The PCLinuxOS magazine

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The PCLinuxOS magazine

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This release was made possible by the following volunteers:

Chief Editor: Paul Arnote (parnote)
Assistant Editor: Meemaw
Artwork: Sproggy, Timeth, ms_meme, Meemaw
Magazine Layout: Paul Arnote, Meemaw, ms_meme
HTML Layout: YouCanToo

Staff:

ms_meme
Meemaw
Gary L. Ratliff, Sr.
Daniel Meiß-Wilhelm
daiashi
Alessandro Ebersol
CgBoy
YouCanToo
Pete Kelly
phorneker
Khadis Thok
Smileeb

Contributors:

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From The Chief Editor's Desk...

Over the past 10 or so months, this pandemic has given birth to many trite, overused, stupid phrases. “In these difficult times” makes me want to throw up. “In these trying times” has the same effect. Same thing for “in these uncertain times.” These phrases just grate on my very last, already-irritated, raw nerves.

We’ve all been through difficult or trying or uncertain times before. And, if you think about it, every difficult, trying or uncertain “time” is unique to the situation it’s applied to. Unless you’re clairvoyant, every new day is uncertain. You don’t know with 100 percent accuracy what each new day is going to bring. Each new day may be difficult or trying, or it may be routine and humdrum, or it may be joyous and triumphant, or it may be happy and exciting. You won’t know until the day is done.

These trite phrases are used to convey a VERY false sense of sympathy and empathy. In many ways, it feels very condescending and insincere. Those saying it – usually as a blanket statement – know nothing about what I’m experiencing or what I’m going through. They didn’t care before all of this, and they won’t care after we get past this, either. A lot of the time, it’s part of a dumb advertisement, trying to goad us into spending whatever little money we have on their marginal product or service.

Well, a new dumb phrase has emerged. It’s “out of an abundance of caution.” Queue the fingernails on the chalkboard. It didn’t initially dawn on me how ridiculously stupid this phrase is, and how dumb it makes those who utter it appear. That was, until the principal at my son’s and daughter’s school uttered it to me when he told me that my daughter’s entire Pre-K class was being quarantined for two weeks because a staff member in her class had tested positive for coronavirus. Mind you, all the precautions of social distancing and mask wearing were adhered to better than Super Glue. No one else has tested positive from her class. No one else from her class has displayed even a hint of symptoms.

It was then that I realized what the real meaning of “out of an abundance of caution” really means. It really means “I really have no idea of what to do, but feel I must do something, even if it’s wrong.” Basically, it means to take a shotgun scatter-blast and hope you hit something. And, I don’t blame the principal. He is, after all, just a cog on a gear in the machine. He’s doing what he’s told/programmed to do. The people at the school board are not allowing their “policies” to evolve with the science and

evidence of best practice. Their “policies” were made when we were mostly ignorant about the coronavirus pandemic, but they haven’t updated them to reflect all of the information we’ve learned over time.

Yes, the pandemic is very, very real. It is sad and tragic to consider all those that we have lost to this virus. But this isn’t the first time humankind has endured a biological assault from Mother Nature.

Just off the top of my head, the Black Plague from the middle ages comes to mind, when we lost between 75 and 200 million people. As a species, we survived that, and it gave birth to the renaissance art period. It lifted many people from serfdom to respected positions within society simply through attrition. It significantly shifted the distribution of wealth among the people.

The 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic killed more people globally (by some estimates) than all of those who died fighting World War I. Some conservative estimates place the death toll at somewhere between 20 and 50 million, globally. In fact, some scholars attribute the end of WWI coming about because of the pandemic. It became difficult to find enough healthy individuals on both sides of the conflict to continue the fight, while also continuing the support services back at home. We survived that, as well.

The AIDS/HIV pandemic has killed over 36 million people. The 1968 Hong Kong Flu pandemic killed over 1 million people. The Asian Flu pandemic in the late 1950s killed over 2 million people. The list goes on and on and on.

Again, none of this diminishes the losses that society has suffered from this current pandemic. Yes, it’s more disruptive than anything else any of us have ever experienced in our lives. And, it certainly doesn’t diminish any personal losses that anyone has experienced. But those the virus leaves behind will carry on to face a new threat later on down the road. As history has shown us, it’s inevitable. I only hope that we can learn some lessons that will help us deal with the next round. And the next.

Until next month, I bid you peace, happiness, serenity, prosperity … and continued good health!

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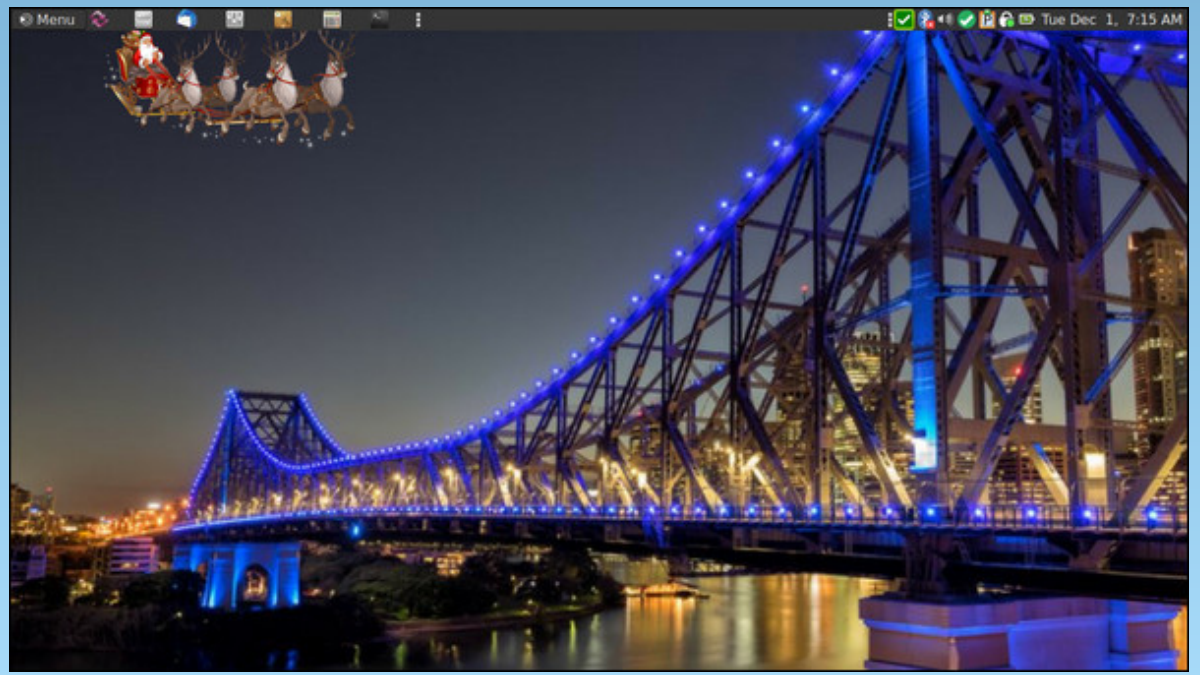
Screenshot Showcase



Posted by brisvegas, on November 30, 2020, running Mate.

The Brazilian General Data Protection Law

by Agent Smith (Alessandro Ebersol)

Brazil's general data protection law was drafted in 2018, still under Michel Temer's government.

The Brazilian project comes in the wake of discussions on data protection in Europe, widely publicized with the advancement of digital devices. The European Union law that protects personal data came into force more than two years ago and has heated up debates around the world.

In Brazil, a Provisional Measure (a decree) postponed the entry into force of the LGPD until 2021, but the Senate converted, on August 26, 2020, the PM into the 34/2020 Conversion Bill, and deleted the article defining the postponement. With the change, the new set of rules became effective as of September 18, 2020.

LGPD: What Is It?

The General Data Protection Law (LGPD in Portuguese) is Law No. 13,709, approved in August 2018. It creates rules for the collection and processing of data by companies. The project's objective is to ensure the privacy and protection of personal data, and to promote transparency in the relationship between individuals and companies.

The project guarantees that the collection, processing and commercialization of personal data will be done only with the authorization of the holders. According to the text, the processing of personal data can be carried out "upon the consent of the holder in writing or by another means that demonstrates the manifestation of the holder's will."

The law applies to data that can identify a person. That includes phone numbers, personal characteristics, documents, etc.

How Did The LGPD Come About?

Zuckerberg washed his hands on this incident.

The origin of all this is in information, since it is the most valuable asset for generating business. One of the first to understand the value of the data was psychology professor Aleksander Kogan, who collected data from more than 270,000 users through a Facebook test. He gathered information such as name, surname, location and pages liked on the social network and sold it to a company called Cambridge Analytica.

What followed was the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where personal data from up to 87 million Facebook users was collected. The data was used to influence the opinion of voters in several countries, to help politicians to influence elections in their countries. Following the disclosure of the use of this data in an investigation by Channel 4 News, Facebook apologized and that Cambridge Analytica collected the data "inappropriately".

Even so, politicians like Ted Cruz, Donald Trump and even the Brexit movement have benefited from the improper data collection.

Shortly after this scandal, European authorities created the General Data Protection Rules (GDPR), a set of European Union laws aimed at regulating data privacy. And it was from the GDPR that the LGPD discussion in Brazil emerged, since the country also needs to adapt to the law to be part of the economic bloc.

What Are The Users' Rights?

One of the objectives of the project approved by the Senate is to make consumers feel like "owners" of their data - that is, to increase consumer empowerment in relation to their own data and what companies will do with them.

With this measure, the consumer gains some rights, such as asking companies what data they store, accessing that data or even requiring that information be deleted if obtained in non-compliance with the LGPD.

Data owners can still request the portability of their information to another supplier. This movement is similar to what can be done between telephone companies and allows the holder not only to request a copy of all his data, but also to provide it in an interoperable format, which facilitates the transfer to other services, even if for competitors.

What Changes For Companies?

Compliance with the standard's completeness will need to be proven by all agents who handle personal data, in the light of the principle of accountability.

One of the ways to comply with this principle will be through the elaboration of a Data Protection Impact Report, through which the controllers should evaluate the complete life cycle of the processing of personal data (covering from collection, use, storage, sharing and deletion of data), including the indication of the basis that authorizes the treatment of the data (which will become 10 hypotheses, consent being only one of those possibilities), as well as the implemented information security measures, including procedures to mitigate any incidents that may occur.

In this sense, the stipulation of the Data Protection Officer (DPO - Data Protection Officer), who will be responsible, among others, for creating a culture of data protection within companies (with special attention to good practices and governance), as well as being the bridge with the National Data Protection Authority (ANPD in Portuguese), which was created by means of a Bill of Law initiative by the Executive Branch, given the partial veto presented by the President of the Republic.

National Data Protection Authority: Who Watches The Watchmen?

The ANPD body, which was provided for in Provisional Measure (PM) No. 869, of December 27, 2018. However, it was vetoed by President Michel Temer, because of a defect of origin. The regulatory body could not be part of the legislative, as expected, but from the executive.

Finally, the body, in its current form, was defined in Law No. 13,853, of July 8, 2019. What are its duties? According to the law, the ANPD has, among other duties:

- Ensure the protection of personal data, under the terms of the legislation;
- Ensure the observance of commercial and industrial secrets, observing the protection of personal data and the confidentiality of information when protected by law;
- Develop guidelines for the National Policy for the Protection of Personal Data and Privacy;
- To supervise and apply sanctions in case of data processing carried out in breach of legislation, through an administrative process that ensures the right to counterclaims, the broad defense and the right to appeal;
- Consider petitions from holder to controller after the holder has proved the submission of a complaint to the controller that has not been resolved within the period established by regulation;
- Promote the population's knowledge of the rules and public policies on the protection of personal data and security measures
- Promote and prepare studies on national and international practices for the protection of personal data and privacy;

These are just a few of its 25 assignments (the full text can be read here: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2019/lei/l13853.htm)
The writing is simply fantastic, with a text that empowers the users, granting them the means to claim their rights to privacy, anonymity, and, above all, freedom of expression on the internet.

Everything would be incredible, were it not the way it was done. I'll explain.

Would you trust your personal data to this man?

Art. 55-A, which created the ANPD as a federal public administration body, was very different from what had been projected in the original bill, which gave rise to Law 13,709 / 2018. Thus, the authority that would be born with special autarchy status, was suddenly "demoted" to an organ. Despite art. 55-B trying to remedy the issue, expressing the technical autonomy of the ANPD, it is certain that the change in the legal nature is not a just academic debate. The effects of the ANPD being a body instead of a special autarchy, a legal nature typical of regulatory

agencies, imply very practical reflexes that can have a substantial impact on the regulation of the topic.

The limitations of being a single body, and not an autarchy, become apparent, after a first inspection: public bodies do not have autonomy, their own assets and perform only what is determined by the State, with the ANPD in this category, the entity is in danger of becoming an authoritarian and undemocratic body. I explain: the authority, as a major regulator of personal data in Brazil, should have the maximum legitimacy, being independent, and should not suffer total political control, as, in fact, it can happen.

However, things have gotten worse since its inception: President Jair Bolsonaro (without a party) has appointed five names, including three military, to form the board of the ANPD (National Data Protection Authority). This appointment, right away, drew attention and raised doubts about what the ANPD is and what is its importance for data protection. But why? Because a survey by Data Privacy Brasil points out that only Russia and China have the presence of military advisers in bodies responsible for data protection and the internet. The survey took into account the 20 most developed economies in the world based on the IMF (International Monetary Fund). And to note that both Russia and China have a very high surveillance on social media, even with a social score, that measures the loyalty of its citizens.

With respect to the right to the protection of personal data, which may soon be included in the country's Federal Constitution, the performance of the Brazilian Authority cannot end up supporting the public authorities in possible violations of the LGPD.

In addition to the Directing Council, the ANPD will have an advisory body, the National Council for the Protection of Personal Data and Privacy. According to the law, the multisectoral Council will be composed of 23 members and must include different voices for the regulation of data protection in the country. The decree that created the ANPD, however, violates this principle indicated in the law by establishing that the representatives of the different sectors will be chosen by the President of the Republic. In other words, it will not be a de facto representation, but another definition of the federal government, which will have the final say on these appointments.

The Good Guys Can Be The Villains, In The End ...

As already criticized previously, such a government option demonstrates a clear confusion between the attributions of bodies with completely different, if not opposite, purposes.
Privacy guarantees and protection of personal data must not be confused with the defense of national security and the protection of strategic information for the country. On the contrary, surveillance activities conducted by bodies of national defense and public security can often jeopardize rights and guarantees that should justly be protected by the ANPD, aiming at the constitution of a balanced system within the Democratic Rule of Law.

Thus, it sounds strange that the entity has, since its inception, so many military personnel in its composition. Would they be present to cover illegal access to Brazilians' personal information, conducted fraudulently by orders from the president?

We cannot forget that the rigging of the state is a hallmark of totalitarian regimes, and it has already happened in Venezuela by Hugo Chavez, a person whom the current president said he admires very much, for his firmness in guiding the destinies of Venezuelans.

Very Beautiful On Paper, But ...

Its effects will only be felt over time, but the way it was created puts in doubt whether the new agency and the LGPD are not just government propaganda pyrotechnics, with no positive effect for Brazilians, or worse, a body to cover up illegal government surveillance activities. Only time will tell.

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PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner

Slow-Cooker Butter Chicken

INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
3 lb boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 medium yellow onion, diced
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 tablespoons finely chopped peeled gingerroot
2 tablespoons garam masala
1/4 cup canned organic tomato paste
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup chicken broth (from 32-oz carton)
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
1/4 cup cilantro leaves, stems removed

DIRECTIONS:

Spray 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.

In a 10-inch skillet, heat butter and oil over medium-high heat. Add half of the chicken and cook, turning once, until browned, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a slow cooker. Repeat with the remaining half of the chicken. Reduce heat to medium; add onions to skillet, and cook until softened, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and ginger-root; cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add garam masala; cook for 30 seconds. Add tomato paste and salt; cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add chicken broth, and scrape the bottom of the skillet with a wooden spoon. Transfer to a slow cooker. Cover and cook on Low heat setting 5 to 6 hours. At the last 30 minutes of cooking, stir in whipping cream.

Transfer to serving dish, and garnish with cilantro leaves.

TIPS:

Garam masala is a blend of spices often used in Indian cooking. The blend typically contains black pepper, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, bay leaves and nutmeg.

Brown Basmati rice makes a lovely accompaniment to this dish.

NUTRITION FACTS:

Calories: 480	Carbs: 9g
Sodium: 481mg	Fiber: 4g

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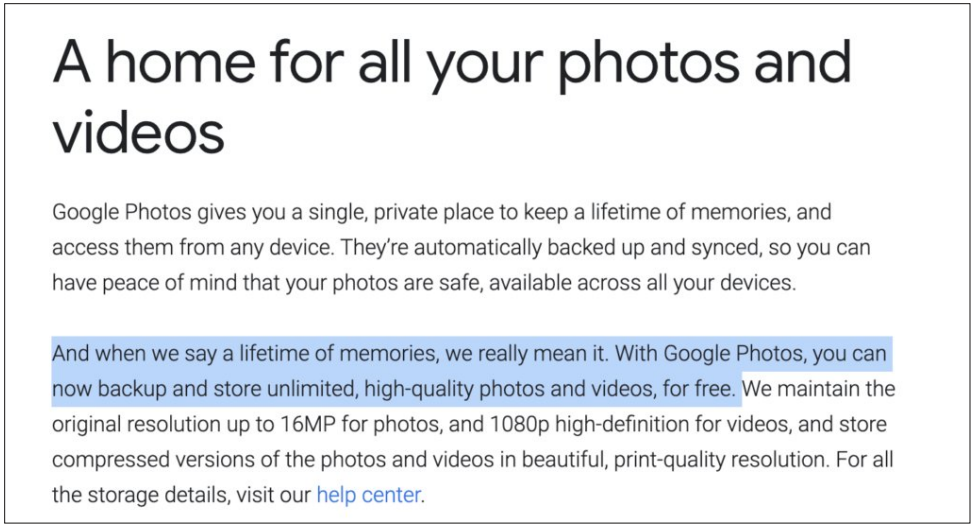
Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Daniel, on December 13, 2020, running LXQT.

Google Photos: Bait Meet Switch

by Thomas Hawk
Reprinted with permission from his blog
Posted on November 22, 2020



Google Photos blog post announcing their new Google Photos service.

In case you missed it recently, Google Photos has decided to end their free unlimited photo hosting service. Beginning in June of next year users will be limited to 15GB of space before being asked to pay for more storage. How much you'll have to pay will depend on how much storage you use. Unfortunately for me, I have more photos than fit their top tier $100/year plan, so even if I wanted to pay I'd be capped out of the service.

While I don't begrudge Google, a trillion dollar company that makes billions of dollars a year, from wanting to make even MORE money, I am offended by the bait and switch approach that they took with Google Photos. Offering a user the first hit for free is classic dealer marketing. A lot of time and energy goes into organizing your photos on ANY photo sharing site and when someone spends hundreds or even thousands of hours organizing their photos at a site only to be priced out of the site, those are countless hours that you will never get back.

Fortunately for me I've spent a lot less time using Google Photos for the past few years. Google's consistent bad faith across photo hosting/sharing products has left me very skeptical of anything they do anymore.

Some of you may remember Picasa (Google killed it). I was a user of that. I also was a big user of Google Buzz (they killed that too). Then I put hundreds of hours into my photography on Google+ (once again RIP). We used to do photowalks and hangouts and lots of other fun things around photography with Google+. Here's my old Google+ url.

Initially I was super excited about Google Photos, but that changed over time. I was disappointed that one of their early features, photo facial recognition, didn't really work for me. It limited the service to 200 faces and unfortunately for me when the service launched it grabbed a bunch of faces of musicians I'd photographed performing at Coachella and chose those as the ones to tag. There was no way to delete those and have it choose people who were actually my family, friends, neighbors, etc.

I was also disappointed that the hours and hours and hours I'd spent keywording all my photos in Adobe Lightroom were stripped out of my uploads to Google Photos. I'm not sure why Google would want to remove one of the best ways for me to search my photos from their service but for whatever reason they strip this data.

Still, Google Photos was free (even though it downsized my photos). It's hard to complain about free — until they locked my gmail. Last year I received a rather ominous message from Google threatening that unless I paid them for more storage they were going to turn my gmail off.

It turns out that even though Google Photos claimed to be able to convert my photos to high quality JPEGs with free unlimited storage, that TIFF files generated by the software program Analog Efex Pro (ironically a former Google owned product before they jettisoned that as well) were not being converted by Google Photos and were sucking up my gmail storage which was then demanding payment from me. They actually locked my gmail and I missed several important emails that were blocked during this fiasco.

By this point I was about ready to delete my Google Photos account -- except I could not find ANY way to delete my Google Photos account. That's right, you

can't just delete Google Photos. You have to delete your entire Google account including your Gmail!

While this is my unhappy story and experience with Google Photos, many, many users were duped into signing up for a free service that they thought would protect, as Google put it, their "lifetime of memories." Now Google is demanding money from these users.

To me it seems wrong (even evil – remember their old motto "don't be evil" that they also abandoned?) that Google would bait and switch so many users on this product. You can't/won't get the many hours that you spent organizing your photos on Google Photos back. Some will just begrudgingly pay up. What I see is one of the world's largest companies who used a classic monopolistic tactic to grab market share by pricing out and hurting smaller competitors and now wants to profit from their move.

Once burned shame on you. ~~Twice, three times, four times, five times~~, six times burned, shame on me. I will never trust Google with another product again.

Thankfully there is an alternative to Google Photos, good old trustworthy Flickr. Here is a thoughtful analysis done by Jeremy Zero comparing Google Photos and Flickr.

I've been using Flickr since 2004 and as long as I can remember my Flickr Pro account has remained unlimited. Flickr/SmugMug CEO Don MacAskill even recently re-iterated Flickr's commitment to honoring their unlimited service. While Flickr may not be a trillion dollar company or make billions of dollars every year like Google does, they are a small company that cares about photographers and your photography. They also do a great job storing and sharing your full high-res, uncompressed, high quality images (and they even retain your photo keywords when you upload them there). I feel much better supporting an ethical small business than a trillion dollar company using monopolistic bait and switch tactics to try to drive the smaller guy out of business.

You can find me on Flickr here. If you are an American Photographer, come join the American Photographer Group I administer on Flickr and say hello.

Focus Stacking In PCLinuxOS

by The CrankyZombie

Before we start, I would like to say thanks to both Tuxlink and Dockmakie for their comments, suggestions and help with this article.

Requires: Hugin/Enfuse

One of my favorite areas of photography is macro photography. Taking images of tiny things is just freaking awesome. I don't know why, but it is one of my favorite types of photos to take and to edit.

Macro photography also poses many challenges. For instance, macro lens and macro methods tend to produce a very shallow depth of field. This means that the amount of stuff actually in focus in the picture is very thin. If you want to take photos that have lots of stuff in focus, you have two options:

1. Shoot with a very small aperture

2. Focus stacking

Let's look at both of these options a little closer.

Shoot with a very small aperture. As the hole in the camera/lens gets smaller, the depth of field gets deeper. This means that shooting at f11 will have a much larger depth of field than shooting at f2.8. Perfect. Just shoot at small apertures and stuff will be in focus.

There are some issues with this though. You still may not have enough depth of field. So if you are shooting something really thick and you want it all in focus, f11 (or smaller) may not be enough.

Some lenses may also not be at their best at f11. Maybe your lens looks best at f5.6 and you don't want to go all the way to f11.

Add to this the fact that f11 takes a lot of light and you realize that shooting with a small aperture may not get the result you want.

Focus stacking is the process of taking many pictures with different elements of the image in focus and then combining the images so that the resultant image is in focus.

It's a little related to HDR (High Dynamic Range) in that in HDR one combines the dynamic ranges of many images into one HDR image. In focus stacking, the user combines the in-focus regions of various images to render one image.

In this post we will talk about how I focus stack in Linux.

The Software

I do all my photography work in Linux (Gimp/Aftershot Pro/DarkTable/Hugin/QtPFSGui/etc). I prefer to work with open source software, but I am not against purchasing software when a good alternative doesn't exist in the OSS world. As to focus stacking directly, the only software package I use is Hugin.

The Process

When shooting macro photography for focus stacking, I use a tripod and a macro focusing rail to adjust the area of the shot that is in focus.

For the example used in this post, I shot eight images. In each image, a different section of the image will be in focus. Below are the eight images taken. While this example worked with as few as eight images, some can take many more individual images to complete a single photo.

The eight images were shot in both RAW and JPG on my Canon SL2/200D. I copied them off my SD card into a directory on my PCLinuxOS box. You can use either format. If you choose to use the RAW format, you want to run the following command. In a console window enter:

```
Dcraw -T *.CR2
```

There are lots of different options you can pass to dcraw to make it do different coolness for you, but for the sake of this post, I kept the defaults. This command reads in all the CR2 files and generates TIFF files from them. This is needed because Hugin works best with TIFF files.

I found using the CR2 (RAW) files from my camera, I ended up with an overall green tinge when they are converted, so I chose to use the JPG images and convert them to TIFF format using GIMP.

NOTE: I found by adding the -a attribute (calculate the white balance by averaging the entire image) to the command, it solved the green tinge for my camera.

Example: **`dcraw -a -T *.CR2`**

Next we need to align the images so that they are all exactly over each other. To do this we will use the following command:

```
align_image_stack -a aligned_ -v -m -g 15 -c 18 *.tif
```

This command makes a new aligned_* image files that are cropped and stacked on top of one another. Now we just need to do the dirty work of actually focus stacking of the image. This could be done manually in Gimp by carefully erasing and layering the images, but that not only sounds like a pain, it is a pain and I am lazy, so instead I just use Hugin again to focus stack the images using the following command. In a console window enter

```
enfuse -o result.tif --exposure-weight=0 --saturation-weight=0 --
contrast-weight=1 --hard-mask aligned_*
```

Hugin/enfuse now does the heavy lifting for us and combines our individually focused sections into one masterpiece image, called result.tif. Hopefully everything in focus. As with align_image_stack and dcraw, enfuse has many command line options that you can use to tweak its results.

So how does the output look? Well, this is the result:

PCLinuxOS

Users Don't

Text
Phone
Web Surf
Facebook
Tweet
Instagram
Video
Take Pictures
Email
Chat

While Driving.

Put Down Your Phone & Arrive Alive.

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PATREON

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by luikki, on December 2, 2020, running KDE.

GIMP Tutorial: Top Ten GIMP Filters, Part 1

by Meemaw

While on the internet, I came across the site Davies Media Design. Michael Davies has several awesome GIMP tutorials. I particularly liked the one where he discussed his top ten favorite GIMP filters (#11). Let's explore part of his list, which is these filters:

1. Gaussian Blur
2. High Pass
3. Unsharp Mask
4. Newsprint
5. Drop Shadow
6. Long Shadow
7. Vignette
8. Add Border
9. Bump Map
10. Little Planet

1. Gaussian Blur

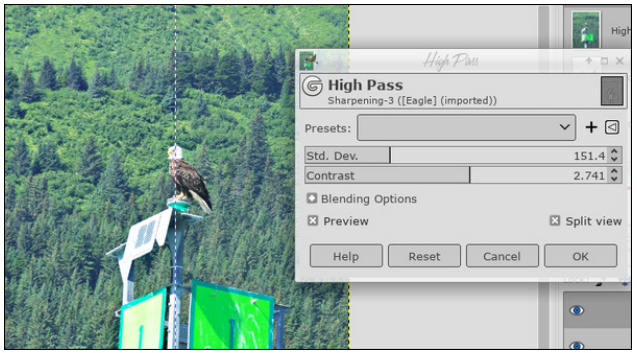
We've used this filter (Filters > Blur > Gaussian Blur) to soften photos just a bit, so I'm going to skip this one for now.

2. High Pass

I hadn't used High Pass (Filters > Enhance > High Pass) before now, but it can be used to sharpen an image. Let's look at a photo I took in Alaska a couple of years ago. This eagle was sitting on top of a sign on a peninsula in the harbor. I got a photo of the eagle, but it's not very sharp (center, top).

To use High Pass, first make a duplicate of your photo layer. Change the mode on the duplicate layer to Soft Light. With that layer still chosen, click on

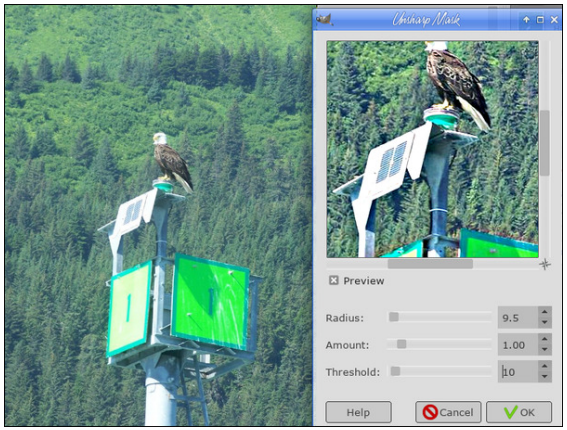
Filters > Enhancer > High Pass and mess with the settings. Every photo is different, so this is a process that needs your judgement. In my photo, I noticed that setting up the Standard Deviation and the Contrast brought out the detail in the trees in the background. I left the split view on so you can (hopefully) see the difference. The changes are on the left.



In the image below, the original is on the left. You can see the image on the right has more detail and is sharper. It's a small difference, but sometimes one doesn't need much of a difference.

3. Unsharp Mask

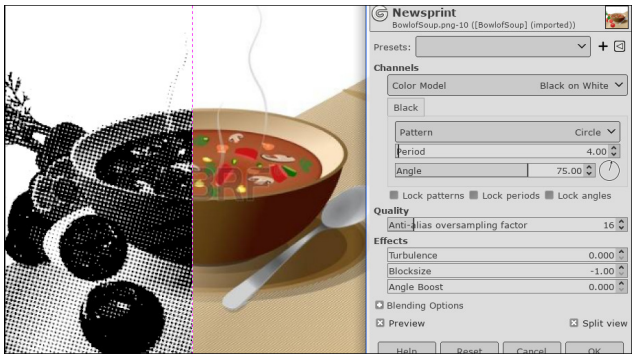
I have used Unsharp Mask (Filters > Enhance > Unsharp Mask), and it does a good job of sharpening a photo. I'll load the same original of the eagle and let's look at it. Click on **Filters > Enhance > Unsharp Mask** and a window will appear. Make sure Preview is checked. In this window you have 3 settings: Radius, Amount and Threshold. The default settings are 5. 0.5 and 0. You can see what the new settings below do in the preview. Again, every photo is different, so you'll have to trust your own judgement of the settings for your photo.

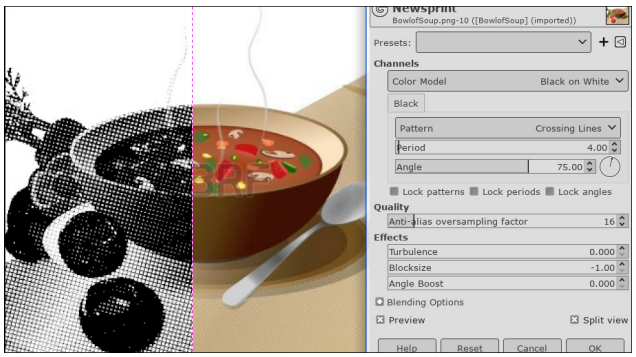


4. Newsprint

This is an interesting filter (Filters > Distort > Newsprint). I loaded a piece of clipart and will illustrate with that.

Clicking on **Filters > Distort > Newsprint**, you get a window with several settings, which can make your image look many different ways.

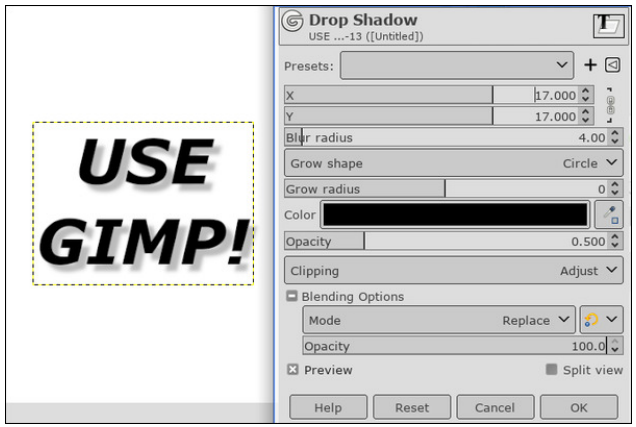




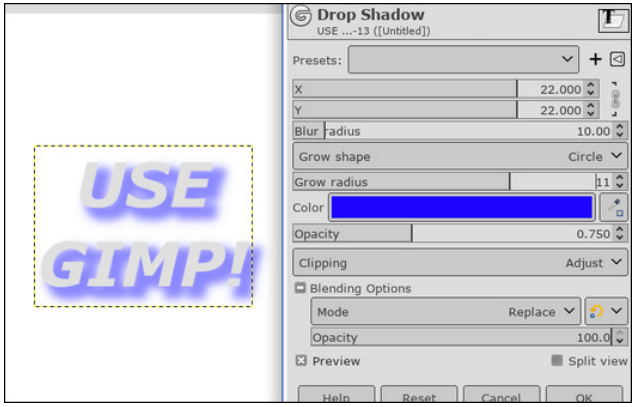
Though it's not so very different yet, the pattern in the first image is Circles and the second one is Crossing Lines. Changing the Period (how large or small your pattern is) can make a great deal of difference. To change it even more, there are effects settings as well. Angle Boost changes the direction of your pattern, Turbulence seems to make things a bit messier, and Block Size compresses your pattern. At the top is a Color Profile setting as well (Black on White, White on Black, and two color settings).

5. Drop Shadow

I think this is one of the most-used filters in GIMP (Filters > Light and Shadow > Drop Shadow). Shadowing gives your project depth, and just makes it look better. This is most commonly used on text, but can be used on images as well. For this, I'll apply it to some text.



I believe the default settings for X and Y are 20. This sets where the shadow goes. Positive numbers set the shadow down and to the right, a negative X setting changes it to down to the left and if both are negative, the shadow will be above and to the left. The higher you go on Blur Radius, the blurrier your shadow will be, and if the radius is zero, you will just have your text in a lighter shade. Opacity (under the shadow color) is how transparent the shadow is. You can also choose the shadow color.



Grow shape lets the shadow be more than just the text shape. A new feature of this filter is the clipping option below the color setting. In the example below, you can see that I used the grow shape, but the shadow now overflows on the right side of the text frame. If the clipping option is set to Adjust, the text frame will adjust to include the overflowing shadow so it isn't just cut off.

As you can see, the text box has adjusted to include the whole shadow.

Well, hopefully, we learned a bit about some of the GIMP filters. We'll do more of the list in the next GIMP tutorial.

Yelp For Help

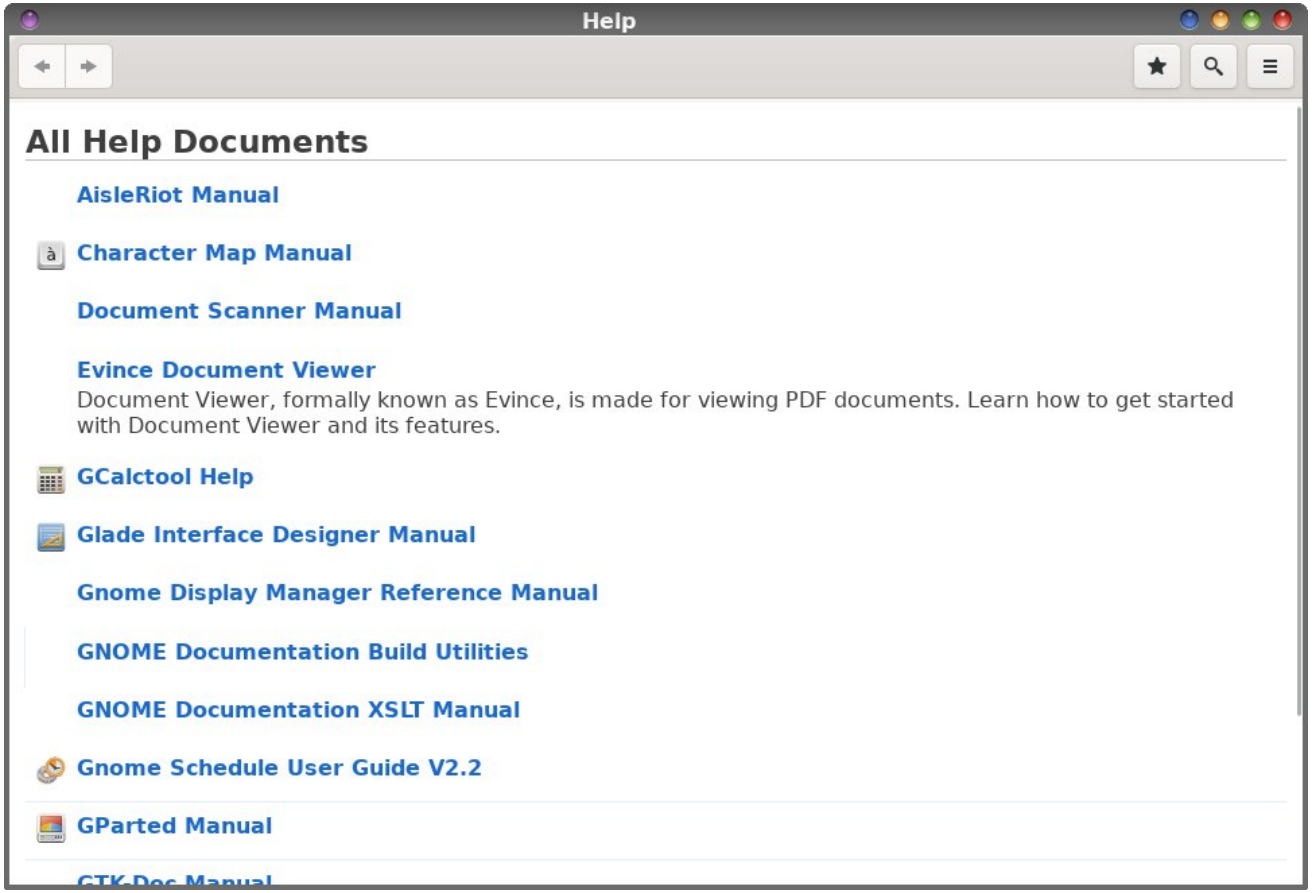
by Paul Arnote (parnote)

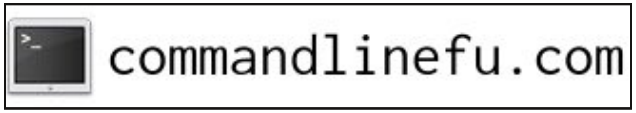
After all of these years using Linux (about 13 years, give or take), I discovered something new that I never knew existed. I was performing updates on my compact notebook computer that I carry with me to work, and I noticed a weird little program called "Yelp" scheduled for updates. It piqued my curiosity, and I was quite surprised by what I found out about it.

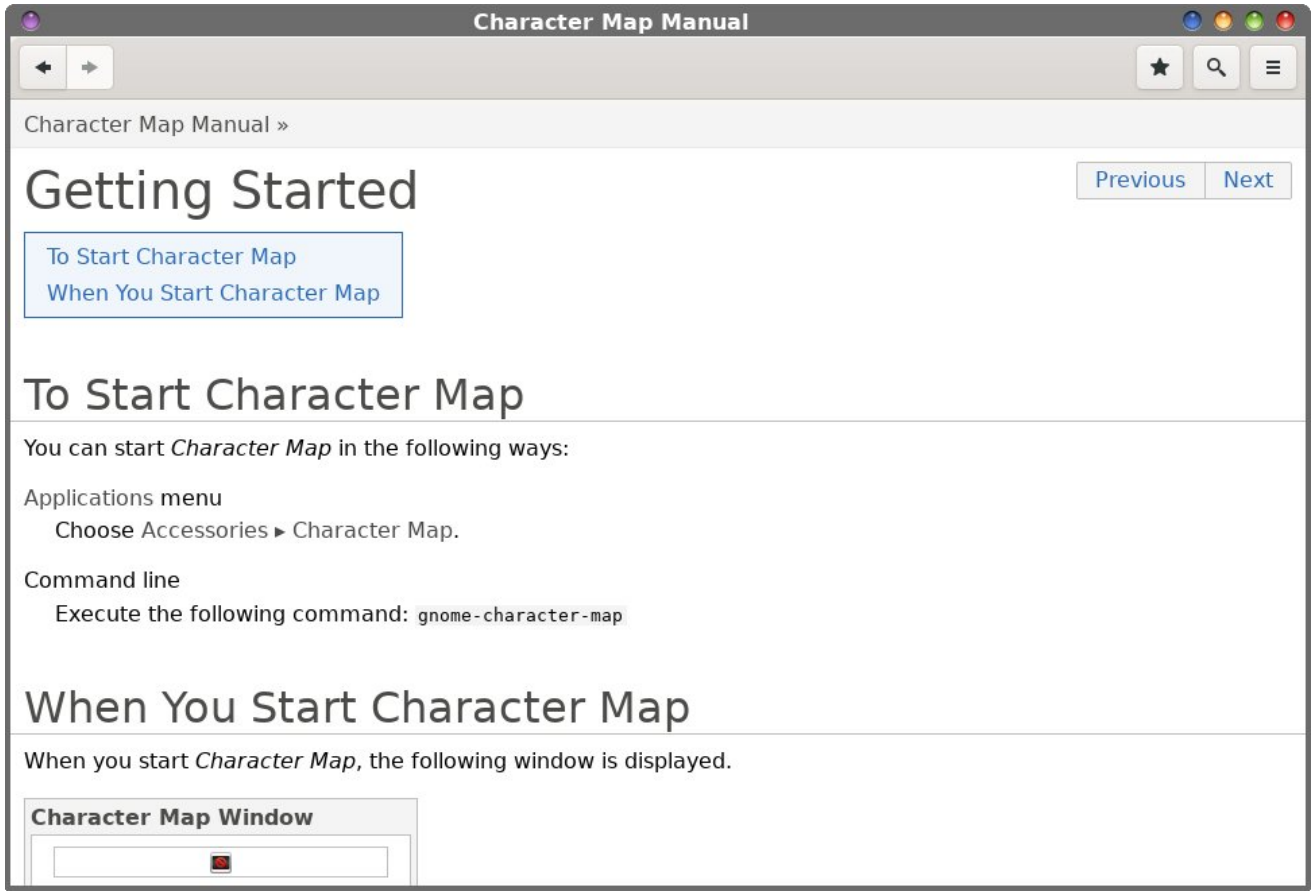
Yelp is definitely in the PCLinuxOS repository, and may even already be installed on your computer. It was on mine, but I had no idea it was even there, much less what function it performed. It doesn't even appear anywhere in my Xfce applications menu, either, which is probably one thing that kept it hidden from me for so long. I've since rectified that issue, and put a launcher for it on my Xfce panel.

As you can see, Yelp lists all the "help" documents on your computer that conform to the freedesktop.org help system specification (only available in *.xml format). This means all help documents in the Mallard, DocBook, man, info, GSL (GNU Scientific Library), and HTML document formats can be viewed in Yelp. In a way, this reminds me of the Windows Help system, both the old RTF-based Winhelp (*.hlp files) and the newer HTML-based help system, built around HTML documents (*.chm files... the "c" stands for "compiled").

Yelp is a part of the GNOME desktop environment, but can easily be installed on other desktops. I am a diehard Xfce desktop fan, and Yelp runs great on Xfce. Since I haven't been a KDE user in quite a while, I don't know if this next bit is still accurate or not. Konqueror used to be able to serve as a "help" viewer in much the same way that Yelp does. You could view man, DocBook, Mallard, info, GSL and HTML documents directly in Konqueror, and their appearance in Konqueror looked almost exactly like it appears in Yelp. But even on KDE, Yelp may be a lighter-weight alternative to using Konqueror, even if it involves installing it separately on your system.





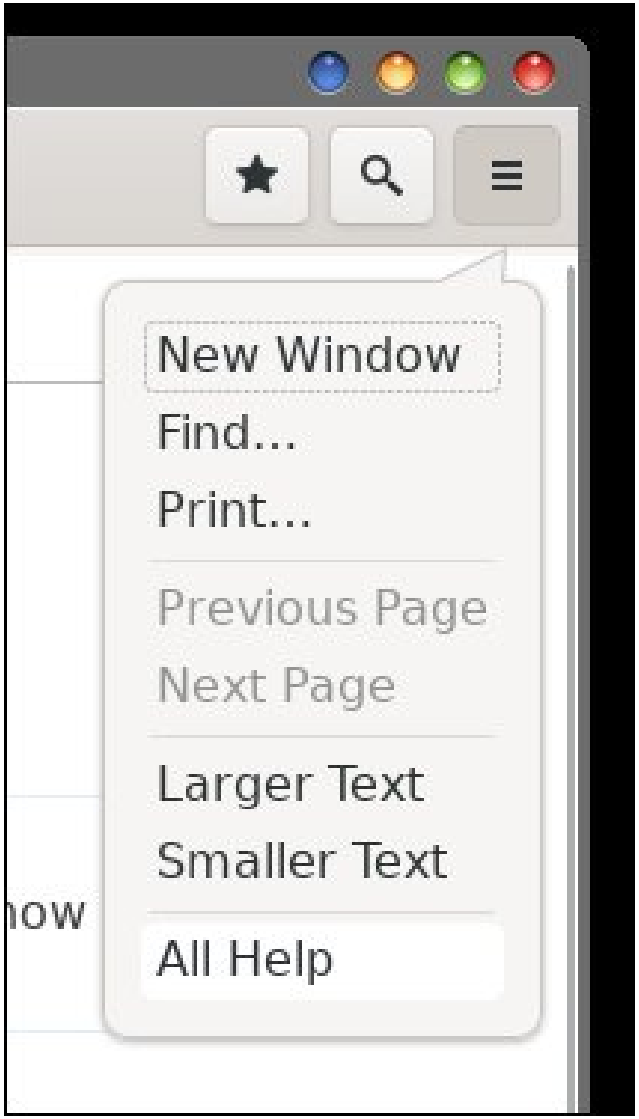


Simply click on the help topic you desire, and you will be sped off to that help file's contents. In the above image, I've delved a few levels deep into the "Character Map" manual.

Use the arrows in the upper left corner of the Yelp window to go back and forth between viewed topics of the help file/manual. On the upper right corner of the Yelp window, you can "star" (bookmark) a frequently visited/referenced topic, or even search for words/phrases/terms you want help with.

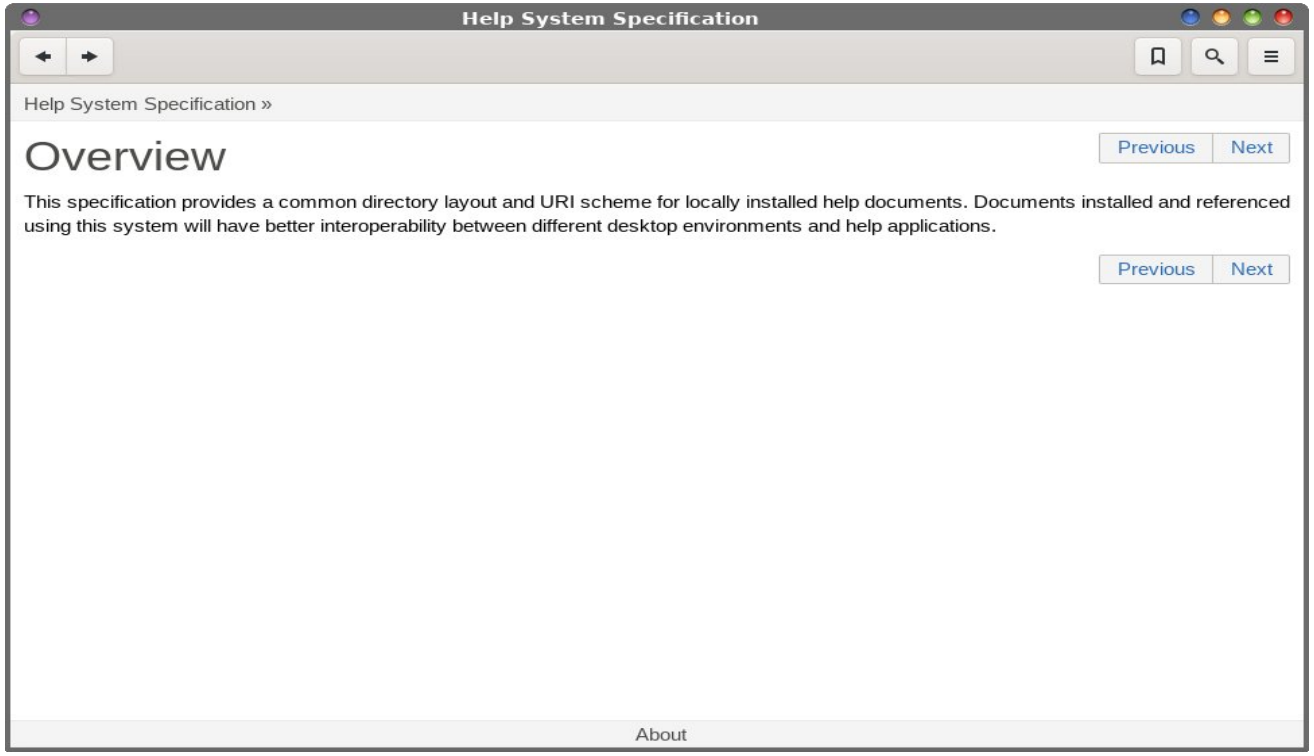
The "hamburger" menu at the far right upper corner allows you to open help topics in a new window, search through the help topics, print the help topics, change the font size that the help topics are presented in, or return to the "main" help page by selecting "All Help" from the menu.

Remember I mentioned the freedesktop.org help system specification earlier, which was spelled out only in a XML file? Trying to read it opened in your browser is -- to say the least -- challenging. Page and paragraph breaks don't occur where they should, and there is no character formatting available (first image next page). It's not what they call "human readable." The cure is simple: download the XML file to your hard drive. Then, go to a command line and type **yelp**, followed by the XML file of the help system specification (with a qualified



path if you're not already in the directory where the XML file is stored), and the XML file for the help system specifications becomes ***very*** human-readable (second image next page).

Help System Specification Help System Specification 2010-04-30 Shaun McCa
directory layout and URI scheme for locally installed help documents. Docume
between different desktop environments and help applications. Directory Layo
path. Documents may be in any format, or even in multiple formats; see for det
specifies where it can be found on the file system. A document identifier consis
letters (U+0041-U+005A and U+0061-U+007A), hyphen (U+002D), undersco
are not explicitly namespaced. To avoid conflicts, document identifiers should
In many cases, the name of the application or package alone may be used. Oth
application followed by a hyphen. Documents are installed under the help subd
XDG Base Directory Specification for details on $XDG_DATA_HOME and $XDG
languages. Each language subdirectory contains subdirectories for documents
document. The document path for a given document is the list of directories of
$XDG_DATA_HOME or a directory in the $XDG_DATA_DIRS path. lang The lan
The document identifier of the document. The document path is ordered first a
the user's preferred list of languages. So, for example, if the user's preferred la
precedence over /usr/share/help/pt_BR/beanstalk. URI Scheme Documents ar
following form: help:document/page?options#anchor document The document
consist of multiple logical pages, which may not be reflected in the actual files



Add In The Tools

Here's something very few people around here (if even any) know about me. Way, way back in my 16-bit "Windows days," I was deeply immersed in the RTF-based Windows Help community. I was fascinated by how it worked, its possibilities for uses other than "help" for programs, and how to extend its capabilities far beyond its original purpose. Ralph Walden, the lead developer for Windows help for Microsoft, was like a god-like figure to me.

To that end, I was the author of a shareware Windows help authoring system, called MiniHelp Plus 3.5. It allowed the user to use a basic text editor, such as Notepad, to create a specially scripted file that would create the requisite RTF files, as well as the other files needed by the help compiler. I was also the author of a dynamic linked library (DLL) that extended 16-bit Windows help files ability many times over what it would do natively. That DLL was called Arsenal, and allowed Windows help to display 256 color graphics (natively, it only displayed 16 color graphics), embed and playback audio and video files, read and write data from/to INI files, and lots of other handy little routines.

I would have continued developing for winhlp32 and onward to HTML-based Windows help, except that I kind of got left in the dust when things moved from 16-bit to 32-bit. I could barely afford my 16-bit C/C++ compiler when I got it. I saved and scraped together the money to buy it, and couldn't afford to upgrade to a 32-bit development environment. As a result, the rest of the world moved on with 32-bit programming, and I was unable to continue developing my 16-bit programs (there are others) into 32-bit programs.

So, that fire to create hypertext documents never really burned out for me. Embers of that fire still smolder today. Even though the rest of the world moved on to 32-bit help, I continued to create 16-bit help/hypertext for a while longer. I pretty much quit when things moved on to HTML based help systems. Fortunately, Yelp gives users several ways

to create hypertext documents. You can use HTML, XML, DocBook, Mallard, and other file types to create the files that Yelp is able to read.

Also in the PCLinuxOS repository is a set of special tools, called **yelp-tools**. These tools are not installed by default, but can easily be installed via Synaptic. They allow you to properly create the "helpful" hypertext documents that Yelp can read. Getting into all the different tools and file types that can be used to create help/hypertext documents is quite a bit beyond the scope of this article, as well as my ability to talk intelligently about them. Still, you can explore them on your own, as I will most likely do at some point. You can find more information about getting started with DocBook here. Mallard also has some getting-started tutorials here. And, of course, you can find HTML information just about everywhere and anywhere. One thing I've already noticed is that both DocBook and Mallard are both XML based, so if you already know some XML, you'll be ahead of the game.

PCLinuxOS Radically Simple

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

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

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

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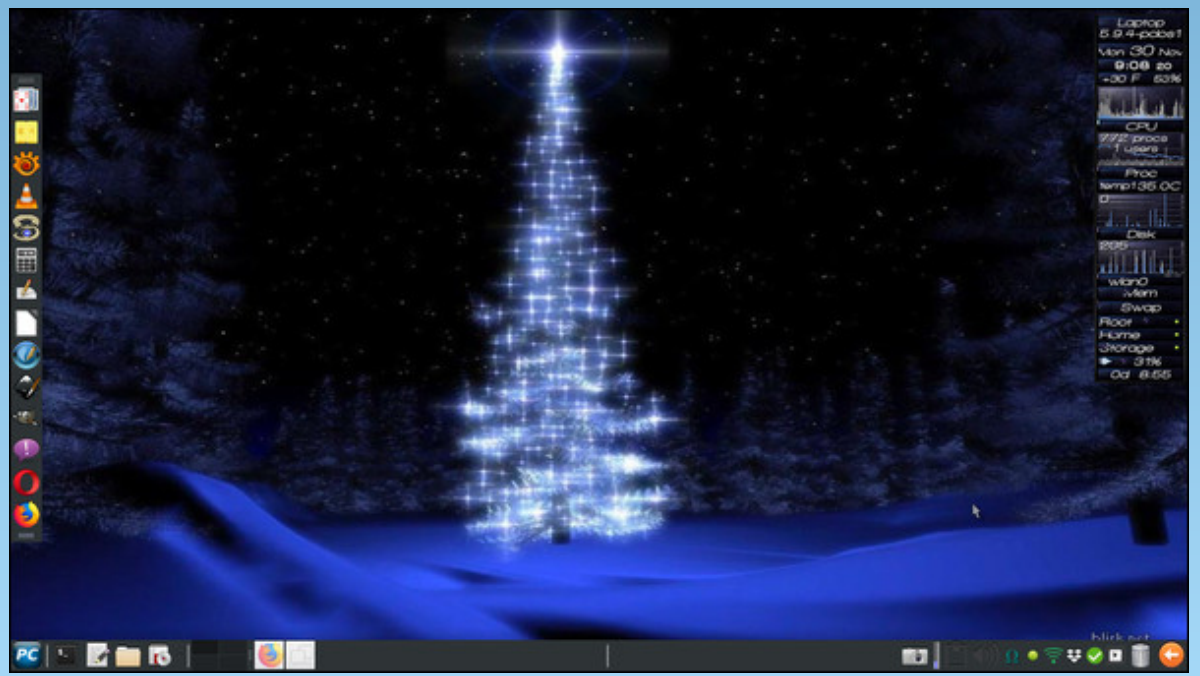
Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Meemaw, on December 1, 2020, running Xfce.

PCLinuxOS Family Member Spotlight: NoIBnds

As told to Mr Cranky Pants-YouCanToo

What is your name/username?
Jim / NoIBnds /

How old are you?
69

Are you married, single?
Married 33yrs - Current one (a couple before current one - took me a couple to get it right)

How about Kids, Grandkids (names and ages)?
One Son w/wife and 2 Grandkids, a Girl, 13 and a Boy, 10

Do you have pets, what is your favorite?
Not any longer -- 3 previous Cats -- and Numerous Dogs, mostly hunting bird dogs. The last 3 were Vizsla's, a yellow lab, German short-hair pointer, Brittany spaniel, a couple of boxers when I was young. Vizsla was the favorite!

Are you retired, still working and if working, what do you do?
Worked in factories for 11yrs, before becoming the Chicago Police.
Retired from the Chicago Police Department with 30yrs - 22yrs street as a PO, Last 8 as a Sgt, also was a Firearms Instructor. Currently an Instructor for citizens to get their Concealed Carry permits.

Where do you call home? What is it like? IE: weather, scenery
Was living in Chicago for 58yrs, Now very Rural in West Central Illinois, USA
House on 10 acres - hills-woods-stream -- weather all 4 seasons - cold in winter - hot in summer
own another 74 acres of farmland and wooded and prairie lands within walking distance of house. Lots of wildlife around the house and property.

Where did you go to school and what is your education level?
Chicago area schools and City Colleges
College and numerous Law Enforcement certifications

What kind of things do you like doing? hobbies, travel, fishing, camping?
Travel, (use to camp when younger), Hunting, Shooting and Fishing (Currently on my property only)
Drove most of USA, Mexico, Ontario & Quebec Canada
TV & Movies, Binge watching on streaming services now, Computers, Local Politics

Why and when did you start using Linux?
I was a Computer geek at work starting with Win 3.1 - by the time of WinXP and all the problems I was always working fixing other peoples computers. I had a friend that thought computers were only for Guns & Porn, so he would trash XP every month or so. So then I went looking for an OS he could use and not trash. Tried Red Hat, Mepis, and then PCLinuxOS around the end of 2003 with Preview 4. I had a question and emailed Tex and he answered back. I was hooked and I have been using PCLinuxOS since then. Even my friend has been using it since then and has never trashed a computer since.

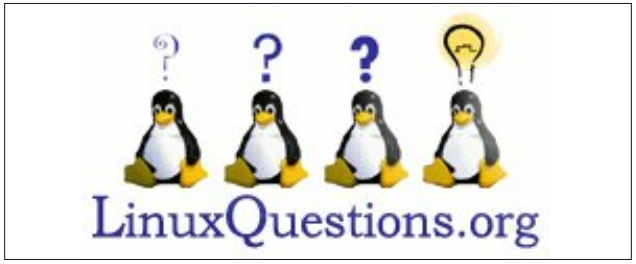
What specific equipment do currently use with PCLOS?
I have several desktops (mostly Cyberpower now), and laptops (Assorted brands) in the house I use it on. I used to build my own, but haven't in years.

Do you feel that your use of Linux influences the reactions you receive from your computer peers or family? If so, how?
In this I am a loner, as I don't know anyone else that does Linux locally except for the ones, I have put it on their computers and I help them with it.

What would you like to see happen within PCLOS that would make it a better place. What are your feelings?
For Tex to remain involved and HEALTHY and to outlive me.

PCLinuxOS Family Member Spotlight is an exclusive, monthly column by YouCanToo, featuring PCLinuxOS forum members. This column will allow "the rest of us" to get to know our forum family members better, and will give those featured an opportunity to share their PCLinuxOS story with the rest of the world.

If you would like to be featured in PCLinuxOS Family Member Spotlight, please send a private message to youcantoo, parnote or Meemaw in the PCLinuxOS forum expressing your interest.



Short Topix: Google Warns Users Content Could Be Deleted

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Jupiter, Saturn Align To Create Christmas Star; First Time Since Middle Ages

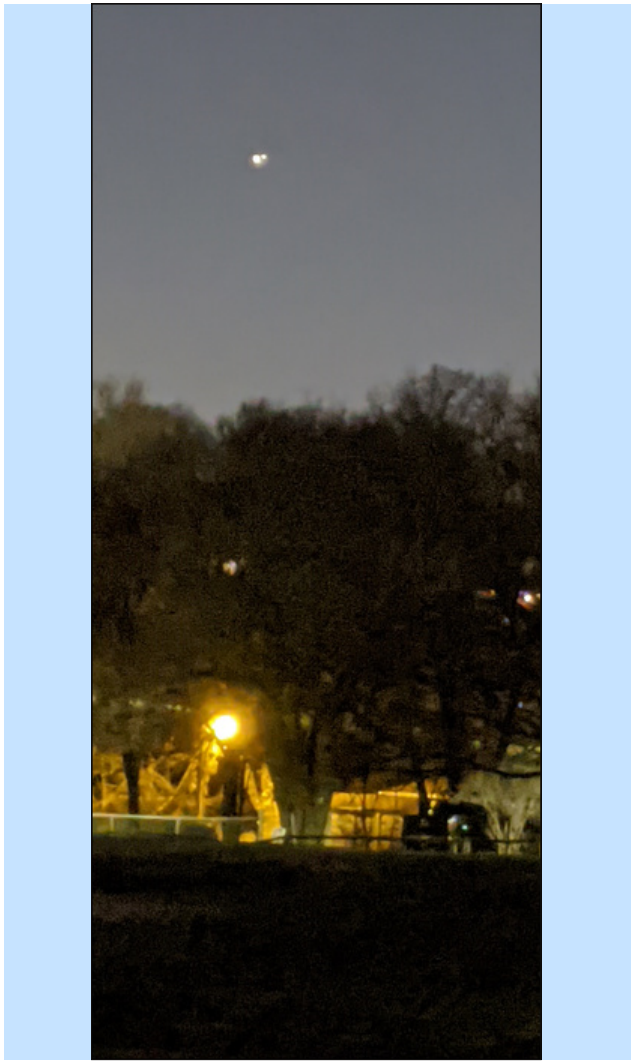


Photo by Paul Arnote, Pixel 3, Night Sight

With the calamity of a year as 2020 almost in the books (as I write this), the world could use a bit of inspiration. For the first time since March 4, 1226 … nearly 800 years … Jupiter and Saturn will appear less than 0.1 degrees apart in the sky, producing a bright star in the evening sky. The alignment peaked on December 21, just in time for the Winter Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere.

Viewable the entire week of December 21, parallels between its appearance and the biblical "Star of Bethlehem" were widespread. The alignment appeared as a bright point of light, starkly standing out in the night sky. The best viewing time was about 45 minutes after sunset, appearing in the southwestern sky. No special equipment was necessary to view the celestial event, either. I shot the photo above on December 21, 2020, using my Pixel 3 cell phone's camera on the "Night Sight" setting, carefully balanced on the corner pillar of a rock wall near my home. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn are clearly visible in the upper part of the photo.

Thankfully, humans won't have to wait another 800 years to see the alignment again. Those who are young enough today, may live long enough to see it again, in fact. My kids (currently seven and four years old) have a good chance to see it again, later in their lives. The next conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn will occur in about 60 years, on March 15, 2080. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have clear skies the week of December 21 got to view this rare phenomenon.

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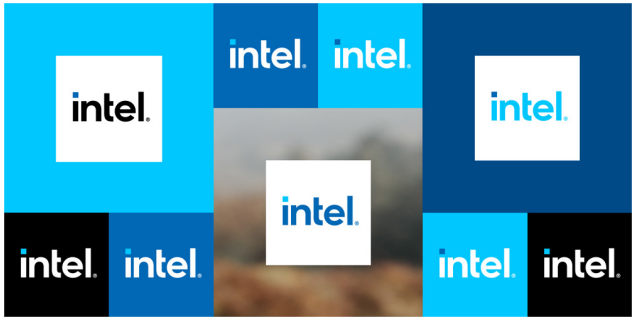
Intel Rocket Lake 8 Core/16 Thread 5.0 GHz CPU Benchmarks On Par With The AMD Ryzen 7 5800X



The 11th generation of Intel processors, termed Rocket Lake-S, are scheduled to be released sometime in the first half of 2021, and most likely early in 2021. Already, benchmark reports have been leaked regarding the performance of the new Rocket Lake processors.

Those reports place the performance of the Rocket Lake processors almost on par with the AMD Ryzen 7 5800X. Check out the table below (top of next page), from WCCFTech, that compares the new processor with the latest Core i9, the AMD Ryzen 7 5800X, the Core i7, and the AMD Ryzen 7 3800X.

From the comparison chart, it appears that the Ryzen 7 5800X still holds an ever so slight lead in performance, even over the tested new Rocket Lake processor.

The Intel processor uses a 14nm core architecture, while the AMD processors use a smaller 7nm core architecture. It is expected that the smaller the core architecture, the faster a processor can theoretically go. So, with the AMD processors using a core architecture half as big as Intel's core architecture, AMD has a theoretical greater speed ability. Of

CPU Name	Single-Core Performance	Multi-Core Performance	Single Core Perf vs Rocket Lake	Multi Core Perf vs Rocket Lake
Intel Core i9-10900K	1407	11014	17% Slower	12% Faster
AMD Ryzen 7 5800X	1661	10367	1% Faster	6% Faster
Intel Rocket Lake Core i9-11900K? (8 Core / 16 Thread)	1645	9783	N/A	N/A
Intel Core i7-10700K	1351	8991	22% Slower	9% Slower
AMD Ryzen 7 3800X	1292	8979	27% Slower	9% Slower

course, CPU instruction sets, various optimizations, and many other factors play into setting the "speed limit" of a CPU's core architecture. With Intel still using the older 14nm core architecture, users should expect power consumption and temperatures to also be higher.

However, Intel is making other changes to help boost performance. Here are some of those changes, as listed by Intel.

Some of the new features being introduced with 11th Gen Intel Core S-Series include:

New Cypress Cove architecture featuring Ice Lake Core architecture and Tiger Lake Graphics architecture.

Double-digit percentage IPC performance improvement.

Better gen-over-gen performance.

Up to 20 CPU PCIe 4.0 lanes for more configuration flexibility.

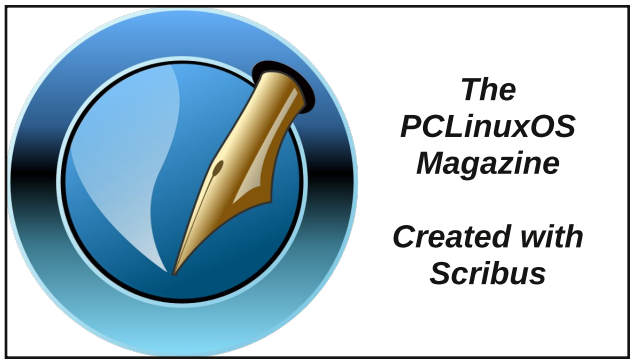
Enhanced Intel UHD graphics featuring Intel Xe Graphics architecture.

Intel® Quick Sync Video, offering better video transcoding and hardware acceleration for latest codecs.

New overclocking features for more flexible tuning performance.

Intel® Deep Learning Boost and VNNI support.

In related news from Intel, they have announced the discontinuation of the 9th generation Intel Core CPUs, and include certain i3, i5, i7, i9, Pentium, and Celeron processors. The last product discontinuance order date is planned for June 25, 2021 while the last shipments will be made until December 24, 2021.



Scrooged: Google Warns Gmail, Drive, Photos Users Content Could Be Deleted

On December 7, 2020, Google started sending an ominous email to users with Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos accounts (I have all three). I received my email on December 8, 2020, with a repeat on December 9, 2020 (as if the first one wasn't enough), and then another one about a week later (I guess because the third time's a charm).

Below is the exact email that I, along with every other Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos user, received.

Dear Google User,

We are writing to let you know that we recently announced new storage policies for Google Accounts using Gmail, Google Drive (including Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, Drawings, Forms, and Jamboard files) and/or Google Photos that bring us in line with industry practices. Since you have previously used one or more of these products in your Google Account storage, we wanted to tell you about the new policies well before they go into effect on June 1, 2021. Below is a summary of the new policies. Please reference our Help Center article for a complete list of what's changing.

Summary of the new policies (effective June 1, 2021):

• If you're inactive for 2 years (24 months) in Gmail, Drive or Photos, we may delete the content in the product(s) in which you're inactive. Google One members who are within their storage quota and in good-standing will not be impacted by this new inactive policy.

• If you exceed your storage limit for 2 years, we may delete your content across Gmail, Drive and Photos.

What this means for you:

• You won't be impacted by these changes unless you've been inactive or over your storage limit for 2 years. As this policy goes into effect June 1, 2021, the earliest it would be enforced is June 1, 2023.

• After June 1, 2021, if you are either inactive or over your storage limit, we will send you email reminders and notifications in advance and prior to deleting any content.

• Even if you are either inactive or over your storage limit for one or more of these services and content is deleted, you will still be able to sign in.

*• **Note:** The inactivity and over quota storage policies will apply only to consumer users of Google services. Google Workspace, G Suite for Education and G Suite for Nonprofits policies are not changing at this time, and admins should look to the Admin Help center for storage policies related to their subscriptions.*

Learn more about how to keep your account active

• To learn more about how to remain active with these products, visit this Help Center page.

• The Inactive Account Manager can help you manage specific content and notify a trusted contact if you stop using your Google Account for a certain period of time (between 3-18 months). Note: the new 2 year inactive policy will apply regardless of your Inactive Account Manager settings. You can learn more about these changes and ways to manage your or a loved one's account in our Help Center.

Learn how to manage your storage

• Learn more about the over quota policy and what counts against storage quota.

• You can use the free storage manager in the Google One app and on the web to see how you're using your Google Account storage, and free up space across Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos.

Thank you for using our services.
Your Google Team

Well, Ho! Ho! Ho! Happy Holidays, everyone! And why not? 2020 has pretty much been a shiitake mushroom show, so what's a little more tonnage dropped on the tonnage of bad things that have been thrust upon us this year?! What great timing, Google!

I doubt there's a good time to announce a movement from free, unlimited cloud storage to a metered system that incurs costs. And it's not that Google's 15GiB of free storage is unreasonable, either. Heck, it's 7.5 times what Dropbox offers. But, their timing couldn't possibly be worse. Their announcement comes in the midst of the most serious pandemic to hit the world in over a century. It comes at a time when extreme uncertainty fills users' lives. It comes when millions are out of work and without a regular income, due to the pandemic and government response to that pandemic.

Even by June 1, 2021, the date that Google has set for the changes to the cloud storage, much of what we are experiencing will still be with us. Despite the great news of a vaccine for the coronavirus, it's going to take much more time to vaccinate sufficient numbers of the population, and then for things to get closer to the "normal" that we all remember before the pandemic than the Google deadline for switching from unlimited, free cloud storage. Getting completely back to the old "normal" will never be possible. Those days are gone forever.

Shakeup For CentOS, Plus A Replacement

First released in May 2004, CentOS is a fork of RHEL (Red Hat Enterprise Linux). Initially, CentOS was released as version 2.0, which was forked from RHEL 2.1AS. The major difference between CentOS and RHEL is that CentOS is free and community supported, while RHEL is a paid version, where users pay for support. The current version of CentOS is CentOS 8.

CentOS, which has become a popular choice to power web servers and other Linux enterprise endeavors, was originally created by Greg Kurtzer as a free alternative to RHEL. Back then, it was known as CAOS. The late Rocky McGough was already working on a RHEL replacement for his employer, and rolled his efforts into the CAOS project, creating CentOS.

In January 2014, CentOS joined Red Hat, but remained separate from RHEL, guided by a new CentOS governing board. The latest version of CentOS, CentOS 8, was released in September 2019, and supports x86-64, ARM64 and Power8 architectures. On December 8, 2020, the CentOS blog reported that CentOS would be switching from a rebuild of RHEL to CentOS Stream, which will track slightly ahead of the RHEL releases, and will occur on December 31, 2021. Historically, releases of CentOS are supported for 10 years, and this move ends that lengthy support.

Reactions across social media were loud and mostly negative. The outcry was heard by Greg Kurtzer, one of the co-founders of CentOS. His response was to create Rocky Linux, named after his late CentOS cofounder, Rocky McGough. While there currently is no release of Rocky Linux available, and no release schedule or date has been announced, expect news to be forthcoming soon.

So why is this considered such big news? Well, you most likely have accessed content somewhere on the web running on a CentOS server. The users of CentOS include Disney, GoDaddy, RackSpace, Toyota, and Verizon. Others, such as GE, Riverbed, F5, Juniper and Fortinet, build products around CentOS. If I recall correctly, even the server that hosts The PCLinuxOS Magazine website is powered by CentOS.

Stay tuned. This saga is evolving quickly. The news has been extensively covered in the computing media. Check here, here, here, here, and here, for starters.

Fool's Gold: Some Users Are Putting Their Router In A Faraday Cage

Have you heard the one about … no … I'm serious … the 5G conspiracy/conspiracies running amok in conspiracy land? I don't know about you, but I've heard 5G conspiracies that blame everything from cancer to being able to read your mind to being able to reprogram your thoughts/behavior.

Well, some fools are buying it … lock, stock and barrel. In fact, according to an article at The Verge, they even have these "less technically minded" individuals convinced enough to fork over $100 (or more) of their hard earned money to buy a faraday cage to put around their home wifi router!

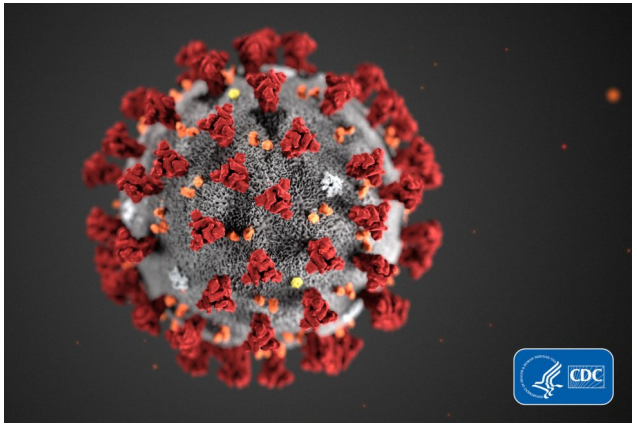
These conspiracy theorists claim that all electromagnetic radiation is bad. What they fail to realize – and fail to disclose – is that we are bombarded with electromagnetic radiation continually, throughout our lives. Light is electromagnetic radiation. Radio waves are electromagnetic radiation. Microwaves are electromagnetic radiation. You cannot escape exposure to electromagnetic radiation, no matter how hard you try.

If you're not familiar with what a faraday cage is, it is designed to absorb and eliminate all electromagnetic radiation. Do you notice how your cell phone reception fails whenever you get into an elevator in a tall building? It happens because you are, essentially, getting into a metal box (the elevator), which blocks the transmission of electromagnetic radiation. Most faraday cages are built of a metal mesh material, which routes any electromagnetic energy around whatever is inside it.

As such, when these technologically challenged people put a faraday cage around their router, and are surprised when they can no longer connect to their wifi router. Yes, technically they can still use their router, but only reliably with a hardwired connection, via ethernet cable. Capitalizing on the 5G conspiracy fears, unscrupulous "merchants" are scamming people into spending $100, $200 or more to "protect them from electromagnetic radiation," and to preserve their health.

The old adage "a fool and their money are soon parted" couldn't possibly be more true in this case! I'm not going to make it easy for you, but just going onto Amazon and searching for "faraday cage" will net you a lot of results that will leave you either shaking your head in disbelief, or buying into the FUD that surrounds this issue. In fact, that's where I found the image above, for this section of the article.

U.S. COVID-19 Data: How Hard Has YOUR Hospital Been Hit?



Even though the first of the vaccines for COVID-19 are imminent and should be available soon, it's going to take some time to get sufficient numbers of people vaccinated before we feel much of a relief from this awful pandemic. This pandemic will likely be with us in the form of high numbers of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations until at least the last quarter of 2021.

If you live in the U.S., you can now take a look at how your local hospital(s) are being hit with COVID-19 cases. Thanks to a website published by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services on their HealthData.gov domain, you can gauge the impact your local hospital(s) are feeling, both overall and from COVID-19 cases.

Once on the site, scroll about 40 percent of the way down the page. There, you will find a CSV spreadsheet file (it opens easily in LibreOffice Calc) that lists all the hospitals in the U.S., and their reports to the U.S. Dept. of HHS. Included in the reports (among other things) are the capacity of those hospitals, how many confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases they are taking care of, and their rate of occupancy.

The CSV file is updated every Friday, and gives a weekly snapshot of hospitals and what they are dealing with. The expected timeframe then is Friday thru the following Thursday. The latest version of the CSV file that I downloaded (I won't link to it directly here, since it changes frequently), however, had been last updated on December 16, 2020, just two days prior to me downloading it on December 18. That puts the update on a Wednesday. Whenever they update the CSV file, it's intended to give a weekly snapshot of hospital capacity and COVID-19 cases.

By all means, follow reasonable requests from local health officials to help contain the spread of the virus (many political types are using the pandemic as a power-grab, and/or politicizing the virus and the response to it). The more of us that do so, the quicker we can get this pandemic thing into our rearview mirror. I do say "reasonable," because there are some putting forth rules and suggestions who are not following the science, evidence and common sense, relying more on a "knee jerk reaction" that has no basis in fact or effectiveness.

Happy 25th Anniversary, JavaScript

December 4, 2020. From The OpenJS Foundation – At the OpenJS Foundation, we owe so much to JavaScript. With more than 97 percent of the world's websites using JavaScript, it is the foundation for online commerce, economic growth, and innovation.

On December 4, 1995, Netscape and Sun announced the creation of JavaScript, "an open source, cross-platform language for enterprise networks and the Internet."

At this year's OpenJS World, we had the honor of hosting Allen Wirfs-Brock, an authority on JavaScript history, for a fireside chat with Alex Williams, the founder and editor in chief of The New Stack. In this talk, "Exploring the History of JavaScript," The OpenJS World audience got a front-row seat for an intriguing conversation packed with insights from Wirfs-Brock, who was the project editor for the ECMAScript Language Specification, the international standard that defines the latest version of the JavaScript programming language. For those interested in exploring the colorful 25-year history of JavaScript, we encourage you to check out this talk.

Today, JavaScript is the common language that brings us to work and into our amazing community each and every day, and we want to take its 25th Anniversary to say thank you and reflect on the amazing year we had.

The open source projects that are hosted with the OpenJS Foundation are the heart of what makes the Foundation. The collaboration, innovative tech, and most importantly, the amazing people are what make the OpenJS Foundation special. This year was a great year for our projects, from new releases to bringing on incubation projects. We thank all project contributors for the important work you do.

We are so thankful to our members for their continued support of the OpenJS Foundation. So far this year, we welcomed Skyscanner and Netflix as the newest members of the OpenJS Foundation.

Thank you to our Board for your time, expertise, and leadership as we continue on our mission to drive broad adoption and ongoing development of key JavaScript solutions and related technologies.

While it hasn't been a typical year for any of us, this community never ceases to amaze when it comes to pivoting and innovating to continue on our path to grow, learn, and collaborate. For those who have experienced loss this year, we see you, and we thank you for being here.

Google "Year In Search" Results

Google has released their "Year In Search" results for 2020. Depending on how you feel about Google, you may or may not be surprised by their results, or what is missing from those results. More than circumstantial evidence has been presented within the past couple of years, showing bias in Google's search results to enable Google to push its own political agenda, and to shape/sway the minds of

searchers who use Google to search for information on politically charged issues.

The link above defaults to the “Global” search results. However, you can change (via a dropdown selection box) to view the search results for individual countries. So, if you live in Peru, you can search for the top search results for Peru, instead of the conglomeration of global search results.

Still, it is somewhat interesting to see what matters most to different people and cultures across the world. As you might imagine in the dumper fire year of 2020, coronavirus pretty much tops the list most often.

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Does your computer run slow?

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simple-to-use
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Screenshot Showcase

Posted by mutse, on December 17, 2020, running Mate.

PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner Bonus

Ginger Pork (Shogayaki)

INGREDIENTS:

½ lb. thinly-sliced pork loin. (ask your butcher to thinly slice it for you, about as thin as a slice of thick bacon.)
¼ onion
1 clove garlic
1 inch ginger (about 1 tsp.)
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 Tbsp. oil
1 scallion, finely chopped

SEASONINGS:

2 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 Tbsp. mirin
2 Tbsp. sake
1 tsp. Sugar (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

In a small bowl, grate onion, garlic and ginger.

Add the seasonings. We like our ginger pork to be a little bit sweeter, so we add 1 tsp. sugar (this is optional).

Season the meat with salt and pepper.

In a large non-stick frying pan, heat oil on medium-high heat. Put the meat in a single layer (cook in batches). Flip the meat when the bottom side is golden brown. If the meat is very thin like mine, cooking time is very short.

Make sure you don't overcook the pork or else it gets tough (but also be careful not to undercook).

When the meat is cooked through, add the seasonings and chopped scallion. Serve immediately.

TIPS:

To reduce sodium substitute the salt with your favorite salt substitute and use Low Sodium Soy Sauce instead of regular Soy Sauce.

NUTRITION FACTS:

Calories: 503	Carbs: 9.7g
Sodium: 638mg	Fiber: 1g

Alternatives To Google Photos

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

You most likely have heard that Google is eliminating their free unlimited storage in Google Photos. The change is expected to take place June 1, 2021. Up until then, you can continue to use Google Photos unlimited storage. From that date forward, all images uploaded to Google Photos will count towards your 15GiB free storage limit.

Certain groups of Google Photos users are exempted from the limit, like Google Pixel users, who get unlimited full resolution free photo storage for having chosen/used a Google Pixel phone. In the interest of full disclosure, I am one of those users. For me and my wife, the convenience of the service far, far outweighs the privacy concerns, of which there are many. One of those many conveniences (besides both having Pixel phones, which afford us unlimited full resolution photo storage) is that all of our photos are automatically uploaded to Google Photos in the background, preserving them should something go awry with our Pixel phones … or should we lose our phones.

Below is the "amended" storage agreement for Pixel 3 users, straight from Google. It appears a little more than half way down the page, under the Pixel Storage Information section of the page.

You get unlimited free storage at Original quality for all photos and videos uploaded to Google Photos from Pixel 3 through Jan 31, 2022. Photos and videos uploaded on or before that date will remain free at Original quality. After January 31, 2022, new photos and videos will be uploaded at High quality for free. If you upload new photos and videos at Original quality, they will count against your storage quota.

I guess Google, a company that makes multi-billions of dollars a year (U.S.), isn't satisfied with having permeated virtually every part of our daily lives. They apparently aren't satisfied with their immense, obscene revenues from all of that personal privacy intrusion, either. Up until now, Google made most of its money from targeted advertising. And, make money they did … and continue to do! As a result, it's one of the biggest and wealthiest corporations on the planet.

Check out the companion article,
***Google Photos: Bait Meet Switch**,*
elsewhere in this issue, reprinted
from Thomas Hawk's blog.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that there is a literal goldmine of money to be made by selling cloud storage. In the photography arena, as more people take more pictures with mobile devices that produce exponentially better images than my first digital camera, cloud-based storage solutions for all of those photos could add considerable ongoing income for those companies poised to offer it. No one is better poised than Google. Google Photos has nearly ***1 billion*** users worldwide.

Plus, in a few years, the whole discussion may be moot, anyways. If Google is seeing a literal goldmine in cloud-based photo storage, how long will it be before others offering "free" cloud-based photo storage also sit up and take notice of the revenue stream they are missing out on? Greed is a terrible trait.

I do "get it." Companies exist to make their shareholders and investors money. The more money they make for their shareholders and investors, the higher their stock prices go, and the more "clout" they have in the marketplace. That's how a capitalistic economy works.

So, What Can You Do?

Well, you do have options. Google is not the only photo service out there offering unlimited photo storage. Let's take a look at some other options you have at your disposal to deal with the end of unlimited storage on Google Photos. Some are free, while others charge a modest amount.

Google One

The first option, and the one that will require the least input from you physically, is to pay Google for the extra storage you need to store your photos. Google is more than willing to sell it to you, too. Fortunately, Google offers storage solutions in tiers via Google One, instead of a one-size-fits-all fashion. Keep in mind that your Google One storage covers Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos. You can get 100GiB of storage for $1.99 per month, or $20 annually. There's a 200GiB plan that costs $2.99 per month, or $30 annually. The next tier jumps to 2TiB, which costs $9.99 per month, or $99.99 annually. You can also buy into the higher tier plans (which afford you considerably more storage than you'll probably ever need) at 10TiB, 20TiB or 30TiB, for $49.99, $99.99 or $149.99 per month, respectively. However, these higher tier plans will also cost you a considerable amount of money. No annual cost was listed with them; only the monthly cost.

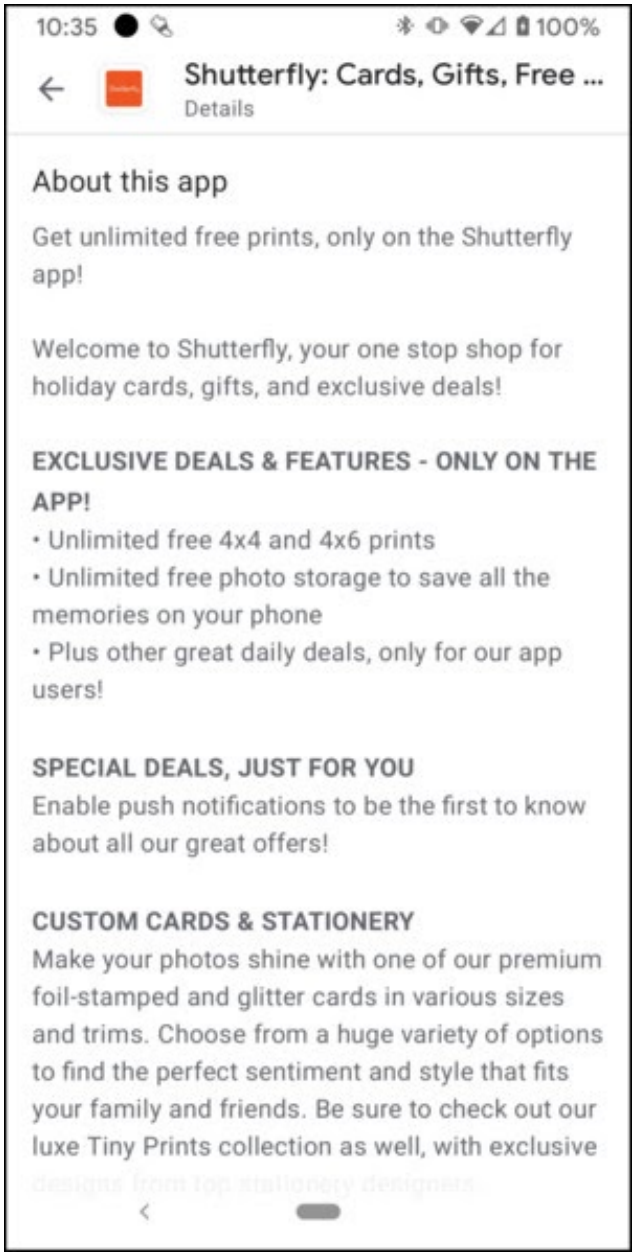
Shutterfly

Shutterfly®

Another good choice would be Shutterfly. I've used their service (via their website) to order prints and personalized gifts. But, they also offer unlimited free cloud photo storage (for now), as the second image above shows. They also have some pretty good incentives for joining their service.

From your desktop, via their website, you can upload your images to your heart's content. Uploads are easy and fast. Then, when you need to create a photo book, order custom photo greeting cards, photo prints, magnets, mugs, custom shopping bags, and a whole host of other custom printed items, all of your photos are already in place, awaiting your selection and edits.

The Shutterfly mobile app is also quite a good deal. Available for both iOS and Android in the respective app stores, it's a free app. Plus, you can upload your images directly from your mobile device to Shutterfly. You can even set the app to automatically upload images from your mobile device to Shutterfly, so this app has that covered, as well. Furthermore, if you use the Shutterfly app, you are entitled to ***unlimited*** 4x4 or 4x6 prints ordered through the app; you only pay shipping.



If there is a downside to Shutterfly, it is the shipping costs for any prints or other items that you might order. They are, in many cases, inordinately costly.

Having used the service personally, the only way I found to circumvent the crazy shipping prices is to wait until they offer a free or discounted shipping promotion. Otherwise, be prepared to pay some crazy, crazy shipping prices. However, I will also attest that the quality of the prints (and other gift items) you receive are very, very good. I've yet to be disappointed with the quality of my orders from Shutterfly.

Flickr

Flickr has been around for quite a while (since 2004), so I'd be a bit surprised if you haven't heard of it. Its roots go back to before it was the photo cloud for Yahoo!, before being spun off on its own. In April 2018, Flickr was bought by SmugMug, and they made their first changes to the service in November 2018. That is when they ended the 1TiB free storage for free users, and restricted free accounts to 1,000 images. That remains the status of the free Flickr accounts to this day.

However, Flickr Pro users do get unlimited photo storage, ad-free service, advanced statistics, worry-free backup via the desktop Auto-Uploadr, and exclusive discounts from Adobe, Blurb, SmugMug, and Priime. The Flickr Pro service is going to cost you $60 annually, which works out to $5 per month. Other plans include $6.99 per month, and another that is $18.99 every three months (quarterly). By far, the best value is the annual subscription.

The main audience that Flickr is aiming for are serious amateur photographers and professional photographers. Users can determine whether certain images are accessible to the public, or if they are to be kept private. Users can also set the "rights" to the images. The choices are "All Rights Reserved," "Creative Commons 2.0 Share Alike," and "Non-restricted."

Flickr does have apps for iOS and Android. Despite having had a free Flickr account for years, I have not installed the app on my phone, so I'm unable to speak about them first hand, other than to let you know that they exist. There appears to be an automatic upload function in the app (judging from a few comments in the Google Play Store), but there appears to be an issue where users are unable to choose which folders are uploaded to the Flickr servers.

PCLinuxOS GraphicStor

All PCLinuxOS users have a unique photo storage solution available to them. It's called the PCLinuxOS GraphicStor. The graphic below perfectly shows the differences between a free and paid account.

The "premium" account will cost you $24.95 (U.S.) per year. You can opt to pay monthly ($3.33), quarterly ($8.75), or semi-annually ($15.00). All are actually pretty good deals, considering that you get unlimited storage for up to 9,999 images, and all are available as choices when you upgrade from a free to a premium account. By far, the annual subscription is the best buy. To sign up, send a message in the forum to The Cranky Zombie (YouCanToo), or head over to the signup page.

ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION
DEFENDING YOUR RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Features	FREE	PREMIUM ACCOUNT
Supported image formats	jpeg and png	jpeg, gif and png
Browse your uploaded images	Yes	Yes
Image thumbnails?	Yes	Yes
Number of images allowed	200	9999
Storage Space	1000mb	Unlimited*
Monthly Bandwidth	Unlimited*	Unlimited*
Maximum upload file size	10,000k	4,000,000k
Upload images in zip archives	No	Yes
Maximum image dimensions	800x600	4000x3500
Auto-resize oversized images?	No	Yes
All images converted to jpegs?	Yes - some loss of quality	No - no loss of quality
Branding added on to images	None	None
Simultaneous uploads?	Yes - 5	Yes - 20
Rename Your Images?	No	Yes
Resize Your Images?	No	Yes
Rotate Your Images?	No	Yes
Image Galleries?	2	100
Email images to your friends	Yes - 3 at once	Yes - 10 at once
Price	FREE Join Now!	$3.33 Upgrade Now

Unlimited* Other limitations (bandwidth, storage space, etc, still apply).

Dropbox

Most of the computer news media lists Dropbox as a viable alternative to Google Photos, but I have to break ranks with them. Most everyone reading this is familiar with Dropbox, how robust it is, and how well it integrates into lots of programs. So, let me explain why I don't view Dropbox as a viable alternative to Google Photos.

First, the "free" accounts in Dropbox are limited to a paltry 2GiB. Really? That number has not changed since the day that Dropbox was released. What am I going to do with 2GiB? At best, I ***might*** be able to store what … 120 (at the most)? … or so pictures in Dropbox, before I run out of room. And that's if I have NOTHING ELSE stored in Dropbox!

Second, purchasing additional storage in Dropbox is a bit pricey. Users can get 2TiB of storage space in Dropbox, but you'll pay $12 per month for it. Considering that you can get the same amount of extra storage in Google One for one-fourth the cost, the Dropbox charges aren't very attractive.

Nope. Dropbox doesn't even make my list. I only include it here because the rest of the computer news media lists them. I wouldn't want you to think that I "forgot about" Dropbox. Plus, you now know why it doesn't make my list, too.

NAS (Network Attached Storage)

Diving into something that's frequently viewed as reserved for "nerd land," you can set up your own server at home, with NAS. You can set the NAS up to be accessible when you're not home, by using NextCloud. It may require a bit more work on your part, but in the end, YOU are in control of your images, who sees them, etc. You can decide how big to make your NAS, too, by adding additional storage drives. With drives over 2TiB becoming more and more common, and also coming down considerably in price, setting up NAS is becoming easier and more in reach (financially) for everyday computer users.

The drawback, though, is the initial cost to set it all up. Expect to pay a bit over $200 to get started with NAS. Prices can easily go much higher, depending on a number of factors, such as processor speed, number of drive bays, and the like. Just in a cursory glance on Amazon, I saw some NAS units going for over $2,000. So, NAS might not be a viable solution for your photo storage needs, unless you have the money to get started.

Going "Old School"

Taking an "old school" approach might not be the easiest method, but it may be one of the least expensive (money wise). It will require a bit more work on your part, but it does have some distinct advantages.

What I mean by "old school" is to save images on DVD-R discs (single layer capacity of 4.7GiB and dual layer capacity of 8.5GiB). If you have access to a Blu Ray disc recorder (single layer capacity of 25GiB and dual layer capacity of 50GiB), even better. To start with, the discs are relatively inexpensive. If your computer or laptop doesn't have a built-in drive, it's fairly inexpensive to add an external drive that connects via USB.

So, you could just keep using Google Photos with its "free" 15GiB limit, and then just download your images to your hard drive, record them to an optical disc, and then delete them from Google Photos to keep your storage under the limit.

If you take the "old school" approach, be sure to make two or three copies of each disc, for safekeeping. Store one copy of important photos somewhere "off site," keep one as a backup, and the other one is the "daily use" copy.

Will it be less convenient? Yep! Will it be more work? Absolutely! But in the end, you won't have to worry that some of your precious photos will be deleted when you run out of available cloud storage space. You also won't have to worry about privacy as much, either.

Summary

In many ways, Thomas Hawk has nailed it with his piece about Google applying the old-fashioned, tried and true "bait and switch." Get users hooked on something by giving it away for free, and then start to charge for that very same thing that you previously gave away for free. Shame on Google for allowing G-R-E-E-D to overrule their founding credo. And no, I won't mention it again here. We've done beat that dead horse so much that there's scarcely any meat left on those bones.

The choices presented above should at least get you started in your quest to find free or affordable photo storage options. I'm sure that there are services and methods that I've overlooked or haven't yet discovered. If you find other services or methods for photo storage, please let me (and everyone else) know about them by making a post in the PCLinuxOS forum. Or, you could email/message me, and I'll be happy to share it.

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Screenshot Showcase

Posted by OnlyHuman, on December 4, 2020, running e24.

PCLinuxOS Puzzled Partitions

			7		6	5	3	
3				1			2	6
	2				5		8	
5		1		8				7
	9							
	4	2	3	7			6	
				5				
	1	3						
					3	6		

SUDOKU RULES: There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. The only way the puzzle can be considered solved correctly is when all 81 boxes contain numbers and the other Sudoku rules have been followed.

When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be prefilled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the game.

Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same.

Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same.

SCRAPPLER RULES:

1. Follow the rules of Scrabble®. You can view them here. You have seven (7) letter tiles with which to make as long of a word as you possibly can. Words are based on the English language. Non-English language words are NOT allowed.
2. Red letters are scored double points. Green letters are scored triple points.
3. Add up the score of all the letters that you used. Unused letters are not scored. For red or green letters, apply the multiplier when tallying up your score. Next, apply any additional scoring multipliers, such as double or triple word score.
4. An additional 50 points is added for using all seven (7) of your tiles in a set to make your word. You will not necessarily be able to use all seven (7) of the letters in your set to form a "legal" word.
5. In case you are having difficulty seeing the point value on the letter tiles, here is a list of how they are scored:
   - 0 points: 2 blank tiles
   - 1 point: E, A, I, O, N, R, T, L, S, U
   - 2 points: D, G
   - 3 points: B, C, M, P
   - 4 points: F, H, V, W, Y
   - 5 points: K
   - 8 points: J, X
   - 10 points: Q, Z
6. Optionally, a time limit of 60 minutes should apply to the game, averaging to 12 minutes per letter tile set.
7. Have fun! It's only a game!

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

Possible score 277, average score 194.

PCLinuxOS Word Find: January 2021
Trees

S Y M C M U W I T C H H A Z E L X G L Q U X C E J Q T E S A
U T A Q C A D H Z Q Q T R O Y O O Y T Z E Q N C S V C H B P
W L A V V I B U R N U M F H D W L K A F Y I Z N J F G K H Q
P R C J S C E U P A L M E T T O E H Y Y R T X S A M V F B T
R C Z W A V L E J R A F X A P D M H E A R S S H I H M H B R
S L G A V R P R D U B D E R C L A A T U E U C A Z I Y J Y A
K I R N W I P B J S J H G X K S K C N E H T R N Q G U D J C
L K V Z U J A Z M T J P C J D R E E O U C P D K X S U F A Q
M J H C E E B D J A I K T I Z N D R U H E Y D L N J N M M H
D W D P Z L A D S K W H A N P N E C Q I K L I F D X E Z O A
D P P A N V R S D Q P X U P I P D R V P O A K L K L A A V N
D F M D Q H C N I M F A Q L I I Y B A S H C F U L I I B Y M
U J D O O W N O R I Q F M N S O P W W K C U X I O N O T Q N
U S G A E E W J R U U D U U B M V U B H T E A K L G U U O I
T Z M C X C G U E E I J K B M R B O D H I Q X A I B Q U I P
J T U M W O P C C B N A J N S A R F A S S A S L X A E L R Y
H T W W S T P Y D W C I C W N T L U E Y Y V U G C K S R F B
G Q J Y C T Y A Y Q E Z P Y D X N T H I I B S F Q Z V K T Q
V C A I S O G Y E R O M A C Y S L E C H U Q V X D L Y B Q H
T S K R E N G L N W W N Y X P X B S F M B F V B I M D A U D
R G F S F W O N P Q K J M A H O G A N Y S K K G I N K G O O
G M D B L O R S D A M L A E B F G S B C N Y D H I U M O M N
D I V K O O V S U U U I S O T A K N D X B M U Z M L W N H C
A M Y K H D C E F N Y M A N G R O V E P H R Z H E G H L A A
O O E T D X J R B X J B S K G H Z E Y W E F K P O L Z A G T
K S W J W U H P A P U F J A I L O N G A M S R D N J K X S A
G A P A E U O Y S H N V H C R A L N E D L O G F Z W J O B L
H N D C S O U C W R G T U N G N I W U M O J O V K G K J V P
P C L K C T R J D I L A Z L V Z A Y U P C V M W N E N G B A
L N E N B B X Z E A E Y G X U B R E V O K Z Z B Y I K C A X

BANYAN
BAOBOB
BEECH
BODHI
CAMELLIA
CATALPA
CHOKECHERRY
COTTONWOOD
CRABAPPLE
CYPRESS
DOGWOOD
EUCALYPTUS
FILBERT
GINKGO
GOLDENLARCH
HAWTHORN
HEMLOCK
IRONWOOD
JUJUBA
JUNGLE
JUNIPER
KATSURA
KUMQUAT
LINDEN
MAGNOLIA
MAHOGANY
MANGROVE
MIMOSA
NECTARINE
PALMETTO
QUINCE
REDBUD
SASSAFRAS
SEQUOIA
SYCAMORE
VIBURNUM
WINGNUT
WITCHHAZEL
ZELKOVA

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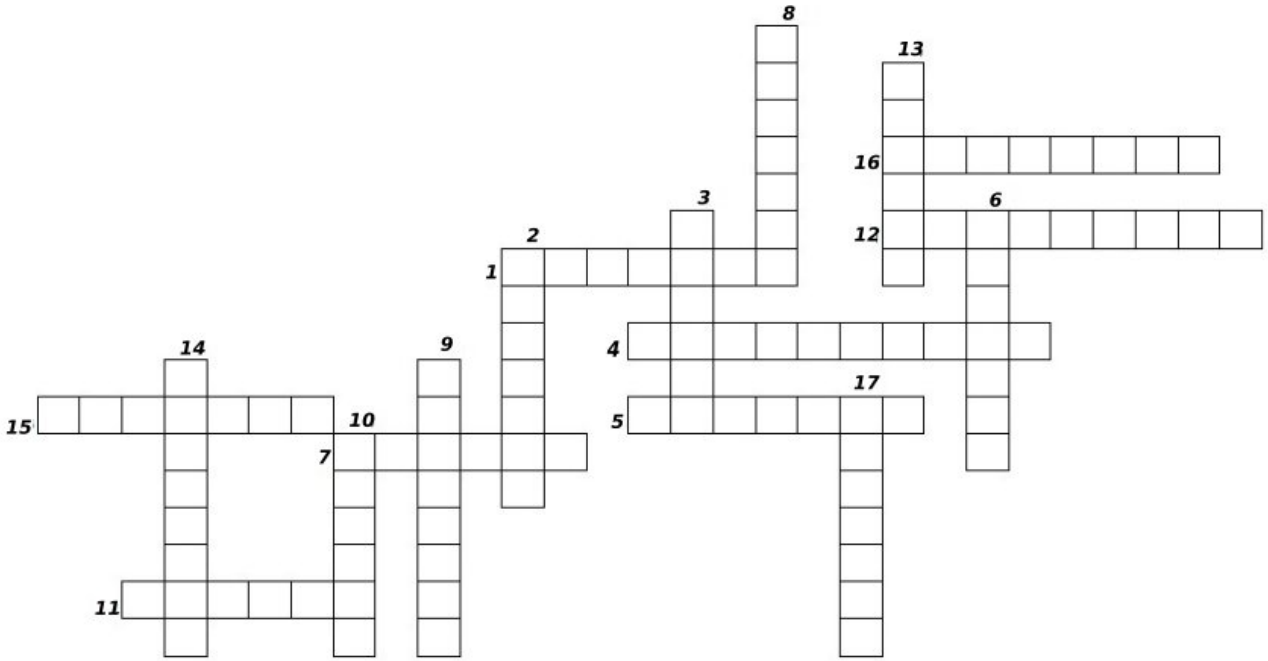
Trees Crossword



1. A deciduous tree of Japan and China sometimes grown as an ornamental for its beautiful leaves.
2. A tree with a fruit that looks like a small orange.
3. An edible fruit of any of several trees of the buckthorn family
4. A genus of mostly Australian evergreen trees or shrubs of the myrtle familyand are widely cultivated for their gums, resins, oils, and useful woods.
5. Any of a genus of evergreen trees of the pine family.
6. Either of two huge coniferous California trees of the bald cypress family that may grow to over 300 feet.
7. A large fig tree that has spreading branches which send out aerial roots that grow down to the ground and form secondary trunks around the host tree.
8. A tall widely spreading Japanese tree of the elm family that is often used as an ornamental and shade tree in place of the American elm.
9. Any of a genus of tropical maritime trees or shrubs that form dense masses important in coastal land building and as foundations of unique ecosystems.
10. A broad-trunked tropical tree of the silk-cotton family that is native to Africa and has an edible acidic fruit resembling a gourd.
11. A large Chinese tree that has fan-shaped leaves.
12. A tall tree of eastern North America whose dried root bark was formerly used in medicine or in flavoring.
13. Any of a genus of trees, shrubs, and herbs of the legume family that occur in tropical and warm regions and have often prickly leaves and globular heads of small white or pink flowers.
14. Any of several evergreen shrubs or small trees native to eastern Asia, having shiny leaves and roselike flowers that are usually red, white, or pink.
15. Any of the begnonia family with pale showy flowers in terminal clusters.
16. A tree or tall bush that has white, pink, yellow, or purple flowers
17. An evergreen tree or shrub with small overlapping leaves resembling scales.

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Mixed-Up-Meme Scrambler

Cops
LPOCEI

Spade
OPOSC

Hamper
TSALL

Utter
PASKE

"_ _ _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _

May I help you?"

Use the clues to unmix the letters to make a new word. Remix the letters in the red boxes to solve the puzzle.

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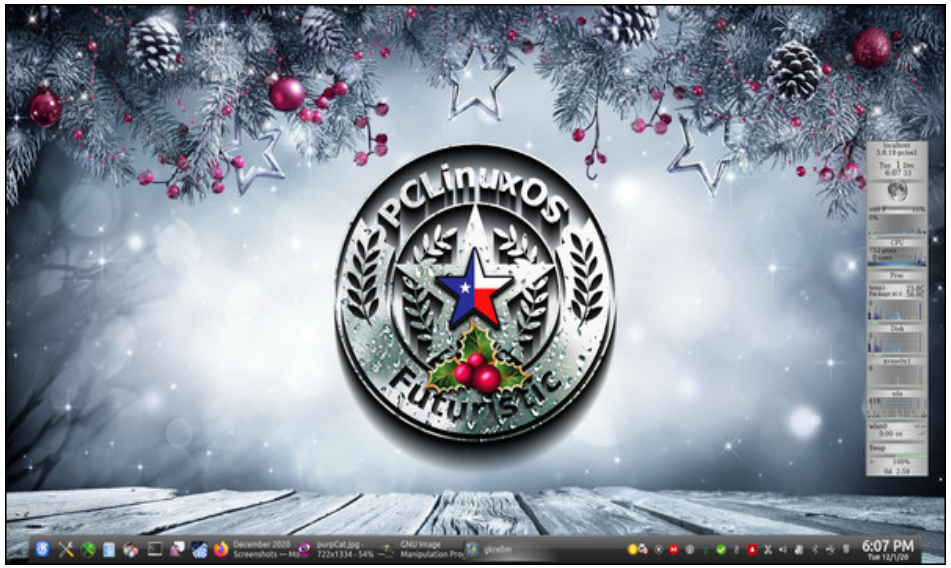
More Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Snubbi, on December 3, 2020, running Mate.

Posted by tbschommer, on December 1, 2020, running KDE.



Posted by tuxlink, on December 1, 2020, running KDE.

Posted by Yankee, on December 11, 2020, running Mate.