

The PCLinuxOS magazine

Volume 197

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*ICYMI: Five Things Scammers
Hope You "Google"*

*Inkscape Tutorial:
Create A Celtic Knot*

*NovelWriter: Help Writing
Your Next Bestseller*

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The **PCLinuxOS** magazine

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The PCLinuxOS Magazine is a monthly online publication containing PCLinuxOS-related materials. It is published primarily for members of the PCLinuxOS community. The magazine staff is comprised of volunteers from the PCLinuxOS community.

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From The Chief Editor's Desk

The PCLinuxOS Magazine has, for quite some time now, been running an ad urging PCLinuxOS users to NOT use their phones while they are behind the wheel. The data is clear that doing so leads to distracted driving, and as expected, leads to often catastrophic outcomes.

Advancements in mobile technology have made us more “connected” than any prior time in history. Most of us are only a text or phone call away from those who need to contact us. That is the upside.

But the downside is the number of people – behind the wheel of a vehicle, nonetheless – on their cell phones. You’re behind some idjit at a red stoplight. The light turns green. And we sit there until the light turns yellow again, all because the idjit at the “front of the line” thought it was more important to text or scroll facebook or watch a video than it was to keep their attention on the task of driving.

What’s even more mind-numbing is which group of drivers I see that are guilty of this offense. You might think it’s the younger drivers, and you’d be wrong. Nope. It’s the OLDER DRIVERS. These are the ones who initially got their driver’s license before the explosion of mobile technology. These older drivers, you’d think, should know better.



There are enough potential distractions while driving a vehicle that we really don’t need to add in the additional distraction of texting, Facebook, videos, and other online content. Pedestrians, bicyclists, road conditions, traffic

patterns, construction zones, turning vehicles, the surrounding vehicles, changing the radio station, other passengers in the vehicle, and animals all offer enough potential distractions that we really don’t need to add in other distractions.

Sending that text message can wait. Scrolling Facebook can wait. Sending that reply to Twitter can wait. Watching that video can wait. Sending that email can wait. Your life or someone else’s life makes it worth waiting to perform those tasks. In many instances, lives hang in the balance.

A vehicle going down the road at 55 mph (88.5 kph) travels the length of an American football field (100 yards, or 91.4 meters) in **less than four seconds**. Now there are a gazillion statistics about texting, and one of them is NOT how long, on average, it takes to reply to/answer a text. On average, most texts in the U.S. are read within five seconds. The response to those text messages, naturally, depend on the length of time it takes the end user to compose a reply to a text message. Longer replies require more time to compose. But, let’s say, for example, that it takes you five seconds to read the text message, and another 20 seconds to reply. In that 25 second time period, you would have traveled over FIVE American football field lengths – over 500 yards or over 450 meters. That’s over a quarter of a mile, or just under a half kilometer! A lot of things can happen or

change within that distance in that short period of time.

At any given time, it's estimated that 660,000 drivers are using their cell phones while driving. In the U.S., one out of every four car accidents are directly attributable to texting while driving. Those are ALARMING numbers!

Where I live, in Missouri, the lawmakers JUST THIS YEAR made using your cell phone while operating a motor vehicle illegal. It's a mystery why it took so long. Police can't pull someone over just for using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle. BUT, if the violator commits another traffic offense and it's discovered that the violator was also using their cell phone at the time of the offense, the offense of using their cell phone while operating a motor vehicle can be added on to the list of offenses.

In many other jurisdictions around the world, it is already illegal to use your cell phone while behind the wheel of a vehicle. It only makes sense. Everyone is in agreement that operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated is a bad idea. Bad things happen. Using your cell phone while operating a motor vehicle is as bad as, if not worse (depending on the study you cite), than driving while intoxicated.

So, please don't be like all these idjits out there, on their phones while operating a motor vehicle. Put your phone down, and "arrive alive." Your life and the lives of those around you depend on it. Most of all, we don't want to lose any PCLinuxOS users because they were on their

phones while operating a motor vehicle. We'd also hate to see any PCLinuxOS users cause the demise of innocent bystanders because they were on their phones while operating a motor vehicle.

I shot this month's abstract cover image while in the waiting room of my son's speech therapist, while he was in one of his weekly sessions. My daughter would always try to see how tall of a tower she could build with these building blocks. The image is looking down the center of one of those towers she would build.

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



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AI Regulation: Too Little, Too Late?

by Paul Arnote (parnote)



A “new genie” has escaped the bottle. A new prince occupies the castle. Elvis has left the building. The barn door has been bolted after the cows and horses have left.

No matter how you frame it, talks about “regulating” (read that legislation) the new, emerging and proliferating artificial intelligence (AI) technology might just be too little, too late.

I’ll talk mostly about efforts in the U.S. to “regulate” the explosion of AI across the computing landscape, simply because this is where I am, and where the information I’m exposed to is most focused. But, we’ll also talk a bit about the E.U., since they offer the best head-to-head comparison with U.S. efforts.

But first, we need to look at a bit of recent history.

A History Of Non-Action

“Social media” popped up, seemingly overnight, around a quarter century ago. Some of those early sites are nothing more than a blip on the history of the internet (think MySpace, followed by Google+ and many others).

Almost as fast, social media sites became the de facto “town hall” for the internet. Just as you might expect, that came with both good and bad. Although it allowed users from all around the globe to connect and share ideas and common interests, it also provided a fertile breeding ground for the tribal mentality that besieges and divides society to this day. Users would gather with those who shared their views, excluding or running off those who didn’t. So, the “town hall” became a town square, with each corner hosting different groups of users, all with differing views. The tribal mentality effectively eliminated any healthy discussion of those views among “warring tribes,” and shut down the process of these groups with differing views of ever finding common ground. Instead, they just sit/stand and shout at one another, with neither side listening to the other.





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Of course, signing up for and using these social media sites is free. But little in this world is truly “free.” There’s always a price/cost, albeit often a hidden one. In the case of social media sites, it’s the hidden cost. They sell advertising space on their sites, all while vacuuming up every last morsel of your personally identifiable private information to provide/sell to advertisers, who then use that information to target you with advertising tailored to your interests. Your personally identifiable private information is the currency that fuels social media.

In the U.S., legislators and others who oversee regulations did NOTHING to regulate either social media or the collection of your personally identifiable private information. Their inaction was louder than the song of crickets while camping in the remotest parts of nowhere.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the E.U. had the cojones and foresight to enact the General Data Protection Regulation, a.k.a. the GDPR. The law, which went into effect five years ago on May 25, 2018, effectively put control of personally identifiable private information back into the hands of its owner, and put limits on data collection and how long that data could be retained. Even though they dragged their feet on addressing the issue, the eventual passage of the GDPR puts the E.U. *lightyears* ahead of any type of the U.S., where data and privacy protections are pretty much non-existent.

Oh, sure you have states that have tried to address data collection and privacy concerns. One such state is California. But, for the most part, such laws don’t carry the weight of federal laws, nor sufficient penalties to make them effective, rendering them little more than lip-service and a public spectacle. Mostly, it’s just political showmanship so those elected officials can stay in office, collect votes for re-election, and so they can say “look at what I’ve done for you!”

It’s one thing to pass laws. It’s entirely another thing to *enforce* those laws. Even fining corporations that make multiple billions of dollars every month a few million dollars in “penalties” is merely chump change for the offending corporations. Often, it’s cheaper for the corporations to pay the fines than it is to institute changes that will ultimately and significantly lower their monthly profits.

Plus, you have to decide who will enforce the laws. Will you create a new enforcement entity, or (and as is the most likely case), will you strap an already under-manned, under-budgeted existing entity with the task of enforcing the new laws? It’s easy to figure out which path most states take regarding enforcement. Taking the second path typically results in under-enforcement of the data collection and privacy laws, with only the most egregious violators prosecuted as an example to other violators or would-be violators.

And then you have the companies affected by such laws helping to write such laws, and pour a ton of money into lobbying against legislation that

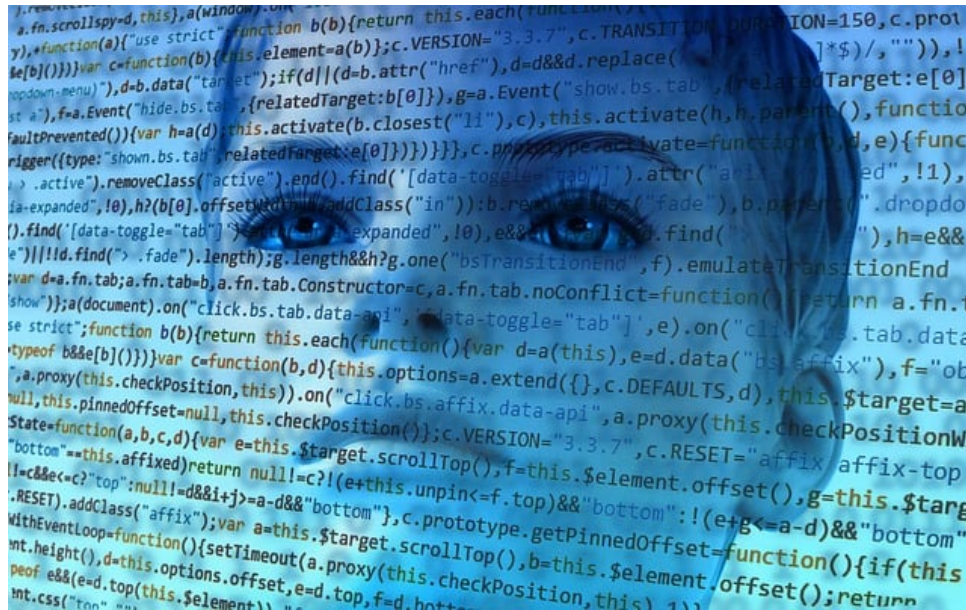


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“goes against” their path to riches. Now, if you were going to help write a law affecting your line of work, of course you’d want to make sure it’s as advantageous to your profits and bottom line as possible. This is exactly what happens in every single instance where those affected help write the laws that regulate their behavior.

Now, The Emergence Of AI



Without a doubt, AI is having its moment in the spotlight. Stories about it are in the “news” everywhere. I can hardly go a day without reading yet another story about how much of an asset AI is going to be, or how it will lead to a destruction of society, and everything in between. There seem to be as many opinions about the impact of AI as there are people writing articles about it. In the U.S., AI’s moment in the spotlight is way ahead of any attempts to regulate it. I mean, data collection and privacy haven’t even been addressed, and here is yet another new technology that demands attention.

It’s not that legislators haven’t tried or are opposed to regulating AI. It’s more like they are all revved up in their sand buggy, but all they are doing is spinning their wheels in the sand.

Sure, Congress has [held](#) hearings. The White House has issued “policy [statements](#).” But little to nothing has been done to put up the “guardrails” that so many are calling for. One of the things explored include “mandatory” disclosure when information has been generated by AI. That is a good idea, just so long as the information originates in the U.S.’s jurisdiction, and the “rules” are followed. A quick drive down the highway should show you how well people follow the rules. What happens when that information is generated from one of the countries responsible for abuses of technology, like North Korea, Russia, or the People’s Republic of China? All three countries are “safe havens” for threat actors, and many of those threat actors are state sponsored.

Three prominent experts with AI have testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law (click on the following links to read their testimony). One was [Gary Marcus](#), professor emeritus at New York University. He has been involved with AI, helping to start AI companies. His testimony highlights the worries and risks with AI, and the need for companies and governments to work together to minimize risks while keeping AI accessible for all people.

Another was [Christina Montgomery](#), Chief Privacy & Trust Officer for IBM. Keep in mind that it was an earlier version of AI produced by IBM, known as Watson, that won the TV game show Jeopardy!. She spoke at the hearings to express how she, as IBM’s AI Ethics Board co-chair, sees the necessary AI guardrails working.

Probably the most high profile person to give testimony at the hearing was [Sam Altman](#), CEO and co-founder of OpenAI. It is OpenAI that has produced the latest version of AI that has the computing world all excited, with ChatGPT and DALL-E 2. He discussed the lengths OpenAI goes to ensure that its AI products are safe and appropriately restrained.

Other tech leaders, including a group that includes Elon Musk and Steve Wozniak, have called for a six month “pause” on further AI development in an [open letter](#), to give industry, regulators and legislators a chance to catch up with constraints and guardrails for AI. The letter has nearly 30,000 signatories at the time of the writing of this article. Other tech

leaders want to continue AI development, full steam ahead, and call Musk's (et al) concerns unfounded. Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt is one tech leader who doesn't support a six month A.I. pause 'because it will simply benefit China,' according to an [article](#) on Fortune.

Meanwhile, the E.U. is considering far-reaching legislation on artificial intelligence (AI), according to an [article](#) on the World Economic Forum website. The fact that they are even considering legislation, which has already been drafted, puts the E.U. years ahead of the U.S. This is especially so when you factor in the protections already in place and afforded by the GDPR.

On the day that Elon Musk et al called for a pause in the "dangerous race" to develop ever more powerful AI, the UK government published its long awaited "[Pro-innovation approach to AI regulation](#)" white paper, according to an [article](#) on Lexology.

AI is the topic d'jour in most of the major countries with a reliance on tech. India is proposing its own legislation, aside from calling for an international approach to regulating AI. China is taking a look at a broad approach that would affect any AI company that has the ability to reach Chinese internet users.

Why Regulating AI Is So Difficult



THAT is the \$25,000,000 question. As you can imagine, there isn't any singular answer.

With even CEOs of AI companies *asking for regulation*, it isn't that clear cut. The problem is how to regulate AI without stifling development, deployment or access.

Congress (I use that term collectively, for the House and the Senate) is largely ignorant about what AI is, what its use is, how it works, etc. Only ONE member of Congress has a master's degree in artificial intelligence, and that is Representative Jay Obernolte of California. To address this knowledge gap, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has arranged a "class" for any/all members of Congress, regardless of their party affiliation, according to an [article](#) from Fox News. Lawmakers who attend will have the chance to hear from two AI experts from MIT.

But this is also the same group that really has no idea how the internet works, how email works, or any other modern tech for that matter. These lawmakers are dinosaurs when it comes to tech issues. So, how can they effectively write legislation to guard against abuses of tech? This is probably the number one reason that a *transparent* partnership between lawmakers and the tech industry is (or should be) the ONLY path forward.

According to an [article](#) on Fox News, in 2022, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed the American Data Privacy and Protection Act (ADPPA), a bill that's aimed at boosting data privacy rights but would also play a big role in regulating emerging AI systems. The ADPPA won almost unanimous support from both parties last year and continues to be supported by companies that are eager to build trust in their AI products, and they believe that a federal regulatory structure will help them get there. BSA/Software Alliance represents dozens of companies, including Microsoft, Okta, Salesforce and others, that build software and AI tools that companies use to run their businesses. BSA is working closely with the committee to get a version of that bill passed this year that it hopes can be approved in a full House vote.

Then you have the concerns of how much any potential lobbyists and special interest groups might have influenced any possible legislation. The lobbyists and special interest groups will work tirelessly to water down any potential penalties, as well as any meaningful constraints. That. Is. Their. Jobs. The end result is typically legislation and regulations that favor the corporations, and the people it's intended to protect be damned. The promise of corporate/industry campaign donations for re-election coffers goes a long way towards getting the attention of a lawmaker who is ultimately concerned about re-election and lengthening his or her stay in office.

Another concern about AI is eliminating bias in its use and responses. That might be a bit difficult, since AI is likely to possess the same biases as those that program it. In other areas, AI has been caught making stuff up (lying) and it's a bit difficult to discern what is factual and what is fiction.

There is also the fear that AI could be harnessed to perform character assassinations on individuals. Without full disclosure, it would be almost impossible to discern whether something actually happened or not. In today's societal and political divisions, and with a major presidential election just around the corner, AI saying something happened or someone said something when neither actually happened is a HUGE concern. Without proper and adequate safeguards, AI could contribute to even greater divisions at a time when it's already extremely difficult to separate information from disinformation.

Summary

We've already talked about how frighteningly real images created by DALL-E appear, and how easy it is to wipe out the EXIF info of an image to help blur that line between reality and fantasy in last month's issue of The PCLinuxOS Magazine.

Because of their inaction on other tech trends, I personally don't hold out much hope for U.S. lawmakers to "get it right." Gridlock and inaction seem to be their ultimate goal, at least judging by their actions (or

inactions). Only time will tell. We should all hope that they act before AI is used catastrophically or causes irreparable harm.

The whole issue about regulating AI is evolving at a lightning pace. We're all going to have to stay tuned and pay close attention. I suspect I'll be writing more about this in the very near future.

All images by [geralt](#), on [Pixabay](#).



PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner



Air Fryer Doritos Chicken Tenders

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS:

9 oz. (255 g) Nacho Cheese Doritos
1 egg, beaten
2 pounds (910 g) chicken tenders, cut into thin strips.
1 teaspoon (5 ml) garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon (2.5 ml) salt
fresh black pepper to taste
For dipping: Ranch, sour cream, ketchup, BBQ sauce or your favorite sauce

DIRECTIONS:

Place Doritos or tortilla chips in a bag and crush them with a rolling pin into fine pieces. The smaller the chip pieces, the better they will stick to the chicken.

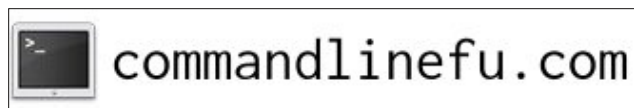
Cut the chicken into thin strips and season with garlic powder, salt and pepper. Put the beaten egg into a bowl.

Dip each chicken strip into the beaten egg then into the crushed Doritos. Gently press the chicken into the crushed tortilla chips, then use the spoon to pour chips over the top of the chicken. Gently press chips into chicken. This method allows the chips to stay dry. If they're wet, they stick less to the chicken.

Spray air fryer basket or racks with oil spray. Gently lay chicken pieces in the basket or on the racks. Spray oil spray on top of coated chicken.

Air Fry at 380F (195C) for 15 minutes. Gently turn the chicken pieces and spray the tops with oil spray (don't turn the chicken too rough or else the Doritos pieces will fall off).

Air Fry for an additional 3-5 minutes, or until the crust is crispy golden brown and chicken is cooked through. Serve with your favorite dip or sauce!



TIPS:

You can bake these in your oven at 400F (204.4C) for 15-20 minutes, turning over once halfway through. Test to make sure that the chicken is no longer pink inside.

Substitute Nacho Cheese Doritos with any other flavored Doritos such as Salsa Verde, Spicy Sweet Chili or Cool Ranch

NUTRITION:

Calories: 392 Carbs: 28g Fiber: 2g
Sodium: 559mg Protein: 36g





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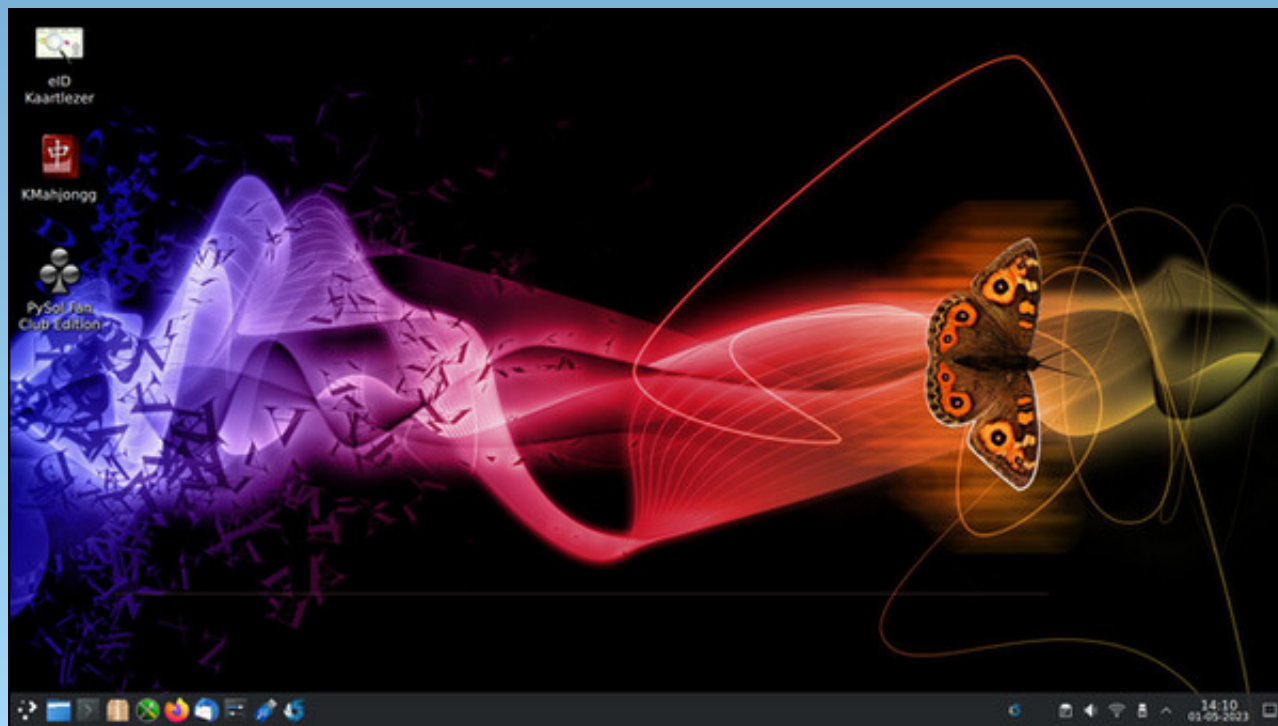
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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by mutse, May 1, 2023, running Mate.



NovelWriter: Help Writing Your Next Bestseller

by expresso

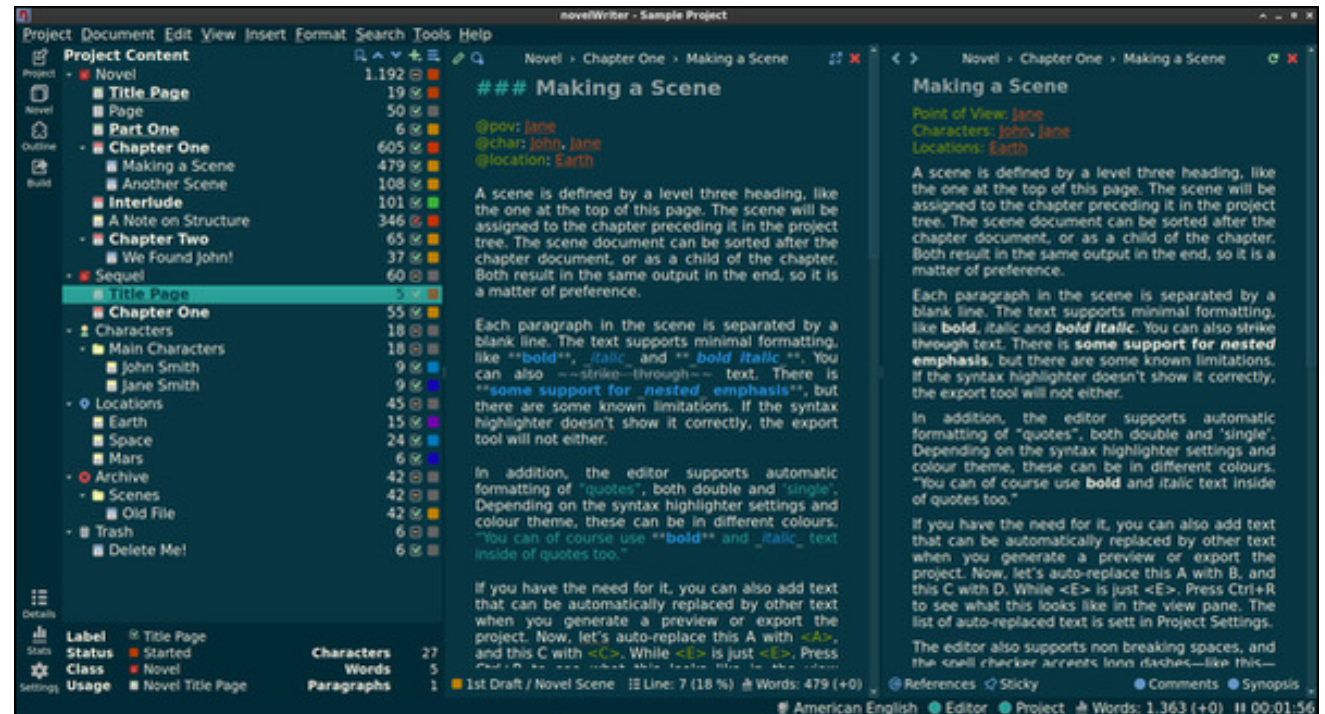
According to Synaptic, **NovelWriter** is “a markdown-like editor for novels”. Well, what does this mean?

As the name implies, it’s a program intended for writing novels. It has several features to help with that, including an adaption to the markdown syntax to help with getting an overview of the novel. On my computer (a reasonably old one), this application launches instantly and is very responsive.

When we open NovelWriter we are immediately greeted by an “open project” window. It lists the projects we’re busy with, which can be opened by double-clicking. There are several other options at the bottom to create a new project, remove a project, and to change the current path.

I chose to create a new project. It asks me several questions about the project and finally asks me whether I would like to have it fill the project. I chose the option which results in an example project (right).

On the right hand side is the preview of the novel. This pane can be turned on and off as desired by clicking the “x” or selecting **Document > Close Document View**. This is



This is what we now see.

what results from compiling the project, but here it’s just a preview. The middle column is the editor.

Compiling a resulting project is quite easy: just select “Build project” from the tools menu and a window pops up which allows you to tweak the build details. Once you’re satisfied you can click have it saved in various formats. I would have loved to see some more export formats, but one can always hope.

On the left side is the project tree. Each entry in there references a separate document. Below the project tree is some information on the entry selected. It contains some handy information, such as word count and whether an item is “active” (to be included in the compilation process). There’s also some information communicated by the colored squares at the rightmost side of each entry. The colors can be configured and their description changed, right from within the GUI.

There's also a distraction free mode, which makes the application go full screen and drops you into an editor, with only a few icons and some additional information (View > Focus Mode). This is handy for writers who wish to work without clutter on their screen. In this mode only things which are strictly necessary to be there are present.

Finally, if you want a bird's eye view of your project, you can take a look at the outline view. While – at the moment – it's not possible to change what you see, it does provide loads of quick information about each chapter and scene of a novel.



It is well organized and provides a good overview of your story.

Finally, there's something which makes NovelWriter quite interesting: on top of it supporting a form of markdown (which is explained in its excellent documentation), it also has a tag system (of which, admittedly, the documentation could use some improvement).

In the project tree in the first image of this article, the user can see that there are several different types of root folders. These indicate the tag used to reference their content. However, if a user wants to be able to reference a note from his story, the note needs to have a tag assigned to it. The tagging system is literally part of the format of NovelWriter.

An example from the example project: there's a character called "Jane" and, as you can see, there's a "@char" entry on her, multiple entries of the same type can be referenced by separating them with commas. Then, below the "characters" root folder, there's an entry on Jane. Somewhere in this document there's a "@tag: Jane". Tags can be right clicked and followed through the project. This is useful if you want to reference a note on a character while being busy with a scene or chapter.

There's also a menu which lets you include various symbols which are not easily typed. In that same menu, there's an option to convert single and double quotes. It's details like this which makes this program so nice to work with.

By default NovelWriter installs are configured with a pretty bright color scheme, however there is a good selection from bright as well as dark skins and color schemes for syntax highlighting readily built in.

There are some drawbacks of this program. While it is definitely a mature project, with an active maintainer, it misses some features which would make life easier, most notably the ability

to compile epub and pdf documents, which would be nice. Also, at times, especially when working with the project tree, it feels a bit clunky.



Export formats

The file format which NovelWriter uses to store its projects has both advantages and drawbacks. A NovelWriter project is basically a directory structure eventually containing dozens of individual files. However, each of those is in a human readable format. This allows the writer to combine NovelWriter with a revision control system, such as git. Another advantage is protection against corruption. A disadvantage is that there are potentially a lot of small files to be dealt with.

Overall this is an excellent program for (aspiring) authors. The program appears instantly on your screen and is very well behaved. It has good configuration options, especially when related to the project at hand. It has a tendency to grow on you, and once you're familiar with it, you can be very productive with it. All that being said, its user interface can seem clunky at places.

It can be found in Synaptic as “novelwriter”, and its website (which is quite nice) is <https://novelwriter.io/>, where you can learn more.



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Instant Messaging Server

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Instant Message!

Screenshot Showcase



Posted by jogurmen, May 7, 2023, running KDE.



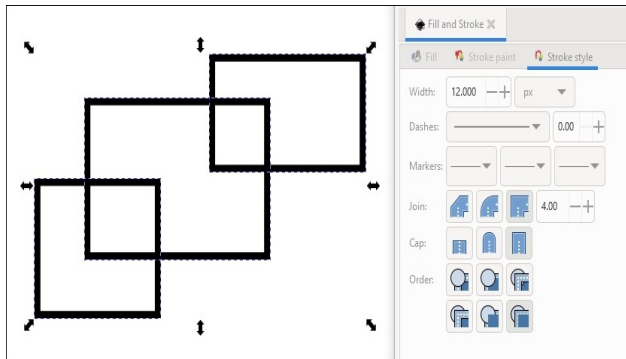
Inkscape Tutorial: Create A Celtic Knot

by Meemaw

As I'm looking on YouTube for interesting things to do with Inkscape, I found one from [IronEchoDesign](#) on how to make a [Celtic Knot](#). It's fairly easy and very fun!

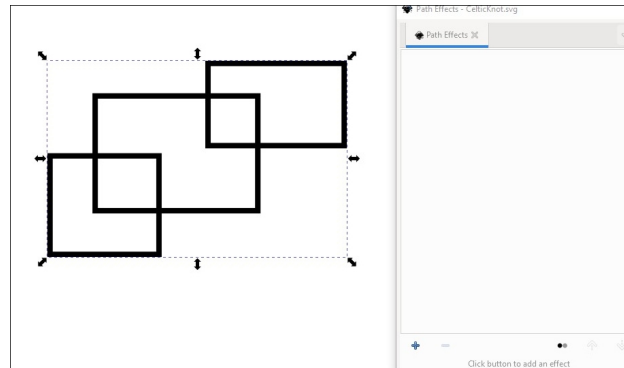
In this tutorial, we're going to use the **Path Effect** called **Knot**.

I'm going to use some rectangles the first time to illustrate what this effect does. If I draw three rectangles and overlap them I get something like this:

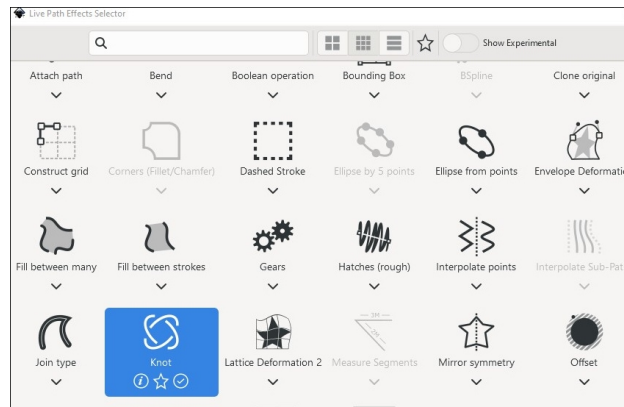


Make sure you have them all selected, and choose **Path > Object to path**. Showing the settings, I did these with a 12 px stroke, and no fill. I also want to choose **Square Cap** in the stroke settings. We'll get to that soon. Also make sure you **group** your objects, because the path effect only works on one object. Now

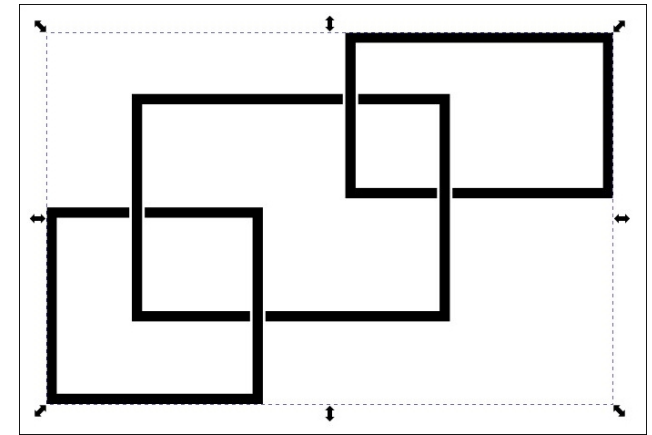
choose **Path > Path Effects**. You'll get a window like this:



Add a path effect by clicking on the plus sign at bottom left. You'll get another window:

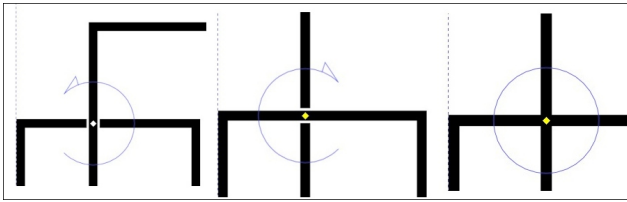


Since I've already done this, the **Knot** effect was already chosen. However, you can find it by searching, but the effects are listed in alphabetical order, so you should find it easily. As soon as you click Knot, the effect will be applied (top, right).



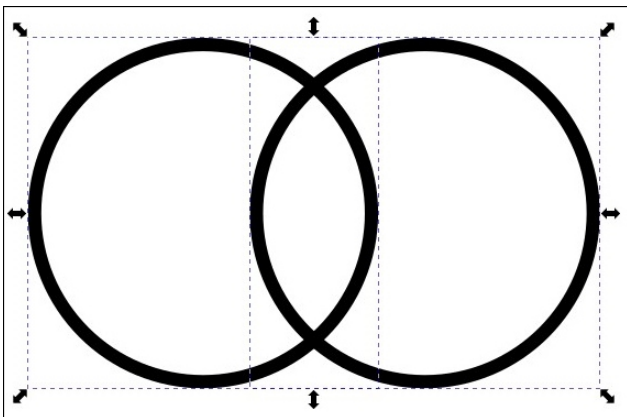
Notice it now looks like they are interlinked. From the path effects settings window you can choose the gap between the lines to make it a smaller gap or a larger gap. The default is set at 3 and "In units of stroke width" is checked. This means that if you set your stroke in pixels, your gap will be pixels, and if your stroke is millimeters, your gap will be as well. Above the gap is a setting called the **Switcher**. This is a tool for making sure your strokes are truly interlinked, so if you are looking at which strokes go over or under the strokes they cross, and want to switch them, you can do that. Change your tool to **Edit Paths by Nodes** and you will see a handle with a circle around it. That's the switcher. Click on it once, and it will reverse the lines so the other looks like it's on top. Click it again and it will remove the gaps entirely. As shown on the next page, the first on the left is what it looks like when you first see it.

The middle image is after it's clicked once and the right image is after a second click.

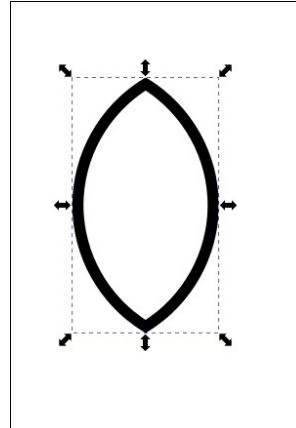


Want to change another intersection? Drag the switcher to the one you want. Be careful that you don't click outside your object, because sometimes when you click back, your switcher is gone. You can get it back if you click on your stroke while the path effects settings window is open.

Now that we have most of what we need, let's make an actual celtic knot. We'll use circles instead of rectangles this time, so draw a circle. Instead of duplicating it, use **Copy & Paste** to make another circle the same size (Iron Echo Design's tutorial mentioned that duplicating sometimes causes problems). Make sure you choose **Path > Object to path**.



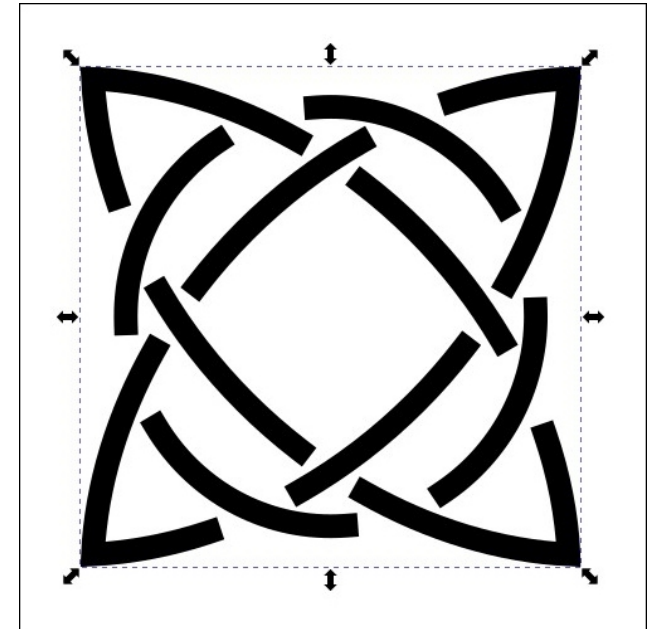
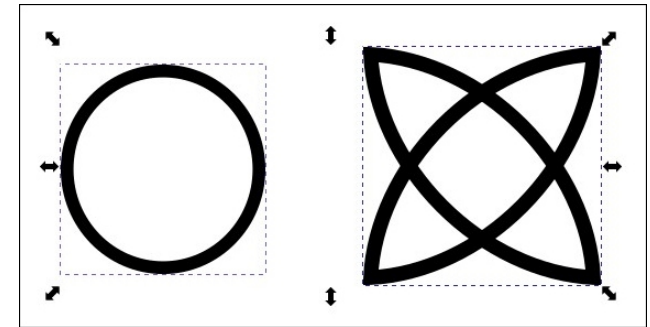
Select them both and use your **Align & Distribute** tool to align the bottoms of the circles, then choose **Path > Intersection**. It should look like this:



You can make this a bit longer if you wish. Click on the arrows again so you get your rotation arrows, then hold down (CTRL) and drag the object until it is rotated about 45 degrees. Holding the (CTRL) down will allow it to move about 15 degrees and then stop until you drag more. Now copy & paste to create another object just like the one you have. Reverse the direction of the new one (flip horizontally) and center them together. Also, create another circle (top, right).

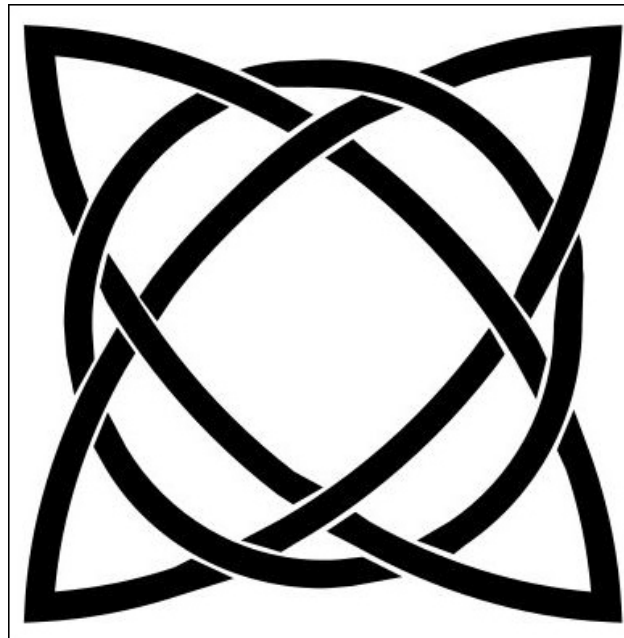
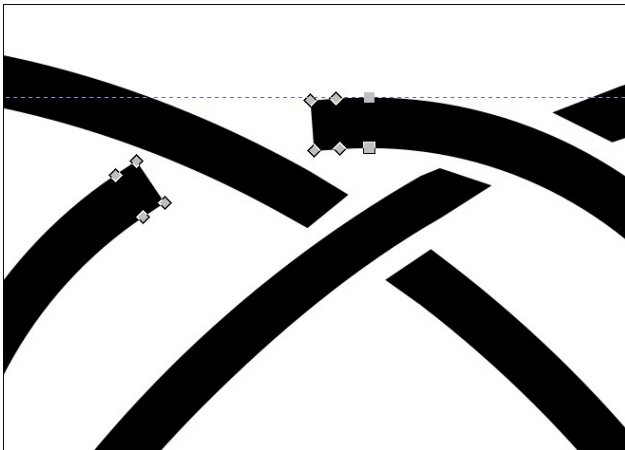
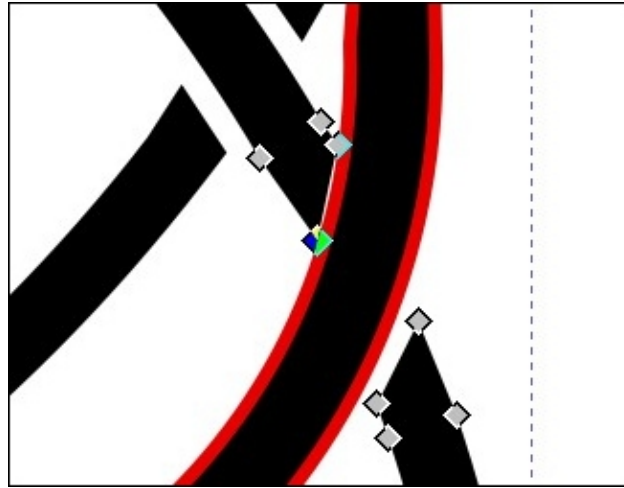
Make sure they are all selected, then center them horizontally and vertically. Now group them, then choose **Path > Path Effects** and choose **Knot** (right).

You should check first to see that your gaps alternate (like I discussed above). Wow, that still doesn't look as good as I had hoped! Good thing



we set our stroke settings for square cap, and I'll show you what to do to fix this. First, click on **Path > Stroke to path**, then change your tool to **Edit path by nodes**. You'll now see four handles near each of the ends of the square paths. You can drag the nodes until the gap looks the way it should (next page, top left).

You can use another trick to help. Since you added **Stroke to path**, you can add a stroke to



the outside of your line temporarily, and that will help you line up your gaps at an equal distance. You can always remove it later if you wish. I put a 3px stroke on this to help me edit the gaps, but took it off afterwards (center, top).

While I've gotten a little shaky in my old age, I have managed to fix the gaps. I know you can do it, too. Have fun!



PCLinuxOS Users Don't

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

While Driving.

***Put Down Your
Phone & Arrive Alive.***

Repo Review: Puddletag

by David Pardue (kalwisti)

If your digital music collection is similar to mine, the music files are haphazardly tagged with various degrees of completeness. Some files may lack informative names and cover art; others may have misspelled track titles or incorrect genres. To better organize your collection, specialized audio tag editors allow you to add and/or edit metadata. Metadata lets information about the audio file -- such as Title, Artist, Composer, Album, Genre, Year -- be stored in the audio file itself. (These core tags are popularly known as ID3 tags).

Puddletag is a simple yet powerful, Qt-based music tag editor that uses Python 3 and PyQt5 (for the GUI). Under the hood, the application uses Mutagen, a Python module which handles audio metadata. Puddletag is an alternative to EasyTag, the oldest and perhaps most commonly used tag editor.

Puddletag is a mature project with a fourteen-year track record. It was first released in July 2008. The original developer, known by the Internet moniker concentricpuddle, is now assisted by a group of developers which includes Sandro Tosi (a computer scientist from Italy) and Corubba (Germany). The program has been translated into French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Czech, Swedish and Russian. The version in the official PCLinuxOS repository is 1.2.0 (released in November 2016).

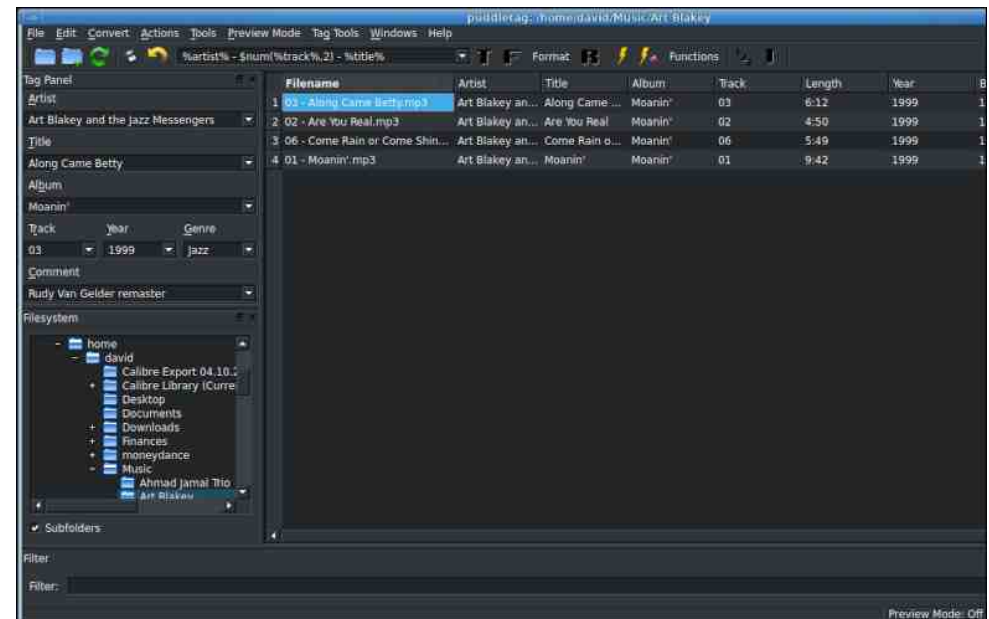
Puddletag is a Linux-native application that has a user interface similar to the popular Windows freeware program Mp3tag. Its most distinctive feature is a spreadsheet-like layout for tag editing. This design allows you to copy and paste one (or more) fields from one file across many, select all tags in a tag column, edit one and then have it cascade through the selection. The layout also makes it easier to spot problems or untagged elements.

The usual tag editor features, such as extracting tag information from filenames, renaming files based on their tags by using patterns and basic tag editing, are supported.

Then there are Functions, which can do things like replace text and/or trim it, do case conversions, etc. Actions help automate repetitive tasks. Integrated web searching via MusicBrainz, Discogs.com, FreeDB and Amazon is also possible.

Supported formats include the following: ID3v1, ID3v2 (.mp3), MP4 (.mp4, .m4a), VorbisComments (.ogg, .flac), Musepack (.mpc), Monkey's Audio (.ape) and WavPack (.wv).

This screenshot shows Puddletag's basic layout, with the contents of my /Music/Art Blakey folder open, as well as the Tag Panel (in the upper-left quadrant) for the highlighted track:



If you find the Tag Panel distracting, you can dismiss it by clicking on its Close button, or by going to the Windows menu and unchecking/deselecting the Tag Panel option.

Puddletag can use a "manual" method for adding ID3 tags to your music files, or a "semi-automated" fashion. That flexibility is welcome because you will not always succeed in retrieving metadata for your albums from Puddletag's integrated Tag Sources.

Retrieving Metadata from Integrated Tag Sources

Puddletag streamlines metadata searches by serving as a gateway to several online music databases. This will save you time by populating empty tags and retrieving cover art for your music collection. You choose your desired database via the Tag Sources window. In version 1.2.0, these Tag Sources are included: MusicBrainz, Discogs.com, FreeDB and Amazon. (The program's current release -- ver. 2.2.0 -- includes the aforementioned databases plus AllMusic.com). Based on my testing of the app, MusicBrainz was the most dependable/reliable Tag Source.

I will summarize these sources, since not all readers may be familiar with them.

FreeDB: The granddaddy of online music databases, it played a key role in the history of music digitization. Its name was synonymous with the ability to rip an audio CD. FreeDB was a community-generated database of strictly CD music metadata. It was established as a free alternative to the proprietary CDDB ['Compact Disc Database'] owned by Gracenote, Inc.

FreeDB was shut down in March 2020. However, the database was extracted and found a new home/host at gnudb.gnudb.org. The database currently contains 4.7 million entries.

Unfortunately, FreeDB search capability does not work in our older PCLinuxOS version because its setting cannot be configured via the user

preferences. It can only be changed by altering the source code. So this value (from 2016) is querying the defunct FreeDB address, rather than the current one.

MusicBrainz: MusicBrainz has almost all the FreeDB database imported, plus it has added more entries of its own. The resulting data set is typically of higher quality than FreeDB. MusicBrainz covers all kinds of recordings / releases with unique IDs; therefore, you will find separate entries for vinyl LPs as well as country-specific releases (e.g., US, Japan, Germany, etc.). MusicBrainz metadata often includes album cover art.

(As an aside, MusicBrainz has its own file tagger software -- called Picard -- that can access the MusicBrainz database to locate metadata to embed into your music files. Picard is available in the official PCLinuxOS repository).

Discogs: Discogs is a database with information about audio recordings -- including commercial releases, promotional releases and bootlegs. Although its original goal was to be the most comprehensive database of electronic music, Discogs now includes releases in all genres. Discogs also has a Marketplace feature to facilitate sales between music sellers and buyers. (It is similar to eBay in that Discogs does not sell anything directly; interested purchasers buy from individual sellers via the platform).

Amazon: Accessing Amazon metadata is not a realistic option, in my opinion. You must create an Amazon Associates account with registration for the Product Advertising API. In addition, your Associates ID must have periodic sales to keep the key active. Otherwise, Amazon will close the account.

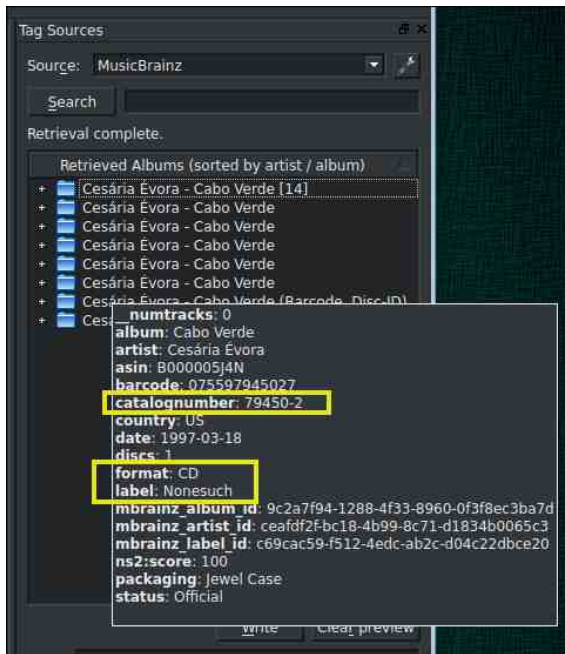
It is a fairly straightforward procedure to retrieve metadata via MusicBrainz. First, open the Tag Sources window. Go to the Windows menu, and select/tick the Tag Sources option. Second, choose MusicBrainz as the Source database to search. Third, select/highlight a row of your



music file. Finally, click on the Search button. In the example below, I am searching for metadata on singer Cesaria Evora's album, Cabo Verde:



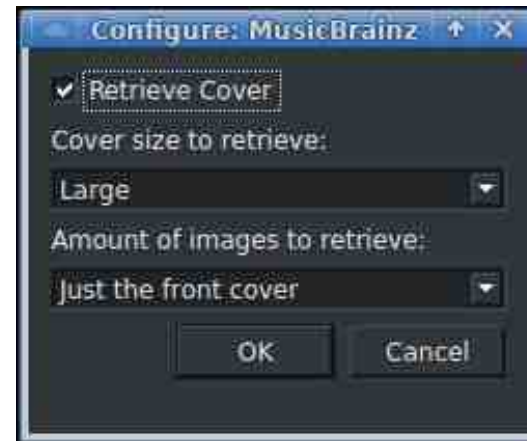
Now, select the correct album metadata from your retrieval list.



Tag Sources are album-based rather than track-based. However, you can choose individual tracks from an album). Click on the Write button. (Puddletag will not write any metadata retrieved from the Tag Source until you instruct it to). Puddletag can retrieve cover art, if it is present in the metadata. Click on the wrench icon to the right of the Source box (top, right).



Next, select / tick the Retrieve Cover option and then click the OK button.

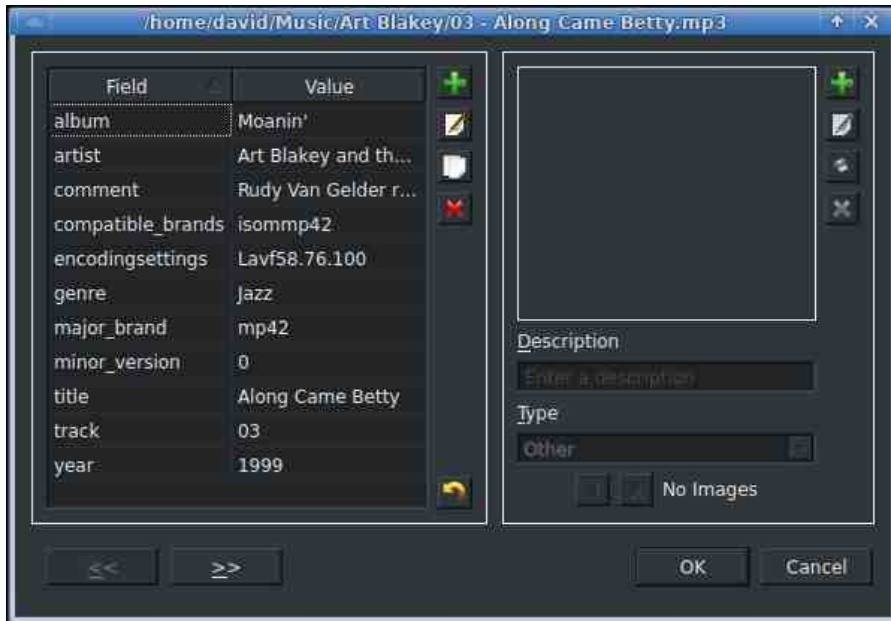


Adding Cover Art Manually

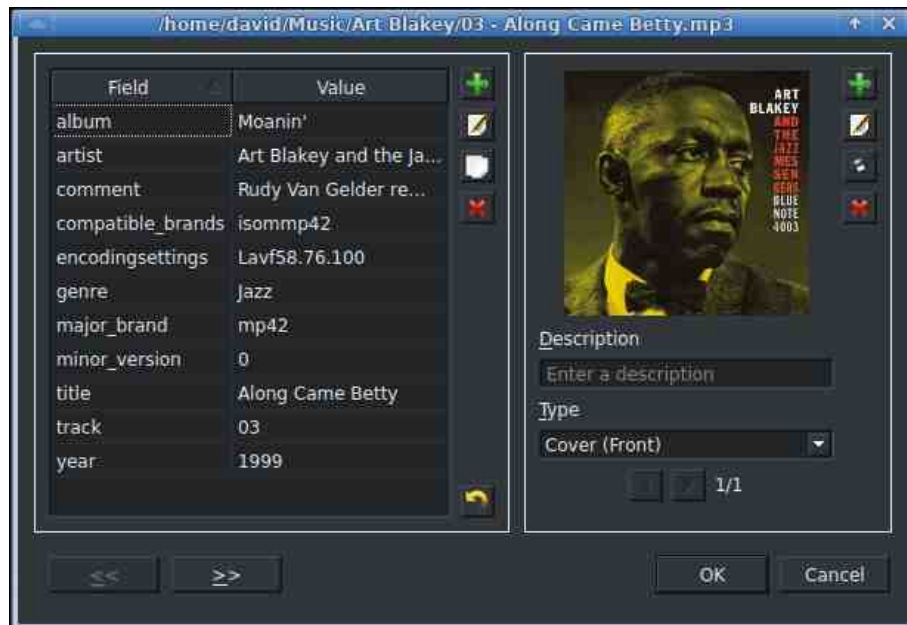
If your Tag Source lacks cover art for some reason, it is simple to add it manually.

First, do a web search for the album artwork and save the image(s) to your PC. This [article](#) suggests some good sites to explore.

Now, select/highlight a row of your music file. Type Ctrl+E to access the Extended Tags dialog. A pop-up window will appear. In the right pane of that window, click on the green "+" [plus] sign (next page, top left).



Navigate to your downloaded image file, select it and click on the Open button. Make a selection from the Type drop-down menu – you probably want to choose Cover (Front) – and click the OK button.



Click on the Save icon [a floppy diskette] in the main toolbar, or type Ctrl+S, to finalize this change.

A Note on Puddletag's Flatpak

The most recent version of Puddletag, 2.2.0 (released in July 2022), is available on Flathub. Although I was able to successfully install the Flatpak on my PCLinuxOS system, I was disappointed that none of the online music databases/Tag Sources worked. When I tried to search, the app would throw error messages. I was unable to troubleshoot this glitch. Since metadata searching is an important feature to me, I uninstalled the Flatpak and went back to using ver. 1.2.0 from our official repository. (Another factor in my decision to delete the Flatpak was its huge size; after installation, it occupied nearly 5GiB of disk space).

Additional Resources

Current development activity on Puddletag has shifted over to GitHub. Nevertheless, there are several [mini-tutorials](#) (with screenshots) available on its previous website.

If you prefer video tutorials, the most helpful one I found was created by user [ProfessorKaos64](#). Although the version he uses is older – it is likely ver. 1.0.1 or 1.0.2 – the features that he demonstrates have not changed since 2012 - 2013.

Summary

If you are looking for an alternative to EasyTag that is Qt-based, Puddletag is an attractive option. Puddletag's distinctive spreadsheet-style GUI is a bit unfamiliar if you are accustomed to EasyTag's interface. However, it works well out of the box and if you only need to do the basics – such as tagging and adding cover art to your music files – you will soon feel at home with the program. If you are willing to delve deeper into its documentation, Puddletag's powerful bulk-editing capabilities become more apparent. I saw a comment from a Reddit user that Puddletag was able to easily handle 50,000 - 60,000 tracks in bulk tagging operations.



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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by The CrankyZombie, May 1, 2023, running KDE.



ICYMI: Five Things Scammers Hope You "Google"

by Paul Arnote (parnote)



Your email address may actually be hurting your chances for landing that new job, according to an [article](#) on Lifehacker. Believe it or not (or like it or not), gmail.com email addresses are generally viewed as “neutral.” Addresses from aol.com or yahoo.com may elicit concerns about your age. And email addresses like “ladyman@someemail.com” or “satansoffspring@anotheremail.com” or “darthvaderfan@sith.net” may be torpedoing your job chances before you ever get out of port, so to speak.

The U.S., Europe and Ukraine are reportedly targets in this malware threat involving Cisco routers, according to an [article](#) on TechRepublic. State-sponsored Russian threat actor APT28 targets certain Cisco routers with an old vulnerability. I’ll wait patiently to see a show of hands of everyone who has ever/never

applied patches to their router. [chirp-chirp] [chirp-chirp] [chirp-chirp] sing the crickets. Yeah ... me neither. Routers (and other hardware) can be “borked” or “bricked” too easily while applying patches, and cost too much to replace (if they do end up borked/bricked). Thus, the vast majority of users never do apply patches to hardware, despite the presence of a valid and verified threat vector. Fortunately (unfortunately?) these particular Cisco routers (they never say in the article exactly which routers are affected) appear to be “commercial” routers. But then again, you can never know for sure which consumer-level Cisco routers use a command or SNMP protocol (the attack vector) that has been (or may have been) “inherited” from the commercial side of their business.

Researchers have found that Google’s 2FA app update lacks end-to-end encryption, according to an [article](#) from TechRepublic. Data synced between devices with the new Google Authenticator app update could be viewed by third parties. Google says the app works as planned, but added that they plan to offer E2EE as an option in the future. Yeah. It’ll probably be

like that Linux version of Picasa that Google never released, or the Linux version of Google Drive that they never released. In other words, don’t hold your breath.



According to an [article](#) on Lifehacker, **there are at least FIVE things scammers are hoping you Google or otherwise search for.** Searching for one of the phrases listed in the article can draw you into a trap.

You’ve seen their advertisements ... well ... EVERYWHERE. And, I include this here simply because of the vast number of MLUs (Mature Linux Users) in the PCLinuxOS family. You may know them as the “We Buy Ugly Houses” people. **HomeVestors of America, the self-proclaimed “largest homebuyer in the U.S.,” trains its nearly 1,150 franchisees to zero in on homeowners’ desperation,** according to an [exposé](#) on the ProPublica website. They tend to zero in on older



homeowners in the twilight years of life. Knowledge is power, and this article should help “arm yourself” to fend off their predatory business practices.

The results are in! Google, which USED to use the old motto “do no evil,” seems to have changed their motto to “use it or lose it.” According to an [article](#) on Lifehacker, **Google has updated their “inactivity policy” for all Google accounts.** If an account has not been used or logged into for at least two years, Google may delete the accounts and its data. That includes Google Workspace (Gmail, Docs, Drive, Meet, Calendar) and Google Photos content. Google’s reasoning for the decision is security-based. According to the company, an account that hasn’t been accessed in more than two years is likely compromised, because those accounts often use leaked passwords, lack 2FA, or have less security settings. While that idea may have some merit (Google says abandoned accounts are ten times less likely to have 2FA set up), it still seems extreme. Welcome to the World according to Google! It sounds to me as if they are trying to make excuses for their horrible track record when it comes to security.

*Looking for an old article?
Can't find what you want? Try the*

**PCLinuxOS Magazine's
searchable index!**

The **PCLinuxOS** magazine

Japan will try to beam solar power from space by 2025, according to an [article](#) from Engadget. The country made a breakthrough in space-based solar energy back in 2015.



Image: NASA artist concept.

NASA is seeking industry proposals for a next-generation LTV (Lunar Terrain Vehicle) that will allow astronauts to go farther and conduct more science than ever before as they explore the south polar region of the Moon during Artemis missions, according to an [article](#) on SciTechDaily.

Google has begun rolling out a generative AI function to its standard Google search program for selected users in the United States, according to an [article](#) on Interesting Engineering, and widely reported on in multiple media outlets.

For Computex 2023, **Intel announced new details about its new AI-focused VPU silicon that will debut in the company's new Meteor Lake chips**, according to an [article](#) on Tom’s Hardware. The company also outlined its efforts to enable the AI ecosystem for its upcoming

Meteor Lake chips. Intel plans to release the Meteor Lake processors, its first to use a blended chiplet-based design that leverages both Intel and TSMC tech in one package, by the end of the year. The chips will land in laptops first, focusing on power efficiency and performance in local AI workloads, but different versions of the design will also come to desktop PCs.



According to scientists from the University of Washington, **there are certain colors that repel mosquitoes and others that attract them**, says an [article](#) from Tom’s Guide. Their study, published in [Nature Communications](#), revealed that the mosquito’s sense of smell (olfaction), influences how it responds to visual cues/colors. However, this color preference only occurs in the presence of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which we exhale when we breathe. And while mosquitoes respond to our breath, sweat, and body temperature — eliminating the colors that attract them in the first place could help keep them at bay. So, if you want to banish these

pesky pests, you could try one of these colors to repel mosquitoes in your home or yard.

Adding to the security nightmare they have already have unleashed, **a recent move by Google to populate the Internet with eight new top-level domains** is prompting concerns that two of the additions – .zip and .mov – could be a boon to online scammers who trick people into clicking on malicious links, according to an [article](#) on Ars Technica.

When your internet isn't performing up to standard, your first thought probably won't be to blame your internet provider. After all, **there are many reasons why your internet could be moving slowly**, according to an [article](#) on CNet. But, then again, **your internet service provider may be throttling your internet speeds**.



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

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

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

Data storage on hard drives may soon become a thing of the past, according to an expert Shawn Rosemarin, who also owns a company selling solid-storage solutions, says an [article](#) on Interesting Engineering. According to Rosemarin, we could see the last hard drive being sold in just about five years from now, [PC Gamer reported](#).



Always breaking the mold on what's deemed impossible, **scientists have discovered a way to create electricity out of thin air**, according to an [article](#) from Giant Freakin Robot. While many regions are preparing themselves for the arrival of the unpleasantness of humidity that will run rampant over the summer, it's in that nasty, watery air that the electricity can be pulled from. But, don't be too quick to literally "cut the wire" that brings electricity into your home.

After a three-year hiatus, **scientists in the U.S. have just turned on detectors capable of measuring gravitational waves** — tiny ripples in space itself that travel through the universe, according to an [article](#) on Inverse. Unlike light waves, gravitational waves are nearly unimpeded by the galaxies, stars, gas, and dust

that fill the universe. This means that by measuring gravitational waves, astrophysicists can peek directly into the heart of some of these most spectacular phenomena in the universe.

The legendary Japanese astronomer Koichi Itagaki made a dazzling discovery recently, capturing observations of **a visible supernova so close to Earth that astronomers have been able to spot it with amateur telescope setups**, according to an [article](#) on BGR. The supernova was found in the galaxy M101 and has been designated SN 2023ixf. This particular supernova is so intriguing because it is so close to Earth, allowing an assortment of astronomers and skywatchers to get a possible view of it without needing expensive equipment to pull it off.

Microsoft has uncovered stealthy and targeted malicious activity focused on post-compromise credential access and network system discovery aimed at critical infrastructure organizations in the United States, according to a Microsoft security blog [post](#). The attack is carried out by Volt Typhoon, a state-sponsored actor based in China that typically focuses on espionage and information gathering. Microsoft assesses with moderate confidence that this Volt Typhoon campaign is pursuing development of capabilities that could disrupt critical communications infrastructure between the United States and Asia region during future crises.



Good Words, Good Deeds, Good News

compiled by Meemaw

Dog Walks 166 Miles Across Sea Ice



Mandy and her children went visiting another town last March. While they were gone, two of Mandy's dogs and her uncle's dog went missing. The uncle's dog regularly goes wandering and always comes back. One of Mandy's dogs, named Startlight, returned after three weeks, but the second dog, named Nanuq, didn't come back with Startlight. Nanuq is an Australian Shepherd, and the American Kennel Club (AKC) [describes](#) the Australian Shepherd breed as smart, work-oriented, and exuberant, adding they are "lean, tough" ranching dogs.

The family kept searching until Mandy's father

told her he heard that someone had seen Nanuq in a town 166 miles away. Checking her Facebook page, and saw pictures of a dog that someone had posted. She realized it was Nanuq, and they went and got him.

Thankfully, a family had seen him and cared for him until Mandy's family could go get him. They told Mandy that Nanuq had a swollen leg from apparently being bitten during his travels, but responded well to medicine. *"If dogs could talk, both of them would have one heck of a story," Mandy told reporters.*

Woman Wins Lottery After Paying For Daughter's Cancer Treatments

Geraldine was on her way home, and stopped at a local store to buy a lottery ticket. She liked the ones with crossword games. As soon as she finished the crossword, it was apparent that she had won the \$2 million jackpot! Her winning came the day after another wonderful day.

Her daughter said, "The day before my mom bought this ticket, I rang the bell and walked out of the hospital after completing my last treatment for breast cancer. My mom had taken out her life savings to take care of me when I was sick. I'm just so happy for her!"

Her daughter and granddaughter went with her to receive the winnings, and took a publicity



photo (above), along with the Lottery's Chief of Staff.

Looking at her options, she decided to take the lump sum payment, minus taxes - around \$1.6 million.

Pizza Delivery Driver Saves Five Children

Nicholas was delivering pizza when he saw a house on fire. Turning around and driving to the house, he yelled that the house was on fire, but he didn't hear anything. He then entered the house himself to look for anyone who might be in there. He found four children and got them out safely, and was told that there was a fifth child inside.



By then the house was filled with smoke and he had to crawl on the second-story floor to find her. They got out through a window on the second floor, after he broke it out, cutting his arm. The children are all safe, and Nicholas received treatment for smoke inhalation, burns and the cut on his arm.

The grateful family has set up a GoFundMe page to help him with his medical bills, and he has been awarded the Carnegie Medal for his selflessness. *The Carnegie Medal is given throughout the U.S. and Canada to those who enter extreme danger while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. The Carnegie Medal has been awarded to 10,355 individuals since the start of the Pittsburgh-based Fund in 1904.*

Student Stops School Bus When Driver Passes Out

A Warren, Michigan school bus driver was on her route when she started feeling dizzy. She

radioed in to her superiors and told them she was stopping the bus, but before she could get stopped, she passed out. Amazingly, one of the students, 13 year-old Dillon, ran to the front of the bus and applied the brake, steering the bus to the side of the road, and instructing his fellow students to call 9-1-1 for the driver.



City officials praised Dillon for his quick thinking and calm in an emergency. The bus driver went to the hospital where she underwent testing to find the cause of her fainting.

The school Superintendent commented, *“I don’t know that it could have gone any better, and when you have an anchor like Dylan taking care of business on the bus, it really and truly was a good day for us.”*



Baby Survives With Birth Weight of 1.17 Pounds



Baby Isla was due to be born in July, 2022. However, mother Lauren went into labor in March! When Isla was born, she weighed just 1.17 pounds (0.53kg), which is less than a loaf of bread. Doctors told Lauren that her child had about a 10% chance of survival. She was so tiny that her hand looked like a baby doll hand next to her father’s.

She had some complications due to her early arrival. Most premature babies have to be on a ventilator at first, but she also had bleeding in her brain and a hole in her heart. She was taken off the ventilator at 6 weeks, but just two weeks after that, she also had a detached retina in her eye, which doctors tried to fix but couldn’t. They waited anxiously to see if she would survive, and miraculously she got well enough

to go home from the hospital in July. This last March, they celebrated her first birthday. Now, she can sit up and is trying to crawl, which is late for a one year-old, but her parents are very thankful. Lauren said, "Looking at her now, you wouldn't know she was premature. She's a proper little madam now, she's got her own personality, and is the most independent little girl ever. It's taught us don't take anything for granted - we live for each day because you don't know what's around the corner."

Man Mows Neighbors' Lawns For Free



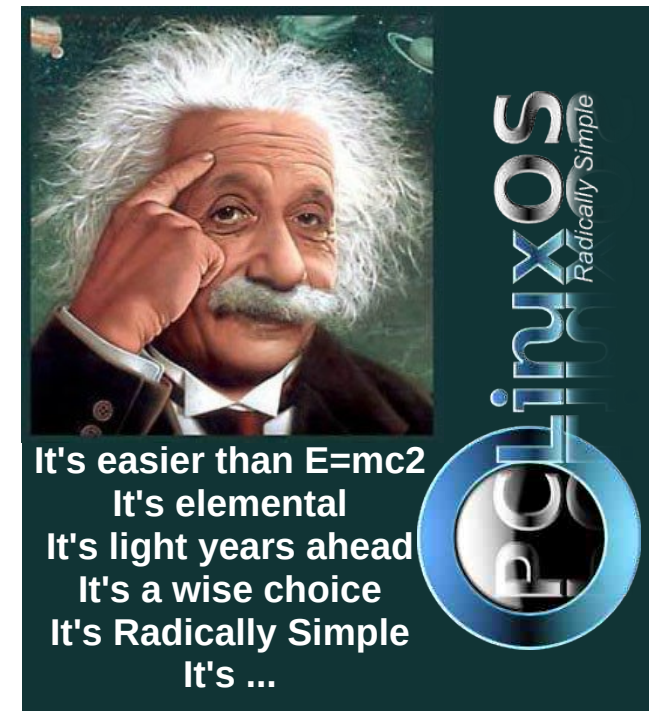
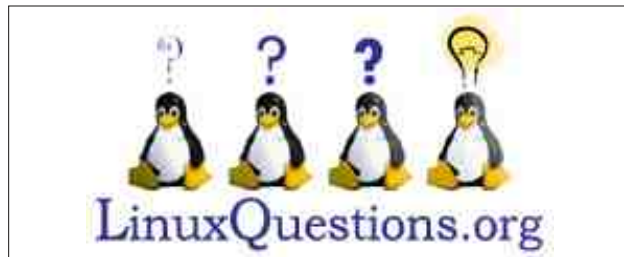
Alex Wells wanted to help people so he started knocking on doors, asking people if they needed help. He had a lot of positive responses! Now he goes to neighbors' houses, mowing their lawns and trimming shrubbery for them. He specializes in taking care of those neighbors

who can't care for their own yards: the elderly, those with disabilities, neighbors battling cancer, single parents, and anyone else who needs his help.

"I'll do the ones that haven't been mowed in like a month or so but I try to find ones that haven't been mowed in several months or sometimes a year," he explained.

He has started an Instagram page called "Mow It Wells" which shows a video of him asking an elderly lady if he can mow her yard. When she asks for his price and he says "free" she excitedly agrees.

"The real excitement comes when I do something extra. Sometimes I'll give them a hundred dollars or I'll do mulch or plant some flowers and stuff and that's when it really gets special," he told a news crew.





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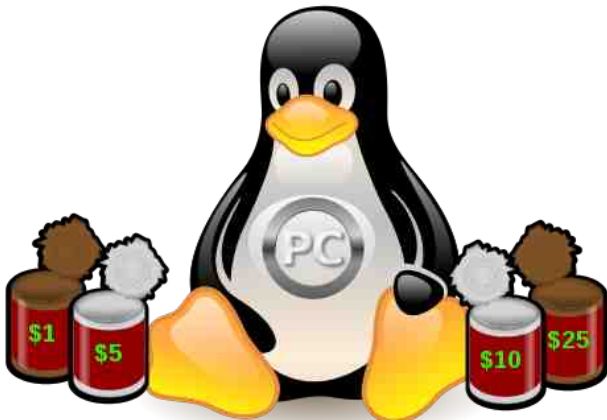
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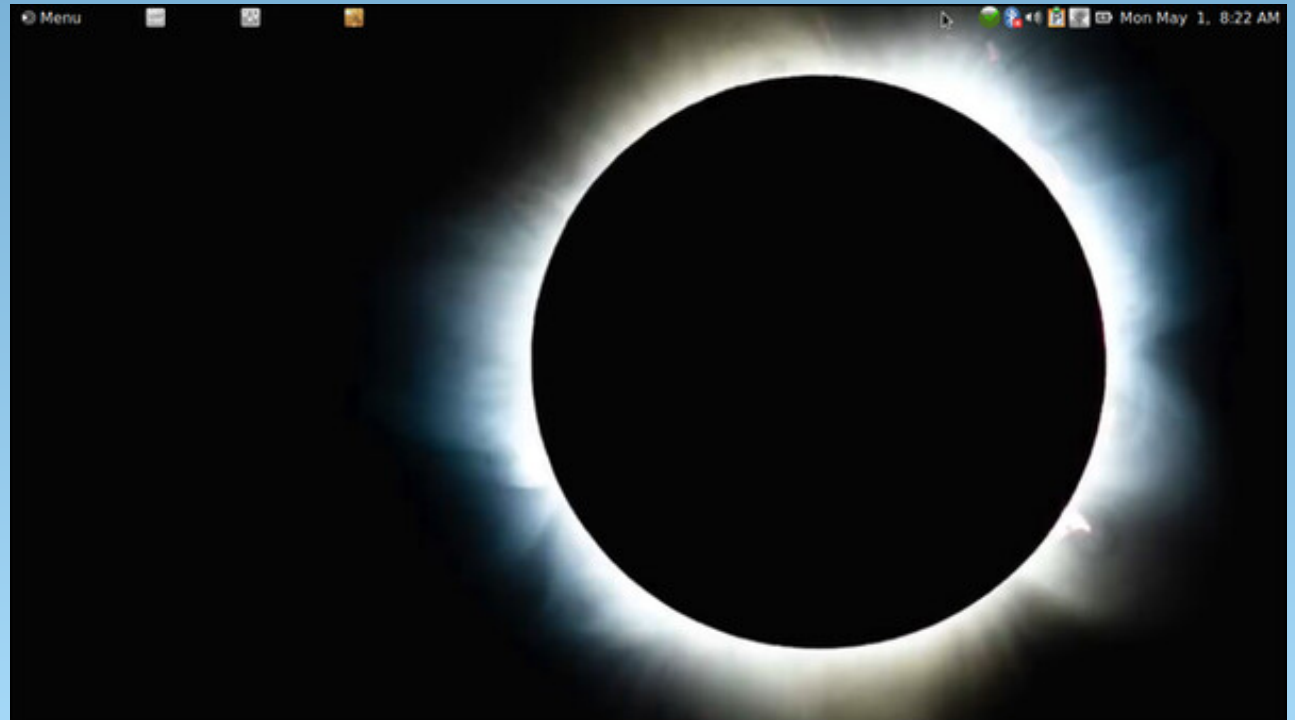
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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by brisvegas, April 30, 2023, running Mate.



Getting Started With LibreOffice Writer

by **expresso**

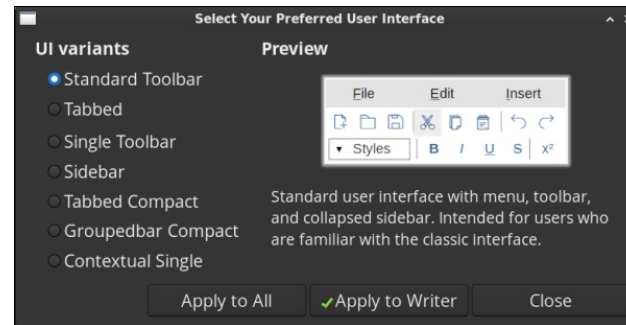
***Editor's Note:** The author of this article intended to write a whole new tutorial series on LO. This was his first installment, with more to come later. However, shortly after finishing this article, he left for another distro that he thought better met his needs than PCLinuxOS. That's how it is with Linux. Users come, users go. With his departure, also came his condolences for not completing his intended article series. We run his first article here, with hopes that PCLinuxOS users may benefit from his insights, views, and knowledge.*

This tutorial is about LibreOffice Writer (from now on referred to as simply Writer). If you follow along you will learn quite a lot about how to get stuff done with this amazingly complex program, which is capable of more than you might think.

Now, there are some situations in which you probably do not want to use Writer, like when you have loads of “objects” in a big document. Everything other than text is an object. If you want to work on a document, which you'll expect to become large and it is expected to have a lot of these objects, you're better off working with another solution, such as LaTeX. It's specifically designed for such situations (and is a whole other subject of its own).

Let's dive in!

Writer has, by default, quite the ancient looking interface. Don't worry, because we have a selection of several interfaces. If you select **View > User Interface**, the following window will pop up.



In and of itself this window is quite obvious. The "Apply to Writer" button only applies the type of GUI to Writer, while "Apply to All" applies the selected GUI throughout LibreOffice.

Each of these GUIs are different from the standard one. Some differ a little, others differ quite a lot. The window will give a short description of each GUI. I had, in some cases, trouble finding his way back to the default GUI. In those cases I'll explain where you can find the above window.

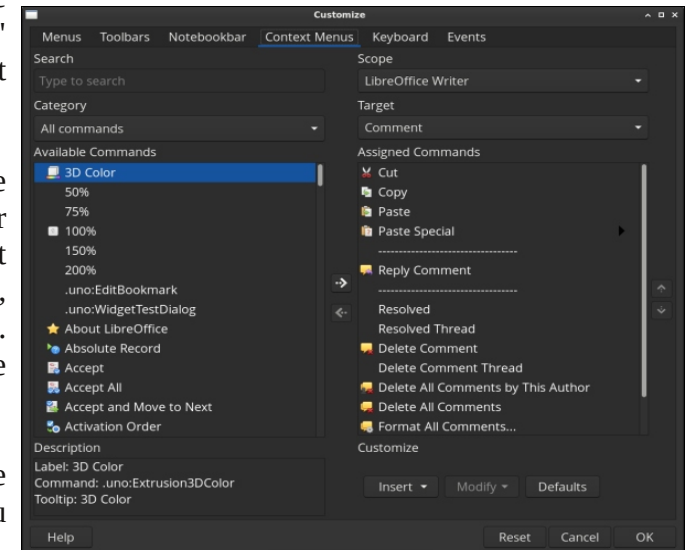
First the tabbed GUI. At the top right of the Writer window, you'll see a little gear. If you

click it, a drop-down menu appears with the **User Interface** menu item in it. Clicking it will yield the above window.

On to **Groupbar compact**. Over here there's a dropdown menu on the right side, it's conveniently called "menu." Clicking this will display a drop-down menu again, containing the entry to open the User Interface selection window.

I'm not going to explain where each feature hides in each user interface. In this tutorial, I'm going to assume the default GUI.

In some cases you may find the need to change the user interface. Don't worry; it's possible, quite extensively so. Below is an image of the window you'll find under **Tools > customize**.



All the tabs in this window are dedicated to allowing you to change Writer to your heart's content. There's a warning, though: changes that you make here, can leave you with a Writer which misses some features and you unable to fix it, or worse, a Writer which is completely unusable. **So, be careful with what you change in this window.**

Now, let's take a look at the shortcut keys (right top).

As you can see, Alt+Home and Alt+End have no function assigned to them. How about we make them go to the beginning and end of the current paragraph respectively? For Alt+Home, you'll need to select the key combination, then the Category (**Navigate**, in our case), and finally the function (**To Paragraph Begin**). The same can be done with Alt+End, but then for the function **To Paragraph End**.

There's loads more to be discovered in this window, if you find something that works a bit clunky, or you miss an option in the menus or under a shortcut key, all that can be arranged here.

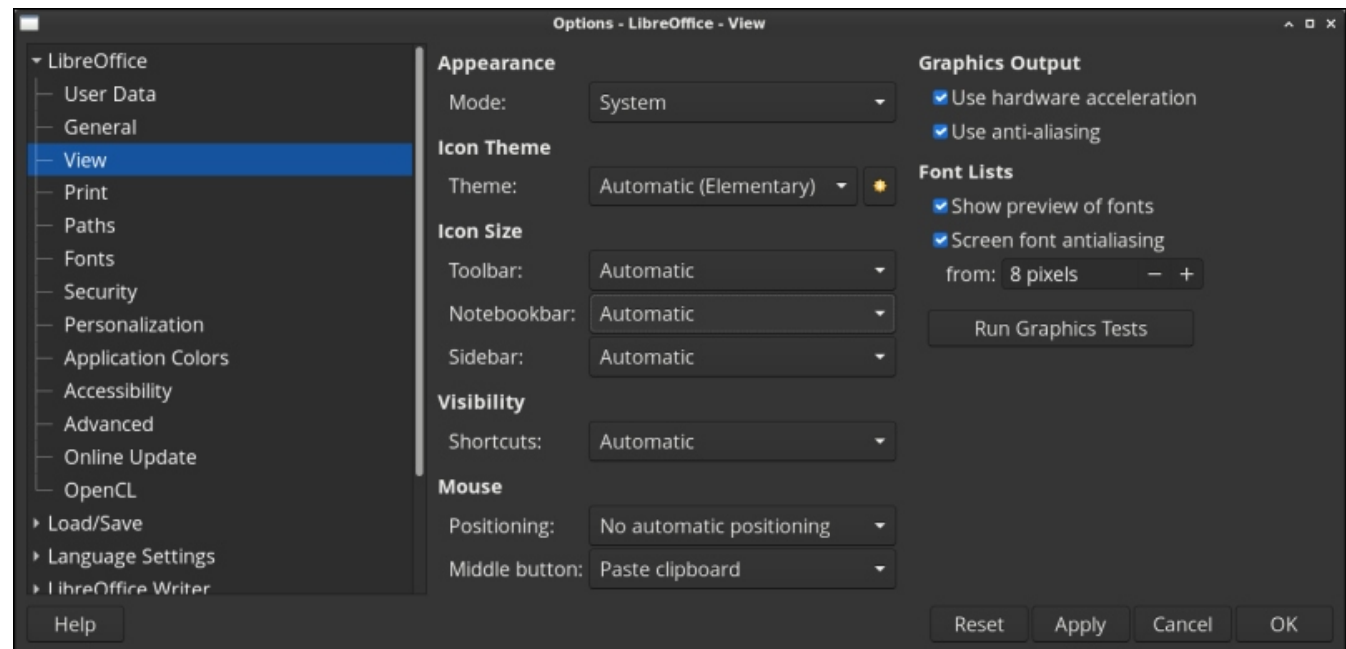
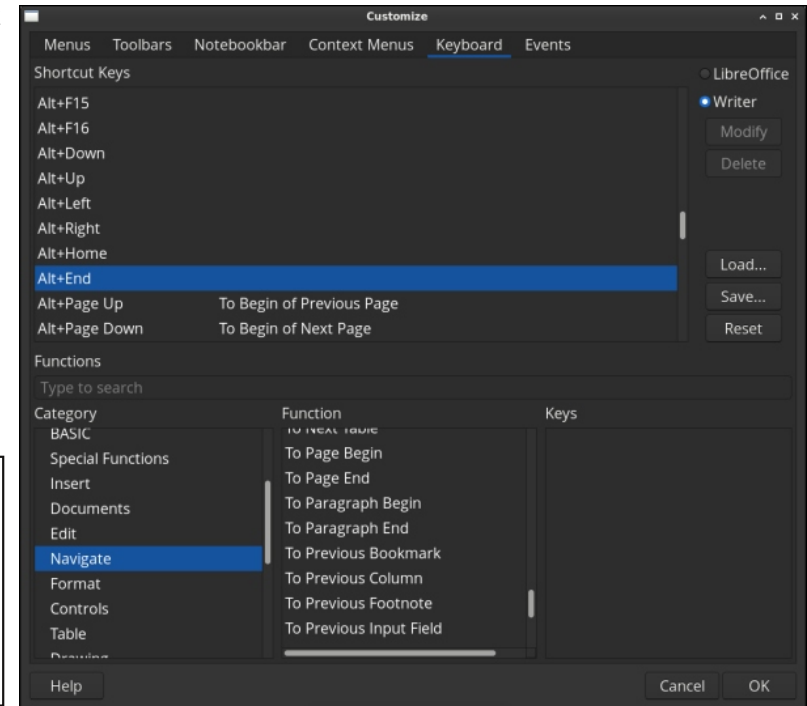
As you may have noticed, the screenshots of the windows I showed had a dark theme. In some cases, you might prefer a different theme than the default one. I'll explain how to change it now.

Start off by selecting **Tools > Options**. In the window that pops up, select **LibreOffice > View**. The window should now look like this:

In this screen, you can choose a light and a dark appearance of LibreOffice. I have mine following the system. Here, you can customize it some more. Feel free to do so.

You now know how to customize Writer to your liking.

I hope this tutorial was valuable to you.



Grab Your Favorite Software From Yesteryear

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Most Linux users (PCLinuxOS users included) got their start with computers using a commercially available OS. Exceptionally few actually started with Linux.

Along the way, we all encountered software that we came to love. Much of that software was designed to run on Microsoft Windows, the commercially available OS that held/holds the lion's share of the OS market.

However, as I'm sure we're all aware, Linux is NOT Windows, and in MANY aspects, we Linux users are thankful for that. But, it also means that it's typically not a trivial task to hang on to and use those software titles that we came to love along our journey, if we can even get them to run at all.



To run those cherished programs, we typically have a few choices. One choice is to dual boot our computer with Linux and Windows. That has challenges all of its own. This usually means you have to log out of your Linux account, and reboot your computer into Windows. That can make sharing data between Linux and Windows a chore, with all sorts of hoops to jump through (like storing/exporting data output onto a shared drive or a USB connected drive of some sorts).

Another choice is to run WINE on your Linux computer. While WINE has gotten progressively better at running Windows programs over the years, it's still pretty much a crap-shoot as to whether or not your favorite Windows program will run under WINE. Some programs are ridiculously simple to run under WINE, while others are persistently stubborn in their determination to not run under WINE. There is a commercially available version of WINE, called [CrossOver](#) from CodeWeavers, that tends to run a bit better. That, though, will set you back \$74 (U.S.) annually, which is nearly the cost of a full-blown version of Windows. For an additional \$420, they're happy to sell you a "lifetime" version of CrossOver. The folks at CodeWeavers have, essentially, tweaked and tuned the WINE code so that it has a better track record of running more Windows programs.

A similar option exists for running old DOS programs. Users can run DOSBox or some other DOS emulator on the Linux desktop. These DOS emulators typically do a pretty good job at running DOS programs. This is probably due to the relative simplicity of DOS, compared to Windows.

Yet another choice is to run an actual copy of Windows in a virtual machine, such as Virtual Box. Even though this requires you to have an actual copy of Windows to install as a virtual machine, it allows you to run a fully functional copy of Windows on your Linux desktop.

Of course, there is one other choice, and it is the one that I've made. If something can't be done under Linux in its native environment, I'm typically not interested. I don't run any of the methods. No dual boot. No

WINE. No virtual machine. And, no Windows. I don't feel as if I'm missing out on anything. In my Linux past, I've done each of the other three methods, all successfully.

Everyone's needs are different, and each method has their own pitfalls and challenges. Thankfully, Linux users (as a whole) are pretty resourceful, so they can usually find a way to resolve the challenges that each approach presents, along with workarounds to the pitfalls.



I am definitely NOT a “gamer.” Oh, I've played some games in my Windows life, like Wolfenstein, Doom, Descent, and Quake. But that was years ago. Today, Solitaire is more my speed. And, I was never very good at the games, anyway. They were just a diversion to fill up my free time with something enjoyable. Even then, I didn't have sufficient time to devote to improving my gameplay. Today, it also probably has something to do with the fact that I have much less “free time” than I used to. My “free time” has demands on it by a six and nine year old and all of their extracurricular activities.

For those users who have loftier “gaming” pursuits, they may employ one or more of the methods we previously discussed for running their Windows games. Some may employ all three methods, just to ensure that they can play their games.

A Software Motherlode

So why talk about how to run Windows on your Linux computer? After all, aren't most of us “Windows refugees,” fleeing the tyranny of Windows?

I'm sure we all have software titles from our past that still bring a smile to our face. They may be fun to run. Or, they may be satisfying merely for their familiarity. But whatever the case, most of us have probably reminisced about playing them again.

Well, you're in luck.

The [Internet Archive](#) has a collection of around **72,000** CD-ROM titles available for download. Many of them are offered as ISO files, so you can “burn” them to whatever medium you choose.



Game enthusiasts will be pleased with the collection of CD-ROM based games available. The image above shows some of the games titles available. There are many, many more titles available than what I've

shown here. I just tried to show some of the titles that were extremely popular in their day, and that most people probably know about.

But the selection doesn't stop there. In perusing the available titles, I found almost every version of Windows available. Yes, even including [ew!] Windows Me, Vista, and Windows 8. I also found old stalwarts, such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, multiple Corel titles, educational software, entertainment software, productivity software, and much more. Do you remember all those CD-ROMs sold in large chain stores, loaded with photos and clipart? Well, there's a great selection of those available, too.

Keep in mind that much of this software has pretty much been abandoned, so using it *may* incur some security risks. Some titles have never been updated, and others have been superseded by better, more secure versions. In other words, you will have to use them at your own risk.

Aside from the games, I'm certain that most Linux users can find native-Linux software that is able to get tasks done. But, if you have a hankering to reach back in your past and re-experience some of your favorite software, this is the place where you might find those software titles. But, be prepared. It may take some time to filter through the nearly 72,000 software titles presented on Internet Archive.



The PCLinuxOS Magazine Special Editions!

A collage of seven PCLinuxOS Magazine Special Editions covers. The covers include: "Windows Migration Guide" (September 2013) featuring a penguin and a blue funnel; "Enlightenment" (May 2011) featuring a penguin; "The KDE 4 SC Special Edition" (Fall 2010) featuring KDE desktop icons; "Gtk Lightweight Desktops: Xfce & LXDE Special Edition" (November 2010) featuring a yellow robot; "Command Line Interface Intro" (October 2010) featuring a terminal window with code; "Openbox Special Edition" (March 2012) featuring a penguin and a box of food; and "The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine" (Fall 2010) featuring a penguin.

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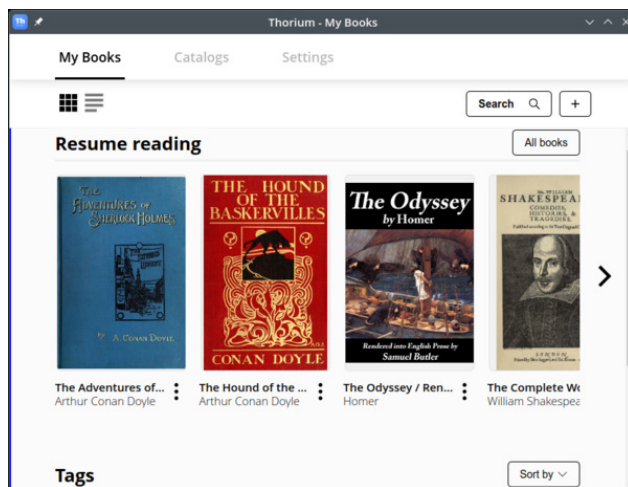
Repo Review: Thorium Reader

by CgBoy

Thorium Reader is a free Electron-based ebook reader designed with accessibility and ease of use in mind. With support for both EPUB 2 and EPUB 3, PDF, DAISY, LCP DRM, and numerous other ebook as well as audiobook formats, Thorium Reader should be able to open most books without a problem.

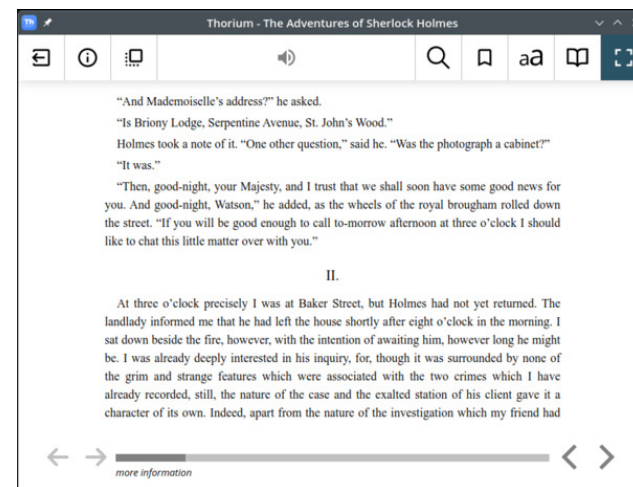
Thorium Reader provides a very uncluttered interface, making it quick and easy to navigate. The application is divided into three tabs allowing access to the main books page, OPDS catalogs, and the application settings. From the My Books page, you can open and manage all your ebooks, which can easily be imported into Thorium Reader by simply dragging and dropping them into the application. Books are automatically sorted into separate categories for those that were recently added, and those that you've already started reading. You can also add custom tags to books in order to help organize them better. A search bar is also provided to make finding books easier (center, top).

Clicking on a book will open it in a new reader window, and resume from where you finished reading last time. As with the main menu, the layout of the reader screen is clean, simple, and well designed. At the top of the window is a toolbar, from which you can return to the main menu, view information about the current book,

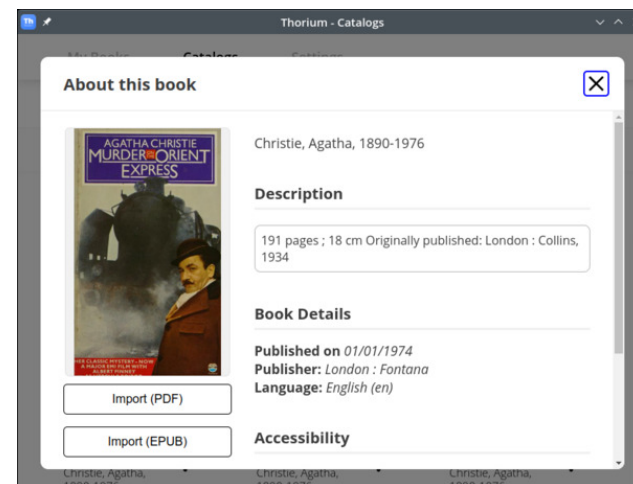


perform searches in the book, add bookmarks, switch to fullscreen mode, access the reading settings panel, and access the navigation panel. From the navigation panel, you can view the book's table of contents, go directly to a specific page number, and access any bookmarks you may have added. At the bottom of the screen you'll find the page navigation buttons, and a bar showing your progress through the book.

By default, the size and number of text columns displayed on the page will automatically change depending on the size of the application window, but this can be manually adjusted from the reading settings panel. You can also change the page view to scrollable, if you prefer navigating by scrolling. Thorium Reader provides numerous other reading settings you can adjust as well, such as text size and font, letter and word spacing, and several interface



color themes that can be enabled. Thorium Reader has the option to use text-to-speech to read aloud books for you, but unfortunately I could not get this feature to work when I tested it.



Thorium Reader supports adding OPDS (Open Publication Distribution System) feeds, allowing you to easily access large online ebook catalogs, and import books into the application. One can, for instance, add the Project Gutenberg OPDS feed and then be able to quickly find and read any book available in their collection. This feature definitely makes Thorium Reader very useful.

Summary

Thorium Reader provided a very smooth and distraction-free ebook reading experience, and was generally quite enjoyable to use. I didn't really encounter any real bugs or problems during my testing of it. Overall, I'd highly recommend Thorium Reader to anyone looking for a clean and simple, yet still powerful, desktop ebook reader.

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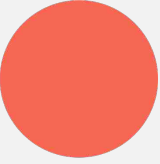
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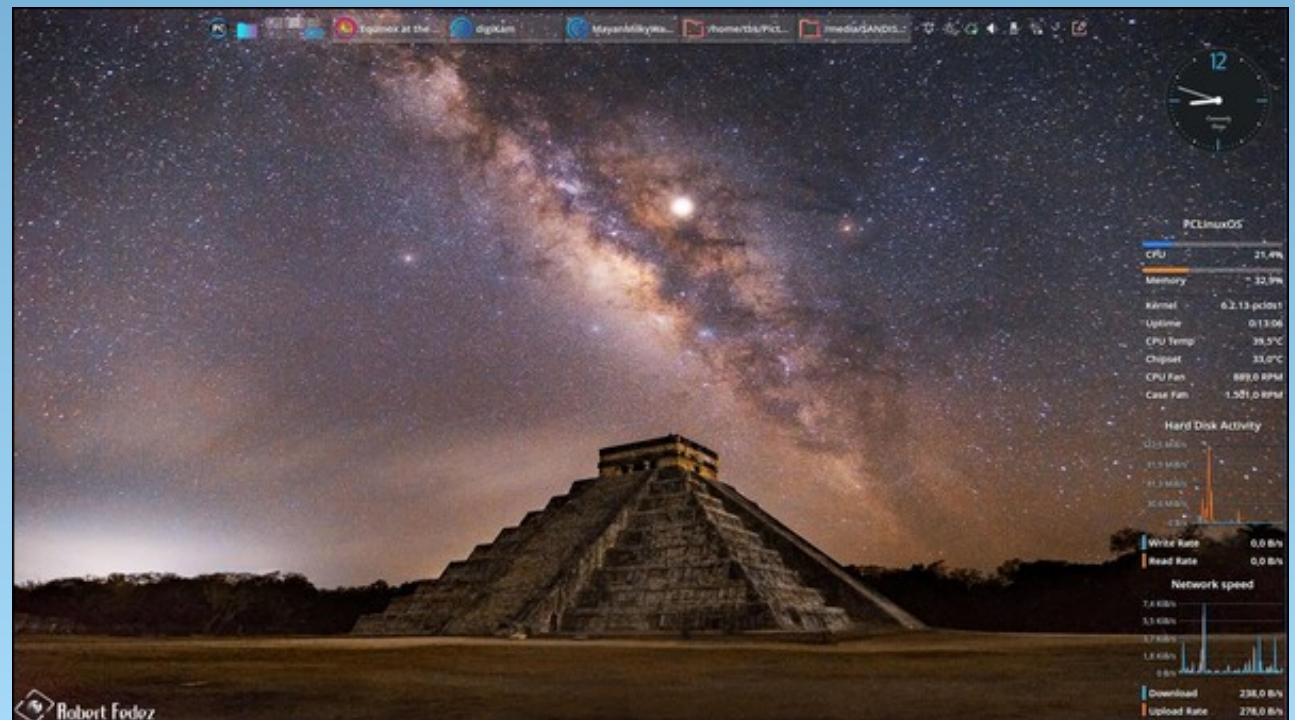
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PATREON

Screenshot Showcase



Posted by tbs, May 1, 2023, running KDE.

PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner Bonus



CrockPot Lasagna Soup

Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound lean ground beef
1 large onion diced
4 cloves of garlic minced
28 ounces crushed tomatoes 1 can undrained
15 ounces tomato sauce 1 can
14 ½ ounces petite diced tomatoes 1 can
32 ounces low sodium beef broth
1 red bell pepper diced
1 green bell pepper diced
2 cups sliced mushrooms
2 teaspoons dried basil leaves
2 teaspoons dried parsley
½ teaspoon seasoning salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
6 ounces dried pasta, any shape
2 cups chopped fresh spinach

TOPPINGS:

Mozzarella Cheese
Ricotta Cheese
Parmesan Cheese
Fresh Basil & Parsley

DIRECTIONS:

Cook beef, onion, and garlic over medium-high heat until no pink remains; drain. Place in a slow cooker.

Add all remaining soup ingredients except pasta & spinach. Cover and cook on low 7-8 hours or high 3-4 hours.

Cook pasta al dente according to package directions. Stir in cooked pasta and spinach. Cover and cook for an additional 10-15 minutes. Spoon into bowls and top as desired.

NUTRITION:

Calories: 257 Carbs: 26g Fiber: 3g
Sodium: 623mg Protein: 18g



Google's Decision To Deprecate JPEG-XL Emphasizes The Need For Browser Choice & Free Formats

by [Greg Forough](#)

[Free Software Foundation](#)

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Whether it's through the millions of dollars Google has funneled into development and advertising or the "convenience" that it offers users in exchange for freedom, the fact remains that Google Chrome is the arbiter of web standards. Firefox, through ethical distributions like [GNU IceCat](#) and Abrowser, can weaken that stranglehold. Google's deprecation of the JPEG-XL image format in February in favor of its own patented [AVIF](#) format might not end the web in the grand scheme of things, but it does

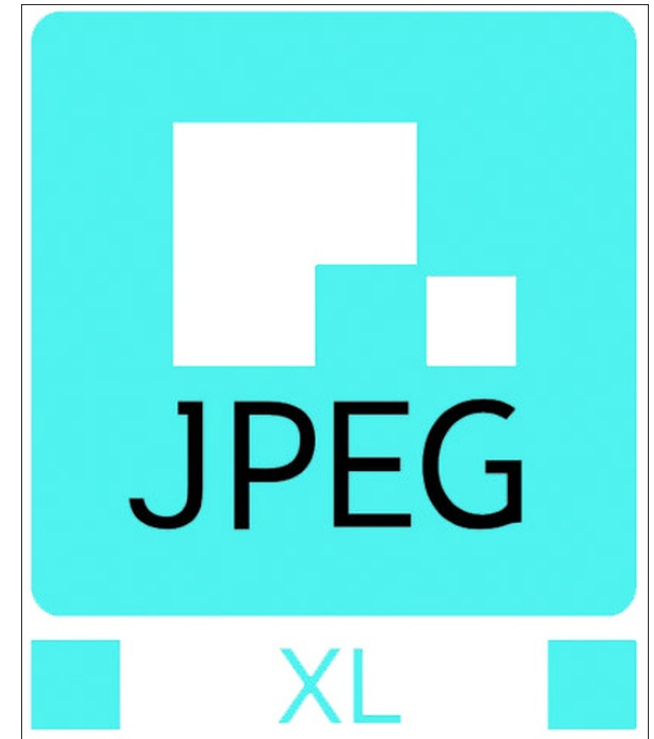


highlight, once again, the disturbing amount of control it has over the platform generally.

Part of Google's official [rationale](#) for the deprecation is the following line: "There is not enough interest from the entire ecosystem to continue experimenting with JPEG-XL." Putting aside the [problematic aspects](#) of the term "ecosystem," let us remark that it's easy to gauge the response of the "entire ecosystem" when you yourself are by far the largest and most dangerous predator in said "ecosystem." In relation to Google's overwhelming power, the average web user might as well be a microbe. In supposedly gauging what the "ecosystem" wants, all Google is really doing is asking itself what Google wants. If we take their contribution in turning the web into the "[WWWorst App Store](#)" seriously, then we understand what Google really wants. Google wants to do what's best for its own predatory interests, not what's best for the web.

While we can't link to Google's issue tracker directly because of another freedom issue -- its use of [nonfree JavaScript](#) -- we're told that the issue regarding JPEG-XL's removal is the second-most "starred" issue in the history of the Chromium project, the nominally free basis for the Google Chrome browser. Chromium users came out of the woodwork to plead with Google not to make this decision. It made it anyway, not bothering to respond to users' concerns. We're not sure what metric it's using to gauge the

interest of the "entire ecosystem," but it seems users have given JPEG-XL a strong show of support. In turn, what users will be given is yet another facet of the web that Google itself controls: the AVIF format.



As the response to JPEG-XL's deprecation has shown, our rallying together and telling Google we want something isn't liable to get it to change its mind. It will keep on wanting what it wants: *control*; we'll keep on wanting what we want: *freedom*.

Google's Decision To Deprecate JPEG-XL Emphasizes The Need For Browser Choice & Free Formats

Only, the situation isn't hopeless. At the present moment, not even Google can stop us from creating the web communities that we want to see: pages that don't run huge chunks of malicious, nonfree code on our computers. We have the power to choose what we run or do not run in our browsers. Browsers like GNU IceCat (and extensions like [LibreJS](#) and [JShelter](#)) help with that. Google also can't prevent us from exploring networks beyond the web like Gemini. What our community can do is rally support behind those free browsers that choose to support JPEG-XL and similar formats, letting the big G know that even if we're smaller than it, we won't be bossed around.

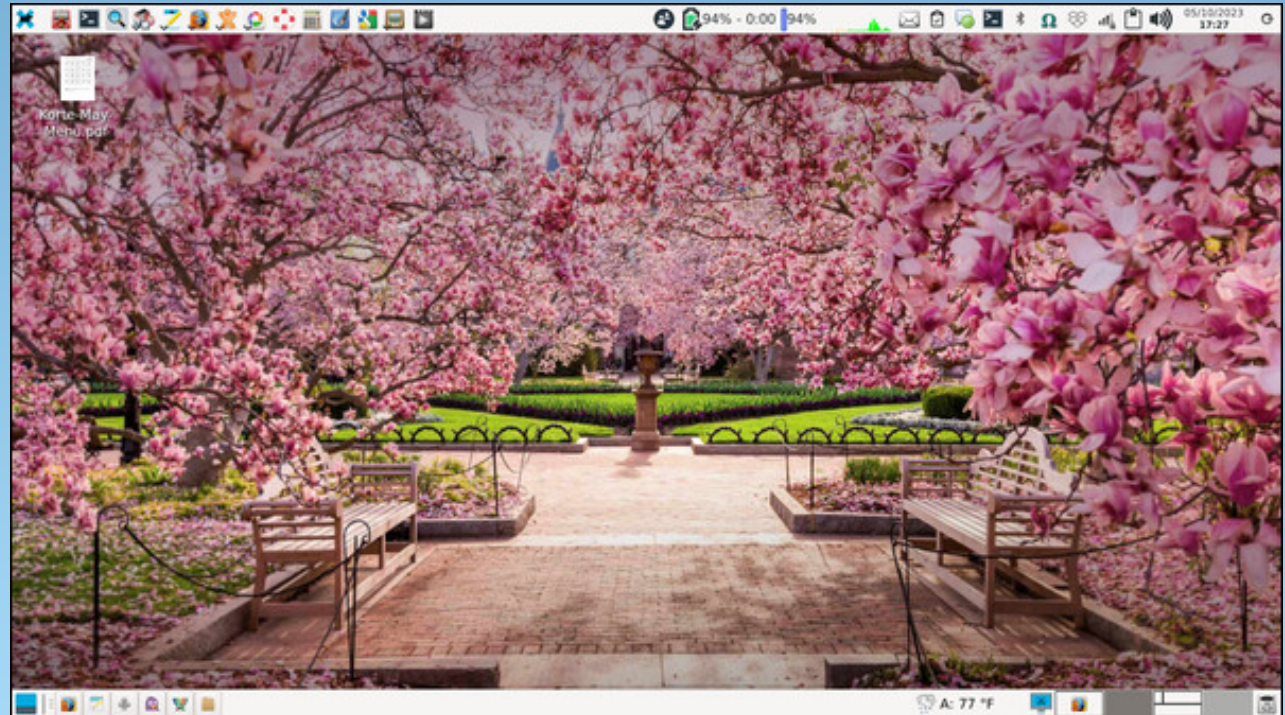


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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by parnote, May 10, 2023, running Xfce.

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

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:

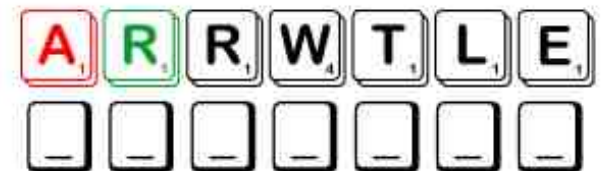
1. Follow the rules of Scrabble®. You can view them [here](#). You have seven (7) letter tiles with which to make as long of a word as you possibly can. Words are based on the English language. Non-English language words are NOT allowed.
2. Red letters are scored double points. Green letters are scored 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



Download Puzzle Solutions Here

Possible score 255, average score 179.



June 2023 Word Find

Modes of Transportation

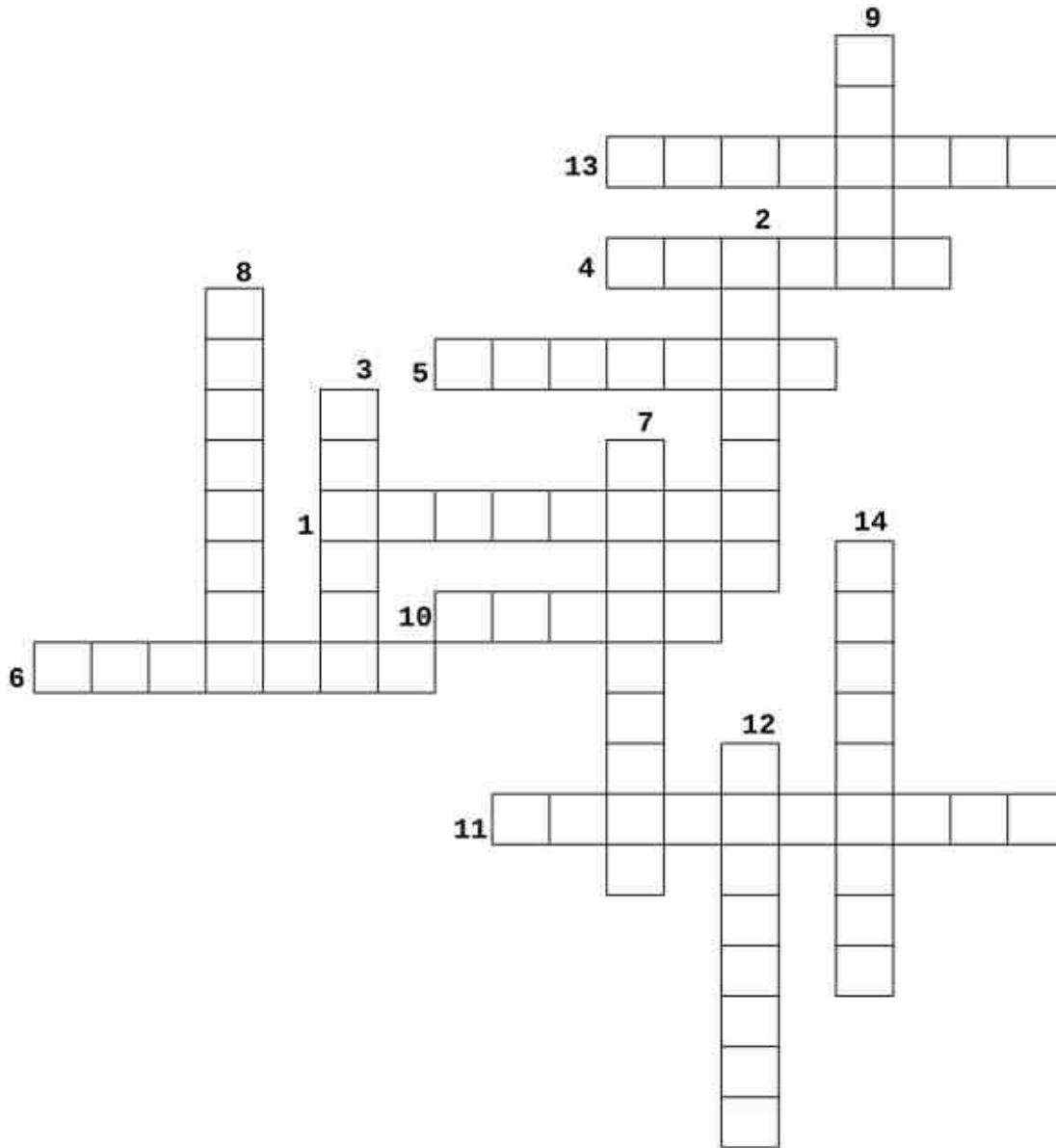
W K O T U J E X S P C Y J U N K A I M U J G H K T G M S W S
M M H T N W Q L B Z Q J F O E U N X S B Y L N T K J S Z Y P
Q O U T D T T O A B L O B E Y F N B Y W I Q S E A P L A N E
R X N K H T E M T L C F O I L A Z I E N D M L J I V D D L E
J P U O R N B R I V E R B O A T W I L T B B F A Y E R J E D
J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

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| AERIAL TRAMWAY | BATTLESHIP |
| BOBSLED | BULLDOZER |
| CATAMARAN | DIRIGIBLE |
| DUGOUT CANOE | EIGHTEEN WHEELER |
| FORKLIFT | GONDOLA |
| HANG GLIDER | HOVERCRAFT |
| HUMVEE | KAYAK |
| LOCOMOTIVE | MONORAIL |
| MOPED | PADDLEWHEELER |
| RICKSHAW | RIVERBOAT |
| SEAPLANE | SEGWAY |
| SNOWMOBILE | SPACESHIP |
| SPEEDBOAT | STAGECOACH |
| STEAMSHIP | SUBMARINE |
| THRESHER | TOBOGGAN |
| TRAWLER | TUGBOAT |
| UMIAK | UNICYCLE |
| VESPA | WHEELBARROW |
| YACHT | ZAMBONI |
| ZEPPELIN | |

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June 2023 Crossword Modes of Transportation



1. A rail-based transportation system based on a single rail, which acts as its sole support and its guideway.
2. A lightweight narrow barge with ends that curve up into a point, propelled with a single oar.
3. A trademark for a durable wide-bodied military vehicle with four-wheel drive.
4. A brand name for an electric vehicle with two wheels.
5. A brand of machine that smooths the surface of the ice on a rink.
6. A large boat that uses a wide, cone-shaped net to catch fish.
7. A boat with two parallel hulls or floats, with a mast mounted on a transverse frame joining the hulls.
8. A small two-wheeled cart for one passenger; pulled by one person
9. An Italian luxury brand of scooters and mopeds.
10. A large, open boat made of skins stretched over a wooden frame that is propelled by paddles.
11. A four-wheeled horse-drawn vehicle used to transport mail and passengers over a regular route.
12. A rigid airship having a long cylindrical body supported by internal gas cells.
13. A farm machine for separating small grain and seed crops from their chaff and straw.
14. A heavy machine for clearing and grading land, having continuous treads and a hydraulic blade in front.

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Mixed-Up-Meme Scrambler



A cold snap can do this
to a beach vendor.

" _____ "

LECCY

_ _ _

RUYLS

_ _ _

VASHIL

_ _ _

LISHEC

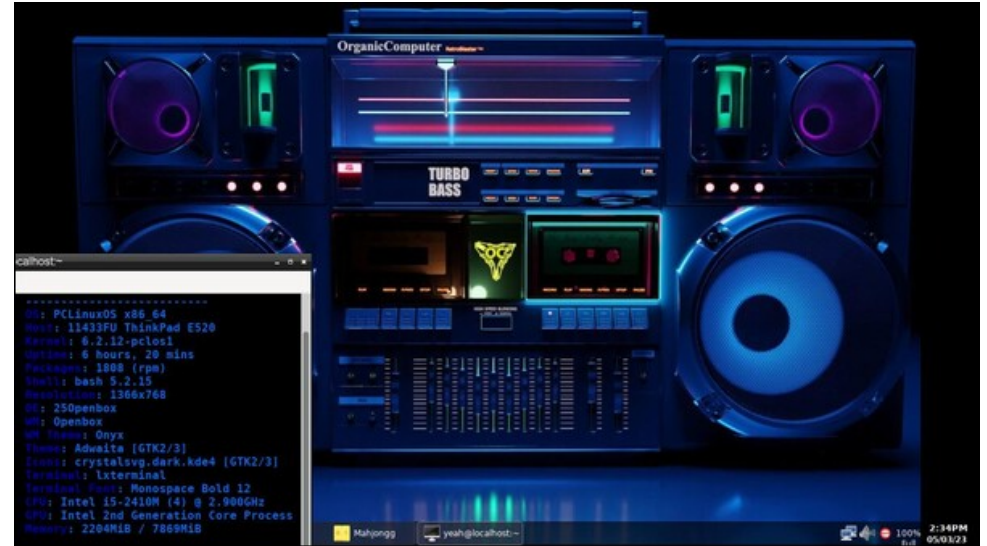
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