Issue #2 - June 2007

# full circle

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR THE UBUNTU COMMUNITY

ubuntu
kubuntu
xubuntu
edubuntu

# LINSPIRE & MICROSOFT

## LINSPIRE SIGNS FOR PATENT PROTECTION

**REVIEW :**
SYSTEM76 LAPTOP
FROM GETTING THE BOX
TO BOOTING UBUNTU

**HOW TO :**
UBUNTU ON A MAC MINI
BASIC INSTALL OF VPN
UBUNTU FOR GRANDMA!

**INSTALL :**
STEP-BY-STEP INSTALL
OF KUBUNTU 7.04 :
FEISTY FAWN

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# full circle


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Your monthly update of what's going on in the world of Linux and Open Source Software

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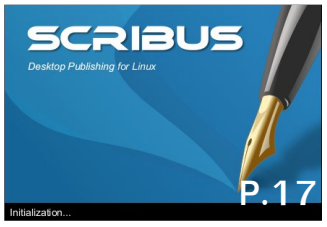

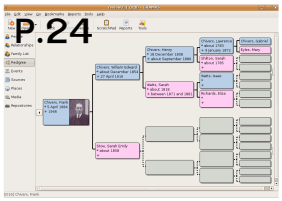



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# EDITORIAL

You may notice a few changes in the design this month (he says with a healthy dose of sarcasm). We received quite a bit of feedback, both good and bad, on the design of issue one. With this issue we hope to address those problems. We also wish to apologise for the grammatical errors which slipped through last month. No one person is to blame, mistakes happen and we'll keep an eye out for them this issue.

Other than some small niggles, issue #1 was a roaring success. Our server managed to hold up to 'the Digg effect' and served in excess of 15,000 downloads within the first 24hours of release time.

What delights do we have for you this issue? Well, we have tutorials on Virtual Private Networking (VPN), installing Ubuntu on a Mac, how one man converted his 80 year-old Grandmother into an Ubuntu user (!) and an excellent review of a System76 Darter laptop. And, of course, **so much more!**

Remember: if you want to have your say about the magazine come and visit us in our monthly, all welcome, meeting. See the last page of this issue for dates and times.

**All the best,**
Ronnie
Editor

**Thanks to :** *linuxgeekery* for the website and .org name, *mykalReborn*, *ukubuntu* and *mrmonday* for the full circle logo. *UbuntuForums.org* for letting us spam their forum while organising all this. *The Ubuntu Marketing Team* for helping us promote and distribute this magazine. And above all; *the Ubuntu community* - as a whole - for being one big, helpful happy, family.

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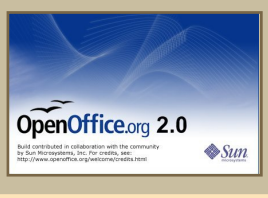


### Ubuntu Not Signing Microsoft Patent Deal

Ubuntu founder **Mark Shuttleworth**, has made it clear that Ubuntu isn't interested in forming a deal with Microsoft along the lines of those recently reached by *Linspire, Xandros* and *Novell*.

***"We have declined to discuss any agreement with Microsoft under the threat of unspecified patent infringements,"*** Shuttleworth said in a blog post on Saturday.

His remarks follow speculation in the press that, following Linspire's agreement with Microsoft last week, Linspire partner Ubuntu might follow suit.

However, as with recent Microsoft agreements with *Novell* and *Xandros*, another aspect of the deal has been raising hackles in the open source community - the purchase by Linspire of protection from patent lawsuits.

Microsoft says Linux infringes a number of its patents, and that Linux companies should sign up to patent licensing deals. Shuttleworth said Microsoft's intellectual property arguments are not valid, and that in any case an agreement offering protection from them would be no real barrier to litigation.

http://www.techworld.com

### Taiwan Firm to Launch Open Source Mobile Phone

The ***NEO1973***, from ***First International Computer*** (FIC), is planned as the first of a series of phones based around the OpenMoko platform.

William Lai, of OpenMoko's community development department, said that the 2.5G touch-screen phone will be available online from OpenMoko priced at US$350. The phone is expected to be ready in September.

OpenMoko was set up by FIC to develop the open source platform for the phone. FIC is making hardware specifications available to software developers and is working closely with them.

The phone communicates on GSM (Global System for Mobile communications) networks and sends data using GPRS (General Packet Radio Service), offering data rates of around 60 kbps to 80 kbps.

Expected features include a 266 MHz Samsung CPU, 64 MB of Flash memory, 128 MB of DRAM, Bluetooth, WiFi, GPS (global positioning system), 3-D graphics acceleration and motion sensing accelerometers.

http://www.linuxinsider.com

### RedHat Next To Sign Patent Deal?

*''We'd love to do the same deal with Red Hat,''* said Tom Robertson, general manager of corporate interoperability and standards at Microsoft. *"We're always open to talking with them."*

That sentiment has not so far been echoed by Red Hat's. The company has said it's not interested in a deal. Red Hat spokeswoman Leigh Day said that is still the case.

*"We continue to believe that open source and the innovation it represents should not be subject to an unsubstantiated tax that lacks transparency,"* she said.

Still, some wonder - as Microsoft lines up the other Linux ducks in a neat little row - if Red Hat might be next, and rumours suggest a pact might be imminent.

http://www.computerworlduk.com

### Ubuntu Home Server Edition

A new home server distribution of Ubuntu is in development. Named Ubuntu Home Server, it is competing against Windows Home Server which is currently in beta. Ubuntu Home Server is still in planning and development stages and as yet there is no release date planned.

Developers are needed so if you think you can help please visit www.ubuntuhomeserver.org to get more details.

### Venezuelan Government to sell Linux-based Computers

The Venezuelan government has officially launched the Bolivarian Computer initiative, a project that aims to mass produce low-cost Linux-based laptop and desktop computers for use in government programs and eventual sale to the public. The computers, which are all being manufactured in Venezuela in the state of Falcon, were developed by Venezuela's Ministry of Light, Industry, and Commerce in collaboration with the Hong Kong-based Inspur Group.

Pricing ranges from $405 to $1,400 for various models depending on the hardware configuration. "The price of other similar brands is $930, and the price of our computer is $690, almost 40 percent less," says Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, describing one particular model. "But, in addition, it has an added value, given that it comes with open-source software and a three year guarantee, while other brands only offer one year."

Venezuela isn't the first country in South America to push adoption of Linux and open source software. The Linux operating system is widely used in Brazil, where an enthusiastic government technology minister once expressed a desire to create a "continent of open source."

http://arstechnica.com

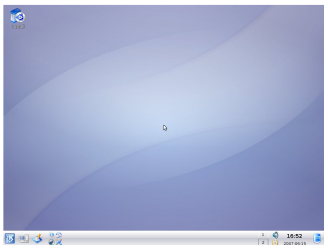
# FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

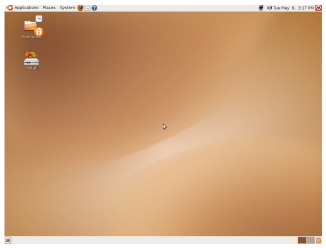
Written by **Robert Clipsham**

kubuntu

Last month we showed you how simple it was to install Ubuntu, and this month we will do the same with **Kubuntu**. Kubuntu is the same operating system as Ubuntu, but with some obvious differences.

The first thing you will notice, looking at the screen shots, is the lack of brown in Kubuntus default desktop. This is because Kubuntu uses a different user interface. The user interface is how you interact with your computer; this could be using a terminal or konsole, typing in commands which your computer will respond to; or it could be a graphical interface, like you see in Kubuntu/Ubuntu.





*Kubuntu (above left) and Ubuntu (above right)*

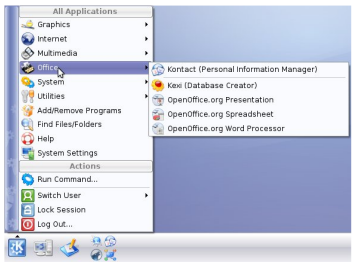
The user interfaces here are the K desktop environment – KDE – and the GNU Object Model Environment – GNOME. You should try both, to see which you prefer. If you can't deicide, don't worry, both can reside happily side by side on the same computer.

## Installing

Once you have done all of the basic things mentioned in last months 'Flavour of the Month', you can begin installing Kubuntu. Start by placing the CD in your drive, and restarting your computer. At the menu (right) choose the "Check Disk" option, then choose "Start or Install Kubuntu." Once the blue bar (below) has finished rocking, you will be shown a splash screen telling you what is loading.

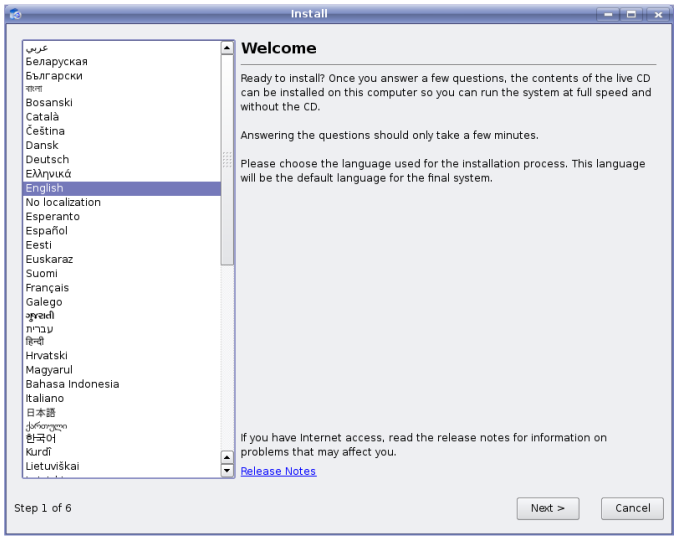
You will then arrive at the Kubuntu desktop (below right), and you will have a full operating system with several open source applications to work with, including:

*Full Office suite*
*Instant Messaging*
*Web browser*
*and IRC client*



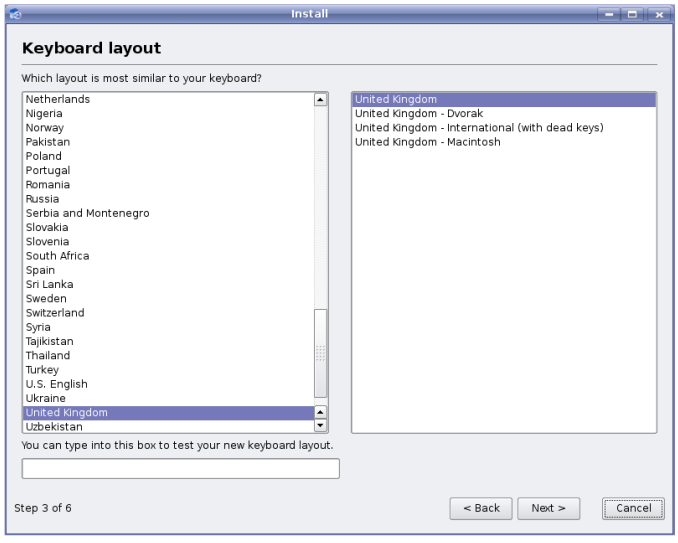

Once you have finished playing, you can click the "Install" icon on the desktop, to start installing Kubuntu.

The first thing the installer will ask is what your preferred language is :




Choose it, and click next to continue. It then asks where you are from, so it can set the time, and make sure you get the fastest updates possible.

Once it knows where you are, it will ask you your keyboard layout (below), so that when you press a key on your keyboard, it will put the right letter on the screen. The main keys that could cause problems are “ and @. If these are switched, you have selected the wrong layout.

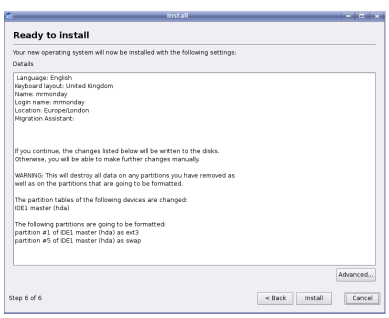



The installer will now ask you how you would like to partition your hard drive. The default option (Resize partition) is usually fine, it will split your hard drive into two chunks, one for Windows and one for Kubuntu.

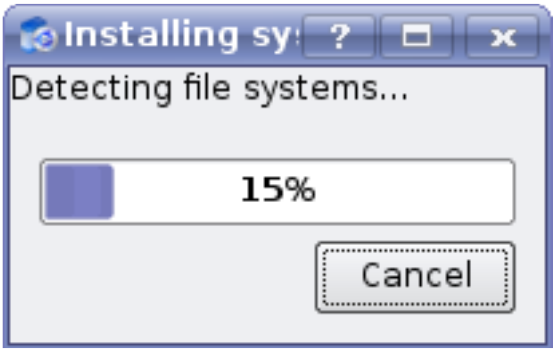
On the next screen, you will be asked if you would like to import any settings from another user, on a windows partition for example. You can transfer all your documents, your desktop background etc. If the setup can not detect any users, it will give you a screen asking for your details (below), so you can log on when it is installed. Keep you password safe!

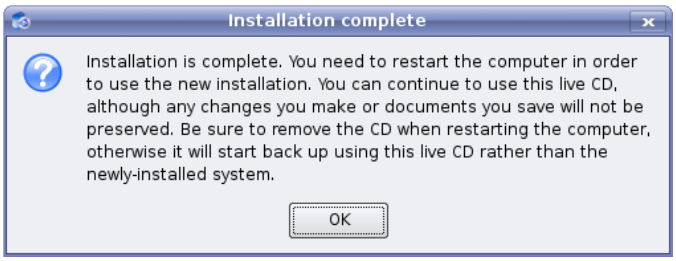
The final step tells you all your settings, so you can go back and change them if necessary (below right).

There are also some advanced settings, but if you are unsure in what you are doing, don't change them.



Finish by clicking the "Install" button, which will finalise your settings, and install Kubuntu.




When the installation is complete, click OK, and then use the K menu to logout, and restart.

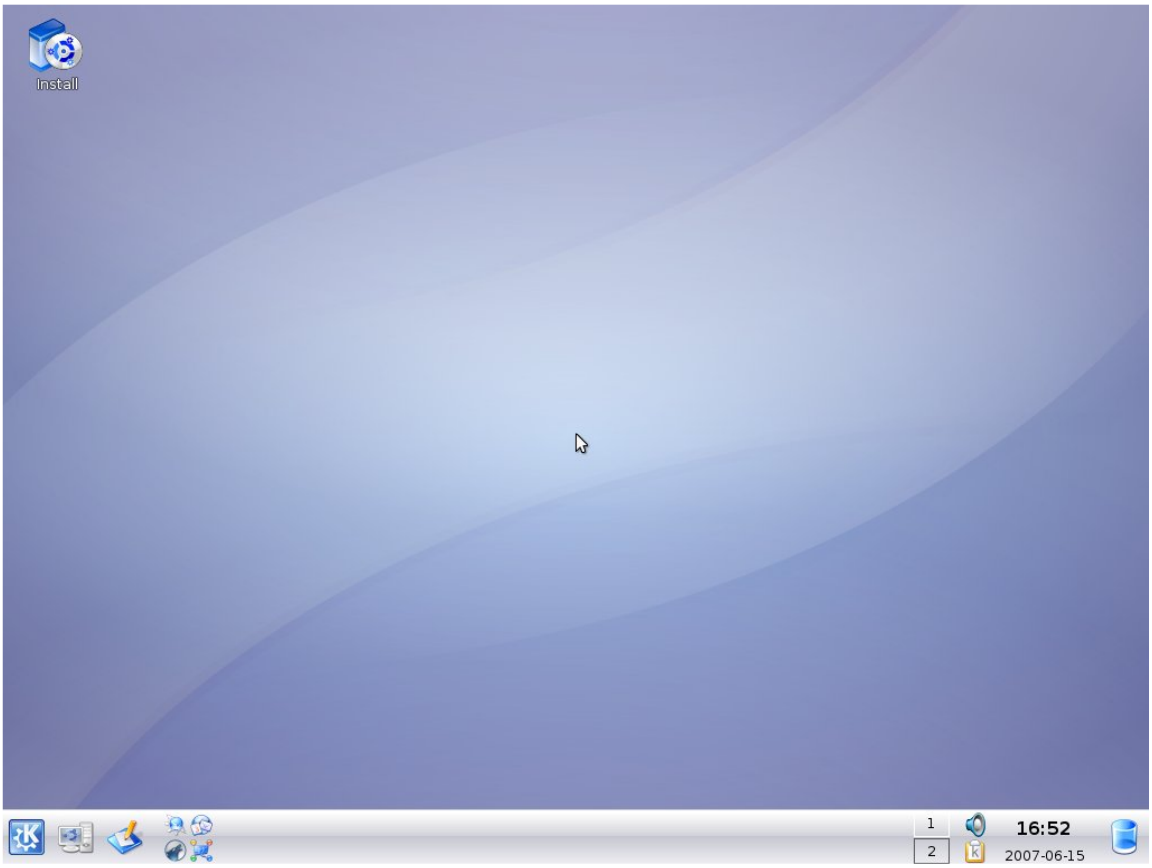
You can then log in (above) with the username and password, you chose earlier.

If all went well, then you will now have a dual boot system with Kubuntu and your other operating system.

You can update Kubuntu by clicking the the update icon (right) in the bottom right of your taskbar. Enter your password and follow the instructions to make sure your system is up to date.

If you have any problems, you can ask in ***#ubuntu*** on ***chat.freenode.net***, or on [www.ubuntuforums.org](http://www.ubuntuforums.org).

Kubuntu (below)



# HOW-TO

Written by **Darkmaster3**

This is a very short Quick-Start Guide and review for installing Ubuntu Feisty Fawn on an Intel Mac Mini. Feisty is the first Ubuntu distro to integrate some bleeding edge proprietary drivers and a very useful Restricted Drivers Manager, so, the installation is straight away if you follow this guide. You don't need any computer ability to achieve a perfect result. Hope you enjoy it.

## Hardware Specs

First of all, the hardware specs of the Intel Mac Mini I own and used for this installation:

*Intel Mac Mini*
*1.66Ghz Intel Core Duo*
*512MB memory*
*60GB hard drive*

If you have a more powerful version of this machine, don't worry, it'll work just the same.

### Prerequisites

To install Feisty Fawn on an Intel Mac Mini you will need to download the following software:

Ubuntu Feisty Fawn (Intel X86) from :
http://www.ubuntu.com/getubuntu/download

BootCamp for OSX from :
http://www.apple.com/macosx/bootcamp/

### Starting the real work

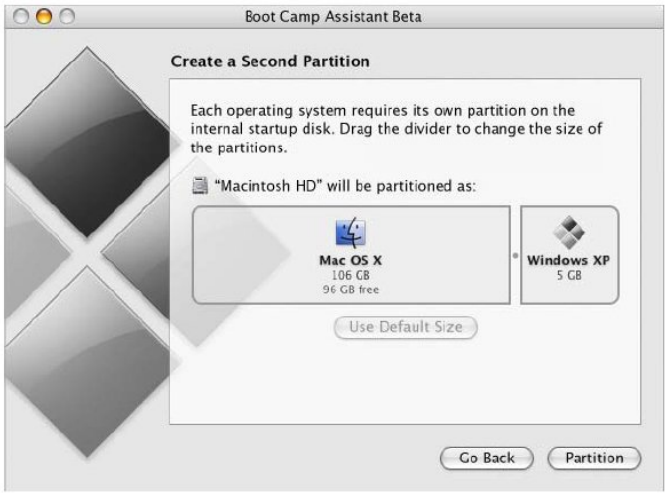
And now let's start working:

1) Install BootCamp, run it and split your HD in 2 parts. The partition intended for Windows will be the one we'll use to install Feisty.

Let's see some illustrated steps to partition your disc:

a) The BootCamp Icon (left)

b) Here's the BootCamp screen (below) in which you can set the size of each partition. You choose how big each partition should be but remember that Linux can install software only in its own partition, so, make it big and continue! Now leave BootCamp where it is and jump to the next step.




2) Burn Ubuntu Feisty's ISO image (Using the "Disk Utility" already present in OSX, Applications –> Utilities), insert it into the disc drive. After having burnt the ISO, return to BootCamp. Ignore the "Start Installation" button. Of course, we don't have to install Windows, so, insert the Ubuntu Feisty CD into the drive and click on the Restart Mac OSX Button.

3) Keep the "Alt" key pressed the moment you listen the classic Mac booting sound. A booting menu will appear, choose CD-ROM. The Feisty Live CD Menu appears. You'll probably be unable to use the keyboard in this menu, don't worry, just wait. After some seconds, Ubuntu Live CD will start loading and you'll be taken into the Ubuntu Feisty desktop.

4) Wow! The wireless card works with the new pre-installed restricted drivers! The restricted drivers manager warns you about the fact that these drivers are not opensource: do you really care? Personally, I'd love OS drivers to exist for any hardware but it is not like that, so, I prefer productivity over renouncing on the use of restricted drivers. The Intel 3D graphic card, obviously, works out the box with the built in Open Source video driver. Everything is perfect then! Let's install Ubuntu.

5) Double click on the Install Icon on the desktop and install Ubuntu as normal. Choose to edit the partitions manually. This part is much simpler now than in any precedent Ubuntu version, I'm very glad of that. Locate the fat32 partition, delete it, it will be converted to free space. Now create a new partition from the empty space, but remember to leave at least 600 MB empty to create the Swap partition.

This new partition will be the one used as root, your main Linux partition. Assign to it this symbol "/" and format it as ext3. Now create a new partition from the remaining free space and choose to use it as "swap". We're all set. Start Installation and configure it as you wish.

6) Reboot and remember: every time you want to run Ubuntu Linux, you'll have to keep the alt key pressed during boot and choose "Windows" (Yes, really) from the boot menù that opens.

The guide is almost over and you've got Ubuntu installed on your Mac Mini! The hardest thing is… after several days of using Ubuntu you'll want to dedicate the entire Mac's drive to Linux!!

**Final Tuning**

In your Intel Mac Mini you've got one of the best 3D cards around for the Linux world. An Intel Video Card. It is not surely as bleeding edge and powerful as an Nvidia or an ATI, but, hey... the driver is open source, you'll never have problems with it and it is super fast with Linux. So, if you like fireworks, let's burn some. If you like Compiz (Very basic effects), you can simply activate it using the new Feisty Desktop Effects:

***System --> Preferences --> Desktop Effects***

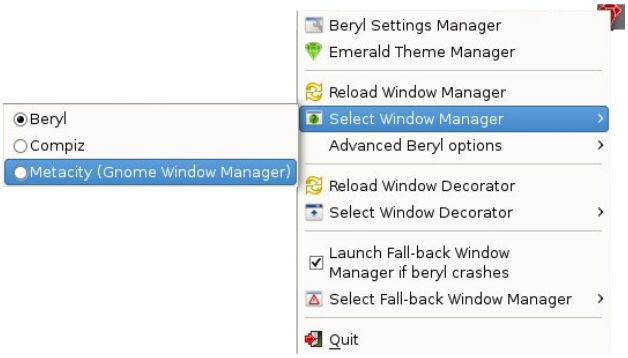
Turn it on and here you go. You'll just have wobbling windows and the rotating Cube. If you prefer to have tons of more effects and productivity functionality, as well as thousands of useless but wonderful eyecandy (To show off Ubuntu to your friends and have them saying a big: "WOW!"), you need Beryl. So, first of all turn off the desktop effects and then:

1) Beryl is in the official repositories now, so let's get it! Run Synaptic, search for Beryl and install all that you wish! I recommend every extra plugin package you find :)

2) ***System –> Preferences –> Sessions***. Click on new: write down Beryl in name and "beryl-manager" (Without quotes) in Command. That's it!

3) Without restarting, Alt+F2. Enter "beryl-manager" and press Return. The Beryl tray icon appears and it's running! WOW! Once you restart the system, Beryl will be loaded automatically.

4) Remember that if you prefer, you can run Compiz instead of Beryl. Don't try to run Compiz while Beryl's running. To run Compiz, as we said, ***System –> Preferences –> Desktop Effects***. Enable wobble and enable cube. Never do it while Beryl is running. To switch back to Compiz, just purge "beryl-manager" away from the "Session Manager", right click on the "beryl-manager" icon, select ***Windows Decorator --> Metacity***, right click on the "beryl-manager" icon again and exit. Now you can activate Desktop Effects again.




5) Enjoy your super fast 3D desktop on a Mac Mini without any significant effort!

Apple's Mac Mini is small, perfectly formed **and** it can run Ubuntu! What more could you ask for?

# HOW-TO UBUNTU FOR GRANDMA

Written by Knightwise

They say it's for geeks, they say its for nerds, they say its for those whose pinkie finger has the imprint of the enter key tattooed on it. We say its for your grandmother ! Yes my friends, I kid you not, for all of those who are afraid to dip their little toe into the great Linux Lake let us reassure you: if your grandmother can do it, so can you. Before we start, let me clarify: we are not talking about turning your Linux machine into a clustered database server with SQL, PHP, Apache, Samba and what-have-you. We are talking about the advantages of using Linux ... as a desktop.

**Why this experiment.**

I have been toying around with Linux since 1999, i've seen the first desktop versions evolve and i've seen the Linux OS grow in strength on the desktop. Last year I found out about Ubuntu Linux and have been doing several articles and podcasts on the use of Ubuntu as a desktop system. I am by no means a Linux zealot; no pingu-pimping for me! Drop me in the Linux command line and I'm as lost as Dirty Harry in a nail salon. I do, however, have a philosophy about computer use. I think technology should be safe and simple and that a computer should work for you and not the other way around. Linux has always been seen as too hard and too complicated. So it was time for a little experiment. Could we put together a Linux desktop system that was simple to use, safe from viruses, spam, and user mistakes, and had a lot of software to offer. Could we build a Linux box that your grandma could use? Well, lets see.

**Step one : Find a grandmother.**

My fiancée's family is pretty tech savvy, her dad is a computer wizz, her mother is on MSN messenger all day, her sisters live online and her grandmother ... is right up the alley. Its not that they are all computer freaks out there, they all just have an open mind towards technology. Good old granny started out on her gaming trip some fifteen years ago when she swiped a hand-console Tetris game from one of her grandchildren. An all night-gaming rush that night got her hooked on these little hand held gaming consoles. Some two years ago, she got a second-hand worn-down IBM Thinkpad laptop running Windows 95 for running some simple games like... surprise, surprise... Tetris and stuff. So when she called me last week in a panic because she accidentally deleted some shortcuts and "could not get her games to work anymore" band in her despair, was even suggesting buying herself a brand new laptop... it was time to jump in.

Granda Meme (above)

**Step Two : Find a laptop**

Finding a laptop for cyber-granny was not all that hard. My fiancée's dad had an old Compaq laptop lying around that was no longer in active duty. With an 800 Mhz

Processor and 256 meg of ram it had been set out to pasture because of a defective PCMCIA slot on the motherboard. Apparently, force feeding a PCMCIA card upside down into its slot does not bode well for the laptop. So it no longer had wireless capability and since the family had bought a new laptop .. it was just laying around. One discarded laptop, one grandma in need .. Cheque please !

**Step Three: Somebody get me a penguin.**

With our laptop secured under our arm it was time to browse through some available operating systems to help "La mama" out. The needs to be met were :

*A*) *Be simple to use.*

*B*) *B safe from mallware, viruses, and user-boo-boo's.*

*C*) *Offer enough free software to avoid having to take out a loan to get started.*

This kind of ruled out Windows XP Pro right off the bat. Several Linux distributions offered themselves up but Ubuntu took the cake.

So it was time to let loose the beast. Downloading a standard ISO image from the 5.10 version was about 20 minutes' work and the whole installation process took about an hour. The simple installation only bothered us with the country settings, keyboard layout and a user name. No problem there. We let it have the entire hard disk at its disposal so we did not have some boot loader clogging up the startup process. The idea here was "easy as firing up a toaster."

When the bongos rumbled to announce the first successful bootup we went straight to the Synaptic package manager and started adding games to our installation. Ubuntu comes with some games in the standard configuration, but when you look in the package manager its like uncovering the lost island of Arcadia. Some games are action based , a lot of them are brain-breakers; ideal for our test subject. We loaded the distro up with some 100 games and that was that.

Now what do you do when you've beat Tetris for the 500th time and can't see another polygon for the rest of the evening? You watch a movie right? Unfortunately most Linux distributions come without support for playing mpeg2 (DVD) and mp3 support. With the latest Ubuntu we can easily install all the video playing goodies you could ever want. Just open a media file and Ubuntu 7.04 will ask you if you want to install the goodies.

**Step Four: Sense some simplicity.**

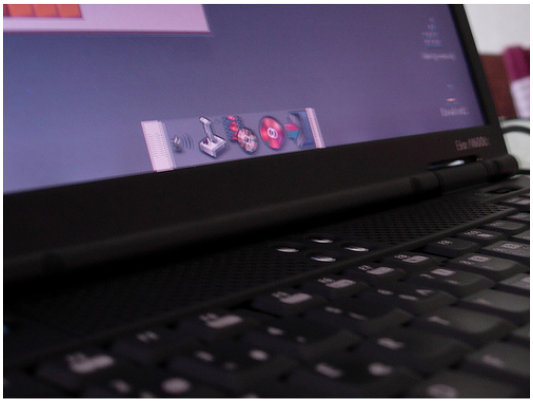
Now. its no good to have a complicated system for our super granny, is it? Time to simplify the whole deal.

**Step one: Automatic Login**. In the settings menu you can choose the AUTOLOGIN feature. This makes sure our little laptop boots up straight into the user's desktop. No login/password combinations but hey... its not like she's typing up memo's for the Pentagon.

**Step two: Could i see the menu please?** Thanks to the Gnome desktop the menu is pretty simple as it is, but a lot of options on the menu were just not needed. So we added the games menu, the DVD and CD player icon and the shutdown icon to the main menu bar and removed everything else. Next up the menu bar was set at the bottom of the screen and the bar you see below was set up top. I left an icon for the main "start" menu there so I could access all the other programs and settings if needed.

**Step three: Explaining how it works** Ok Gran, here is how it works. Press the blue

button to start up the computer. Wait until you hear the music. Then you have four buttons on the bottom on the screen. One will give you a menu with ALL the games. If you want to play a movie, just pop in a DVD and click on the second button with the little film reel on it. Want to play some music? Pop in the music CD and click on the little CD. And to shut down the system just click on the little door there.

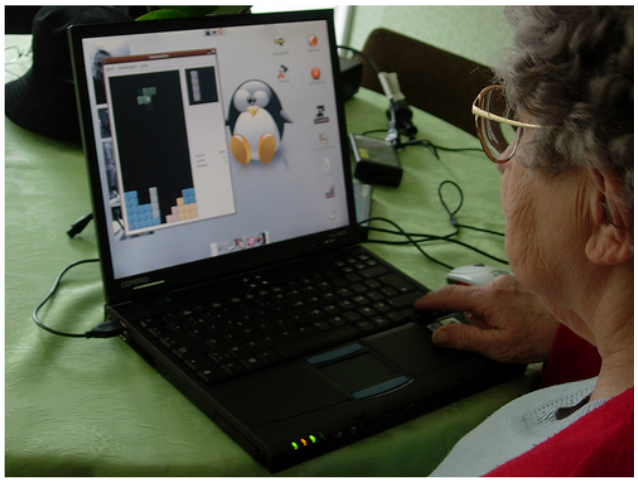


That's it, half-an-hour later Granny was trained on using the computer, had a ton of games to choose from, could play movies and music CDs and was able to boot up and shutdown her system without ever having to worry about pressing the wrong button. Who said Linux was hard?

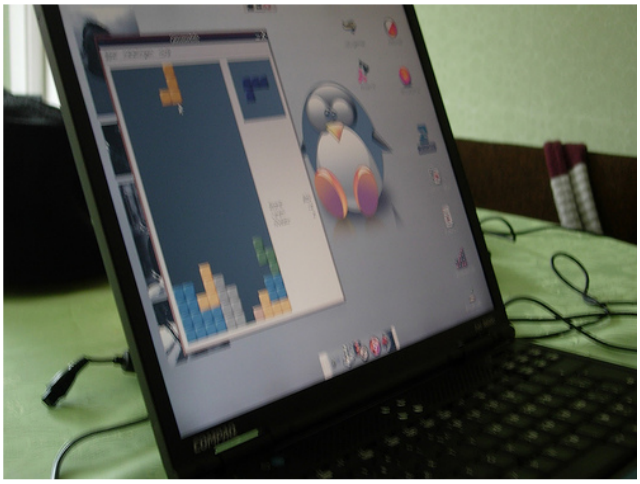
**Conclusion.**

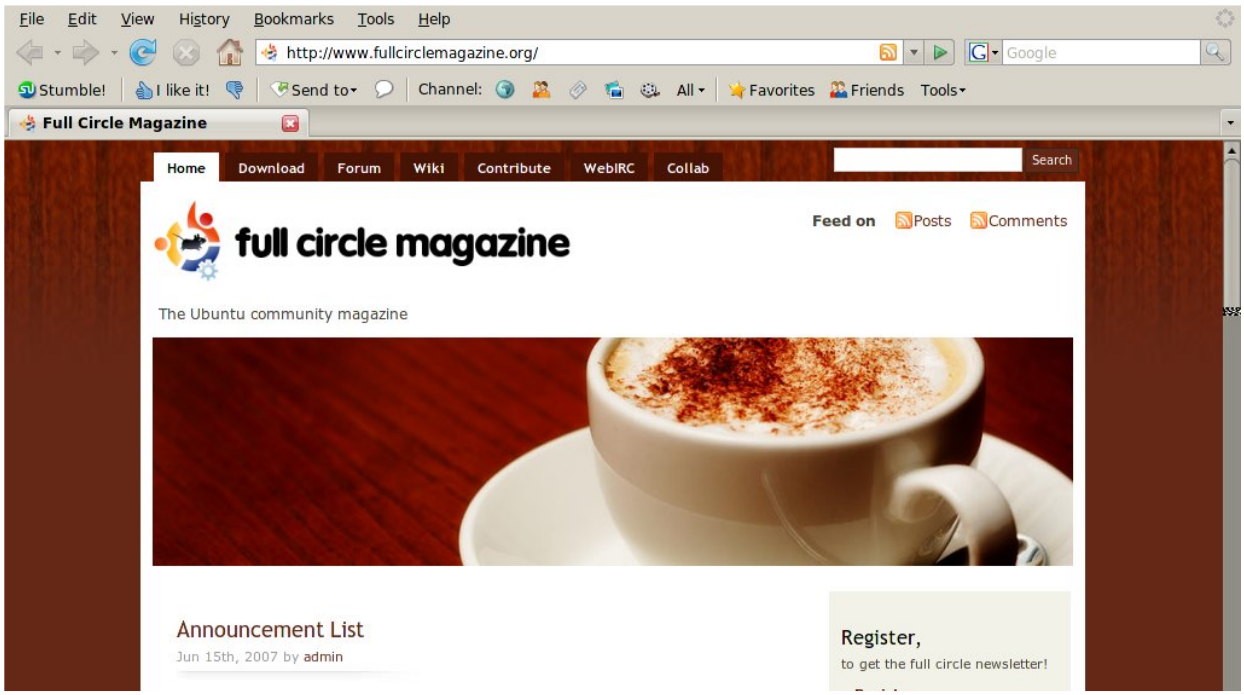
Needless to say, Nana was thrilled. She had a stable and secure operating system and did not have to worry about pressing the wrong buttons because quite frankly... there were none. A grin as wide as the Brooklyn bridge spread across her face when she saw the entire selection of games she could play and not have to worry about breaking anything in the process. “This is much easier than the previous one” she uttered, casting a wayward glance to her old Windows computer.

I'll be keeping tabs on our cyber-granny over the next few weeks to see how she gets along with her new system.



Now with computers coming more abundant in our everyday lives, it's natural that everybody wants one, including everyone in your family. But as the family computer-geek (and professional IT consultant) it would just turn into a nightmare providing support for everyone. So using a simplified Ubuntu installation does keep calls about viruses, broken operating systems and spyware away. Even if she decided to go online, I would just have to add the Firefox and Pidgin (formerly known as Gaim) buttons to her menu bar, give her a crash course in chat 'n' surf and she would be on her way. No high maintenance on this operating system. When handled right it can be a simpler and safer operating system to plant down in the soil of an inexperienced user. OK, you can't install all the CDs you see in the shop, but Linux comes with all these goodies built in. This way you even save money! So the question is: have you seen your granny lately?



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ubuntu forums

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# HOW-TO VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORKING

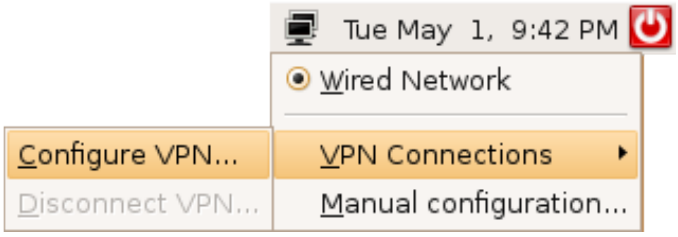
Written by Mark (aka Mouseclone)

I have been using Ubuntu since 6.06. I have set-up connections on 6.06 using pptp-config, on 6.10 using kvpnc, and now on 7.04 with network-manager-pptp. 7.04's set-up, by far, has been the easiest way of doing things. My only wish was that this came pre-installed. Let's get to the meat shall we?

The following commands will have this set up right away.

*sudo apt-get install network-manager-pptp*

You should now see VPN under the applet. Click on the network applet -> ***VPN connections*** -> ***Configure VPN***.



Click the ***Add*** button

Walk though the wizard. Make sure you configure your options correctly. I have had the nm-applet crash on me for not configuring the route with the /24 or /[network] after it.

In the end you should have something that looks like this:

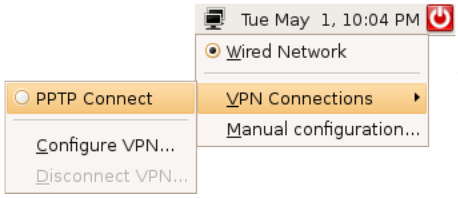
I know people are against it, but I would recommend restarting at this point. If you insist on staying connected the following should get the setting in the applet in the systray

**NOTE: each of the commands below should be on one line each, no Enter until after you've typed the word 'restart'**

*sudo /etc/dbus-1/event.d/25NetworkManager restart*

*sudo /etc/dbus-1/event.d/26NetworkManagerDispatcher restart*

Afterward you will have:




This has by far been the easiest set-up that I have gone though. It is simple. The one thing that I think that Ubuntu should have done was to auto-install this package. Then again, I use VPNs and not every home user of Ubuntu will use VPNs so maybe it is good that they left it out, less bulk for the average home user.

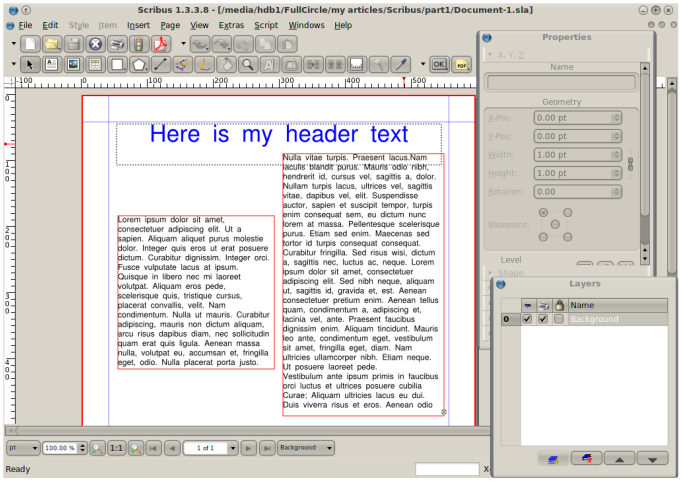
# HOW-TO

Written by **Ronnie Tucker**

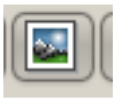
Last month we created a new document, added some filler text then went on to add columns and also link the columns together to have our text automatically flow from one column to the next. This month we will focus on adding images to our document.

First the technical bit: JPG images use compression to keep the file size small. While this may seem like a good idea at first, it comes at a cost: your images may show "artifacts." Artifacts are small squares you sometimes see in images -- mainly on web pages which often use highly compressed images - and while this may look good on a web page, it looks bad in a document, especially if it's to be professionally printed. GIF images, on the other hand, have a limited colour palette. While this may be good for a two-colour logo it's not so good when you try and drop a full-colour image to 256 colours, so I suggest you use PNG images. Do not fall into the trap of simply converting a bad quality JPG/GIF to a PNG; this won't repair the image. Always start with the best-quality image you can find.

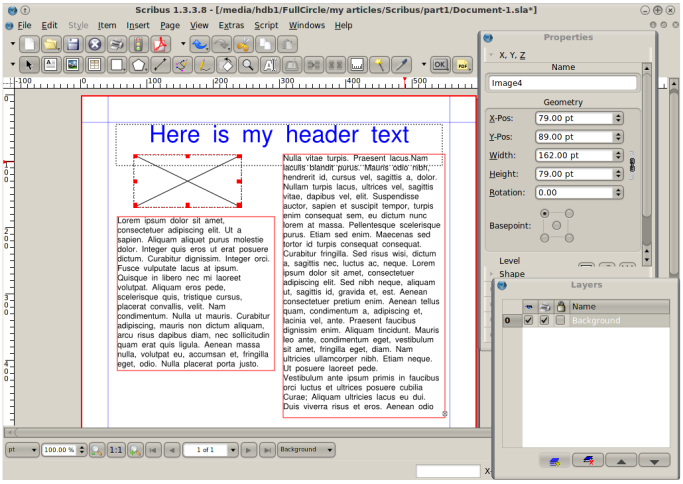
So, without further ado, let's load up our text document from last month.



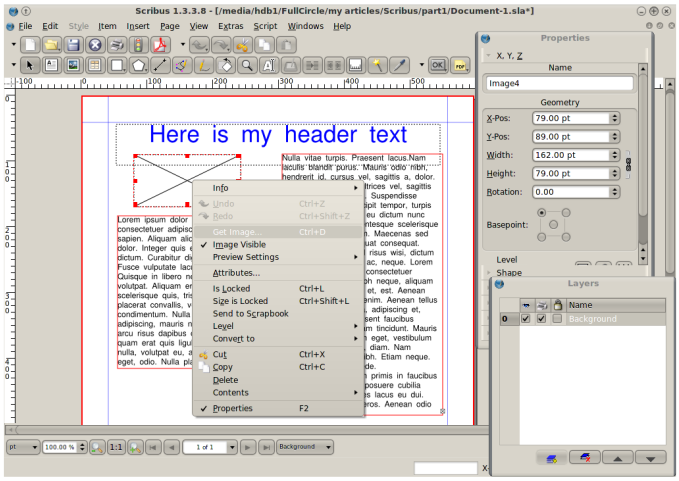

To place an image into the document we click the Insert Image Frame button:



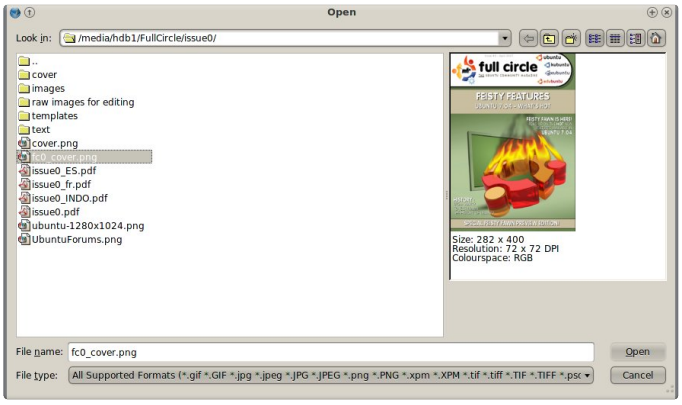
And draw out a box, just like we did last month for a text box:

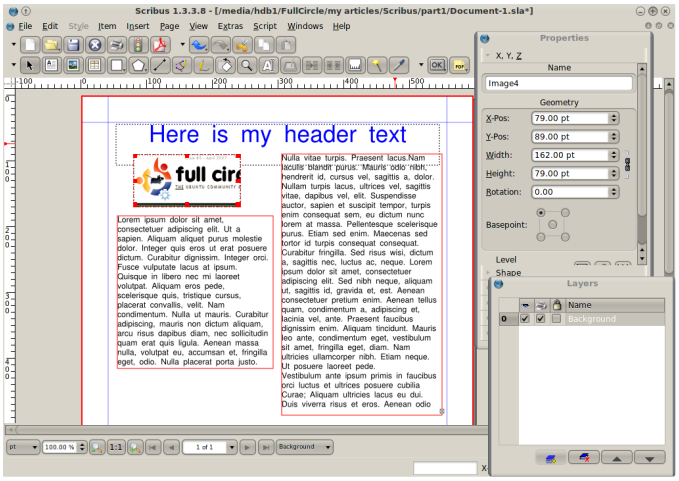



To chose an image, right click on the image frame and choose Get Image:



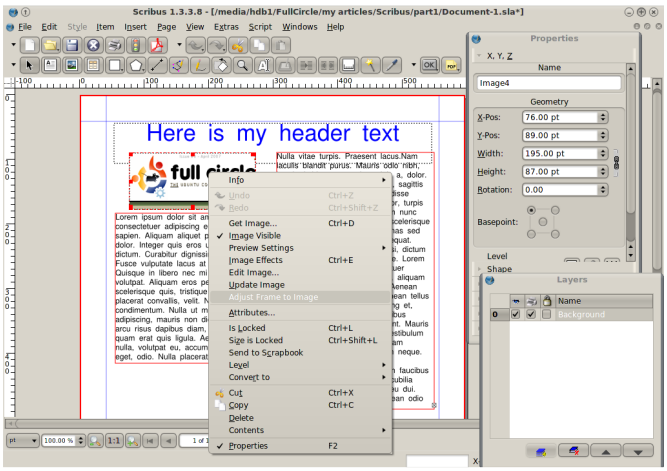

A file dialogue box will appear and from there you choose which image you want to insert into the image frame and click the Open button:

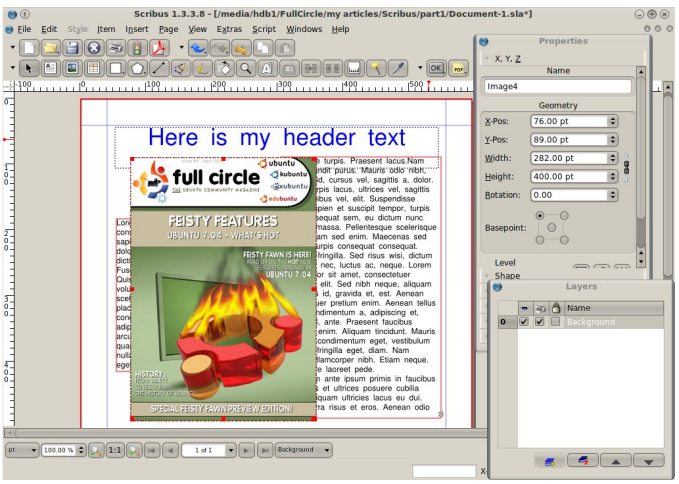


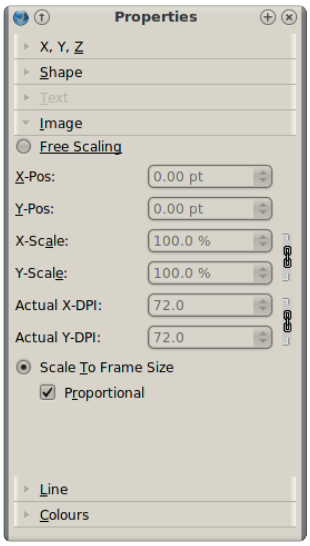

OK, there's a problem... as you can see from the screen above, the image is badly cropped in that we can only see a small portion of the image. We need to make a decision here. Do we make the image frame the same size as the original image? Or do we resize the image to the image frame? For demonstration purposes we'll do both.

First, to make the image frame the same size as the original image we could drag out the image frame box. Easier still is to right click on the image frame and choose Adjust Frame to Image:



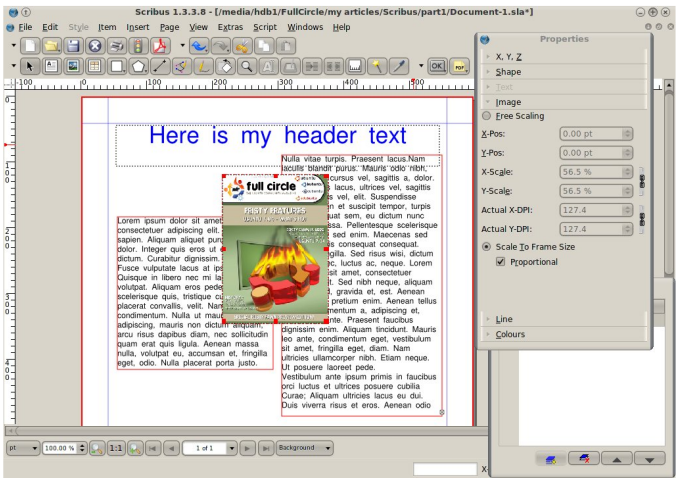




But now the image is too big, time to reduce its size. In the Properties window click the Image tab.




This shows the position and size of the image, but let's not guess sizes. Let's resize in the document itself. Select the Scale to Frame Size option. This will allow us to resize the image by resizing the image frame. Be sure to have Proportional ticked as this will stop us from stretching the image out of proportion.

Click the image frame and resize it.

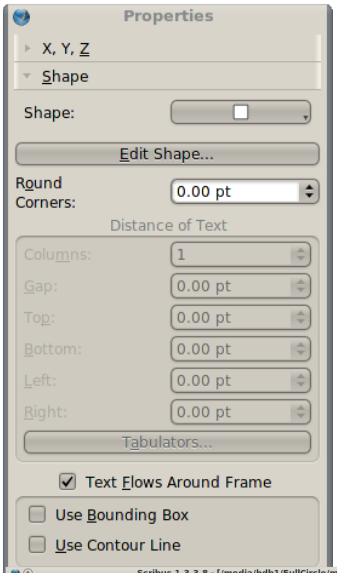


And of course you can move the image frame to position the image where you please.

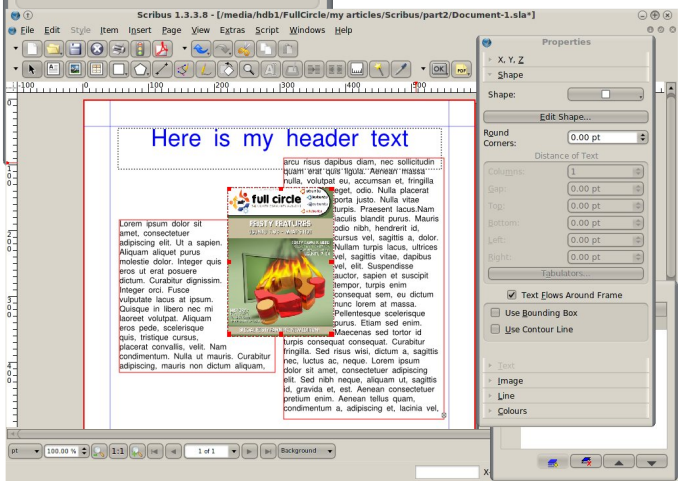
The only problem we have now is the image obscuring the text behind it.

Solution: have the text flow around the image.

To do this, select the image frame and in your Properties window, select the Shape tab. The Shape tab is new to us but all we want to do for now is select the Text Flows Around Frame option.



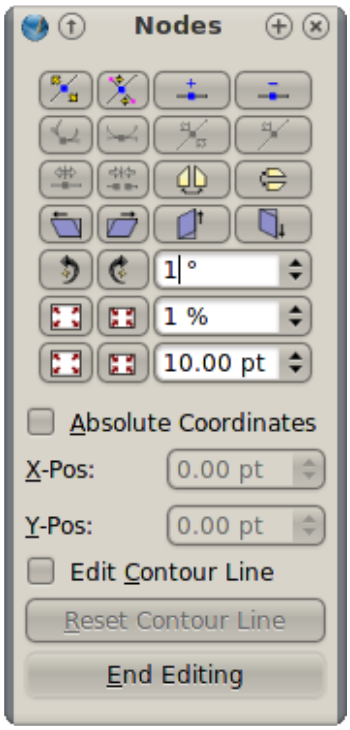

There we go! The image now displaces the text around it's edges! Try moving the image frame on the page and you'll see the text update itself automatically. Just like magic!



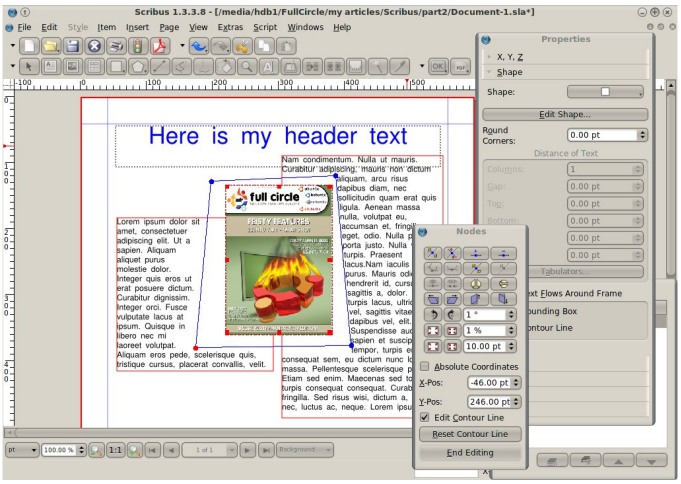

The only problem we're still left with is that the text is a bit too close to the right side of the image. This is easily fixed.

With the image frame still selected and in the Shape tab (in the Properties window) we select Use Contour Line. Next click Edit Shape and a new window will appear.

Don't panic! We aren't going to use most of this window, but notice that your image frame now has a blue outline. In this new window, tick the Edit Contour option, our blue outline now has a blue blob on either corner, left click and drag those blue blobs, you'll see the contour line move and your text with it. Play around with this contour line to get the text to your liking.




When you're done, click the Edit Contour option again to turn it off and click End Editing to close that window.




And that's pretty much all you need to know about images!

Next month we'll look at text. We really don't want to have to select paragraphs of text and apply a font type or size over and over again, so we can create Paragraph styles, but that's for next month.

# REVIEW SYSTEM 7 6 DARTER LAPTOP

Written by **Alan M. Hood**

For the past six months, I have been reading at the Ubuntu Forums about System76, a company that pre-installs the Ubuntu operating system on laptop and desktop systems. An opportunity arose to purchase a System76 computer after I decided that my parents current laptop, a Compaq Presario (AMD 1.5 Ghz, 512 Mb, ATI graphics, 20 Gb hard disk) running Ubuntu 6.06, needed to be replaced. A Darter seemed like a perfect fit as it is lightweight, stylish, and runs a familiar operating system.

## Darter Component Selection and Ordering

I didn't order the default Darter from System76. Instead, I upgraded the Darter with a faster processor, more RAM, and larger hard drive capacity (see box right). The system was ordered on Friday, April 20, 2007. Ordering was simple and straightforward through the System76 website (www.system76.com) and shortly after I submitted the order, I received an email that the Darter would ship in five business days. System76 kept their word and it shipped on time. Because I selected a shipping address that differed from the billing address, I had to verify that the shipping address was correct. I spoke to Carl at System76 and he made sure that the order went to manufacturing the same day. If that wasn't enough, Carl was kind enough to upgrade my shipping from ground to 2-day at no charge.

Fig. 1

Right on schedule, the system arrived on Monday, April 30, 2007. When the Darter arrived, I was taken a little bit by surprise by the box in which it was shipped. The box had nothing on the outside except for the ship-to sticker (Fig.1). The other notable item

### System76 Darter Laptop Specifications

**CPU** - Intel Core 2 Duo: Core 2 Duo T7200 2.0GHz 4MB 667F

**RAM** - 1.5 GB DDR2 667 MHz (1 x 1 GB + 1 x 512 MB)

**Hard Drive** - 80 GB 5400 RPM *

**Graphics** - Intel GMA 950 224 MB Integrated Graphics

**Screen** - 13.3” Widescreen WXGA (1280X800)

**Sound** - Intel High Definition Audio

**Networking** -10/100(LAN)

**Wireless** - Intel 802.11 abg & Bluetooth

**Card Reader** - 4 in 1 Card Reader

**CD ROM Drive** - CD R, CD RW, DVD R and DVD DL

**Expansion** - PCI Express Card Slot (34/54)

**Ports** - VGA, 3x USB 2.0, Mic In, Headphone Out, FireWire 1394B, S-Video

**Battery** - 6 Cell Lithium Ion

**Dimensions**- 12.4" x 8.9" x 1.24" (W x D x H)

**Weight** - 4.3 lbs

** Upgraded component*

about the machine was its smaller than expected size (note the 8.5”x11” sheet of paper in the picture). The components were packed tight with cardboard inserts (no packing peanuts, paper, or other environmentally unfriendly materials), and the laptop itself was packed in a smaller box inside the shipping box. Included in the shipment were the Darter laptop, battery, two CDs (manual and Windows Drivers), carrying case, Intel Core2 Duo pamphlet, power cord, power transformer, an instruction sheet and a thank you letter (Fig.2). The carrying case feels well padded, good quality, and has numerous pockets.

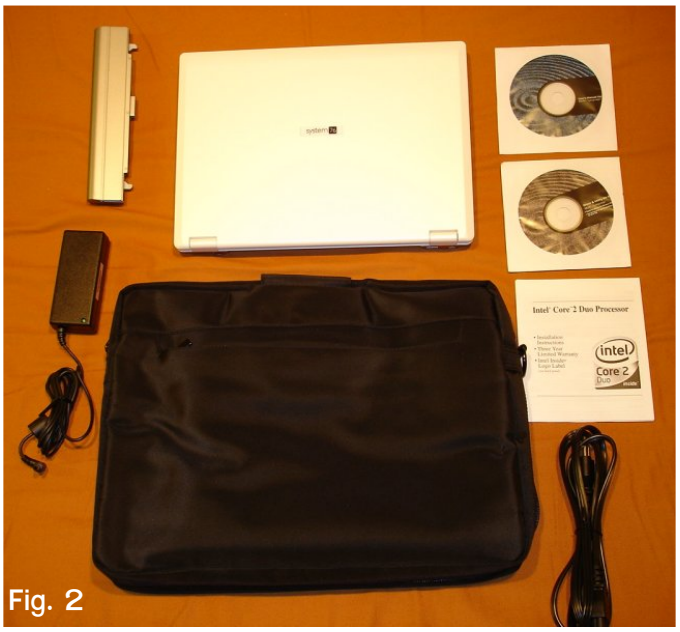


Fig. 2

## Quality

I have used laptops that were high quality workhorses, as well as those that felt cheap throw away machines. So, how does the System76 Darter compare? Quite well actually. The lid is plastic but not flimsy. The hinge that attaches the lid to the base is sturdy. The speakers are tinny and not overly loud, even when sound is set to the maximum level. For normal use in a relatively quiet room, the sound level, when maxed, is plenty loud enough, however if the sound needs to be increased, then dedicated speakers will do the trick. The keyboard is not clicky, but, it has good tactile feel. The keys on the keyboard are surprisingly large which will please users with wide fingers. The two plastic silver buttons of the mouse pad feel a bit too clicky though. The system runs quiet, which will be very pleasing to my mom as the fan on her laptop is noisy. The only significant noise that the system makes is when the hard drive becomes active. I like the button that releases the lid, it is secure yet easy to push. Overall, despite the low quality speakers, I give the quality of the Darter high marks.

## Hardware Compatibility

### Hardware that Works Out-of-The Box

The out-of-the-box experience has been quite good, but not perfect. The top four components (wireless, graphics chip, display, and mouse pad) were of the most concern because these components tend to give users, including myself, the most trouble when installing Ubuntu on a custom built machine. I just about fell over after I turned the Darter on for the first time and the network manager immediately detected the wireless networks in my area. Equally impressive was the fact that 3D video was working without intervention, which meant setting up Desktop Effects was simple. I was pleased to find that the Intel GMA 950 chipset to be powerful enough for Desktop Effects (Compiz or Beryl). I was equally pleased to find that the display was working exactly as advertised (resolution of 1280x800) right out of the box (zero intervention on my part).

### Hardware that Partially Works

There were some hardware compatibility issues with the Darter. Some of them were fixed after a driver update, but not all. The devices that were initially partially functional, and later fixed, were the optical drive and microphone. When the system

first arrived there were other problems as well, the Darter would freeze up which was traced to inserting a non-blank CD disk into the optical drive the CPU would spike every few seconds (Fig. 3). The microphone jack also didn't work at first. After consulting with System76 technical support by email, phone, and the forum, a fix could not be provided immediately, but the problems were resolved with a driver update a few weeks later.

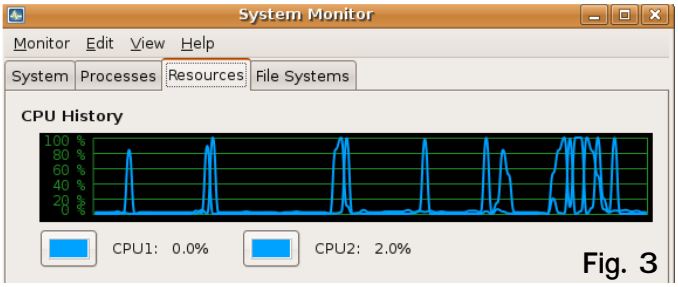


Fig. 3

Two hardware components that remain partially functional are the keyboard Fn keys and the 4-in-1 card reader. Not all of the Fn keys work on the Darter, such as the two Fn keys for dimming/brightening the screen and the LCD/Monitor switcher. The Fn key that puts the system in suspend mode will activate suspend; however, the system will not awaken from suspend mode. All of the other Fn keys (i.e., wireless, mail, web browser, LCD blank, mouse pad on/off, and volume) work properly. The 4-in-1 card reader works with SD cards, but not with Memory Stick Pro (Sony products) or Multimedia Cards (MMC). Because devices that use these removable media can connect to the Darter via a USB dongle, and SD cards are so prevalent, this is likely to be a minor annoyance for most users.

### Hardware that Does Not Work

The power management features of the Darter are not very good. The only power saving feature that works reliably is blanking the screen, since neither suspend nor hibernate work well enough. Properly working power management has been an issue with Linux distributions for some time and, admittedly, resolving the issue is complex. I was hoping that this would be a non-issue by ordering a Darter, but unfortunately, the Darter is not immune to power management troubles.

### Service and Support

System76 service has been very good, beginning with purchasing all the way to resolving hardware issues. Because my order didn't go immediately to manufacturing, Carl at System76 upgraded the shipping to 2-day air without additional cost. I contacted System76 technical support using email, phone and the forums. System76 responded to all three forms of communication in a timely manner. Responses to my tech support email were received within 24 hours. When I called their tech support phone number, I didn't get through to a person immediately. However, I was not put on hold, but rather, I was instructed to leave a message. A System76 tech support representative (Tom) called within an hour or two and we discussed the hardware issues described above at length and the best course of action. System76 tech support was just as responsive to forum posts, i.e., within 24 hours. I was particularly impressed with this forum reply message “Dang it! I thought I had it nailed there.” - thomasaaron (System76 Support Representative).

### Comments from Two Windows-Only Users

During the time I was writing this review article, I had an opportunity to share the Darter with two Windows users that had never used a Linux distribution. The first Windows user was a friend that came to visit and is a Windows Power User (WPU). I offered my friend the Darter to use for the Internet, checking web-based email, and whatever else he needed. He

accepted the offer and used the Darter over the weekend. He made several comments about the machine that stood out.

He remarked that the Darter is responsive, fast, and quiet. He also mentioned that the gray lettering on the keys of the keyboard was too light resulting in a difficult time in pecking at the keys with his index fingers (Fig. 4). Because I am a touch typist, I hadn't considered that this could be an issue for some users. The Darter became particularly useful to him for testing his two USB thumb drives after we went golfing and his pull-cart rolled into a pond. He found that the Darter served him well in testing the thumb drives the next day.

Fig. 4

The second Windows user was a co-worker and not a WPU. He agreed to take the Darter home for an evening after I told him about the cool eye-candy. He returned the next day and the first thing he mentioned was the 3D cube. The cube really stood out as a useful feature because of the perceived value of having additional workspaces. He said that he had no problem in creating an Open Office Writer document and saving it. Overall, he found the system to be easy to use. Similar to the WPU, my co-worker was also impressed with the speed of the Darter and its performance.

**Conclusion and Rating**

After using the Darter for the past five weeks, I conclude that the Darter would be an excellent laptop for anyone wanting a laptop for web surfing, email, office work, etc. It is fast and has plenty of graphics power to run Desktop Effects. My worries about the Intel GMA 950 not being powerful enough to run fancy 3D desktop effects (Compiz or Beryl) have vanished completely. The power of this Darter not only makes itself apparent with running 3D eye candy, but also for running every day applications, which launch within seconds. The entire system is very nimble and responsive. The Darter also is impressive with its light weight, low noise, and large keys on the keyboard.

Because I didn't have to worry about compatibility issues with several hardware components that typically plague users that do a self-install on a laptop, ordering the Darter with Ubuntu Feisty Fawn (7.04) pre-installed has my made life simpler. Some hardware issues were still present initially, most of which were resolved by reporting the hardware issue and waiting for a driver update. Although Darter hardware compatibility isn't flawless, it is pretty darn close and the few that remain (i.e., Fn keys, 4-in-1 card reader, and power management), are minor for this reviewer.

**Summary: the Darter with the Intel Core 2 Duo T7200 CPU and 1.5 Gb RAM is a great performing system, which is simple to use thanks to the Ubuntu Feisty Fawn operating system.**

**4/5**

*System runs, hardware that did not work weren't show stoppers, some system configuration was necessary that required basic computer knowledge*

Al Hood lives in Minnesota, USA. An avid tech enthusiast, he has been using Linux since 2000, with Corel Linux. Al has also experience with Mandriva, Xandros, and Ubuntu distro's. In addition to open source computing, he is a husband, a father of two, and enjoys spending time outdoors.

# INTERVIEW

# GRAMPS DEVELOPER

Interviewed by **Adrian Rea**

**Don Allingham** is the lead developer for the **GRAMPS** genealogy software. Here we put Don under the spotlight and ask him the questions that you, the readers, sent in from our full circle preview issue. If you want to learn more about GRAMPS please see issue #1 of ***full circle*** for our in depth review.

**So Don, what's your background with computers and programming?**

I've been involved with computers and programming since the early 80's. I started writing programs in college for VAX/VMS and Unix systems using Fortran, Pascal and C. My first job out of college was developing software used in the design of VLSI chips. For about the past 13 years, I have been out of software development, designing VLSI chips.

Since leaving software engineering, most of my programming has been in hardware description languages (including Verilog and SystemVerilog) and scripting languages (such as Perl and Python).

About six years ago, I started the GRAMPS project and have been involved in Python coding ever since.

**Is GRAMPS the first piece of software you have worked on?**

GRAMPS is the first Free Software program that I have worked on.

Early in my career, I developed specialized software for the development of VLSI designs.

**How did you learn to program and how long did it take?**

I'm pretty much a self-taught programmer. Other than a college course in Fortran and another in Pascal, I had no real formal training. I learned programming from experience, working with other people, and reading books.

But after 20 years, I still consider myself to be learning.

**What gave you the inspiration to create a genealogy program?**

The inspiration for GRAMPS came from my father. He was researching the family tree, but he was having considerable trouble with Windows and the genealogy program he had been using. He wasn't able to convert to Linux until he had a working genealogy program. So, figuring it would be easier to write a genealogy program than to try to fix Windows, I started working on a program. After I had something that was basically working, he convinced me to release it.

**How long did it take you to create the first stable version of GRAMPS?**

Well, a lot depends on what you mean by "stable". It took almost three years to release the 1.0 version, but people were using it very successfully for a long time before that. The first release, version 0.0.1, took about two months to put together.

**What advantages does GRAMPS have over other genealogy software?**

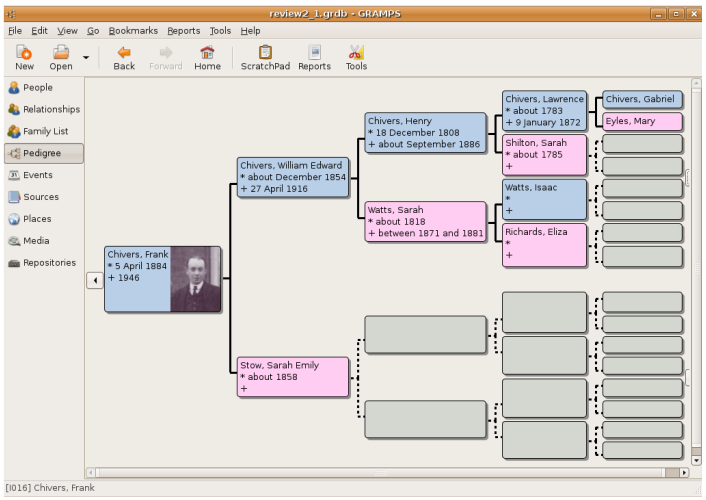
In the true Free Software style, GRAMPS makes sure that you own your data. Most programs lock your data into their own,

proprietary format. At this point, you are at the mercy of the program for access to your data.

While most genealogy programs can export GEDCOM, they usually do a poor job of export. This is due to GEDCOM being an inadequate format, and programs developing their own, incompatible extentions. Quite often, some of your data is not exported, making it impossible to transfer all of your data to another program.

GRAMPS will export to GEDCOM, but it will also export to an XML file that contains all data in the database. We even provide an XML DTD.

**How would you rate the success of GRAMPS, and where would you like to see it going? Are there any specific changes in GRAMPS you would like to develop?**




A lot depends on your definition of success. GRAMPS is a pretty obscure program compared to Firefox or Evolution. However, if you consider the "target market," GRAMPS is well known in the Linux genealogy community.

But my definition of success would be - "Is the program what you expected it to be?" And I would have to say that GRAMPS has far exceeded any of my expectations. GRAMPS is maturing, and the feature set is settling down. This will allow us to spend less time on database and GUI issues and more time on report generation and data analysis.

**How do you find so much time for a product that obviously gives you great pride, but no financial return?**

Well, I have a very understanding family. My wife has gone back to college, so I need to have something to do while she works on her homework :-)

My ability to work on GRAMPS varies over time, depending on work hours and family time. Usually, when I get too busy, other developers can help take up the slack.

**Each release of GRAMPS has a name taken from lines in the Monty Python show script, was there a particular reason for choosing Monty Python?**

Many on the development team are fans of Monty Python. Since GRAMPS is written in the Python language, it just seemed appropriate. And you have to admit, "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" has to be one of the funniest movies of all time.

**GRAMPS is a powerful database but has been getting more complicated for new users. How do you balance simplicity and useability for new users with the demands of database integrity and functionality for seasoned data handling genealogists?**

We have created a fictional "Aunt Martha" who we use as our target audience. Everyone has an Aunt Martha in their family. She is the computer user who doesn't know a lot about computers, and really doesn't want to know more. She just wants to use a few things on her

computer without having to invest a lot of time.

Every feature that we add goes through the "Aunt Martha Test". We ask ourselves if Aunt Martha could reasonably be expected to understand the feature. If the answer is "no", then we have to ask if the feature should be included, if there is a way to simplify the problem so that she could understand it, or if we could handle the feature in such a way that she would not have to worry about it.

In the GNOME tradition, we try to offer reasonable defaults. Many times this is enough to handle complex issues. For most people, the default operation is just what they want, and they never have to worry about anything beyond that.

**Do you have a preferred Linux Distro to work in?**

All the machines in my house (six at last count) are running Ubuntu. My server runs 6.06 LTS, and the rest are running 7.04. I've been running Ubuntu since the release of 4.10.

**How do you cope with producing so many translations into other formats for other Linux distro's?**

For languages: we have a good team of translators on the project. GRAMPS is a rather difficult program to translate, since it generates text based reports. The translators put in an amazing amount of work to provide translations.

For packaging: the official release out of the GRAMPS project source code, not any particular installation package for any distribution. We have volunteers to package the program for different distributions, such as Ubuntu, Debian, Fedora, SuSE, and even Windows.

**GRAMPS has been ported not only to various Linux distros but to Mac and Windows variants. How do you feel about your program, being expanded for other distros?**

GRAMPS is released under the GPL. This allows people to port it to whatever platform they desire. While I personally have no interest in either Mac or Windows, I see nothing wrong with these ports.

That being said, I have noticed a general difference between Linux users and Windows users. Linux users are more likely to interpret "Free Software" in terms of "Free as in speech." They are more likely to participate in the project and help us improve the program. Windows users are more likely to interpret "Free software" as "Free as in beer," looking for a program that doesn't cost anything. As a result, they do not tend to participate as much.

**Are there many difficulties adapting the system for different cultures and languages, when the family references are different across the world?**

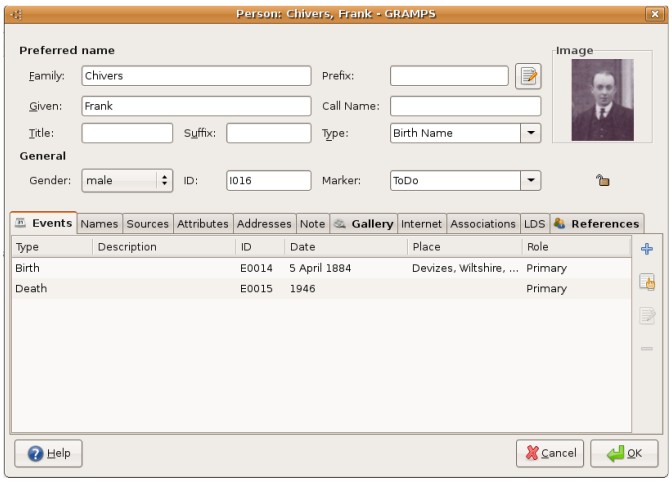
Much of the complexity in developing GRAMPS comes from attempting to handle all the variations around the world. For example, something as simple as a name, is in reality, very complex. In some cultures, a name is displayed in the format of GivenName FamilyName, in others, it is displayed as FamilyName GivenName. Some cultures use patronymic names, other don't. To properly handle names, we had to develop a highly flexible system which allows users to customize how they want to display names.

In other cases, we've had to develop specialized code for different locales. An example of this would be the Relationship Calculator. In many English speaking

areas, there is a fine granularity of relationships between cousins. You will find terminology such as "second cousin once removed". Other cultures do not make that distiction, but will instead differentiate between a male and a female cousin.

**How do you manage a team of developers, across the world to produce a cohesion in developing a single product?**

Our IRC channel (#gramps on irc.freenode.net) has been key in communication between developers and users. While differing timezones can make the IRC channel a bit difficult at times, it offers many benefits. Not only are we able to get good discussions going on in real time, we also have a chance to get to know each other. Once you get to know each other, it becomes much easier to work together.




An important thing for any project is to make sure that you put aside your ego, and work towards a concensus. Usually, a bit of discussion and a bit of compromise produces a better idea in the end.

**How difficult is it working with other formats such as GEDCOM and other genealogical programs when conversion into GRAMPS is requested?**

The closest thing to a standard format in genealogy is GEDCOM. But as an interchange format, it is very poor. The format was designed by the LDS Church to handle the needs of the LDS Church. However, there are quite a few things that GEDCOM cannot handle.

Most commercial systems have closed formats. We do not try to reverse engineer these formats. There are quite a few programs out there with quite a few different formats. It is not practical to try to handle each revision of each proprietary format.

We would prefer a standard genealogy format the resolves the deficiencies of GEDCOM. Unfortunately, this does not exist. In the past, we tried to get other projects interested in working towards a common interchange format, but we found little interest.

**You have spent a significant proportion of your time developing GRAMPS, which is licensed under GPL. Do you ever feel your code, even if used within the licence, could be developed and promoted by another team, calling it a new name and taking the spotlight away?**

I'm not concerned about this at all. If someone else could take the code and improve it, while adhering to the GPL, then more power to them. This only benefits the user. After all, this is what Free Software is all about.

This would not be unlike the Debian/Ubuntu relationship or the Ubuntu/Linspire relationship.

**Do you have a strategy to recruit more developers?**

Even though we need additional help, I don't actively recruit developers. Several years ago, we attempted a bounty

program, with no success. This has led me to believe that a person has to be self-motivated to be a valuable contributor to a project.

**On the system as a whole, the program developers and community, what would you say your strengths and weaknesses are?**

I would say that our strengths are a good code architecture and a good community.

Our biggest weakness is a lack of developers. GRAMPS is a complicated program, and requires a lot of support. Quite frequently, the support demands are overwhelming.

**Much talk has been made about the strength of the Ubuntu/Linux desktop now, especially compared with the commercial Windows Vista. Do your family use Linux or is it hard to promote it in a currently Windows dominated environment?**

I have used Linux exclusively for about seven or eight years now. My wife and son both run Linux, reverting to Windows only for specific programs (AutoCad and iTunes).

Linux would be easier to promote to your average Windows user if a wider range of programs were offered. Linux has more than its share of music players, IRC programs, and RSS aggregators. But these aren't the programs that appeal to your average Aunt Martha, and until Linux develops a wider range of software, it is going to have a limited appeal.

If you walk into a store that sells software to the masses, you can get an idea of the kind of software that Linux is missing. About a third of the software consists of games. Another third consists of virus checkers, firewalls, anti-spyware, and other system utilities. The remaining third is the interesting set. This category consists of genealogy programs, greeting card programs, recipe programs, landscape and home design programs, and similar programs. And regardless of what you think of these stores, they do know their customer base and what that customer base desires.

Part of the reason that GRAMPS was created was to help fill this void. My personal opinion is that if Linux wants to attract a wider base of users it needs to widen the types of programs that it offers.

**What programs and development systems do you use to produce GRAMPS?**

GRAMPS is built using Python, PyGTK, and Glade. As far as development, about the only tool I use is Emacs.

**And finally, what advice would you give to a budding programmer?**

Make sure you are programming because you enjoy programming. Be willing to put aside your ego, and listen to others. Not only will you learn more, you will also discover that the ideas of others can really improve your project.

***Many thanks to Don for taking the time to sit under the spotlight and be grilled!***

Next months interviewee will be none other than Colin Watson, Installer Team Leader, Ubuntu Community Council Member and Line Manager for half the distro team!

Please email your questions for Colin to: questions@fullcirclemagazine.org

# MY STORY

# SIX MONTHS ON PURE LINUX

Written by Matt Hoy

Today, Thursday 22nd Feb, 2007 marks six months from the day I formatted my hard drive, and left myself with pure linux. It was a GRUB error that started it all on 22nd Sept, 2006.

I had a Windows XP and Ubuntu Dapper Drake (6.06 LTS) dual boot system, pretty simplistic. The majority of my hard drive was given to XP, as I'd only been using Linux for around a month. Anyway, you can read in full what happened here, but basically some simple fiddling around as root left me in a position that, as I know today was very, very easy to fix. But, of course being new to Linux I played around futher, destroyed my XP partition and decided to format. Upon cleaning my hard drive, Ubuntu became my Primary Operating System and to this day, I haven't looked back.

The distribution I've been using for the best part of these past six months is Ubuntu, "Linux for human beings". I started back then with Ubuntu 6.06, Dapper Drake and have since upgraded to 6.10 Edgy Eft. Ubuntu is based on Debian, and is available to use with GNOME (Ubuntu), KDE (Kubuntu) and XfCE (Xubuntu). I use GNOME because I like the minimalism and looks of GNOME, and prefer it's layout to KDE. Both KDE and XfCE are also available on my system (presented with a menu at log in) but I choose not to use them. I'd recommend Ubuntu to anyone looking to try out Linux. It's completley free, unlike some other popular distributions, and has a great user base willing to support you, as well as premium support available from professionals if required. To find out more on Ubuntu, head to the Ubuntu page at MBHoy.com, or Ubuntu.com.

I've got all my hardware working, printer, webcam, phone, PocketPC, iPod, etc, which is quite an acheivement as hardware support is usually the one thing that keeps people from converting completley to Linux. iPod support was easy. I just compiled the latest version of libgpod, and installed amaroK 1.4.5 over that. To get the printer working, I had to swap printers with someone, I'm afraid to say. Lexmark is too stingy to develop Linux drivers for their all-in-one (printer, scanner, fax) range, so I had to swap for a standard Z601, which is printer only. Phone support was probably the easiest and involved syncing via bluetooth, whereas PocketPC is a very hit and miss device that few people have managed to get working, with it being Windows Mobile based. Basically I just tricked sync into thinking my Dell Axim X3 was some form of iPaq, and compiled numerous drivers and pieces of software relevant to that. The result was plugging it in and having one click sync with PocketPC, brilliant.

Some pieces of software I'm liking at the moment are amaroK, Kopete, Firefox, Thunderbird, Vive, gFTP, VMWare, Multisync and many, many more. amaroK is, quite frankly, the best piece of software that has ever graced my screen. It's worth convertng to Linux for amaroK alone, it really is a truly awesome media player, can't fault it. It also lets me put things on my iPod, so it's used constantly for playing, purchasing and iPodding my music. Kopete is MSN Messenger for

KDE. It has some nice effects and lets me chat to my friends, nice. Firefox and Thunderbird are pure essentials, so much so that they come installed in Ubuntu. Vive has been mentioned before here, it's the single fastest DVD ripper I've ever seen, love it. gFTP lets me put files on the MBHoy.com server, VMWare lets me run other operating systems inside my Ubuntu desktop and Multisync syncs with my PocketPC. Brilliant line up, some worth trying out if you're a linux user, or looking into if you're thinking of converting.

In conclusion, I'd say my time with Linux has been both rewarding and exciting. I've learned many new skills and become a part of what is easily one of the most friendliest and largest community based projects worldwide. Before converting I had my worries, partly why I kept my XP partition for the first month. Dipping my toe into Linux wasn't enough, I didn't have the mind set or the motive to get things working, but once it was my only option and I was forced to make these things work, I realised just how interesting and fun it was not only to research and get these things working myself, but to see the results and share them within a community. Of course, my amazing set up that is dual monitor (17inch monitor on desk, 26inch monitor mounted on wall to the right), 2.1 Creative Labs speaker system, iPod, Bluetooth Phone, PocketPC, Wireless Keyboard/Mouse and so much more wouldn't all be here today if it wasn't for the wealth of Linux information and happy, helpful people on the internet, which has helped me so much with my six month journey. (Most of which, I have to say was at Ubuntuforums, a site you simply can't afford not to visit as a aspiring Ubuntu user, or even a full-time linux genius).

Try it out today, Linux is free and me and thousands of others are here to help you with anything you need. I highly reccomend it, my journey so far has been a brilliant one, and I know it's only just begun.

**Ubuntu 7.04**

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**Ubuntu is a community developed operating system that is perfect for laptops, desktops and servers. Whether you use it at home, at school or at work Ubuntu contains all the applications you'll ever need, from word processing and email applications, to web server software and programming tools.**

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# UBUNTU YOUTH

Written by **Samuel Barrett**

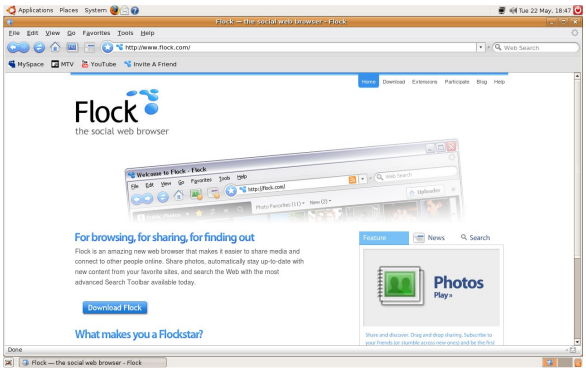
The future of Open Source is in the Young People of today, that's why this corner of the magazine is for young people or simply those who are young at heart.

## OK, I've installed Ubuntu, but now what?

You have installed Ubuntu, your sitting there admiring your talent of actually getting it to work nicely on your machine, then you suddenly realise that you haven't got your favourite program or the programs installed are a bit dull. Well all that is about to change! In this month's article we are going to be covering the most exciting and fun programs available to linux.

### Flock

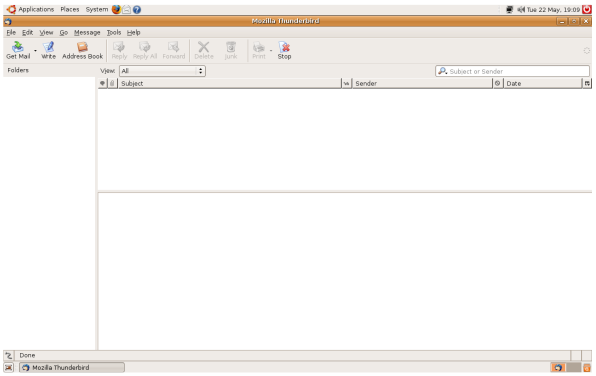
Flock is a social wb 2.0 browser offering the ability to easily share photos, stay up to date with your favourite sites and search the web with its powerful inbuilt search tool. Based on Mozilla Firefox, Flock is sure to please!




Flock is available from: http://www.getdeb.net/app.php?name=Flock

### Thunderbird

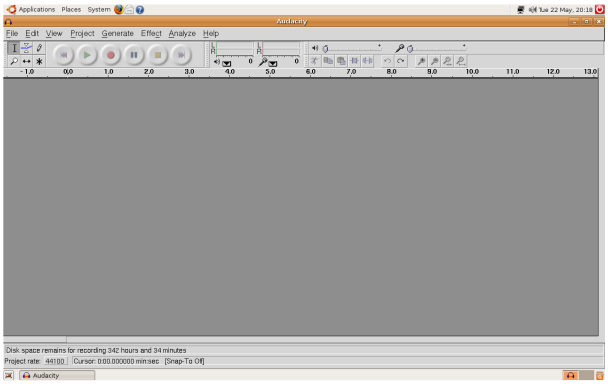
Webmail is taking the world by storm, but wouldn't it be nice if you could check all your email accounts in one place? With Mozilla Thunderbird you can! Thunderbird is another revolutionary application from Mozilla allowing you to fetch and store your emails in one simple and easy to reach location.



Mozilla Thunderbird is available from: Synaptic/Apt-Get

### Audacity

Audacity is a free audio recorder and editor that allows you to record live audio, create and edit your own podcasts and create multi-track recordings.

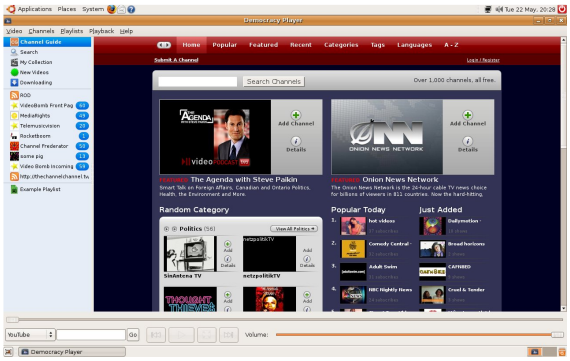


Audacity is available from: Synaptic/Apt-Get

### Democracy Player

Democracy is a video player with a difference. Democracy offers the ability to

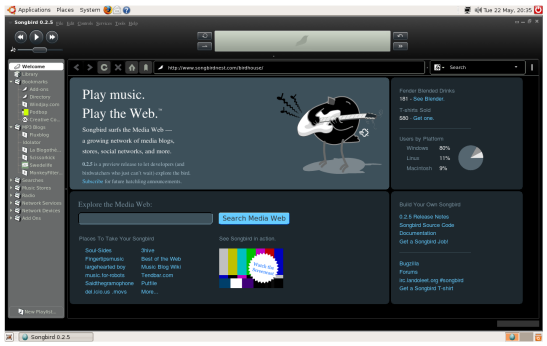
subscribe to Internet shows via RSS feed, search YouTube, Google Video and Yahoo! Video and easily download BitTorrent files with the ability to watch them in the same application.



Democracy Player is available from: Synaptic/Apt-Get

### Songbird

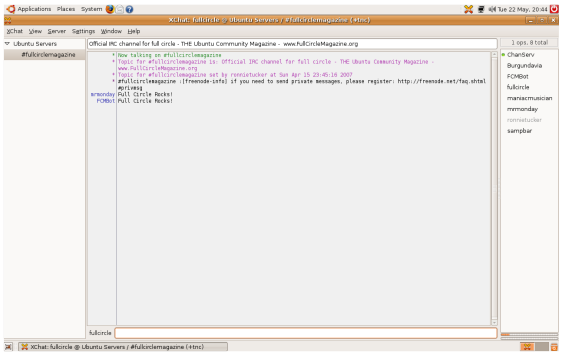
Songbird is a digital jukebox and web browser mash-up. Songbird allows you to subscribe to your favourite podcasts/radio shows, browse the web listing all playable audio files on the page and organise and scan your computer for audio files.




Songbird is available from: http://www.getdeb.net/app.php?name=Songbird

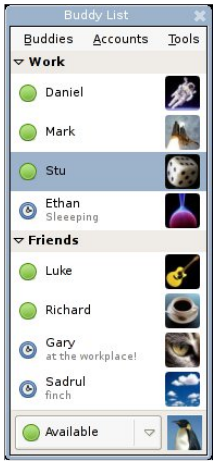
### XChat

XChat is an IRC (Internet Relay Chat) client for Linux. XChat allows you to join multiple IRC chat rooms and servers, talk publicly and privately and most importantly, allows you to join us at #fullcirclemagazine and #ubuntu-youth on irc.freenode.net



XChat is available from: Synaptic/Apt-Get

### Pidgin

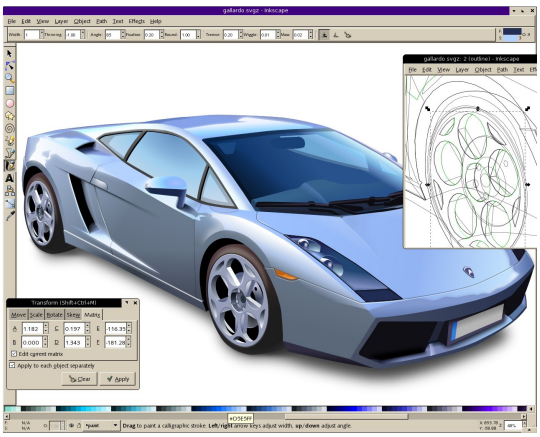



Pidgin is a instant messaging client for Linux which allows you to connect AIM, ICQ, Jabber/XMPP, MSN Messenger, Yahoo!, Bonjour, Gadu-Gadu, IRC, Novell GroupWise Messenger, QQ, Lotus Sametime, SILC, SIMPLE, and Zephyr. Pidgin has the ability to login to several accounts at once, transfer files, send nudges and change your buddy icon.

Pidgin is available from: http://www.getdeb.net/app.php?name=Pidgin

### Inkscape

Inkscape is a open source vector graphics editor similar to Adobe Illustrator. With its simple-to-use interface, Inkscape is sure to show the creative side of you.



Inkscape is available from: Synaptic/Apt-Get

# LETTERS

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

Thanks very much to you and everyone who contributed to this project. I haven't finished reading it yet, but the content I have seen so far is of excellent quality and I'm very pleased to see it coming together.

**Matt Zimmerman**

I am a fairly new Linux user and I would like to thank you for putting out this magazine. I know it probably takes a lot of hard work and I appreciate it. I like how you have something for everyone, the noobs and the more advanced users. Please continue to create this wonderful magazine.

**FaDe 420**

I very much enjoyed reading Full Circle Magazine Issue #1.

However, I would like to be able to print it out so I can read it, so I think any links you put in articles should also have the url printed as well, not just a "find it here" link title. Thank you, and I look forward to future issues!

**Mack Richards**

Editor: *We'll do our best to try and include full URL's where possible, but sometimes the long URL's either take up too much space or would be a nightmare to have you type in! But we'll keep it in mind!*

Great job on the magazine. I'm not currently a Linux user, but hope to be soon. I found the magazine to have a great mix of articles, and it wasn't way over my head, like so much Linux stuff I've read.

Wonderful premiere issue. I'm looking forward to future issues.

**Lee Schwabe**

I just read you #1 issue and I loved every bit of it. Really informative, nice looking, complete and interesting, I'll definitly be a regular reader.

I use GNU/Linux (Ubuntu from day 1) for about a year now, and I use it as my primary OS since about 2 months. Your magazine is like candy to me.

Keep on the good work, you're doing all this for a good reason.

**John from Montreal, PQ**

This magazine is absolutely incredible. I stumbled onto this while browsing the web and was highly intrigued by it as I am a relatively new Kubuntu user (Dapper Drake was my first distro). The howtos are nice and very informative. Please keep up the good work.

**Garry Butler**

After using Ubuntu for a few months I'm amazed at how much I accepted as normal operating procedure under Windows. Now, when I use Windows at work I have no patience for the constant slow downs, crashes, blue screens, and fatal errors that is the norm for Windows.

Thanks again and keep up the good work.

**Steve Goodman**

Editor: *Those are just a few of the emails we received after the release of issue #0. Myself and all those involved want to thank you all for the good wishes and articles you've been sending in. Keep those articles and stories coming!*

I want to tell you about something that could be interesting for a future article: feisty fawn is not compatible with nvidia G80 cards (8800 gts and gtx). If you looking for internet you will see that a lot of people install the property and repository drivers and only get a black screen. It would be nice if you analyze the problem and talk about in your magazine.

**Diego Giao**

Editor: *Anyone else out there having G80 problems? Remember: you can use LaunchPad to file bug reports. Be sure to submit your bug reports because if no-one knows about your bug, it'll certainly never get fixed!*

I just wanted to compliment you on the magazine. I found it to be very well thought out and executed. I didn't know about Gramps and am planning on working on a family tree project. I am glad I read the magazine to learn about this program.

**Michael Naughton**

Editor: *Thank you Michael. I'm sure you'll find GRAMPS to be exactly what your looking for. I've used it in the past for part of my own family tree, and it was a joy to use. Check this issue for our exclusive interview with Don, the lead developer of the GRAMPS software.*

It was a pleasure reading the first issue of full circle, but I would like to comment on the 'top 5 linux games' article ... I've tried most of linux games and have never found a game that is better than Tremulous (www.tremulous.net) and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tremulous for more info.

**Verb**

Editor: *Thanks Verb. Tremulous does indeed look pretty special and very polished. We'll get someone from the team on the case to give it a test run and hopefully review it in a future issue. Better still; anyone out there want to write an in-depth review of Tremulous?*

Above: Tremulous in all its 3D glory!

# Q&A

Written by **Robert Clipsham**

If you have an **Ubuntu** related question which needs answering, email it to us here at questions@fullcirclemagazine.org, and we'll pass them on to Robert for answering in a future issue. **Please include as much information as you can about your problem.**

**Is it possible for me to change my username and password I use to log into Ubuntu? Can I do this without creating a new account?**

You can change all your log-in details simply by going to System > Administration > Users and Groups and selecting your name. You can change everything to do with your account there. In Kubuntu go to the K Menu > System Settings > User Management > Administrator mode, select your user and go to modify.

http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?p=2845188

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**Several of my 3D applications run very slow, and I don't know if OpenGL is installed. There doesn't appear to be a package called opengl in Synaptic. Any ideas which packages install /maintain OpenGL?**

OpenGL support is included with the 3D graphics card drivers for your graphics card. If you have an ATI or nVidia card, you can find the drivers in the restricted drivers manager (System > Administration > Restricted Drivers Manager).

http://www.opengl.org/

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**Ubuntu seems to have a cool enough clean look to it, but is there a way to customize it to look as/more visually attractive as/than Vista?**

Compiz is pre-installed on Ubuntu, just go to System>Preferences>Desktop effects, then click enable. If you want a more customisable look, you can use beryl (www.beryl-project.org) and use themes from www.gnome-look.org or www.kde-look.org.

http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=439230

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How do I install Ubuntu Studio?

Go to Applications> Add/Remove... Then search for ubuntu studio. Install it like you would any other program.

http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=439717

# MY DESKTOP

Written by **Rob Kerfia**

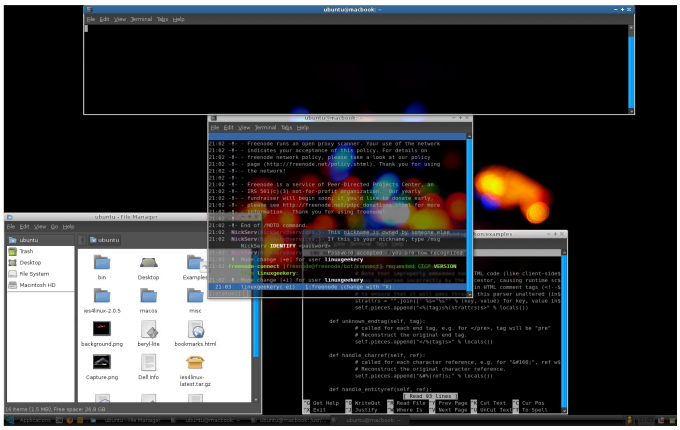
This is your chance to show the world your fancy desktop or PC. Please email your screenshots and photos to: misc@fullcirclemagazine.org. Please include a brief paragraph of text about your desktop, your PC's specifications or any other interesting tidbits about your desktop or PC.

Well, this is my desktop. It's where most of the work on the Full Circle Magazine website happens. I'm running Ubuntu 7.04 (with a patched kernel).

The desktop is just Beryl with the XFCE 4 Panel -- no GNOME, no KDE.

It's quite fast and lightweight. The theme is Ubuntu Studio (you can get it from their repositories. There are instructions at ubuntustudio.org). The Emerald theme is Sky.

All of this is running on a 17 inch MacBook Pro with a 2.33GHz Intel Core 2 Duo, 2 GB RAM and a 256MB ATI Mobility Radeon X1600.



# MY PC

Written by **Daniel Cohen**

***AMD Athlon 2800+ 1.84 GHz, nVidia GeForce 5200 FX, 2GB DDR RAM, DVD-RW, Logitech X-230 2.1 Speakers Saitek Gamer's Keyboard, Optical Mouse 3000, Wacom Volito 2, hda1 = 120gb, hdb1 = 80gb, hdc1 = 250gb.***

Customisations include: Fan controller, 4 UV fans, 3 (1 dud) UV striplights (2 blue, 1 purple), harddrive coolers and monitors.

When I got it, it was a low-end PC which really wasn't - and still isn't - great at playing games. But what makes it special to me is that it was the first computer that I built myself, around 3 years ago. When you build your own PC there are all the problems, like the fan not fitting next to the whopper graphics card, but in the end it is much more satisfactory, not to mention cheaper! I guess I like comparing it to Dell's and appreciating how much nicer a custom built PC looks with all the glowing and the shinyness.

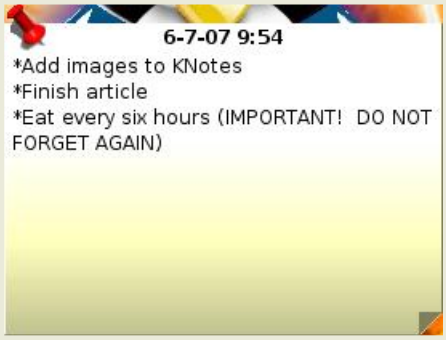
It's currently quad-booting (yes quad-booting) Windows XP, Ubuntu 7.04, Fedora 7 and Windows Vista (which I won in a competition, otherwise it wouldn't be on there). I use windows for any games that don't run in wine, but apart from that it's Linux all the way. Luckily all parts of my PC work in Ubuntu and Fedora just fine.

# TOP 5 WIDGETS / APPLETS

Written by **Andrew Min**

Each month, Andrew will bring you a **Top5** list of obscure games, applications or whatever else that he can scratch from the depths of the Internet! If you have ideas for lists, please email them to us here at: misc@fullcirclemagazine.org and we'll pass your ideas on to Andrew.

## KNotes




Homepage: http://pim.kde.org/components/knotes.php

One of the best ways to get things done is to use sticky notes. My biggest problem with them is that I'm always at the computer, so I don't see them. That's why I use KNotes, a virtual sticky notes program for GNU/Linux users. Just type Alt-Shift-N to create a new note (or right-click on the KNotes icon and click "New Note"). You can set alarms, send notes to other computers (if they use KNotes as well), email notes, print notes, save notes to text files, change the colors and fonts, hide notes, keep them above or below all windows, create notes from the clipboard (Alt-Shift-C), search notes, and much more. As an added bonus, it will show up in Kontact (the KDE PIM suite) under the Notes section.

If you use Kubuntu, KNotes is pre-installed. All other Ubuntu users can install the knotes package from the repositories .

## SideCandy Network

Homepage: http://www.gdesklets.org/

SideCandy Network has a simple job, and it does it well. All it does is report information on your Internet connection. It will show your device (which you can change in the configuration), your IP address, and the upload and download speeds. Everything that you need to know about your Internet is packed into a tiny widget that takes up virtually no space. It's one of those little tools that is forgettable but invaluable.

To install SideCandy Network, you'll need gDesklets (a GNOME widget engine) installed (the gDesklets package in the Ubuntu universe repository). Open gDesklets, navigate to the System/Net section, and double-click on SideCandy Network.

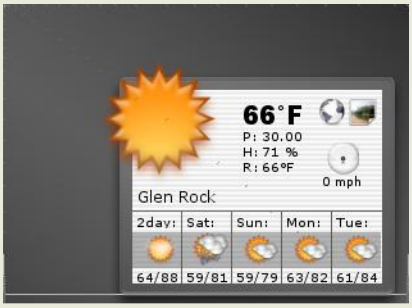
## Quote of the Day

Homepage: http://www.gdesklets.org/?q=desklet/view/181

Quote of the Day pulls quotes from multiple sources and displays them in a widget on your desktop. It supports backgrounds, resizing, and does its job well. Now you can quote sayings by everyone from Confucious (“Ignorance is the night of the mind, but a night without moon and star”) to Juan Ramón Jiménez (“If they give you ruled paper, write the other way”).

Quote of the Day is another gDesklets widget. However, unlike SideCandy Network, Quote of the Day isn't installed with gDesklets. You need to download the Quote of the Day archive from its site. Then, open gDesklets, click File > Install Package... browse to the archive you downloaded, then double click on Quote of the Day.

## liquid weather++




Homepage: http://liquidweather.net/

Weather reporting is one of the most popular uses for widgets. Liquid weather ++ (aka lwp) does a fine job of reporting the weather from three weather forecasting services (Weather.com, Accuweather, and the BBC). But more than just give the current weather conditions, it will also generate a five day weather report, show wind speed and direction, visibility, UV, earthquakes, webcams, email or print current conditions and/or 5 day forecast (ReportLab required), give reports on multiple cities and supports skinning.

To install liquid weather++, you need SuperKaramba (a widget engine for KDE users, available in Ubuntu universe repository). You'll also need to have ImageMagick (imagemagick in the Ubuntu repositories) and PyQt installed. Once all the requirements are met, download the .skz file from the lwp site and double click it (or open SuperKaramba, click Open Local Theme, and choose the file you downloaded).

## BuildAMon

Homepage: http://kde-look.org/content/show.php/BuildAMon+-Build+Your+Own+System+Monitor?content=53736

No widget article is complete without mentioning a system monitor (a monitor that reports CPU usage, memory usage, HDD temperature, and other system information). However, it is virtually impossible to choose which one to use. After all, some people think that certain resources are more important than others (I personally like to know how much RAM I have free, while others might be more interested in a hard drive usage monitor). That's why I love BuildAMon. Instead of offering just one widget, it provides you with tons of sensors, gauges, and graphs, and lets you customize it according to your needs (there is a bunch of useful comments in the code, so even people who don't know how to program will feel at home). It features sensors for system information (username, hostname, kernel, uptime, etc), CPU usage, CPU (and GPU) temperature, HDD temperature, fan speed, memory usage, disk usage, Wlan signal level, gateway text, hard disk SMART info, reports on the users logged in, has network graphs, and much more.

To run BuildAMon, you'll need SuperKaramba. Then, download and extract the BuildAMon tar.gz, open one of the example .themes, and start editing. To run your creation, double click on the .theme file (or open SuperKaramba, click Open Local Theme, and choose the .theme).

# HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

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**Meetings**

Contributors meetings : Saturday 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th July @ 1600 UTC

General meeting (all welcome) : Saturday 14th July @ 1700 UTC

Meetings take place in the IRC channel **#fullcirclemagazine**, which is on the irc.freenode.**net** server. Or you can use our webIRC page which will allow you to interact with the IRC channel from within your web browser.

**Deadline for Issue #3 is Sunday 15th July.**

**Projected release date for issue #3 is Friday 27th July.**