full circle
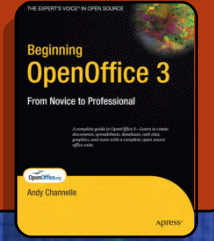
THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR THE UBUNTU LINUX COMMUNITY

ISSUE #25 - MAY 2009

TAKE A RIDE WITH
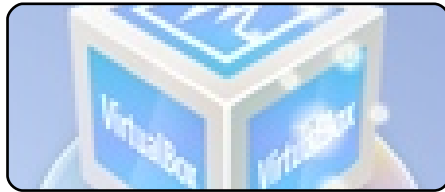## VirtualBox

full circle

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR THE UBUNTU LINUX COMMUNITY

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another issue of Full Circle magazine.

'm really not sure how to begin this month's editorial without it sounding whiney, or demanding attention, but here goes. Last month (FCM#24) was our first issue with the redesign. I did, to be honest, expect a flood of emails pointing out glitches, demanding the return of the old layout, or emails giving us tips on what to change for further improvement. Nothing. Not one email about the layout. Surely I didn't nail it first time. There must still be something we need to improve upon?

With the redesign, we also did a big push to try to get new readers by supplying Digg, Reddit and Slashdot buttons. The result was **very** poor. From over 13,000 downloads, only three hundred people Dugg us. Disappointed isn't the word! We rely on readers to help spread the word and get more people reading FCM, and more importantly, going on to use Ubuntu.

While on the subject of help. We **urgently** need articles to keep FCM afloat. Pretty much every article we've ever been sent (over the past two years) has been used, and we need more. As I've said many times before: **you do not need to be an expert to write an article**. Something as simple as emailing us links to Ubuntu/Linux news stories is a great help. Check our Ubuntu.com wiki page for article ideas: http://wiki.ubuntu.com/UbuntuMagazine

I hope to read your articles soon!

All the best,
Ronnie
Editor, Full Circle magazine
ronnie@fullcirclemagazine.org

This magazine was created using :

What is Ubuntu?

Ubuntu is a complete operating system that is perfect for laptops, desktops and servers. Whether at home, school or work Ubuntu contains all the applications you'll ever need including word processor, email application and web browser. Ubuntu is and always will be free of charge. You do not pay any licensing fees. You can download, use and share Ubuntu with your friends, family, school or business for absolutely nothing.

Once installed, your system is ready to use with a full set of productivity, internet, drawing and graphics applications, and games.

TIP: use the new 'contents' link to jump to the contents page from any other page!

contents ^

Ubuntu One: Free Online Storage

Canonical has just released a new "cloud" service for all users: Ubuntu One is currently an invitation-based Beta. There are two storage options: a free 2GB account and a $10/month 10 GB one. If you are familiar with services like Dropbox, Ubuntu One apparently does the same job.

The main features, as described on the official website, are: seamless integration and synchronization between multiple machines and a convenient web interface. But, while Dropbox works across all main platforms, the Ubuntu One application will exclusively be available for Ubuntu 9.04 operating systems. Of course, thanks to the web interface, files should be accessible (but not synchronized) from any other computer, the only requirement being an Internet browser.

Source: http://news.softpedia.com

Moblin: The Intel–backed Linux platform for Atom

Moblin is an optimized Linux platform that provides a modern, engaging user experience for mobile devices, such as netbooks, MIDs, and IVI systems. Moblin has a common core of Application and User Interface services and APIs, which provide application developers a rich and consistent development environment across multiple device form factors.
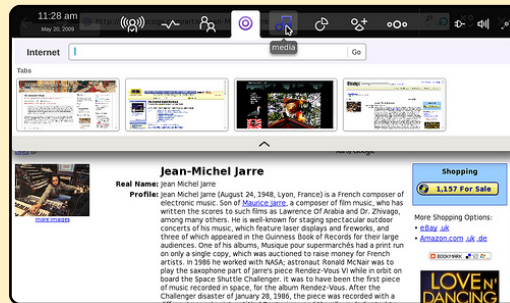
• To learn more about the overall architecture, see the Moblin Overview.
• To try out the latest Moblin, grab an image and follow the instructions for a test drive.

• Got a great idea for a Moblin application? Dive into the SDK documentation and get started as a Moblin application developer.
• FAQ - A list of frequently asked questions (and answers!) about Moblin.
• Join in! Find out how to get involved in our growing community.

Source: http://moblin.org

FCM#24 WINNERS

Congratulations to our FCM#24 winners:
• *William Wynn*
• *Steven W. Cox*
• *Ankur Mishra*
Who each win a copy of ***Ubuntu Unleashed 2008***.

This month: ***Beginning OpenOffice 3***, check p.18 for the review and competition.

Low–cost pluggable NAS adds Linux support

A $100 networked-attached storage (NAS) device using the Marvell SheevaPlug reference design has been updated to support Linux desktops. The Cloud Engines Pogoplug NAS, also received its own plug from *The New York Times*.

The Pogoplug enables remote viewing of external storage devices via a web browser. The device connects to an external hard drive or memory stick via USB, and to a router via gigabit Ethernet, says Cloud Engines. The 4.0 x 2.5 x 2.0-inch device plugs directly into a wall socket, and enables remote uploading of multimedia, including access from an Apple iPhone.

Source: www.linuxdevices.com

COMMAND & CONQUER

Written by Lucas Westermann

FCM#24 correction: /var/logs/ mentioned last month should actually be: /var/log/ – apologies for any problems.

Have you ever thought to yourself "There has got to be an easier way to do this," as you're sifting through tons of old commands in the history – looking for a specific one? There is an easier way. Not only that, but there are a few useful things you can do with your terminal and shell to make life easier. Now, to start with, you'll notice I used the terms "terminal" and "shell," and I have known some people to think they are one and the same, so I will take a moment to explain.

A terminal is the actual program that displays the shell prompt, but you can easily change which shell it displays. Also, any configuration of the prompt has to be done on the shell, not the terminal. Two commonly used shells are Bash (Bourne Again Shell), which is

the default one in most cases, and Zsh (creatively named "Z Shell"). If you want to try out a new shell, all you have to do is install it and then run, for example:

```
zsh
```

from a running bash shell. If you decide you like it so much that you want to change (like I did), you can change by running:

```
sudo chsh <username>
```

where of course "<username>" is your actual username. It then asks you something similar to this:

```
Changing the login shell for <user>
Enter the new value, or press ENTER for the default
Login Shell [/bin/zsh]:
```

where you just need to enter the path to the shell file

(usually in /bin/). The entry in the square brackets is your currently chosen shell (as you can see, I use the Z shell).

Back on topic: The history of your shell can sometimes be extremely long and confusing (I think mine is at 1000-or-so commands since I last cleared it, and that was not too long ago either). I very often find myself running the same commands over again, sometimes with lots of arguments, sometimes with very few. For the long ones, I've gotten in the habit of pulling up the list of history and searching it for the command I want. For example:

```
history|grep cd
```

returns:

```
996 cd Dropbox/Scripts/C
```

which displays for me the last cd command I ran, or all of the cd commands I've run if there were more than one. You'll

> There has got to be an easier way to do this...

notice that it also displays a number on the left (in my case, it's 996). So if you want to re-run the command, you have a few options. You can copy and paste the line (which is, honestly, not very efficient since you need to take your hands off the keyboard), or you can run:

```
!996
```

which will automatically run the command in the history list with the identifier 996. Woah, I'm back in my C scripts folder, talk about easy! Only four characters for an entire command. This most definitely appeals to my (extremely) lazy side. It's also much faster than using the up or down keys to go through the history line by line to find the right command.

COMMAND & CONQUER

Hopefully, this has also appealed to you. One last note, you can also just run:

`!cd`

to run the last cd command again.

Another extremely useful thing I've learned is that you can add custom functions to your Bash shell (this works on Z shell as well). To do this you can open your .bashrc (in gedit, vim, nano, or anything that tickles your fancy). I'll be using vim.

`vim .bashrc`

You'll then have a very long (and most likely confusing) file open. I generally add custom entries toward the end of the file, just to keep it separate from what should be there, and denote it with a comment, but you can choose whatever works best for you. If you want to merely make running one command easier, something like using the command:

`update`

to run the following:

`sudo apt-get upgrade`

then I would recommend using aliases, since it's just a tiny bit less typing. (For me, the number of keystrokes is extremely important when making shortcuts). So, if you want to alias that, the following line should be added to your .bashrc . (I added a comment to just make it clearer – you can leave it out if you wish).

```
#Alias for updating the system
alias update = "sudo apt-get upgrade"
```

Another alias I use very often is this one:

```
#An alias to make the ls command more detailed
alias ls = "ls -la --color=always --classify"
```

As you probably noticed, I have effectively replaced the ls command with a much more detailed output. Now you may be asking yourself "but what if he wants to use the actual ls program without arguments?". The answer is this:

`\ls`

The backslash overrides any aliases bound to that name, and runs the command as-is.

Now, focusing on functions again. These are basically scripts added directly to your shell configuration file, which can be quite useful. The example I'm going to be using is on page eight. Don't worry, I'll explain it.

I've used this script occasionally to convert the audio from .m4a files to .mp3, since I can't see myself typing all those commands by hand (no matter how occasional the use). The function is defined in the first line, and after the first brace (curly bracket), it's then the actual script. It checks to see if the arguments are empty, and if so, it prints the error message at the very end of the script (second to last line). If it does have arguments, check to make sure the first file exists, and then create the output file (the .mp3 in this case). If it doesn't exist, print "file <filename> doesn't

exist!". Once that's done, it checks to see if the output file exists (the .mp3), to ensure that the first loop completed successfully. If not, don't move the file. It then moves the .m4a file to your Music folder, while taking the output name (so that you can tell which m4a goes with which mp3), and exchanging the mp3 with m4a, so that it still plays. It then also says that it was moved, and moves the mp3 to the Music folder. It also checks to see if the Music/m4a directory exists (the if statement before the m4a comment). If it doesn't, it is created before proceeding. Hopefully, people will find this useful, since I have a few leftover m4a files from my iTunes collection, and I convert them as I see them. The only thing I have to note is that the function seems to require the filenames to be in quotes (backslashes and spaces and such don't work). So the function would be run like this:

```
m4a "2-10 You're the Inspiration.m4a" "You're the Inspiration.mp3"
```

The resulting files will be in

the ~/Music folder, and the ~/Music/m4a folders. However, the mp3 will be missing the id3tags.

I'll leave that as a challenge for any reader who wishes to undertake it. There are command-line tools that let you access tag information, and as a slight hint I will tell you that the archlinux package perl-mp4-info (in the Arch User Repository on the website) is a tool that will read the tags from the m4a file (or at least, it should), and it should be available for Ubuntu. If you can extend the script to automatically copy the tags from the m4a to the mp3 and feel like sharing your solution with me, please email the code to me, and I will add it into the next article (giving due credit, of course). I haven't actually written the code, but I have a fair idea of how to do it. (I haven't felt the need to test my algorithms since I think I have converted all my m4a files now!) I will compare any code I receive to my algorithm, and will note in the next article whether or not it was how I

```
m4a(){
if [[ "$1" != "" && "$#" == 2 ]]; then
    #check if files exist
    if [ -e "$1" ]; then
        #convert audio
        ffmpeg -i "$1" "$2"
    else
        echo "File "$1" doesn't exist!"
    fi
    if [ ! -d "$HOME/Music/m4a" ]; then
            mkdir $HOME/Music/m4a
    fi
    #move the .m4a file to the m4a folder if the files exist in
the current directory
    if [ -e "$2" ]; then
        mv "$1" $HOME/Music/m4a/"`echo "$2"|sed 's/mp3/m4a/'`"
        echo "m4a file was moved to the ~/Music folder"
        mv "$2" $HOME/Music/
        echo "Moved the mp3 to the ~/Music folder"
    else
        echo "File "$2" doesn't exist!"
    fi
else
    echo "Invalid arguments (or too few/many), please run this
script with \"m4a <input> <output>\""
fi
}
```
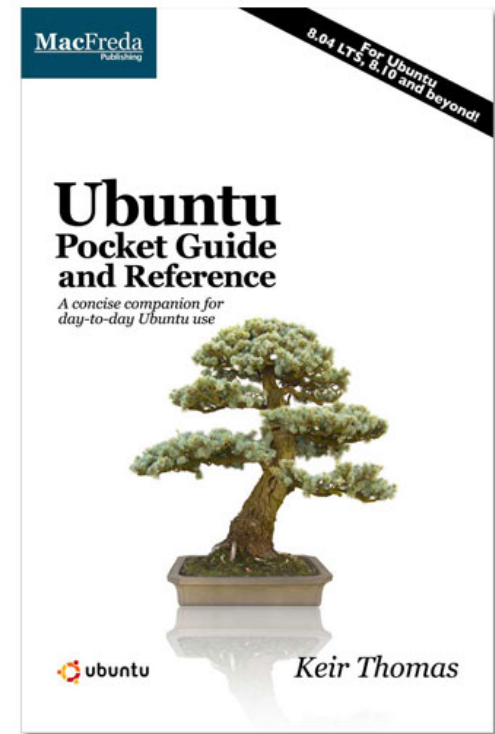
had thought it could be done, or if it's something I never thought of. As far as I know, ffmpeg won't carry over the information.

I hope that these tips have helped you out, and that you've found it at least partially useful. I know they've saved me loads of typing and made working in the command line so much more efficient (I even use Awesome [Ed: a dynamic and tiling window

manager: it's in the repo's] on my main system, so that I really hardly touch my mouse these days). I look forward to seeing if anyone feels like taking up the challenge of completing the function above.

Lucas has learned all he knows from repeatedly breaking his system, then having no other option but to discover how to fix it. When he finds time, he publishes a blog at: http://lswest-ubuntu.blogspot.com.

MacFreda Publishing

Ubuntu Pocket Guide and Reference
A concise companion for day-to-day Ubuntu use

ubuntu   Keir Thomas

Ubuntu Pocket Guide and Reference

$9.94 from Amazon.com
or
FREE from

www.ubuntupocketguide.com

D id you save last month's tutorial? If not, you should build it first, because this tutorial will tell you how to make it look even better.
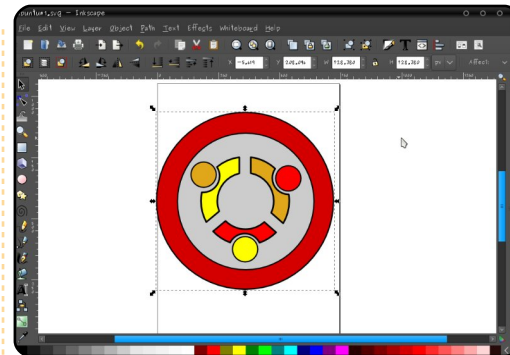
Let's Begin

Make a circle that can cover your Ubuntu logo and put it behind - by selecting OBJECT > LOWER. It will look like this:
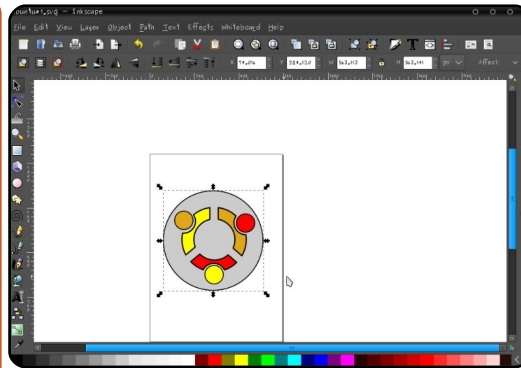
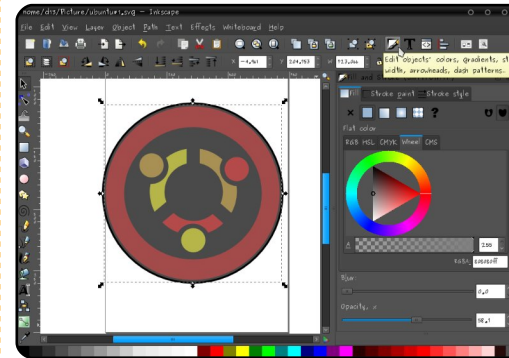You can give it a color of your choice.

Then, we make one more circle, and put it behind the entire image. Like this:

Now, we will make it glossy.

First, duplicate the biggest circle - I hope you remember that to make duplicates you can use CTRL+D - then fill it

with a grey color. In-fill properties; set the opacity to make it semi-transparent. Like this:

Now, and this is my favorite part, select the grey circle and press SHIFT+F2, or you can click the *Edit Nodes by path* button in the toolbar, on the left of your screen.
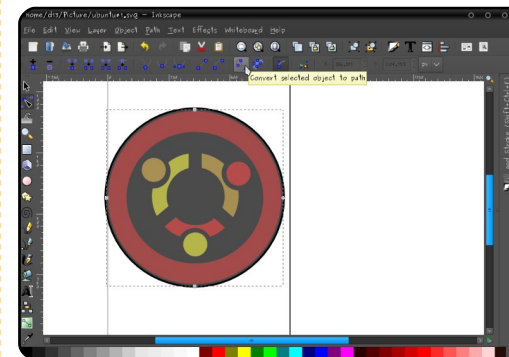
Click the icon that says

Convert selected object to path (hover your pointer over an icon to see its description), then *Convert selected object's stroke to the path*, and lastly *Show the Bezier handles of selected nodes*. Now click the node below. It will show another node, drag it. You can modify the path by selecting another node. This is what I get:
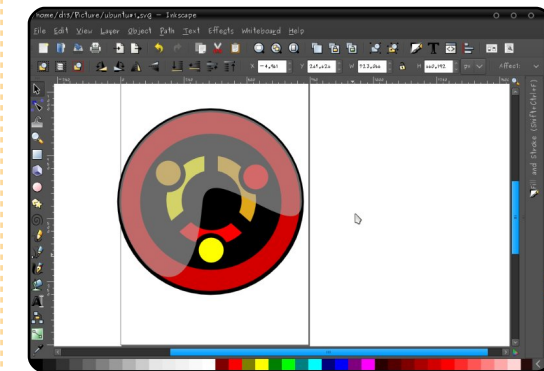
Now you can print it and make a pin. See you next time.

Yoga Sukma is a 19 year old Indonesian who is currently studying Computer Science and loves graphic design and programming. Please send feedback to:
juzt_atkinson@yahoo.com

I remember reading about running Ubuntu as a guest OS in Mac OS X Leopard from a technology columnist - but he might as well have been speaking gibberish, as I barely understood what it was all about. I searched for "virtualization" in Ubuntu, but I found the documentation to be a bit out-dated, so I decided to download "virtualization" software from the repositories, and then try it out for myself.

That route is almost always the best way to learn about things anyway.

So from Add/Remove, I typed in "virtual", and came across VirtualBox OSE (OSE stands for Open Source Edition). I had to download a couple of add-ons from Synaptic Package Manager, but in no time I was running Mandriva One 2009 as a guest OS under Ubuntu.

Setting up a guest OS is quite straightforward. Just click on "New" in the left-hand pane of VirtualBox and follow the instructions. You'll be asked to type in the name of the OS, and choose the OS type from a drop down list. In these series of screen shots I will use openSUSE 11.0 as an example, just hot off a torrent download.

Next is configuring the RAM to be allocated to the guest OS. I found it best to double the default recommended base memory size of 256 MB for a more satisfying experience later.

Then, we have to create a virtual hard disk.
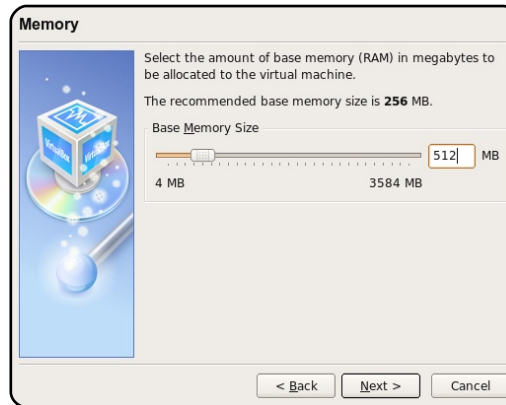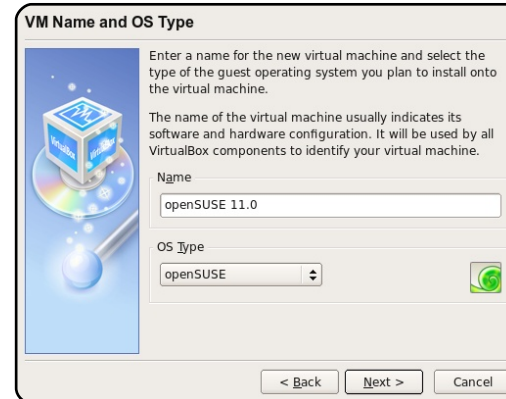
For the next step, it is best to leave the default configuration.

Once we're done setting up our virtual hard disk, we'll be

presented with a summary, and you'll find your guest OS in the aforementioned side pane of the main window.
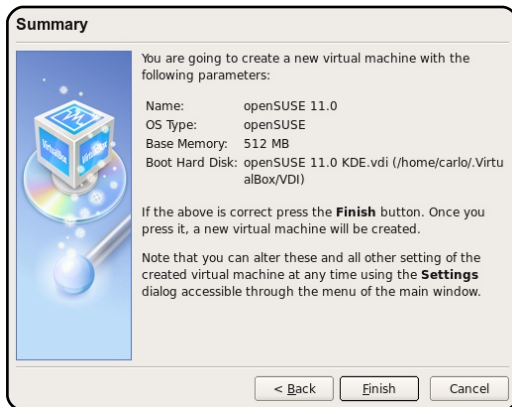
Once you double click on the selected guest OS (or click on Start), you'll be presented with a First Run Wizard (right). Just click on Next, and then select the source of guest OS (CD or ISO). In my case I am going to point to the just-downloaded openSUSE 11.0 KDE ISO.
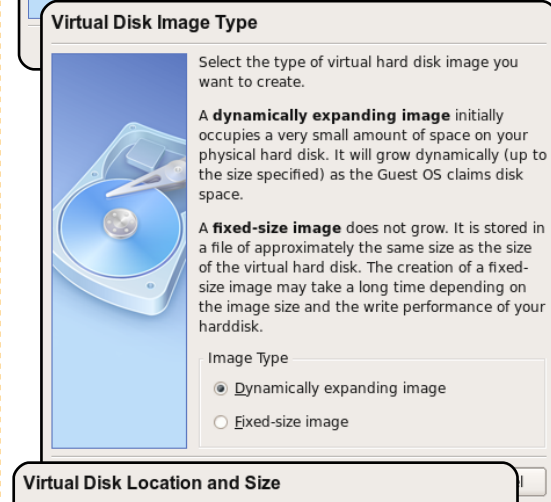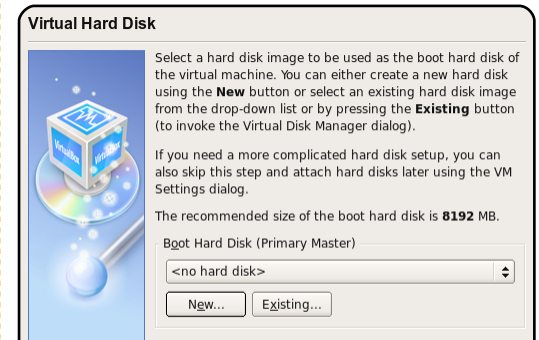
And we're done! VirtualBox OSE will now boot my OpenSUSE. You can install the ISO file into the virtual hard disk as if it is a real hard disk, a
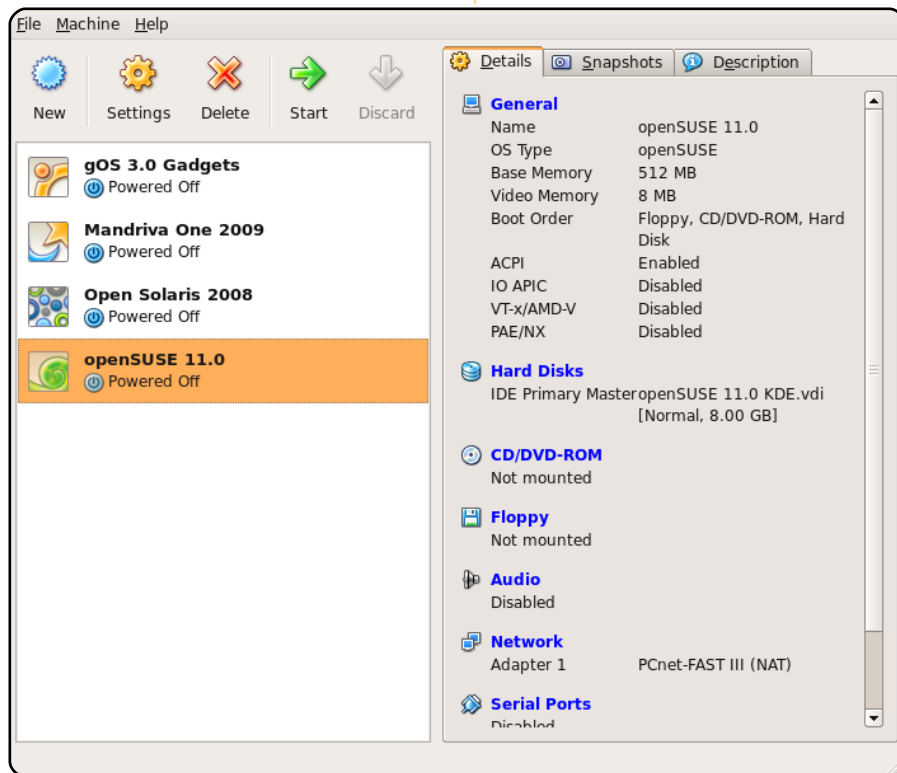
nd you can also remove the ISO file once you're done installing.
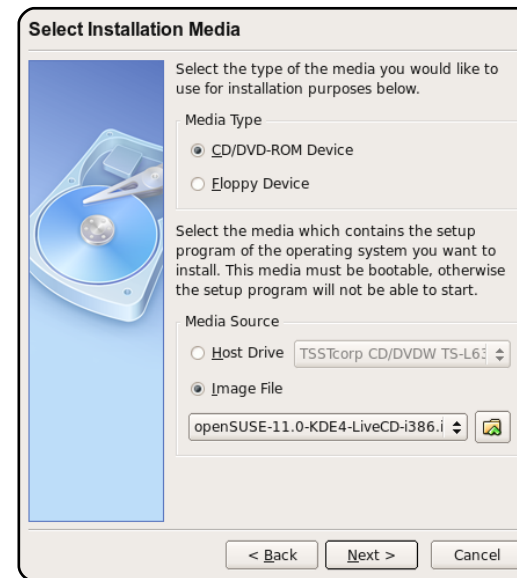
Here is a screen shot of the openSUSE live desktop:
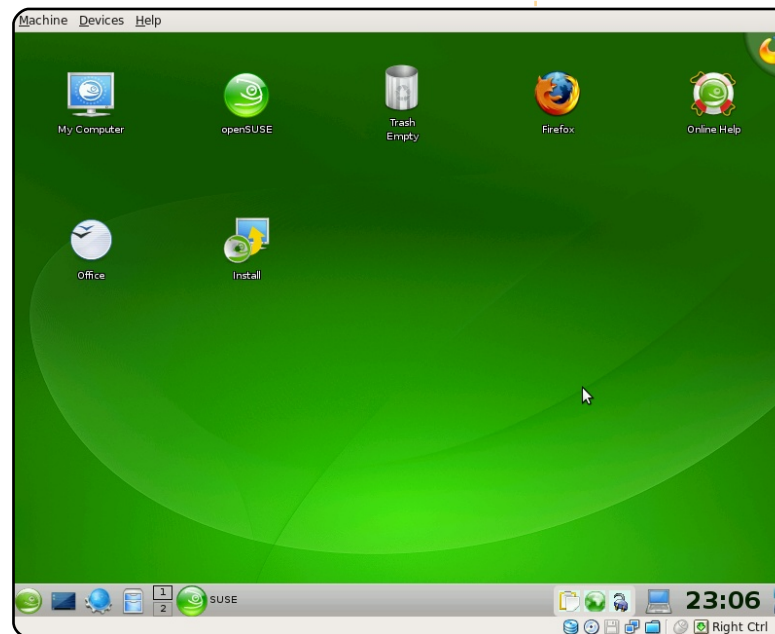
I find VirtualBox OSE simple and effective, but I shudder to think about its performance in less powerful machines (my laptop is running on an Intel Dual Core 1.86 GHz with 1 GB RAM). It's a nice tool to have - especially if you want to try some different flavors of Linux out there. I just play around with my guest OS's, and haven't really tried doing stuff like printing. One thing I noticed is that my sound device is not recognized by any of the four guest OS's. I am very happy with Intrepid Ibex and have no plans on replacing it - but, for the general purpose of trying out different operating systems for curiosity's sake, VirtualBox OSE answers my need.

Do you ever play a game in windowed mode because if you play it in full screen, and someone starts a chat with you, on Skype/ICQ/etc., you can't Alt+Tab to the chat window? Do you experience low frame rates (FPS) in a game, and that's why you don't play it? Do you have a configured TV-out so your TV's desktop is next to your monitor but you can't scroll to that side in StarCraft or another strategy game? If so ... say hello to your new friend - gaming in a new X session!

I was trying to figure how to solve my three problems (described above), and I found that if I run my games in a new X session they run faster. Counter Strike Source 640x480 on LOW lags if I run it like normal, and when I run it in a new X, I play it perfectly on 1024x748 on NORMAL. Sounds too good to be true? Not at all, let me show you how it's done.

The first thing we have to do is to start an X session (the default settings in Ubuntu forbid you doing so) so open a terminal and use nano as root (sudo) to edit the Xwrapper.config file:

```
sudo nano
/etc/X11/Xwrapper.config
```

nano - a simple console text editor

For more information about /etc/X11/Xwrapper.config open a console and type:

```
man Xwrapper.config
```

When you open the Xwrapper.config file, navigate with the arrow keys to a line that says "allowed_users=console", and change it to "allowed_users=anybody". Then, to save that file, press Ctrl + X; nano will ask if you want to save your changes, type Y; then it will prompt for where to save them, we want to overwrite the old file so just hit Enter.

Now that we can run extra X servers from our X server, the next thing we want to do is to restart our X - I'm not sure that this step is required, but it won't hurt you. And, when we are back, we have to configure our games to run in a different X session. For that we have to be sure that the game is not configured to run in a virtual desktop in "winecfg". If you are not sure about that, open a terminal and type "winecfg", or go to Applications -> Wine -> Configure Wine. In the Applications tab, if there is the .exe of your game, click on it and then go to the Graphics tab and make sure that the check box next to "Emulate a virtual desktop" is not checked. If it's checked when you start the game in another X, the game will run in the upper left corner of your monitor (we don't want that).

After this, I made Bash scripts for my games that I wanted to play in another X server. That way, I can play them in my normal X, or in another X. If you don't know how to make a Bash script, here is how to do it:

Open a text editor (for example Gedit if you are using Ubuntu, or Kwrite for Kubuntu), and type:

```
#!/bin/bash
X :2 -ac -terminate -config
only_one_monitor.conf &
```

BETTER GAME SPEED WITH X

```
sleep 2
DISPLAY=:2 nice -20 env
WINEPREFIX="/home/cherva/.win
e" wine
"C:\Games\Starcraft\Starcraft
.exe"
```

X - is the command to start another X session

-ac -disables host-based access control mechanisms. Enables access by any host, and permits any host to modify the access control list. Use with extreme caution. This option exists primarily for running test suites remotely.

-terminate - causes the server to terminate at server reset, instead of continuing to run.

-config - tells the server to use a different configuration file for the X server (remember about the scrolling in Starcraft?), this only_one_monitor.conf is the same file as /etc/X11/xorg.conf, but I removed the tv-out configuration from it, so that when I get to the edge of my screen, my mouse will remain in my monitor, and Star Craft

will scroll instead of my mouse going into the TV's display. For more options read this http://linux.die.net/man/1/xserver

Then with the **sleep 2** command, we wait 2 seconds, because the new X server requires some time to get up and running.

DISPLAY=:2 - runs the next command in our new X instead of running in our current X.

nice -20 - run the process with maximum priority (for better performance), and then the normal command that Wine makes when it makes a shortcut in your applications menu or on your desktop.

env WINEPREFIX - is your wine directory.

wine - this is the command to run wine. "C:\Games\Starcraft\Starcraft.exe" is the game.

When you make that Bash script, save it somewhere. Then open Nautilus and navigate to that directory.

Because we need that file to be executed, we have to make it executable. So right click on the new file and click properties. Go to the permissions tab and check the check box next to the text "Execute". Then close that window and double click on the new script. On Ubuntu it will ask you what to do: "Run in terminal / Display / Cancel / Run" - click on Run, and enjoy your gaming with +20 FPS, scrolling in strategy games, with no problems with the chatting. Now, if you want to switch to your old X session, press Ctrl+Alt+F7, to go back to the game press Ctrl+Alt+F9 - it can spawn at F8 so try that too. And keep in mind that I'm not a big expert on Linux, so there may be a better way to do this, but it works for me and I'm perfectly happy with it.

I've been using computers since the days of DOS 6.22 and have worked my way up through Windows 3.11, 95, 98SE and XP. However, the more I used them, the more dissatisfied I grew. I don't like Microsoft's business practices. This, and many other things, put me off.

A colleague told me about Open Source – and I loved the concept straight away! He gave me a copy of Suse 10.1, and I immediately installed it on my computer. Unfortunately, it didn't work well. Yast was difficult to fathom, and the amount of faffing about to try to get my Canon printer to work was hair-tearing. I reluctantly went back to the comfort zone of Windows. However, the seed had been sown.

I had heard of Ubuntu, but after my experience with Suse, I was in no mood to try it. However, Microsoft themselves were about to push me back into the warm embrace of the cuddly penguin's flippers. The tool? Windows Genuine Advantage. The straw that broke the camel's back came when I tried to install some Microsoft software from their website. Before allowing me to download, it insisted on validating my copy of Windows. So what's the point of phoning home at my expense every day? If that wasn't bad enough, after finally downloading the software, it insisted on validating my copy of Windows all over again before it would install. At this point I'd had enough. I resolved to try Linux again and installed Ubuntu 6.06.

> " **I felt a sense of freedom using it...**

The rest, as they say, is history. It installed without a problem, and even my printer installed without fuss. It was easy to use and configure. I felt a sense of freedom using it, knowing that nobody would be spying on me and placing unreasonable restrictions on me over its use. When I did have problems, the Ubuntu community Web forums couldn't have been more helpful. They listened patiently to questions they must have heard many times before, and answered them with good grace. Ubuntu has become better and better with every further release, and I'm utterly hooked.

I would never go back to Windows now, and I'm telling family, friends and colleagues to ditch theirs and trade up to Linux. After a couple of years as a Linux convert, I have tried installing Suse (version 11) again on my spare computer to have another go. It's still more difficult to get things done than with Ubuntu, but the experience with Ubuntu has helped at lot. Yast is a bit easier, but finding and installing things like codecs is still not easy. I'm sticking with Ubuntu.

Written by Kris Gielis

First Experience Of Kubuntu

A friend of mine, who has been working in all kinds of Unix and Linux environments for many years, hinted that I should have a look at Full Circle Magazine when he heard that I had started to experiment with the latest Kubuntu distribution. So, on a lazy Sunday afternoon, sitting in an easy chair, coughing my lungs up because of a cold I had caught, I started reading Issue 21.

I skipped a couple of articles that were intended for more experienced users (Programming in C), or for gamers (my son might be interested, but it isn't my thing), and was reading the results and comments of the FCM #20 survey. The writer of the article stated that not knowing enough English, or not knowing enough of Linux (or Ubuntu – I still don't understand the fuss of Ubuntu being, or not being, Linux) is not an acceptable excuse for not contributing to the

magazine. Was he talking to me? I'm not a native English speaker, and I know almost nothing about any Linux, Ubuntu or Kubuntu, except for the few things I learned installing it on my netbook – and trying to configure it as a disaster recovery plan for my company notebook. But then again, both experiences may bring some ideas to other people with similar problems. So I opened my OpenOffice.org Writer and started typing.

A few months ago I bought my ADVENT 4211 netbook (an MSI Wind u100 clone), and found out that it came with a

French Windows XP Home Edition. I did some research: could I change this language to my own language (Dutch), or to English, keeping the Windows XP licence that was included? Finally, I gave up and started thinking of installing some kind of Linux distribution (but which one?) on this netbook. It was an ideal opportunity to get some Linux experience on one hand, and to get rid of the French OS, on the other. I had already read some articles in my computer magazine on Linux, and its different flavors, and decided to go for the latest (at that time) Kubuntu, version 8.10 with KDE 4.1.

But there the problems started. These netbooks don't have a CD/DVD drive, and all you find on the internet are ISO files which you can download and burn on a CD. Fortunately, there is Google. After some research on the net, I found a Windows XP program that enabled me to make a

bootable USB stick (might be an interesting topic for your how-to section as there are lots of netbooks being sold with XP on-board without CD/DVD drives), from a Kubuntu distribution in ISO format. This made it possible to start up my PC from the USB drive, and get some first experiences with the new OS.

As I didn't have too much confidence in this new OS, or actually in my own knowledge of it, I wanted to keep the XP install on the netbook, at least for a while. Fortunately, I learned about Wubi – which made it possible to boot Kubuntu without having to worry about creating new disk partitions. It's really very easy for anyone to install, and gives you all the chances you need to get acquainted with the new OS you chose – while your familiar OS is still available.

So, I booted my netbook with the newly installed Kubuntu, and soon found the

next problem: the built-in wireless network adapter didn't work. Again, I did a lot of Googling to find out how I could check the manufacturer and type of this adapter (Realtek rtl8187se), and how to get it working with my installed Kubuntu. A new driver needed to be downloaded and compiled before the WiFi could be configured. But this wasn't the end of the story. After another boot, the WiFi wasn't working any more, and more Googling was needed to find out that the compiled drivers needed to be copied somewhere deep in the /lib/modules folder. That did the job – until one day I received some automatic updates, which generated also a new version in my boot list. When I started up that new version the WiFi was, again, gone.

Therefore, one piece of advice for everyone who starts installing a new OS on his/her PC: keep a log of the problems and the solutions you encounter. There is a fair chance that you'll have to implement those solutions
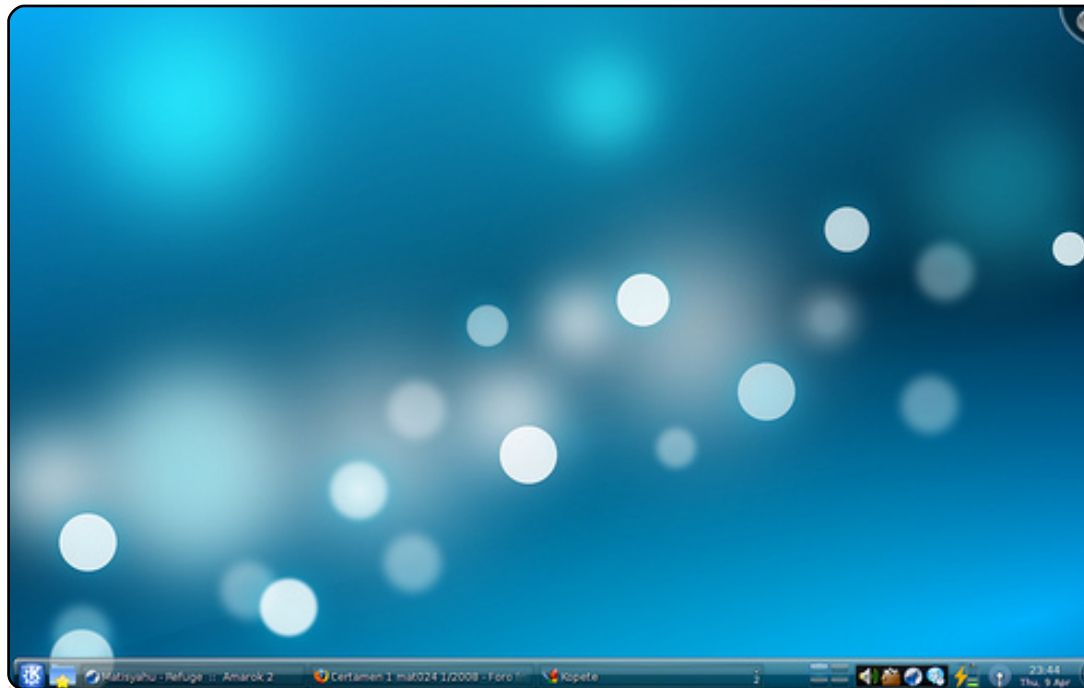
again some day, and the web page that helped you most the first time may no longer be online. I never found the excellent step-by-step procedure that got me through the download and compilation of my rtl8187se drivers the first time. So I had to start searching for the correct procedure all over again. None of the procedures I found were as good as the one I used initially.

This story seems to be short and pretty straightforward, but

I can assure you that it took me several weeks of searching, and a lot of trial and error, until I finally had a system that worked as it was supposed to. Honestly, I think that most people I know would have given up a lot earlier. In other words, installation of (K)Ubuntu is still too complicated for the majority of the people who use a PC nowadays. To really break through in the mass market, PC's will have to be sold with Ubuntu pre-installed, and all special issues – such as drivers

missing in the distribution – taken care of by the reseller.

This experience however brings me to the second story. I travel rather frequently, usually to some West African countries. During those journeys, I witnessed a couple of times that colleagues of mine experienced a crash of their laptop. Usually the HDD causes this, and their presentations and data which need to be presented to the customer are gone.

So, I started thinking of some disaster recovery plan. I bought myself a 2.5" WD My Passport Essential external USB HDD to have at least a backup of my files with me on my journeys. But, having a backup of the data, but no PC to access them, doesn't help too much either. As most PC crashes are related to disk problems, I started thinking of making this external drive bootable, with again, a version of Kubuntu installed on it. So I booted my PC from the USB memory (from my previous story), and told the installation program to install Kubuntu on

the external USB drive. This worked quite well. I could boot up Kubuntu when the USB drive was connected, and boot the original XP when I disconnected the USB drive. So far so good.

Then came the first surprise. When I wanted to synchronise my data on my internal HDD in my laptop (running XP), the external USB drive was not recognised any more. The disk partition manager that comes with XP saw 2 "primary" partitions on the disk, but didn't even recognize the formatting. Some extra downloads of partition managers didn't bring any improvement in this. Only when I booted up Kubuntu again and installed Gparted, I found out what had happened. For the installation of Kubuntu on the disk, all data already present on the disk had been put together in a small partition (as small as possible) and the rest of the disk was used as a bootable partition for Kubuntu.

Booting from USB stick, and using Gparted, I was able to reduce the size of that latest partition. On the free disk space, I created an NTFS partition for the backup of the data on my laptop. As this WD My Passport Essential comes with some software (wdsynch) to synchronise both documents and contents of your Outlook files, I used this to synchronise the data on my PC with the USB drive. The software even encrypts the data on the USB drive. Unfortunately, there is no Linux/Kubuntu version of that software, so I can't use it to read the encrypted/synched data on the drive. So now I am looking for software similar to wdsynch – with an XP as well as a Linux/(K)Ubuntu version – so that I can access the data that I synchronised in both Kubuntu and Windows XP. I also need a solution to read all the mails that are stored in Outlook PST files when running Kubuntu on my PC.

This brings me to the following questions for your readers:

• The disaster recovery plan that I came up with can, of course, be of some interest for other people as well. Certainly for those who travel rather frequently. So it may be the subject for a separate article, including installation of (K)Ubuntu on an external drive, and the use of synchronisation software versus other types of backup/restore software.

• A question for the how-to part: is there any synchronization (including encryption) software available with versions for both Windows and Ubuntu?

• At the company I work for,

Outlook is the standard e-mail and calendar tool. How can I make all the e-mail history that is stored in the PST files on my (internal) HDD available so that I can read them running my Kubuntu ?

I hope you enjoyed my story. Although I have been working with PCs since 1985, with several versions of DOS and Windows, these were my first steps in the Kubuntu world and, unfortunately, they weren't easy.
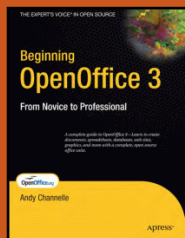
Written by Ronnie Tucker

Beginning OpenOffice 3

P/back: 488 pages

Publisher: Apress, Dec 8, 2008

ISBN: 978-1430215905

A book that is perfectly timed – since Ubuntu 9.04 (Jaunty) now comes with OpenOffice 3 installed by default. It begins by introducing the five main components of **OpenOffice 3** (OOo): *Writer*, *Calc*, *Impress*, *Draw*, and the newcomer, *Base*.

The first chapter discusses the creation of basic documents using Writer, followed by a more lengthy chapter on designing a newsletter. Fortunately, this chapter has plenty of screenshots to guide you along the way. Writer automation is quite a long chapter, but no doubt a widely used feature among word processing aficionados. Chapter four introduces Calc, the OOo spreadsheet application. It begins with simple family accounts, then adds features, such as graphs, to the spreadsheet. Impress is discussed next, showing that great presentations can be created for free. Again, there are plenty of screenshots to show you every step of the process in achieving professional looking presentations. Event posters are the first subject of the Draw chapter. It then moves on to creating flow charts and various types of diagrams – something I didn't know that Draw could do. Chapter seven introduces the new database application, Base. Here the author creates a database with entries for name, address, postcode, and so on, even going so far as to create a nice background, making the data entry screen look very professional. He also shows how simple it is to sort, or arrange, the entries by any title. This is a welcome addition to OOo as most people would probably be using Calc for things like that.

Part two of the book shows how it's possible to create larger projects using all the applications in OOo as a team, beginning with creating a web page layout in Writer and adding images, links and image hotspots. While in Writer, the next chapter shows how it is possible for many people to collaborate on a single document and, most importantly, to keep track of the changes. Near the end of this part of the book the discussion moves to the linking and embedding of information in documents. As the book comes to a close, the author nudges the user in the direction of add-ons.

If you want to know enough about OOo to create intermediate level documents (be it text, spreadsheet or otherwise), then this is an excellent book. Not only are the many screenshots very helpful, but the whole book is written using little, or no, technical jargon. It is perfect for those, as it says in its title, Beginning OpenOffice 3.

Competition

This month, one lucky reader will win a copy of *Beginning OpenOffice 3*! To win, answer this simple question:

Q: How many components make up the OpenOffice suite?

Email your answer to: competition@fullcirclemagazine.org. **All entries must be in by Sat. 20th June 2009, and the winners will be announced in FCM#26. Good luck!**

Full Circle would like to thank APRESS for their generosity in giving us a copy for this competition, and review.

Behind MOTU is a site featuring interviews with those known as 'Masters of the Universe' (MOTU). They are the volunteer army of package maintainers who look after the Universe and Multiverse software repositories.

Age: 15
Location: France (near the border with Switzerland)
IRC Nick: smarter (an anagram of my last name)

How long have you used Linux, and what was your first distro?
I've been using Linux for three and a half years now. My first distro was Kaella, a Knoppix based Live-CD adapted for French users. That's probably why I like so much Debian-based distros and KDE.

How long have you been using Ubuntu?
I started using Ubuntu three years ago, as soon as I got a laptop.

When did you get involved with the MOTU team and how?
I was hoping to help with Ubuntu development for some time, and finally, one day (a year and a half ago, if I remember correctly, I joined some developers channels on IRC (which I had used only a few times before, mostly for providing support for users or asking questions, and asked how I could help.

What helped you learn packaging and how Ubuntu teams work?
The French wiki and the English one were really helpful for learning packaging. I also had a lot of comments on my packages on IRC and REVU which helped me make better packages. I learned how the teams work mostly by watching discussions on IRC.

What's your favorite part of working with the MOTU?
Learning new things and working with great people.

Any advice for people wanting to help out MOTU?
Don't hesitate to join development channels on IRC to ask questions!

Are you involved with any local Linux/Ubuntu groups?
I'm one of the administrators of the French forum, but never participated in any local event related to Ubuntu.

What are you going to focus on in Jaunty?
I'm currently learning C++/Qt and PyQt. In Jaunty, I hope to be able to improve our distros tools (like the upgrade manager or the language selector). I will also focus on making sure KDE4 is as good as or better than KDE3 for the few features that we still miss from KDE3.

What do you do in your other spare time?
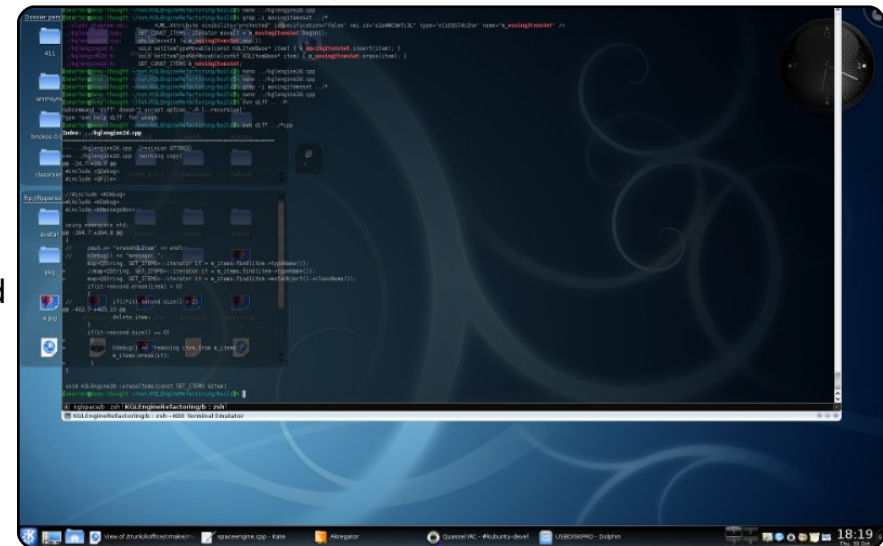I read a lot, I also play quite a lot of video games

LETTERS

Every month we like to publish some of the emails we receive. If you would like to submit a letter for publication, compliment or complaint, please email it to: letters@fullcirclemagazine.org.
PLEASE NOTE: some letters may be edited for space reasons.

Refreshing

It has been nice to brush up on my C skills especially since I learned C in Windows, but am now on the path to complete migration to Linux and free software. But would it not be better if the author gives an embedded or separate article where the tutorial is about how to implement this to create software? Maybe start with a simple calculator with a GUI. I love FCM and regularly visit Full Circle on IRC to find it empty. I hope we get some traffic there.

Amar

Ed: *Unfortunately a lot of our writers have exams looming, hence the absence, this month, of our C series, and a temp Top5 writer. Hopefully the writers are successful in their exams, pass, and return to FCM soon. And as Amar points out in his letter, our IRC channel is always open, pop in for a chat. I'm sure Robert*

(mrmonday) would be delighted to see some new 'faces'. Log in to irc.freenode.net and /join **#fullcirclemagazine**.

Correction

I just want to point out a mistake about the Midori browser. The Website is http://software.twotoasts.de/index.php?/pages/midori_summary.html. The Midori on sourceforge has nothing to do with webkit.

I also want to talk about the midori and the webkit-team PPA's:

```
https://edge.launchpad.net/~midori/+archive/ppa
```

```
https://edge.launchpad.net/~webkit-team/+archive/ppa
```

... using those PPA's you'll get the brand new version.

Stéphane

Seventeen years ago I had a severe stroke and ended up in a wheelchair. Since I have to do what I can, I started as an assistant at a day care centre for the physically disabled.

A year ago I switched several of our old PC's to Ubuntu and, after some months, drafted a proposal to start using Ubuntu completely, instead of Windows.

The activities vary from music, to education, Internet, and so on. Actually we are unique in what we are doing. Looking at all Ubuntu distros, we wonder which one will work best for us. Our basic problems are things like: accessability-helpers (such as special keyboards, mouse replacements, voice-command). It is really hard to get good assistance in this project, as we are users-not programmers.

Any suggestions would be gratefully received.

Bodhi Coutinho

Just Like Magic

Your response to Jason Allen (FCM#24, p.27) about the possibility of running a series on how you create your magazine with FOSS products (esp. OOo, Gimp, and Scribus) gets an enthusiastic response from me. Please give this idea strong consideration. I'd be especially interested in learning GIMP tricks, and working on hands-on, beginner-to-intermediate projects with Scribus. Pointers and links to

recommended online and in-print books covering these apps would also enhance the series.

Also, your mention of a wiki for proofing FCM intrigues me. How do you make use of this, and why do you find this works better for FCM than exchanging documents while using the document change/comment functions in OpenOffice Writer? This would be a helpful article in the proposed series.

I am a new reader as of #24, and I found you by following the link from the most recent episode of one of my favorite podcasts -- Ubuntu-UK.

I can see reasons to come back again to FCM each month:

• I've barely started with Inkscape, so I'll be following Yoga Sukma's series with interest.

• The forays into CLI and programming are intriguing.

• Kudos for the spirit-of-Ubuntu human-interest story on

Grandma Irene.

All in all, finding *Full Circle* magazine was a happy bit of serendipity. Thanks for all your hard work on it.

Jim Kerwin

Ed: *Thanks Jim. I'll certainly try and write up an article, or two, on the process we go through in making Full Circle magazine, as it certainly presents some unique little hurdles to overcome. As for books, hopefully in the future we'll review some GIMP and Scribus books. See our review this month for an excellent OpenOffice 3 book.*

Less Is More

I like what I see. Different eye-candy. You are spoiling us with all your hard work.

I would, however, like the magazine to revert to the original size. You might know of the principal applied by musicians, for instance, where they say "less is more." I think that if someone reads the
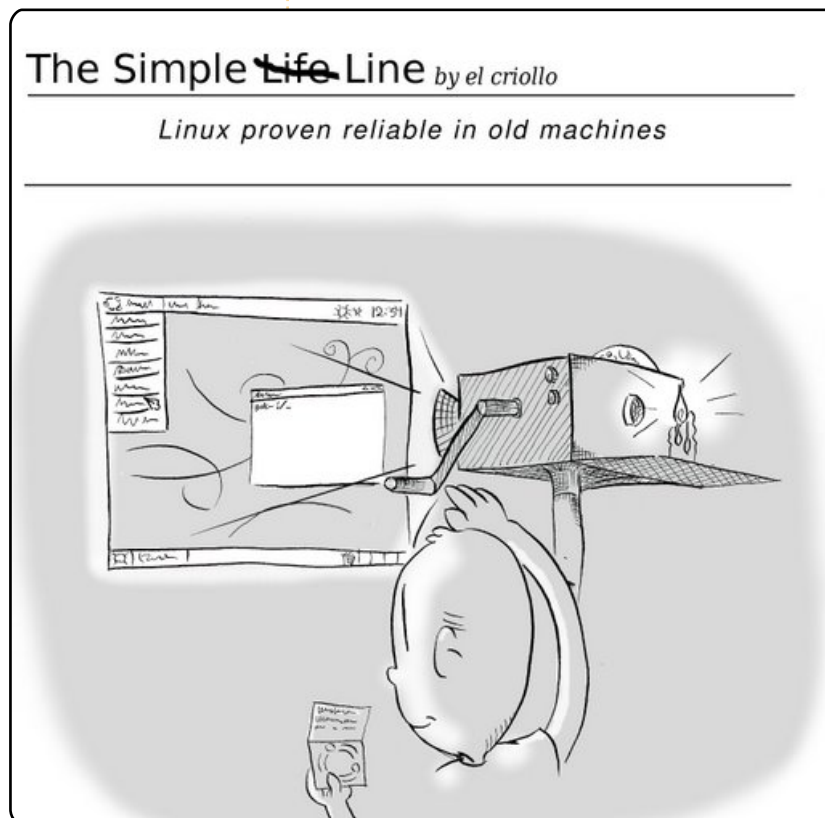
magazine and reaches the end and wonders if there is more, then the amount was correct. If, after reaching the end, they feel as if they have had to wade through the mag, then it was probably too much.

So if you don't get a flood of articles and are forced to shrink the mag, I will not complain. Thank you for a very useful and well produced magazine.

Victor Moisey

Ed: *A flood of articles? We should be so lucky! I completely agree with your 'less is more' idea with regards to the length of FCM, the reader should never have to wade through pages of ads, or articles, to get to the good stuff.*

*Speaking of articles, our stockpile of articles is now critically low. **We really need articles folks! No articles means no magazine.** I know it sounds a bit over exaggerated, but we **seriously** need articles to keep going. You don't need to be an expert to write an article. Just write about the things you do with Ubuntu.*

The Simple ~~Life~~ Line *by el criollo*

Linux proven reliable in old machines

UBUNTU GAMES

Written by Edward Hewitt

GAME NEWS

• **Quake Live** is almost ready for Linux - id Software's Marty Stratton has said that the team will be testing Quake Live on Linux this month, so the game should be released soon.

• **Sacred Gold** is out on Linux – Sacred is a popular Windows RPG, it has finally been ported to Linux and is ready to order!

This month I will be reviewing a game starring our mascot, Tux! **Extreme Tux Racer** is a downhill racing game. The game is based around navigating Tux to the bottom of many different slopes as fast as possible.

When you get into a race, you are presented with a snowy mountain with Tux ready to slide down. Push forward for Tux to speed up, back to slow down, and left and right for turning. You need to get Tux down the mountain as quickly as possible and catch some fish on the way. The graphics are very good, and the game runs well on low end computers. The music is charming and is present throughout. The game has a good sense of control, as you navigate Tux down the hill, apart from a few issues when you hit a tree. It is good fun to watch Tux fly through the air at over 120 kph!

The game consists of many different courses, which you have to complete to unlock the next one. Once they are all unlocked that is basically it. There is the appeal of playing the courses again to beat your best time, but there is not a whole lot of incentive to keep playing the courses again. The game lacks any long term enjoyment. However, it would be unfair for me to criticize the game on its replay value. The developers obviously intend it to be an enjoyable game to race Tux downhill as fast as possible, and not for it to be a long-lasting game. It is enjoyable play through, and it will keep you amused for 5 minutes when you have nothing to do.

You can download Extreme Tux Racer 0.4 from the Ubuntu repos!

Ed Hewitt, aka chewit (when playing games), is a keen PC gamer and sometimes enjoys console gaming. He is also on the development team for the Gfire project (Xfire Plugin for Pidgin)

Join the Ubuntu Gaming Team!

Recently, a new Launchpad team has been set up called Ubuntu Gaming Team. Please join the team https://launchpad.net/~ubuntu-gaming

Q&A

Written by Tommy Alsemgeest

If you have Ubuntu-related questions, email them to: **questions@fullcirclemagazine.org**, and Tommy will answer them in a future issue. **Please include as much information as you can about your problem.**

Q I'm trying to create a USB start-up disk (100GB), but what are FAT16, FAT32, NTFS, EXT2, EXT3, ETX4?

A The file format you choose would depend on how it will be used. For USB start-up disks, you should use the format of the operating system you are going to install onto it. If you were to install Ubuntu on it, for example, it should be formatted as Ext3.

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Q I'm using Ubuntu 9.04 i386 desktop version, and my sound was working fine until I did a system update today, now I get no sound.

A Have you checked whether all the volume controls are on full? The most easily missed is PCM in the volume control.

Q I have tried to update Jaunty. It told me that 54 updates were to be installed, and it asked me to do a partial upgrade. I clicked OK, but nothing happened. The packages are there to be downloaded and installed, but nothing happens, and the window closes as it is. How do I solve this problem?

A I had the same problem, but a:

```
sudo apt-get update
```

```
sudo apt-get upgrade
```

```
sudo apt-get dist-upgrade
```

fixed everything nicely.

––––––––––––––––

Q I lost my grub bootloader when I re-installed Windows XP. I tried to get back the grub bootloader by using the Ubuntu 8.10 desktop and terminal. Please help!

A It is best to use the "grub" program instead of "grub-install" from a Live CD. All the details are in the first part of the tutorial here: http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=1014708

––––––––––––––––

Q I was using OpenOffice when suddenly it posted that there wasn't enough disk space to continue working. I can't save anything, programs randomly close, and the File Browser says that I have zero bytes left of free space in the file system.

A If you are truly out of space, I would recommend at least running
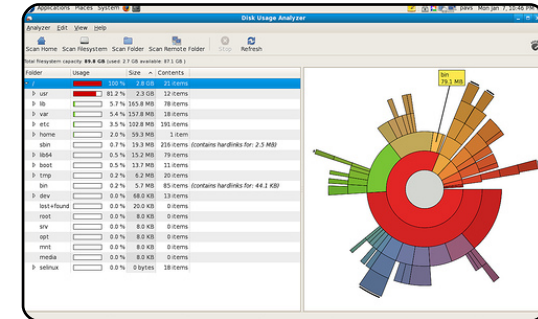
```
sudo apt-get clean
```

which will clear out the local repository of retrieved package files. It probably won't free up a ton of space, but might give you enough breathing room to use other tools to investigate and find other things to clean up.

You might also want to run

```
df /
```

to verify your free disk space is indeed that low...

I would use *baobab* (above) or *filelight* to get a graphical representation of where your disk usage is. From there, it's pretty much on you to figure out what can safely be removed.

MY DESKTOP

Your chance to show the world your desktop or PC. Email your screenshots and photos to: **misc@fullcirclemagazine.org** and include a brief paragraph about your desktop, your PC's specs and any other interesting tidbits about your setup.
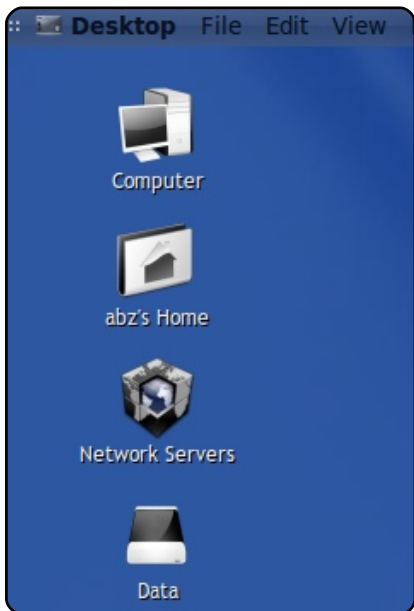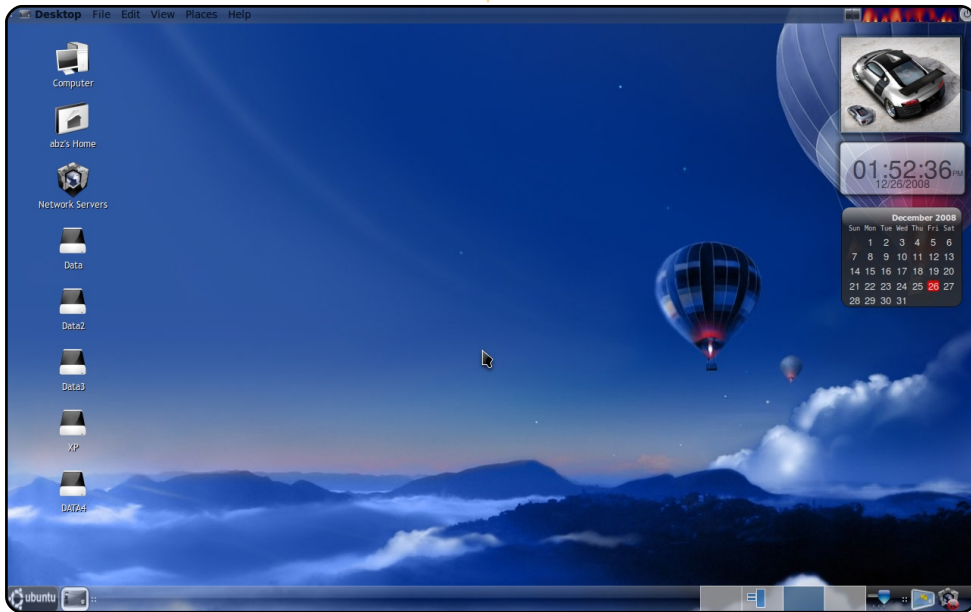
I'm running Ubuntu 8.10 Intrepid on an Acer Aspire 4520. My laptop has an AMD Turion 64 X2 1.9 GHz processor, 1.5 GB RAM with nVidia GeForce 7000m as the graphics card. It's running perfectly with Compiz-fusion and Emerald as the window decorator.

I have GlobalMenu, GnoMenu and Screenlets installed, so it's like the fusion of Leopard and Vista with an official Fedora wallpaper. The "Black-white 2 Vista" icon can be found on gnome-look.org.

Abz

I run Ubuntu Intrepid Ibex 8.10 on a self-assembled rig which consists of an AsRock motherboard, an AMD Athlon 64 X2 4000+ CPU, ASUS nVidia 8600 GT 256 MB, 3 GB memory from Corsair, and a 320 GB hard drive. The system runs perfectly and smoothly, and I haven't really got any serious problems! One of the things I love with Ubuntu (and GNU/Linux in general) is the possibility of customizing your Desktop's appearance. In this screenshot, I'm using the theme Infinity with matching icons, and a *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* wallpaper.

Casper Hansen
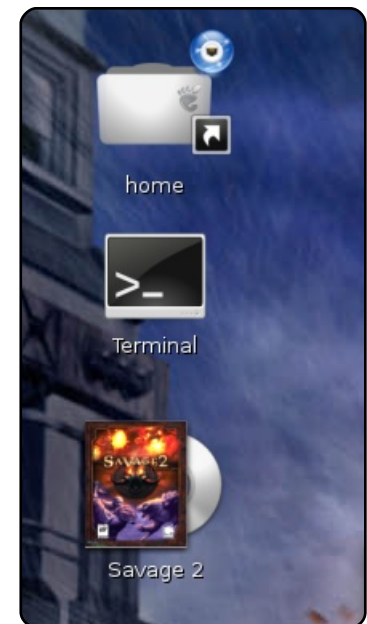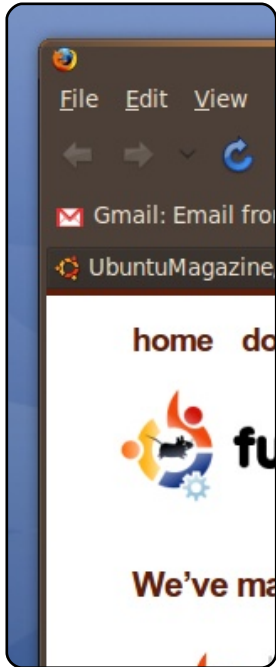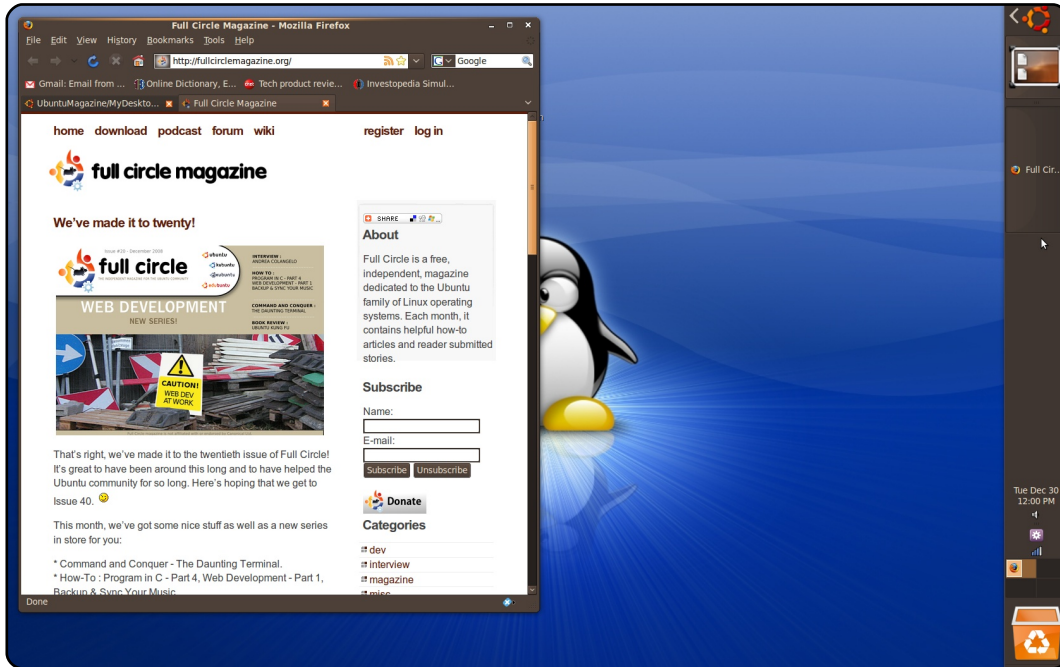
My desktop is pretty simple. I removed the bottom panel and then moved the top panel to the right side and filled it with the Ubuntu main menu, a "show desktop" icon, window list, clock, workspace switcher, trash, and other basics. I set the panel to auto-hide, so that, when I'm working, I can keep a program full-screen and have nothing else taking up screen space. I installed a nifty program called Gnome Do (http://do.davebsd.com/) that I use to launch all programs with the keyboard instead of clicking the main menu, and I can switch between open applications with Alt + Tab – so I don't have to use the mouse much. I'm using the DarkRoom theme, which comes pre-installed on Ubuntu 8.10. My dad told me about linux last year and I have been using Ubuntu ever since. I love using Ubuntu, and though I'm just in high school now, I hope to keep learning about Linux and maybe study computer science in college.

Christopher Turney
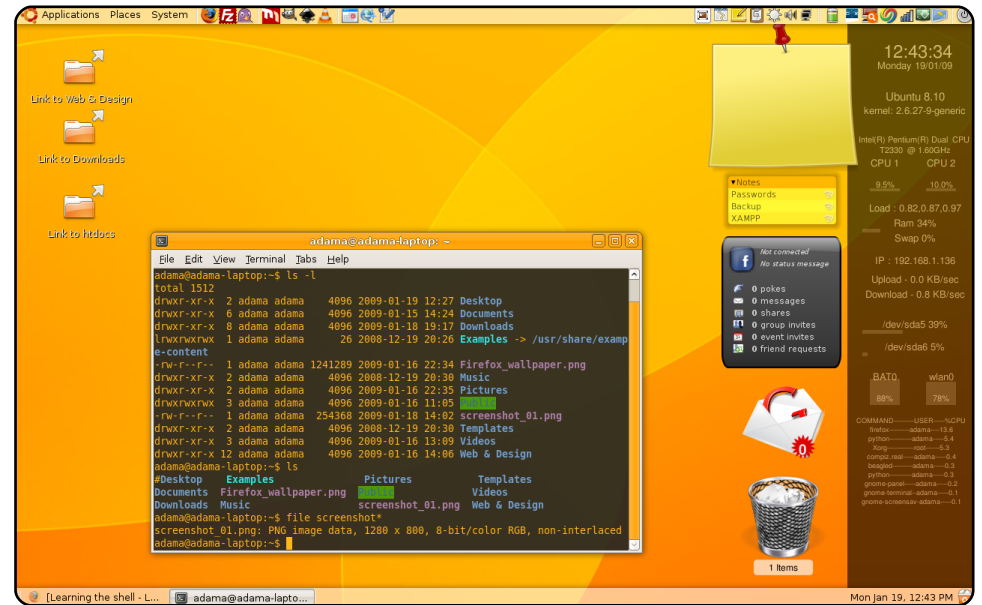
I was a Mac user for years before deciding some months ago that I wanted to try something new like Ubuntu. So I got a cheap second-hand laptop (dual core 1.60, X3100 graphics card, 2 GB RAM) and tried various Linux distributions before deciding my favorite desktop was Gnome, and my favorite distro was Ubuntu – thanks to its great forums. So I'm perhaps one of the few people switching from Mac to Linux, but I surely hope it'll start happening more and more. Gnome is a great desktop: Very stable, fast and flexible, and the more you use a free system the more you realize why you cannot go back. Now I do everything with my humble laptop: Watch movies; use Inkscape along with a graphic tablet; and I love GIMP, OpenOffice, and so on. I'll never look back!

Alex

Slingshot
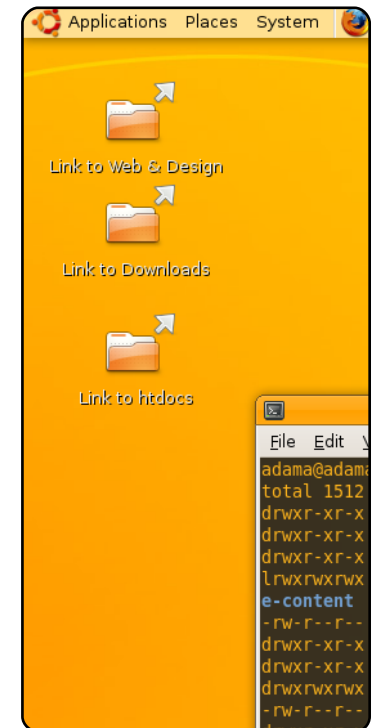
http://happypenguin.org/show?Slingshot

This game is very simple. You and another ship are in the same solar system, and apparently, having some fundamental disagreements, feel that one of you must be blown to smithereens. There happen to be a random number of planets in the way (sometimes invisible), so you have to carefully plan how you'll make your next shot.
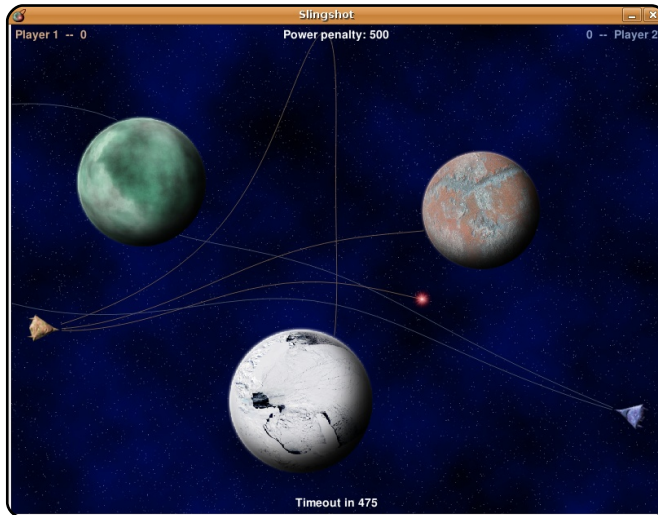
The gravitational pull of the planets is a huge factor in this. Sometimes your missile will just be lost in infinite loops about a planet's orbit, but fortunately there's a nice little "timeout" that'll keep this from going on forever.

You can install this game by installing the **slingshot** package from the repos (in 8.10 Intrepid Ibex onwards).

Moon Buggy

http://seehuhn.de/pages/moon-buggy

This delightfully simple game takes place on the moon. It is composed entirely of ASCII art, which is just amazing.

Your job is to cruise along the surface of the moon, hopping over craters and shooting lasers at boulders to clear your path. It is played entirely at the command line.

This game is also in the Ubuntu repos, package name: **moon-buggy**.

Slime Volley

http://slime.tuxfamily.org

Normally, I don't think volleyball games like this are too spectacular, but this one is! It features network play (up to 6 players), multiple balls, and an AI that makes me ponder the extinction of mankind.
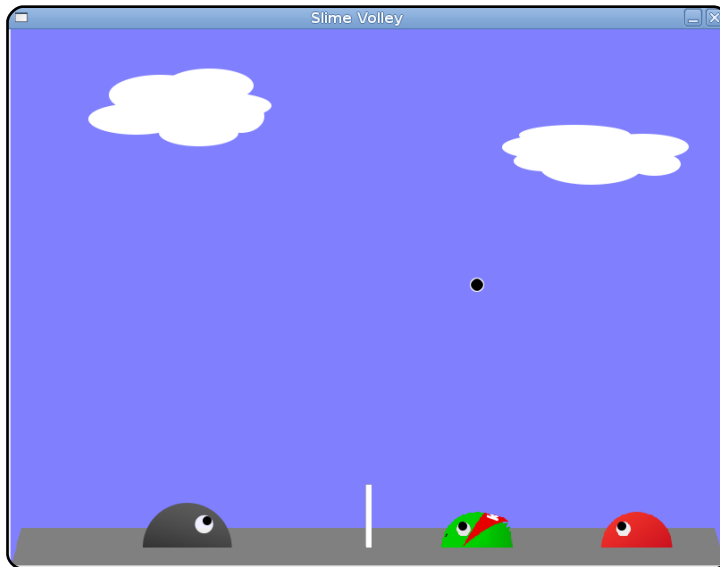

I have not tested the networked multiplayer function with another person yet, but tests on my own network show it to be pretty snappy.

This one is not available in the Ubuntu repos, so you have to get it from its homepage at http://slime.tuxfamily.org. There is a .deb package available in the Downloads section.

Overkill

http://artax.karlin.mff.cuni.cz/~brain/0verkill/

This game is the most violent thing I've ever seen on the command line. It is a side-scrolling multiplayer shooter, all implemented in ASCII, like moon-buggy though more complex,

as it contains animated backgrounds, moving characters, shot guns, hand grenades and pretty much anything you could expect out of a modern shooter besides hardware-accelerated graphics.
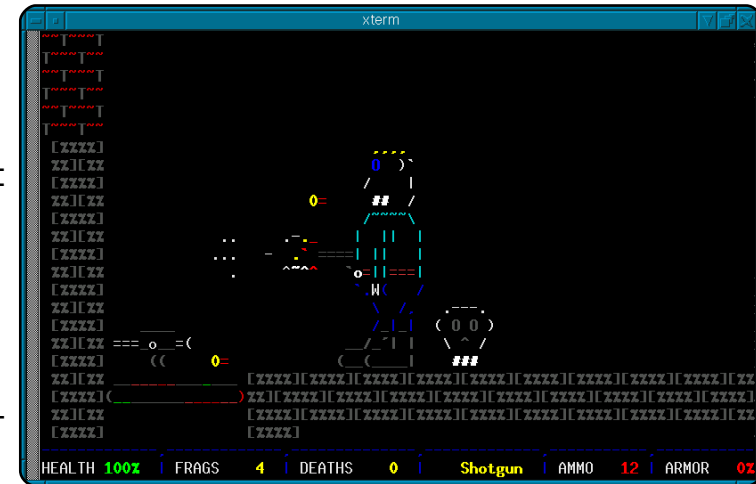
There hasn't been any work on the game since the year 2000, but it works fine for me, despite there being only one operating public server for it (the address is meta.io, if you're wondering). Although you could make your own server if you want, the server-side program is packaged with the game.

There is no Ubuntu package for 0verkill. You'll have to go to http://artax.karlin.mff.cuni.cz/~brain/0verkill/ and download a tarball. Installation instructions are available on that website.

Paintown

http://paintown.sf.net

This one is sure to make some of you readers nostalgic. Paintown is a scrolling fighting game that features some characters that you may recognize from classics such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It is quite addictive and easy to lose an hour to. Use with caution.

This game also features network play, or play with a bot. I got to play with Paintown developer Jon Rafkind, and despite dying around 30 times, I had a blast. The network play is quick and works beautifully. The game itself is quite challenging, too.

This one isn't in the Ubuntu repositories, but you can download a Debian package from the homepage at http://paintown.sf.net.

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Because the show is produced by the Ubuntu UK community, the podcast is covered by the Ubuntu Code of Conduct and is therefore suitable for all ages.

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