



full circle

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR THE UBUNTU LINUX COMMUNITY

ISSUE #38 - May 2010



NEW SERIES
VIRTUALIZATION



Photo by: Tambako the Jaguar (Flickr.com)

REVIEW - UBUNTU 10.04 - LUCID LYNX

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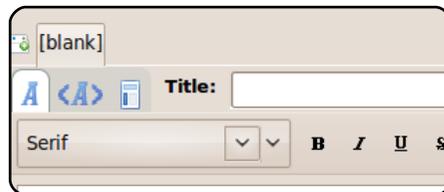
THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR THE UBUNTU LINUX COMMUNITY



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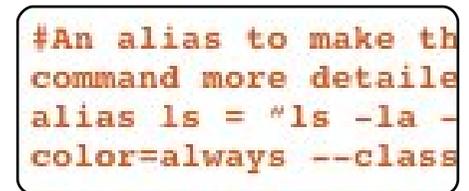
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Welcome to another issue of Full Circle magazine.

This month sees the start of a new series of articles on virtualization. If you've ever wanted to try a new operating system, but without dual booting, or if you just want to run Windows for that one elusive application then this series is for you. In this first part, Lucas Westermann will take you through the set up of your virtual machine. From next month you get your hands dirty with actually installing an OS.

Yes, 10.04 was released several months ago, but this month we have a review of it's good, and bad, points and the writer has thoughtfully included an extensive list of applications which he finds useful, maybe you'll discover a new favourite application.

I'd like to thank those of you who sent in your Top 5 lists for this issue, while Andrew Min is away, I could only print one but rest assured, the next time Andrew needs some time off, I'll use the other Top 5 lists.

Speaking of submissions, remember folks, we're always open to new ideas for articles, columns and so on. We've no limit to the number of pages in FCM so feel free to write some articles on whatever you're best at.

All the best!

Ronnie

Editor, Full Circle magazine

ronnie@fullcirclemagazine.org

This magazine was created using :



What is Ubuntu?

Ubuntu is a complete operating system that is perfect for laptops, desktops and servers. Whether at home, school or work, Ubuntu contains all the applications you'll ever need including word processor, email application and web browser. Ubuntu is and always will be free of charge. You do not pay any licensing fees. You can download, use and share Ubuntu with your friends, family, school or business, for absolutely nothing.

Once installed, your system is ready to use with a full set of productivity, internet, drawing and graphics applications, and games.

TIP: use the new 'contents' link to jump to the contents page from any other page!





Linux wins the SCO vs Novell case

The six-year-long Novell-SCO case is over - the judge ruled that Novell did indeed own Unix patents copyrights which SCO failed to license properly and therefore the case is closed.

Judge Ted Stewart said: "The jury could have rejected the testimony of SCO's witnesses for a number of reasons, including their lack of involvement in drafting the APA, the fact that there was little testimony on any actual discussions concerning the transfer of copyrights, or that many of the witnesses had a financial interest in the litigation."

SCO became little more than a source of lawyers' letters and was seen by many as the arch nemesis to the development of Linux.

Source: theregister.co.uk

Nvidia Display Driver 256.35 For Linux



After many months of hard work, Nvidia finally announced on

June 22nd the final and stable version of the 256.x proprietary driver for Nvidia graphics cards. Nvidia 256.35 incorporates lots of fixes and improvements, over previous releases. Unofficial GLX support was also added for a few OpenGL extensions, as well as Thermal Settings reporting improvements, Compiz fixes, many VDPAU improvements, and many more.

For the complete and detailed changelog, please check the release announcement at: <http://www.nvidia.co.uk/object/linux-display-ia32-256.35-driver-uk.html>

Source: softpedia.com

SystemRescueCd 1.5.6 includes new version of GParted



System Rescue Cd

The SystemRescueCd developers have issued the sixth update to the 1.5.x branch of their Linux distribution. Based on the Gentoo LiveCD, the SystemRescueCd is configured as a tool kit for administering or repairing an operating system and recovering data after a system crash. Supported file systems include Ext2, Ext3 and Ext4, ReiserFS, XFS, JFS, VFAT, NTFS, ISO9660 and Btrfs.

SystemRescueCd 1.5.6 uses either the 2.6.32.15 Linux kernel or the 2.6.34 kernel as an alternative and features the latest major 0.6.0 update to the GNOME Partition Editor that adds support for devices with sector sizes greater than

512 bytes and a new alignment option. With GParted users can easily create, organise and delete disk partitions using a graphical user interface (GUI).

SystemRescueCd 1.5.6 is available to download from: <http://www.sysresccd.org/Download>. A user manual is also available to download from: <http://www.sysresccd.org/Online-Manual-EN>

Source: h-online.com

Ask The Editor

Robin Catling has somehow managed to convince me (Ronnie) to appear on **Full Circle Podcast#10** to make it an FCM editorial Q&A, so if you have a question for me about anything FCM, email it to: podcast@fullcirclemagazine.org





COMMAND & CONQUER

Written by Lucas Westermann

Before I begin the actual article, I'd like to mention an email I received from a reader. Alexander was kind enough to point out that there is a GUI tray program called "gstm" that does ssh port forwarding. For those of my readers who prefer GUI alternatives where possible, there you go. It's available in the universe repository. Also, a reader (who, alas, did not share his/her name with me - but you know who you are!) pointed out that in Step 7 of my FCM#37 C&C article I failed to point out that you need to substitute "localhost" with the IP of your server. (The command was "`ssh -D 8080 lswest@localhost`", where `lswest@localhost` had to be substituted with `your_username@IP_ADDRESS_SERVER`). Sorry for any confusion that may have resulted.

This month, I spent quite some time re-writing a few

patches for DWM (Dynamic Window Manager) so that they would work with the pango patch, which adds xft font support to DWM's statusbar. In doing so, I learned quite a bit about diff, and have decided to share what I learned with you, my readers. If you're asking yourselves "why should I know how to use diff, since I don't use DWM nor generate patches?", the answer is simply because diff can be applied to so many situations. Imagine you are writing a script, and you want to add to the script, but require the old version for a different computer - instead of creating and backing up two separate scripts, you can write the script, create a copy of it, make changes to the copy, generate a .diff file, and back up the original script and the .diff file, and save yourself some work in the future. Or, if you're helping a friend, and you can't simply send them the file you need to correct, you can send them a .diff to make the changes.

There are probably many other uses (adjusting configuration files, and so forth) that I haven't thought of yet.

Diff is installed, by default, in most distributions. If it's not present in Ubuntu, just install it with:

```
sudo apt-get install diff
```

Once it's installed, you're pretty much all set. In order to generate a .diff file, you need to have two files you want to analyse. One will be the "original" (I will refer to it as such from now on), and the other will be the "updated" file.

For simplicity, let's say I have a file that contains the following:

VirtualBox How-To (set up, install, and configure a virtual machine).

Virtualization series: Each month write an article for a distribution with screenshots

and so forth

C&C: *Cover useful stuff to do with curl, wget, and so forth? And diff?*

And I want to change this to:

VirtualBox How-To (set up, install, and configure a virtual machine).

Virtualization series: Each month write an article for a distribution with screenshots and so forth

C&C: *Diff (wget and curl next month)*

I'd make the changes I want in the "updated" file. I usually add a "-patched" suffix at the end of the filename. Once the changes are made, and I want to generate a diff, I will type the following into my terminal of choice:

```
diff -up original updated >
articles\list\update.diff
```

COMMAND & CONQUER

Replace “original” and “updated” with the actual file names and paths. If you don't want the diff file to be created in the current working directory, append a path to the filename on the other side of the “>”. The “>” tells the shell to redirect all output into whatever you pass after the symbol - in this case, the .diff file. If you want to apply the changes to another copy of the original file (on a different computer, for example), you would need to run one of the two commands in the folder containing the file you wish to patch (they do the same thing):

```
patch -p1 < /path/to/.diff
```

```
patch -Np1 -i /path/to/.diff
```

Where, of course, you exchange the “/path/to/.diff” with the actual path.

I realize that my example isn't really a case where you would decide to use a patch/.diff file to make changes, but I chose it for the sake of simplicity. Another scenario where diff is useful: if you have two files (in my case,

it's usually configuration files), and you don't know if they've been changed, and if they have, what changes you've made. To check this, you can simply run the command:

```
diff /path/to/first/file  
/path/to/second/file
```

Be sure to actually replace the paths. The output should look something like this:

```
5c5  
< - Cover useful stuff to do  
with curl, wget, and so  
forth? And diff?  
---  
> - Diff (wget and curl next  
month)
```

I'll explain the above line by line. The “5c5” is (I believe) a comparison of lines within the first and second files. I'm not certain of this, but it seems to be the case. The next line displays a line that was removed (the “<” denotes deleted), and the line below displays the line that was added (therefore replacing the original line), which can be seen with the “>” symbol.

As you can see, this is a

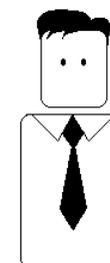
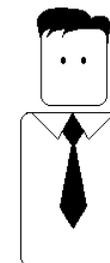
very useful tool for figuring out the differences between two files, especially if they're rather long. You can pipe the output into “more” or “less” for easier reading, or redirect it into a text file. The format will be the same, as long as you don't append any arguments to the diff command.

Hopefully this introduction to diff has helped you realize a scenario in which you could make use of it, and will hopefully make life easier for anyone who decides to use it. As always, any questions or comments can be emailed to me at lswest34@gmail.com. Be sure to include “C&C” or “FCM” in the subject line, so that I reply quickly (and can organize my emails easily!).

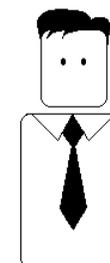


Lucas has learned all he knows from repeatedly breaking his system, then having no other option but to discover how to fix it. You can email Lucas at: lswest34@gmail.com.

We're launching a campaign
against social networking sites.



Be the first of your friends
to join us!





HOW-TO

Written by Greg Walters

Program In Python - Part 12

SEE ALSO:

FCM#27-37 - Python Parts 1 - 11

APPLICABLE TO:

ubuntu kubuntu xubuntu

CATEGORIES:



DEVICES:



In our last session, we looked at the API from wunderground, and wrote some code to grab the current conditions. This time, we will be dealing with the forecast portion of the API. If you haven't had a chance to look at the last two installments about XML, and the last one specifically, you might want to review them before moving forward.

Just as there was a web address for the current conditions, there is one for the forecast. Here is the link to the forecast XML page:

<http://api.wunderground.com/api/uto/wui/geo/ForecastXML/index.xml?query=80013>

As before, you can change the '80013' to your City/Country, City/State, or postal code. You'll probably get back about 600 lines of XML code. You have a root element of 'forecast', and then four sub elements: 'termsofservice', 'txt_forecast', 'simpleforecast' and 'moon_phase'. We will concentrate on the 'txt_forecast' and 'simpleforecast' elements.

Since we went over the usage, main, and "if __name__" sections last time, I'll leave those to you to deal with and just concentrate on the goodies that we need for this time. Since I showed you a snippet of txt_forecast, let's start with that.

Shown below is a very small portion of the txt_forecast set for my area.

After the txt_forecast parent element, we get the date, a "number" element, then an element that has children of its own called forecastday which includes period, icon, icons, title and something called fcttext...then it repeats itself. The first thing you'll notice is that under txt_forecast, the date isn't a date, but a time value. It turns out that this is

when the forecast was released. The <number> tag shows how many forecasts there are for the next 24 hour period. I can't think of a time that I've seen this value less than 2. For each forecast for the 24 hour period (<forecastday>), you have a period number, multiple icon options, a title option ("Today", "Tonight", "Tomorrow"), and the text of a simple forecast. This is a quick overview of the forecast, usually for the next 12 hours.

```
<txt_forecast>
  <date>3:31 PM MDT</date>
  <number>2</number>
  -<forecastday>
    <period>1</period>
    <icon>nt_cloudy</icon>
    +<icons></icons>
    <title>Tonight</title>
    -<fcttext>
      Mostly cloudy with a 20
      percent chance of thunderstorms in the evening...then
      partly cloudy after midnight. Lows in the mid 40s.
      Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph shifting to the south after
      midnight.
    </fcttext>
  </forecastday>
  +<forecastday></forecastday>
</txt_forecast>
```



Before we start working with our code, we should take a look at the `<simpleforecast>` portion of the xml file which is shown right.

There is a `<forecastday>` tag for each day of the forecast period, usually 6 days including the current day. You have the date information in various formats (I personally like the `<pretty>` tag), projected high and low temps in both Fahrenheit and Celsius, gross condition projection, various icons, a sky icon (sky conditions at the reporting station), and “pop” which stands for “Probability Of Precipitation”. The `<moon_phase>` tag provides some interesting information including sunset, sunrise, and moon information.

Now we'll get into the code. Here is the import set:

```
from xml.etree import  
ElementTree as ET
```

```
import urllib
```

```
import sys
```

```
import getopt
```

Now we need to start our class. We will create an `__init__` routine to setup and clear the variables that we need, this is shown top right on the following page.

If you don't care about carrying the ability of both Fahrenheit and Celsius, then leave out whichever variable set you don't want. I decided to carry both.

Next, we'll start our main retrieval routine to get the forecast data. This is shown bottom right on the next page.

This is pretty much the same as the current conditions routine we worked on last time. The only major difference (so far) is the URL we are using. Now things change. Since we have multiple children that have the same tag within the parent, we have to make our parse calls a bit different. The code is top left on the following page.

Notice we are using `tree.find` this time, and we are using for loops to walk through the data. It's a shame that Python

```
<simpleforecast>  
  --<forecastday>  
    <period>1</period>  
    --<date>  
      <epoch>1275706825</epoch>  
      <pretty_short>9:00 PM MDT</pretty_short>  
      <pretty>9:00 PM MDT on June 04, 2010</pretty>  
      <day>4</day>  
      <month>6</month>  
      <year>2010</year>  
      <yday>154</yday>  
      <hour>21</hour>  
      <min>00</min>  
      <sec>25</sec>  
      <isdst>1</isdst>  
      <monthname>June</monthname>  
      <weekday_short/>  
      <weekday>Friday</weekday>  
      <amp;pm>PM</amp;pm>  
      <tz_short>MDT</tz_short>  
      <tz_long>America/Denver</tz_long>  
    </date>  
    --<high>  
      <fahrenheit>92</fahrenheit>  
      <celsius>33</celsius>  
    </high>  
    --<low>  
      <fahrenheit>58</fahrenheit>  
      <celsius>14</celsius>  
    </low>  
    <conditions>Partly Cloudy</conditions>  
    <icon>partlycloudy</icon>  
    +<icons>  
      <skyicon>partlycloudy</skyicon>  
      <pop>10</pop>  
    </forecastday>  
    ...  
</simpleforecast>
```

```

=====
# Get the forecast for today and (if available)
tonight
=====
fcst = tree.find('.//txt_forecast')
for f in fcst:
    if f.tag == 'number':
        self.periods = f.text
    elif f.tag == 'date':
        self.date = f.text
    for subelement in f:
        if subelement.tag == 'period':
            self.period=int(subelement.text)
        if subelement.tag == 'fcttext':
            self.forecastText.append(subelement.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'icon':
            self.icon.append( subelement.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'title':
            self.Title.append(subelement.text)

```

```

class ForecastInfo:
    def __init__(self):
        self.forecastText = [] # Today/tonight forecast
information
        self.Title = [] # Today/tonight
        self.date = ''
        self.icon = [] # Icon to use for conditions
today/tonight
        self.periods = 0
        self.period = 0
=====
# Extended forecast information
=====
        self.extIcon = [] # Icon to use for extended
forecast
        self.extDay = [] # Day text for this forecast
("Monday", "Tuesday" etc)
        self.extHigh = [] # High Temp. (F)
        self.extHighC = [] # High Temp. (C)
        self.extLow = [] # Low Temp. (F)
        self.extLowC = [] # Low Temp. (C)
        self.extConditions = [] # Conditions text
        self.extPeriod = [] # Numerical Period
information (counter)
        self.extpop = [] # Percent chance Of
Precipitation

```

```

def GetForecastData(self,location):
    try:
        forecastdata = 'http://api.wunderground.com/auto/wui/geo/ForecastXML/index.xml?query=%s' % location
        urllib.socket.setdefaulttimeout(8)
        usock = urllib.urlopen(forecastdata)
        tree = ET.parse(usock)
        usock.close()
    except:
        print 'ERROR - Forecast - Could not get information from server...'
        sys.exit(2)

```

doesn't offer a SELECT/CASE command set like other languages. The IF/ELIF routine, however, works well, just a bit clunkier. Now we'll break down the code. We assign the variable `fcst` to everything within the `<txt_forecast>` tag. This gets all the data for that group. We then look for the tags `<date>` and `<number>` - since those are simple "first level" tags - and load that data into our variables. Now things get a bit more difficult. Look back at our xml response example. There are two instances of `<forecastday>`. Under `<forecastday>` are sub-elements that consist of `<period>`, `<icon>`, `<icons>`, `<title>` and `<fcttext>`. We'll loop through these, and again use the IF statement to load them into our variables.

Next we need to look at the extended forecast data for the next X number of days. We are basically using the same methodology to fill our variables; this is shown top right.

Now we need to create our output routine. As we did last

time, it will be fairly generic. The code for this is shown on the right of the following page.

Again, if you don't want to carry both Centigrade and Fahrenheit information, then modify the code to show what you want. Finally, we have a "Dolt" routine:

```
def
DoIt(self, Location, US, Include
Today, Output):

    self.GetForecastData(Loca
tion)

    self.output(US, IncludeTod
ay, Output)

forecast = ForecastInfo()
forecast.DoIt('80013', 1, 0, 0)
# Insert your own postal code
```

That's about it for this time. I'll leave the alert data to you, if you want to go through that.

Here is the complete running code:
<http://pastebin.com/wsSXMxOx>

Have fun until next time.

```
=====
# Now get the extended forecast
=====
fcst = tree.find('.//simpleforecast')
for f in fcst:
    for subelement in f:
        if subelement.tag == 'period':
            self.extPeriod.append(subelement.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'conditions':
            self.extConditions.append(subelement.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'icon':
            self.extIcon.append(subelement.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'pop':
            self.extpop.append(subelement.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'date':
            for child in subelement.getchildren():
                if child.tag == 'weekday':
                    self.extDay.append(child.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'high':
            for child in subelement.getchildren():
                if child.tag == 'fahrenheit':
                    self.extHigh.append(child.text)
                if child.tag == 'celsius':
                    self.extHighC.append(child.text)
        elif subelement.tag == 'low':
            for child in subelement.getchildren():
                if child.tag == 'fahrenheit':
                    self.extLow.append(child.text)
                if child.tag == 'celsius':
                    self.extLowC.append(child.text)
```



Greg Walters is owner of *RainyDay Solutions, LLC*, a consulting company in Aurora, Colorado, and has been programming since 1972. He enjoys cooking, hiking, music, and spending time with his family.



```

def output(self,US,IncludeToday,Output):
    # US takes 0,1 or 2
    # 0 = Centigrade
    # 1 = Fahrenheit
    # 2 = both (if available)
    # Now print it all
    if Output == 0:
        for c in range(int(self.period)):
            if c <> 1:
                print '-----'
                print 'Forecast for %s' %
self.Title[c].lower()
                print 'Forecast = %s' %
self.forecastText[c]
                print 'ICON=%s' % self.icon[c]
                print '-----'
            print 'Extended Forecast...'
            if IncludeToday == 1:
                startRange = 0
            else:
                startRange = 1
            for c in range(startRange,6):
                print self.extDay[c]
                if US == 0: #Centigrade information
                    print '\tHigh - %s(C)' %
self.extHigh[c]
                    print '\tLow - %s(C)' % self.extLow[c]
                elif US == 1: #Fahrenheit information
                    print '\tHigh - %s(F)' %
self.extHigh[c]
                    print '\tLow - %s(F)' % self.extLow[c]
                else: #US == 2 both(if available)
                    print '\tHigh - %s' % self.extHigh[c]
                    print '\tLow - %s' % self.extLow[c]
                if int(self.extpop[c]) == 0:
                    print '\tConditions - %s.' %
self.extConditions[c]
                else:
                    print '\tConditions - %s. %d%% chance
of precipitation.' %
(self.extConditions[c],int(self.extpop[c]))

```



Full Circle Podcast



The **Full Circle Podcast** is back and better than ever!

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- Ubuntu interview
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- *Ed Hewitt*
- *Dave Wilkins*

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HOW-TO

Written by Lucas Westermann

Virtualization Introduction

SEE ALSO:

N/A

APPLICABLE TO:

ubuntu kubuntu xubuntu

CATEGORIES:



DEVICES:



I've always been a fan of virtualization, since it allows me to play around with various distributions, to create configuration files for window managers without fighting with a semi-functional in-between stage, and to install operating systems I wouldn't necessarily use in a real-world scenario in order to understand them better. Even these days, I have 5 virtual machines sitting idle on my computer. They are Arch Linux i686, Crunch Bang, Open BSD (64 bit), OpenSolaris 2008.11, and Ubuntu 9.10. In this series, I'll be covering how to install Virtual Box, and configure it for use with USB devices, and adding/removing virtual machines. Every month, I'll write a how-to for a new distribution - until I've covered all the ones I'm comfortable with (and maybe a few I'm not). Today, we'll simply be paving the way for subsequent articles by setting everything up properly.

Step 1 – Installation

The first step is, logically, to install Virtual Box. This can be done in two ways. If you don't plan on using any USB devices with the virtual machines, the OSE (Open Source Edition) will be fine for you - it's available from the repositories. To install it, type this command:

```
sudo apt-get install
virtualbox-ose
```

If, however, you plan to make use of features such as Remote Desktop Protocol, USB devices, and USB over RDP (remote desktop protocol), then you'll need the Personal Use and Evaluation License (PUEL) binary, which can be downloaded from here: http://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Linux_Downloads

You can add the repository there if you like, and follow the instructions to install Virtual Box, or if you prefer to download a .deb file, you can

download the .deb, and simply double-click the package, once you download, and it will allow you to install it, or, if you prefer the CLI way, you can install it with this command:

```
sudo dpkg -i
/path/to/package/
```

Where “/path/to/package” is replaced with the actual path, such as “~/Downloads” if it's in your home folder's Downloads folder.

Step 2 – Configure USB Support

(only required for PUEL edition)

If you find that USB device mounting doesn't work for your installation (it should, so try it first), give the following a shot:

Add the following line to your /etc/fstab file:

```
none /proc/bus/usb usbfs
auto,busgid=108,busmode=0775,
devgid=108,devmode=0664 0 0
```

It's important to note that



you must change the “108” to the ID of the vboxusers group on your computer. To find it, type the following:

```
grep vboxusers /etc/group
```

Once you add that line, run the following command:

```
mount -a
```

And you should now be able to connect USB devices.

Step 3 – Creating a Virtual Machine

This will be the last step we cover today. In this step, I'll cover how to create a Virtual Machine.

First, you'll want to know what distribution/OS you're installing. For simplicity's sake, I'll assume we're installing Ubuntu 9.10, 32bit edition. Once you're ready to begin, hit the “New” button in the upper left-hand corner of the window. This will open the New Virtual Machine Wizard. You'll want to hit “next” to skip the Welcome page, and move on to the

Name and OS Type pages. Here, you'll type in:

Name: Ubuntu 9.10
Operating System: Linux
Version: Ubuntu

Once you've entered the information and hit next, you'll be staring at a slider, wondering just how much RAM to give your virtual machine. These are the general values I use:

Unix – 384MB
(no GUI, with GUI, go with 512MB)
Linux – 512MB
(with Compiz, go with 768MB)
Windows XP – 768MB

For this demonstration, I'll stick with the default 512MB. After pressing next, you'll be asked if you want to create a new hard drive, or use an old one. You'll want to create a new hard drive, so keep the default selection and hit next again. On the new window, move along to the second page (Hard Disk Storage Type). Here you have two options, which I'll briefly explain:

(1) *Dynamically*

Expanding Storage is a file container that starts at the smallest possible size, and expands its physical size as you install and add things to the virtual machine. For example, if you give it 10GB of storage, it'll start at around 100kB, and increase to 3GB as you install something, and so forth. (This is my personal preference, since it helps me keep some space free).

(2) **Fixed-size Image** is a file container that sticks to the size you give it, meaning you won't run into issues if your hard drive is full and the dynamic expanding storage can't expand anymore (unlikely these days though). Instead, if you give it 10GB, it's a 10GB file. Choose whichever format you'd like, and hit next.

My hard-drive sizes for virtual machines are as follows:

Unix – 5-8GB
(no GUI, with GUI 8-10GB)
Linux – 10-12GB
Windows XP – 15-20GB

Therefore, I'll increase the size of the hard drive to 10GB and hit next, and then finish to complete the hard-drive selection. Your Virtual Machine is now set up and ready to go. You just need to hit finish once more. In case anyone wants to move ahead and try installing something, you need simply run the machine and choose an ISO/CD from the first run wizard.

Something to note is that a virtual machine will not be as fast as a native application

“ ... a virtual machine will not be as fast as ... non-virtualized hardware.”

(native = running on non-virtualized hardware). Compiz may or may not run once you install guest additions

(depends on your GPU), and, of course, Virtual Box will eat a lot of RAM, since it allocates the assigned amount to the virtual machine at the start. (I'm not

sure if the newest version does this dynamically or not). You will need to either account for this in advance if you have less than 2GB of RAM, or simply run Virtual Box on its own (no other running programs).

I hope that this opening to my Virtualization series was understandable, and that some of you will find it useful. If anyone runs into issues, or has any questions, they can direct them to lswest34@gmail.com. Just be sure to put either "FCM" or "Virtualization Series" into the subject line, so that I reply in a timely manner. Stay tuned for next month's article on installing our first Linux distribution, and setting up snapshots to avoid losing a system.



Lucas has learned all he knows from repeatedly breaking his system, then having no other option but to discover how to fix it. You can email Lucas at: lswest34@gmail.com.

Twelve Months of Joy - Looking Back

About six months ago I posted on Ubuntu Forums about my first impressions of using Ubuntu. This is just an update to that post.

My first use of Ubuntu was when I requested a Live CD of 8.10. My first impression of it was "wow!", it was awesome, and even though I had my fair share of issues with it the first time around I stuck with it and fixed many problems such as Flash, Java, sound and Internet connection.

I then just mass installed many, many programs to see which ones I liked best, then when Jaunty came out I installed it and found that my sound worked much better and Java and Flash had vastly improved. While using Jaunty I tested many desktop environments, window managers, themes and desktop setups.

I now use Ubuntu 9.10 with Emerald and Compiz. I am also hosting a project on LaunchPad and regularly participate on the forums, in IRC and on mailing lists. I also now run an Ubuntu based server and its

current uptime is 127 days.

Sure, I still have a LOT to learn but I'm optimistic about it now. No longer is there any need for me to download cracked proprietary software, scan for and remove hundreds of viruses a day or even spend so much time maintaining and administering my systems. I now find I have time for so much more and I feel that this is just the beginning for me.

No longer do I think "*damn, I have to do that assignment*", I say, "*yes! I can use OpenOffice!*".

In conclusion, Ubuntu has changed my life, I really mean this too. Not only has it made my computing activities far more interesting and a lot easier, I now enjoy the challenges it presents me with.

nisshh





HOW-TO

Written by Anthony Dean

Browser Blogging

SEE ALSO:

N/A

APPLICABLE TO:

ubuntu kubuntu xubuntu

CATEGORIES:



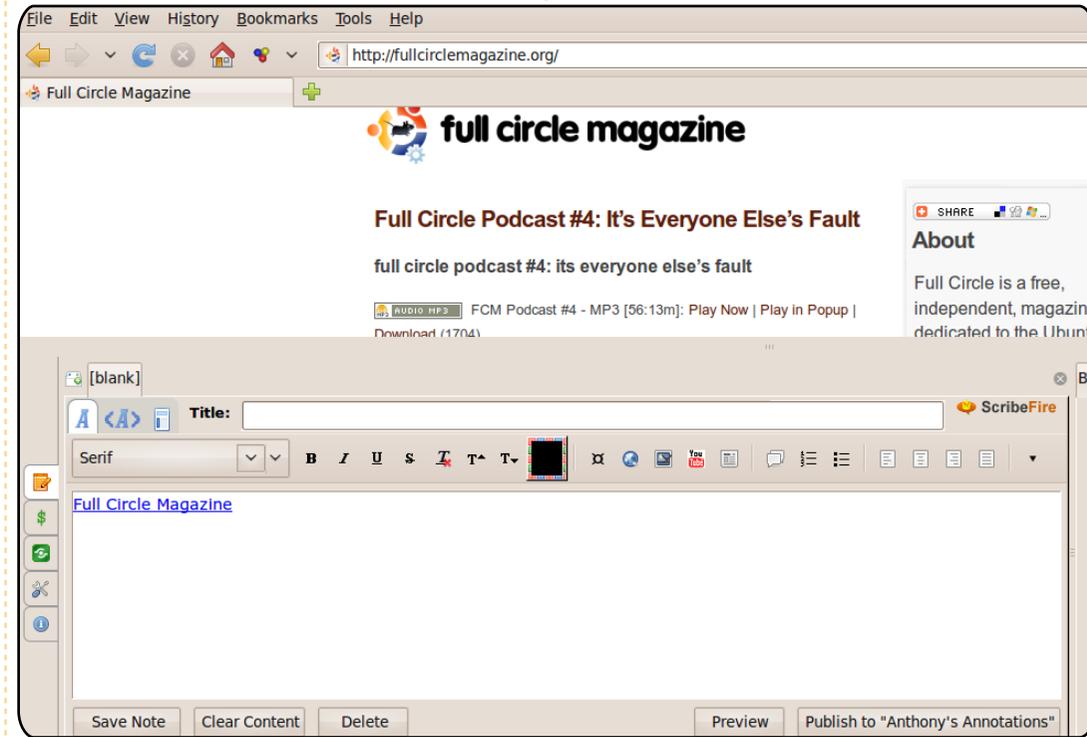
DEVICES:



(<http://www.scribefire.com>) is a Firefox extension which, when installed, allows posting to a blog from within Firefox, and offers an assortment of blogging options (right).

Installation

To install ScribeFire within Firefox, go to Tools > Add-Ons, then under the Get Add-Ons tab, search for “ScribeFire” in the text search box. Firefox should then display ScribeFire in the results. After clicking “Add to Firefox” (and restarting the browser), ScribeFire will be installed. ScribeFire can be displayed by selecting the small orange icon resembling a notepad that now appears in the bottom right corner of the browser window. The default editor interface will then appear, as seen in the first picture. ScribeFire can also be activated by right-clicking in Firefox, and selecting ScribeFire; several options are displayed, including “Blog this page”, which offers the ability



to begin a blog post with the displayed page's URL pre-entered.

ScribeFire's interface features five tabs at the left side: Editor (the default interface), Monetize, Promote, Settings and About. Additionally, several tabs will appear in the right side of the Editor screen: Blog, Entries, Categories and Options.

Set Up

Setting up ScribeFire for your blog should be simple, thanks to a setup wizard for entering new blogs. To use the wizard, under the Blog tab on the right side of the default Editor tab, select “Add”, which will start the wizard. Follow the instructions as indicated, which

For years, I've had my own blog, allowing me to post my thoughts on topics ranging from explaining comic book minutiae to describing what I did on my vacations. However, how I post to my blog has varied over the years. While I've used various Firefox extensions, as well as the default posting interface that Blogger.com offers, my current choice for posting to my blog is ScribeFire. ScribeFire

BROWSER BLOGGING

may vary depending on your blog's needs, its host, and so forth.

As mentioned above, ScribeFire's main tabs are located on the left side of the interface, each with a different main feature.

Editor

The Editor tab is the default interface. The Editor tab, as shown in the first picture, features a window for entering the blog post's text. The tab also features a toolbar at the top, offering, similar to a word processor, tools for basic formatting of text (bold, italics, underlining), as well as adding images or URLs to the text entered. Tabs at the top left offer a choice of rich text editing (the default), HTML format editing, or a live preview of how the finished text will appear on the blog. Other editing options, including bullets and quotes, are also included.

The right side of the Editor pane includes the tabs:



The screenshot shows the ScribeFire Editor interface. At the top, there are banners for 'UBUNTU user GET KARMIC' and 'UBUNTU user'. Below that is the 'full circle magazine' logo. The main content area is titled 'Share this page' and includes a 'Share this page' button and a list of social media sharing options: Propeller, Reddit, Facebook, Digg, Fark, StumbleUpon, and Newsvine. On the left side, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for document, currency, share, and information. Below the main content area, there is a 'Done' button. On the right side, there is a 'Options' panel with a 'Close' button. The 'Options' panel has a tabbed interface with 'General' selected. The 'General' tab contains the following options:

- By default, open ScribeFire in...
 - split-screen mode
 - a new window
 - a new tab
- Save editor tabs and content on close
- Confirm when closing a tab
- Auto-save notes while you work
- Show Editor on Bottom of split screen
- Hide the ScribeFire Context Menu
- Sort Categories
- Show status-bar icon
- Disable Quickblogging toolbar

Blog: For adding or deleting blogs to use with ScribeFire.

Entries: For viewing and editing previous blog posts made with ScribeFire.

Categories: To tag blog posts with searchable tags; for example, a blog post about Bugs Bunny cartoons might have as tags "Looney Tunes", "Bugs Bunny", "rabbits", and "cartoon".

Options: A few options for customizing the particular post



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being written, including editing its timestamp, and a few tracking features for websites such as Technorati or delicio.us.

Monetize: The Monetize tab offers settings for those who wish to place advertising services on their blog. This feature, however, relies on a plugin from a website named InLinks.com (whom ScribeFire has partnered with), and is compatible only with blogs using Wordpress.org, Drupal, or MoveableType.

Promote: The Promote tab (above) offers linking to the blog post using various online services, including StumbleUpon, delicio.us, Technorati, and Facebook.

Settings: The Settings tab offers various advanced settings for ScribeFire, including editing the basic template for blog posts, some ScribeFire display settings, and import/export functions for blogs.

About: The About tab displays the ScribeFire home page, which lists news and version

update information about ScribeFire.

Conclusion

As you can see, ScribeFire offers a powerful blogging interface from within Firefox. ScribeFire has proven quite useful to me, with the ability to right-click within Firefox and blog about a particular viewed page. While I don't make use of the promotional or monetary features, these might also be useful for users looking for a convenient way to link a blog post to Facebook or delicio.us, or to use advertising on their blog.

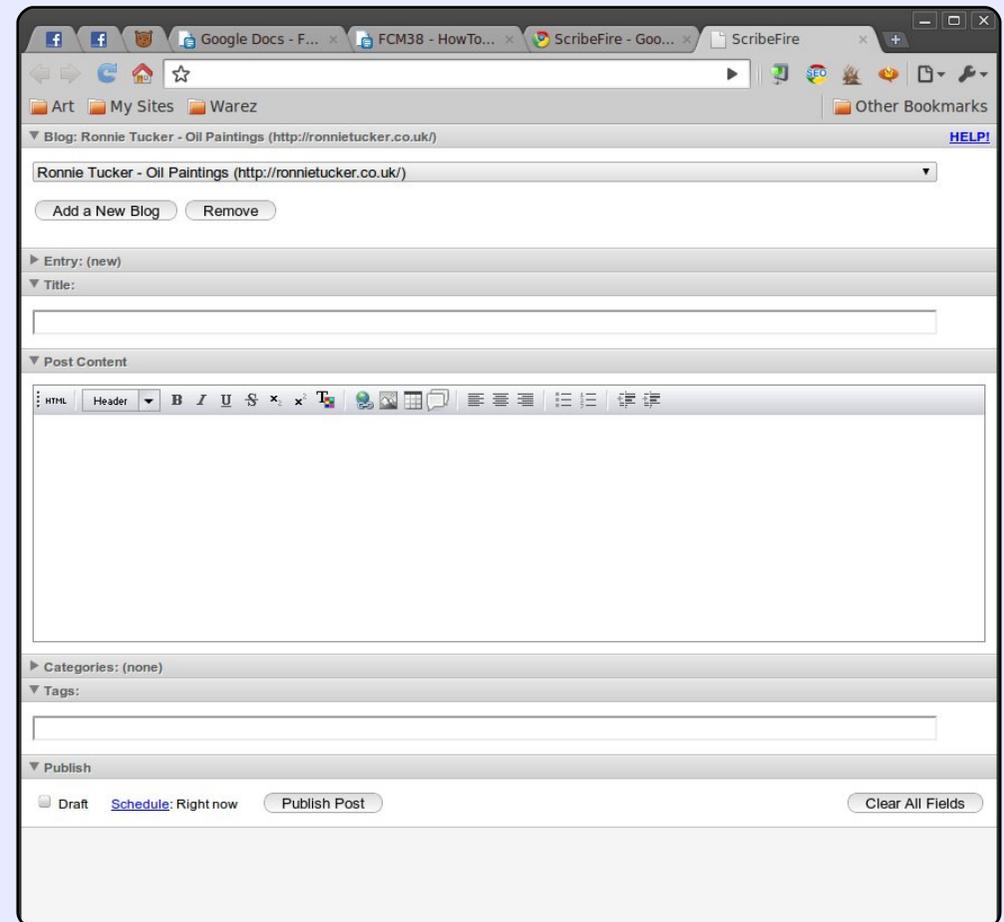


Anthony Dean has been an Ubuntu user since version 5.04 (Hoary). Anthony may be reached at adean33@gmail.com, and his blog is at: <http://adean.blogspot.com>.



Google Chrome

ScribeFire is also available as a Chrome extension via: <http://goo.gl/greo>



MY STORY

Written by Kushal S. Pandya

I am a second-year computer science student, so software has become an extremely important part of my life. Initially, we didn't have a computer at our home, for, in our country (India), PCs are not ubiquitous but are considered a luxury. I purchased a new Acer Aspire 4930 laptop for my studies in January of 2009. I got the best configuration of that time. I myself installed Windows XP, which was already outdated but still widely used, and also used in our college. Frankly speaking, pirated versions of Windows are easily available in our town. In fact, it's hard to find the genuine version. But, instead of upgrading to a new version of Windows, I continued with XP.

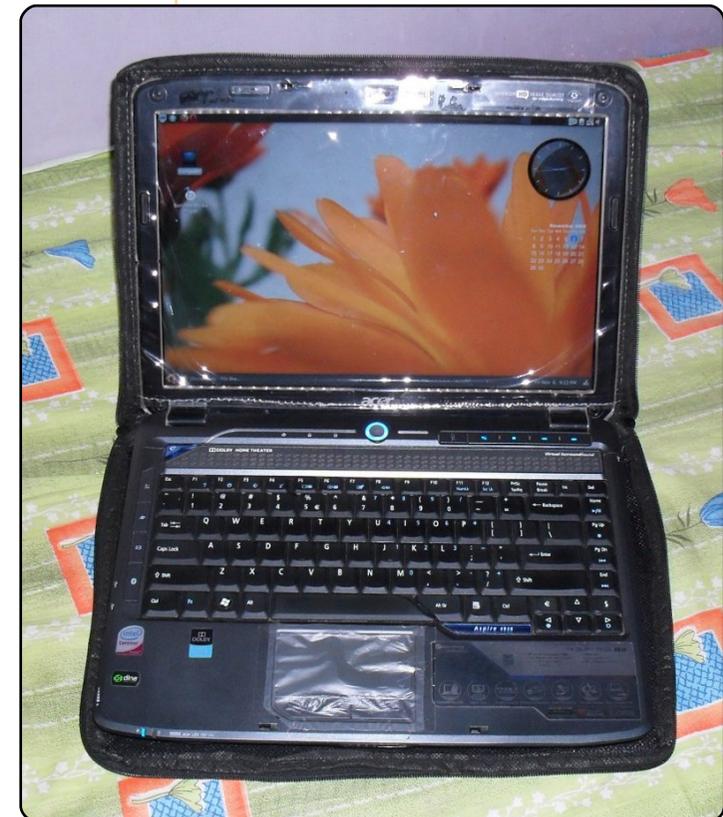
I heard many students and lecturers talking about Linux. I finally realized that they were talking about an operating system. But I ignored it, because I thought Linux may be boring or useless, and I

hadn't seen anyone using it. (All the computer science institutes and businesses in India are Windows dominated.) In the beginning of my second year, I got fed up with Windows, but had no choice to discontinue using it. One day, when I was reading a local newspaper supplement, I saw an article about Free and Open Source Software. I was familiar with both these terms, but gave them no importance before. The article not only spoke about free operating systems, but also mentioned the names of some, such as OpenSolaris, Ubuntu, Fedora, and openSUSE. All these names were new for me; I hadn't known that they were different faces of Linux. Finally, I decided to get any one of them. I don't have an Internet connection at home, because in our country the 'good' and 'inexpensive' service is provided by a government phone-service provider, BSNL. But the bad thing is that this 'good' service remains off 10

days a month, and this 'inexpensive' service charges quite higher amounts for unlimited browsing at low speed (156 kb/s) as compared to other countries. After all, India is still a developing nation. We also have other providers who provide faster surfing, but they are not available in our city. So, I had no choice except to use the Internet at a cyber café.

I first went on the website of OpenSolaris and downloaded its 2009 version. It took 3 hours to complete the download at a low-bandwidth cyber café. I also visited the Ubuntu website, but did not download Ubuntu, because I was more familiar with Sun Microsystems than Canonical. After the download was

completed, I went home and burned the ISO image to a CD. I was very excited as it was the first time I was about to see a non-Windows OS. But wait, my laptop booted from the CD but wasn't able to run the LiveCD. I made many attempts, all in vain. I was very disappointed, especially since my laptop had the specifications required by OpenSolaris. I also tried the CD



MY STORY

in a friend's desktop, but got the same result. After that I just gave up, which is not in my nature.

A few days later, I got a CD of Ubuntu 6.06 from a friend. I didn't know whether it was the newest version or not, but I was impressed with the CD as it came from Shipt. I tried the CD, but obtained the same result. I was getting tired now. The very next day, I went to the cyber café, visited the Ubuntu website and found that the newest version was 9.04. I tried to download it, but the download process started with an extremely slow speed (5 kb/s). I didn't wait for the download to complete, so instead I downloaded the PDF documentation of Ubuntu 6.06. The same night, I started reading it in the hope that I might find a solution to my problem. I read the features of Ubuntu - how things work, what software is installed, etc. - in the documentation, and got desperate and sad that I couldn't install it in my laptop.

But the good part was that I read about Shipt on that

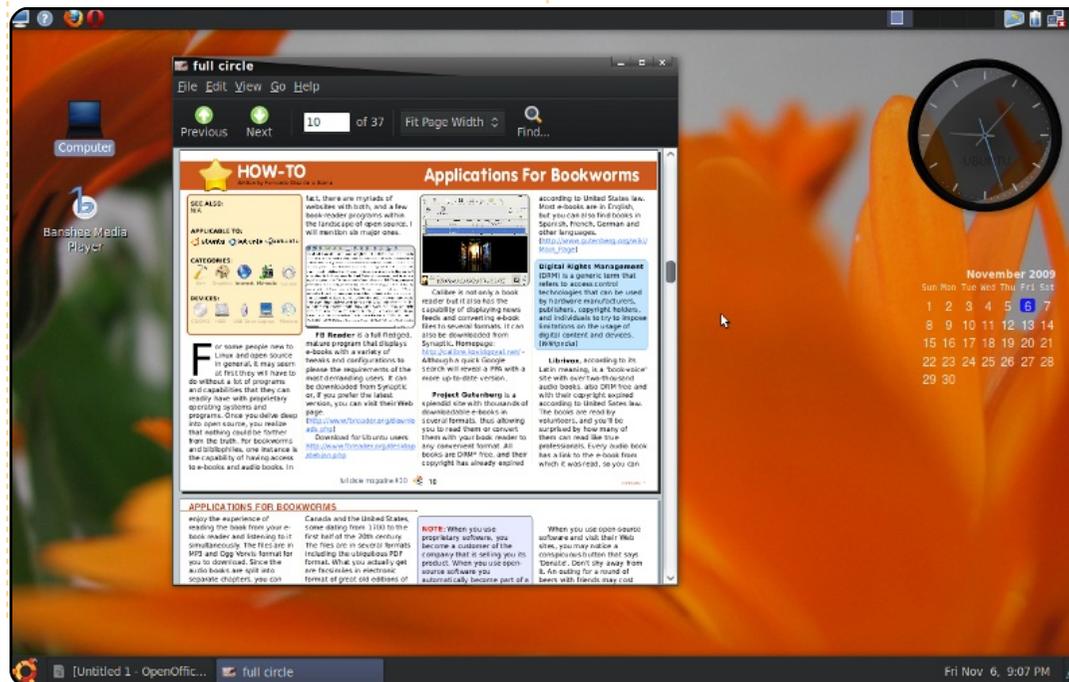
Ubuntu CD I got. So, I requested a free CD of the new version on the website. A week later my same friend gave me an Ubuntu CD which he said could be installed inside Windows. It was version 8.10, and it did install inside Windows. Then I saw Ubuntu for the first time, a non-Windows OS running on my laptop. I remember the date and time well: 31 July 2009, 12:47 p.m. At first sight the OS looked extra-terrestrial, but I kept on exploring it. The thing that impressed me a lot was that Ubuntu didn't need any

device drivers for my laptop, in contrast to what I had faced before with Windows XP.

After a week, I was familiar with Ubuntu. In fact, I was working flawlessly at the terminal, did critical system modifications such as auto-mounting local hard drives on start-up, creating a Pagefile, and changing the GRUB boot menu. I learned these things from various sources such as the Ubuntu Pocket Guide, Ubuntu Kung Fu Beta, and Ubuntuforums.org. Finally, one fine morning, 21 August 2009,

the requested CD from Shipt arrived by post. That was a happy day for me. I installed the newest version of my beloved Ubuntu. However, I found that one can't make the most out of Ubuntu without a direct Internet connection, which wasn't possible for me. But I continued to use it by only modifying themes via gnome-look, even though it wasn't able to play any of my media files.

Then I started discovering the world of Linux. I saw that Linux comes in a wide variety of distributions, but, undoubtedly, Ubuntu is the king of Linux distros. I became acquainted with Ubuntu's children: Kubuntu, Xubuntu and Edubuntu. I also came to know the terms GNOME, KDE, Xfce, etc. I also found the most wonderful thing about Ubuntu: Full Circle magazine. In fact, one day I downloaded all its issues and read them in my free time. This increased my knowledge of Ubuntu and Linux to a greater extent, thanks to all the people who produce this magazine by their precious effort.



I also convinced the owner of the cyber café to let me use my laptop there, so that I could make a direct Internet connection to my computer. I then finally got the most from Ubuntu. I felt that I'd become a master of using Ubuntu and the Linux command line. I then tried some other faces of Linux, such as Mint and openSUSE, but they were unsatisfactory compared to Ubuntu. When I used Compiz, I found that Windows can't even provide 10% of the graphical effects that Ubuntu provides. Safety is, of course, a big feature of Linux and Ubuntu - Windows viruses might have become confused when I used Ubuntu.

I have benefited greatly from Ubuntu, which is developed by a community of users like me. I heartedly felt that I can't keep on using it until I contribute to Ubuntu in some way. So, I started searching for ways to contribute. I had many options for contributing as I am a programming student. I've

already learned languages such as C, C++, JavaScript, HTML, Visual Basic, and databases like FoxPro. I'm a creative photographer, so I also want to help with the Art Work.

I've promoted Ubuntu in our circle, and most of my friends started using it. Currently I run Windows 7 RC and Ubuntu 9.10. I use Windows only to develop my projects in Visual Basic and to play games. I hope we can get the same gaming capabilities into Ubuntu soon. I want to know about any good documentation on learning Python and Perl, because I've found that most of the programs for Ubuntu are developed in these two languages. So, fellow readers, please help me with your suggestions for learning these so that I can effectively contribute - send them to kush.creator@gmail.com,

That was my journey to Ubuntu. My experiences have convinced me that a Linux/Ubuntu era will occur in the world of computing.



MY STORY

Written by Tony Hughes

I have been aware of the existence of Linux as an operating system since it started to appear on PC magazine cover discs in the '90s. At that time, Red Hat seemed to be the predominant distro pushed on cover discs. As a non-technical PC user with acquired skills using Windows from its 3.xx days, I had little interest then in installing and learning a new operating system.

From about 2002 I started to become a little more adventurous, and, with the help of a couple of more technically minded friends, I started to delve into the world of PC upgrading. I built a PC for myself. At this stage, I became aware of the cost of Windows XP when I had to spend £100 for an OEM disc and license. Also, around this time I met a guy at work who actually ran Linux on a laptop he brought into work, but it was too reliant on command-line interventions for me to use.

By 2006, I was more confident with Windows, and could even do a few things with confidence in a terminal window. Around this time, a PC magazine I read regularly had a beginner's Linux section that mentioned this new Linux distro called Ubuntu. It said the installation process had become quite user friendly. I got hold of a copy (I can't remember if this was a cover disc or if I downloaded the ISO image from the Web), I ran it in live mode, and was quite impressed. I also experimented with the late, lamented Freespire, which, at that time, was one of the easiest systems to install. I was so impressed with Ubuntu that I learned how to install it as a dual-boot system, although, at this stage, I was still unclear how to get things like DVDs, MP3s and other multimedia to work successfully.

Over the next few months I played around with Ubuntu and liked it. With the help of forums,



and some people I got to know who also used it, I was able to get all the stuff like Flash, MP3 and DVD playback working, mainly by activation of the Medibuntu repository and installing the restricted extras packages, but there were still a few things that I needed Windows for, so I did not make the break from Windows completely.

In 2008, I was given an old PC, which I got working, and in which I wanted to install a reliable, secure operating system. XP was not a choice, for it cost more than the PC was worth - it was old and with limited memory. I installed Xubuntu on it, and this breathed new life into the PC, which subsequently was given away on the Freegle network (formally Freecycle) in my local area. Being at university, during the summer vacation I was able to rebuild a number of PCs with parts from Freegle, and, as I was giving them away, I again installed a variant of Ubuntu tailored to the spec of the PC, more often than not Xubuntu. That summer I gave away about 12

PCs which all had Ubuntu (or an Ubuntu derivative such as Mint) on them. I have since gone on to do quite a few more, with the current tally being in the mid 20's.

In May 2009, I realised that I was very rarely accessing my XP partition, preferring instead to boot into Ubuntu. I installed Ubuntu as my only system on the disk. Since that time, I have learned about Virtualbox and have installed a virtual XP system in Ubuntu, which works for me when I occasionally need to access an XP system.

In the Blackpool area of the UK where I live there was a LUG, but it had become largely inactive. However, at the beginning of this year, the guy running it started a drop-in on a Saturday morning, with mixed success. I've started to attend this, and it's beginning to attract a small group of users who are sharing their experiences with Linux (mainly Ubuntu or one of its derivatives). My confidence in my abilities, and my knowledge of Ubuntu, have grown, so, while I'm still a beginner, I'm

starting to realize that I can help others. I'm also more confident in looking for solutions to my own problems on the forums, and through reading more advanced books. I have even taken the leap to editing configuration files in a text editor, if only in a small way. I subscribe to several PC magazines, one of which is Linux specific, and I continue to learn.

As for using Ubuntu, in a little over 3 years I have probably got to the stage it took me over 10 years to get to with Windows. I'm writing this after a week of installing and shaking a few bugs out of Karmic on three PCs. My desktop (P4(D) 3.4GHz with 2GB of RAM), an old Toshiba Equium laptop (1.4GB Celeron with 2GB of Ram), and my Acer Netbook, all have the standard desktop version installed with

the required tweaks for multimedia. So far I love it, although as I'm still firmly 32bit, I'm not getting the full speed boot up of those with faster 64-bit PCs, but, hey, you can't have it all.

My next task is to gradually get my partner to accept that Windows is not the be-all and end-all of the PC world, but that may take quite a while.





Expectations were high in January when a guy named Steve stood up in San Francisco and announced a new digital messiah; after almost two years of hype and speculation, it seems we'd be satisfied with nothing less. Just one look at the shiny tablet (cue heavenly choir), and the pundits declared we were in the future.

Yet less is what we got. This is not a review. The reviews talk endlessly about everything the latest i-thing lacks: the screen isn't OLED, it doesn't display e-ink, it's heavy, the battery life isn't so great, there's no stylus, and so on. We wanted the next Wii controller, the next point-and-pinch multi-touch screen, the next tilty-pointy, GPS-giro-scoped, voice-enabled, low-fat, high-protein lean-mean-grilling-machine.

What about price points? Do you get the cheap one with limited storage and limited

connectivity, or the expensive one that still doesn't have enough storage and needs a 3G plug-in to talk to the world in joined-up writing? Can you Facebook while in the bath?

This Steve guy is still going to sell a few million of them, if only because certain sections of the developed world are overgrown adolescents with a fetish for toys, gadgets and, yes, status symbols of how much disposable income they have. Steve dismissed the netbook as just a cheap laptop that doesn't do much. It's not a new category of device between PC and smart-phone, it's just a cheap laptop. Sorry Linux fan-boys, there goes your bridgehead into the mass market. The tablet (cue heavenly choir) is the third device, Steve just told us so.

Maybe I've missed the point. Maybe it's not about the device. Maybe it's in the services that make up Steve's tablet (cue heavenly choir).

The VHS player brought movies to people who'd stopped going to movies. When that market peaked, the DVD player started it all over again. The Sony Walkman brought us music on the move, now the iPod does it better. The Wii is bringing computer games to people who didn't play computer games. The guy called Steve is out to create a new market from several old ones traditionally called publishing. The i-thing has colour, it has connectivity. It will deliver newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and novels direct to your screen. It will bring college textbooks, technical manuals, service logbooks, and catalogues. It will be more usable than a netbook, more versatile than an e-book reader. Think of all the air-conditioning engineers, realtors, district nurses, roadside mechanics, and law students. If Steve can evangelize the publishers, we could get our sports pages with streamed highlight clips of all

the home-runs, field goals, and KOs. For a premium price. Steve will tell you what that is, since you'll be in his on-line store buying all your tunes, apps, papers, and books. Since the tablet uses Steve's own microchips you won't be able to jail-break it without a PhD, and, if you do, the next software update will re-jail you faster than Dog the Bounty Hunter. A unified platform of hardware and software, and a growing mountain of recurring payments for services colourfully rendered. Oh, the humanity!

I'm going to commit heresy. The latest i-thing is not the digital messiah. It's another manufactured marvel of silicon and plastic. It's not going to set you free or save your soul. I know I'm poor, damned and ugly. I'll stick with Linux.

I will give Steve one piece of advice. Give the tablet a water-proof cover. A lot of them will get dropped in the bath.



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For the past week, I've been using the Lucid Lynx release from Canonical and, while I'm the eternal skeptic, I do have to admit this is one impressive OS.

To save on space, I'll just state that the installation is no different than previous incantations. If you're looking for something new here, the only thing you'll notice is that the previous "try or install" menu is missing. In its place is a new menu that uses buttons instead of the cursor keys to make a choice.

Post installation is the usual OS bag of updates that is standard for Windows, Mac and Linux users. In my case I had roughly 350MB of updates waiting in the wings (actually larger than my Windows 7 and OS X Snow Leopard updates). It is odd that Ubuntu takes 20 minutes to install, but the updates take over an hour to download. Go figure.

Is the boot time quicker as Canonical claims? Yes, and impressively so. 9.10 routinely took 45 seconds to boot, with BIOS and POST included, but Lynx shaves that by at least 15 seconds. From the time I push the power button until I have a useable desktop is about 30 seconds, tops. Notice I said useable versus "I can see it but can't use it" usually found in Windows. No hourglass of delay with Ubuntu.

Unfortunately, my computer BIOS does not allow for Quick Boot, or I'm sure I could shave off another 10 seconds.

Once the desktop is visible you'll notice the brown is gone for shades of purple. Truth be known, I've always changed this as quickly as possible for something with a little more zing, and this time was no different. Change is nice - but do any of us really keep what we get straight from the disc?

Other than the color change,

not much to comment on; however, the most evident change on the desktop is the panel indicator for wireless connectivity. Instead of the usual ascending bars-of-power, you now have the Apple style upside down arcs, but that's not the only difference. Something else has changed, and it's for the better, believe me.

In past Ubuntu variations I've complained about wireless connectivity. It has always been haphazard and tended to drop, especially during extended downloads. Even worse, it would ask again for the WEP code I gave it earlier, and would keep asking until the signal was located. In many cases, I just found it easier to restart and connect that way.

Something changed in Lynx. This is the same computer I used Heron, Ibex and Jaunty on, and the same wireless system, too. Lynx never once dropped a signal, nor has it

bothered me for a code I'd already given it. It just stays locked on, even at the outer fringes of the signal.

Beyond what you can physically see on the desktop, a few things have changed. Ubuntu One is not on the main menu anymore (it's now under Places instead of Accessories), but you can also access it through Rhythmbox - because now you have a music store built in, à la iTunes. Better yet, if you have an iPod, it will now connect easily (even the Touch), although swapping music is still a chore. Now you can support Ubuntu by downloading songs through its service, and, if you have a One account, it will even backup the songs online for you to use later should something happen (or you need to access them via another computer). Not even iTunes offers that.

And what of the bazillion codecs you needed in the past to actually play movies and



MP3s? You still don't get them but at least Lynx will download them for you with a gentle "wink, wink, nod, nod" reminder as soon as you open Rhythmbox (past variations waited until you actually attempted to play the video and/or audio offender). This last minute reminder upset a lot of users, so the change is nice.

The sad loss for most is GIMP. Deleted because some found it difficult to use, it's easily downloaded and curiously is not that large of a program for what it does. Go to the repositories and it's sitting there patiently awaiting your command to download.

The real difference many will notice is the moving of screen sizing tabs to the left instead of right top corner in programs. I use an Apple computer otherwise, so this is no great big deal, and it's easily changed if you so desire, but some users have been complaining. Why the change? Who knows, but I saw nothing major in the change.

Probably one of the most noted, yet minor, changes is the substitution of Yahoo for Google as the Firefox search engine. Of note, you still get your choice of 8 or so search engines by merely using the drop down box in Firefox. Google is still there, but now it's a search engine you have to search for! By the way, once you do go to another search engine, Firefox stays with it until you change again.

On a curious note, my Firefox homepage was set to Google. Is this an inside joke? You have the main search engine as Yahoo - but the browser's homepage as Google? This must be a programmer's stab at the system.

I've noticed some reviews praising the Ubuntu Software Center (or Centre if you get the UK version), but I didn't see where it was any different from 9.10. Maybe I'm missing something, but I just didn't see much of a difference. Of course, Synaptic Program Manager is still there for those of us who prefer to get the

eclectic mix of programs not offered via Software Center. Either version is slick and easy to use, as is adding repositories if you so desire.

Are there any peculiarities that need to be worked on? Of course, no OS is perfect out of the box; however, most I found here were minor in nature (but aggravating to work around).

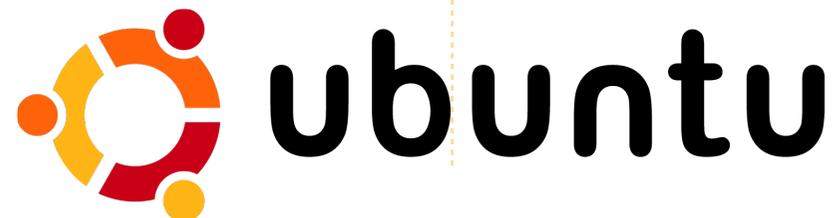
For example, what happened to my touchpad's side scroll? It's gone - even though the mouse program tells me it's activated. No amount of tweaking has helped, and recommendations from the forums have gone nowhere, yet this same trackpad was working under previous versions. This is a big gripe I've seen in forums.

And then there's the problem with Ubuntu One. It works when it feels like it, and I can't tell if it's because of

suspect programming or an overwhelmed system, but it will often take several minutes to connect (by which time I've usually forgotten what I meant to do). I have a hunch Canonical got caught off-guard by the demand, so maybe it'll be fixed quickly.

Finally, what happened with the shutting down time? What used to take 5 seconds now takes 15, and I can see no reason why this is happening. I just find it curious that Ubuntu has swapped a quick boot time for an equally longer shut-down period.

On a scale of 10, I'd definitely give this version a strong 9. I'm finding it easier to use and maintain than my OS X computer, and my work computers with Windows 7 could learn a thing or two from Ubuntu.



Lucid Lynx (10.04) is the greatest in a long line of rather impressive Ubuntu distributions, and is probably equipped more than sufficiently for the average user; however, it's always fun to experiment with various programs.

In no particular order, here is my listing of favorite programs I'd recommend to users.

Update Manager. Okay, it's more a chore than a program, but haven't you wondered what the red exclamation point in the panel indicates? You'd be surprised by the number of users I've met who don't have a clue, even when a simple mouse-over of the panel icon gives you a narrative balloon explaining it.

Ubuntu Tweak. As the name states, it's designed to tweak Ubuntu - but it does more than this. You can add programs, add repositories, and even get rid of garbage files and kernels clogging your hard drive. It comes standard with Super OS

but not with base Ubuntu. It can be used under KDE or Xfce desktops, but then you do lose some functions. One major advantage of this program is that it's really (really) hard to screw up Ubuntu if you follow the instructions, unlike some other programs that give you a nasty disclaimer right before crashing your system.

Panel Add-On Apps. Many don't know you can add apps to the top and bottom panels by right clicking and going to "Add to Panel". My favorites include weather, Force Quit, and hardware monitoring apps. Unnerve guest users by adding the roving eyes that follow mouse movements. And you can enlarge the panels too, which is useful for us oldsters who can't read like we used to.

GIMP. Dumped for 10.04 as standard equipment because of user complaints about difficulty, it can still be found in the repositories. If you can find a better Photoshop clone - at \$600 less - you'd better grab it. Picasa is a close second, and possibly a little easier to use, but not as feature rich.

Swiftfox. Firefox is great, but it can be poky. But, this highly tweaked version does away with the slow browser blues. Add enough add-on features and you can reduce the viewing window to a size of a postage stamp, but there is probably no better overall browser. Blazingly quick to open, it often bests Firefox by several seconds in the processing of tricky web pages.

Opera. Close second to above. Not quite as twitchy with some websites as Swiftfox is, but still needs tuning to avoid unintended shutdowns when a site gets slow.

Screenlets. For those of us who can't live without a desktop clock and assorted eye candy. Better than Google Gadgets (which can get a little goofy), or Google Desktop - which gets really memory intense and somewhat intrusive.

Nero Lite. Yes, it's the same company that makes a pricey full version; however this is the free version for Linux. Oddly,

Nero doesn't make a full version for Linux that I'm aware of - but I could be mistaken. Alternative is Brasero.



Skype. Free computer to computer internet calls. Need I say more? Chat away with that person in China if you so desire, or aggravate other computer users you see online.

Cheese. Got a webcam? This will activate it and add special effects if you desire.

Web/Gmail Notifiers. I use webmail, and standard email programs don't like that. These do the trick. Webmail for Firefox/Swiftfox will do the same thing for all webmail services as an add-on to the

browser, but this is for those times when all you need is just the mail - without the aggravation of opening a browser.

Desktop Drapes. Be truthful and admit the standard desktop is boring. Load this program, and you can set it to change the desktop background every couple minutes or so. Just don't be too greedy and add all the backgrounds available from Ubuntu Art (just loading those takes a good hour or so).

Wine. Wine is not an Emulator, or so the acronym goes. Been in beta for close to a decade but who's counting? It works okay for some Windows programs, and is a great option for those not wanting to load a full OS-like Windows using VirtualBox (see below). Play on Linux is the companion version that allows some games to operate in Ubuntu.

VirtualBox. Sun's Linux giveaway, it's a virtual machine for users who can't live without Windows. A little

dicey with some of the peripherals, but I'll live with the minor inconvenience in lieu of paying big bucks for other emulators. If you opt for this one, go with the Ubuntu Tweak version as it has more features than the repository version.

Homebank. For those who like Quicken but don't feel like running it under Wine, this is a good knock-off. GNUCash is a close second, but a little quirky. Now if I could get the bank downloads to go directly to the program....

Hulu Desktop. Great for watching movies and TV shows without having to fork over the dough for cable and satellite bills. So what if you have to watch the occasional commercial? Works better for me than the other programs found in the Ubuntu repositories. For those in the U.S. who enjoy Archer, Hulu offers it uncut (check it out).

Frozen Bubble. Yes, it's a game but it's also a guilty pleasure. Play it enough, and you'll have Carpal Tunnel

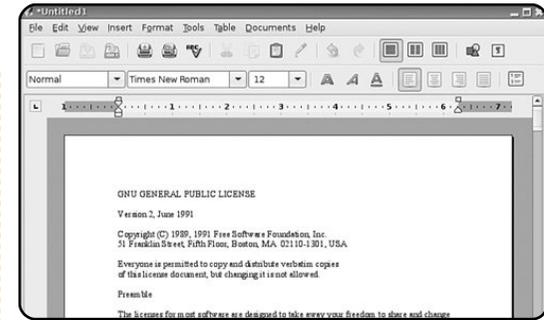
Syndrome, but what a way to go.

Google Earth. Big Brother is watching, and this proves what the paranoids have been saying for years. Anything I can use to find Frisbees on the roof of a neighbor's house is probably too enticing to turn down. Dumped from standard repositories and even Ubuntu Tweak - so you'll have to fish for it.

Pidgin. Replaced by Empathy, I still prefer this version for IM needs. The original and the best, even if the developers can't spell.

Writer's Café. The free version is limited - but more than sufficient for those of us who aspire to be playwrights. Now if I could just write a screenplay.

Exaile. Slick music player, really slick. If Rhythmbox didn't come with the Ubuntu Music Service, I'd use this one all the time.



Abiword. For those days you need a quick word processor - without the frills. Largely overlooked, and that's a shame. Quicker to load and respond than OpenOffice - it offers just about everything Word does except the price tag.

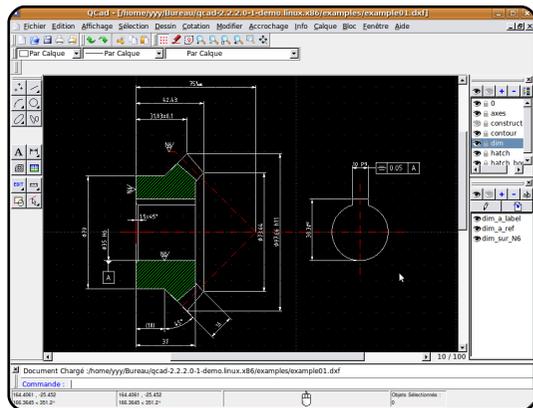
Basket Note Pads. More advanced than most of the sticky note programs, it's a little known gem.

Symphony. Ever wonder what happened to Lotus? They went to the free side, but most of this failure was from the ill-fated Lotus Smart Suite of the late 90s in which Lotus issued discs with "Louts" instead of Lotus on the front. For those who think the IBM cache is better than Open Office, this program gives you a processor, spreadsheet and presentation package for \$99 less than what

they charged when they were Louts and, yes, the name is spelled right this time.

Netbeans. Need a quick website program that won't take a 1,000 page book to understand? Here it is.

Qcad. Mini AutoCAD



equivalent that costs about \$800 less. Electric is the program for electrical CAD work.

Buoh Comic Reader. Where else can you get about 75 comic strips on a daily basis - without buying a paper? A little known program that should have garnered more respect, it hasn't been updated in 5 years but still looks fresh.

Hydrogen. I can't play the

drums to save my life but this program goes a long way in helping. Click here, click there, and then press play, and you might become a drum virtuoso, too. Harmless time killer.

Freemind. Mind mapping utility for those requiring something to plot their next plan on, it should be called Mindless since that's the type of fun it represents.

Terminator. Not the movie, the program that gives you a foursquare window of Terminals for us geeks who can't get enough command-line time.

Fonts. Not a program - more a new addition to the Ubuntu Software Center. You can now download a load of obscure fonts you never knew existed, including one that looks suspiciously like my undecipherable handwriting.

Bibus. Not a Bible program, but one that cranks out bibliographies like EndNote does.

ClamAV. Linux is safe and impervious to Windows viruses -

but you can still inherit something nasty via email. Make sure to download the graphical interface, too, or it's strictly a command line option. Firestarter is the firewall equivalent also worthy of downloading.

Anything with a K at the beginning. Okay, I use the Gnome desktop, but some of the KDE programs just can't be passed up. You have to admire creators coming up with names that start with a K - and keeping a straight face at the same time. Widely overlooked by Gnome users, many of these programs are astounding in their own right. Under Gnome most will work.

Although it's not a program, one other item that should be in the possession of any Ubuntu user is Keir Thomas's book, **Ubuntu Kung Fu**. Sure, it's a goofy title - made all the goofier by the inclusion of a kitten on the front cover - but the included tips range from silly to hardcore tweaks - with nothing but raw, useful information in between. In my opinion, the best Ubuntu book

out there.

And, finally, the *Ubuntu Software Center* **Download All** button. Haven't seen this yet? Truthfully, I haven't either, but I'm still waiting for that to show. Sure would make life a whole lot easier, even if the download did take a day or two to finish.

As for honorable mentions, how about the 1,000 or so calculators you can find in the repositories that will compute anything short of future time events? And don't forget the dozen or so video and music players that can play music variations I never knew existed, or the hundred metric to American or American to metric conversion programs. Of course, you also have the programs to create your own Ubuntu and/or programs discs, and even one to create USB drives containing your favorite Ubuntu flavor.

And how about.....



MOTU INTERVIEW

Taken from behindmotu.wordpress.com

Andres Rodriguez

Behind MOTU is a site featuring interviews with those known as 'Masters of the Universe' (MOTU). They are the volunteer army of package maintainers who look after the Universe and Multiverse software repositories.



Age: 24

Location:
Miami, FL.

IRC Nick:
RoAkSoAx.

How long have you used Linux, and what was your first distro?

I've been using Linux on a daily basis for almost three years now, but I started with Red Hat 7.1 in 2001.

How long have you been using Ubuntu?

I've been using Ubuntu since 2005, just a few days after Hoary was released, but it wasn't until version 6.10 that I started using it on a daily basis.

When did you get involved with the MOTU team, and how?

Well, I always wanted to get involved with open source, and I found Ubuntu a great place to start. I actually started reading the Developer Documentation released with 6.06, but never got the time to actually commit myself to it due to work and studies. Mostly because it's not easy to get started in open source in a third world country like Peru, where everything is pretty much M\$ oriented.

Anyways, when Nicolas Valcarcel (nxvl) became a MOTU, I just said "I want to become a MOTU too", and I requested a Mentorship for the Intrepid development cycle. However, I was unable to finish it due to personal reasons. So it wasn't till the Karmic development cycle that I pretty much put all my spare time into it. I restarted my Mentorship, but with ivoks this time, and now you see me here.

What helped you learn packaging and how Ubuntu teams work?

What I believe helped me learn packaging was my desire to do it, and the willingness to put my hands on packaging, but of course all of that was driven by the documentation, my mentors, and all the people that reviewed my packages and helped me along the way. Something that I was told, and you all might know, is that you will always learn something new while being a MOTU.

What's your favourite part of working with the MOTU?

My favourite part is that no matter who you are, what you do, where you're at, and what time it is, someone will be there to help you, and that you can learn so much from other people. I also find it amusing to work in such a distributed environment.

Any advice for people wanting to help out MOTU?

Yes. If you really have the desire to help and become a MOTU, just commit to it, because if you do, you'll always find the time to help out. Read the documentation and always ask questions; don't get disappointed if people are not around to answer them. You might make a lot of mistakes, but you must be willing to learn from them and listen to what others have to say! And well, just practice, practice, and continue to practice!

Are you involved with any local Linux/Ubuntu groups?

Yes. My involvement with LUGs started with AQPGLUG, which is the group from my home town. Then, I got involved with the Ubuntu LoCo Team, where I'm now one of the Council Members. Right now, since I do not live in Peru any more, I'm



MOTU INTERVIEW

on my search for a new LUG to get involved with here at FIU.

What are you going to focus on in Karmic and Karmic+1?

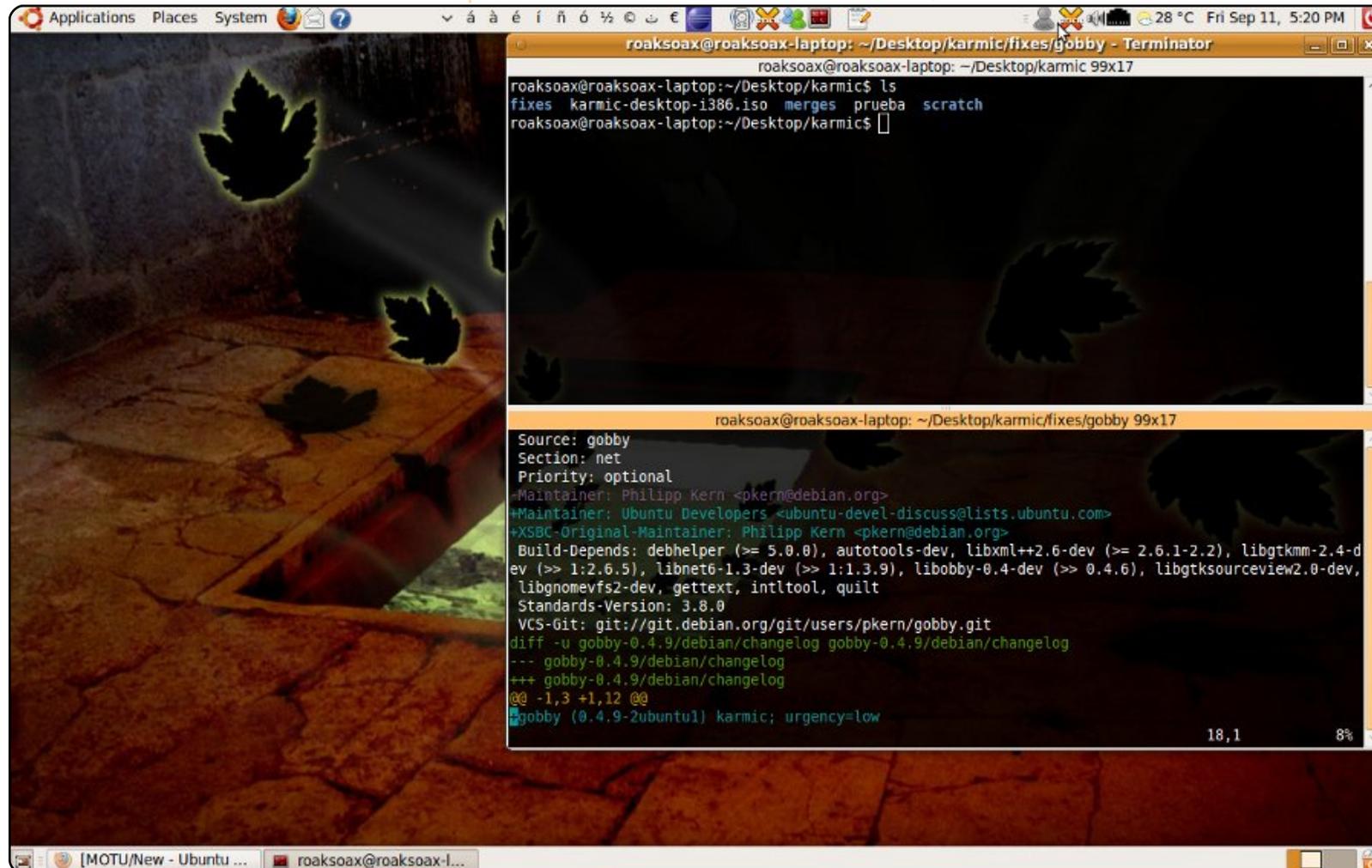
My focus for Karmic will be the Sponsorship Queue and bugfixes. For Karmic+1 it will be the Server Team and the

Ubuntu HA team, now that I have more experience. However I would really like to get involved with the Security Team (because I've always wanted to be a Security Expert), and with the Desktop Team (because I use it every day and it just feels right to contribute to it).

What do you do in your other spare time?

Well, the past few months (between May and July), I pretty much spent all my spare time in the MOTU mentorship process. The past 3 weeks I haven't had much spare time.

However, I like to hang out with friends, watch movies, play video games and play soccer and tennis.





Window Buttons

In a recent issue of Full Circle, in the Q&A section, you gave a method of moving the window buttons back to the right side. Although this is the method most commonly referenced to accomplish this, it may create trouble down the road. The buttons were moved to the left to make way for a new feature on the right side called window indicators or "windicators": <http://www.markshuttleworth.com/archives/333>.

If you make the change in gconf you may break this new function. The "right way" to move the buttons back is to select an older theme, like Human, that has the buttons on the right side and then change all its defaults to the Radiance or Ambiance choices. Then just save it with a new name. This way you get the Ambiance or Radiance theme but with the buttons on the right side and you have not

potentially broken the upcoming new feature.

Dr. Martin G. Miller

Installed Packages

With reference to the question on page 28 of FCM#37: "How can I quickly check on whether a package is installed."

It may be of interest to note that the actual package name is often unknown or only partially known. For example, I have Amarok installed but it's not the current version, I reinstalled an earlier version (v1.4) as I found it worked better for me. Now, an Aptitude search for Amarok tells me it's not installed as my version is called Amarok14. However, if you search for Amarok? then I do get the hoped for answer.

Readers may also be directed towards the excellent

utility, Synaptic, where a search for Amarok does produce the required information in the results window, showing me that Amarok (v2.2) isn't installed but Amarok14 is.

I find the Q&A very informative, many thanks.

David

Alternate CD

I have an NEC PII 366 PC with 512MB of RAM. I have come the point that if there was no Alternative CD available I could not load this machine with Ubuntu using the Live CD that I download regardless of the version of Linux.

I just installed Ubuntu 10.04 on this machine with no problems using the Alternative CD. I use this older machine because it has an 80 gig HD in it and I use it as a second place to backup important

information. I use Giver to transfer the files via Wi-Fi to this computer.

I read the article on Lubuntu and I thought I would give it a try so I downloaded the ISO and burnt it to a CD. The first thing I noticed was that it did get to the Live CD desktop, and it got there rather quickly. I did not find a system monitor, but I found a system tool that reported memory. This reported about 360 megs of memory in use and about 142 megs free. The tool also reported I had only 502 megs of memory in the machine. I now have a decision to make. Do I load Lubuntu or do I stick with the Ubuntu 10.04 that is in the computer now and running just fine.

Thank you Ubuntu for continuing to making Alternative CD of your new releases and keeping this computer alive with Ubuntu. I hope the Linux community does not ever forget about



LETTERS

these older machines that still have life in them and keep creating low memory usage install CDs such as Alternative Disks.

Andy Lino

Tiling Windows

The mention of using PyTyle in other window managers confused me, since then you mention using it with GNOME. GNOME's not a window manager though. Are you saying you can use PyTyle with Metacity? Additionally, Xmonad can be used with full desktop environments like GNOME or KDE, if you don't want a minimalist xmobar. I've used KDE+Xmonad for over a year and was on GNOME+Xmonad for about 6 months before that.

Mackenzie Morgan

Lucas says: *I mentioned PyTyle as an alternative to a tiling window manager, since it is a tiling script (i.e. can run in*

any window manager/desktop environment combination). You're absolutely correct that GNOME is a desktop environment and not a window manager, and I should have said Metacity to be clearer. I also realize that any of the tiling window managers can be used with a desktop environment such as XFCE, KDE, GNOME, since they would simply replace the window manager (xfcewm, kwin, and metacity, respectively), but it seemed to be overkill to mention that for a Top 5 list. Also, being the minimalist that I am, I tend to forget that some people mix minimalist window managers with desktop environments. I'm sorry that my descriptions weren't as clear as I wanted them to be, and I thank you for bringing this to my attention. I hope that I've clarified this for you?

Screen Rotation

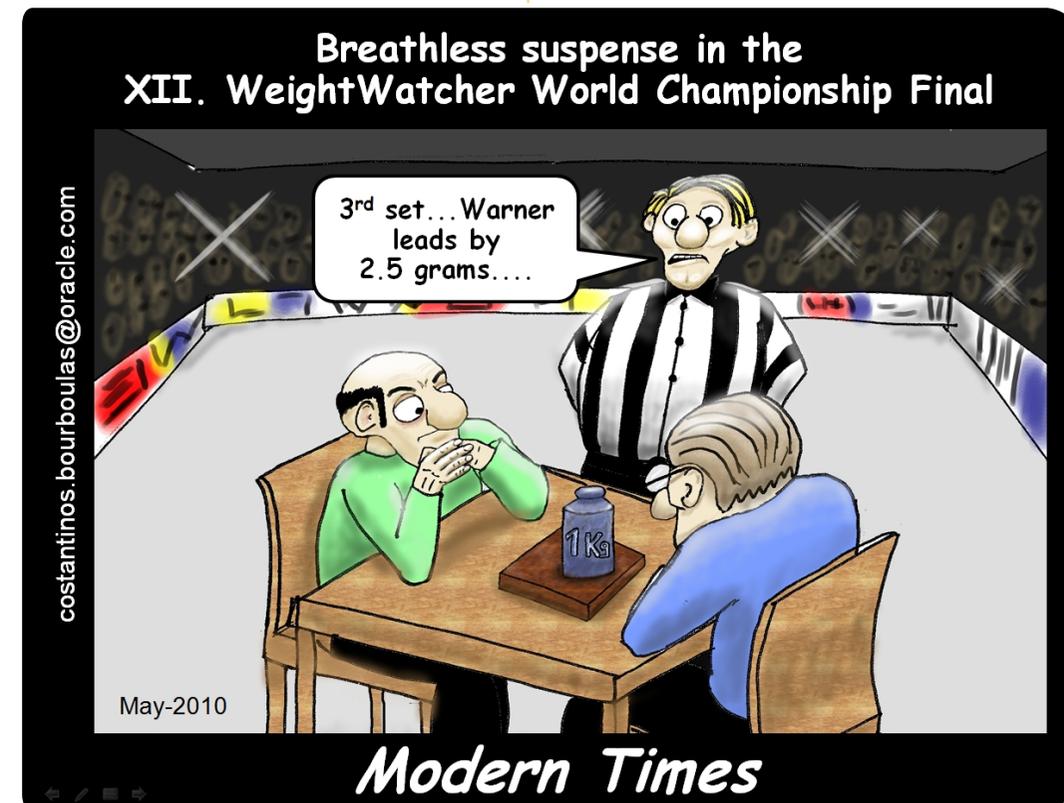
Reading the FCM#37 Q&A, it seems that the answer to the laptop upside-down

screen question was overly complicated, at least if the user is using Lucid (and Karmic, I believe; possibly even earlier). It is far simpler to go to System > Preferences > Monitors, and set the screen rotation there. I believe it is also possible to use the GUI tool provided with the proprietary NVIDIA drivers, if those are in use. The xrandr commands used will also work without needing to edit

xorg.conf. In addition, xorg.conf is not even used anymore by default in Lucid (and possibly earlier).

Keep up the good work on Full Circle!

Zachary Pletan





GAME NEWS

Open Sourcing more games

– After the success of the Humble Indie Bundle, *Lugaru*, *Aquaria*, *Gish*, and *Penumbra* are now open source!



A few weeks ago, Wolfire Games made ripples across the net about their Humble Indie Bundle, allowing you to pay what you want for 5 indie games! This issue sees the start of a 4-part series to review each game. I have already reviewed *World of Goo* in Issue 24.

Lugaru is a unique game, but also sounds slightly odd. You play as a rabbit, with a ninja-like fighting style. Very strange idea for the game, but when you play it, it's very "cool" indeed. Turner is the rebel rabbit you play through the story and challenge missions. He has an excellent array of moves you can use to defeat your enemies: from kicks and punches to using weapons such as knives and swords. Turner is also very agile, being able to jump great heights and lengths, as well as sprint.

Lugaru features two game modes. The first is a story mode focusing on Turner's efforts to find those responsible for slaughtering his village. The story takes place over several missions, which are all very similar: kill every rabbit and wolf on that mission to move on. The story itself is nothing special; you won't miss anything from skipping it, but the story is told through many

different scenes. The missions do vary location - from snowy mountains to vast deserts to forests. The challenge mode works the same way as the missions: kill all the enemies. However, in this mode, you are

scored and timed. It is important to complete the challenge as quickly as possible, and pull off special attack moves to get the higher scores. This mode does bring a lot of replay value, as you try to beat your score. It would be nice to see an online leader board, to see how well you are doing compared to the rest of the world.

The gameplay is excellent, one of the best third-person games I have played for gameplay. The controls are



very fluid. Moving your camera with the mouse and controlling Turner with the keyboard works very well. I have always complained that third-person games do not work well on a PC, but Wolfire seems to have got it right. Controlling Turner is incredible fun. You will start each mission by getting into position for your first attack. You could sneak in stealthy, or charge in. Jumping is very smooth, and it is incredible fun when launching yourself great distances. The fighting is the most crucial part of the game,

but, sadly, it's a bit hit or miss. You are able to pull off great moves with Turner: karate kicks, drop kicks, and deadly knife fights. It all looks great as you watch Turner and your enemy taking chunks out of each other, with very nice blood effects (not suitable for children).

Now onto the bad: Most of the time, the combat is hard and not very fluid. You will be

running and jumping around your enemy trying to get in a shot. When you do manage to get a shot in, it's likely to be blocked, which seems to happen too often. It gets more irritating when both you and the enemy are scrambling for the knife that got knocked out of your hand when you were hit. If that's not enough, it's likely that the enemy will run off to alert others of your attack. When the fighting

works, it works very well, but most of the time it does not. Usually the best tactic is to sneak around and take them out in one blow, one by one.

The graphics are nice and well presented, but very outdated by today's standards. It is very scalable; you should be able to run Lugaru on many different computers, even with a basic 3D card. The sound is solid - with a good soundtrack and sound effects during fighting.

Lugaru is an enjoyable fighting game with plenty to do. The controls and level design are excellent, but the game's biggest letdown is the fighting mechanics. It's definitely worth a play, but expect a tough fight.

L

Lugaru is a cross-platform game, with a simple Linux installer. There is a free demo, but to buy the full game it is \$20.

Score: 7/10

Good:

- Great controls
- Very scalable
- Plenty to do

Bad:

- Poor fighting mechanics
- Would be nice to have an online leader board



Ed Hewitt, aka chewit (when playing games), is a keen PC gamer and sometimes enjoys console gaming. He is also on the development team for the Gfire project (Xfire Plugin for Pidgin)





Q&A

Written by Gord Campbell

If you have Ubuntu-related questions, email them to: questions@fullcirclemagazine.org, and Gord will answer them in a future issue. Please include as much information as you can about your problem.

Q Before I upgrade my wife's computer I would like to be able to list out all her applications. Is there an easy way to do this?

A Yes, open Accessories/Terminal and enter this command:

```
dpkg --get-selections "*" > Desktop/applications
```

The text file "applications" will appear on the Desktop, containing a complete list of all the packages installed using Ubuntu tools. It will not include anything you have downloaded from web sites.

You might also want to check out Remastersys, which lets you create an ISO with all your applications. If it fits, you can burn it to a DVD, or you can use USB Startup Disk Creator to put everything on a flash drive of the appropriate size. The ISO contains only the

applications, no data -- which means you might have to recreate any custom settings again.

Q I have just installed Ubuntu 10.04. Now what?

A <http://blog.thesilentnub.com/2010/04/ubuntu-1004-post-install-guide-what-to.html>

Q How do I use a dial-up Internet connection with Ubuntu?

A Sadly, it is a long process, told in several places. My suggestion is to Google:

[dial-up redux ubuntuforums](#)

The first result might take you to the fourth page of the thread; click on "first" and start reading. You will probably also want to read the content of a

linked thread, where the link is "wvdial offline installation".

Q I'm getting a Grub 1.5 Error 21 after installing Ubuntu on an external hard drive. This problem occurs when I reboot my XP machine without the external hard drive plugged in, if I plugged in the external hard drive where I installed Ubuntu, then I am ok, I can choose Ubuntu or XP.

I tried to edit the boot.ini by changing the 2 to 1, that does not help. Any help would be appreciated!

A (by **Undecim**) That means that you installed Grub to your internal drive rather than your external.

If you want to fix it, you should first put grub on the external drive, then put Windows' bootloader back on the internal drive.

To do this, boot Ubuntu and open a terminal, type "mount" and the first line of output should look something like this:

```
/dev/sda1 on / type ext4 (rw,errors=remount-ro)
```

the /dev/sda1 in that example means that Ubuntu is on the first harddrive (sda) and on the first partition (1). Yours may say "/dev/sdb1" instead, since you are on the external drive.

Now, type "sudo grub-install /dev/sda" where /dev/sda is the hard drive that you need to put grub on. In my example, I would need to use /dev/sda (not /dev/sda1 - /dev/sda1 is the partition, not the drive), because that's the hard drive with my Ubuntu installation. If you saw "/dev/sdb1 on /" after typing "mount", then you will need to use "/dev/sdb" instead. This command will require your password. Note that when you are typing, you don't see any characters, but your password is indeed being entered.



Once that's done, you can restore the Windows bootloader with a Windows recovery disk. Have a look here for instructions:

<http://www.techzonez.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-3975.html>

Q I used to run Ubuntu 9.10 Karmic 32-bit. Yesterday, I made the switch to 64-bit.

Everything works perfectly, except the only game I like to play: Dofus.

I got it to install, but when I click the launcher I am getting this error:

```
Failed to execute child process
"/home/mike/ankama/Dofus/share/UpLauncher" (Permission denied)
```

A (by **Dearingj**)
Sounds like you need to give yourself execute permission for that file. Try this in a terminal:

```
sudo chmod u+x
/home/mike/ankama/Dofus/share/UpLauncher
```

Q My Toshiba laptop overheats when it works hard, since the fan never comes on.

A (Thanks to **Ashima** in the Ubuntu Forums)
Here is what works for me. Toshiba L500, 64bit Ubuntu 10.04

```
sudo apt-get install sensors-applet
```

```
sudo sensors-detect
```

Next: answer yes to everything. Exit then restart.

```
sudo gedit /etc/default/grub
```

then change

```
GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX_DEFAULT="quiet splash"
```

to read

```
..."quiet splash
acpi_osi=Linux"
```

Next:

```
sudo update-grub
```

to update /boot/grub/grub.cfg. Exit then restart computer.

Future Releases

Most of the time, there is a "current stable release" of Ubuntu, and there is also some version of the next release. For example, as of July, 2010, the current stable release of Ubuntu is 10.04, Lucid Lynx -- but you can download and install a test version of Ubuntu 10.10, Maverick Meerkat. Future releases go through several stages: Alpha, which is like the frame of a house before the walls go up, Beta, where we have walls, but you use a ladder to reach the basement, and Release Candidate, where the house is almost ready to move in -- but the paint's not dry.

The purpose of making future versions available is so that people can find the bugs and report them! Do not install a future release and entrust

your most valuable files to it; it's made to be broken. Sure, it might have later versions of some applications than what you get in the current stable release, but you can't depend on them.

If you read a lot of messages in the Ubuntu Forums, you will see a few tales of woe: "I installed (a future version of Ubuntu) and enjoyed using the new version of (some application), and put (several dozen hours) into creating (something) using the application, and then it disappeared! How can I get it back? The answer is, "sorry, it's gone."

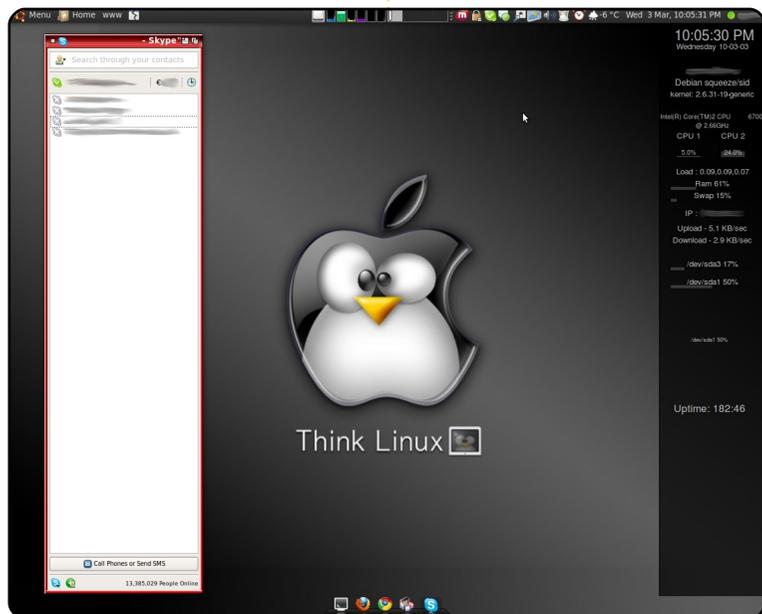
For Ubuntu to move forward, people must try future releases and report the bugs, but don't go down that road unless you understand that everything you do might disappear.





MY DESKTOP

Your chance to show the world your desktop or PC. Email your screenshots and photos to: misc@fullcirclemagazine.org and include a brief paragraph about your desktop, your PC's specs and any other interesting tidbits about your setup.



My setup is an homage to my diverse computing heritage. I'm using a custom-made Amiga OS theme pack for my windows, an AWN dock, and an overall dark theme. I've always said Ubuntu is about choice, so I've included the Linux Mint repos in my system, and use the Mint menu exclusively. I use Miro and a UPnP to stream media content to my PS3 and my HDTV. This is something I would never be able to do with Windows.

Computer Specs:

Ubuntu 9.10 with Linux Mint 8 Repos added
Intel Core 2 Duo 6700 (2.66GHz)
2GB RAM
ATI Radeon X1600
300GB HD

Thomas Boxall



This is my desktop with the '65 Mustang as my desktop wallpaper, the Cairo dock, and Linux Mint 8. Lots of custom icons too!

All running on a Gateway 2x Pent 4 CPUs at 3.0, with 1.5 of RAM.

Never had a better running computer. Note the *Full Circle* magazine folders on the desktop (podcast too!). Keep up the good work! It's been the best two years of computer usage. No more Microsoft!

Randy





This is my simple but effective desktop.

I combined some elements from Windows and Mac. For example, the panel is Windows 7 style and so are the borders of my windows. I use docky with the Mac style; my cursor theme is also Mac style.

My icons are from the Gnome step into freedom theme, and I use Google gadgets and gdesklets. All this runs on Karmic Koala on a Compaq Presario C700 with 120GB of hard disk and 1GB of RAM. And it's perfect for me.

Christian Ali



The icons are the famous hidroxigen, and the japanese clock on the table is a Screenlet. Between the hands there's a conky with the forecast script that shows the weather. And the dock is the wonderful Cairo Dock. It seems difficult but actually is really easy to do. I like to modify and create desktops, but always consider their usability. A GUI that is beautiful but complicated isn't useful, and has lost the point of the Desktop.

With this Desktop I won the amateur contest for the best desktop of the month on the Ubuntu Italian forum. I have also [done a guide for doing a desktop like this](#).

Specifications: CPU: Intel Pentium Dual E2140 @ 1.6GHz ; Nvidia Geforce 8600 GT silent; 2GB of RAM.

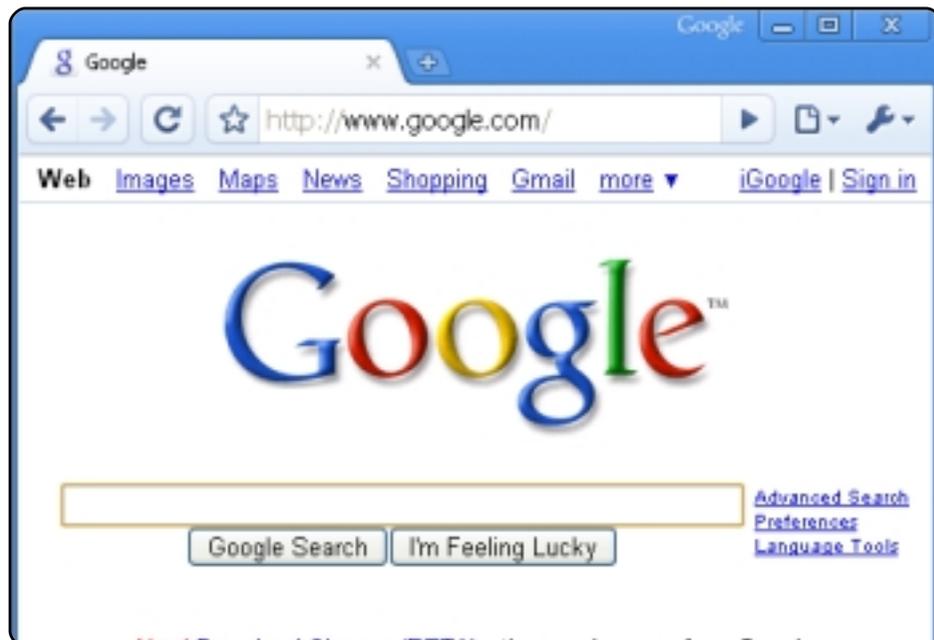
Santiago

Google Chrome

<http://www.google.com/chrome>

This browser is fast. It's fast to start, fast to load pages, and fairly stable. After using Firefox as my primary browser for a couple of years, I'm surprised at the overall speed of Chrome. I'm also a heavy user of Google services and tools, so integration with many things Google has been an attractive aspect of this browser as well.

To Install: Visit <http://www.google.com/chrome>, and click the download button. Select the version of Chrome that best matches your computer, then double-click the file to install the .deb.



GnomeDo

<http://do.davebsd.com/>

This is the one piece of software that I use most often, but notice the least. As a launcher, GnomeDo is fast, accurate, beautiful, and reliable (most of the time).

To Install: Find "**gnome-do**" in Synaptic Package Manager and install it from there.

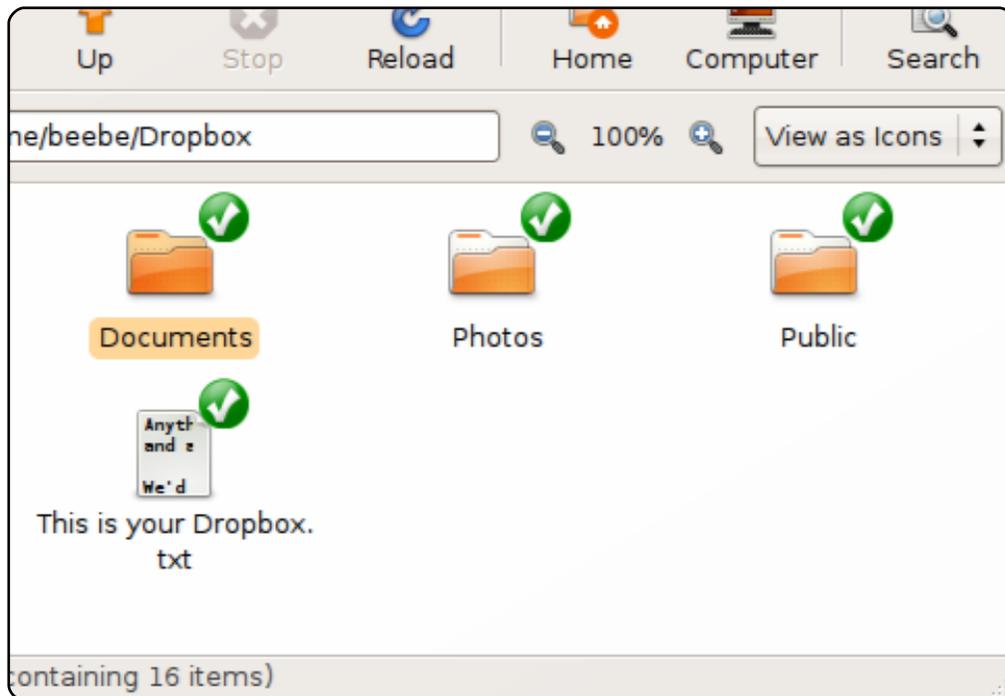


Dropbox

<https://www.dropbox.com/>

Dropbox offers dead-simple file synchronization and backup at a reasonable price. I keep all my most-used files in Dropbox so I can have access to them on my laptop and at the other two locations where I spend the majority of my time. Free 2 GB of storage for basic users, but paid accounts offer more storage on a yearly subscription.

To Install: Visit <http://dropbox.com>, click the download button at the bottom of the page. Choose the version of Dropbox that best matches your computer, then double-click the .deb file to install.

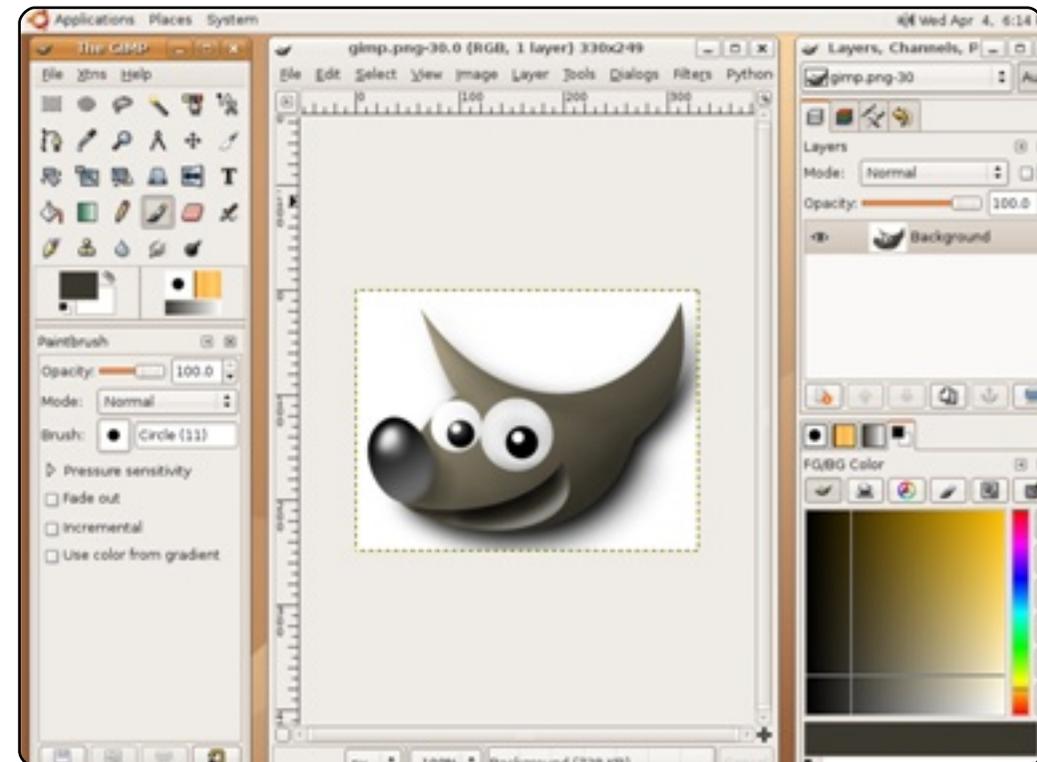


GIMP

<http://www.gimp.org/>

This is a powerful image-editing package that gets the job done. With GIMP, I'm able to create and edit hi-res images. GIMP even imports PDFs so I can fill out and edit forms. From the most basic image editing to more complex projects, GIMP handles just about anything I throw at it.

To Install: It comes pre-installed prior to Lucid. You can install it manually from the Software Centre or Synaptic using the "***gimp***" package.

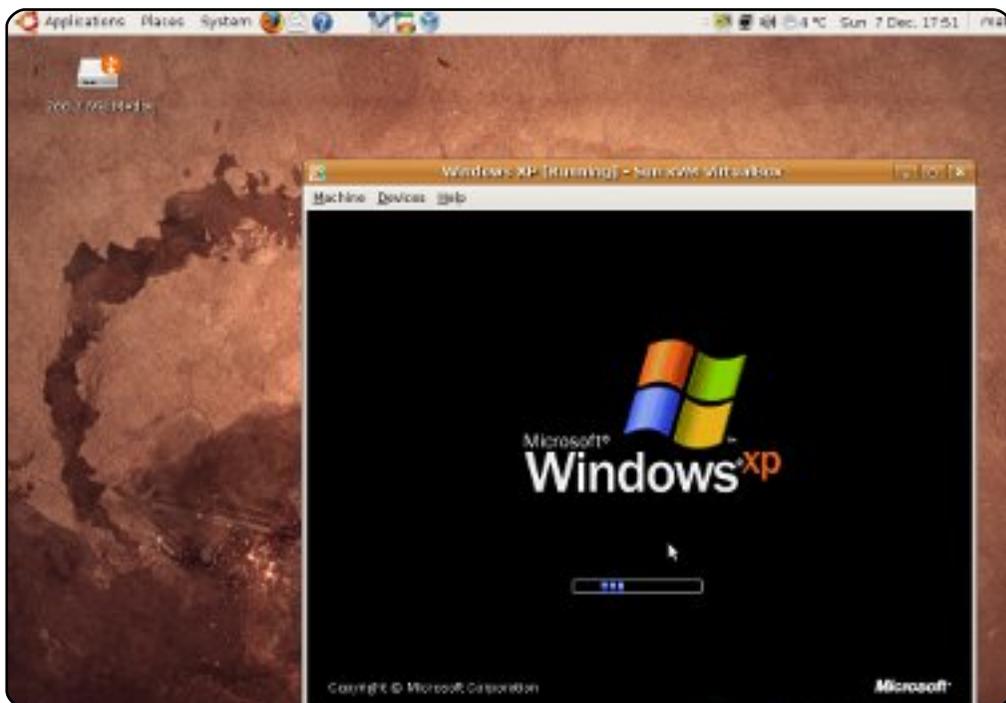


VirtualBox

<http://www.virtualbox.org/>

Let's face it, there are some situations where Linux, even a great distro like Ubuntu, just comes up short. A customer relationship program I use at work simply isn't compatible with Ubuntu. The only way I can get it to work is by using VirtualBox to run a Windows XP image, so I can then run the software. After using VirtualBox for over a year in this scenario, I've been satisfied with its performance and compatibility.

To Install: Find "**virtualbox-ose**" in Synaptic Package Manager and install it from there. **BONUS:** Another incredibly useful package is "**virtualbox-guest-additions**".



The Ubuntu UK podcast is presented by members of the United Kingdom's Ubuntu Linux community.

We aim is to provide current, topical information about, and for, Ubuntu Linux users the world over. We cover all aspects of Ubuntu Linux and Free Software, and appeal to everyone from the newest user to the oldest coder, from the command line to the latest GUI.

Because the show is produced by the Ubuntu UK community, the podcast is covered by the Ubuntu Code of Conduct and is therefore suitable for all ages.

<http://podcast.ubuntu-uk.org/>



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