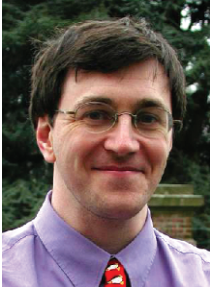


# Little by little



Dear Linux Magazine Reader,

I decided to re-start a gateway machine at home. No real reason, it just seemed like a good idea at the time. 184 days uptime. The result

was no IP from the cable company. Odd, because a minute before I had been happily browsing. I reset the machine again and noted that the DHCP request failed. I called up the cable company. All went well until I mentioned Linux. "Ah that's your problem. Must be Linux. We don't support it." and the phone went dead. I had half been expecting this.

Against my better judgement I loaded on the ISP supported proprietary OS and called back the next morning. After much discussion which included them saying that they could ping the machine, even when it was switched off, they said it was my cabling. Eventually an engineer was dispatched. Cables were exchanged, Network cards swapped and installed. Cable set-top boxes swapped. The engineer went away saying all would be working in an hour after they had reset the set-top box.

The following day, still nothing worked. Another call to the help line resulted in them saying that the set-top box had been wrongly installed. Another

man, another box and an assurance that the helpline would call the following day after it had once again reset.

They did not call. Eventually I rang to be told that the replacement set-top box was broken and that I needed to book another engineer as it was too late to send one that day. Next day, another man, another box. Finally in desperation this engineer called the head office. All the hardware had worked previously it was just that they had run out of IP addresses. By downgrading the service some addresses were still available. Finally, I was back online with an order for a Linux-friendly ISP.

While this was going on, the engineers explained that they personally were interested in Linux. One asked what benefits he would gain from changing. I launched into my usual spiel about freedom, while watching his eyes so I could stop just before they glazed over. He stopped me and said that he was not interested in freedom as he had copies of another OS from a friend. He did not care about viruses because he religiously reinstalled every month.

He was unimpressed by everything I showed him. He only used his home machine for typing letters and emailing clipart to friends. His system did everything he wanted so there was no point in changing. Only when he mentioned that he really needed to get a copy of a more expensive OS did I enquire why. He has a dual processor machine just for word-processing!

"Linux can do more than one processor and the new 64-bit machines". It was one of those eyes-light-up moments. Having managed to get me back online, I then spent thirty minutes Googling for proof that 64-bit CPUs and multi-CPU systems ran happily with Linux.

He left with a couple of pages of URLs and saying that he would be buying a

dual Opteron system so he could tell all his friends that his system could outperform theirs.

That is not quite the end of the matter. In the heat of the moment many things are said and promised. The real surprise was about two weeks later when Tony phoned to say he had bought a machine and three different versions of Linux. He wanted to know how to install them all along with his other OS. He had played with Linux for a week and wanted to know why everyone was not using it. Another one joins our ranks.

Good Wumpus hunting!

**John Southern**  
Editor

## Reader Survey

Help us improve Linux Magazine by participating in our reader survey. Let us know that you like and don't like, what you'd like to see more of, less of, and give us your comments in general.

You'll find more information and a survey form on pages 8-9. You can also download the form from [www.linux-magazine.com/Survey](http://www.linux-magazine.com/Survey).

# 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.