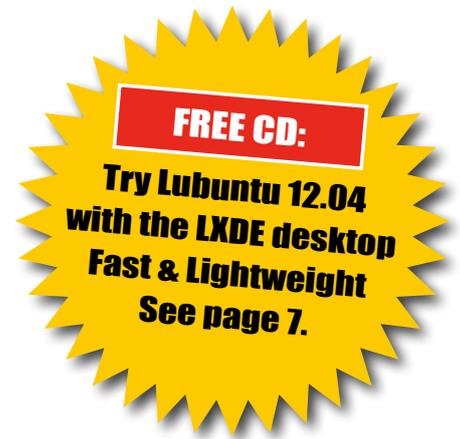


PHOTOS, FUN, AND GAMES



Rikki Endsley, Editor in Chief

Dear Ubuntu User Reader,

In issue 13, I asked for your thoughts about Unity and your first impressions of HUD, and many readers responded. A few readers have warmed up to the Unity desktop – despite being frustrated about lost productivity during the climb up the learning curve – but no one sounded particularly thrilled with it yet. A

couple of readers cited Unity as the reason why they tried out other Linux distributions, and at least one of those readers is now using CrunchBang. One reader wrote, “Remember Vista? The 12.04 LTS was your opportunity to do a W8 and pull back from the brink. You may regret not taking it.” Ouch.

Another reader wrote to say that he recently gave his wife, who is in her 70s, her first computer, which he set up with Ubuntu 11.04. In her case, Unity is the first desktop she has ever used. “I am quite sure that any other desktop would have caused much more trouble for her,” the reader says. “After a year of [Ubuntu] use, she is very proficient and no longer asks my advice.”

If you aren’t enjoying the Unity desktop, you have other options. Try out the Lubuntu CD in this issue (page 7), which includes LXDE (Lightweight X11 Desktop Environment) [1] instead of Unity. We also show you how to create your own custom Ubuntu (page 46) with your choice of desktop environment, and we test out five programs to help you roll your own distro.

For many of us, summer is over and students are going back to school. I still have hundreds of summer vacation photos to organize, color correct, and send to the printer, which means I’ll spend quality time soon with GIMP and my image files. Luckily, this issue focuses on photography. Claudia Meindl explains what’s new in GIMP 2.8 (page 16) and offers some tricks to help you polish your pictures

(page 20). We also look at RAW data, the digital equivalent of photo negatives, and several converters to help you work with RAW data files (page 26).

In July, my teen daughter and I traveled to Portland for O’Reilly’s Open Source Convention (OSCON). Although OSCON was technically “work” for me, I see so many friends and colleagues that the convention also feels like a vacation and reunion. For this issue, Amber Graner interviewed Elizabeth Krumbach, one of the 2012 O’Reilly Open Source Award winners [2]. In addition to being a Linux sys admin, member of the Ubuntu Community Council, and Marketing and Website lead for the Xubuntu project, Liz leads the Ubuntu Women project. As the mother of a teen, I’m thankful for Liz’s contributions and for projects like Ubuntu Women, particularly now that my daughter is taking her first programming class. Fortunately, my daughter wasn’t surprised when she walked into a classroom full of young men, but her experience illustrates how pervasive the lack of diversity in computing still is, even at the high school level.

Despite all the fun my daughter and I had this summer, I’m happy to bid the overwhelming Kansas heat a not so fond farewell, even if that means trading the heat for ice and snow. If the weather has you stuck indoors, we’ve got ideas to keep you busy and entertained. In this issue, we look at three desktop publishing programs (page 64), and we show you how to use Airtime 2.0, open source radio automation software (page 74).

In his column, Ubuntu’s community manager, Jono Bacon, talks about Ubuntu as an emerging gaming platform (page 8). At OSCON 2012, several readers told me they’d like to see more coverage of games inside the pages of *Ubuntu User*, so I’d like to do a roundup of recommended games for our next issue. If you’d like to contribute to the roundup, please email and tell us which games you play on Ubuntu and why you like them: edit@ubuntu-user.com.

Rikki Endsley
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[1] LXDE: <http://lxde.org/>

[2] 2012 O’Reilly Open Source Awards: <http://www.oscon.com/oscon2012/public/schedule/detail/25039>