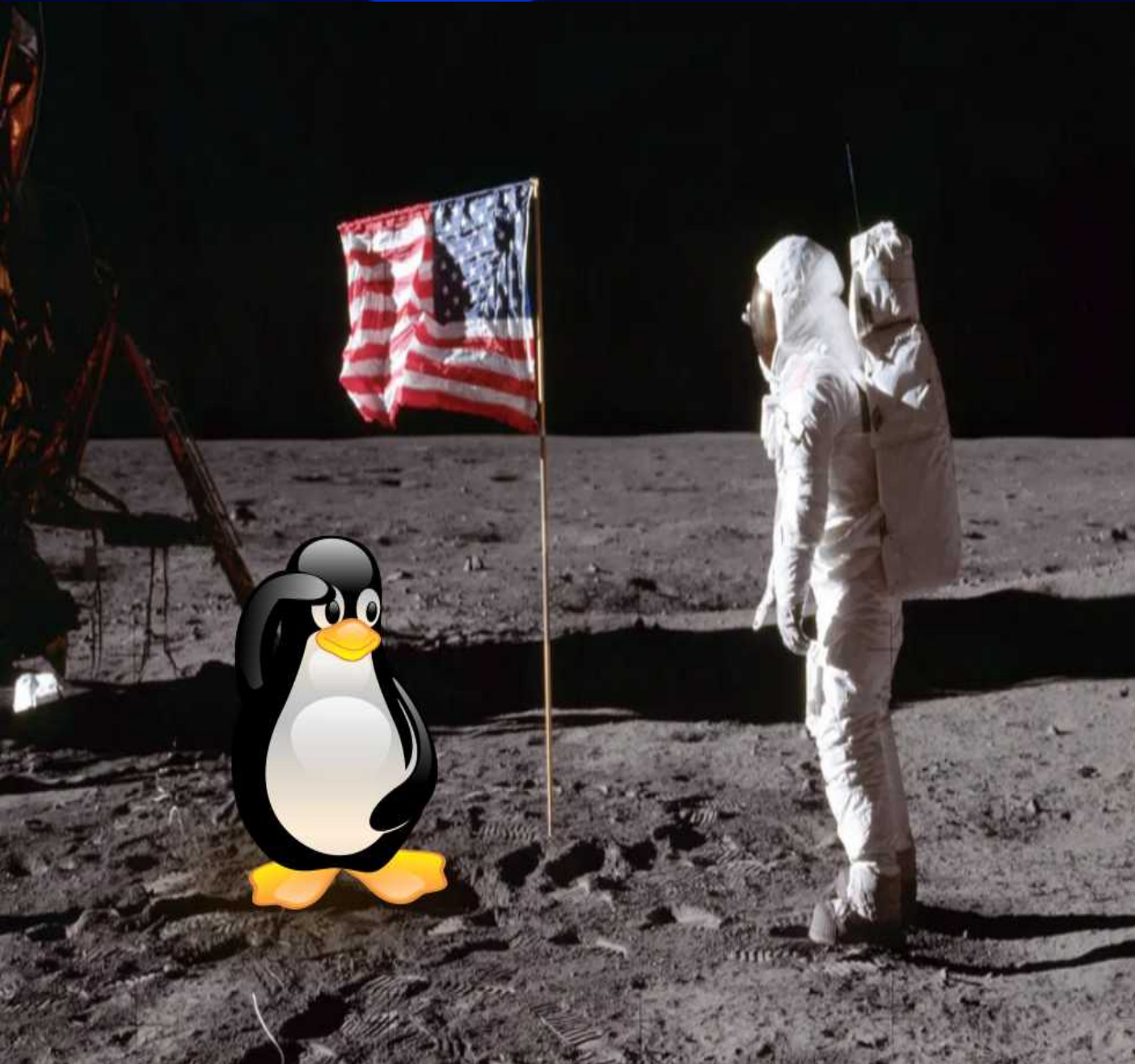


The PCLinuxOS magazine

Volume 174

July, 2021



***Network Manager: The Low-Down
On Getting Up To Speed***

***The Dangerous Liaisons
Of Big Tech Companies***

***GIMP Tutorial: Removing
A Background, Part 2***

***Short Topix: Windows 11
Announced, Expected
By Year's End***

***FreeNode Destructs.
What It All Means
For FOSS, PCLinuxOS***

***Browser Update Features
You Might Have Missed***

***PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner:
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The **PCLinuxOS** magazine

The PCLinuxOS name, logo and colors are the trademark of Texstar.

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This release was made possible by the following volunteers:

Chief Editor: Paul Arnote (parnote)

Assistant Editor: Meemaw

Artwork: ms_meme, Meemaw

Magazine Layout: Paul Arnote, Meemaw, ms_meme

HTML Layout: YouCanToo

Staff:

ms_meme

Meemaw

Gary L. Ratliff, Sr.

Daniel Meiß-Wilhelm

daiaishi

Cg_Boy

YouCanToo

Pete Kelly

Smileeb

Alessandro Ebersol

Contributors:

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From The Chief Editor's Desk...

Responsibility. Accountability. Culpability.

It seems that, in today's world, the "ability" to accept any "bility" (unless it's a disability) is sadly and sorely missing.

Unlike in the time when I was growing up, along with every generation before that, no one today takes responsibility for their own actions. It's always the "blame game" where it is someone else's fault for one's failings. Didn't get a coveted job? It was the hiring manager or HR person's fault. Didn't get that last promotion? The boss didn't "like" me. The list of excuses, as Buzz Lightyear would say, goes "to infinity and beyond," with each one twisted around and customized to relieve the "aggrieved" party of any self responsibility.

While these situations can and do happen, their frequency is far less than we're made to believe or think. Never mind that you might not have been the most qualified candidate for that coveted job. Never mind that maybe someone else showed more/better leadership potential for that promotion. It's far, far easier to blame someone else for one's failings than it is to take responsibility for those failings.

A little introspection can go a very long way in these cases. But as long as the "aggrieved" party refuses to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the "failure," there can never be any introspection. That introspection may prompt the "aggrieved" party to seek additional training or schooling to better position themselves for that next coveted job opening or promotion. Without accepting responsibility, the "blame game" continues on, ad nauseum, over and over and over again.

Related to responsibility is accountability. In fact, "responsibility" is listed as a synonym for



"accountability" in the dictionary. Even though the dictionary lists them as synonymous, I see them as separate. There's not many degrees of separation, but I still view them separately. In my mind anyway, accountability means a willingness to accept the consequences of your actions. It also means that you own up to your own mistakes, shortcomings,

and faults. Just as they preach in many of the 12 step programs, admitting that you have a problem is 50% of the solution.

Culpability, again in my mind, is a combination of accepting responsibility AND accountability in any given situation. You openly admit your shortcomings

(or that you are in error), and you are accountable for your actions (you accept the consequences of your actions).

Look around. It's actually quite easy to see examples of people who accept responsibility, take accountability, and who admit culpability. They are the rare breeds. It's that rarity that makes it easy to single them out from the masses, who by and large, don't do any of those things. Even most of our vaulted leaders are devoid of these qualities. Some possess none of them at all.

We've made it very easy in today's society for virtually no one to take responsibility for the things that go on in their lives or for their actions. No one is held accountable, as the rest of the masses rise up and coddle the "aggrieved" with excuses for the "aggrievance." And, if you don't have both of the first two traits (most don't even have one), there can never be any culpability.

And you wonder why society has deteriorated to such a sad state?

This month's cover commemorates the 52nd anniversary of mankind's first steps on another celestial body with astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the moon, July 20, 1969. If it had happened today, I'm sure Tux would be right there to return Armstrong's salute, as he is in the cover image "enhanced" by Meemaw. Here's to hoping that mankind's return to the moon will involve Tux ... and Linux (I'm almost certain that it will!).

Until next month, I bid you peace, happiness, serenity and prosperity.



Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Yankee, on June 1, 2021, running Mate.

Network Manager: The Low-Down On Getting Up To Speed

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Goodbye, net_applet. Hello, Network Manager.

After using a combination of PCC (PCLinuxOS Control Center) and net_applet to manage internet connections under PCLinuxOS for YEARS (pretty much since its inception), PCLinuxOS made the switch to Network Manager in early June 2021. Network Manager also replaces the lesser used (but very capable) wicd program. Network Manager has become the default network management tool in most Linux distributions in recent years. It debuted in November 2004, first introduced by Red Hat, so it's definitely not a youngster.

As a result, there is a LOT of information out there about Network Manager (henceforth referred to as NM). In fact, there's so much information available, it may become a daunting challenge to find the information you seek. Indeed, users could experience "information overload" when searching out information on NM, which could make it difficult to discern what information is needed for a particular issue.

While I'll give you a list of some resources to explore as you get accustomed to NM (at the end of the article), let's spend more time explaining the best way to get your network up and running after this huge change to the PCLinuxOS landscape.

Trust me. My first time through this on one of my computers was not a joyous affair. It took me about three hours to figure things out. I should have written things down from the forum before I started, but I didn't. So, I repeated the process on my "travel" laptop, leveraging what I learned in the first attempt, and after going back to the forum to figure out where I erred in my first attempt. What follows is the benefit of my trials and tribulations, coupled with information gleaned from the various threads about NM in the PCLinuxOS forum.

Step One: Start With A Clean Slate

Go ahead and run updates on your computer. NM will only be installed from the PCLinuxOS repository when you specifically select to install it. When you do decide to install it, you will also want to install networkmanager-applet (named nm-applet). For whatever reason, the networkmanager-applet is not installed

automatically, and you will need to mark it for installation. The networkmanager-applet is for any desktop, and allows users easy control of their network connections. KDE users will also want to install plasma-nm-applet, plasma-nm-applet-openvpn, and its other associated plugins, which is specifically for KDE and LXQt users to control their NM connection. I've been told by tbschommer that the plasma NM applets will work on GTK desktops, such as Xfce. Since I run a GTK desktop, I prefer to run the GTK plugins. **Once you install NM (and it's applets), your current net_applet and/or wicd tools WILL stop working. You will lose your internet connection, but DON'T FREAK OUT.**

Now would also be a good time to install any NM plugins that you think you might need from the PCLinuxOS repository. If you connect via a VPN, you will definitely want to install the NM plugin for OpenVPN. If you're in doubt, just go ahead and install all three of the NM plugins that are listed in Synaptic. That way, they are available for any future use.

By all means, RESIST the urge to uninstall drakx-net. Even though it's "load" has been significantly lifted by NM, it IS still necessary for the proper functioning of your system.

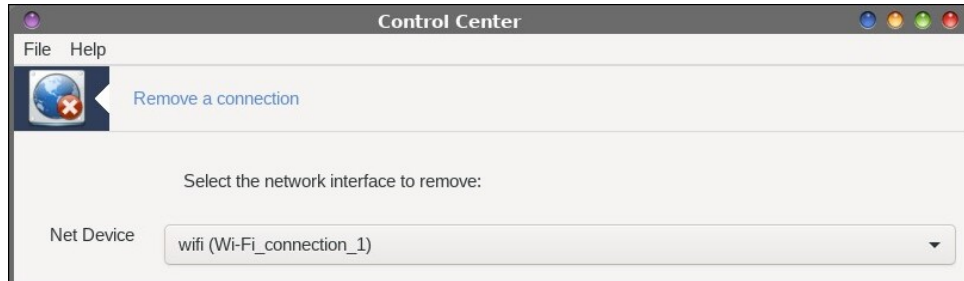
After installing NM, go back into Synaptic and uninstall net_applet and/or wicd. You won't need them any longer. If you have net_applet or wicd set to autostart on your computer, remove it from the programs you've queued up to automatically start when you login to your computer.

So, up until now, PCC and net_applet (or wicd) have been doing an admirable job of managing your network connections. But now, with NM being the "new kid on



Network Manager: The Low-Down On Getting Up To Speed

the block,” that all changes. As counterintuitive as it might seem, you will need to clear out all of the saved networks that were previously managed by PCC and net_applet (or wicd). But, DON'T do this before you've run updates and installed all of the Network Manager programs!



We need to get rid of all of the existing network connection information, and let NM start afresh. One way to get rid of existing network connections is to go into PCC > Network & Internet > Remove a connection. Use the dropdown box listing all of your saved connections, and delete them, one by one. However, there have been reports in the PCLinuxOS forum of that being a hit-or-miss endeavor. The other, more certain way, is what Textstar calls the “nuclear option.” Open a terminal session, and su to the root user. Then, enter the three following commands:

```
rm -f /etc/sysconfig/network-scripts/ifcfg-eth0
rm -f /etc/sysconfig/network-scripts/ifcfg-wlan0
rm -f /var/lib/NetworkManager/*
```

PLEASE ... remember that you are executing these commands as the root user, so exercise care and precision when performing these actions. The “nuclear option” really is the express lane to getting NM properly set up.

If you don't want to enter these commands yourself manually (or aren't comfortable working at a root prompt in a terminal session), don't despair. Textstar has created a new package, called “netnuke” that performs these actions for you. Here's the description from Synaptic:

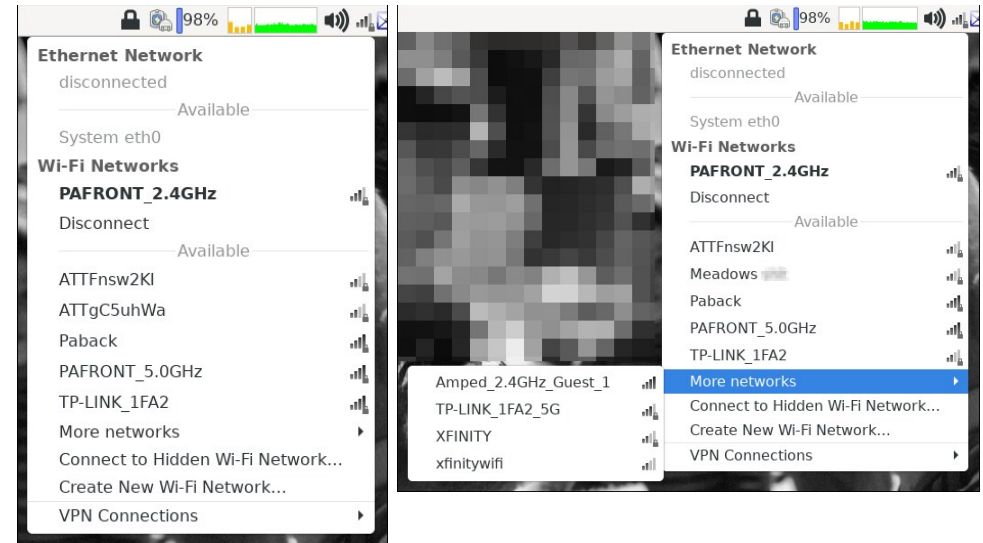
A command line program to nuke your network connections. Run netnuke as root in a terminal then reboot and set up your network connection through the networkmanager applet.

Also, once you've got NM, the applet, and any/all the plugins installed, add nm-applet to automatically start when you boot your computer. This way, you won't have to manually start it. Just. In. Case. If you end up with it in there unnecessarily, or find it in your list of startup applications multiple times, you can always delete it/one of them later on.

Then, reboot. When your computer has rebooted, use NM to set up your network connections, which is what we'll discuss next.

Step Two: Set Up Your Network Connections Using NM

Believe it or not, now comes the easy part.



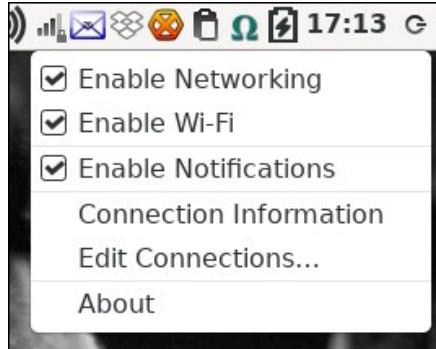
Left-click your mouse pointer on the NM applet icon in your system tray. You may need to wait for a few seconds, but NM will locate and list all of the networks it finds. Select the network you want to connect to. The network you are currently connected to is shown in bold type, as displayed in the above images of the NM left-click menu (if you've already connected to a network). NM will list the five networks with the highest signal strength, or so it seems (left image). All of the others are listed under the “More networks” menu entry (right image). Networks marked with a signal strength indicator and a small padlock require a password to be able to connect to them.



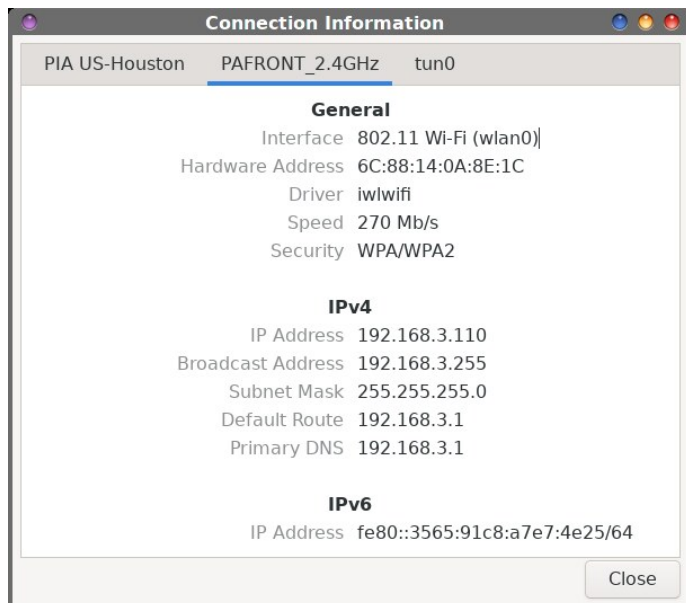
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If the network you select is password protected (and many are), you will see the dialog box above (previous page). Enter the password for the network in the “Password” text entry box. If you want to see the password (to ensure that you’ve typed it in correctly), check the “Show password” checkbox. Then, click the “Connect” button at the bottom right of the dialog box.

Don’t worry. NM will automatically remember all the connection details for the networks you’ve connected to, including the passwords. That way, the network is readily available for you to connect to again, in the future.

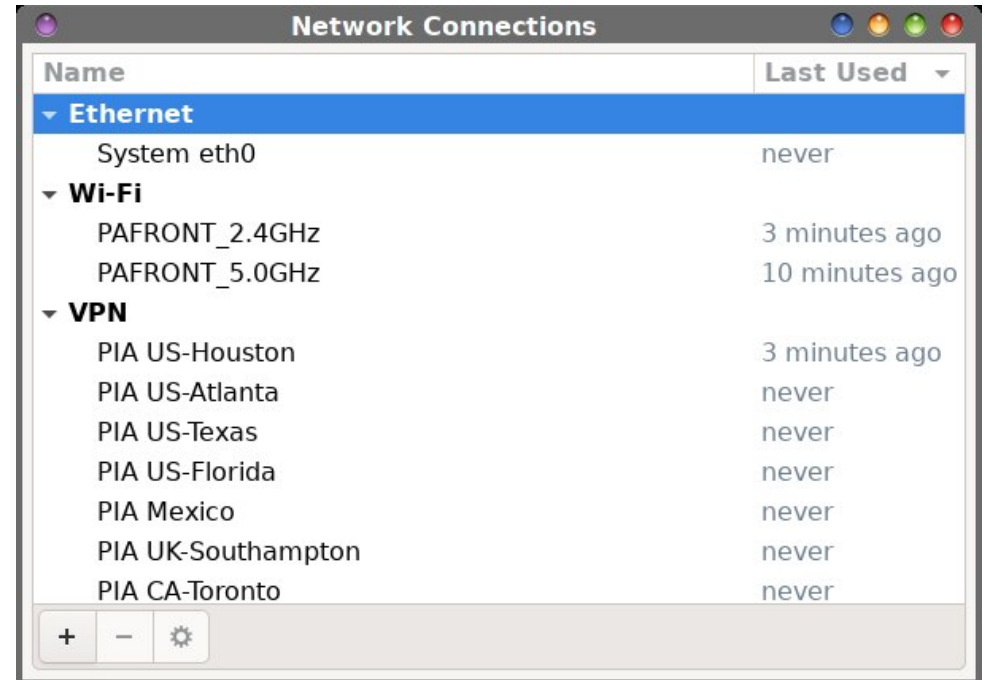


If you right-click your mouse pointer over the NM icon in the system tray, you get some additional choices. The first three items, represented by checkboxes in the menu, should be self explanatory, so we’ll skip over these, as they require no explanation. The same applies to the last item in the right-click menu.

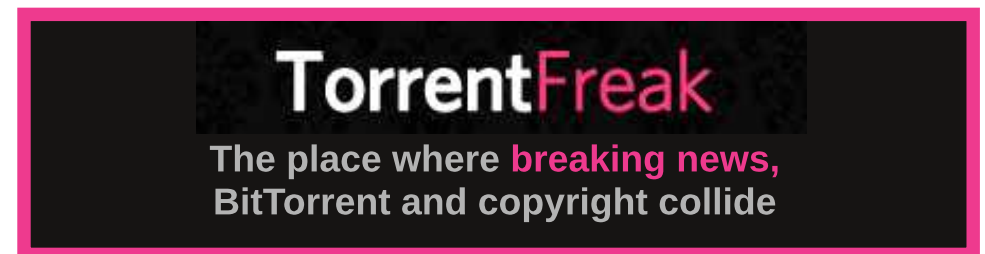


Selecting the fourth item, “Connection information,” will give you a dialog similar to the image above (bottom, previous column). That dialog box will provide all sorts of information about your connection.

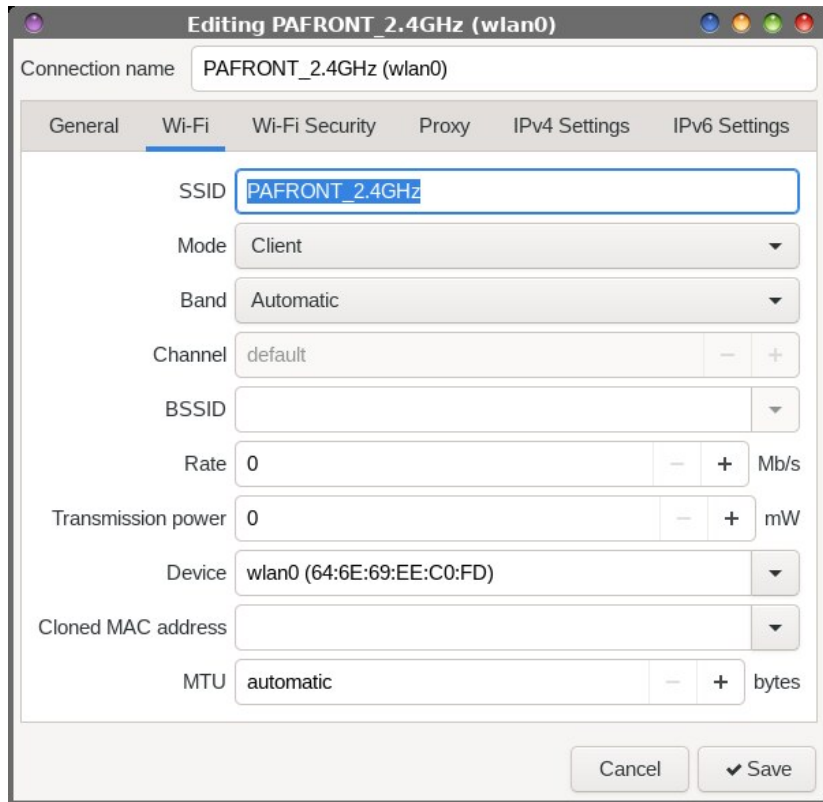
Tweaking Your Connection



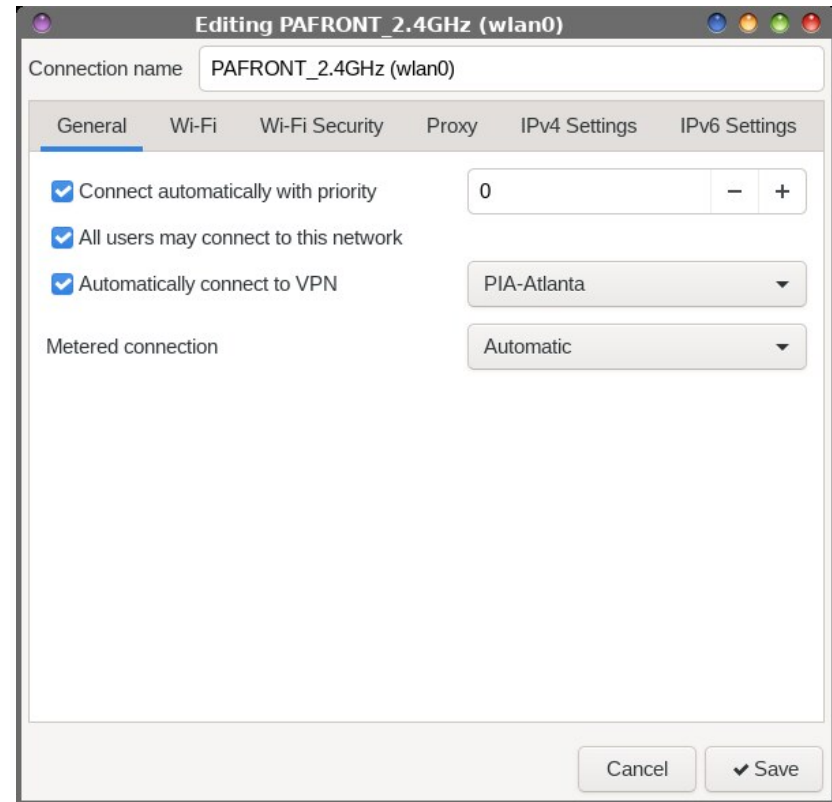
Selecting the “Edit Connections...” menu item from the right-click menu brings up a dialog box similar to that pictured above. Selecting the category of connection and then the “+” button at the lower left of the dialog box will allow you to set up a new connection. Similarly, double clicking an existing connection (or single clicking it, then hitting the “*” button at the bottom left of the window) will allow you to edit the information for that connection.



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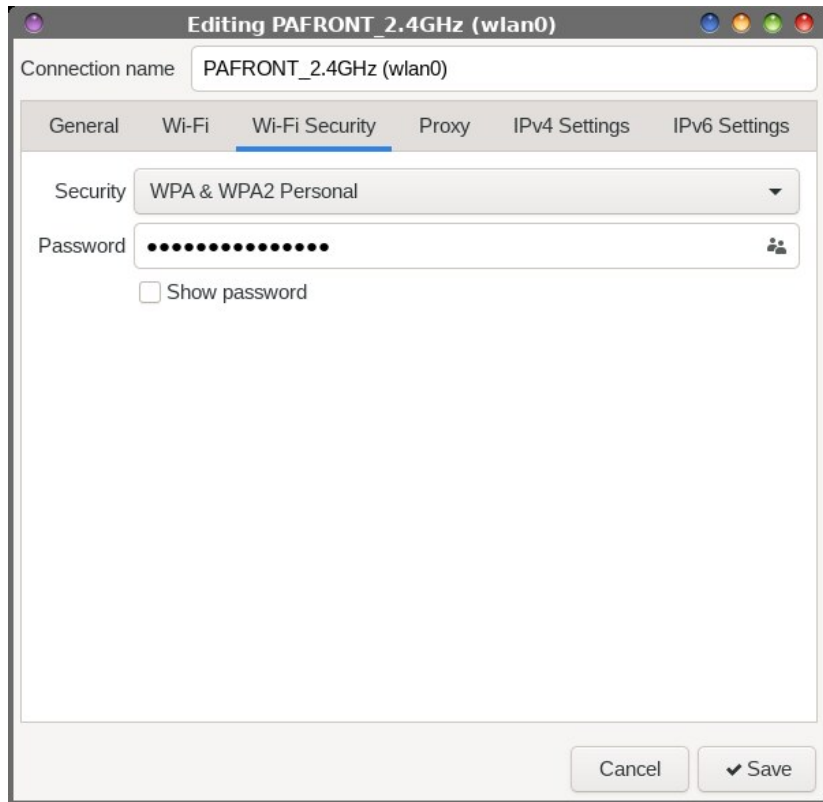


When you select to edit an already established connection, this is the dialog box and view you initially see. It always opens to the second tab, at least in the case of a wifi connection. The top text entry box allows you to name the connection whatever you want to call it. It defaults to the SSID of the network you are connecting to. Generally, you will be just fine accepting the defaults under this tab.

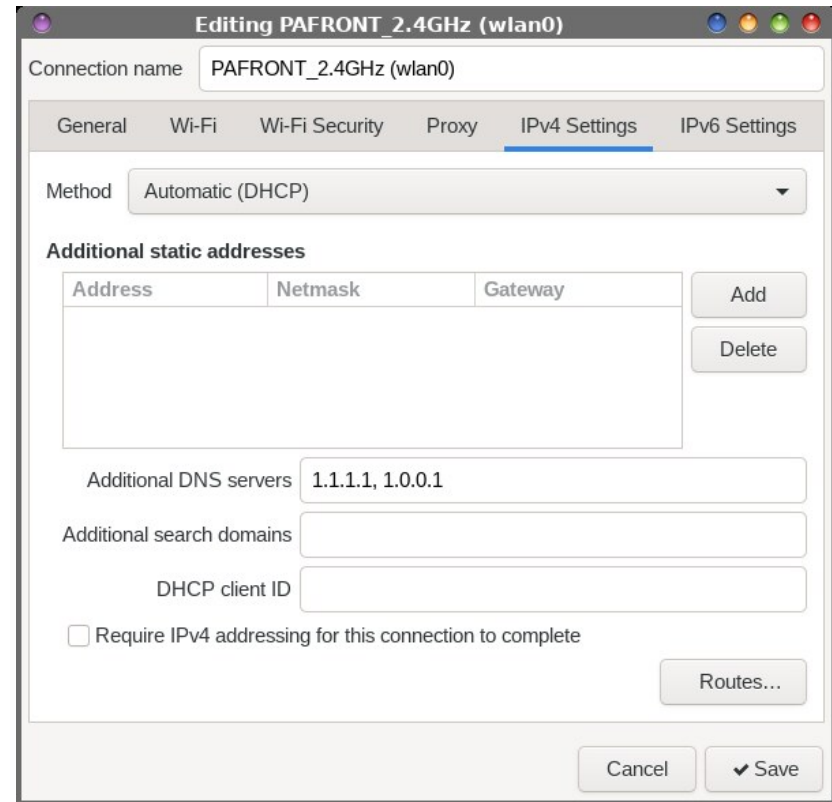


Under the “General” tab, you can adjust the priority of automatically connecting to the specific network. Higher numbers give higher priority. Place a checkmark in the box if you want the network to be available to all users. If you use a VPN, you might want to check the box to automatically connect to the selected VPN (via the dropdown selection box) when the connection is established.





“Wi-Fi Security,” the third tab, is exactly what you think it is. It’s where you can change/set the encryption type and password for the selected wifi network. Place a checkmark in the checkbox if you want to view the entered password.



If you typically use a different DNS service than the one provided by your ISP, such as Google or Cloudflare, the “IPv4 Settings” tab is where you will specify the address(es) for your DNS service. I use Cloudflare to help prevent a DNS leak (you can test for a DNS leak at <https://dnsleaktest.com/>), which can expose more information about your travels around the web than you might like, as well as expose you to malware and malicious sites. Enter the primary and secondary DNS addresses, separated by a comma and space, as I have them entered above. Other popular DNS services include OpenDNS (208.67.222.222 (primary) and 208.67.220.220 (secondary)), and Google (8.8.8.8 (primary) and 8.8.4.4 (secondary)).



Troubleshooting

Some users have expressed some “issues” with NM not connecting on a reboot. For whatever reason (that yodelu is working on in the NM package), NM reports that it is not running and is locked. At a root terminal prompt (signified by a # prompt, as opposed to the \$ prompt as a normal user), enter **service networkmanager status**. The response comes back **networkmanager dead but subsys locked**.

```
# service networkmanager status
networkmanager dead but subsys locked
```

However, while still at a root prompt, enter **service networkmanager restart**. You should see the following in the terminal window:

```
# service networkmanager restart
Stopping networkmanager daemon:
[FAILED]
Waiting for connection:
[ OK ]
```

Once you “manually” restart NM, your connection should come up fairly quickly.

One user in the PCLinuxOS forum, **fred84**, found a workaround. From a root prompt in a terminal session, enter **chkconfig networkmanager off**. Then, edit (again, as root, and in a plain text editor) `/etc/rc.local` and add **service networkmanager start** to the end of the file, on a line of its own.

If you find that the nm-applet is not automatically starting on a reboot (you’re missing the icon in your system tray), go check the programs you have set to automatically start when you boot your computer. I run Xfce, and that list of programs is under “Settings Manager,” then “Session and Startup,” and then the “Application Autostart” tab. If you don’t see nm-applet listed, you might want to add it to the list of programs to automatically start when you boot/reboot your computer. Nearly all of the Linux desktops have similar features that allow users to specify programs to automatically start when their computer starts or reboots. The list of programs to start automatically just may be in different locations. But, they are there, from what I’ve found.

The other thing you might want to do is just be patient. On my “main” laptop, I have some kind of a weird timing issue where the wireless network isn’t brought up right away. It was this way under net_applet, and the same behavior exists with NM. If I just walk away for a few minutes, the network will usually be up and working as it should when I come back to the computer several minutes later. Fortunately for me, I don’t have to deal with this issue very often, since my “main”

laptop stays on 24/7, and I only reboot when I run updates or when the system begins to “feel” sluggish.

Setting Up Your VPN

I hate to admit it, but setting up a VPN under net_applet and PCC’s Network & Internet never made any sense to me. I did manage to sort of get it setup once, with **tbschommer’s** assistance. But even then, the VPN connection didn’t work all that reliably for me. Probably the only ones that whole mess made sense to was the person/team who originally wrote it. I could never figure out what went where.

I like to use a VPN with my internet connection. My ISP (Comcast/Xfinity) has no business knowing my business. VPNs encrypt the data between my computer and my VPN’s server. All my ISP can see is traffic, but because it’s encrypted, they can’t tell what it is I’m doing.

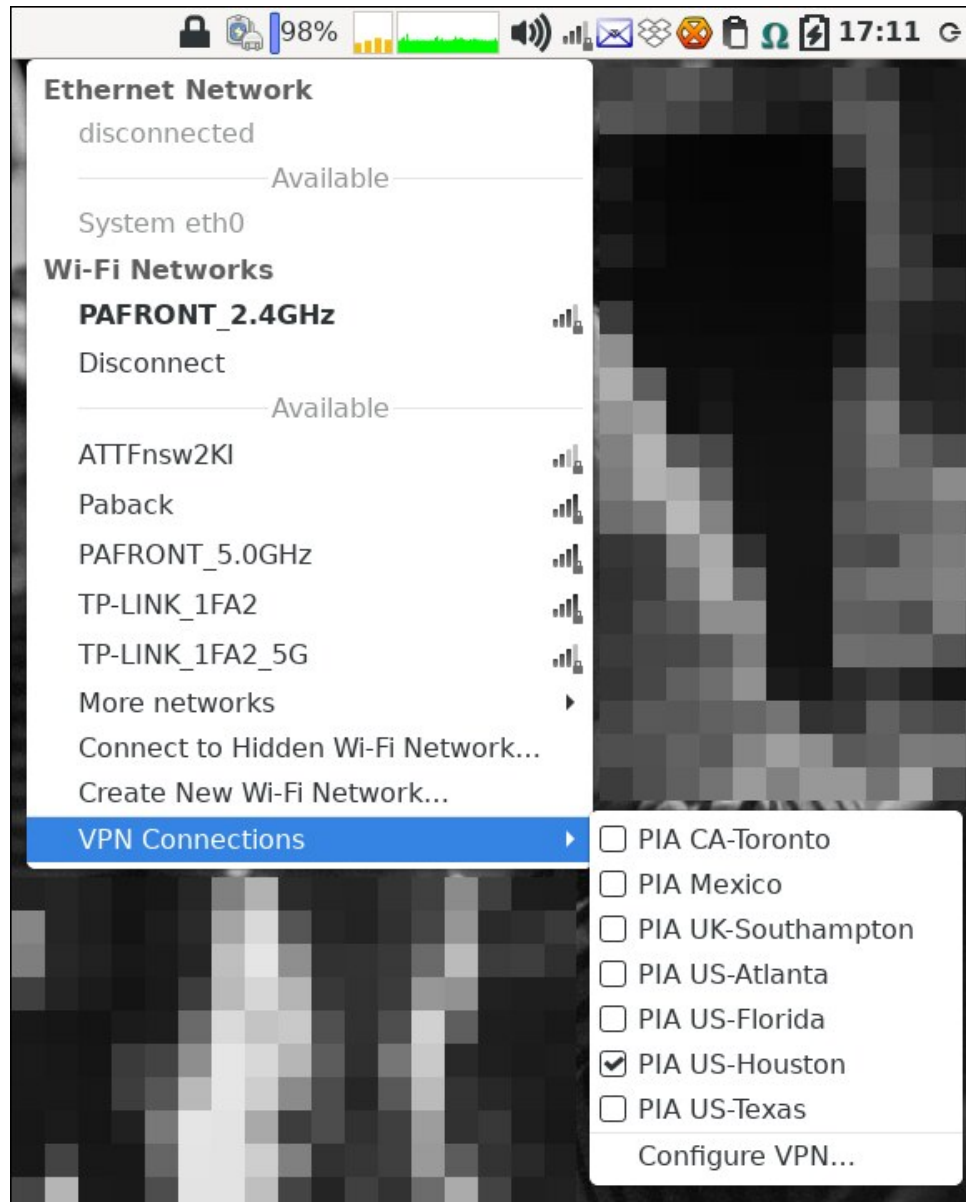
For example, Comcast is notorious for sending out DMCA notices for **anyone** downloading torrents, whether that data is free or copyrighted. One recent [thread](#) in the PCLinuxOS forum illustrated this blanket policy with Comcast when it was pointed out that someone downloading an ISO of Ubuntu received a DMCA “Cease & Desist” order for downloading the ISO via a torrent file. Never mind that the Ubuntu ISO is FOSS, and freely available to all and anyone who wants it. I use [Private Internet Access](#) (PIA) as my VPN provider. I’d rather avoid such nonsense. It’s not that I’m doing anything “illegal.” Rather, I prefer the privacy and “lack of hassle” that a VPN provides.

Well, NM makes setting up your various VPN servers child’s play, a literal walk in the park. Kudos to tbschommer for steering me in the right direction, via a private message on the forum. I was a little “gun shy” of trying to tackle setting up an



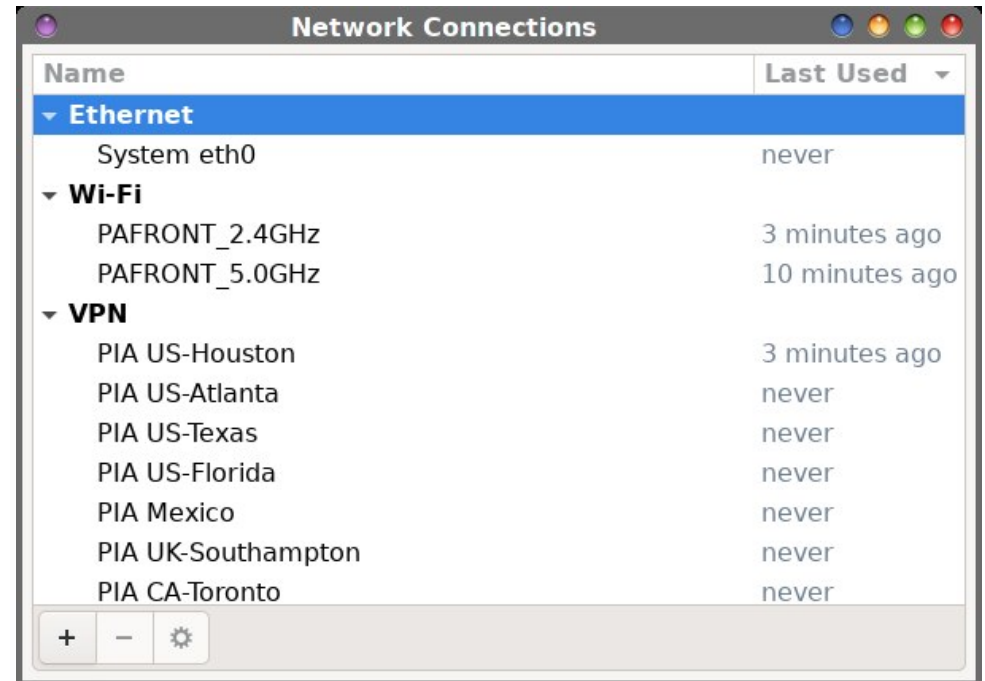
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OpenVPN connection to my VPN provider, after having tried many, many times in PCC ... and failing nearly every single time.

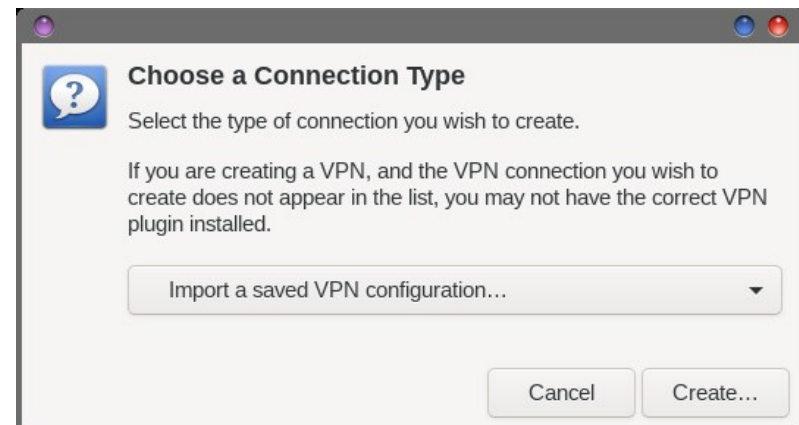


All the way at the bottom of the left-click NM menu, you'll find the "VPN Connections" menu entry. If you've not configured any VPN connections up to

this point, the only thing populating the submenu is the "Configure VPN..." menu selection. In either case – whether you're setting up your first or fifteenth VPN connection – select "Configure VPN..." from the menu.

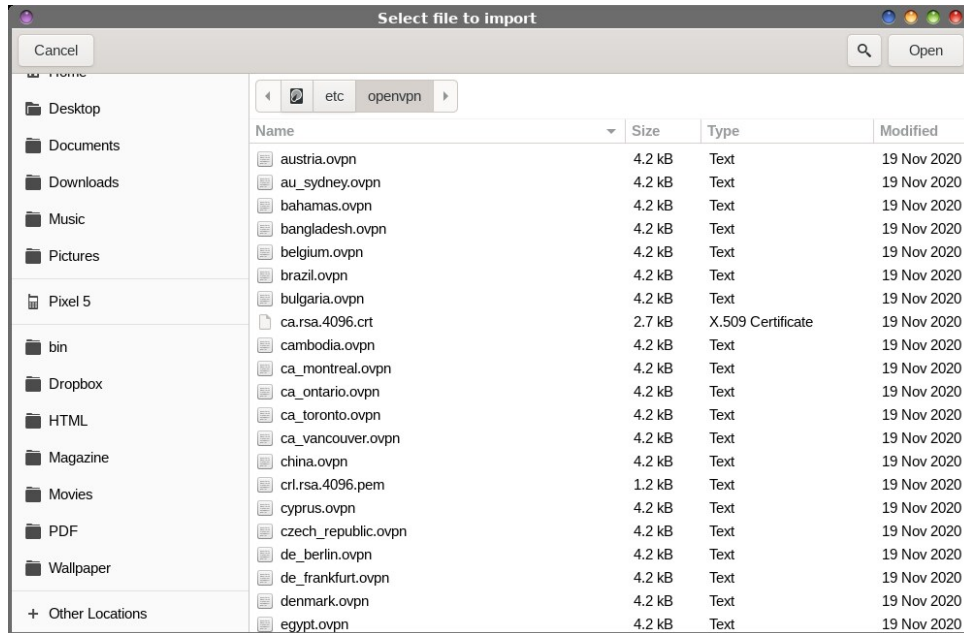


If you already have at least one VPN connection configured, NM will bring up the "Edit Connections" dialog box. Select the "+" button at the lower left corner of the window. If this is your first VPN connection that you're configuring, you'll see the dialog box shown below.

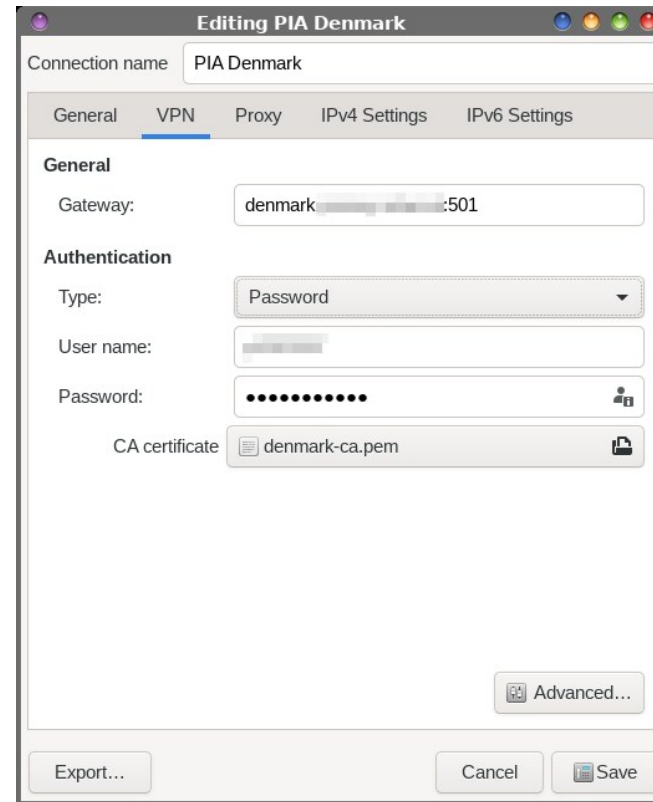


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From the dropdown selection in the dialog box, go all the way to the bottom of the selections and select “Import a saved VPN configuration...” from the choices. For what it’s worth, the default selection in the dropdown selector is “Ethernet.” Once you’ve selected to import your VPN configuration file, select the “Create...” button.



Now, go to the directory where you have all of your OpenVPN files stored. I store mine, as the root user, in the /etc/openvpn directory. This way, they are available to all users on my system (even though I’m really the only user on my computer). Either double-click the *.ovpn file representing the VPN server you want to connect to, or single click it and then select “Open” from the file selection dialog box.

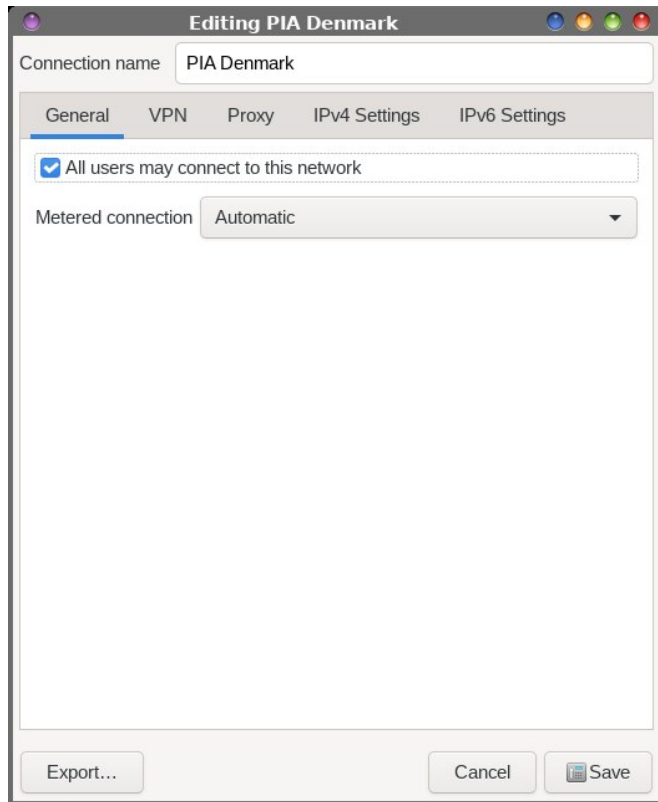


In the top text edit field, you can call your VPN connection whatever you like. It will usually default to the same name as the VPN configuration file for the server you selected. In my case, the name defaulted to “denmark.” I changed it to “PIA Denmark” to make it more readily identifiable as PIA’s VPN server located in Denmark.

Just like with the wifi connections, the VPN dialog box opens with the second tab preselected. Under this tab, you will simply need to enter your username (obscured for privacy reasons in the image above), and your password (already obscured). Click on the symbol at the right side of the password field, and select the “Store the password for all users” option.



Network Manager: The Low-Down On Getting Up To Speed

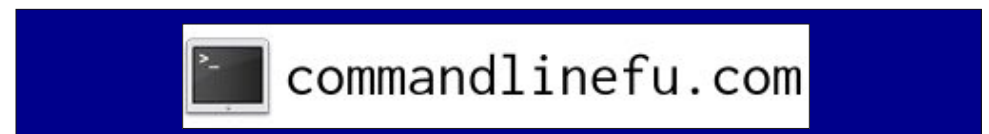
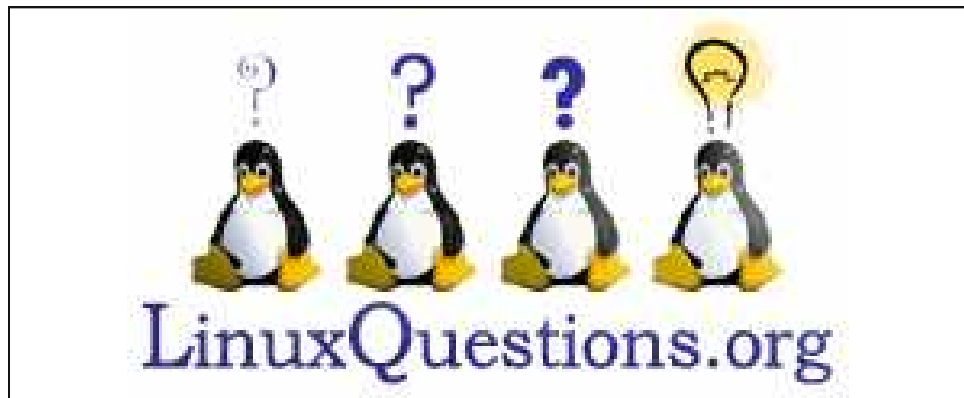


Under the “General” tab, you can decide if you want VPN access to be shared with all users by checking the checkbox (which is the default).

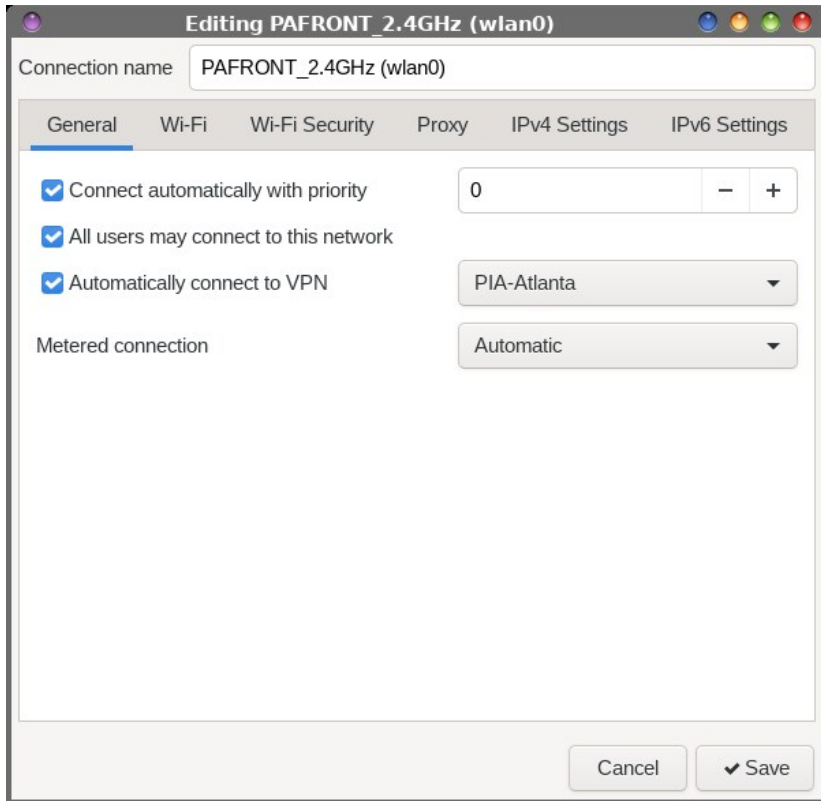


Just like we did with the wifi settings dialog, go to the “IPv4 Settings” tab and enter the custom DNS server settings you want to use with your VPN connection. The format is the same. Enter the primary and secondary DNS addresses, separated by a comma and space.

Repeat this process for each of your VPN’s servers you want to add to your VPN Connections collection. Doing so goes quickly, and you will soon end up with multiple VPN servers listed among your available VPN connections, as I have done in the first image above in this section of the article on setting up your VPN connection(s). In that image, I have a choice of seven different servers for my PIA VPN service to choose to connect to (out of about 90 choices overall). It’s a trivial task to add more, if I feel like I need them.



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Back under the wifi connection settings, under the “General” tab, you can select a VPN server you want to automatically connect to when the network connection is made. So, if you have a favorite VPN server you like to use, and if you don’t want to risk “forgetting” to sign into your VPN (and allowing your ISP to log all of your activity that they have no business knowing), making this selection will help insure that you are always protected.

I have to attest that setting up VPN connections under NM is way, way, way easier than it ever was under PCC. It’s pretty much painless ... and it works! NM does a lot of the “heavy lifting” for you, so all you have to do is point it to your VPN’s valid *.ovpn file, and it pretty much fills in the blanks for you. Well, other than your username and password, anyways.

Additional Resources

Like I mentioned at the outset, NM has been around for quite a while. Most other Linux distros already rely on NM to manage network connections. In a way, they

paved the way for the ease of adoption by PCLinuxOS. They’ve already guinea pigged it to death. So, what we get is the tried and true version, pretty much free from the niggles that nearly always accompany “new” software.

As a result, there are a lot of resources and information about NM out there. Do an internet search for “network manager” and you’ll retrieve a literal ton of links. Below are five links that may be useful for those wishing to dig a little deeper into NM and its associated programs (like nmcli, the command line version of NM), as well as many configuration settings and options that we couldn’t possibly cover here. Our goal here was to merely help you get NM up and running on your PCLinuxOS computer.

Linux Man Pages

networkmanager.conf: <https://linux.die.net/man/5/networkmanager.conf>

NetworkManager daemon: <https://linux.die.net/man/8/networkmanager>

Manuals & Wikis

nmcli Reference Manual:

<https://developer.gnome.org/NetworkManager/stable/nmcli.html>

networkmanager.conf Reference Manual:

<https://developer.gnome.org/NetworkManager/stable/NetworkManager.conf.html>

Arch Linux Wiki: <https://wiki.archlinux.org/title/NetworkManager>

Freedesktop.org:

<https://people.freedesktop.org/~lkundrak/nm-docs/nm-settings.html>

Gentoo Linux Wiki: <https://wiki.gentoo.org/wiki/NetworkManager>

There are many, many, many more reference sites for NM out there. These, though, should get you well on your way to digging deeper into the inner workings of NM, if you choose to do so.

Summary

Yes, change is very scary for a lot of people. But trust me when I tell you that this change to PCLinuxOS will pay dividends for years to come. First of all, it provides a familiar interface for users who might migrate to PCLinuxOS from other Linux distros. We already have an ace-in-the-hole as one of the few systemd-free Linux systems around. Second, it puts PCLinuxOS on par with the rest of the Linux

community, with most Linux distros already relying on NM for network management. Third, it makes network management – especially the use of VPNs – infinitely easier than we’ve ever had it.

Keep in mind that there are many different iterations of even the same “model” of networking cards. Compound that with many different models and manufacturers, different chipsets, and other nuances, and you have the “wild wild west” of networking. Tuning a program like NM to work with all those different network cards is a monumental task. Whatever you do, don’t give up. There will be a solution, because NM is very flexible in dealing with those differences in networking cards.

Even though NM isn’t new, it is new to PCLinuxOS. As with most “new” things, there will be growing pains and “glitches” to figure out and iron out as we get used to it and its little niggles. Every program has them. But the positives far outweigh the negatives, so don’t let a few little bumps in the road deter you.

So, NM is a win-win for everyone. You shouldn’t shy away from this change. Embrace it. You will be glad you did.



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

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The Dangerous Liaisons Of Big Tech Companies

by Alessandro Ebersol (Agent Smith)



Oracle is watching you

I previously wrote about the nebulous relations of big techs with the American spy agencies, which, by itself, would be very worrisome. These agencies treat citizens as if they were criminals, violating everyone's privacy, listening to conversations, keeping pictures, archiving personal data, which, normally, would only be acceptable with warrants issued by judges. But no, they act clandestinely and outside of the law(s). This alone would be very bad. But research for writing is an interesting activity, as Forrest Gump would say, when you open a box of chocolates, you never know what you will find. And, research is like that, you start researching a subject, and, how the thing ends, you never know. Imagine my surprise when I found out that American companies, big tech companies, are involved with the Chinese government? Yes, and not that they are spying on the Chinese government. Far from it. But they are helping to perpetrate human rights abuses. Exactly the same government that is openly condemned for human rights abuses, is a first class customer of several US tech companies.

Oracle, serving big brother...



The authorities in China are using software developed by the American company Oracle to

monitor and enforce a kind of Minority Report-style policing system on the Chinese population. Yes, dystopian science fiction is becoming reality.

According to The Intercept website, Oracle's products are being used by various law enforcement agencies in China to analyze vast amounts of data, which is then used to surveil and track citizens. One such place where Oracle's technology is being used is the concentration camps in Xinjiang, where the Chinese communist government has detained up to two million members of the Uyghur ethnic minority along with an unknown number of political prisoners.

However, things get worse, as mentioned in the above mentioned Minority Report style.

The slide presentation features a navigation bar at the top with five tabs: 'Case Outline', 'Existing Pain', 'Oracle Solution' (highlighted in red), 'Business Benefits', and 'Q&A'. The main title is 'Use Case #1—Crime Partner Analysis'. Below the title is a red banner with white text that reads: 'Pick up a suspect, say Mike, according to the relationship between people and their hotel stay, you may find the other suspects. Click to view more information of the suspect and hotel.' The slide displays two screenshots of the Oracle software interface. The left screenshot shows a complex network graph with numerous nodes and connecting lines, representing relationships between individuals. The right screenshot shows a detailed profile of a suspect, including a photo, personal information, and a list of associated data points. The Oracle logo is visible in the bottom left corner of the slide.

Slide presentation of Oracle's products for "crime prevention"

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Selling technology without any ethics

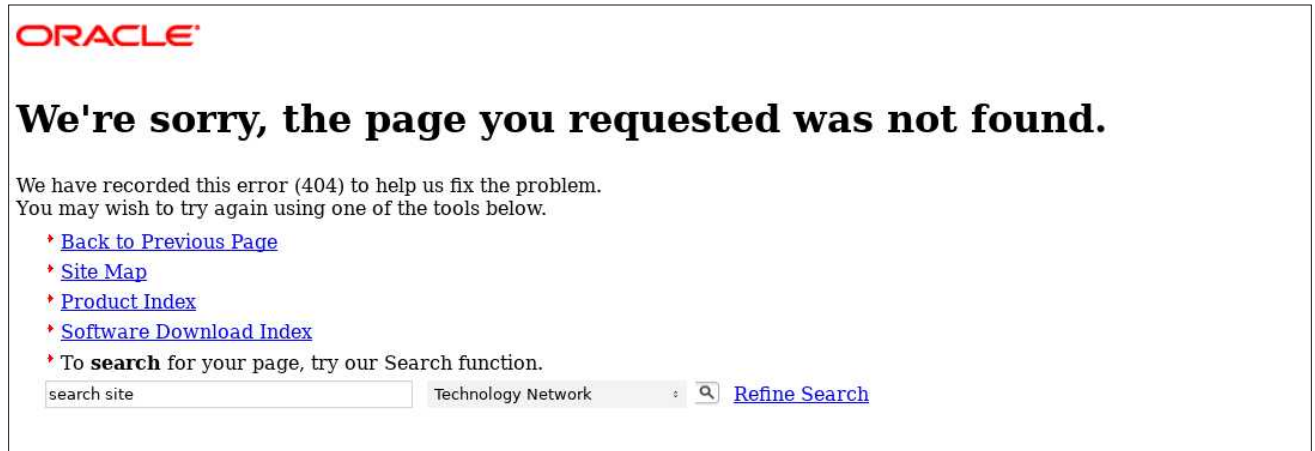
Mara Hvistendahl, a writer for the Intercept website, had access to a slide presentation from the company where various products for "police prediction and analysis" were demonstrated. The slides of the presentation, hosted on Oracle's website, begin with a "case outline" listing four "Oracle product(s) used" by Liaoning police to "do crime analysis and prediction." One slide shows Oracle software that allows Liaoning police to create network graphs based on hotel records and track anyone who might be connected to a particular suspect. Another shows the software being used to build a police dashboard and create "heat map(s) of security cases." Apparent images of the software interface show a blurred face and several Chinese names. The final slide claims that the software helped the police, whose data sets had been "incomprehensible," more easily "track key persons/objects/events" and "identify potential suspects," which in China, often means dissidents.

The slideshow purportedly accompanied a presentation given at Oracle's California headquarters in 2018, where the province's police were able to filter through large amounts of data using Oracle's platform to identify potential suspects.

The technology essentially allows the Chinese government to predict and flag individuals deemed dangerous, or potentially dangerous, for arrest before they even "commit a crime."

Oracle's marketing materials boast that the company could enable Chinese law enforcement agencies to collect information from various sources, including social media activity, facial recognition, DNA databases, and much more public and private data, mining various data sources (big data mining) for their purposes.

The slide show was [here](#). However, the negative backlash was so great that the slide show was removed.



Attempt to access Oracle's propaganda brochure for the Chinese government

Speaking to the Intercept, Oracle spokeswoman Jessie Moore said that the presentations were simply theoretical and that the business the company does in China is in full compliance with US export controls and sanctions.

However, contrary to Oracle's official statement, the slides actually show how Chinese security forces have been using technology.

According to Xavier Lopez, former senior director at Oracle, "The provincial police in China used the software. The data didn't come from us. The data came from the province. The province uses the software, they license the software to use for different things, for different use cases. And this was an example of when they used it for that particular use case."

Double standards

All said, the documents paint a disturbing picture of a technology company sacrificing its professed values to push its data analytics products in China, where the most formidable data collector is the Chinese government.

Oracle's presentations on China's security apparatus raise a number of serious questions for the company, which is entangled with the US defense establishment. It said last year that its customers include "all 5 branches of the U.S. military," and has recent or pending contracts with NASA, the Commerce Department, and the CIA. Oracle has also worked closely with police departments in the US.

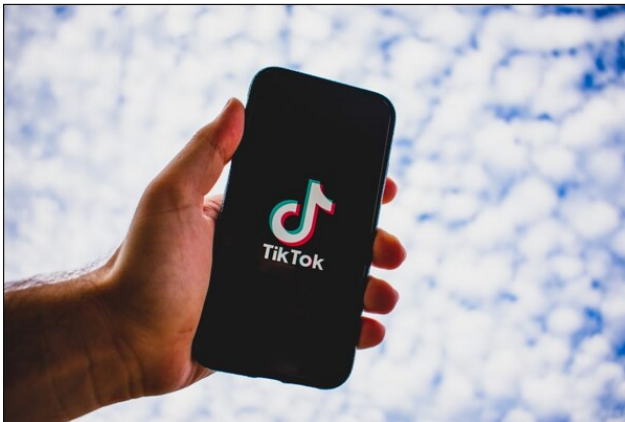
However, Larry Ellison's hypocrisy is stunning. Co-founder and Chairman of the Board Larry Ellison criticized Google's 2018 plans for a censored Chinese search engine, telling Fox Business, "We have serious competition with China. I'm on Team USA." The fact that Google "is going to go into China and facilitate the Chinese government to surveil its people is pretty shocking," he added.

But, it gets worse. Way worse.

The Man Who Sold the World (or at least 300 million people)

Oracle has always been close to the U.S. government, working with the CIA as one of its first customers, so much so that Oracle's work with the

government (Safra Catz, Oracle's CEO, was in the Trump administration's transition cabinet in 2016) helped it and Walmart outmaneuver its rivals in an attempt to control U.S. operations for Chinese-owned social media company TikTok last year, after the Trump administration ordered TikTok to find a U.S. buyer for its American operations. The proposed deal, under challenge in court, was motivated by concerns that TikTok's Beijing-based parent company could pass on sensitive user data to Chinese authorities. But in a strange twist, the documents show that Oracle marketed the use of its software to those same authorities in an extreme example of putting profit above human rights.



Tik Tok, another surveillance social network

Oracle's interest in both TikTok and data-driven policing is a result of its continued push into the growing cloud market and the related expansion of its artificial intelligence offerings. The company's roots are in database software, but over the past decade it has acquired several online search engines and data analytics startups. Oracle has also become a big data broker. It claims to sell data on more than 300 million people worldwide - what it calls "the largest collection of third-party data in the world."

"Companies should not sell any kind of predictive surveillance system to the Ministry of Public Security," said Maya Wang, senior researcher at

Human Rights Watch in China, who was among a group of experts who reviewed some of Oracle's presentations, The Intercept has obtained. "They shouldn't have any business with the Ministry of Public Security."

"This raises questions about the role the West has played in inspiring and building surveillance systems in China."

Besides the human rights concerns, the documents point to deep national security issues. One of the military-oriented submissions cites Oracle's defense work in the U.S. in an apparent effort to win Chinese cloud contracts. "The fact that an American technology company is marketing capabilities to enhance the combat power of the Chinese military is definitely poor judgment, especially given how eagerly Oracle continues to seek opportunities to work for the Department of Defense," said Elsa Kania, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security and an expert on Chinese military strategy, after reviewing the relevant documents. "It says something about the pursuit of profits and market share over issues of ethics and due diligence."

Oracle, exporting repression today

Oracle's efforts are part of an overall shift toward big technology entering policing, in which more niche companies like Palantir and PredPol are being edged out by large platform companies like Amazon, IBM and Microsoft. Oracle's data analytics software and applications have been used by the Chicago Police Department and the Illinois State Police, as well as by several local governments in the United States.

But Oracle has also marketed police applications of its software in countries with deplorable human rights records, including not only China, but also Brazil, Mexico, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, according to company documents and police contracts uncovered by The Intercept, as

well as presentations by Oracle employees uploaded to Slideshare and other sites. The documents make clear that the software could be used for additional surveillance. An Oracle global marketing brochure from its website notes that police "need crime analysis and social media analysis in a single source." Another implies that Oracle's software could help police filter 700 million messages a day from major social media applications-including WeChat and Weibo, as well as "chat rooms, forum pages, reviews, and news media." Under "Barriers to Overcome," it lists "privacy protections."

"We have a lot of evidence of the negative potential of this type of technology for the black and peripheral population" in slums and other poor neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro, said Pablo Nunes, a researcher at the Rio-based Center for the Study of Security and Citizenship. "It also reinforces the criminalization of certain spaces in the city."

Oracle is a bad company, unpatriotic and unprincipled

Yes, that is true. But, it's not only Oracle. We have Google trying to sell its search business in China, with a modified search engine, and we also have another one, our old acquaintance, that has been collaborating with the Chinese government since the 2010s. Yes, I mean Microsoft, the good old Microsoft. Of course, the ties of Microsoft with the Chinese government can be traced way back, but I only "scratched the surface", so to speak.

Microsoft and Oracle: Partners in Crime

Back in 2013, Microsoft filtered words from Chinese Skype users, in conjunction with Chinese provider Tom Online, it offered a modified version of its communication app. When a TOM-Skype user sent chat messages containing "suspicious" language found within the program's periodically updated

keyword list, an alert was sent to TOM-Skype's servers containing the sender's account name, the time stamp of the message, and the detected word(s).



This censorship and surveillance scheme was discovered by Jeffrey Knockel, a 27-year-old graduate student (at the time) at the University of New Mexico, who decoded and published a list of the words that cause Skype to block messages or forward them to Chinese servers.

In 2019, it came to light that Microsoft has been working with a military-run Chinese university on artificial intelligence research that could be used for surveillance and censorship, a revelation that has sparked outrage from China's opponents on Capitol Hill.

Three papers, published between March and November last year, were co-written by academics at Microsoft Research Asia in Beijing and researchers affiliated with China's National University of Defense Technology, which is

controlled by China's top military body, the Central Military Commission.

One of the papers described a new AI method for recreating detailed environmental maps by analyzing human faces, which experts say could have clear applications for surveillance and censorship.

The paper acknowledges that the system provides a better understanding of the surrounding environment "not seen by the camera," which could have a "variety of computer vision applications."

Samm Sacks, a senior fellow at think-tank New America and an expert on China technology policy, said the documents raised "red flags because of the nature of the technology, the author's affiliations, combined with what we know about how this technology is being deployed in China right now."

"The [Chinese] government is using these technologies to build surveillance systems and to detain minorities [in Xinjiang]," Ms. Sacks added.

The U.S. government is debating whether research collaborations, particularly in sensitive areas such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality, should be subject to stricter export controls.

Microsoft and Huawei, a happy marriage

President Donald Trump signed an executive order banning Huawei products in American homes. Huawei not only works closely with the Chinese government to monitor citizens through technology and AI, but is also under investigation for working to subvert the US-Iran nuclear weapons agreement. Huawei is blacklisted on the U.S. Department of Commerce's Export Administration Regulatory Entities List.

Microsoft has temporarily complied with the Huawei ban and stopped selling the company's laptops online. However, after evaluating the extent of the



Huawei notebook sold at Microsoft store

regulations, Microsoft agreed to continue selling the existing stock of Huawei laptops in its Microsoft store. In fact, Microsoft is proud of its work with the telecommunications industry in China, which must comply with the Chinese government's rules.

"Today, our most complete subsidiary and largest R&D center outside the United States is in China," Microsoft's official website says. "Microsoft boasts a robust partner ecosystem with 17,000 partners. For every RMB Microsoft earns in China, Microsoft partners earn 16." Because of its local product strategy and "commitments to helping Chinese partners," Microsoft prides itself on being one of "The Companies Remaking The Chinese Economy." Their success in China comes at a cost, as they please the Chinese government and help develop products that compromise privacy, which implies American security, at home and abroad.

Microsoft's submission is complete

More recently, on June 3rd, 2021, the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, interestingly enough, if one were to search for "Tank Man" on the Bing search engine, one would get the answer below:



There are no results for **"tank man"**.

You've reached the end of the internet - it's a modern-day miracle.

Unlike its main search engine competitor Google, Bing has been allowed to operate within China. Microsoft has to censor Bing search results for the Chinese government, but on Friday, 06/04/2021, Bing users in other countries, including the US, UK and Singapore also found the "Tank Man" images missing.

The lack of search results for the phrase "Tank Man" led to accusations that Microsoft was censoring the image on behalf of the Chinese government. The BBC reported that a Microsoft spokesperson said the issue was "due to an accidental human error and we are actively working to resolve this."

Microsoft's response to the incident earned mockery from Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX). Cruz tweeted, "Was the 'accidental human' who made the mistake by chance Microsoft's head of Marketing for China?"

Profit above all...

It is not only the big tech companies that try, by all means, to please the Chinese government. Media companies, cinema, TV, comics, books, and even video games, all try to gain the favor of the Asian giant, and especially to win a potential market of 2 billion people. However, in this blind race for profits, many things get lost along the way. And these losses can be costly for everyone, as disastrous maneuvers by these companies can put everyone's future in danger.



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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by tuxlink, on June 5, 2021, running KDE.

Short Topix: Windows 11 Announced, Expected By Year's End

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Dumb Criminals: He Should Have Worn Gloves



A drug dealer in Liverpool, England gave the authorities all they needed to locate and apprehend the suspect ... from a social media post he made of himself holding a wedge of stilton cheese, according to an [article](#) on The Verge.

Police authorities were able to view fingerprints in the detailed photo posted online, leading them to the drug dealer's whereabouts. Let this serve as a reminder that while your fingerprints are unique to you, they are not so private, especially when you go posting their images (knowingly or unknowingly) on the internet. That was his first mistake that led to his capture.

His second mistake came from posting the picture to EncroChat, an encrypted phone system that – unbeknownst to the suspect – had been compromised by authorities last March. That left the encrypted service with more holes than Swiss cheese (pun intended). Since then, authorities have

identified around 10,000 of its users in the UK, who are “all involved in coordinating and planning the supply and distribution of drugs and weapons, money laundering and other criminal activity,” according to authorities, who say that a total of 60,000 of its users have been identified worldwide.

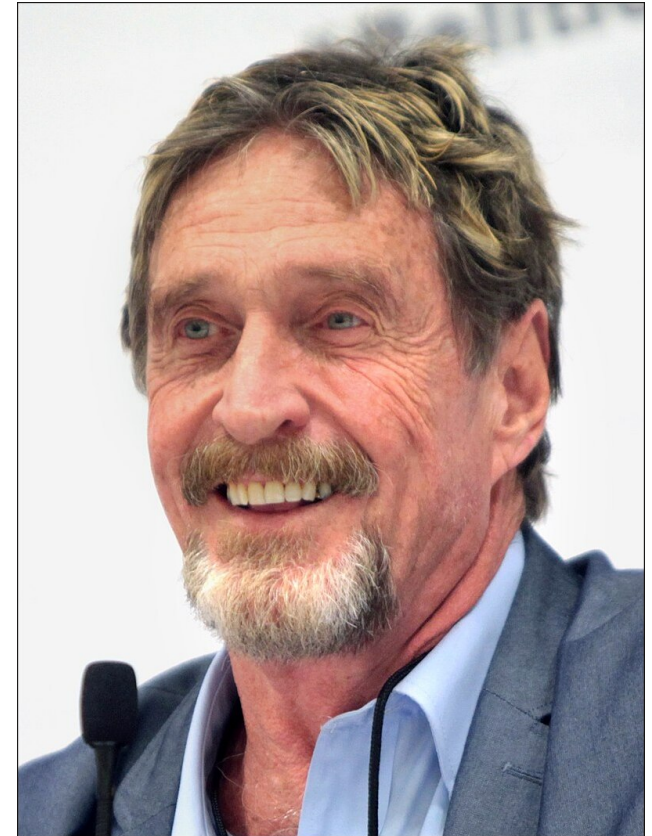
The suspect was subsequently sentenced to 13 years and six months in prison after pleading guilty to the charges, which also included transferring criminal property. Those charges also included conspiracy to supply cocaine, heroin, MDMA, and ketamine.

He should have worn gloves.

John McAfee, Founder Of McAfee Anti Virus, Found Dead In Spanish Jail Cell

John McAfee, the creator and founder of McAfee antivirus software, was found dead in his Spanish jail cell from an apparent suicide. McAfee, 75, was awaiting extradition to the U.S. to face tax charges that, if convicted, would have resulted in a multi-decade long prison term in the U.S. He was arrested at the Barcelona airport last October, and remained in the Spanish prison since that time, awaiting the extradition hearing for his U.S. tax law charges.

A well known cryptocurrency promoter and tax opponent, McAfee was discovered in his Brians 2 penitentiary cell in northeastern Spain, near Barcelona. Prison personnel attempted to revive him, but the prison's medical staff ended up pronouncing his death. Despite being initially ruled a suicide, a judicial delegation is launching an investigation to ascertain the cause of death.



John McAfee, 2016, speaking at Politicon in Pasadena, CA. Photo by Gage Skidmore, CC BY SA 3.0

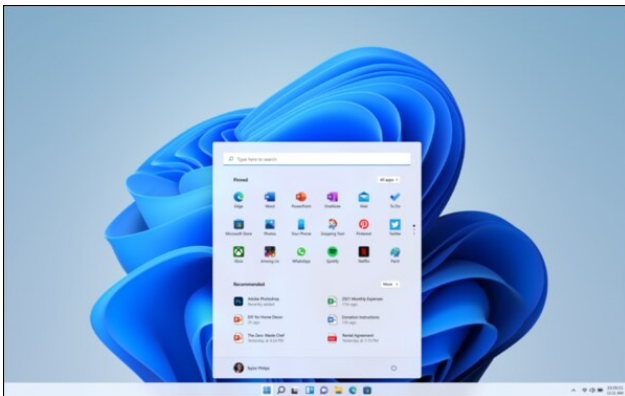
McAfee's suicide occurred just hours after a Spanish court approved his extradition to the U.S. to stand trial for the tax law infractions. The court's ruling was eligible for appeal, and any final determination on extradition would have had to come from the Spanish cabinet. McAfee had previously stated that he had no plans or desire to return to the U.S. Reports on McAfee's death were widely circulated in both the mainstream and computer media outlets.

Short Topix: Windows 11 Announced, Expected By Year's End

McAfee once launched two long-shot presidential campaigns (2016 and 2020), and as recently as 2016, participated in the Libertarian party presidential debates. He was a popular speaker in many circles. In 2012 he was wanted for questioning in connection with the death of Gregory Viant Faull, who was shot to death in early November 2012 on the Belize island where the men lived. He was often described as paranoid, even going so far as to granting a television news interview, but only if he could hold a loaded pistol in each hand. McAfee's company was purchased in 2011 by Intel, who folded it into their cybersecurity division to dissociate the brand from its founder.

Controversy is already swirling around his death. There are many people who are claiming that McAfee met the same fate as Jeffrey Epstein, and it wasn't suicide. Even McAfee's wife has come out and stated that there is no way that McAfee would have committed suicide. Since his death occurred in a lonely Spanish prison cell, no one on this Earth will ever know for sure, and anyone who claims otherwise is just speculating based on circumstantial evidence.

Windows 11 Announced, Expected By Year's End



Well, it shur duz look purdy! But then again, so does lipstick on a pig.

Microsoft [announced](#) the newest version of its operating system, Windows 11, on June 24. In the pictures that they have released, Microsoft has tinkered with the "taskbar" again, moving the "Start" button – and all of the "taskbar" buttons, for that matter – to the central part of the bottom of the screen, reminiscent of how a docker toolbar might appear on Linux or on a Mac. Originality ... er, mimicry ... at its finest!

You're going to LOVE the system requirements.

Seriously? 64GB of storage?! I can install PCLinuxOS on x86 hardware with only 32GB of storage space. The system files (root partition) will take up 12GB, 4GB can be assigned to swap, and 16GB can be used for a /home partition. Granted, that's not a lot of storage space for my personal files, but then I could use an attached USB drive for all my storage, if push came to shove.

To spur adoption of Windows 11, Microsoft is providing a FREE upgrade path for Windows 10

Processor:	1 gigahertz (GHz) or faster with 2 or more cores on a compatible 64-bit processor or System on a Chip (SoC)
RAM:	4 gigabyte (GB)
Storage:	64 GB or larger storage device
System firmware:	UEFI, Secure Boot capable
TPM:	Trusted Platform Module (TPM) version 2.0
Graphics card:	Compatible with DirectX 12 or later with WDDM 2.0 driver
Display:	High definition (720p) display that is greater than 9" diagonally, 8 bits per color channel
Internet connection and Microsoft accounts:	<p>Windows 11 Home edition requires internet connectivity and a Microsoft account to complete device setup on first use.</p> <p>Switching a device out of Windows 11 Home in S mode also requires internet connectivity. Learn more about S mode here.</p> <p>For all Windows 11 editions, internet access is required to perform updates and to download and take advantage of some features. A Microsoft account is required for some features.</p>

Source: Microsoft,
[Windows Specifications](#)

Short Topix: Windows 11 Announced, Expected By Year's End

users. The upgrade offer will commence from its release, into 2022.

One new feature of Windows 11 is the ability to run a user's favorite Android apps on a Windows 11 desktop. Except, it links to apps in the Amazon App store, instead of the Google Play store. The selection in the Amazon App store is miniscule, compared to the offerings in the Google Play store. It also features Chat for Microsoft Teams integrated into the taskbar to help keep you connected to the people you want to ... connect to. Microsoft is also targeting gamers, and is offering special (translation: paid) access to over 100 games, with more being added all the time (their words, not mine). A revamped Microsoft Store helps connect users to entertainment options, such as Disney+, Netflix, Spotify and others.

Many of the computer media types think that Microsoft is being a bit overly optimistic about an end-of-the-year release date. I guess we'll all see what the next six months brings.

Jonah Reincarnate?



A New England lobster diver near Provincetown, MA got to experience, first-hand, how things might have felt for Jonah when he was swallowed by a humpback whale while diving for lobsters.

Professional lobster divers literally pick lobsters off the sandy bottom of the ocean.

Michael Packard, 56, made his first dive a little before 8 a.m. on June 11. Donned with scuba gear, he dove to the sandy bottom in the 60° F water, where he saw other fish scurrying about. Then, about 10 feet from the bottom, he felt a shove and everything went dark.

"All of a sudden, I felt this huge shove and the next thing I knew it was completely black," Packard recalled Friday afternoon following his release from Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis.

"I could sense I was moving, and I could feel the whale squeezing with the muscles in his mouth," he said.

Packard initially thought he was inside a great white shark, but couldn't feel any teeth and discovered he didn't have any wounds. At that point, he realized that he had been swallowed by a whale.

"I was completely inside; it was completely black," Packard said. "I thought to myself, 'there's no way I'm getting out of here. I'm done, I'm dead.' All I could think of was my boys — they're 12 and 15 years old."

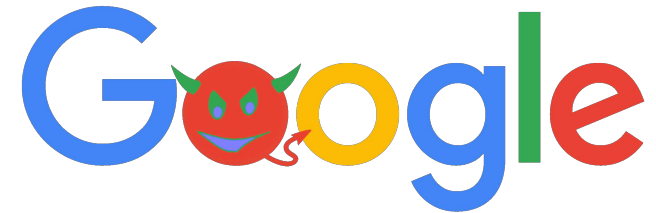
Donned in scuba gear, Packard began to struggle. The whale began shaking his head, so it was apparent that the whale didn't like what it had ingested. Packard estimated that he was in the whale for 30 to 40 seconds before the whale finally surfaced. He saw light and the whale threw its head from side to side. And the next thing Packard knew, he was outside of the whale and in the water.

Humpback whales are not aggressive animals, particularly towards humans. It appears that Packard's ingestion by the whale was most likely a mistake, and most likely by a juvenile feeding on fish in the area. When a humpback whale feeds, its mouth opens like a large parachute, and whatever is

in their path is swept up. The large, billowing mouth blocks their forward vision, so the whale never knew that it had ingested something it did not want to eat. Even though Packard fit into the whale's mouth, its esophagus is too small to fully swallow a human.

Packard suffered some soft tissue injuries from the ordeal, and plans to return to lobster diving once he has healed.

If You Thought Google's Evilness Was Limited To The Internet, You'd Be Wrong



The story about the origins of COVID-19 continues to be played out like a poorly acted horror film. EcoHealth Alliance, headed by Peter Daszak, has been deliberate and one of the principal players in trying to debunk the lab origins of the virus, despite mounting evidence that the virus had indeed escaped from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Daszak was one of the members of the WHO team who set out to attempt to find a naturally occurring evolution of the virus.

The plot and number of "players" in this drama continue to thicken and deepen. It has now come to light, by way of investigative journalists and published on The National Pulse [website](#), that Google has funded EcoHealth Alliance for more than the past 10 years. Through the nonprofit foundation/charity arm of the tech giant known as [Google.org](#), Google funneled money to EcoHealth Alliance to fund research on bat coronaviruses. That money, conceivably, could have also been used to fund the "gain of function" research that aided the virus to jump species from bats to humans.

This story continues to evolve at break-neck speed. However, I doubt that we'll ever know the whole picture of this biological debacle that has stained humanity. Let's hope, though, that we learn enough to help prevent another similar occurrence from happening again in the future. The next time, we might not be so lucky as to be able to contain it or find a vaccine or treatment.

PCLinuxOS Short Topix Roundup



YOU SURE YOU WANT THAT NEXT CUP OF COFFEE OR THAT NEXT COLA? Researchers have [found](#) that regular caffeine intake causes the gray matter in our brains to shrink. They conducted a study that compared caffeine recipients to those receiving a placebo. Even though the effects are temporary and transient, a shrinkage of gray matter was found in the caffeine recipients. Researchers were especially intrigued by how striking the difference was in the right temporal region of the brain and the hippocampus, which is essential for memory consolidation. Researchers cautioned against saying that caffeine had a negative impact

on our brains, but did indicate that this study could pave the way for future studies exploring the effect further.

The BBC had a very interesting [article](#) on how to **RECYCLE ALL PLASTICS BACK INTO THE OIL FROM WHICH THEY CAME**. Up until recently, the process consumed more energy than it took to create new plastics from oil. But new advances put the process more within our reach. By converting plastics, which take forever to break down in landfills (if they ever even do), back into the oil from which they came, that oil could be used to create new fuels or to even create new plastic items. The BBC calls it "infinite plastics," since the reclaimed oil can be used to create new plastics.

The United States Air Force is [looking](#) at **USING THE STARSHIP ROCKET BOOSTERS** to deliver up to 100 tons of supplies or personnel to any place on the planet in one hour or less. The rockets would carry the same payload as the current C17 cargo planes, but be able to deliver the payload to any site in the world in one hour or less. The USAF is looking to put the idea to test sometime in 2022.

You can thank a **GLOBAL NETWORK OF AMATEUR SLEUTHS** who formed a network called [D.R.A.S.T.I.C.](#) for uncovering much of what now appears to be the lab-leak origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, causing the COVID-19 pandemic. They poked and prodded around in obscure online databases from around the world to find the clues that helped put the puzzle pieces of the virus's origin into place. D.R.A.S.T.I.C. stands for "Decentralized Radical Autonomous Search Team Investigating COVID-19."

As the month of June commenced, [reports](#) were plentiful about how **PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC ARE NOW RELUCTANT TO RETURN TO WORKING IN AN OFFICE**. In fact, the pushback from employees is so strong that many are choosing to quit their jobs altogether, rather than return to the


office to do the same work they were performing from home. The pandemic forced many to work from home, and in the process, those employees found a more satisfying and rewarding balance between work, family and home life. So much so, that they now are hesitant ... no, reluctant ... to give up the new, preferred work-home-family balance.

The eyes may be the "window to the soul," but they also may be a window into the mind. According to an [article](#) that appears in Scientific American, **PUPIL SIZE IS AN INDICATOR OF INTELLIGENCE**. The larger the pupil, the greater the intelligence. The report is a fascinating look at why researchers think this is so.


In May 2021, a hacker group known as DarkSide disrupted pipeline operations for Colonial Pipeline with ransomware, sending gasoline prices soaring in the U.S. In June 2021, **FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS MANAGED TO RECOVER 63.7 OF THE 75 BITCOINS COLONIAL PAID IN RANSOM** to DarkSide, according to a TechRepublic [article](#). Because of the volatility of bitcoin, that represented approximately \$2.3 million of the \$4.4 million ransom, due to the price of bitcoin dropping since the time the ransom was paid.

If you needed more proof that **YOUR PERSONAL DATA IS FOREVER AT RISK**, there were two reports of HUGE data breaches this past month. From one TechRepublic [article](#), a hacker released a 100GB text file containing 8.4 billion passwords onto a popular hacker forum. Security personnel think that the file contains passwords accumulated from previous data breaches. This should serve as a stark reminder to NEVER reuse passwords between sites. In another [article](#) on ArsTechnica, researchers from NordLocker uncovered a mystery piece of malware that is yet unnamed. That malware has collected a dizzying 1.2TB of data from PCs, including login credentials, email addresses, browser cookies, autofill information, and payment information. The data was extracted/mined from more than 3 million PCs from between 2018 and 2020.

Thanks to the impending release of Windows 11 at the end of the year, **TPM 2.0 CHIPS HAVE QUADRUPLED IN PRICES**, according to an [article](#) on CNX Software News. Sometimes, that increase occurred in less than 12 hours after the announcement of the Windows 11 release. Prices went from just under \$25 to nearly \$100. Many outlets are simply sold out of the TPM 2.0 chips. TPM stands for Trusted Platform Module, and without TPM 2.0, Windows 11 will **not install** on a PC, regardless of how “powerful” your PC is. You could have an i9 Intel processor with 64GB RAM, and without a properly installed or configured TPM, Win11 will not install. Many PCs made and sold since 2011 have TPM chips installed, but Windows 11 will “reportedly” require TPM 2.0, which was only released in 2019. Many who follow Windows think that Microsoft **may** allow a fallback to TPM 1.2, however. They think that TPM 2.0 is a “soft requirement,” and that TPM 1.2 will be the “hard requirement.” Microsoft isn’t saying so officially, though, only that “Win 11 is still in ongoing development and months away yet so wait and see when it’s officially released.” TPM can be set up via a chip on the motherboard, or can sometimes be set in a computer’s BIOS. Your mileage may vary, depending on which computer you have.



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PATREON

Screenshot Showcase



Posted by The Cranky Zombie, on June 1, 2021, running KDE.

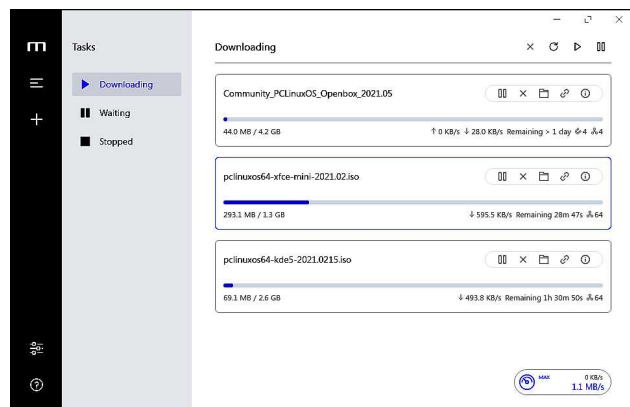


Repo Review: Motrix Download Manager

by CgBoy

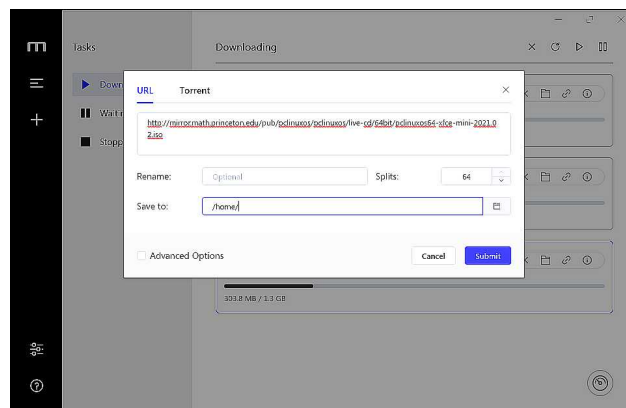
Motrix is a powerful, easy to use download manager that has support for HTTP, FTP, BitTorrent, and Magnet links. Motrix can handle up to 10 active downloads at once, and it can also accelerate download speeds by splitting the files into multiple parts, making it faster than downloading through a regular web browser.

Motrix has a very modern and nicely designed user interface. The main page you're presented with when opening Motrix is the Task List, from which you can view and manage all of your active downloads. The tasks can be filtered to show only those that are currently downloading, waiting, or stopped, from the Tasks panel on the left. From the sidebar on the far left, you can access the Motrix website, the Task List, start a new download, and open the Preferences page. Motrix also gives you a nice internet speed indicator down in the lower right corner.



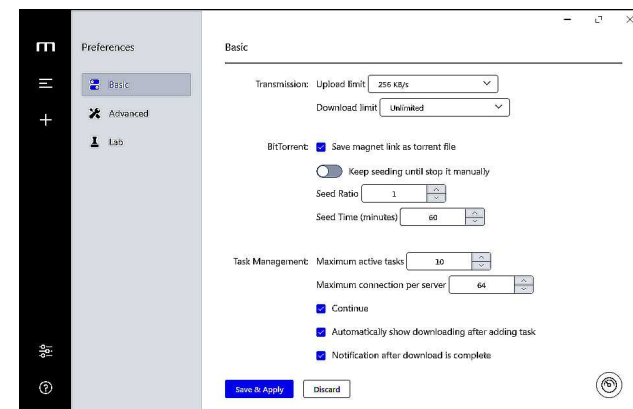
To add a new download, click on the + button on the far left sidebar and a small window will pop up. Here,

you can paste the URL or Magnet link to the file you wish to download, or select a torrent file by dragging and dropping it into the window, or opening it manually. Then you can set the download location, choose to rename the file if need be, and set the number of file splits for download acceleration. When you're ready, just click Submit and your download will start and be added to the Task List.



Downloads start automatically as soon as they're added to the Task List, so there's unfortunately no way to schedule them. The controls at the top of the Task List allow you to remove any selected tasks, refresh the Task List, and start or pause all of the downloads at once. Next to each task are also individual controls for starting, pausing, and removing the download, as well as opening the download folder, copying the link, and opening the Task Details page for extra information. The individual download speeds (and upload speed, in the case of torrents), along with the estimated time remaining are also shown for each task. As soon as a download finishes, the task is moved to the Stopped tab of the Task List (top, right).

From the Preferences page, you can change a variety of settings, such as the maximum upload and



download speeds, edit the torrent trackers list, and you can also set up a proxy server if you so desire. Clicking on the Lab tab of the Preferences page will give you access to various browser extensions available for Chrome and Firefox to enable downloading files through Motrix.

Summary

On the whole, I found Motrix to work really well, without noticing any bugs or problems. The main feature that I would have liked to have seen in Motrix was the ability to schedule downloads to only start at certain times, but that's not a huge issue. All in all, Motrix turned out to be a stable, well designed, and very easy to use download manager, perfect for any simple tasks.



PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner



*from the kitchen of
youcantoo*

Mexican Stuffed Chicken

Servings 4

[Unit converter](#)

INGREDIENTS:

Chicken

1 cup shredded pepper Jack cheese (4 oz) (176 g)
4 oz cream cheese, softened (112 g)
1 can (4.5 oz) chopped green chilies (127 g)
1 package (1 oz) taco seasoning mix (28 g)
4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (6 to 8 oz each)
(170 - 226 g)
2 tablespoons olive oil (29 ml)

Topping

3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese (3 oz) (176 g)
1/4 cup sliced green onions (4 medium) (26 g)
1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves (4 g)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat oven to 400F (204C) Line large, rimmed sheet pan with foil. Place a wire rack on top of foil. Spray with cooking spray.

2. In a medium bowl, mix pepper Jack cheese, cream cheese, chiles and 1 tablespoon of the taco seasoning mix. On the thick side of each chicken breast, cut the 3-inch-long pocket to within 1/4 inch of the opposite side of the breast. Spoon about 1/3

cup cheese mixture into the pocket in each chicken breast. Secure with toothpicks.

3. In a small bowl, mix the remaining taco seasoning mix and the olive oil. Place chicken on rack; brush with oil mixture.

4. Roast uncovered for 25 to 30 minutes or until stuffing reaches an internal temperature of 160F (71.1C) Top chicken breasts with mozzarella cheese; bake 3 to 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Top each breast with green onions and cilantro.

NUTRITION:

Calories: 560

Carbs: 10g

Fiber: 1g

Sodium: 1190mg

Protein: 50g



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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by parnote, on June 20, 2021, running Xfce.

GIMP Tutorial: Removing A Background, Part 2

by Meemaw

In May, I started a series of ways that you can remove the background from most any photo, referencing [this video how-to](#) on YouTube. The author has several other videos that are very good.

This month I'll finish covering the five methods.

Select by Color



This works really well with a graphic that has a specific colored background. Loads of clipart is made with backgrounds that I wouldn't mind deleting. The one below is a cute Christmas background, but it has that blue area behind it.



With it open in GIMP, choose the **Select By Color** tool and click in the blue area. The blue and only the blue will be selected with the "moving ants" to show what's selected. Notice that the border between the

blue and everything else is kind of dotted - in your window, the dots will be moving. Remember to add an Alpha channel! Again, if you right-click on the layer, and Add Alpha channel is greyed out, you already have one.



Now you can press the delete key, and the blue area will be transparent.



In this clipart, I then selected the white to delete. **NOTE:** you have to be careful there because there is some white in the eyes and mouths. After I selected the white, I used a large eraser to erase the white around the outside while leaving the eyes and mouths. If you have a certain color selected, and go over it with the eraser, only the color you have selected will be affected. For my use, I then chose **Select > None**, to deselect everything, and used my eraser to carefully erase the black line that had been between the blue and the white.



I exported it as a png, and though it shows a white background here, I can insert it into another picture and the white will be transparent.

Layer Mask

The layer mask is a little more involved, but it will help remove a background in a photo which has someone with wisps of hair extending into the background. You could cut them off, of course, but

the photo won't look the same. This is an image by Esther Merbt, free on Pixabay.



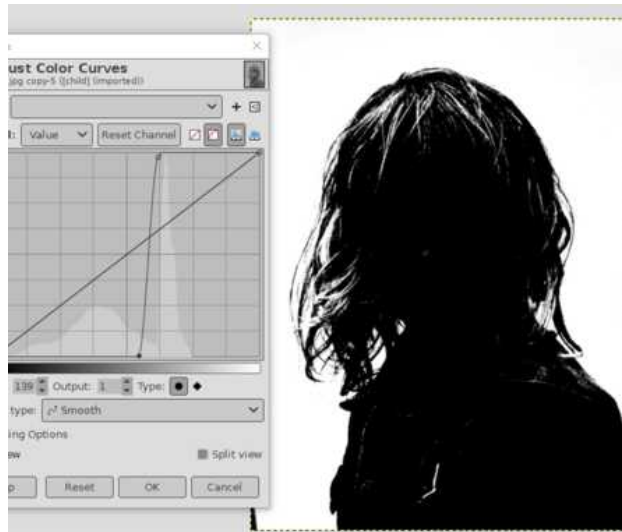
Now, if I just trace around the main part of the hair and cut off the “wild child” part on the left, the photo won't look the same. So, let's use a layer mask. This works really well if there is a big contrast between the subject and the background. There are several steps:

Open it in GIMP (of course) and duplicate the layer.

With the duplicate chosen, go to **Colors > Saturation**, and slide the setting clear down to the left until the photo is black & white.



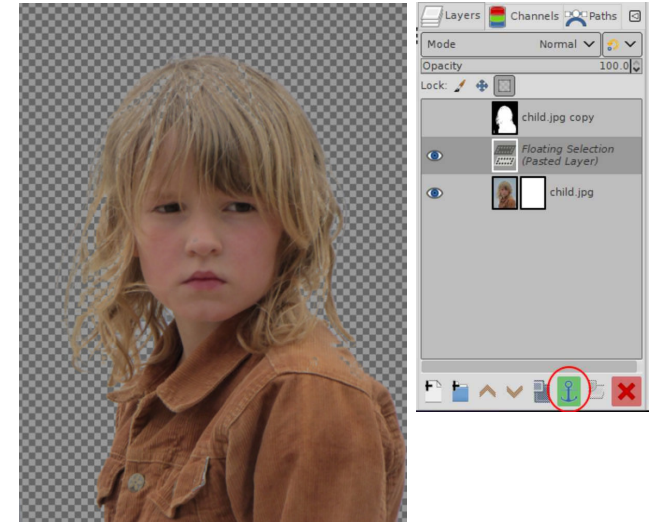
Go to **Colors > Curves**, and adjust the curve until the subject is mostly black and the background is mostly white.



Go back to **Colors** and choose **Invert**. Copy this to your clipboard using **Edit > Copy Visible**. Now, click on the eye next to the copy in the Layers dialog to make it invisible, and choose the color layer.



Right click on the original layer and choose **Add Layer Mask**. When the window comes up, the default is White (Full Opacity). That's what you want, so click OK. Then go to **Edit > Paste into selection**.



In your Layers dialog you'll see an anchor at the bottom that has turned green. Click that to anchor the pasted selection into the layer mask.

You'll see that the background is gone, but you may have some areas (like the hair on top of her head) that are also gone. We'll just fill those back in with a white brush. This is the tricky part, so take it slow and zoom in to get what you want. Depending on the photo, you might have to fill in some skin, lighter hair and clothing as well (there's a white tab on her jacket, her lighter hair, and her shoulder that I had to work on.) Rather than fighting with the background to put in all of her hair, I elected to just put in a bit



and leave the rest out. It doesn't have all of her lighter highlights, but it came out pretty well. On the left (previous page), how it looks in GIMP, and on the right, the exported photo. If you add it to a scene, the white will be transparent.

Foreground Select



Our last method is foreground select. Open the photo you want to use, and choose the **Foreground Select** tool. I'm using this photo of a lion.



Draw a rough outline around the foreground object. When you finish the outline, connecting the start and finish, and press the Enter key, the background outside your outline will turn blue and everything inside the outline will be a lighter blue.



You'll also see a small window at top right named Foreground Select, and you'll also see that your mouse pointer has turned into a brush. Using the brush (and it can be resized at left), paint over the foreground you want to keep. It will paint white, but when you release your mouse button, the white will disappear and you will see your foreground object.



When you've painted it the way you want, click on Preview in the Foreground Select window, and you can see how it's going to turn out. When you are happy with it, press Select in that window, and your paint will turn into a selection. Invert the selection and press **Delete**.



This works better if the foreground and background have more contrast than the photo that I used has. I got a little extra green from the plants around the lion's mane. You can go in and fix it, but you have to zoom in and paint it with a really small brush. Mostly, it works well. Top, how it looks in GIMP, and bottom, the exported file inserted on this white background.



I hope you've found a method that works for whatever image you're using!



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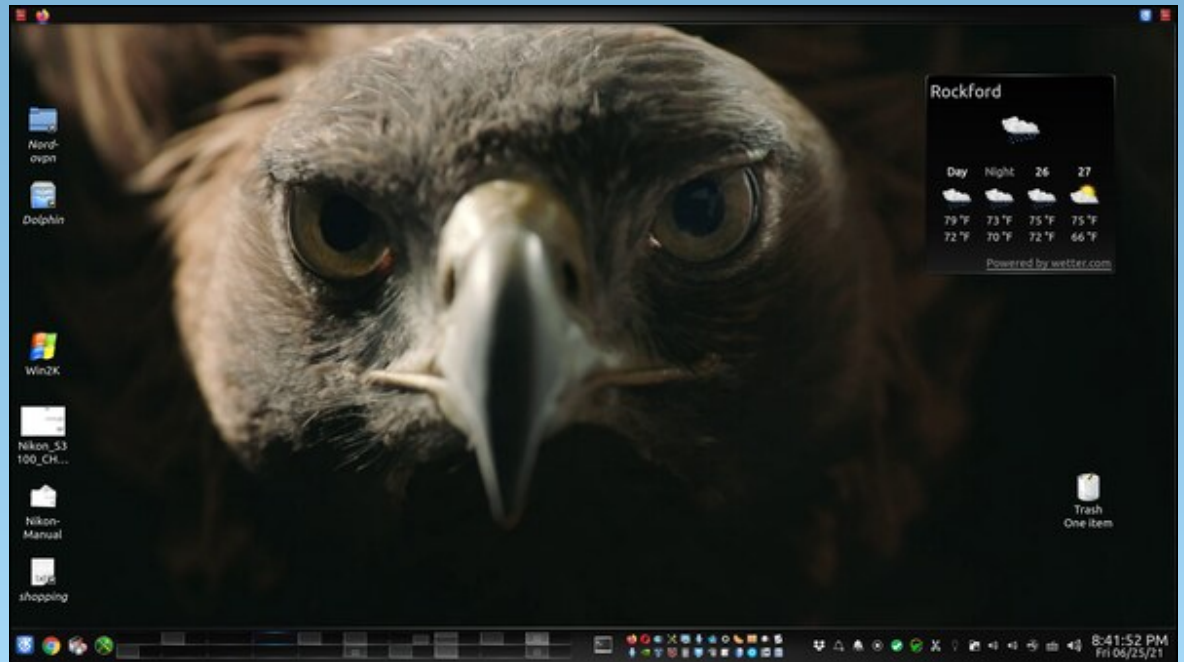


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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Old-Polack, on June 25, 2021, running KDE.

Browser Update Features You Might Have Missed

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Back in the early days of the web, we'd have to wait up to months sometimes for an update – and new features – to our favorite web browser. These days, updates for the various browsers seem to come more frequently than I fill the gasoline tank on my pickup truck. You barely have time to get used to and try out one version before the next version is coming out.

Back in the early days of the web, there were no more than two or three competing web browsers. Today, there is an endless stream of browsers, each offering their own special take on what the developers think a web browser should be. Names like Brave, Vivaldi, Chromium, Konqueror, Midori, Basilisk, Dillo, Epiphany, Ephemeral, Flashpeak Slimjet, Waterfox, Iridium, Min, Netsurf, Microsoft Edge, Palemoon, Otter, Seamonkey, and many others populate the browser landscape. And all of these are just the ones I located during a cursory look in the PCLinuxOS repository. I'm certain that I missed a few ... or more. There are many more that aren't in the PCLinuxOS repository.

Most publications would say that there are four "major" browsers: Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera, and Microsoft Edge. Some might say there are five, adding in Safari for MacOS/iOS. I call them the "big boys" of the browser world. But, for our purposes, there are only three big boys on the block: Firefox, Google Chrome, and Opera. Let's exclude Safari, since it's pretty much an exclusive MacOS/iOS thing. I also exclude Microsoft Edge, not because it isn't innovative (it is), but because most Linux users distrust Microsoft so much that they refuse to install or use Microsoft products on their Linux installation. Microsoft Edge is immeasurably better than the old, recently retired hack called Internet Explorer. That part is impossible to debate. Using the Chromium code-base for the new browser, Microsoft Edge has even recently introduced very innovative and extreme-space-saving TRUE vertical tabs. But Linux users' collective distrust of anything Microsoft is going to make Microsoft Edge a tough sell to Linux users, and Linux is the "language" we speak around here.

I'm only going to hit the highlights of the recent browser improvements and new features. This won't be an all-inclusive review of all that is new and better, so I'm sure to probably miss listing one of your favorite new features or improvements. But I'll try my best to list the most important of the "new and improved."

Also, the list will be presented alphabetically, to avoid any "browser prejudice" or "browser bias." Those who regularly read my articles probably already know my preferences, but I'll also try to present the "new and improved" without bias or judgement. However, there is one case among the "new and improved" features that has the potential to introduce what could be a significant security vulnerability, and I won't hesitate to point that out when we come to it. In theory, the "new and improved" feature sounds like a great idea on the surface, but when looked at objectively could also become quite the security issue.

Firefox



Firefox has been around significantly longer than either of its "big boy" competitors. Even though its market share has dwindled as other browsers have gained popularity, it remains one of the true innovators in the browser market. That market share runs between 6% and just over 13% on the desktop, depending on which set of data you read or believe. Firefox's lack of adoption on mobile platforms, coupled with the increased use of mobile platforms, has been a serious cause for Firefox's overall lackluster market share numbers. On mobile

platforms, Firefox has less than a 1% market share.

On June 1, 2021, Mozilla released Firefox 89. The latest release includes a reworking of much of the appearance of Firefox, as well as making it faster at rendering pages. One of the goals of the development team in reworking Firefox was to create, as much as possible, the same look and feel across all platforms. So, your copy of Firefox on your desktop would look and feel similar (if not the

same) to Firefox on Android, iOS, MacOS, Windows, BSD, etc. Below is a list of some of what you will find in the latest Firefox.

Simplified toolbar: The Firefox toolbar is where you type a URL, so it's where the action starts. The new toolbar is simplified so you get to the good stuff effortlessly. They removed visual clutter to focus on the most important navigation items.

Streamlined menus: They consolidated extra menus to be more direct and intuitive. The streamlined menu puts priority actions quickly at your fingertips. They also reduced visual noise by removing unnecessary iconography and provided clearer labels.

Inspired tab design: Floating tabs neatly contain information and offer cues only when you need them, like visual indicators for audio controls. The rounded design of the active tab signals the ability to easily grab and move tabs as needed.

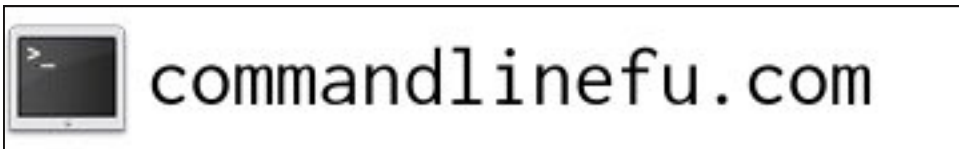
Updated prompts and fewer interruptions: They've removed unnecessary alerts and messages. Where they do have messaging, the design and language are clean and clear.

Cohesive, calmer visuals: Throughout the new Firefox, you'll quickly notice more consistent styling, lighter iconography, a refined color palette, and a more modern aesthetic for screens of all sizes — computers, phones and tablets.

Enhanced private browsing mode: All browsers have a private browsing mode, but none match Firefox. The popular Total Cookie Protection moves from the optional strict setting to always-on in private browsing. This feature maintains a separate "cookie jar" for each website you visit while browsing privately. Any time a site deposits a cookie, Firefox locks it up in its own cookie jar so that it can't be shared with any other website.

As stated on their [blog](#) entry from May 20, 2021, "While we make small design improvements regularly, major overhauls are big undertakings that don't come around all that often since change can be hard. We took the Firefox redesign project to heart with the goal of making your life a little better so you can worry less, get more done and feel good about what's on the horizon."

Firefox is on a four-week release schedule for new releases.



Google Chrome



Released in September 2008, Google Chrome got off to a relatively slow start. Today, however, it is the most widely used web browser. Google Chrome's overall market share is right around 65% of all browsers on all platforms today. On the desktop, Google Chrome's dominance accounts for nearly 70% of the market share. On mobile platforms, Google Chrome hovers right around a 64% market share. The latter is most likely due to the fact that Google Chrome is the default browser on Google's mobile platform, Android.

Google Chrome 91 is the latest version of the search giant's browser, and was released on May 25, 2021. Here's some of what you might expect to see when you fire up the newest version of Google's browser.

Up to 23% faster. Thanks to a new JavaScript compiler named "Sparkplug," the newest version of Google Chrome claims to be up to 23% faster than previous versions. "An important component of delivering a fast browser is fast JavaScript execution," Thomas Nattestad, product manager for Chrome, wrote in a May 27 post to a Google [blog](#).

Automatically start web apps. Under Google Chrome 91, web apps can be set to automatically start when you log into your account, by right clicking on the web app icon.

Copy and paste local files into a web page. Starting with Google Chrome 91, users can copy and paste local files from the file system straight into an email or web page. Say you want to include a copy of your resume in an email. Go to your local file system, copy the file to your clipboard, and then paste the file into your email.

Web apps have local file read/write access. Specially written web apps now have the ability to read and write local files to your computer. Remember I said

there was something that could, conceivably, have serious security concerns? This is it. While conceptually it sounds like a great idea to give web apps the same file read/write access as installed programs, stepping back from it for a broader view quickly reveals a situation RIFE for abuse. Don't be surprised if this becomes a new attack vector – very soon – from malware actors! I don't have sufficient "trust" that Google has placed appropriate safeguards in place to prevent such activity. This [article](#) from web.dev explains the plus side of this new ability in detail. This [video](#) from Google Chrome Developers on YouTube also gives you a quick overview of file access by web apps.

Google Chrome currently releases a new version every six weeks. However, starting in the 3Q of 2021, Google Chrome is planning to switch to releasing a new version every four weeks.

Opera

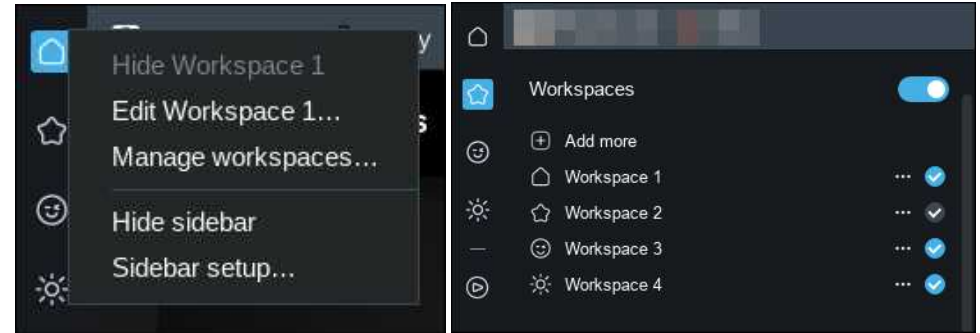


Opera has always been a little "different." The Opera developers have always approached the web browser with a different mindset, outlook and goals. Even today, if you've never run Opera, you may find the Opera window quite foreign. Some things are exactly where you think they should be (address bar, tab bar, bookmarks, settings menu), but then there are other things that will leave you scratching your head (hint: click on the Opera icon at the upper left of the screen to open up the Opera menu). Opera is different, but in good ways.

Opera has never had a majority share of the browser market space. Currently, it has just under a 2.5% market share overall, and up to 3.5% market share on desktops. On mobile platforms, that market share is somewhere between 2.2% and 3.3%, depending on who's numbers you read and believe.

We don't cover Opera much here in The PCLinuxOS Magazine. So, some of the "new" features we're covering here may not be necessarily "new" to long time

Opera users. I am a "sometimes" Opera user, but not enough to even classify myself as an "occasional" user.



There's one feature in Opera that I was completely unaware of until within the past month. That feature, called "Workspaces," actually debuted in Opera back in late February, 2020. On a fresh installation of the browser, Opera comes with the requisite one workspace setup. BUT ... if you right click on the workspace (signified by the pentagonal "home plate" icon), you get a menu (left image above).

Select "Manage workspaces..." from the menu. That will open the "Sidebar Setup" dialog. At the top of that dialog is where you can add workspaces. Turn on "Workspaces" by clicking on the slider to turn them on, and then simply click on "+ Add more" at the top of the dialog (right image above). In the next window that opens, you can select the icon you want to use to represent your new workspace. My workspaces are represented by the "home plate" icon (required), and by a star, a happy face, and a sun. You can turn off your additional workspaces by unchecking the checkmark at the right side of the workspace in the list. You can also completely turn off workspaces by clicking on the slider at the top to turn off workspaces.

I'm not sure, though, why anyone might want to turn them off once they experience using workspaces. Workspaces ARE A GAME CHANGER! Once you use them, you'll wonder why every browser doesn't make use of them.

Workspaces allow you to group your tabs into related ... well, workspaces. These allow you to work with a LOT less distraction than having all of your open tabs visible at the same time. For example, when I'm writing an article for the magazine, it's not uncommon for me to have a dozen or more tabs open at any given time. Using workspaces, I can group together only the tabs that I need to focus on as I write my article. This prevents me from becoming distracted, for example, by incoming email. Switching between workspaces is as simple as clicking on the workspace I want to change to, each with its grouping of open tabs.

Another thing with Opera involves browser extensions. Being a bit less “popular” than the other “big boy” browsers, Opera typically doesn’t have the vast selection of browser extensions available that the “others” have. Well, there is a way to correct that.

Go [here](#) and install this Opera browser extension. This extension will allow you to install Chrome browser extensions for use in Opera. The vast majority of Chrome browser extensions work just fine in Opera, since both browsers use the same rendering engine.

Opera releases are not regularly spaced, although most releases appear to come out every six to eight weeks.

Summary

We don’t tend to cover new browser releases as much as we used to. They just come out too frequently to be able to keep up with, and we don’t have the staff to devote to such coverage.

Firefox has a few comparison [charts](#) of features between itself and competing browsers. You might find it interesting to check it out to see how each compares with one another.

These days, it’s fairly rare for users to use strictly one browser. While I tend to use one particular browser 98% of the time, I do use other browsers for specific tasks. I suspect that most users are also in the same boat.



The PCLinuxOS Magazine Special Editions!

A collage of six PCLinuxOS Magazine Special Editions covers is shown. The covers include: 1. "Windows Migration Guide" (September 2013) featuring a penguin and a Windows logo. 2. "Enlightenment" (May 2011) featuring a penguin. 3. "The KDE 4 SC Special Edition" (Fall 2010) featuring KDE desktop icons. 4. "Gtk Lightweight Desktops: Xfce & LXDE Special Edition" (November 2010) featuring a cartoon car. 5. "Command Line Interface Intro" (October 2010) featuring a terminal window with code. 6. "Openbox Special Edition" (March 2012) featuring a penguin and a box labeled 'UB'.

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FreeNode Destroys. What It All Means For FOSS, PCLinuxOS

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

On May 19, 2021, the FreeNode IRC (Internet Relay Chat) network exploded into controversy. Twenty to thirty FreeNode staff members resigned their positions, and created Libera Chat, a new IRC network. FreeNode is considered the IRC home to numerous FOSS projects, including PCLinuxOS.

As a result, many FOSS projects have abandoned FreeNode. Most have gone to the newly formed Libera Chat network. These FOSS projects include Gentoo, Ubuntu, Wikimedia, CentOS, FreeBSD, and Arch Linux, just to name a few.

The controversy over FreeNode still rages like an out of control wildfire. FOSS projects continue to flee the carnage. Libera Chat, started by former FreeNode staffers, went from startup to the sixth largest IRC network literally overnight with all the requests for new IRC channels and new registered users. As you might imagine, the Libera Chat folks have been slammed with requests, and now have a backlog of new channel requests.

How Did This All Happen?

As with most things that have this much drama and trauma involved, the details are a bit difficult to extract. With two competing views of the actions involved, it's certainly difficult to discern exactly where the real truth lies. But let's try to at least provide a somewhat condensed timeline for the events that led up to this fiasco. It might just help shine some light onto how this happened. As you might imagine, this whole thing is, for lack of a better word, messy.

The logo for FreeNode, featuring the word "freenode" in a lowercase, rounded font. The "freenode" part is in a light gray color, and the "node" part is in a bright green color.

FreeNode originally started as the Open Projects Network (OPN) in 1998, before changing to their current name in 2002.

In 2006, the FreeNode project originator, Rob Levin, died in a car wreck. Levin's brother wanted to turn it into a business, but Christel Dahlskjær, along with help from Richard "RichiH" Hartmann, took over the FreeNode project. She was an employee of Private Internet Access when she took over control of FreeNode's parent corporation, FreeNode Limited. She was the FreeNode "head of staff."

Dahlskjær transferred ownership of FreeNode Limited to tech entrepreneur Andrew Lee in 2017, seeking a way to fund it more dramatically. Lee is the founder of VPN provider Private Internet Access. (In the interest of disclosure and transparency, I am a customer of PIA, and it in no way impacts my reporting of these events.)

In March, 2021, Dahlskjær resigned from FreeNode to pursue other life interests. A new head of staff was not immediately appointed or named. In the power vacuum that ensued, a senior staff member assumed the role and asked for ownership of the domain. Lee instead suggested a decentralization of FreeNode. Shortly thereafter, Lee's access to the domain account was revoked. Despite being listed as the domain owner, Lee was denied access to the

domain. Some former staff members painted this as a hostile takeover by Lee, and that brings us to the current events that led to multiple senior members of the FreeNode staff resigning.

If you want more in depth information about the FreeNode trials and tribulations, an internet search will net you more reading material than you can read in a day. It was reported all across the computer press outlets, so take your pick. To get you started, here's a [search](#) from DuckDuckGo. This [link](#) is particularly telling of the former staff members' view of things, along with each of their resignation letters (or at least the ones who chose to share those letters). This [link](#) (PDF, shared on TechRights.org) is particularly telling of Lee's side of things. You be the judge.

The Current Status

As a result, Lee ended up regaining control over FreeNode. But, in the process, many of the IRC channels that had been in place for years (including **#pclosmag**, which I created) ended up with its owners locked out. It was as if everything had been nuked. The same fate appears to have happened to the **#pclinuxos** and **#pclinuxos-support** channels. This self-destruction happened in mid-June.

I attempted to create a new channel for the magazine, but inconsistent behavior with NickServ (which manages registered user accounts) and even more radical behavior from ChanServ (which manages registered channels) resulted in extreme difficulty in creating the new channel.

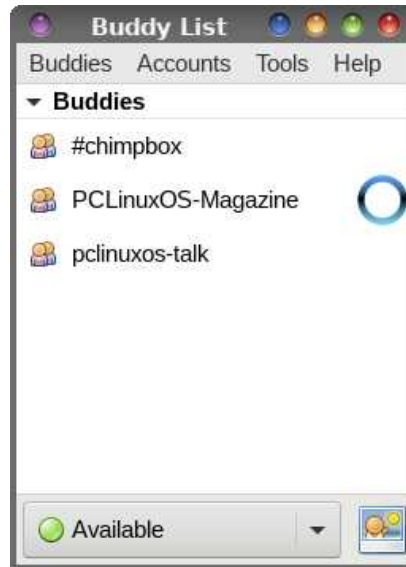
I'd be trudging through the NickServ and ChanServ commands, and then NickServ would get amnesia. You can't run ChanServ if NickServ can't recognize you as a registered user. So, I had to start all over, first getting NickServ to recognize me as a registered user, and then hope to get through all of the ChanServ commands before NickServ caught another case of amnesia. And, do it all flawlessly.

That new channel, **#PCLinuxOS-Magazine**, is still up and running, as of the writing of this article. However, it still isn't set up as I want, due to how flaky NickServ and ChanServ are behaving. I just left it in a state of "good enough for now."

I do not know of the plans for the two main PCLinuxOS channels on IRC yet. But, The PCLinuxOS Magazine has decided to relocate to the PCLOS-Talk server. Setting up the chat room for the magazine was easy, and not fraught with the pitfalls of having to deal with the flaky behavior of NickServ and ChanServ, not to mention the obscure, cryptic, non-intuitive commands used to manipulate those two services on IRC.

The move to the PCLOS-Talk server allows the magazine to maintain a consistent chat service that is available to any and all PCLinuxOS users who wish to avail themselves of the feature. Running on PCLOS-Talk, users can talk openly in the chat room (pclinixos-magazine), or take private conversations to a private chat window.

You will, though, be required to sign up for an account on the PCLOS-Talk server, if you haven't already and wish to join the magazine's chat room. Doing so is easy enough, and it's free. Follow the instructions in YouCanToo's and Tuxlink's [article](#)



Top: The PCLinuxOS-Magazine chat room on PCLOS-Talk, running on Pidgin. Bottom: The logo for the PCLOS-Talk service.

from The PCLinuxOS Magazine's March 2017 issue. While you're there, you can also drop into the pclinixos-talk and #chimpbox chat rooms to talk about whatever you wish to talk about. By the way, just about any topic is allowed to be discussed in the magazine's chat room, provided it's not abusive, obscene, or doesn't fall into a prohibited category (pornography, etc.).



What's Next?

Just like anyone else, I can't predict the future.

But, the **#PCLinuxOS-Magazine** channel on FreeNode is currently (at the time of this writing) still up and running. However, I cannot say for how long. There are multiple reports of channels being taken over on FreeNode just for mentioning moving to another network. FreeNode disallows "advertising" or mentioning other networks. The new magazine channel on FreeNode does mention in its topic that the chat is moving/has moved to PCLOS-Talk. So I may not have any say in how long that new channel stays up or under my control. Even if it escapes

being taken over for that violation, I do not plan to keep the new channel up and running for too much longer.

Summary

The PCLinuxOS Magazine has maintained a chat presence on IRC ever since I became the editor 12 years ago. Had the kerfuffle at FreeNode not occurred, we'd still be there. But the sloppy way that the "transfer" was handled during the power change has necessitated a move to a new home.

IRC is old technology that predates the World Wide Web, having started in August 1988. Tim Berners-Lee didn't even propose his idea for the WWW until March 1989, seven months later. His vision wouldn't become reality until Christmas 1990. IRC has served its purpose admirably during that ensuing time. It allowed people to interact directly with one another, across vast distances, in real time.

But it definitely has some areas that just don't make sense in today's computing landscape. Messaging on the web has evolved to include better, more dynamic, more secure methods. IRC uses an inordinate amount of bandwidth to send plain text messages. It's insecure, and ripe for data interception.

So, now is as good of a time as any to move on. PCLOS-Talk runs on a custom XMPP server. It's more secure, even if just for the fact that it requires users to have an account, which means that users have had some sort of vetting just to be able to connect. IRC will allow anyone to connect, with or without an account, increasing exposure to trolls, spammers, and others with malicious intent.

When one door closes, another one opens. Thanks for the fond memories, FreeNode and IRC. You served us well.



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Screenshot Showcase



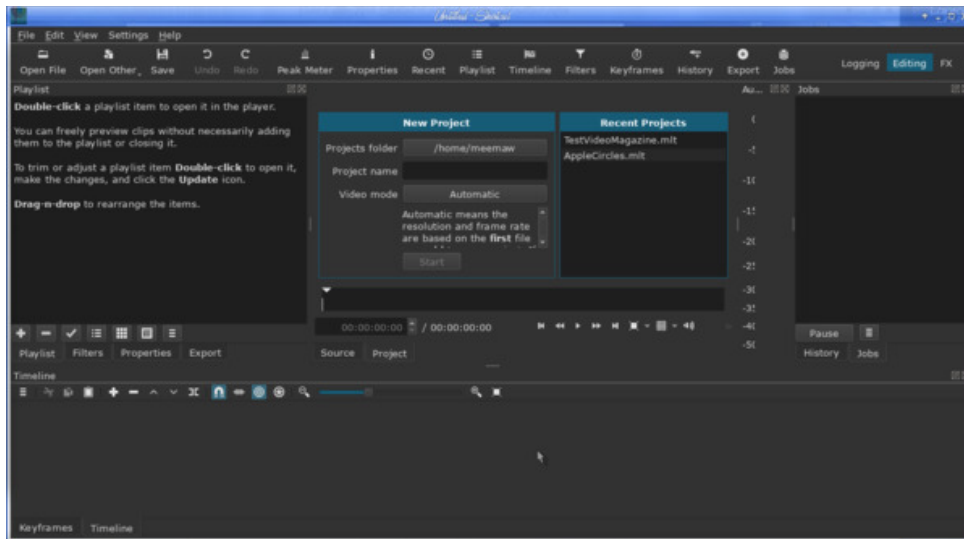
Posted by mutse, on June 16, 2021, running Mate.

Video Editing With Shotcut

by Meemaw

I recently took on a project at work which involved editing videos. I wasn't sure how to do that, or even what editor to use, but Shotcut and Avidemux were recommended to me as good programs. Both have Windows versions as well, and both are in our repo. I chose Shotcut, knowing I could use it on my work computer (Windows) and my home computer (PCLinuxOS, of course!). I also frequently take my work laptop to another office, and wanted to be able to work there as well. While working on my project, I have gotten started learning Shotcut. I won't pretend I know everything about it, but this article might get you started if you're interested. Let's explore.

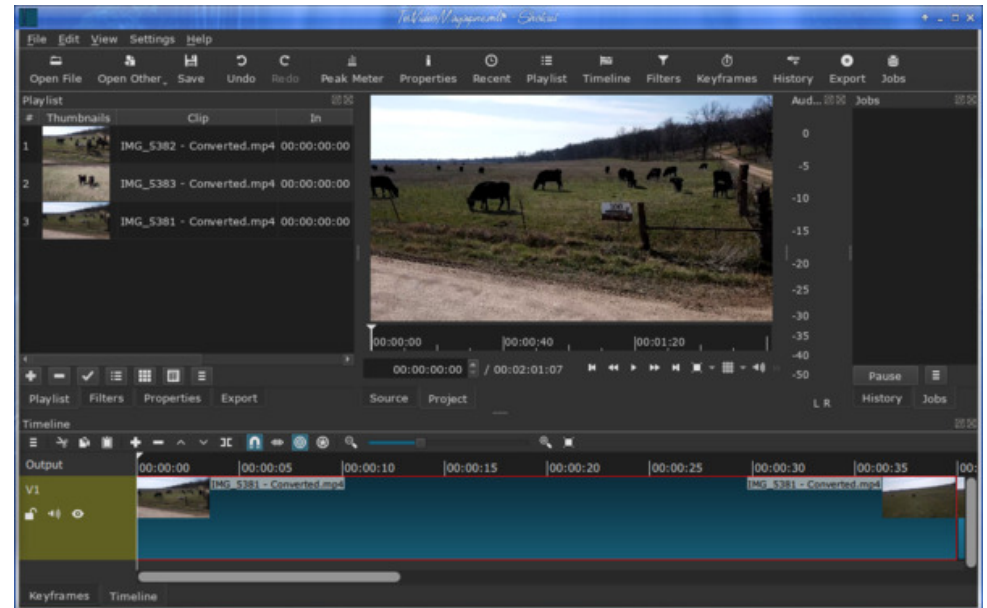
Installing Shotcut is very quick and easy. When you open it, you get the following window:



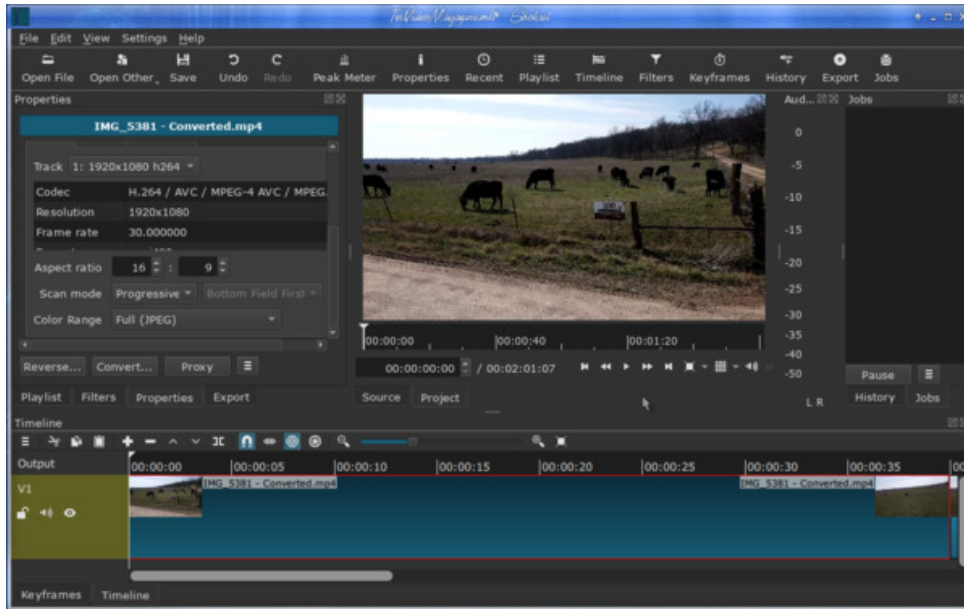
Wow! There's a lot of stuff there! Some of it you can close, but it's actually arranged pretty well, with some of the important items in tabs. Across the top of the window are several tools you will use (Open, Save, Undo, Redo) plus buttons for something you may have closed (Peak Meter, Playlist, Timeline or Filters).

Across the middle of the window is the Playlist, the New Project window, the

Recent Projects window, the Peak Meter (that's the vertical line of numbers) and the Jobs window. Below the New and Recent windows you will see the controls for the player. Once you have a file to play, the New and Recent sections will be replaced by the screen for the video player. You can start off by entering a name for your project, and designating the folder you're saving it to using the New Project window. Or, you can start by adding some files to your Playlist. You can choose Open, or you can position your file manager near Shotcut, highlight the clips you want to use, and then click and drag them over to the Playlist window on the left. Notice that at the bottom of the Playlist window, there are some tabs. You'll most likely see Playlist, Filters, Properties and Export. These are the tools you'll be using most of the time (however, I haven't used Properties much). If you started off clicking and dragging, be sure to click on **File > Save As...** and save your project.



With video clips in your playlist, you can start by choosing the clip you want to use first, and dragging it down to the bottom of the window into the Timeline. When you have a video selected, the Properties tab shows the properties of that particular clip. It will show handy things like speed, duration, codec, resolution and aspect ratio (next page, top left).



Above the Timeline, you'll see another toolbar. These are the tools you'll use to edit the clip (bottom of this page).

The hamburger at the left has another menu of additional tools that might be used, such as adding another track or removing one. After that from left to right: Cut, Copy, Paste, Append, Remove, Lift (remove clip without affecting the position of the other clips), Overwrite clip onto the current track, Split at playhead, Toggle snapping, Scrub while dragging, Ripple trim and drop, Ripple edits across all tracks, Zoom in and out, and Zoom timeline to fit. If you hover your mouse over each, you will get these descriptions. Let's look at each briefly.

Cut, Copy and Paste are just what they are everywhere else.

Append can insert a clip into your timeline, either at the beginning (if you're just starting) or after a track that is selected.

Remove can remove a clip or part of a clip.

Lift removes a clip without moving any of the other clips. If you have 3 clips in a row and you lift the center one, the space will remain.

Overwrite clip onto the current track lets you place a clip in the place of another one.

Split at playhead allows you to choose a spot in your clip and cut it into two pieces. The playhead is a vertical line that travels through the clip while it's playing to show you where you are.

Toggle snapping is one of the tools that works automatically when it's toggled on. It shoves one clip up against the end of the clip before it without any effort on your part.

Scrub while dragging lets you drag the playhead across your clip and it will play at whatever speed you are dragging (instead of normal speed which may be too fast for you) in order for you to be more precise on your split.

Ripple trim and drop is actually trim & drop which has a "ripple effect" - this means that you can drop a clip in anywhere, but it will move every clip after it over to the right, and if there's a space between them, the space will stay.

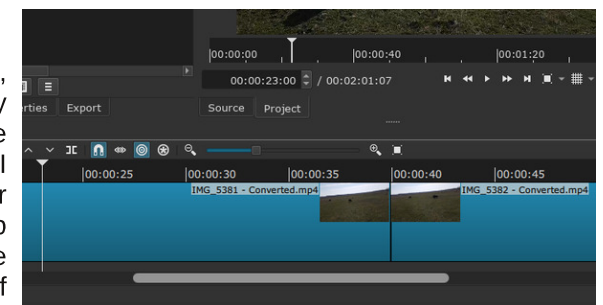
Ripple edits across all tracks - You might have to experiment with this a bit, because I'm not sure I used it. However, the documentation says that Ripple trim and drop has to be toggled on to use this one.

Zoom in and out is the slide bar with the plus and minus on each end. It zooms into the timeline so you can edit more effectively.

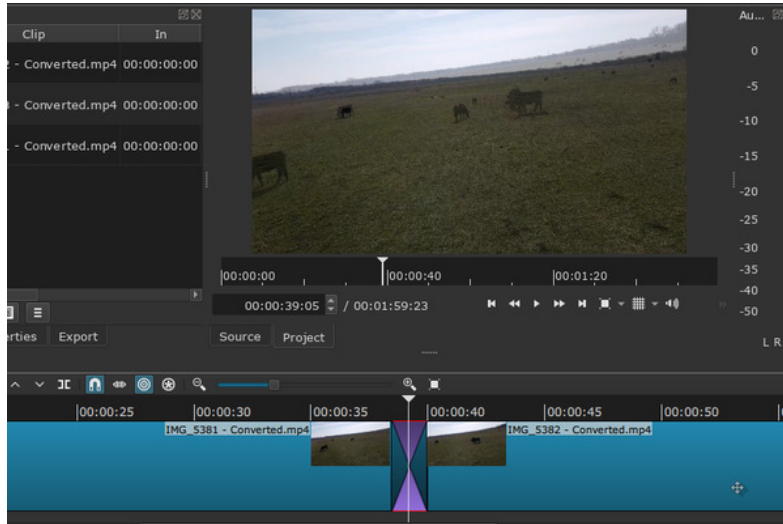
Zoom timeline to fit is just what it says. If you click this, your video will be zoomed out so the whole thing appears in the timeline.

Okay, now you have your clips in your Playlist and have dragged one down into the timeline. Choose the one you want to use next and drag it down as well. If you have Toggle snapping on, the second clip will snap up against the end of your first.

While my clips look identical, they are only similar in that they are successive clips of a drone flying over a cow pasture. I want to make them smoother than just one clip snapped up against the one before it. There are a couple of methods of

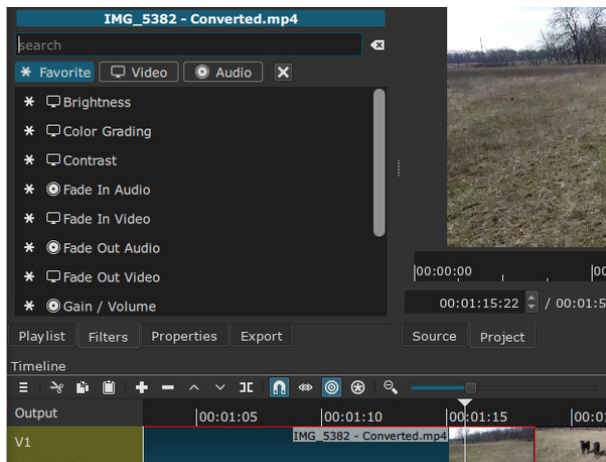


fading out of one clip and into another, and the first one's fairly easy. Grabbing the second clip, move it over the edge of the first. You'll have to experiment with your clips to see what works the best, but if you have 2 or 3 seconds that you can overlap, it seems to work pretty well most of the time. As you can see in the player, one clip is fading out in favor of the next. In the timeline, you can see the overlap(it looks like a box with an X in it).



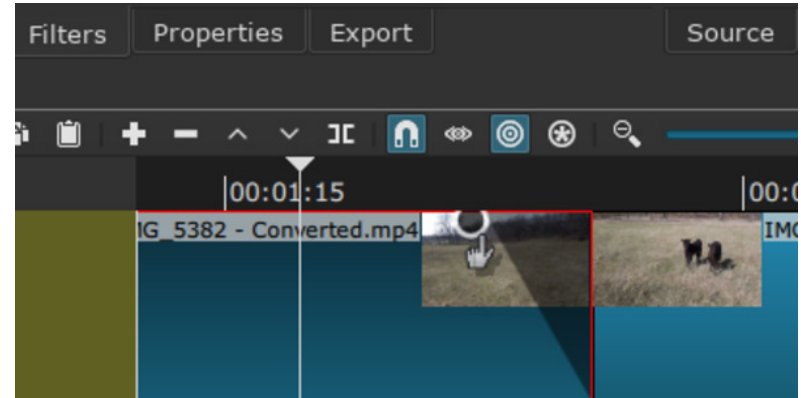
If you have a soundtrack, make sure your speakers are finished speaking before your overlap.

Another way to connect your clips with a smooth transition is to Fade In and Fade Out. These are filters. In your main screen, the tab next to Playlist is Filters. With a clip chosen, and the Filters tab chosen, you must **Add** a filter to see the list.

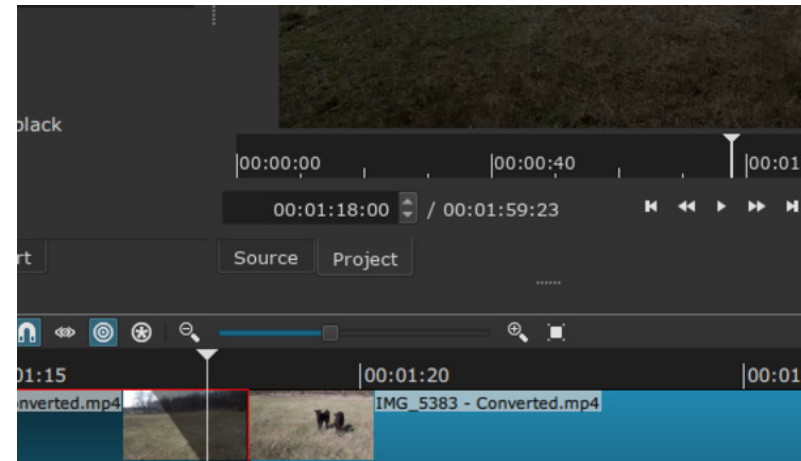


As you can see, there are three sections in this window: Favorite, Video and Audio. With the clip chosen, I selected Fade Out Video. The program will add a black triangle at the end of the clip, and the default is 1 second. If you hover your mouse over the clip at the top, you can see that your cursor has changed to a finger and a circle has appeared on the

end of the triangle. Moving the circle with your mouse will lengthen or shorten the time your fade-out lasts. You might have to zoom into the clip to grab the handle.



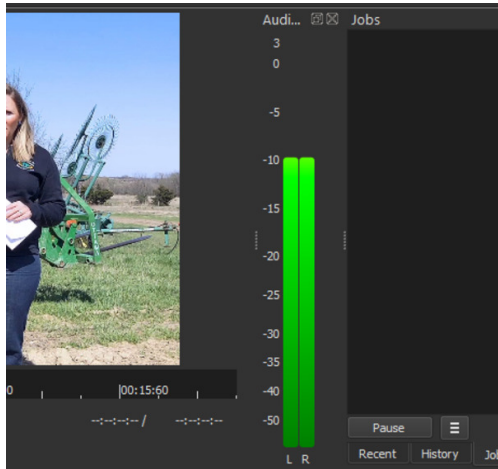
You can see here that the clip is darker, and it fades out to black (although there is a setting to change the opacity of the fade).



Many of the most-used filters are in Favorites and have an asterisk (*) to the left of the title. If you can't find what you're looking for, look in one of the other tabs, and then make it a favorite by clicking on the asterisk on that line. I might use Hue/Lightness/Saturation a bit, so I made it a favorite. When I go back to the Favorites Menu, it is there.

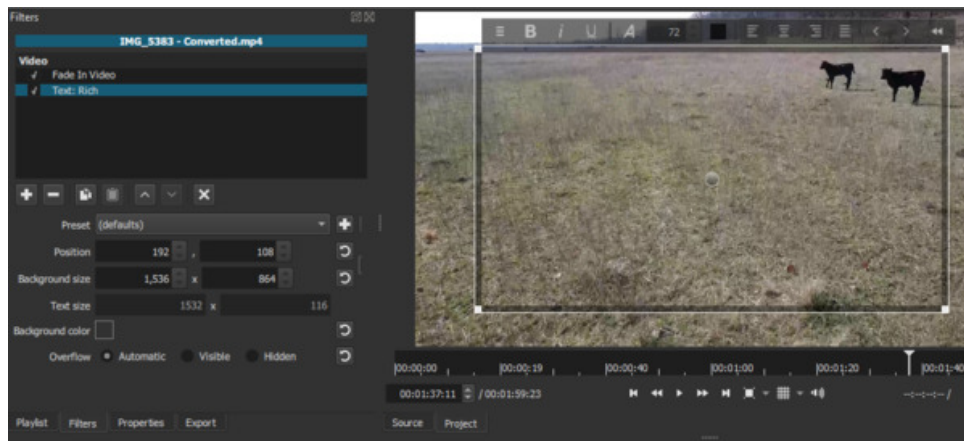
In my editing I found a great variation in the volume of the individual clips. No one wants to watch a video that they have to keep turning up and down, or a section that blasts really loud, so another one of the useful filters is Gain / Volume. When your video has an audio track, the Peak Meter (the vertical line of numbers to the right of the player window). measures the volume.

This clip is from a different video. You can see the volume in the Peak meter. This particular clip was recorded loud, so I used the Gain/Volume filter to reduce the volume so it was a bit less loud, and the same filter on the subsequent clip to boost the volume a bit, aiming for something similar on each clip so the volume on the whole video would be fairly uniform.



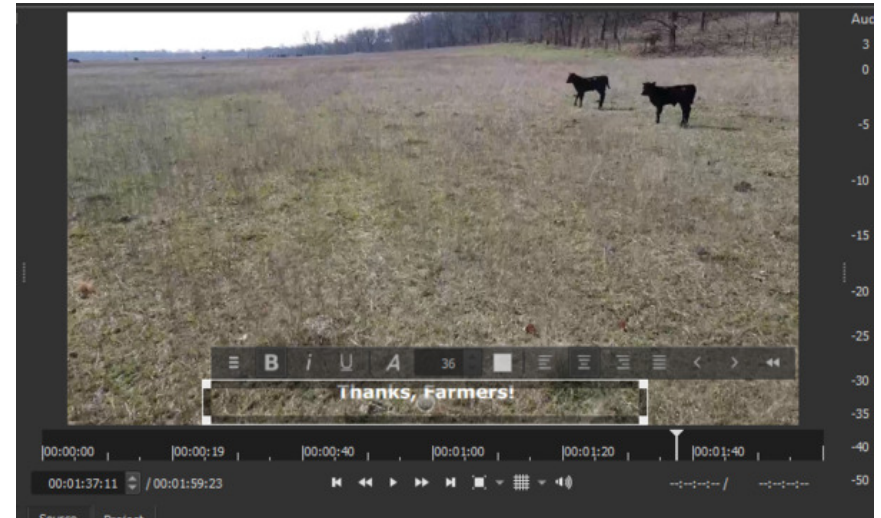
In the filter window you have a slide bar to control the volume. I slid the bar to the left a bit to turn it down, and replayed the clip, going back & forth until it was where I wanted it. I'm sure there's a better way, but that worked for me.

Another filter I used was the Text filter. You can use this to add text to a clip. Again, make sure you have selected the clip you want to use, then click Filters. **Text: Rich** is in Favorites, so add it.



Notice now that I have a big text box on the screen with formatting tools at the top and a faint circle in the middle of the box. You can use your mouse to change the font, size, alignment, etc., before or after you add your text (after you add it, you will, of course, have to highlight it). At left, you can choose size and position, plus text size and background color. The Preset drop-down allows you to choose how you want the text to appear on the screen, with choices like Slide in from left, Slide out top and Slow zoom in (or out). I could have taken advantage of these, but didn't, as I had an email I wanted to display during all of the conclusion clip.

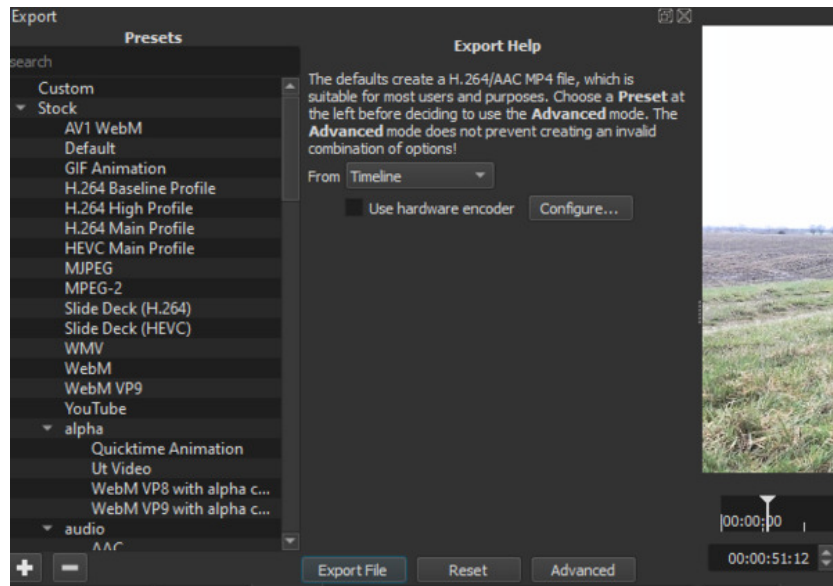
The handles at the corners help resize the text box and the circle in the center lets you move it to your desired location. To get rid of the text box so you can see the result, just click on another filter or deselect the text filter.



Another thing you can do is add an audio track to your video. The ones I did for work already had them, so I didn't get too much experience with that, but clicking the hamburger menu in the Timeline, you can choose **Timeline Operations > Add Audio Track**, and experiment. This video had no audio.

When you finish your editing, you can Export your work as a video file. Not knowing enough about the types of video file formats, I chose to stay with the

default. Here's the Export window with the standard message. It says "The defaults create a H.264/AAC MP4 file, which is suitable for most users and purposes. Choose a **Preset** at the left before deciding to use the **Advanced** mode. The **Advanced** mode does not prevent creating an invalid combination of options!"



I just stayed with the default. There's a button that says **Export File**, so click on that. You will see a window that gives you the opportunity to change the filename and location if you wish, then it will export it. Be prepared for it to take a while (some of mine were finished in 10 - 15 minutes). Longer videos will take longer to export (my longest video was 19 minutes long when completed).

This so far is my experience with Shotcut. I intend to do lots more experimentation, but if you have a project you want to do, you should be able to get started with this short tutorial. You can find the video [here](#).

I did an [article](#) on OpenShot in Sept, 2015. With all the problems that OpenShot seems to be having at the moment, I think Shotcut may be a good substitute.

Agent Smith did an [earlier article](#) on Shotcut in May of 2020.



The PCLinuxOS Magazine Special Editions!



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PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner Bonus



Foil Packet Low Country Shrimp

Servings 4
[Unit converter](#)

INGREDIENTS:

1 lb small red potatoes, halved (453 g)
4 pieces frozen corn on the cob [mini ears](#),
thawed, cut in half
2 teaspoons oil (9.34 g)
2 teaspoons [Old Bay™ seasoning](#) (8.4 g)
1 lb (453 g) uncooked peeled deveined
extra-large shrimp (16 to 20 count)
12 oz fully cooked [andouille](#) sausage,
sliced (340.19 g)
1 lemon, cut into 8 wedges
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves (15 g)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat gas or charcoal grill. Cut 4 (18x12-inch) sheets of heavy-duty foil. Spray with cooking spray.

2. Place potatoes in a microwavable bowl. Microwave uncovered on High 5 to 6 minutes or until potatoes are just tender. Add corn to potatoes; drizzle with 1 teaspoon of the oil, and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of the seasoning; mix until evenly coated. Place shrimp in a medium bowl; toss with remaining

1 teaspoon oil and remaining 1 teaspoon seasoning; mix until evenly coated.

3. Place an equal amount of sausage on the center of each sheet of foil. Dividing evenly, arrange potato and corn mixture around sausage. Divide shrimp evenly over sausage. Squeeze 1 wedge of lemon over each pack.

4. Bring up 2 sides of foil so edges meet. Seal edges, making tight 1/2-inch fold; fold again, allowing space for heat circulation and expansion. Fold other sides to seal.

5. Place packs on the grill over medium heat. Cover grill; cook for 6 minutes. Rotate packs 1/2 turn; cook 5 to 7 minutes longer or until shrimp are pink and sausage is heated through. Remove packs from the grill, cut large X across the top of each pack. Carefully fold back

foil; sprinkle with parsley, and top with remaining lemon wedges.

OPTIONS:

Two ears of fresh sweet corn can be substituted for the frozen corn in this recipe. Cut each ear into 4 pieces.

To make in the oven, place packs on a cookie sheet. Bake at 375F (162.7C) 23 to 25 minutes or until shrimp are pink and sausage is heated through.

NUTRITION:

Calories: 540	Carbs: 35g	Fiber: 4g
Sodium: 1120mg	Protein: 40g	



PCLinuxOS Puzzled Partitions

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

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

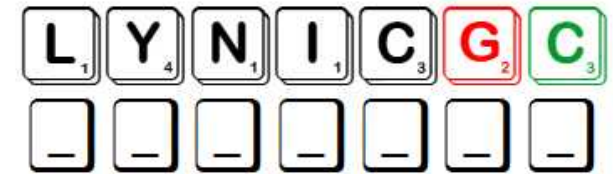
5 points: K

8 points: J, X

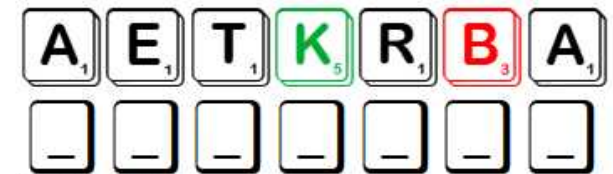
10 points: Q, Z

6. Optionally, a time limit of 60 minutes should apply to the game, averaging to 12 minutes per letter tile set.

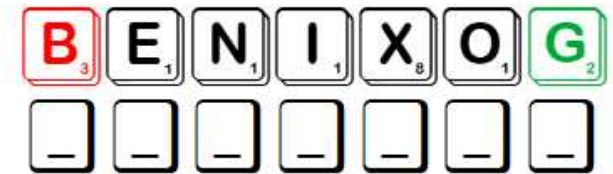
7. Have fun! It's only a game!



Triple Word



Double Word



Possible score 264, average score 185.

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

PCLinuxOS Word Find: July, 2021

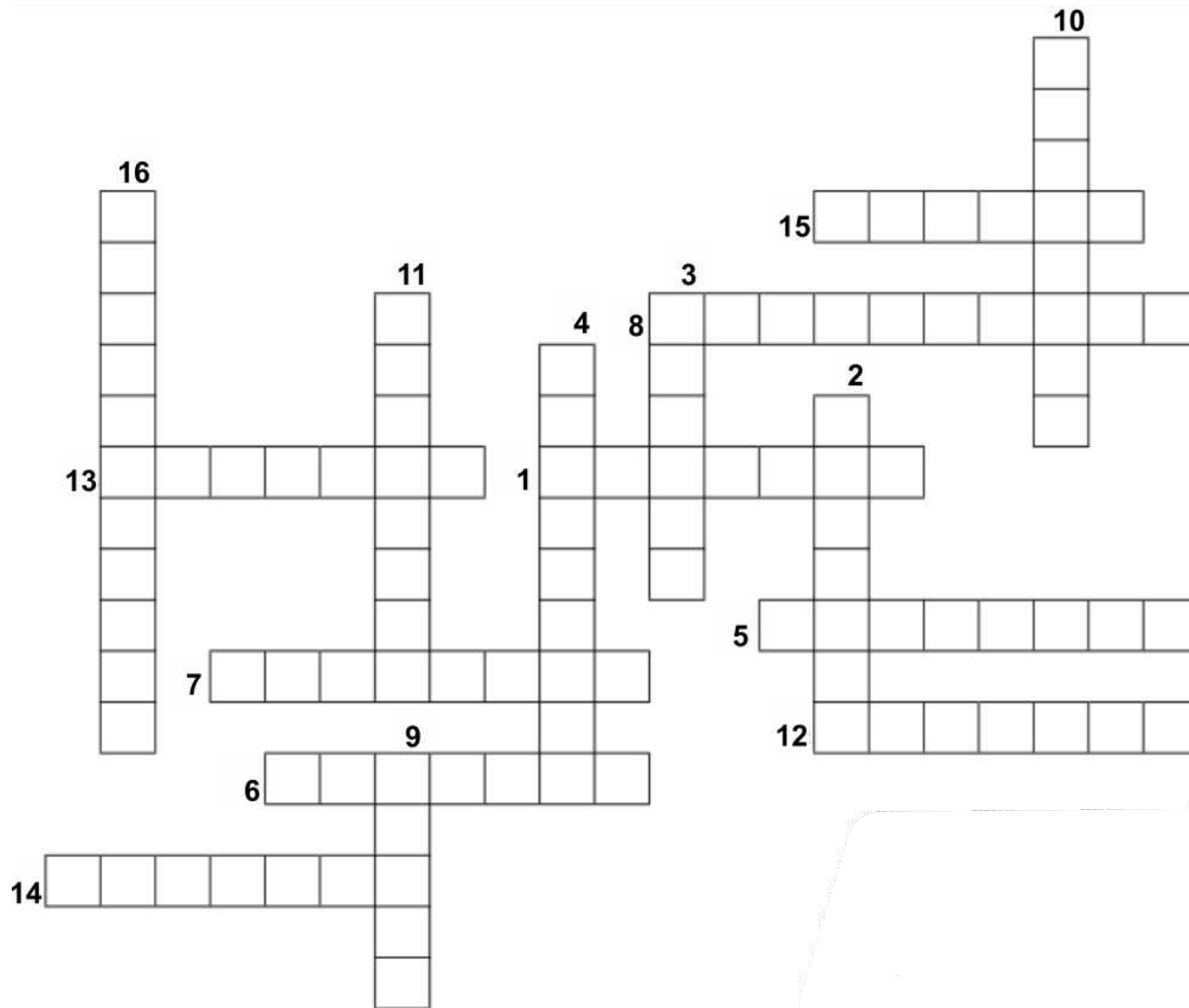
Sports

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

ARCHERY	BASEBALL
BASKETBALL	BIATHLON
BIKING	BOXING
CANOEING	CRICKET
CURLING	CYCLING
DECATHLON	DIVING
FENCING	FIELD HOCKEY
FIGURE SKATING	FOOTBALL
GOLFING	GYMNASTICS
HOCKEY	ICE HOCKEY
KARATE	LACROSSE
PARASAILING	RACING
RACQUETBALL	ROCK CLIMBING
ROLLER SKATING	RUGBY
SAILING	SCUBA DIVING
SKIING	SOCCER
SOFTBALL	SURFING
SWIMMING	VOLLEYBALL
WATER SKIING	WHITE WATER RAFTING
WIND SURFING	WRESTLING

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Sports Crossword



1. A bat-and-ball game played between two teams of eleven players on a field at the center of which is a 22-yard pitch with a wicket at each end.
2. The art or sport of using a foil, épée, or saber in attack and defense.
3. The act or practice of fighting with the fists, with or without gloves.
4. An athletic contest consisting of ten track and field events.
5. A winter sport combining cross-country skiing and rifle shooting.
6. The sport of riding toward the shore on the forward slope of a wave, especially while standing or lying on a board.
7. A game played with a bat and ball by two opposing teams of nine players, each team playing alternately in the field and at bat, the players at bat having to run through four bases laid out in a diamond pattern to score.
8. A game played between two teams of five players each, the object being to throw a ball through an elevated basket on the opponents side of a rectangular court.
9. A football-type game in which play is continuous without time-outs or substitutions, interference and forward passing are not permitted, and kicking, dribbling, lateral passing, and tackling are featured.
10. A game played by two teams of 11 players each on a rectangular, 100-yard-long field with goal lines and goalposts at either end, to gain possession of a ball and advance it in running, passing or kicking plays across the opponents goal line.
11. A game played on a rectangular field by two teams of ten players each, in which participants use a long-handled stick that has a webbed pouch on one end to try to propel a ball into the opposing teams goal.
12. A game played on a large outdoor course with a series of 9 or 18 holes spaced far apart, to propel a small, hard ball into each hole with as few strokes as possible.
13. The art, sport, or skill of shooting with a bow and arrow.
14. A game in which two four-person teams slide heavy, oblate stones toward the center of a circle at either end of a length of ice.
15. A Japanese martial art in which sharp blows and kicks are administered to pressure-sensitive points on the body of an opponent.
16. An activity where a person is towed behind a boat while attached to a specially designed parachute.

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Mixed-Up-Meme Scrambler



First

of Linux

Thou Shall Not Log In As Root

Punch
KOCKN

— —

Critter
ALAMIN

— — —

Wild
PACMAD

—

Date
IMTE

—

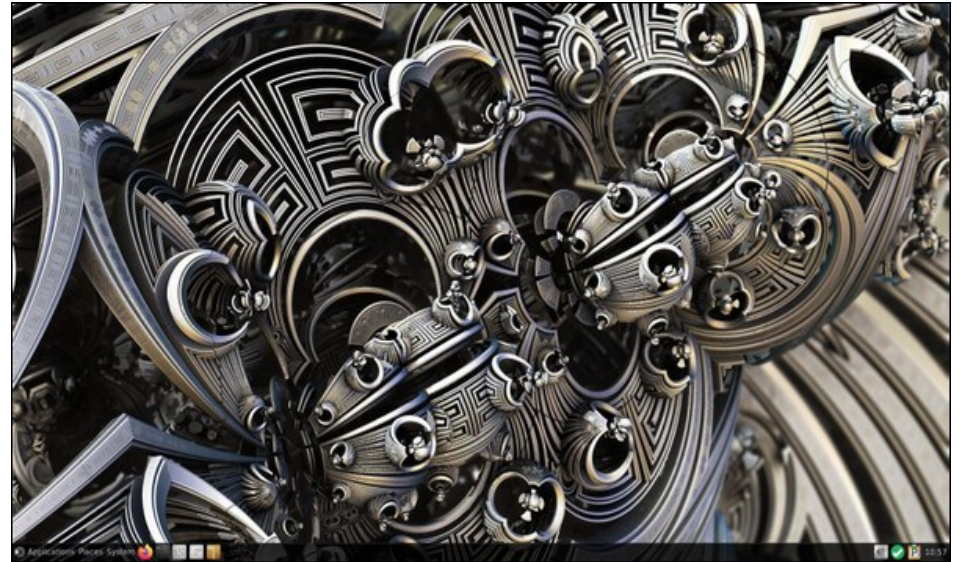
Use the clues to unmix the letters to make a new word. Remix the letters in the red boxes to solve the puzzle.

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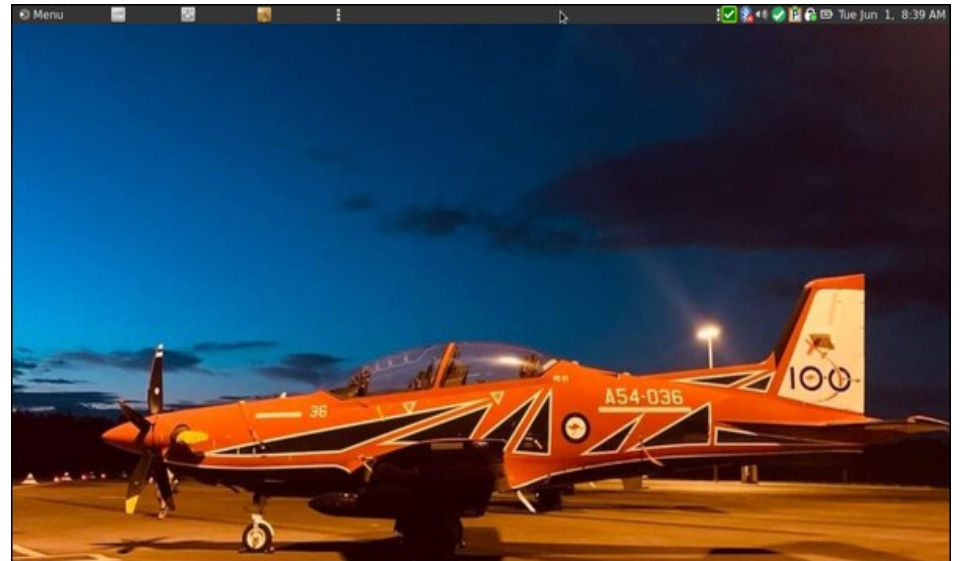
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Posted by jogurtmen, on June 16, 2021, running Mate.



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