

## Linux Security

# Defending Data

First the good news. So far, Linux systems have managed to avoid attacks that cause widespread damage. And now the bad news: there is no guarantee that things will stay this way. **BY ULRICH WOLF**

Of course, we all hope that Linux will continue to spread, but at the same time that means that more and more inexperienced users will be moving to Linux. Because of their pervasiveness, Linux systems are becoming increasingly attractive targets for widespread attacks. Will the Linux trend produce a generation of users who access the Internet without any protection, fail to password protect their office PCs, and store home banking PINs in text files on their computers – just like many Windows users are rumored to do? Who knows?

One thing is for sure, the age of innocence is a thing of the past. There is some indication that users are slowly but surely becoming aware of the dangers. Script kiddies, spammers and dubious business practices have put an end to the Internet's reputation as a friendly open cyberspace. The Web can be a hostile place, just like the rest of the world. It is time to get used to that. Protecting the IT resources placed in your care should no longer be regarded as an exercise in egoism, but as one for the common good. After all, insecure systems are commonly used as a platform from which to launch further attacks.

In this issue, we will not limit ourselves to introducing tools and explaining their usage – as is so often the case in security literature. Instead, we aim to cultivate more awareness of security basics. This issue kicks off with an article on whether Open Source is really more secure. It discusses how we can judge this, and where Open Source should be going in the future, if we want to stay ahead of the field.

We then take a look at the Adamantix distribution. In contrast to Debian, Adamantix contains patches and programs that proactively enhance the distribution's security.

It is followed by an article on firewalls, which – although essential security components – cannot provide complete protection.

Then it is time for us to get tough: hardening the Linux kernel, and Linux applications, is one of the ultimate challenges in the field of security.

You can look forward to inside information straight from the developers of PaX.

To top it all off, this month's DVD features the Adamantix distribution – in our opinion one of the most promising hardened distributions on today's market. ■

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*data scan in progress...*