Technical Support
Readers can write in with technical queries which may be answered in the magazine in a future issue, however Linux Magazine is unable to directly provide technical help or support services either written or verbal.

CURRENT ISSUES
ONWARDS
AND
UPWARDS

Nearly the whole of my month has been dedicated to setting up networks and dealing with people who seem to excel in adding new requirements at the last minute – people who want to print to all printers; want to put all cheap inkjets onto a network; want to monitor and control users desktops. Admittedly, there haven't been many requests for Linux on the desktop, but for everything else there has been great demand.

Corporate-wise, Lotus Notes seems to be very popular at the moment along with PHP and, surprisingly, Fortran. In each case Free Open Source software has coped and in a lot of cases has been better than some of the outrageously priced commercial options. The ability to change some part so that it suits a client rather than have a client change to suit the package is very refreshing.

On the other hand, the big Linux distributors have started to release commercial packages. Here they are using a base of Open Source and adding all the services you would expect to let you get a good night's sleep without worry. It can range from firewalls to Web-based catalogues. Yes we can do it all from free packages but sometimes it is nice just to throw in a disc and not have to run through a mental checklist.

Finally, having more choice gives any potential IT proposal more flexibility. The option of no cost is still the biggest win but, if needed, having business products sold with backup from a third party may also swing the balance

At the end of the day, formulating proposals simply comes down to a case of meeting customer needs. To that end – when a client requires a little more guidance – the introduction of the subject of Open Source software certainly won't prejudice a proposal. Now where have I put that Fortran primer?

Happy coding!

John Southern, Editor