

Choosing a future



Dear Linux Magazine Reader,

Linux is changing. It is hard to judge the speed of change without constantly upgrading, re-evaluating and testing both the operating system, application

and the utilities that together make it such a wonderful usable system.

I was lucky enough to spend the weekend playing with an older machine that I had installed Linux on, more years ago than is polite to mention. Just as quickly as the hardware has changed over time, so has the software. The underlying core remained the same. I could still connect the machine to a network and all the basic tools were available. Graphically the computer has fallen behind the most.

Although I like to think I favor the command line for most things, using this machine brought home just how much I now use a graphical front-end for some tasks. Going back to the old FVWM showed both the advantages and per-

haps some disadvantages that we have advanced to over the years. KDE and Gnome are wonderful desktop environments that handle everything I currently wish for. The downside of these is that they tend to hog machine resources. Even something small and quick such as Fluxbox has a lot of eye-candy compared to the older systems.

FVWM appeared clunky and from a time long ago. Looking back at my notes for the old machine that I had left myself, I had referred to the improvements that FVWM had compared to the previous TWM. Where were all my little tools and shortcuts? Still I had to get on with the job and rescue some long lost, but still needed data.

Time passed, and using both the Window Manager and the command line I finally resurrected the necessary information. My mind slowly remembered how to use the system. Shortcuts slowly resurfaced through familiarization. Once finished, I realized that the system did not have all the bells and whistles that the modern Window Managers have. However, everything went fine and I probably spent more time actually working on the task in hand.

I like having the bells and whistles. They are a nice comfort but I intend to try to use less of them and concentrate on using the quickest way to do whatever task I need to do in future..

With all the new features, we are in danger of creeping featuritis. This modern disease attacks all software to some extent. Star Office has over 80 different highlighting colors. I know this may be down to compatibility, but who really uses all of these?

One of the joys of Linux is the freedom it brings. We are not forced to use one

LINUX MAGAZINE

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.

operating system. We can move around distributions and enjoy the benefit each brings. Fixing on just one distribution means no freedom of choice. Source code may be free and open, but without competition, the market would be no better than any other.

We may say to one another socially that our particular current distribution is better than XYZ brand, but we can all monitor and learn from the others. I am fortunate to run so many different distributions and although some have advantages it is wonderful to compare.

Onward for a diverse future,

John Southern
Editor

Go East!

We are proud to announce the launch of a new sister-publication, **Linux Magazin Romania**. The Romanian-language version started with the September issue and is a reaction to the very high level of interest that Linux and Open Source enjoy in Eastern Europe.

We wish our colleagues great success in helping Linux become the standard OS in Romania!

For those of you who read Romanian, or just for fun, have a look at: www.linux-magazin.ro.