

Business News

■ “Dance a Light, Fluendo”

A new company dedicated to creating streaming media services using free software technology has been founded. Fluendo is based in Spain and intends to develop a free software streaming media server that can provide an all-in-one solution to serve both live and pre-recorded media content to any existing platform.

“While there are commercially backed streaming servers available for other platforms than Linux, these servers are proprietary, limited in features, and costly to buy, license, or keep running”, said Fluendo’s CEO Julien Moutte.

Fluendo’s streaming server will be based on GStreamer, a library that allows the construction of graphs of media-handling components, ranging from simple Ogg/Vorbis playback to complex audio (mixing) and video (non-linear editing)

processing. Fluendo has also declared its intent to support the Free



Software development model by announcing that “it will assist the GStreamer community in further stabilizing and developing the framework”.

At first, the streaming will only use freely available and royalty-free codecs. Later on, Fluendo plans to support proprietary formats, which will be made available under the licenses that the patent holders specify. In addition, Fluendo will be planning to offer support contracts and custom development services to content providers. ■

<http://www.fluendo.com/>

<http://www.gstreamer.net/>

■ I work in a Land Down Under

IBM Australia plans to expand its Open Source lab in Canberra. The company has announced that it expects to create “new jobs, helping to build skills and strengthening Australia’s reputation for innovation in IT.” The Linux Technology Center in Canberra was founded in 2001, employing nine Open Source developers. The recent expansion program is being supported by the Australian Capital Territory Government.

John Harvey, IBM’s Director of Corporate Affairs for Australia and New Zealand, said that Open Source software had grown in popularity among IBM’s customers and that the expansion of the Center would help to service this demand. He said “The Center will also become a focus for Open Source skill development in Australia. The Center will expand its existing links with Australian Universities to foster Open Source development skills and train the experts of tomorrow”. ■

<http://www.ibm.com/au/>

■ With a little Help from my Friends

DreamWorks digital animation studios, famous for producing films such as “Shrek”, recently boosted their image rendering capabilities, without needing to buy extra hardware. The company has managed to achieve this with the help of HP. HP has constructed a 1,000-processor computing farm, which companies such as DreamWorks are permitted to access remotely, for a fee.

This allows DreamWorks to handle peak loads during the final rendering stages of films such as “Shrek 2”, “Shark Tale” and “Madagascar”, without needing to build render farms that would spend much of their time idle. The computing farm is based on HP ProLiant DL360 servers running Linux and HP ProCurve network switches. It is linked via a high-speed network to the DreamWorks Animation studios to provide an extension of the film company’s internal data center. ■

<http://www.dreamworks.com/>

<http://www.hp.com/>

■ Linspiring!

Lindows, Inc. has announced that that it has filed a registration statement with the USA Securities and Exchange Commission and hopes to raise up to \$57.5 million in a public offering of its stock. WR Hambrecht & Co, along with Roth Capital Partners will act as the managers for the offering.

The dates for the Lindows’ stock to begin trading has as yet not been fixed. There is also some uncertainty about the extent to which the continuing battle with Microsoft will lead to trouble when Lindows’ Initial Public Offering (IPO) does go live. After being sued by Microsoft in various countries, the company initially changed its name to Lin—s (pronounced “Lindash”) in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Subsequently, while facing the prospect of eventually being sued in every jurisdiction that gives credence to Trademarks, they seem to have concluded that perhaps discretion is the better part of valour, and have changed their name worldwide to Linspire (“Lin’ from Linux and ‘spire’ which means pinnacle”, says Lindows CEO Michael Robertson). More Microsoft-led court cases in the United States, Canada, Finland, Sweden and France are coming up – so, good luck and be Linspired. ■

<http://www.linspire.com/>

■ Here comes the Sun!

Sun Microsystems Inc. is considering offering a free, open source version of Solaris. Jonathan Schwartz, the company’s recently appointed president and chief operating officer, said: “Maybe we’ll GPL it. We’re still looking at that.”

Until now, Solaris has been freely available to non-commercial users, but the source code has never been published and Sun has charged \$99 for a single-processor license.

Although Sun hasn’t been overly enthusiastic about the GNU General Public License in the past, Schwartz said there was “not a lot” preventing Sun from releasing Solaris under the GPL. Sun is contemplating the possibilities of offering support contracts, perhaps using a model similar to that used by Red Hat. ■

<http://www.sun.com/>