

LETTERS

No Lizards Here

We're going to start off this Letters section with a small correction. A couple of readers noticed an error in James Stanger's article on secure browsing. Here's one of your comments.

"Loving the magazine, but would like to point out there is some misinformation on your latest issue (issue 04). On page 86 where it talks about Google Chrome it says that Chrome is powered by the Gekko engine. For one, it is "Gecko," and secondly, Chrome uses web-kit, so does safari and the iPhone. Gecko is the rendering engine for Firefox. Great work on the magazine otherwise!"

Jordan

UU You're quite right. Google's Chrome browser is based on WebKit and not Gecko. And thank you. We're thrilled that you are enjoying the magazine!

Backward Compatibility

What happens to everyone using 9.04 and earlier? If we install the new version, do we lose all the tweaks and additions we have added to our previous versions? And is it worth upgrading every 6 months?

Richard

UU First and foremost. Whenever you upgrade any operating system, Ubuntu Linux or otherwise, make sure you have a backup of your data. In fact, make sure you have more than one, and verify that it's a good backup. Now that I've got that out of the way, let me answer by saying "it depends."

There's no need to upgrade every six months. You may choose to, but you are by no means bound to. If your system is serving you well and you don't need features that accompany the latest and greatest, then don't upgrade. Each distribution is part of an evolution in software, and each new release brings changes that are bound to affect the way you work and the look and feel of the environment. You might have to re-tweak if you want things to look and work the way they used to. Release 10.04, covered in this issue, is a case in point. The changes from the desktop perspective are substantial compared with 9.10.

If you decide not to upgrade, you still need to remember to install security updates as long as they are available for your version. If you install an LTS version like Ubuntu 10.04, Ubuntu will provide updates for up to three years.

So why upgrade? Because things change. Bugs are squashed. Software

evolves. New features emerge that enhance the desktop experience. The beauty here is what hasn't changed. Your Ubuntu Linux distribution and the software that comes with it is still free and open, unlike the commercial alternatives. And you are still free to decide when, or if, you will follow the next step in its evolution.

Rawking

Let's go with the standard intro ... First let me say, awesome mag, yo! You guys Rawk!

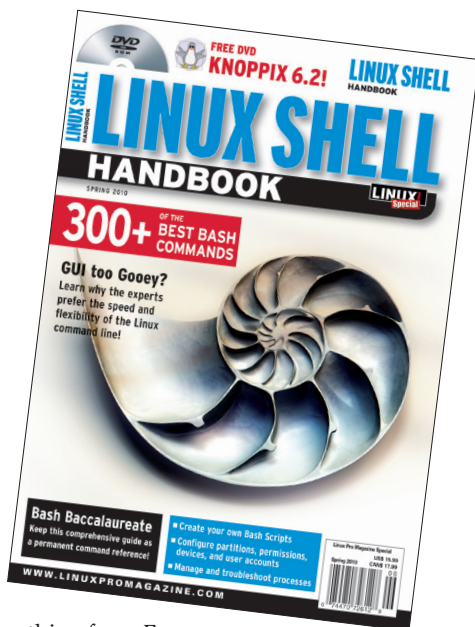
Just kidding. It's good to see more and more of these types of publications. I remember when it was just Sysadmin and a couple of Z-D pubs. Okay, okay! So I'm a geek!

Anyway, I just picked up Issue 3 of your magazine with the 9.10 release a couple days ago. I wanted to see how Ubuntu is doing, and in the midst of rebuilding my PC at home, was blown away by the ease of install! Not granular enough for me, but this is a brilliant way to introduce a newbie to the OS!

A friend of mine from work was having problems with his earlier edition of Ubuntu (9.04, I believe) right after the GRUB startup. I told him to go back and closely watch the errors that pop up during bootup and let me know what they were so I could coach him through the problem. This is what I love about Ubuntu and all the Linux distros. Even a relative newbie like him, by just watching the startup messages, could fix his system. (He just needed to `fsck` a filesystem.) He didn't even bother coming to the expert. Try doing THAT from a Windows system.

He was complaining about not having anything like a cheat sheet to help him through other commands, and lo and behold, Mike Basinger's Q&A column in Issue 3 of your mag mentioned some-

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and suggestions to
letters@ubuntu-user.com



thing from Foss-wire. That is what I am actually writing about. The links provided for command-line cheat sheets are perfect for what he wants to learn. (I told him to use `man -k <keyword >`.)

I advocate open source every chance I get, and I've just converted another person. (I have him building his own Smoothwall.) Thanks for the work you folks do; there is yet another Ubuntu user in the ranks.

Ross

UU Hey, we love your standard intro. Do go on.

Seriously though, we are happy to reprint the links to the Unix/Linux and Ubuntu cheat sheets for other readers who just joined [1] [2]. And if you're looking for a more comprehensive command-line guide with lots of great examples, check your local bookseller for the Linux Shell Handbook (or you can order online [3]).

Thanks for your feedback. We do what we do because we believe in the promise and the power of Linux and open source. Ubuntu User aims to make Ubuntu Linux fun while providing guidance and education from some great writers in the field. That said, when we talk about the open source community, we're also talking about people like you; men and women who (geekness aside) love this stuff enough to want to help others learn, understand, and appreciate what Linux and open source software has to offer. No, dude. You rawk.

Define Easy

First of all, let me start by saying congratulations and thanks for a great magazine. I wasn't expecting the depth of

coverage on a distribution-specific magazine, as similar titles in the past have been a bit gimmicky to say the least. Well done guys.

I was particularly interested in the "100 Paper Cuts" article and saw it as a very positive step from Canonical to increase the market acceptance of Ubuntu. However, I don't think it goes far enough. For most of my career I have been a Windows user, and while I can see all of the benefits of Linux, it just doesn't quite hit the mark, and I feel like I just don't quite get it, despite tinkering with it for 10 years. It always seems like the most difficult way to achieve a task.

I'm not a Linux-basher by any stretch of the imagination – quite the opposite, in fact – but what brought home the true state of Linux more than anything was an article I read in Issue 80 (May 2010) of *Custom PC* magazine.

In this article, a member of the writing staff (the one with the least exposure to Linux) was asked to live with Ubuntu for two weeks. I think this article captures the essence of the Linux user experience better than anything else I have read. This guy isn't a n00b – far from it. But put Linux in front of him and he is. The difficulty in using Ubuntu as a games platform is secondary to the fact that he has to find new ways to do most of his everyday tasks, and none of them seemed particularly obvious to him.

I think if David Siegel saw this, it might change the focus of the "100 Paper Cuts" project. Yes, these minor issues need fixing, but Ubuntu, and other Linux distributions for that matter, need testing outside of the Linux community. Shaun

UU You are correct that more testers from outside the Linux community could provide useful information to the design-

INFO

- [1] Unix/Linux command line cheat sheet: <http://fosswire.com/post/2007/8/unixlinux-command-cheat-sheet/>
- [2] Ubuntu command cheat sheet: <http://fosswire.com/post/2008/4/ubuntu-cheat-sheet/>
- [3] Linux Shell Handbook: <http://www.linuxpromagazine.com/special>

ers and developers who work on Ubuntu. Actually, Windows users and other non-Linux types are free to test pre-release versions of Ubuntu and submit comments. Let's hope more of them step up for future releases.

The "Linux community" is every Linux user – not just developers and enthusiasts. And remember that there are millions of Linux users. I personally hate to compare Linux to other systems, but the truth is that familiarity with another OS does tend to introduce some culture shock to somebody trying a new OS.

I haven't read the article you mention, but if his focus was on using Linux as a games platform, he might be missing the point. Also, did they provide a follow-up article where they let a Linux user test a Windows system?

Linux isn't Windows. It's Linux. Most users of personal computers aren't gamers. Office workers aren't concerned (or probably shouldn't be) with whether the PC on their office desktop supports the latest Windows 3D battle simulation.

When you say Linux doesn't "hit the mark," I would have to ask "where, specifically?" Linux and open source software powers the Internet (which is made possible by open standards), and Linux is the engine that drives billions of dollars in online commerce. It's the desktop operating system of choice for millions of users worldwide. ■



Sebastian Duda, 123RF.com