Forward thinking

Dear Linux Magazine Reader,

Persuading people, especially those who make the corporate decisions, that Linux is both easy to use and can cope with their demands, has just become easier.

Knoppix has been a favorite of mine since just after its launch when someone at a User Group showed it to us. A bootable CD that you can put in a machine and without anything being written to the hard disk gives you a fully-functional Debian system. I timed this and after 53 seconds I was happily running a KDE desktop. It is possible to then install this on to your hard disk should you be tempted.

Simpler for the CEO is to try WorkSpot. By pointing any browser at the WorkSpot website, you can sign up for a month's usage for $10. This gives you a Red Hat 8.0 desktop running on the WorkSpot server, fully accessible in your web browsing window.

Worried about technical support? All the major distributions offer support for their particular branding of Linux, but now IBM/HP/Dell are offering tech support for their customers. This is as good as the main Linux distributors and has the advantage of having the big-name backing that the CEO is likely to recognize.

Small computers seem to be the current flavor. VIA has been busy releasing their EPIA integrated motherboards. At just 17cm square, these range from silent versions to the new 1GHz processors. They allow you to be quite creative with the casing and there are versions inside toasters, radio controlled cars etc., A recent demonstration at a Linux User Group showed diskless versions network booting from one another to give an example of a Linux Internet café.

On the downside, one of the big broadband companies has decided that fast access is so good that they will impose a limit on the amount people download. At full speed you could download for less than three hours a day. Do a little bit of browsing, read your spammed email box and then try a network install from a remote server as often shown in modern Debian distributions and overstep the limit.

Microsoft has managed to do it again. This time they have announced that they are seeking wide-ranging patents on the .Net technology. This will have follow-on effects. Certainly with the Mono project and also with the standards committees who have been working with the aim of .Net becoming a standard. To quote Microsoft's own web page ".NET is built on open standards and embraces all programming languages". Guess they forgot to say the secret words of Software Patent. Just how much time do you want to invest in something that you may be stopped from using?

Happy Hacking,

John

John Southern
Editor

We pride ourselves on the origins of our publication, which come from the early days of the Linux revolution.

Our sister publication in Germany, founded in 1994, was the first Linux magazine in Europe. Since then, our network and expertise has grown and expanded with the Linux community around the world.

As a reader of Linux Magazine, you are joining an information network that is dedicated to distributing knowledge and technical expertise. We're not simply reporting on the Linux and Open Source movement, we're part of it.

Use Linux, Be Proud

As can be seen in the Community section, we have started the conference season again. Apart from being informative, they offer a chance to meet like-minded souls. The time spent with people outside the lectures is just as valuable. The main developer conferences do not have the commercialism of a Linux expo. This means you cannot buy goods or talk to vendors.

Having said this, the conferences have the advantage of the community spirit and being close to the real developers. It is always nice to see some of the vendors turn up to listen to the lectures. I always feel that I can trust them as they have their heart in the right place.

If you cannot get to a conference, you should try to attend a local user group. These are the best sources for help. People go out of their way to solve your problems expecting nothing in return, soon they become close friends and the community spirit grows.