

Letters to the editor

Write access

■ What to put on the DVD

Here's my 2p worth about what to put on the Linux Magazine DVD:

Always provide the source tar-ball.

Always test the tar-ball decompresses and builds ok for clean installation of any distributions you've recently given away. Then you know what "support" packages need to be included to keep readers happy.

If you've recently put a distribution on cover disk there is an excuse to provide installation specific binaries for that distribution. But I think Linux users are all familiar with tar-ball installation so duplicating the same software for lots of distributions is a waste of space.

I guess for Linux there comes the problem of how to fill the DVD because you can fit a lot of projects on a DVD. There is not much bloatware for Linux.

So I think being radically different to typical "Microsoft OS magazines" is OK. There is a lot of public domain data out there. There is a lot of stuff I for one would like to download but size is prohibitive.

Carefully chosen, such data might also sell the magazine to non-Linux people. From the top of my head, things like public domain NASA images (always going to be popular, and I guess there are lots now), texts from project Gutenberg, other public domain books, dictionaries.

I think that is how to fill the space left by a lack of commercial demos and bloatware for Linux. I even forgot to mention all the public domain music stuff like soundfont files.

Chris Gibbs, by email

LM Thank you for your input Chris. We are constantly improving our DVD processes, and one of our goals is to provide more sources and binaries.

Your idea on filling in blank DVD space with public domain data such as music and images is something that we're looking in to. Feel free to point out sources of such data that you think would be appropriate.

Reader comments are always welcome as a way to help us improve Linux Magazine. We invite all readers to participate in our reader survey, which you will find described on pages 8-9. This is one of the most important ways for us to understand what interests our customers. ■

■ Third CD

I would like to check a CD-Rom ISO image before I turn it into a real CD. How can I tell the iso is downloaded correctly?

Mark Bradley, by email

LM Most ISO images that you download also have an MD5 checksum file in the same directory. For example the ArchLinux distribution found at <ftp://ftp.parrswood.net> has a file `arch-0.5.md5sum`. This file has a single line starting `6201fedd...` and is the checksum total of the iso image. This is compared to the number generated with the command:

```
md5sum arch-0.5.iso
```

If these match, then you have successfully downloaded the ISO image. This does not necessarily mean the iso was made correctly.

Before burning the ISO to a CD, you can test it by mounting it as a filesystem with the following command:

```
mount -o loop,unhide -t iso9660  
-r /path/to/cdimage.iso /mnt/iso
```

`-r` is for read only, `-t iso9660` is the type of filesystem found on most CD-ROMs. `unhide` just makes any hidden file visible. ■

■ Changes to Format

Good day to you all and thanks for a great magazine. Right balance and content etc.

Now as for the changes to the issues I am not so happy. I don't actually want the DVD, nor do I want to subscribe. I have tried that and found your delivery



Please send your comments and suggestions to letters@linux-magazine.com

to be less than satisfactory. I want to pick up my copy of the magazine at the news stand without a DVD or CD-ROM and not pay more than £3.99. I am unwilling to pay any more for any magazine, no matter how good.

Sorry, but you lose a reader, or at least a regular one. Please continue to do the plain vanilla issue with nothing stuck to the front cover.

Paul Foster, by email

LM We understand that not everyone has a need for our DVDs. As you say, we just have to accept that we can't please everyone, though we wish it were possible. Many of our articles are available in our online archive at www.linux-magazine.com/Magazine/Archive free of charge, so maybe that will help you somewhat. Also, please keep an eye on what we are doing, some changes in the future may fit your situation better. Thanks for your comments, and we hope to welcome you back someday! ■

ERRATA

The juror descriptions in last month's article on the Linux New Media Awards contained a few errors. We listed Alan Cox as being from Scotland, which he is not. Alan is originally from Birmingham and now lives in Wales. We apologize for any distress caused.

John Southern, Editor of Linux Magazine, was mistakenly described as having founded the Greater London Linux User Group. John definitely did not found the GLLUG, but does regularly attend meetings.