One by one

Dear Linux Magazine Reader,

Normally the summer sees a slow down in activity as more people go out in the sun rather than stay indoors working on computers. This year the opposite seems to be happening in our worldwide Linux community. This is a strong indication that Linux is gaining more users and administrators. More projects are being announced and the number of Linux administrating jobs on offer is slowly increasing.

Some of this could be down to the popular press carrying Linux related stories such as that in Brazil, where it has been announced that there is to be a law making it mandatory for 80 percent of all government and institutional software to be Open Source within three years. They have made this decision based on the need to increase the country's technology base and provide jobs.

The city of Munich in Germany is also following the new trend and is to use Open Source software, throughout the cities 14,000 public administration desktop computers, see page 13.

I expect this is causing some internal memos at Microsoft, who announced the purchase of the RAV antivirus technology and cessation of the Linux version with one breath while their CEO Steve Ballmer in his yearly address is quoted as saying Linux is a competitive challenge and free software an interesting alternative.

The increase in Linux projects is leading to some mature development. The Gnome accessibility project has recently seen a flurry of activity concerning its handling of data for visually impaired and blind. This has recently become very useable with the opening up of the code to more developers.

A visitor arrived last Thursday and we started talking about computers. He had never heard of Linux and so I started to explain. Fortunately I was stopped by others arriving before his eyes completely glazed over. I really struggled not to be over enthusiastic and scare him away from Linux. The offer to help backup all his notes and letters from floppy disk has helped and we now have another joining our ranks.

Each convert will help us all by developing, or at least providing a market for, new projects. In turn these projects will lead to software which is more likely to do what we want and replace that which is only just adequate for our needs. Taking a risk on new software may lead to some wasted time, but not effort. Our software lives and grows by evolution.

Being innovative is not enough. Being useful and used ensures it develops the way users want. Using Open Source and GNU software gives us all that freedom of choice that is otherwise lacking.

In a world where our freedoms are slowly being eroded, it is good to know that we have control of at least one area of our lives.

Vive la révolution!

John Southern
Editor

LINUX MAGAZINE

Better informed

The Linux Magazine Preview newsletter we announced last month is a great success. Thanks to everyone who sent us feedback - we were overwhelmed by the mass of positive comments. For those who missed out, the Preview is a monthly email newsletter that gives you, among other things, a sneak peek at the next issue, with links to articles posted online in advance of the on sale date. Sign up here: *http://www.linux-magazine.com/Newsletter.*