**­­­Linux Server (Ubuntu) Features**

**1. Smart Scopes**

One of the biggest issues surrounding Unity lately is Smart Scopes. Think of this feature as an all-encompassing search for your desktop. Open the Dash, enter a search string, and you'll get results from one hundred sources. Search results include: Local disks, UbuntuOne cloud, Amazon, Wikipedia, UbuntuOne Music Store, Youtube, social networking sites, and much, much more. Of course, the big issue with Smart Scopes is that it transmits your search results, which some consider a security issue. For those that don't like it, it can be turned off. For those that do - you'll be amazed at how powerful a search tool can be. Personally, I fall into the latter category and use Smart Scopes every day.

**2. Ubuntu One install login**

During the installation of Ubuntu 13.10 you are prompted for your UbuntuOne account credentials. Although this doesn't really change much in the end, what it does is streamline the overall installation process - especially for those that already have a UbuntuOne account. For those that don't, they'll be made aware of the service and (hopefully) sign up for one of the most seamless cloud storage services available.

**3. Keyboard language selector**

If you happen to use different keyboard layouts for different tasks, you are in for a treat. With 13.10 comes a notification button that allows you to quickly switch between those keyboard layouts with a click of the mouse. You can even set up keyboard shortcuts to switch between your different layouts - making use of multiple languages incredibly simple.

**4. Compiz performance improvements**

Many users of 13.04 and earlier iterations found the performance steadily improving, but still lacked a certain zip to the opening of the Dash and other interactions with the desktop. With Saucy, the improvement of Compiz is noticeable. The speed at which the Dash opens is definitely a step forward in bringing Unity in line with the faster desktops on the market. With these improvements, the desktop no longer feels sluggish on any front, nor does it have any of the holdover flakiness of previous releases. Some of these improvements are a combination of Unity and Compiz - but much of the performance is thanks to Compiz updates.

**5. In Dash payments**

If you're looking for the means to quickly purchase items from various online retailers, Ubuntu 13.10 brings to you In Dash payments. Open up the Dash, search for an item, right-click the item, and click Buy. Clicking the Buy button will then launch the default web browser to that item's web page where you can purchase the item. What is nice about this is it will allow you to do a bit of price comparison - when, for example, a multi-media download will show up in Amazon and UbuntuOne Music store. Pick the right price and purchase.

**6. Kernel 3.11**

There are tons of tweaks to the new kernel that focus on performance. One of the major changes is zwap, which alters the way swap space is used. According to the zwap documentation: "...zswap basically trades CPU cycles for potentially reduced swap I/O. This trade-off can also result in a significant performance improvement if reads from the compressed cache are faster than reads from a swap device." Also included in the new kernel you will find: AMD DPM support, low latency network polling, KVM/Xen (for 64 bit ARM) support, better AMD Radeon support, and much more.

**7. Radeon UVD support**

Out of the box, Ubuntu 13.10 should include support for Radeon UVD (Unified Video Decoder - which deals with hardware decoding of H.264 and VC-1 video codecs). Prior to this, a number of tricks and hackery was necessary to get this system working. Not so with Ubuntu 13.10. Although much of this support is due to the kernel, Saucy Salamander should go a long way to making this much easier to deal with than previous iterations.

**8. LibreOffice 4.12**

The flagship open source office suite continues to get better and better with every release. With this release of LibreOffice, all of the new features that arrived in 4.1 finally have that polished look and feel they've desperately needed. One of the biggest improvements is the menu system. If you don't use the HUD (which you should), you will find the standard menus to respond far better than with 13.04 using LibreOffice 4.1. This improvement alone makes the upgrade worth your time (especially if you are a LibreOffice power user).

**9. Easier server connection with Nautilus**

One of the things I like about Nautilus is the ability to hit Ctl-L and enter the address of an SMB share on a network. Now there is a simple icon (in the left nav) that allows you click and then enter the address of the server. Although you still have to enter "smb://" followed by the IP address, it's still more intuitive than before. I do wish this would remove the need for adding the "smb://" in order to get into the share. It would be far more user-friendly if all you had to do is click "Connect to server" and then enter the IP addy of the share address. But that's picking at nits.

**10. Back to Xorg**

Ah the controversy hits a bit of a bump in the road. It was thought that 13.10 would be the first release with the new X server, Xmir. That is not the case. A few nasty issues raised their head (in particular was mult-monitor problems) and so the developers decided to hold off defaulting to Xmir. Personally, I think this was the right call. 13.10 doesn't need the added weight of a new X server. I believe Xmir shouldn't arrive until 14.04 - when it's ready for prime time and not before.

Ubuntu 13.10 should have fans of the distribution excited. But it's not just fans that should pay attention to what Canonical is doing with Ubuntu. Users fed up with the Microsoft platform should take note - Ubuntu Saucy Salamander is polished and easy enough for the average user to enjoy a robust and reliable desktop experience. Hopefully these ten features will pique your interest enough to get you to jump on board.