Keep an Open Mind!

Welcome to this, the first issue of Linux Magazine UK. The magazine aims to address the needs of the entire Linux community, both professionals and enthusiasts alike, as well as appealing to those who simply want to understand just what the Linux fuss is all about.

Whoever it was said "from tiny acorns, mighty oaktrees grow" might have been thinking about Linux. Who would have thought that a hobby project started by a Finnish university student in 1991 would grow, in less than ten years, into a worldwide industry worth billions of pounds? Only this month, worldwide IT research company IDC, reported yet further growth of the Linux phenomenen.

Of course, the acorn wouldn't have flourished without the right climate and nurturing. For that we have to thank Richard Stallman's vision of "free software" that resulted in the GNU Software Project. Belief in Stallman's ideal was enough to motivate thousands of programmers to spend millions of hours developing not just this free operating system but hundreds of free utilities and applications to run on it. That's why when we talk about Linux we should really be saying "GNU/Linux."

But Linux isn't the only important outcome of the GNU Project. It has started another ball rolling: the move to open source. Open source software and GNU software aren't the same thing, but they share one fundamental principle: the program source code - the text that programmers write in order to create software - must be free for all to see and modify. An ever-increasing number of companies are starting to realise the benefits of open source including Sun Microsystems, which will be releasing the entire code of its StarOffice suite very soon.

So what are the benefits of open source? For a software company one benefit is the potential for thousands of individual programmers to test and add features to their programs. Another is that customers increasingly want openness. They are starting to see the value of open standards and the disadvantages of closed ones.

For you, the user, the benefit of open source is that you can once again take control. You aren't forced to accept what a closed-source software company gives you. You aren't locked into expensive upgrade cycles just to get rid of bugs that shouldn't have been there in the first place. If you find a bug you can fix it. If you need a new feature you can add it. Or, if you don't have the necessary expertise, you can find someone who can. Try doing that without the source code!

Open source development directly addresses the problems that users of closed source software experience every day. That's why more and more people are moving to Linux and open source. Linux is now a mighty oak, strong enough to support business-critical applications.

At Linux Magazine we campaign for the Linux cause in every corner of the world - both physical and virtual - and guarantee to bring Linux professionals and enthusiasts an unbeatable mixture of high quality editorial and informed opinion.

We're at the dawn of a new era in computing - one where the users are back in control!

See you next month

Julian Moss
Editor

GUARANTEE

We pride ourselves on the origins of our magazine which come from the very start of the Linux revolution. We have been involved with Linux market for six years now through our sister European-based titles Linux Magazine (aimed at professionals) and Linux User (for hobbyists), and through seminars, conferences and events.

By purchasing this magazine you are joining an information network that enjoys the benefit of all the knowledge and technical expertise of all the major Linux professionals and enthusiasts. No other UK Linux magazine can offer that pedigree or such close links with the Linux Community. We're not simply reporting on the Linux and open source movement - we're part of it.