LINUX NEWS

Web browsers on the move

Much is happening in the development and refinement of Web browsers for the Linux community. Galeon has recently hit version 1.2, Mozilla 0.9.9 – just missing out on the code freeze for Mandrake 8.2 it seems – and Opera has released version 6.0 TP3.

Variety is the spice of life, so they say. Mozilla and Galeon give you a prime example of Open Source software while Opera offers all that you would expect from a commercial product.

Info
Galeon: *http://galeon.sourceforge.net*
Mozilla: *http://www.mozilla.org*
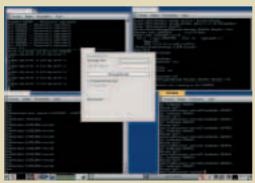Opera: *http://www.opera.com*

The ever improving Galeon

BlueOS – BeOS interface to Linux

The development of BlueOS, a Linux API, is hoping to speed up the compiling and porting of applications to BeOS. BeOS has suffered in that very few applications are available for it and this has held the OS back from appealing to a wider audience. Much work still needs to be done, so the usual call for developers to help with the project has come about again.

There is development, which is always good news, and will hopefully spur those with some free time to go back and look at the project again.

Info
BlueOS development site: *http://blueos.free.fr*

A GNOME skin for BlueOS

SuSE develop support for AMD's Hammer processor

AMD have announced that SuSE Linux AG has submitted enhancements to the official Linux kernel to support AMD's x86-64 instruction set. As you know, the Linux kernel is the fundamental source code upon which all Linux operating systems are based.

AMD's next-generation processor, code-named "Hammer", is supposedly designed to provide unprecedented levels of performance for both 32-bit and 64-bit software applications. Hammer processor-based systems will grant business and home users the benefit of long-term investment protection as these systems are designed to enable seamless transition from a 32-bit to 64-bit environment. AMD expects to begin shipping the first version of the Hammer family of processors at the end of 2002.

"With support for AMD's future processors in the official Linux tree, Linux users everywhere will appreciate being able to run their native x86-64 applications and their existing 32-bit x86 applications," said Linus Torvalds, creator of Linux.

Info
SuSE: *http://www.suse.com*
AMD: *http://www.amd.com*

Apple to license CUPS

Easy Software Products has announced that Apple Computer has licensed the Common UNIX Printing System (CUPS) for use with Apple operating systems and software. The standard CUPS distribution will be provided with Apple's Open Source Darwin operating system, while an enhanced version of CUPS with Apple's Aqua user interface will be provided with MacOS X.

CUPS uses the Internet Printing Protocol (IPP) as the basis for managing print jobs and queues. The Line Printer Daemon (LPD), Server Message Block (SMB), and AppSocket (also known as JetDirect) protocols are also supported with reduced functionality. CUPS adds network printer browsing and PostScript Printer Description (PPD) based printing options to support real-world printing under UNIX.

CUPS has become the de facto standard for most modern boxed-set Linux distributions. With this news, printer manufacturers may be encouraged to start producing drivers for CUPS. We shall see.

Info

Easy Software Products: *http://www.easysw.com*
CUPS and CUPS support: *http://www.cups.org*

KDE 3 – not a bed of roses

The release of KDE 3 has been cast into a bad light, following accusations that the KDE 3 developers have mismanaged the project. The standards and practices which helped bring forth KDE2 are said to be lacking from recent development, causing some consternation throughout the user community. None of this has been taken lying down by the KDE 3 developers, who are keen to point out the complexity of the development process.

For more details, see the NewsForge article at: *http://www.newsforge.com/article.pl?sid=02/03/09/2 24213*

Linux on a PlayStation 2

Linux (for PlayStation 2)

Sony has finally announced a release date for its eagerly awaited Linux kit, which allows you to use your PlayStation2 computer entertainment system as a fully functional desktop computer, or so the Sony FAQ says. The hope is that this will start shipping in Europe on the 22nd May 2002. Song has even set a price of 249 Euros for those of us in (or at least near) Europe.

The Linux Kit (for PlayStation2) comes complete with an internal hard disk drive, plugging in a keyboard, mouse and computer monitor will allow you to install and run a wide variety of computer applications that have been written for the Linux operating system. In addition, the kit allows you to develop your own programs that operate on Linux (for PlayStation 2).

The kit comes with a broadband network adaptor (Ethernet) (for PlayStation 2). This allows for connection to high speed Internet services as well as home PC networks.

There is one caveat that is causing some concern amongst all the excitement. To use Linux (for PlayStation2) you will need a computer monitor that supports "sync on green". A significant proportion of standard computer monitors do have this support, but not all, so to avoid disappointment you had better check first.

Info

Linux PlayStation 2 community*: http://playstation2-linux.com*

GTK+ 2.0 released

GTK+ is the multi-platform toolkit used for creating graphical user interfaces. Offering a complete set of widgets, GTK+ is suitable for projects ranging from small one-off projects to complete application suites.

GTK+ is Free software and part of the GNU Project. However, the licensing terms for GTK+, the GNU LGPL, allow it to be used by all developers, including those developing proprietary software, without any license fees or royalties.

What's more, they have released version 2, which you can get at *http://www.gtk.org*.

Gnome 2.0 Beta 2 now out

Great improvements have been made in the latest release of the GNOME desktop, or so it's been claimed by those in the know. These improvements include enhancements for anti-aliased text to make your screen reading that much more comfortable, as well as many improvement and new features for disabled users. If you want to know whether the commentators are telling porkie pies, or whether GNOME 2.0 really is as good as they say, then slip this month's coverdisc in your CD-ROM drive and find out for yourself.

Info
GNOME   www.gnome.org

Crisis in kernel patching

The guys at the UKUUG arranged a most entertaining discussion meeting, held in London at the end of February. Everyone went expecting a lecture from Eric Raymond, as he's very good at starting discussions! During the meeting he expressed his concerns at the way the kernel patching gets done.

According to Eric Raymond, Linus Torvolds has "reached his stress limit" acknowledging that no one person could deal with the vast number of kernel patches which come forward from the kernel maintainers. Eric Raymond claimed that patches, many of which would help with the development and progress of Linux, are being dropped without good reason.

"Linus needs to get better at delegating," said Eric Raymond. "Sometimes he can file out jobs and then arbitrarily reverse the decisions made."

Info
UKUUG: *http://www.ukuug.org/events*
Eric Raymond*: http://www.tuxedo.org/~esr*

Hardware donations required

The sad truth is that old hardware often gets consigned to the skip simply because it's taking up too much space. It pains us to do it, but we live in a world where space is precious.

The Stone SouperComputer is trying to lay its hands on as much old hardware as possible in its attempt to construct a Beowulf-class Linux cluster for an A-level computing research project.

The pleading email we got at the office suggests that they will take anything, 386 or greater. They also will take non-Intel machines as well.

Info
*The Stone SouperComputer –
http://stonesoup.esd.ornl.gov*

AOL to use Mozilla Gecko

Last month there was much concern about Red Hat being bought out by AOL. Well, they were seen in the same room together! But it appears that these discussions had more to do with setting up a support deal for AOL to use Mozilla as its browser of choice over Internet Explorer.

There have been rumours for a while that AOL was keen to start using the Gecko rendering engine – which is the prime part of Mozilla – for its own purposes. The switch should save AOL lots of money.
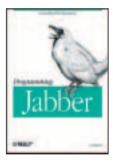
Even though Gecko might be used by AOL it is unlikely that they will produce any client software that will run under Linux. A support thing, we guess.

Info
Mozilla: http://www.mozilla.org

Programming Jabber

Yet another O'Reilly book hits the shelves this month, this time covering the messaging client Jabber. Jabber is a set of protocols expressed in XML, and an extensible framework that allows people and applications to exchange all sorts of information, from simple text messages to extending the backbone of an enterprise data system. Jabber gives programmers the power to build applications that have identity, presence, and that can take part in conversations.

"Programming Jabber: Extending XML Messaging", provides programmers the opportunity to learn and understand the Jabber technology and protocol from an implementer's point of view. "I was intrigued by the protocol; my entry point into the Jabber world was from the bottom up, so to speak," says DJ Adams, the author. "From day one, I was looking at the XML flowing between client and server. At the time, my head was full of XML, messaging, and Internet-wide communication. Jabber seemed to encapsulate all these things in one neat little box of potential. The more I learned about Jabber the more mesmerised I became."

Info
O'Reilly*: http://oreilly.com/catalog/jabber*

Open Source software to cure open sores?

Open Source software is the key to building a reliable and affordable IT infrastructure for the NHS, claims leading IT security consultancy Skygate Technology. The company's comments follow the recent BBC "Your NHS Day" and the announcement from Prime Minister, Tony Blair that taxes will have to rise to fund improved NHS services.

"The NHS recently announced its £500m 'Building the Information Core' strategy to modernise its IT systems by 2005," says Skygate director Pete Chown. "With much public scrutiny and limited resources the NHS should be seriously considering the cost and reliability advantages of using Open Source software."

"For example, systems where reliability is paramount would be ideally suited to the Open Source Linux operating system. These could include the planned systems for electronically booked appointments, electronic patient records and electronic health records."

"There is no doubt that large-scale, public sector IT projects are fraught with risk. The Inland Revenue, National Air Traffic Service and Passport Office are all examples of IT projects that have either failed, run late or gone well over budget. If the NHS is to invest heavily in IT then it should take the time look at all the available options. These have to include Open Source software because the business case, in terms of cost and reliability, is compelling."

Info
Skygate Technologyhttp://www.skygate.co.uk

"Free Consultancy" as in "Free Beer"

Openweb Analysts Ltd. is now offering free consultancy to London-based firms considering Open Source solutions for Web development.

Companies and government bodies who are thinking of using free software can now contact an expert for advice. They should email Openweb Analysts with a full explanation of their business and their interest in Open Source. They will receive a response examining potential Open Source solutions for their business. Those companies most able to benefit will be offered a free face-to-face meeting to discuss it further.

Info
Openweb Analysts Ltd: *http://www.owal.co.uk*
Email advice: *advice@OWAL.co.uk*

New ELSA graphics cards out

ELSA has launched its new range of consumer graphics boards: the ELSA Gladiac 925, ELSA Gladiac 725 and ELSA Gladiac 517 products. These new boards use the latest generation GeForce4 technology from nVidia, setting new standards in 3D performance and multimedia flexibility.

At the top-end the ELSA Gladiac 517 TV-OUT provides PC gamers with an entry-level step-up to performance gaming. Based on the new nVidia GeForce4 MX 440 GPU, the board is equipped with 64Mb DDR RAM, an effective memory clock rate of 400MHz and a core clock speed of 270MHz. The

ELSA Gladiac 517 TV-OUT offers gaming and DVD-movies on TV and provides superb image quality with the new nFinite FX II engine, Lightspeed Memory Architecture II and Accuview Antialiasing.

All four of the new boards in the ELSA GLADIAC range support the 3D shutter glasses ELSA 3D Revelator. It so happens that nVidia also produces drivers for Linux users, just a shame that they are closed source.

Info
ELSA   *http://www.elsa.co.uk*
nVidia   http://www.nvidia.com/

GPL test case

It seems that the case between NuSphere Corp and MySQL will not be tried in court in a case that would have proved the standing of the GNU general public licence (GPL to it's friends).

The preliminary hearing between NuSphere and MySQL was to begin on February 27, but has had cold water poured on it by Massachusetts US District Court Judge Patti Saris, when she refused to allow arguments to be brought forward which would have expanded the case beyond a trademark dispute.

Info
MySQL   *http://www.mysql.com*
NuSpherehttp://www.nusphere.com

NetBSD for the desktop

Wasabi Systems has released its NetBSD for desktops boxed set. It contains over 2,000 applications for NetBSD, including GNOME, KDE, office suites, Web browsers, development tools and games.

The package release of Wasabi NetBSD 1.5.2 contains 5 CD-ROMs with the full binaries of the world's most portable operating system for 20 platforms, plus over 1.9Gb of recompiled third party software for x86 PCs. These CDs are bootable on x86 PC, Alpha, DECstation, SPARC, Power Macintosh, and VAX platforms. A 16-page installation guide is included, and as an added bonus, you will also receive a colourful NetBSD CPU badge.

The NetBSD operating system is a fully-featured, Open Source, Unix-like operating system descended from the Berkeley Networking Release 2 (Net/2), 4.4BSD-Lite, and 4.4BSD-Lite2. NetBSD runs on thirty-one different system architectures featuring twelve distinct families of CPUs, and is being ported to more. The NetBSD 1.5.2 release contains complete binary releases for twenty different machine types.

NetBSD is a highly integrated system. In addition to its highly portable, high performance kernel, NetBSD features a complete set of user utilities, compilers for several languages, the X Window System, firewall software and numerous other tools, all accompanied by full source code. It also supports third party software (including the KDE and GNOME desktops) through its package management system.

Info
Wasabi: *http://www.wasabisystems.com*

GNUPro ports to Xstormy16

Red Hat, one of the leading Linux providers, has announced a partnership with SANYO to complete a highly complex GNUPro port to SANYO's Xstormy16 processor. GNUPro is recognised as the world's most popular embedded development tools suite.

"We chose Red Hat to build the GNUPro port to our processor because of its extensive knowledge of embedded architectures, prominence in GNU tool development and exceptional technical support," said Susumu Yamada of SANYO. "Our customers appreciate the ubiquitous nature of GNU-based tools, and we look forward to working with Red Hat to provide these benefits.

"The architecture on which SANYO's processor is based is designed for memory-constrained applications, and SANYO plans to utilise it on home appliances, portable units and audio systems. Red Hat's embedded tools team will draw upon their expertise in porting GNU-based tools in order to develop compiler, debugger and related software development tools for SANYO's architecture. Red Hat will also provide ongoing maintenance support to SANYO.

Info
Red Hat: http://www.redhat.com/solutions/embedded

AdAstra invests in SuSE Linux

AdAstra Erste Beteiligungs, a privately held venture capital company has invested 4.4 million euros in SuSE. Large enterprises benefit from SuSE's deep project knowledge in terms of design and implementation of individual IT structures. For the IT infrastructure of small and medium-scale enterprises, SuSE offers cost-efficient, easy-to-administer standard solutions such as the SuSE Linux eMail Servers and SuSE Linux Firewall.

During the past months, SuSE Linux restructured its internal organisation into four target-group-oriented Business Units, which handle the various customer segments according to their specific needs. "In the IT world, SuSE Linux AG is renowned for its highly innovative products and services. With the new organisational structure, SuSE has established an optimum base for handling the various requirements of the individual customer segments, thus being able to participate over proportionately in the rapidly growing Linux market," commented AdAstra's Hans-Christian Perle.

"The new management exceeded our expectations. Despite a generally difficult environment, SuSE Linux AG was able to increase its total turnover by about 50 per cent to 40 million euros during last year. The former technology start-up SuSE successfully transformed into a reliable and auspicious enterprise," added Tillmann Lauk, CEO of the lead investor, e-millennium 1.

Info
SuSE: *http://www.suse.co.uk*
AdAstra: *http://www.adastra.com*

SuSE has a new CTO

Boris Nalbach, an experienced IT professional, has assumed the position of Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at SuSE Linux, the international Open Source technology leader and solutions provider.

"Boris Nalbach was our favourite candidate for staffing the Executive Board vacancy," said Gerhard Burtscher, Chairman of the corporation's Executive Board. "Under his supervision, we will introduce additional smart Linux solutions for end customers as well as for enterprises and promote the strategic and operational collaboration with our technology partners."

Info
SuSE*: http://www.suse.co.uk*

Red Hat help develop SuperH SH-5 compiler

Both Red Hat and SuperH, Inc., the developer of RISC microprocessor cores, have announced that they are working together on a compiler for the new 64-bit SuperH SH-5 processor. The Red Hat GNUPro compiler is a commercial software development suite of tools built around the Open Source GNU standard. The joint work with Red Hat is part of SuperH's commitment to using, and making available, Open Source software for the SuperH architecture.

The SuperH architecture is ideally suited to digital consumer convergence products and targeted at service providers, system manufacturers and semiconductor suppliers. Red Hat is working with SuperH to develop Open Source solutions across the SuperH architecture to deliver powerful, reliable and affordable solutions ideal for the mass consumer device market. The SuperH architecture, including the new 64-bit SH-5 core architecture, will be supported by the Red Hat Embedded Linux developer suite enabling developers to gain access to the latest software upgrades as they become available and to Red Hat Open Source support.

The SuperH architecture is designed for digital consumer applications such as set-top boxes, portable multi-media appliances, games consoles, and many other 'infotainment' products. Automotive applications include car information systems, motor control systems and satellite navigation products. Telecoms applications include video telephones, home gateway systems and smart phone applications.

"When designing consumer devices, getting the embedded technology right is critical – it must be able to support feature-rich applications but also come in at the right price point for the mass consumer market," said Jon Frosdick, Software Director of SuperH, Inc. "Open Source software is an important part of our strategy for ensuring that the SuperH architecture is designed to deliver the highest price performance ratio. We're delighted to be working with Red Hat to develop Open Source solutions for the new SuperH SH-5 architecture."

Info
RedHat: *http://www.europe.redhat.com*
SuperH: *http://www.superh.com*

New SuSE OS

SuSE Linux has announced the launch of the eighth generation of its OS, which will be available from software retailers from mid-April. This release comes with increased security, the newest KDE desktop, KDE 3, and is the first distribution to feature it. With incredibly fast installation and expanded multimedia capabilities this could make it one of the most advanced Linux distribution for professional and private desktop users.

An almost fully-automated installation routine and the comfortable graphical desktop environment KDE 3 make SuSE Linux 8.0 the ideal choice for all Linux newcomers and private users, who want to benefit from the advantages of the Linux operating system on a desktop computer.

SuSE Linux 8.0 will be available from software retailers from mid-April 2002. The recommended retail price for SuSE Linux 8.0 Personal (3 CDs, 2 manuals, 60 days of installation support) is £39; SuSE Linux 8.0 Professional (7 CDs, 1 DVD, 3 manuals, 90 days of installation support) is £59. An Update offering for previous users is also available, priced £39 (inclusive of VAT).

Powering the Welsh spirit

E-spirit Wales specialises in Linux training and implementation for small to medium size companies. They run courses teaching Linux from beginners classes to using Linux in the enterprise, namely changing over from a Windows NT to a Linux-based system. Training is carried out on-site or at seminars provided by representatives of Espirit Wales Ltd in close co-operation with the various Linux distribution manufacturers and Linux IT – the largest Linux solution providers in the UK. Linux implementation is carried out by certified Linux engineers on all conceivable systems. They aim to give a guaranteed software solution with both telephone and on-site support.

Info
E-spirit Wales: *http://www.e-spirit-wales.co.uk*

PointBase – 100th partner for MontaVista

MontaVista Software Inc., has announced the one hundredth member of the MontaVista Partnering Program: PointBase, Inc., developers in Java database technology for managing and synchronising enterprise data among servers, mobile and pervasive computing devices, headquartered in Mountain View, Calif.

"PointBase has supported Linux for some time now and we are naturally excited about our milestone partner status with MontaVista Software," said Cameron McEachern, executive vice president for sales and marketing at PointBase. "Our pure Java, small-footprint relational database complements the strengths of VisualAge Micro Edition for MontaVista Linux, while delivering the persistent storage capabilities needed to enable embedded applications. We look forward to continue working with MontaVista Software to bring value to our mutual customers."

Info
PointBase: *http://www.pointbase.com*
MontaVista: *http://www.mvista.com*