# Moving targets

**Dear Linux Magazine Reader,**

A few weeks ago, I had a small car accident. The result of which was the car was written off. The car had done wonderful service. Of all the cars I have owned and driven this was only the second that was one of those cars where it just keeps going. Yes, I had replaced the tires and brakes, but the engine and major parts had seen me through 150,000 miles and looked like it would remain so. Getting over the grief of its demise, I went to buy another car. Like most things, this was a juggling act between the short time needed to buy and the cost.

Decision made, car bought. Like most forms of technology, car manufacturing has advanced. New features that were once luxury items are now commonplace. After only a few weeks driving, I start to wonder how I ever lived without them.

Is Linux advancing too fast? I ask this question because I keep talking to people who say that they do not use Linux because they have tried it in the past and did not think it as good as their current setup. When I ask them when they tried Linux, the usual answer is a couple of months ago. This usually means over a year ago, though in some cases this is many, many years ago.

Other proprietary Operating Systems release on average every two years. Linux for a major distribution is released about every six months. The rapid rate of change has meant that we have not only caught up to other systems, but surpassed them in functionality. Unfortunately, unless you can persuade someone to keep trying Linux they are stuck in the recent past, believing that Linux is not advanced. I am guilty to some extent of perpetuating this myth for some. When they visit, they can see machines that have old text only systems.

This is not because I am too mean to download a copy and burn a CD, I have enough distros to make a small mountain. It is because the systems work and I have no need to change them. Other machines have the latest distributions, but these particular computers are subject to such frequent change that I can never remember the new features that they have. All the computers on my main network get upgraded about once a year.

It is just bad timing that visitors always see the machines just before upgrade or when I am still fumbling may way around new menus and applications. In the future, I will try to keep at least one machine with the latest features to convince others and also to remind me how much everything has advanced. This week, I managed to free some time and get my hands on four new distributions.

The old distributions had just kept on going. Yes, I had replaced security patches and hard disks, but the kernel and major parts had seen me through hundred of days and looked like it would remain so. Getting over the grief of the old distributions demise I went to load another system. Like most things, this was a juggling act between the configuring time-cost and the new features on offer.

Decision made, distros downloaded. Like most forms of technology, Linux has advanced. New features that were once cutting edge development items are now commonplace in the main core of the systems. After only a few weeks of running these, I start to wonder how I ever lived without them.

Have fun playing!

*John*

**John Southern**
Editor

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