Business News

Lycoris Tablets

Element Computer, Staten Island, N.Y., announces the availability of its new tablet-style PC. The Helium 2100 uses a customized version of the Lycoris Linux distribution and can be purchased for $999. This is considerably cheaper than comparable tablets running Microsoft's Windows XP Tablet PC Edition.

The Helium 2100 has a swiveling screen that makes it convertible from a touch-screen tablet device to a traditional notebook PC. Looking under the hood reveals a 1GHz Antaur processor by Via Technologies, 256MB RAM (expandable to 1GB) and a 30GB hard drive. The Helium has a 14.1" XGA (1024 x 768) Touch Panel active matrix display and a 85-key keyboard with extended function keys.

The President of Element Computer, Mike Hjorleiffsson, said that Element had combined standard Linux components with a few customized applications to accomodate features such as pen-based and touch-screen functions. Handwriting recognition is due to be released in early 2004. Jason Spisak, Lycoris Vice President of Marketing, hopes that the sub-four-digit price will make "companies who were hesitant before" more confident about entering the tablet market. The Helium 2100 should appeal both to Linux users and people looking for a affordable way to experiment with tablet computing. ■

http://www.elementcomputer.com/store/product_info.php?products_id = 33

Love conquers all

Ransom Love, the co-founder and former CEO of Caldera, has joined Progeny's board of directors. Progeny, founded by Debian GNU/Linux creator Ian Murdock, is a provider of support for Debian and RPM based distributions.

Ian Murdock said: "We are very pleased and honored to have Ransom join our board. He was one of the pioneers in commercializing Linux and has been a leader in promoting standards and unifications across Linux distributions".

Love started his Linux career when he left Novell to help found Caldera in 1994. As Caldera's CEO he was instrumental in the creation of UnitedLinux. His acquisition of SCO seemed to be paving the way for users of commercial Unix to migrate to Linux. Subsequent events after he had left SCO have shown such hopes to be forlorn.

On the subject of Progeny, Love said: "They have some real opportunities with their relationship with the Open Source Community, with Debian." ■

http://www.progeny.com/

On the Road again

HP is looking to bring Real World Linux to the masses, with the HP Linux Roadshow billed for venues in 20 countries throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The show is aimed at customers and business partners.

At each of the events there will be an exhibition area with products and demonstrations from attending vendors. Companies such as BEA, Oracle, Novell and Red Hat are due to present their Linux solutions running on HP hardware.

The show started back in November and will continue at least until spring 2004, including stops in Turkey, Italy, Finland, Ireland, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia and South Africa. HP intends to supplement the schedule with additional events in Germany, France, Spain and Hungary. Upcoming events are to be announced on the Roadshow website. ■

*http://www.hplinuxroadshow.com/*

Penguin Burger

McDonald's Germany has switched its Web services, DNS, FTP and proxy services on the Internet to Linux. McDonald's uses Web services to support its 1,200 restaurants throughout the country. The Linux distribution it has chosen is Suse Linux Enterprise Server.

Project Manager Thomas Trepl said that "the implementation of Suse Linux Enterprise Server has resulted in uptimes of more than 400 days – interrupted only due to extensions on the hardware side". Suse's market position in the German retail sector is strengthened further by German-based retail opticians chain, Apollo-Optik's plans to switch its 600 servers to Suse Linux Standard Server by 2006. ■

http://www.Suse.com/
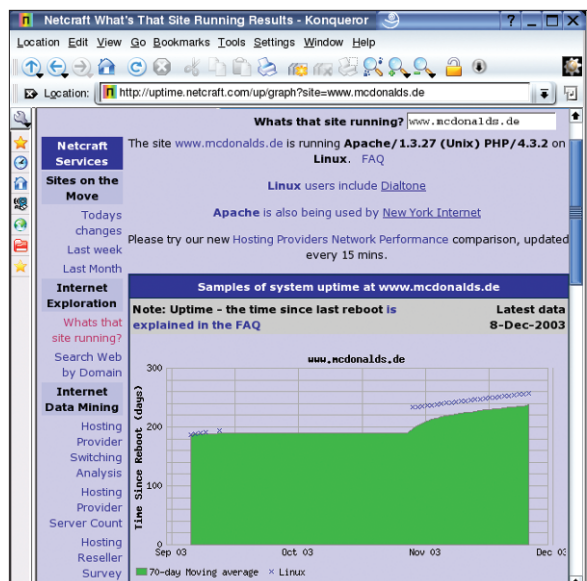
■ New Pricing for Sun Java Desktop

With Linux as a key element, Sun Microsystems is fighting its way back into the market. The company, that has been plagued with negative reports on the high TCO of its solutions, is now offering a new pricing system that addresses these concerns. The key to this strategy is Sun's Java Desktop System that integrates Solaris, Linux and Windows environments.

The software is a modified Suse Linux version with a Sun Microsystems look. Adding StarOffice allows users to exchange data with Microsoft Office users. The new Looking Glass desktop provides users with a unique 3D-desktop experience that includes transparent windows, songs displayed in a 3D jukebox

and pages that you can literally push aside.

As the desktop is just one part of a package that includes directory and web services, nearly everything but the server OS is included. To keep licensing simple, companies only pay US$ 100 per annum per member of staff.

An introductory discount of 50% is available until June 2004. And as Sun owns a SCO license for System V, this is a safe bet for CIOs wanting to use Linux. The lower price has so far attracted the Chinese government who invited Sun to quote for 1 million desktops, with an option of another 199 million desktops if tests are successful.

If China goes ahead with the deal, this would mean Sun supplying almost a third of all desktops worldwide, and taking second notch in the market. It would change the whole landscape, and make Sun the Linux market leader. Meanwhile, the UK has decided not to wait and see, but has launched its own Java Desktop trials. ■

http://www.sun.com/service/ products/software/ javaenterprisesystem http://wwws.sun.com/software/ javadesktopsystem