a "Tips & Tricks" article. There are 12 "tips and tricks" explained, to help you get more out of your LXDE experience.

Put a Sox In It

In a default installation of PCLinuxOS-LXDE, there is no way to play sound files from the command line. Before you say, "But I can play sound files from [insert your favorite GUI sound application here]," this inability may be something you want to correct. For example, I like to use checkgmail to notify me of new email in my primary Gmail account. One of the abilities it has is to execute a command when new email is received. I like for a sound to be played when I receive new mail. But without the ability to play sound files from the command line, there is no way for me to play a sound (via checkgmail) when I receive new mail.

Enter sox. Available in the PCLinuxOS repository (only 816 KB in size), sox allows you to play sound files from the command line. Sox stands for "Sound Exchange," and it bills itself as the "Swiss Army Knife of Sound Manipulation." As such, with the added ability to play sound files from the command line, I am able to play a sound when new mail arrives to my Gmail account. Simply enter the command, similar to the one below:

```
play -v 0.10
/home/paulibm/Sounds/r2d2-1.wav
```

The command line instructs sox to play a sound file at 10 percent volume (-v 0.10), and the path to the sound file I wish to play (/home/paulibm/Sounds/r2d2-1.wav). The "play" command is actually very powerful, and the above command doesn't even scratch the surface of what it is capable of doing. You can get a better idea of its full capabilities by typing play --help at the command line, or by entering man sox at the command line to view the extensive man page documentation.

While I'm not going to steal the thunder of discovery from your looking through the documentation or help for the play command, I will touch on one other command line switch you may want to use. While it's not usually necessary to do anything special to play a valid sound file, it can be helpful to give the play command some additional "guidance" on what type of sound file you want to play. So, if I want to play an MP3 file, I can tell sox to "get ready" to play that type of file, with the -t command line switch. Here's an example:

```
play -t mp3 -v 0.50
"/home/paulibm/Music/THX - Dolby
Digital Sound Effects Trailer.mp3"
```

Since the file name has spaces in it (and if the file name of your sound file has spaces in it), you will need to enclose the file name in double quotes. Otherwise, your sound file will not be able to be found to be played back, since a space has special meaning on the command line. This is just one reason that spaces in file names is discouraged under Linux, since spaces in the file name can become problematic when trying to utilize the file from the command line.

Play a Sound When PCLinuxOS-LXDE Starts

Perhaps it's the relative youth of the LXDE desktop, but there is no obvious way to play a sound when LXDE launches. If you followed through with the previous tip and installed sox, then playing a sound when LXDE starts up is easy.

First, create a simple bash script, similar to the one below:

```
#! /bin/bash

play -t mp3 -v 0.40
/home/paulibm/Sounds/startup.mp3
```

Next, follow the instructions from the LXDE: Autostart Apps With .desktop Files article in the **September, 2010** issue of The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine. Make the bash script executable, and copy it to your /usr/bin folder (as the root user). While you can name your script file whatever name you wish, I named mine startup-sound.sh. Now, either create a .desktop file that points to your "startup-sound.sh" file, and place it in your $HOME/.config/autostart directory, or add **startup-sound.sh &** to your lxde-autostart.sh file. In fact, you can even just place the entire play command into your lxde-autostart.sh file, if you want. I prefer to keep it modularized and in its own bash script file, where I can make changes without the risk of messing with my lxde-autostart.sh file.

I've not yet been able to figure out how to get LXDE to play a sound when you are exiting the desktop.

Install a Better Power Manager

It's no secret that the LXDE Power Manager is seriously lacking in functionality. In fact, it's known to be buggy. For laptop users, this is a huge deal. You can circumvent the buggy LXDE Power Manager by installing a different power manager. If I were you, I'd avoid the Xfce4 Power Manager, since it also has some current issues and does not work properly. About the only other choice is to install the Gnome Power Manager. It is available in the PCLinuxOS repository, and although it's a Gnome application, it pulls in hardly any extra Gnome dependencies. As an added benefit, Gnome is also based on the Gtk+ 2.0 libraries, which are the native libraries upon which LXDE is built. But most importantly, the Gnome Power Manager just works, and works as it should.
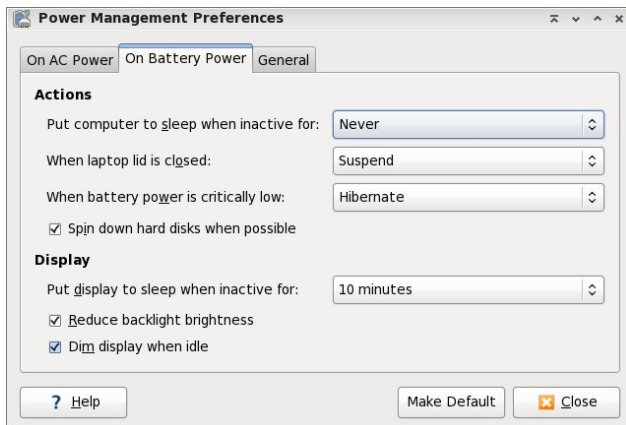

The command to start the Gnome Power Manager is `gnome-power-preferences --sync`. If you want the Gnome Power Manager to automatically start when you start your LXDE desktop, you can add `gnome-power-preferences --sync &` to your lxde-autostart.sh file that you created from the instructions in the LXDE: Autostart Apps With .desktop Files article in the September, 2010 issue of the magazine.

The Gnome Power Manager will properly inform you of remaining battery time (when working unplugged), or remaining battery charge time (when plugged into a power source). If you are using LXDE on a notebook or netbook computer, this becomes a very important issue, for the obvious reasons.

Workaround For Trash In LXDE

To start with, the lack of a bona fide trash can has been remedied in the newest release of PCManFM
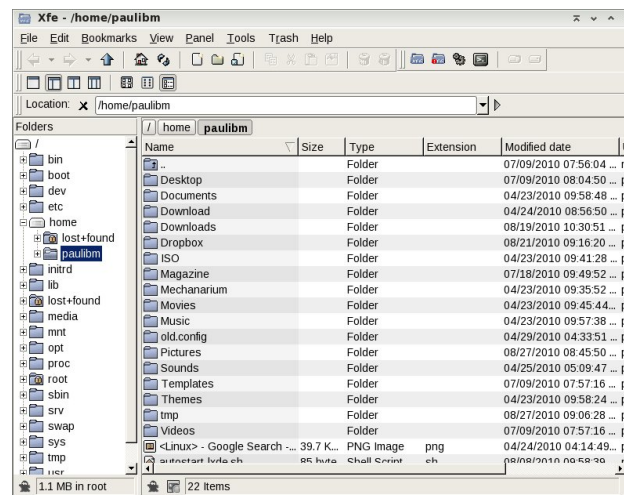
that is default in PCLinuxOS-LXDE 2010.10. In earlier versions of PCManFM, trash does not work. You can get around this issue by installing **xfe** from the PCLinuxOS repository. Xfe, short for X File Explorer, resembles Windows Explorer in Windows 98.

When you come across a file that you want to send to the trash, open xfe. Go to the directory that contains the file you want to send to trash, right click on the file and select "Move to Trash."
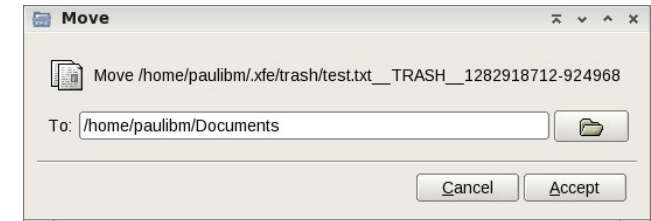
Similarly, you can restore items from the trash. Again, open xfe, and select Trash » Go to trash from the Trash menu. Right click on the file you want to restore, and select Move to... from the context menu that pops us. Type in the name of the folder you want to move it to (or select the destination by clicking on the folder icon button next to the text entry box, and selecting the destination with your mouse). Click "Accept" to complete the move of the file.

To delete files in the xfe trash, select Trash > Empty trash can from the menu.

Place Icons On Your Desktop

Granted, not everyone wants icons on their desktop. In fact, some LXDE users are a bit "miffed" about a PCManFM bug that places an unremovable "My Documents" icon on the desktop. (I fall into the category of users who really don't want a lot of icons on my desktop - it's too reminiscent of Windows for me). But gauging from the screenshots posted to the monthly screenshots thread in the forum, there are just as many users who do want icons on their desktop. If you fall into the latter category of LXDE users, you too can adorn your desktop with all of the icons you desire.

There is a utility for LXDE, called lxshortcut. While not installed by default, it is available in the PCLinuxOS repository. Lxshortcut is a utility that helps make a .desktop file that is compliant with the de-facto freedesktop.org standards. I know, I know ... you're asking yourself "now why didn't he tell me about this before now?" To be perfectly honest, I didn't know it existed until I stumbled across it while researching other "tips and tricks" for this article. But given the relative simplicity of how a .desktop file is constructed, knowing the structure of the file isn't necessarily a bad thing. And now that you have a better understanding of that file structure, lxshortcut will help eliminate some of the work you have to do. Really, it's a good thing.

Don't bother going to look for an icon in your PC Menu for lxshortcuts. It doesn't exist. Instead, you start it from the command line. To start it up, simply type lxshortcut --input=[name-of-file].desktop at the command line. You will be presented with the window below:

In the first text entry box, "Name," enter the text of what you want to call the shortcut. In the second text entry box, "Command," enter the command you want to execute when the shortcut is selected (or click on the "Browse" button and select the application to launch from the list of installed applications in /usr/bin). In the third text entry box, "Tooltip," enter the text you want to be displayed when your mouse hovers over the icon. At the far left side of the window, click on the "Change Icon" button and select the icon you want to use for the shortcut. The only thing under the "Advanced" tab is "Use Startup Notification," and this is typically left unchecked. As you can see, its use is fairly cut and dry.

Once you have everything entered the way you want or need it, then click on the "OK" button. A properly structured .desktop file, with the name you assigned it when you opened lxshortcut with the input= command line switch, will be written to your $HOME/.local/share/applications folder. It should look something like this:

```
[Desktop Entry]
Encoding=UTF-8
Type=Application
Name=Xfce4 Screenshooter
Name[en_US]=Xfce4 Screenshooter
Icon=applets-screenshooter
Exec=/usr/bin/xfce4-screenshooter
Comment[en_US]=Take screenshots of your desktop
```

Now, it really isn't doing us much good there in its current location, since it still isn't showing the shortcut on our desktop. Open PCManFM and go to that directory. Find your new .desktop file, right click on it, and select "Cut" from the context menu that appears. Over in the top left pane of PCManFM, you will see an entry defined as "Desktop." Click on it, and paste the .desktop file into your "Desktop" folder. Immediately, your new desktop shortcut icon should appear on your desktop. Repeat these steps for each and every shortcut you would like to place on your desktop.

As a bonus, this method should actually work on just about any desktop environment. Just install lxshortcut from the PCLinuxOS repository, and you should be able to similarly create desktop shortcuts for Xfce, Gnome, KDE, and any other DE that conforms to the freedesktop.org standards.

Customize Your LXDE Menu

While we are talking about .desktop files, it's also a good time to discuss how to customize your LXDE menu. We touched on it briefly, when we were talking about how to add applications to be automatically started when LXDE starts, in the LXDE: Autostart Apps With .desktop Files article in the **September, 2010** issue of the magazine.

Just by simply placing your properly configured .desktop file in the /usr/share/applications directory, you can add items to your PC Menu. But in order for items to properly appear in your PC Menu, you have to first list the menu category to place the item in. All it takes is one small typo to prevent your item from showing up in the menu.

There are just two things you need to do. First, using the .desktop we created in the previous step (presuming you want to make a menu entry for that application), add the following line:

`Categories=X-MandrivaLinux;Graphics`

Second, copy the .desktop file to your /usr/share/applications directory (you must have root privileges to do this). Now, your application will have an entry in your menu.

Here are some categories you may want to use when adding applications to your menu:

```
X-MandrivaLinux-System-Configuration-Other;
X-MandrivaLinux-Multimedia-Sound;
X-MandrivaLinux-Office-Wordprocessors;
X-MandrivaLinux-System-FileTools;
X-MandrivaLinux-Internet;
```

There are more categories; I'm not going to try to bother to list them all here. The easiest way to figure out the category is to open the .desktop file of another application that appears in the menu location where you want to place your application. Simply copy the "Categories=" line from that .desktop file, and paste it into the .desktop file of the application you want to appear in that category.

Customize Your LXDE Menu: Part Deux

You may have noticed that when you right-click your mouse on the desktop, you get a different context menu that appears like this:
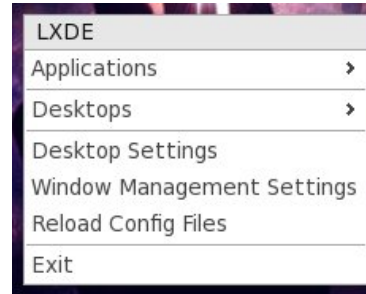
Believe it or not, this is not exactly an LXDE menu (even though it says so at the top). Rather, this menu is under the control of the OpenBox window manager. As such, the configuration file for controlling this context menu is the menu.xml file, located in /usr/share/lxde/openbox. (Psst ... much of this information also applies to the OpenBox remaster of PCLinuxOS).

Probably the one area of this context menu you will be most interested in is how to add applications to the "Applications" menu item. In the box to the right is the structure for the "Applications" menu.

Since it is written in XML, the file structure is very similar to HTML. We briefly covered this in the LXDE: All Hail The Halo Of halevt article elsewhere in this issue of the magazine. Basically, once you issue a XML command, you must close it. Notice how the first line of the "apps-menu" section of menu.xml starts with <menu id= ... >, and the last line in the section is </menu>, telling the system that this is the end of this particular menu. Notice how each <item ...> ends with </item> before listing the next item. Similarly, <action ...> is ended with </action>, and <command>[your command here] is

```
<menu id="apps-menu" label="Applications">
<item label="PCManFM">
    <action name="Execute">
<startupnotify><enabled>yes</enabled><icon>pcman
fm</icon></startupnotify>
    <command>pcmanfm</command></action>
</item>
<item label="LXDECC">
    <action
name="Execute"><command>lxdecc</command></action
>
</item>
<item label="Configure Your Computer">
    <action
name="Execute"><command>/usr/sbin/drakconf</comm
and></action>
</item>>
<item label="Package Manager">
    <action
name="Execute"><command>/usr/sbin/synaptic</comm
and></action>
</item>
<item label="LXTerminal">
    <action
name="Execute"><command>lxterminal</command></ac
tion>
</item>
<item label="Firefox">
    <action
name="Execute"><command>firefox</command></actio
n>
</item>
</menu>
```

ended with </command>. Just be sure to close the commands in the reverse order that you issued them.

So, if I want to add my favorite screenshot application to this "Applications" menu, I would insert the following right before the last line that reads </menu>:

```
<item label="Screenshooter">
    <action name="Execute"><command>xfce4-
```

```
screenshooter</command></action>
</item>
```

This would place a menu item, named "Screenshooter," in the context menu, under Applications, right after Firefox. Pretty simple, huh?

An Alternate Autostart Method

You gotta love it. As usual in Linux, there are always multiple ways to get things done. This is not an exception when it comes to configuring applications to automatically start when LXDE starts.

Buried in the /etc/xdg/lxsession/LXDE directory is a file named, ironically enough, autostart. Simply add an @ symbol, immediately followed by the name of the application you want to automatically start (e.g., @**conky**). Now, whenever LXDE starts up, Conky (or whatever other application you inserted at the end of that file) will automatically start. Just remember that you can edit the autostart file only if you have root privileges.

**Get A New Doo: Installing OpenBox Themes**

Definitely one way to customize your LXDE desktop is to give it a whole new look. The easiest way is to head over to http://box-look.org/ and download a new OpenBox window manager theme. Once you find the one (or several) that you like, download them to your /home directory. I place mine in my /home/paulibm/Downloads directory.

You are likely to find the OpenBox themes in different formats. Many of the themes are available as *.obt files, and these are the easiest ones to install. Once you've downloaded them, right-click your mouse on the .obt file and select "Open With OpenBox Configuration Manager." This will install the theme to the $HOME/.themes directory, automatically.

If you download a theme in either a .tar.bz or .tar.bz2 format, you will need to do a little more work to install the theme. First, open the archived file with File Roller (or any favorite archive manager). Look for a directory that says "openbox-3." Extract that directory, and any sub-directories, to a folder in your $HOME/.themes directory. It's best to name the new folder the name of the new theme you are wanting to use. At the very least, it helps avoid confusion later on. Next, re-start the OpenBox Configuration Manager. Your new theme should be listed among your choices.
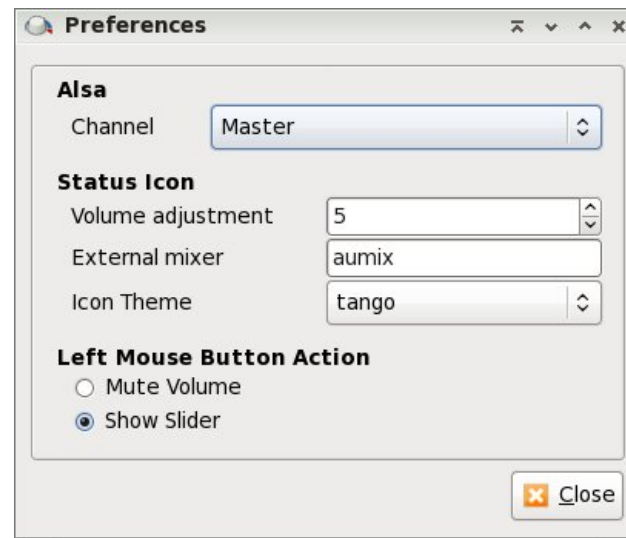
Get More Control Over Your Sounds

The sound volume panel plugin for LXDE is pretty lame. You basically only have control over the volume. Period. That's it. It is very basic, and it's a rare situation where it will meet the needs of hardly any computer user. Fortunately, there is a (better) alternative.

Open up Synaptic and install **volumeicon** from the PCLinuxOS repository. Once installed, you will not only have control over the volume of your sound card, but also access to set the other levels for the additional ports on your sound card. To start volumeicon, click on your PC Menu icon, select "Run," and type in volumeicon.

By default, volumeicon uses alsamix, a command line mixer opened up in xterm. While functional, I prefer to use a GUI based sound mixer. When you right-click your mouse on the volume icon in the notification area of your panel, you can select Preferences from the context menu. When you do, you will see a window similar to the one shown in the previous column.

Here, you can specify a different external mixer to use. I have chosen to use aumix, a lightweight mixer that does not seem to be desktop-specific. You could just as easily choose GMixer (the Gnome sound mixer), AlsaMixerGUI (a GUI alternative to the command line alsamix), or any other sound mixer you prefer to use. Whichever sound mixer you choose to use will be launched when you select "Open Mixer" from the context menu of volumeicon.

At the top of the window, you can choose which sound channel you want volumeicon to control. The "Volume adjustment" sets the increment to raise or lower the volume when you rotate the wheel of a mouse over the sound icon. The "Icon theme" allows you to set the appearance of the icon displayed in the notification tray. Finally, you can determine what action to take when the left mouse button is clicked on the sound icon. The default value is to mute the volume. I have changed it to show the volume slider, since I rarely use the mouse with the notebook computer I have LXDE installed on.

Make PCManFM Sing & Dance

Although being a lightweight file manager, PCManFM does have some "hidden" tools and features that will make your life easier.

It may not be immediately apparent, but PCManFM can display multiple tabs, with each tab containing/displaying different folders on your
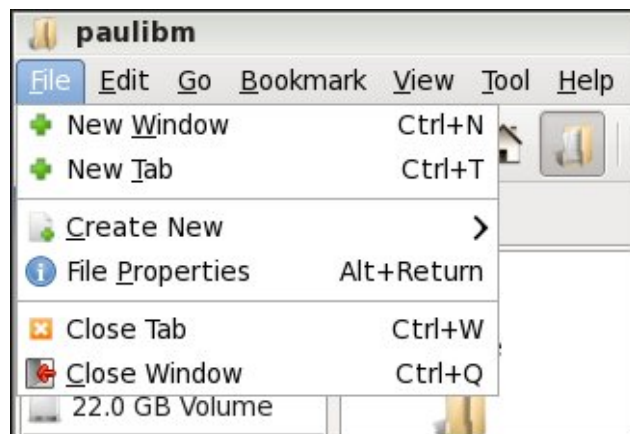

computer. Under the "File" menu, select "New Tab." Alternatively, you can just press Ctrl + T when PCManFM has the focus, and a new tab will be created. The use of tabs means you only have to have one PCManFM window open to view or work on the contents of multiple folders, which can save you some memory usage. This is especially important if you are working on an older machine with limited memory.
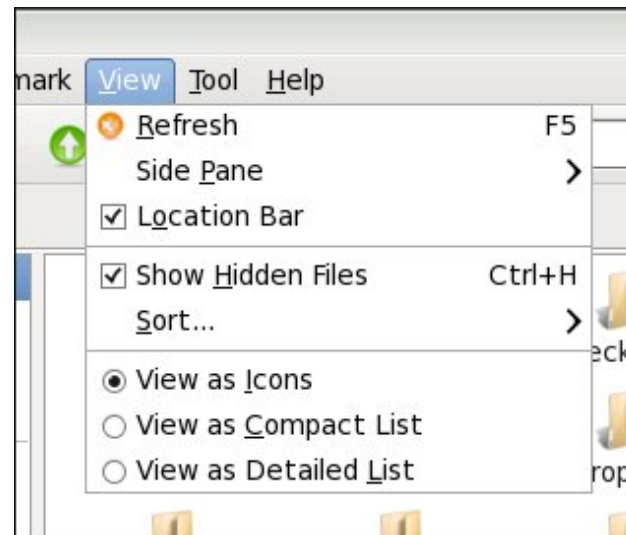
It's also very easy to view hidden files on your computer. From the "View" menu, select "Show Hidden Files" to toggle the display of hidden files. You can also use a keyboard shortcut, Ctrl + H, when the PCManFM window is focused to toggle the display of hidden files.

Under the "Tool" menu are three very useful tools. First, you can open a LXTerminal session simply by selecting "Open Terminal" (or simply by pressing F4 when the PCManFM window has the focus). As an
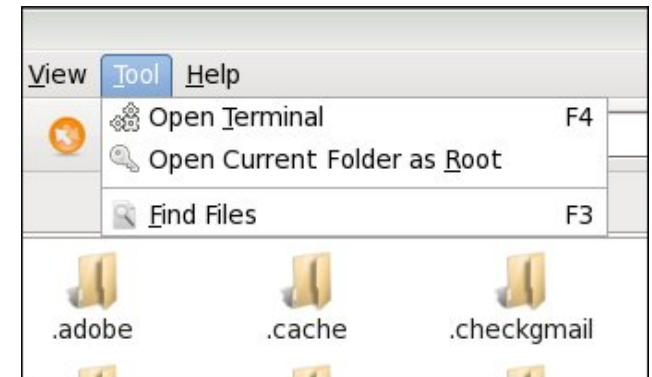
added bonus, your terminal session is opened up with the currently displayed folder as the active directory in your terminal session.

Sometimes, it's necessary to elevate your "privileges" to the root user to perform various actions on files. PCManFM makes this easy. Simply select "Open Current Folder as Root" from the "Tool" menu. After being prompted for (and properly supplying) the root password, another copy of PCManFM will be opened up with root access to the currently displayed folder.

Finally, you can use the "Find Files" item under the "Tool" menu to search for files on your computer. You can use the normal set of wildcard characters, and tell PCManFM where to look, so you can narrow your search.

Icon Display On Your Panel

It isn't quickly apparent how to control the display of icons on your panel, so it certainly deserves mention

here. The question came up in the PCLinuxOS forum a month or two ago, and the user was having difficulty finding where to control this setting.

Right click on the panel, and select "Panel Settings" from the context menu. When the "Panel Preferences" window opens, click on the "Panel Applets" tab. Find and click on the "Task Bar (Window List) line. Then click on the "Edit" button on the right side of the window.
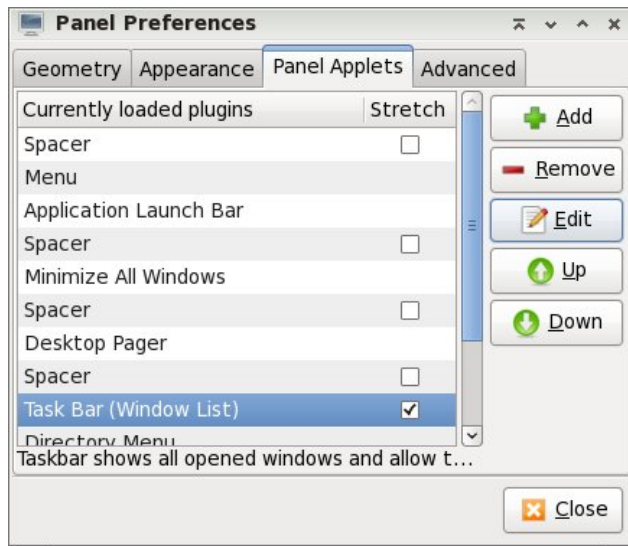
This brings up the window below. The first option, "Show tooltips," is checked by default. I cannot think of a reason to turn this option off, but if you don't want tooltips to be displayed, you are free to uncheck this setting. If you want to only display the icons of the open windows, without any text, check the option labeled "Icons only" (second option from the top). This will display only the icon of the open
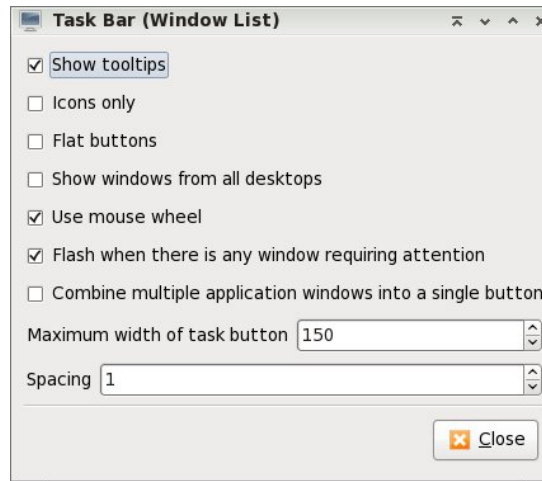
window in your task bar, similar to the "Smooth Tasks" widget in KDE 4.

Select the third option, "Flat buttons," if you do not want your panel buttons to have a 3D appearance. Select the fourth option, "Show windows from all desktops," if you want to see icons representing all of your open applications from all of your desktops, and not just your current desktop. This might be helpful if you are likely to forget that you have an application already open, but on a different desktop, and memory is at a premium.

With the fifth option, "Use mouse wheel," you can use your mouse wheel to switch between available desktops simply by scrolling your mouse wheel on an empty portion of your desktop. This option is turned on by default in PCLinuxOS-LXDE. The sixth option, "Flash when there is any window requiring attention," flashes the window icon in the task bar whenever there is a window that requires your attention.

The seventh option, "Combine multiple application windows into a single button," causes only one icon to be displayed in the task bar, regardless of how many instances of the application you have open. So, if you have this option selected, and you have six instances of Leafpad running, only one icon for Leafpad will appear in the task bar.

The final two options allow you to set the maximum width of a task button (default is 150 pixels), and the spacing between buttons on the task bar (the default is 1 pixel spacing).

Conclusion

Despite it being one of the newer desktop environments (it is, after all, only four years old), there are already lots of features built into the LXDE desktop. I think you will agree with my assessment that there is a lot of room for many improvements and enhancements in the LXDE desktop, and I have no doubts that these improvements and enhancements will find their way to fruition as the LXDE desktop matures. Meanwhile, the LXDE desktop is already a robust desktop environment, and it should provide most any intermediate to advanced Linux user a satisfying desktop experience. And it does so, without getting in its own way and while adhering to its "mission" to be a full, complete lightweight desktop.

As you have seen, there are many ways to "tweak" the LXDE desktop, if you only know where to look and know what to do.

Get Slick With xbindkeys

by Pete Kelly (critter)

PCLinuxOS comes with a little talked about utility called xbindkeys, which is pre-installed. What it does is to 'bind' a key or key sequence to perform a function under the X windowing system, e.g. KDE. You may wonder why this is useful when systems like KDE and Gnome already have the ability to assign short-cuts to keys, and you can click on the icon of a .desktop file to launch almost any installed application. This is true, but xbindkeys takes this a step further.

With this little utility, you can perform any function recognized by the system with a simple key sequence. Add to that the ability to recognize most of those 'extra' keys that appear on multimedia keyboards, to modify any key press by the simultaneous pressing of the shift, control, alt and super (Windows) keys and more. Not only is the key press recognized, but the key release is seen as a different event. Something else that makes this utility so flexible is the ability to recognize and act upon mouse button presses with key presses, even when using those usually ignored additional mouse buttons.

Of course, you have to set it up to perform your particular magic. This is quite easy to do, even though you do need to briefly open a command line terminal. You will need to create or edit a configuration file, and xbindkeys will create a default one for you to get you started. But thanks to the PCLinuxOS developers, you don't even need to do that. They have already put one in your home directory.

The configuration file is a simple text file that can be edited with any text editor, such as kwrite. The default file supplied for you is a hidden file (the name begins with a period) in your home directory, named .xbindkeysrc. It is fairly long, as it contains a lot of helpful introductory text, but once you are familiar with the application, you can streamline the file by deleting most of this.

Open the file and scroll down until you find these lines:

```
# Examples of commands:

"xbindkeys_show"
control+shift + q
```

Any line that begins with a '#' is ignored by the program.

The text inside the quotes is the command to execute, and the line below is the sequence of keys to execute that command. What this pair of lines does is to execute the command "/usr/bin/xbindkeys_show" which is a script which will list the currently recognized commands. To try it out, click on an empty part of the desktop, hold down the control and shift keys and press q. You will be presented with a window like this:

Those two lines, the command and the key sequence are all that are needed.

Why did I tell you to click on an empty part of the desktop? You

will all ready have many shortcuts pre-defined by KDE or other applications, and you don't want to conflict with those. Clicking on the desktop gives it the "focus," and it is unlikely that there is a Control + Shift + Q shortcut defined there. When defining new shortcuts, for this or any application, you should consider the possibility of creating a conflict.

Look at the next two commands in the screen-shot

```
"xterm"

        m:0x4 + c:41
        Control + f
```

and

```
"xterm"

        m:0x4 + b:2 (mouse)
```

The command is the same in both cases.
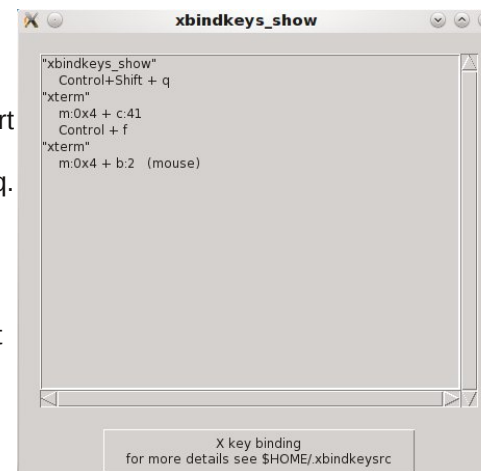
In the first case, `m:0x4 + c:41` means modifier key number 4 plus character key number 41.

A modifier key is something like control, alt or shift and character 41 (in my locale, yours may vary) is the letter f. The next line repeats this in an alternative, more readable format but not all keys can be represented in this friendlier format.

The second case performs the same function, but using the

control key. We know this from the previous example, and button number 2 on the mouse.

The mouse buttons are easy to assign. The left, middle and right buttons correspond to b:1, b:2 and b:3, respectively. Other buttons can be easily determined by experimentation. The keys and modifier keys need a different approach, and the programmer has included a simple way to discover any key press combination, even most of those "additional" keys. This is where we need the command line, but don't worry. This is a very simple procedure.

Open a terminal and type:

```
xbindkeys -k
```

A small window will appear on the desktop. The only purpose of this window is to "steal" the focus. Anything you type now will be directed to this window, although it won't appear there. The window will close and what you typed will be reported to its parent – the command line of the terminal window. If you press Control + Alt + W, you will see this:

```
Press combination of keys or/and click under the window.
You can use one of the two lines after "NoCommand"
in $HOME/.xbindkeysrc to bind a key.
"(Scheme function)"
    m:0x1c + c:25
    Control+Alt+Mod2 + w
```

Where you see "(scheme function)" you will enter in your configuration file the actual command that you want the key press to perform. Under that, add either one of the two lines below. For example, if you want the key press Control + Alt + W to launch OpenOffice Writer, then in your configuration file you would enter either:

```
"openoffice.org3 -writer"
Control+Shift + w
```

or

```
"openoffice.org3 -writer"
m:0x1c + c:25
```

If you type **xbindkeys -mk** at the prompt, then the little window won't close after one key sequence, but will keep on echoing the codes of pressed keys to the terminal until you press q. This is useful when first setting things up.

Since version 1.8.3, the version that is currently in the PCLinuxOS repositories, a listening loop has been added to automatically detect changes in the configuration file. But if you have problems with that, or you have an earlier version and your newly added short-cut isn't seen, then executing the following line at the command prompt should resolve the matter.

```
killall -HUP xbindkeys
```

So now that you know how to find the key codes, you will need to know the command format. For anybody familiar with the command line, this should not present a problem. But for everybody else, an easy way is to right click on the menu button at the left of the panel, and select "Menu Editor" from the box that appears. Then simply locate the application that you want to launch, highlight it and copy what appears in the

"Command" box on the right. You may get more text than you need, but the application will run. If it complains, then you can go back and edit out the extra info from the configuration file.

Another way is to type the application name at the command prompt, followed by **--help**. This invariably lists various options that can be passed to the application to modify its behavior. For instance, suppose you are playing some music through Amarok and the phone rings, so you want to pause the music. The Amarok short-cut for this is the space bar. But if Amarok has been minimized to the task bar, then this doesn't work. Typing **amarok --help** at the prompt gives the information that we need. If we add **-t** or **--play-pause** after the command **amarok**, the the state will toggle between playing and paused. These two lines:

```
"amarok --play-pause"
Control+Mod2 + Pause
```

added to the configuration file will pause playing music or restart it, if paused by pressing the control key and the pause key. I used the longer -play-pause option rather than -t, as is shows better what the short-cut does, which may be helpful in a few months time. But -t works just as well.

Now you can unclutter your desktop, make use of extra keys and buttons that have been lying idle. And, you can impress your friends with your programmed shortcuts.
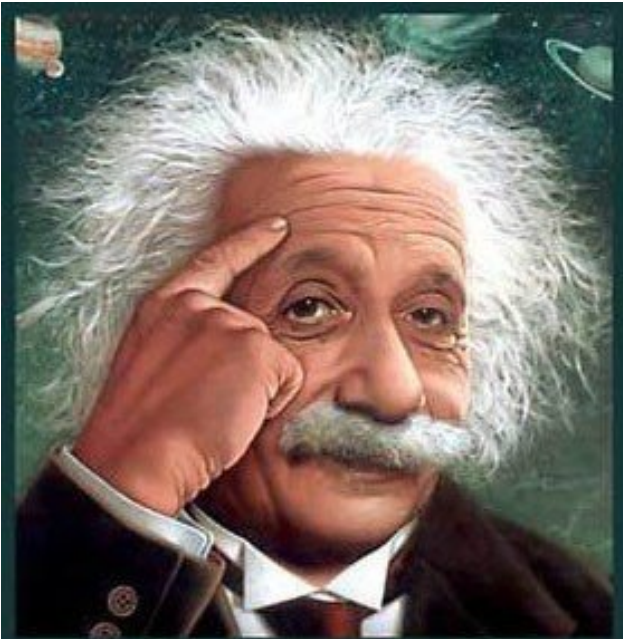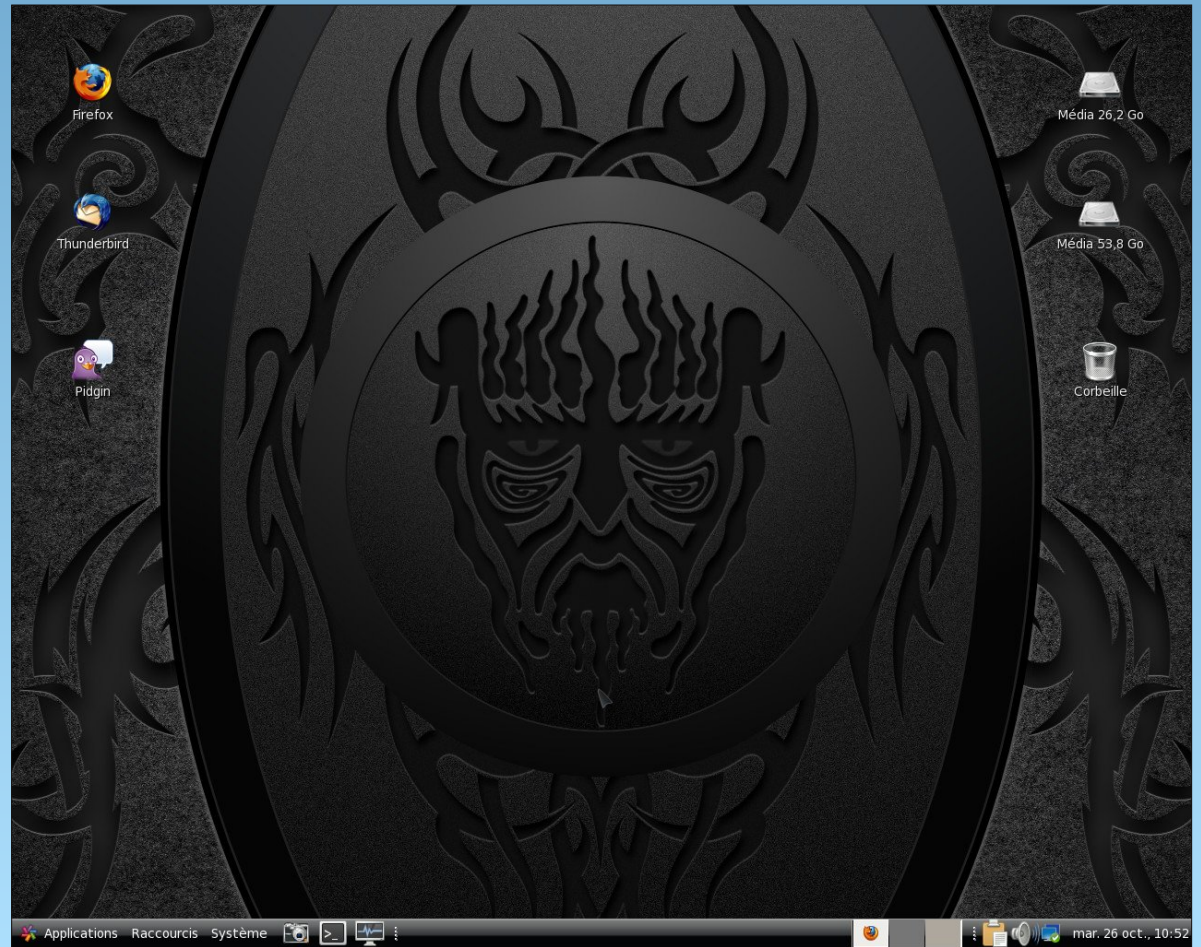
It's easier than

e=mc²

It's elemental

It's light years ahead

It's a wise choice

It's Radically Simple

It's ...

Posted by blueface, October 25, 2010, running Gnome.

Come Ye Thankful Users Come

Come ye **thankful users** come to the forum and have some fun
Leave your worries far behind come meet others of your kind
Everyone here is balanced and sane nothing to lose and much to gain
Come to the PCLOS Forum today join the fun now don't delay

Texstar will give the latest update **Sproggy** will draw with his palette
Old Polack has good advice **Joble** posts without thinking twice
Archie drops in once in a while **Rudge's** posts make us all smile
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Linuxera is a computer whiz **ms_meme** thinks she's in show biz
Meemaw's always a post or two late **parnote** has a lot on his plate
Scoundrel tries to run the place **jaydot** is there just in case
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Gnrich always writes an essay **Andrzejl** wants to have the last say
T6 tries to post the most with over ten thousand he can really boast
With **Crow** you never will know **agust** will make your screen glow
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Fun posts **Wildman** will guarantee **joechimp** is clever we can all agree
Of **pinoc's** knowledge we partake **uncleV** always keeps us awake
All our members are so polite never a post to incite
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Come and see **timeth's** bull of talent he is so full
Birthday greetings we always share about our age we don't care
Smileeb's words are very wise **djohnston's** advice takes the prize
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Blackbird's ever ready to chat about this and maybe that
Coolbreeze really knows his stuff from **Sammy2fish** we can't get enough
Longtom always has something to share with **Neal's** skill none can compare
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Weirdwolf's posts are ever new lots of advice from **YouCanToo**
Johnboy's always on a crusade with **Coffeetime** we wouldn't trade
Many topics **menotu** does start **gseaman** is oh so smart
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About **ElCuervo's** posts we haven't a clue **Hootiegibbon** is one of the crew
Leiche is always up to new tricks laughing at **tschommer** will give you kicks
To be the best is our goal every member working in the console
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To all **new users** a big hello with PCLOS you will grow
With our members' help you'll be impressed to that we all attest
No problem is too small but at times you might have to reinstall
Come to the PCLOS Forum today join the fun we know you'll stay

Shotwell: A Lightweight Linux Graphic Tool

by Daniel Meiß-Wilhelm (Leiche)

While The Gimp is a great piece of imaging software, sometimes it can be a little too much. So I searched for a lighter application to handle my pictures, and to edit images.

I found Shotwell, a lightweight and simple application, to handle images.

From Shotwell's description:

Shotwell is a new open source photo organizer application designed for the GNOME desktop environment. It allows you to import photos from your camera, view and edit them, and share them with others.

Here are some key features of "Shotwell":

· import photos from any digital camera supported by gPhoto

· automatically organize events containing photos taken at the same time

· rotate, mirror, and crop photos

· export photos as they are or by specifying dimensions and JPEG quality to reduce size

You can find additional documentation about Shotwell at http://trac.yorba.org/wiki/UsingShotwell0.7.

Have no fear. It's not only for Gnome. I use it under LXDE, and it works fantastically.

Initially, it generates an index for all the images you have stored on your harddrive. This takes a while. After it is done, it will show all your images as a thumbnail in the window.
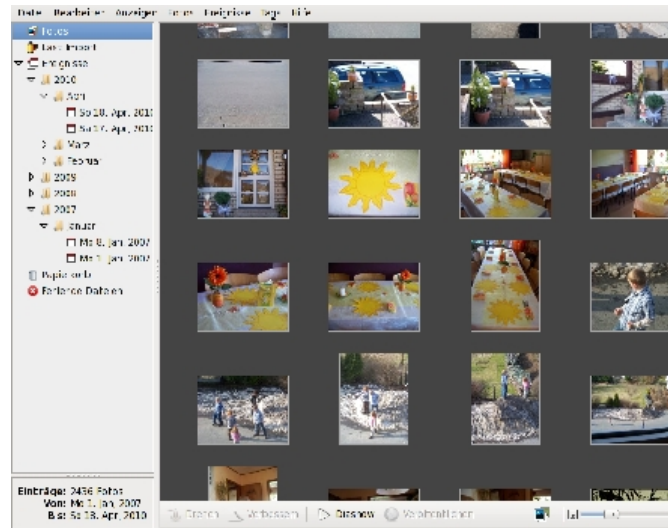
Click on Slideshow, and it will display all pictures. You can create your own slideshow, if you like.

To select a picture, click on it, and the viewer will show the selected picture. (top right)

To crop picture, a simple click is need on crop (Beschneiden). A white box will appear over the photo. You can adjust the size by clicking and hold the mouse over the crop border. Drag the mouse to crop your picture. The box will change to display rule of thirds lines, to aid with composition. (right)

When you are satisfied with the crop of your image, click on OK.
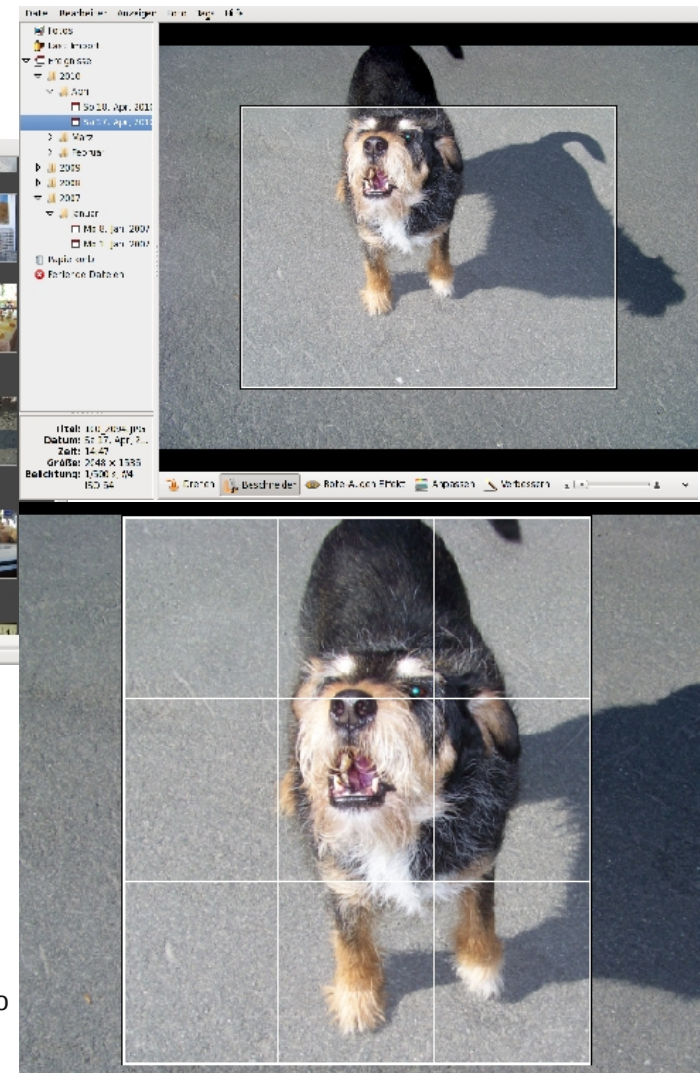
If you are not satisfied with the result, you can click again on crop and have another go at it.

For all the other ways to manipulate pictures, read the documentation. I needed Shotwell initially for this very simple crop tool. Well, that and the need for something to provide a simpler way to handle all my pictures. What I miss is a simple paint effect to generate balloons, but who knows what the future brings.

Have fun.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Pirate, October 13, 2010, running KDE 4.

Computer Languages from A-Z: Q, R, S

by Gary L. Ratliff Sr. (eronstuc)

This article will deal with three languages for a couple of reasons: all three are basically related to statistical studies, none of the three are able to be used on my installation of PCLinuxOS.

One of the three languages is proprietary, and thus not available. All the languages are actually correctly named with just a single letter of the alphabet. Although S is a proprietary language, many programs written in it can be run unmodified in R (which, by the way, is also known as GNU S). All three are very interesting, but that interest may perhaps be due to my early interest in statistics. It seems that most of the students in my class were not adept at the mathematical rigors of the statistics course, and that my Z score was three above the average for the class. I was often bribed to take it easy on the exams. However, these were always declined, as I found the subject extremely easy. Of course during the graduation day ceremonies, I did receive one of the first diplomas given for having the highest grade point average. So I usually found all the subjects easy.

The S Computer Language

We will begin with the features of S, because this was the first language to be developed in this set of languages. As mentioned, R is designed to be an open source tool to be used by professional statisticians. It was developed at Bell Labs by John Chambers, Allan Wilks, and Rick Becker.

The S language began in 1975 as a means of using the FORTRAN statistical library, SCS Statistical Computing Subroutines, developed at Bell Laboratories. It was desired to have a means to use the features of the system without having to code the applications in Fortran. The language gradually developed, and it is noteworthy that to have the system usable by various hardware, the code for S was distributed as source code so that the users could change it to suit their differing systems.

This was about the same time that Unix and the C language was being developed, so it was not long until the product was re-worked to utilize these and move away from the use of the Fortran language. The system has continued to evolve, and today is the commercial product S Plus.

The R Project

With the wide success of S for statistical projects, a similar product was desired that would be available for everyone. And two people from the statistical department of the University of Auckland, New Zealand, Ross Ihaka and Robert Gentleman, created this language. It was named R, from the fact that both of their first names began with this letter. Now that it is well developed, it has become a major tool for statistical study and graphics work. However, unlike the proprietary S system, it is fully open source, and thus freely available.

The language is available in the PCLinuxOS repositories and may be found by performing a search for R-core in Synaptic. I could not get this to install on my KDE 2009-1 version, however it installed fine my new PCLinuxOS 2010 system. Once it is installed, you will find it under the More-Applications > Sciences entry on the menu. You can launch it be clicking the R menu item presented, or you can enter the command R from a terminal. This should produce these results:
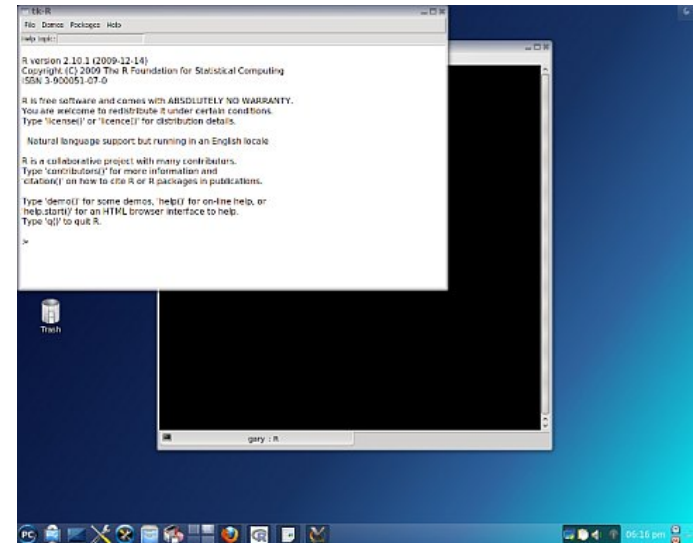

Here you learn that you may obtain more information on the system from the web browser, which you may reach by entering the command: help.start(). This will enable you to learn anything about the system from this interface. For an example, one of the demos is below (next page):

This is obtained by entering the command demo, and placing this item which you wish to have demonstrated. This was from demo (recursion), and then hitting the return key until it gave the plot of the results.

The R system is growing, and the above is just the core unit. There are also many other modules which may be obtained from CRAN. (A central repository for these models.)
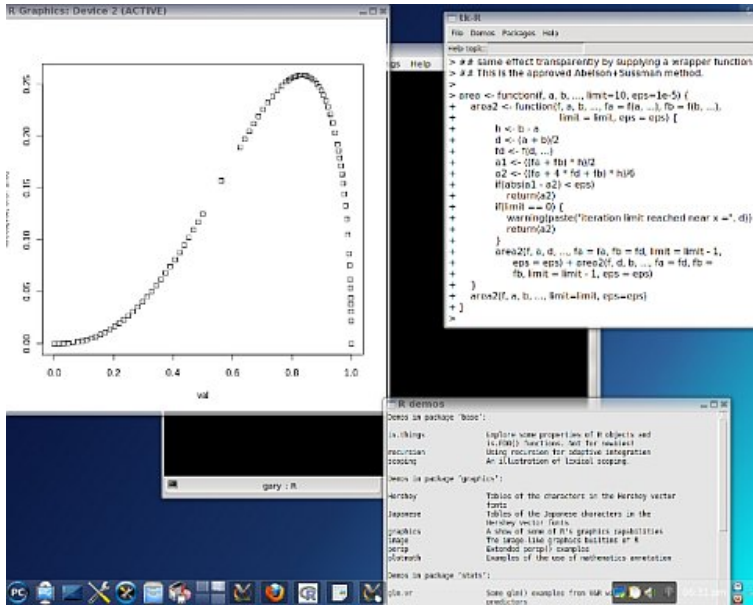
If you wish to use this language, I did get the system to function correctly on my Windows partition.

So here you see why three letters were covered in one article. All three languages are basically mathematical and statistical. Only one of the three was able to be installed, and this only on the newest 2010 version.

Let us end this, and next month get into a system which functions well on PCLinuxOS. In fact, it comes already installed on most versions of Linux. It has a reputation of making developing graphical applications easy. And indeed, I found that it was already installed on my systems. So until next time, when we will explore Tcl (pronounced tickle)Tk.

The Q Language

We now reach what would be considered the beginning of the study. This system functions under Windows, but I have not been able to make it work under any version of PCLinuxOS. I could use the Wine system to install the Qpad, but once installed, none of the equations would produce any results when entered.

Quite a bit of material is available. The author's Q in a nutshell shows many of the possibilities of this language. However, as I mentioned these would not function in PCLinuxOS. I also tried to install the system from the source code, and on either attempt, received a message when trying to configure the system that it had failed the sanity test.
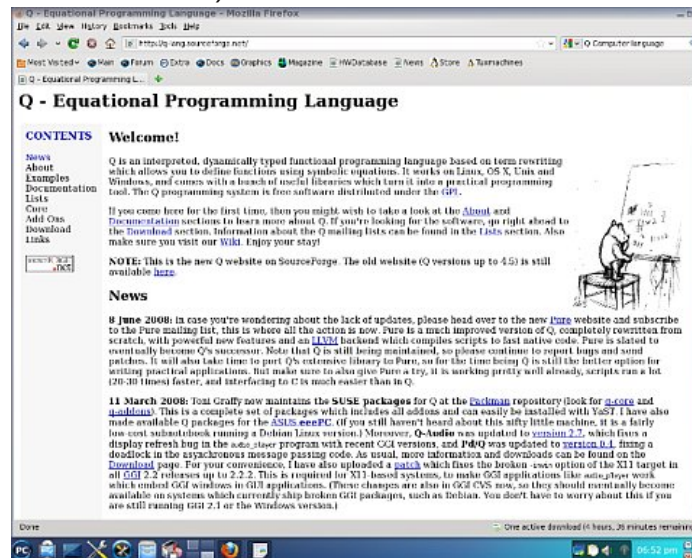
ms_meme's Nook: Linux Street

PCLOS it is the best
Going to find my way to where the code is sweet
Can you tell me how to get
How to get to Linux Street
How to get to Linux Street

Come to the forum and play everything's A OK
Friendly users there that's where we meet
Going to tell you how to get
How to get to Linux Street
How to get to Linux Street

PCLOS I am so impressed
Now I'm on my way with the elite
I'm loving what I found
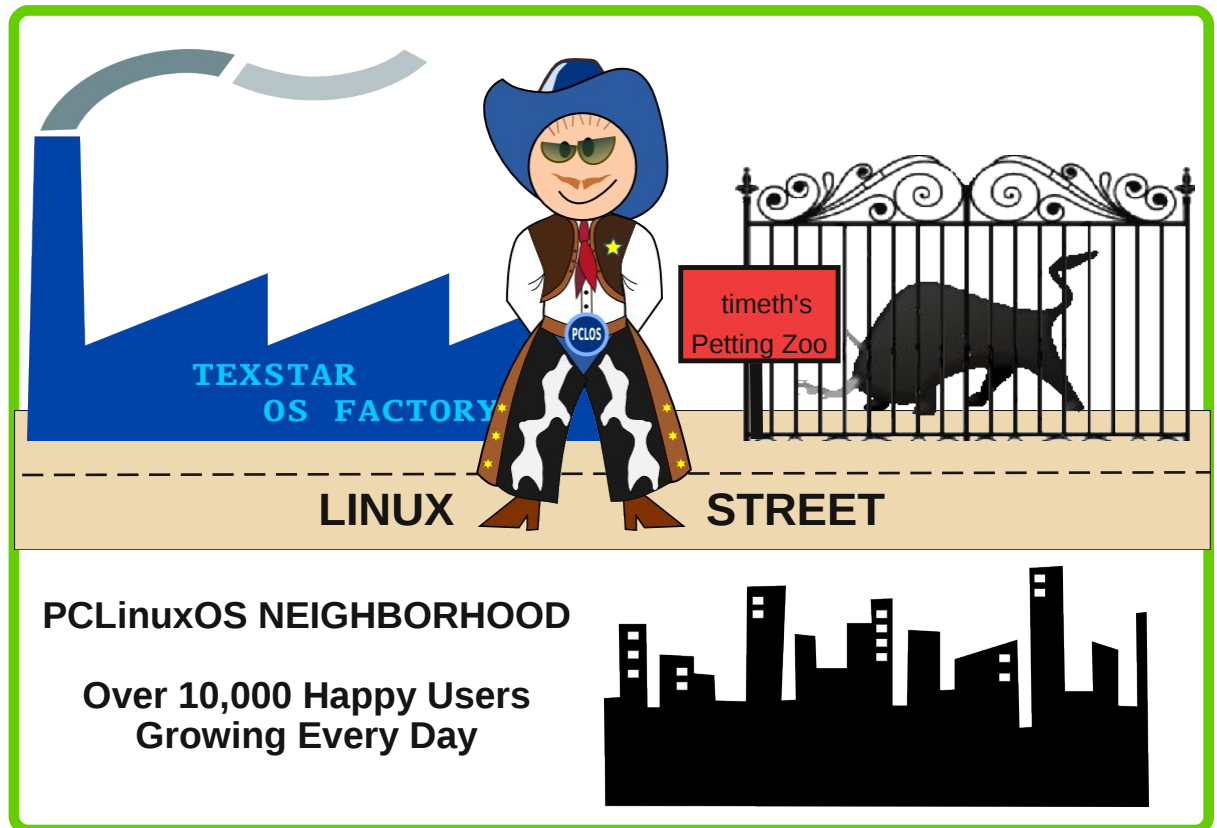What I found on Linux Street
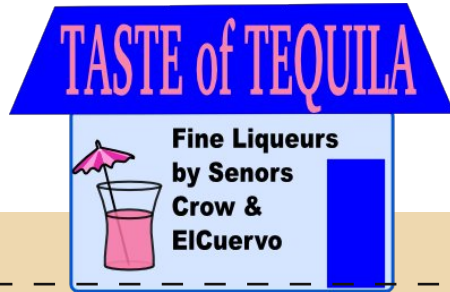What I found on Linux Street

PCLOS what a great success
Oh happy day let me repeat
I'm loving what I found
What I found on Linux Street
What I found on Linux Street

OGG
MP3

PCLOS
LINUX STREET

TEXSTAR
OS FACTORY

timeth's
Petting Zoo

LINUX   STREET

PCLinuxOS NEIGHBORHOOD

Over 10,000 Happy Users
Growing Every Day

PCLinuxOS
Radically Simple

MeeMaw's Rose Shop

TASTE of TEQUILA

Fine Liqueurs by Senors Crow & ElCuervo

PCLOS Eye Candy

travisn000
sproggy
pinoc
siax

Bike and Trike Repair

Joble's

LINUX STREET

PCLinuxOS Cinema

STARRING
Coffeetime AndrzejL

NEAL'S Coffee Corner & Book Nook

CPA Office of joechimp

Count
Posts
Accurately

longtom's

CRAC-POT CAFE

Meals-half price

LINUX LANE

MLU HOME
baldbrick   wayne1932
j-retired   weirdwolf
smileeb   Wildman

Johnboy's Pub

LinuxEra
PhinePhotos
Travel Agency

parnote   gseaman

Publishing Office of The New PCLinuxOS Magazine

LINUX LOOP

SPORT'S CENTER

longtomjr

ms_meme's
Singing Lessons

Viking
Security System
911-SCOUNDREL

Security Agents

davecs
hootiegibbon
old-polack
jaydot

LINUX AVENUE

Free Snacks

PCLinuxOS
Teen Recruiter

Lee2olo

PCLinuxOS
Administrative
Break Room

PRIVATE

KEEP OUT

News & Weathermen

Sammy2fish
coolbreeze
MGBguy
ontogo
sixthwheel

Radio
UXLIN

ThirdofSix
Xyus
7272andy
pags

LINUX DRIVE

T6 Boutique

Featuring

Sizes

Free GAS
&
HOT AIR

Rudge
menotu
terryH
chilly
Ramchu
Georgetoon

PCLinuxOS Special

uncleV's
Tram Service

grnich's
BACON
Buffet

LINUX PLAZA

PCLinuxOS
Radically Simple

43

Game Zone: PopCap Games

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

One reason often cited by Windows users for not migrating to Linux is the lack of games. Sometimes, it's because they like playing certain games that are created to be played on the Windows platform.

Well, let's remove some of that stigma – and at least dispel some of those "reasons" for not giving Linux a spin around the block.

Enter PopCap games, who offers up a whole suite of puzzle games that are designed to be run on Microsoft Windows and Apple's OS-X. Many of these games are single player games, and offer a whole lot of entertainment value.

How to install and play

Because all of these games are created primarily for users running Windows or OS-X, you will not find any native Linux games produced by PopCap. Nonetheless, and certain to be of joy to PCLinuxOS users, is that I have yet to find a PopCap game that will not play under Wine, without modification.

So, once you've installed Wine from Synaptic, all you have to do is download the .exe installation file(s) from the PopCap games web site, and double click the file to install it on your computer.

Once installed, the program will appear under the Wine menu entry on your PC menu. Simply go to the program's menu entry there to launch the game. It really is that easy.

What's available?

There literally are 50 different games in the PopCap PC Games download catalog. It would be next to impossible to cover and review them all here. So, instead, I'll review three of the ones I've downloaded and installed on my various computers.

Amazing Adventures: The Caribbean Secret

From the PopCap website:

Legend tells of a Spanish ship loaded with gold that vanished in the Caribbean Sea. A secret fortune of gold went missing 300 years ago – and now, you could be the one to find it!

To track down the treasure, you'll need to seek and find over 2,000 cleverly hidden objects in 25 amazing Caribbean locations. Piece together all the clues and

solve tons of unique mini-games in over 100 levels, and you'll complete your adventure. Plus, when you find all the hidden skulls, you'll unlock two bonus game modes! Do you have what it takes to discover the cache of gold?

If you want a puzzle game that is extremely addictive, then this is the game for you. When I downloaded it, I literally spent hours playing this game over the course of a weekend, to solve all the puzzles and discover the ancient cache of Spanish gold.

In this game, you have to find the listed objects that are hidden in the displayed scene. Once you find all of the listed objects, you then have to solve another puzzle before moving on to the next stage of the game. As you complete each stage of the game, you receive a piece of a treasure map, which you have to reassemble after completing all of the stages of the game. Only then will you get the chance to solve the puzzles that will unlock the cache of Spanish gold.

You will be very happy to learn that this game is very playable on older computers, even on P3 with 8 MB video and 512 MB RAM. I ran this game on PCLinuxOS LXDE without any issues.

Zuma

From the PopCap website:

Survive the ancient temples of Zuma, the critically acclaimed action-puzzler from PopCap! Deep in the jungle lie hidden temples bursting with traps and trickery, and it's up to you to uncover their treasures. Fire magical balls from your stone frog idol to make matches of three

or more and clear the deadly chain before it reaches the golden skull.

Explore all the temples – if you're good, you'll rack up huge combos and special bonuses that'll help you on your way. But think fast and aim smart, or you'll be history in this action-packed puzzle challenge!

Zuma resides near the pinnacle of addictive, action-puzzle games that offer endless hours of single-player gaming fun and challenging time wasting. Once you start playing, you will find it difficult to just walk away. Trust me on this one. The premise is simple: shoot various colored balls from the stone frog idol to make three or more color matches in a row. When you do, the chain of marbles will explode. You can also shoot various "special" balls to slow down the progression of the marbles towards the golden skull, explode large chunks of the marble chain, or improve the accuracy of your shots.

This particular game requires a 3D accelerated video card, and was nearly impossible to play on my old P3 with 8 MB of video memory. However, it is very playable on my other laptop, which has a dual core Intel processor with a built-in Intel video card that has generous amounts of video memory.

Bejeweled

From the PopCap website:

It's the classic gem-swapping game that started the casual games phenomenon! Swap adjacent gems to match three or more sparkling jewels. The more matches you make, the higher your score. Relax to entrancing music and graphics. Get hints-on-demand when you're stuck. And when you're ready for a bigger challenge, try the Time Trial in both advanced and expert modes.

Bejeweled is the first and only puzzle game since Tetris to be inducted into the Computer Gaming World's Hall of Fame. Play it yourself to find out why!

Sometimes, you just need an game that allows you to escape, either for a short time or for hours on end, and that doesn't necessarily require a lot of thought. Bejeweled fits that description, to a tee. In fact, I can't even begin to quantify how much time I've spent playing this game, either on my computer or on my cell phone while waiting for a haircut or in the doctor's office. I'm sure it's much more than even I would be willing to admit.

Game play is quite simple: flip adjacent crystals so that three or more crystals align in a row or column. When you do, they vanish from the screen, and the crystals above it fall down to fill in the vacated space, while more crystals fill in from the top.

This game is playable on all of my computers that I tried it on, including my older P3 computers.

Caveats and Tips

Some games will require that you have a 3D graphics card. Others have exceptionally modest hardware requirements, and can be played on minimalistic computer hardware. It is a good idea to click on the "System Requirements" button on each game's web page to learn what the minimum hardware requirements are. Surprisingly, most of the games that I have tried fit into the latter category that has only modest hardware requirements.

The games in the PopCap Download Games catalog are intended as time-limited trial versions. However,

Screenshot Showcase

I have yet to find a game in the catalog that you cannot play, in its entirety, under Wine. In some cases, you will receive a nag screen at the end of the 60 minute trial period, asking you to pay the $9.95 to continue to play the game. In such cases, simply closing the nag screen allows you to continue playing the game to its conclusion. In other games, the 60 minute trial nag screen never appears.

Conclusions

You won't go wrong downloading and playing the games that are in the PopCap Download Games catalog. They are very fun to play, and much of the time, present very challenging game play. They are truly designed to bring out the child that exists deep within all of us.

Answers to Mark Szorady's Double Take:
(1) Turkey hair different; (2) Turkey snood smaller; (3) Chef hat taller; (4) Chef bib shorter; (5) "I" changed to "he"; (6) Cleaver different; (7) Bushes missing

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Posted by MerReady, October 8, 2010, running KDE 4.

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Top L: Posted by Sproggy, October 3, 2010, running Xfce.

Top R: Posted by loukingjr, October 27, 2010, running Openbox.

Bottom L: Posted by ef2000, October 23, 2010, running e17.

Bottom R: Posted by Aradalf, October 11, 2010, running LXDE.