Current issues
QUICK CHAT

I have spent the last week fighting, both with a cold and with my network. Testing out new distributions can be exciting and full of wonder, but when things go wrong just what do you do? With other operating systems, the chap next door could normally come around and say "well if you reinstall it then it'll fix the problem", because his fourth cousin's daughter's boyfriend told him to do it once and it worked. Under Linux he normally takes a quick look, shudders because the cursor in your drawing program points the wrong way, and leaves. Not much help apart from saving on the teabags.

Hours of manual reading later and I'm no closer to a solution. The Web seems to be nothing but blind alleys and dead-ends this week. Email offers no quick solutions and I don't feel well enough to attend the local user group. I want instant help by someone knowledgeable.

A couple of emails later, a friend reminds me of IRC. Internet Relay Chat has a tarnished reputation of seedy pick-up rooms but the computer section is alive, healthy and very robust. After a few clicks to join some rooms and a short listen to make sure it's the correct topic, I'm in there with my questions. I was mildly chastised on occasion for not thinking before typing and sometimes received no response, but on the whole the answers that came back were so quick, accurate and helpful that my network was up and running again in no time. With some of the major distributors sending out major releases this month I can see IRC will become a necessity.

Happy Hacking

John Southern
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.