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MUUGlines2000

The Manitoba Post-Apocalypse Survivor and Unix User's Newsletter

January 11, 2000: Amanda Saves The Day

OK, so you've got a huge network of workstations, each with disks to backup (assuming Y2K didn't wipe them all out), and only one server with a tape drive. What can coordinate all of that? How do you schedule all the backups, so everything gets backed up frequently enough? Are there enough hours in the day? Relax! Let Amanda save the day (and your data) for you.

Amanda (the Advanced Maryland Automatic Network Disk Archiver) is not only one of the world's most contrived acronyms, it's also a very powerful, flexible, and (best of all) free piece of software which implements a client/server architecture for backing up your networked UNIX systems. In this presentation, Gilbert Detillieux will describe Amanda's features and architecture, share some of his experiences with setting it up in a production environment, and (if possible) demonstrate it in operation.

As always, we're open to suggestions for meeting programmes, not to mention presenters! Feel free to convince someone you know to give a talk at on of our meetings, and be sure to mention that it's very informal. We're not expecting professional public speakers here. Contact any of the board at board@muug.mb.ca or in person at our meeting if you have an idea!

We will also have a round-table discussion, in which anyone can raise questions regarding their experiences (or lack thereof) with all things Unix. We realize that it can be a little intimidating, but please be assured that no question is too easy (or "dumb")!

Please note **our meeting is back at the IBM offices** in the TD Centre building at Portage and Main. Meet in the lobby before 7:30 P.M. to be escorted up to the meeting room.

Parking is available either in the parkade behind the TD building, off Albert Street or in the ground level lot just north of the TD building. Entrance to the lot is from Albert Street, behind the parkade. Parking is a $1.25 flat rate for the evening. You must purchase your ticket from a dispenser, so make sure you've got exact change – a loonie and a quarter, or 5 quarters.

Magazine Competition Starts

After an enormously successful September '99 newsstand debut, Maximum Linux magazine, part of Imagine Media's Computing Division, is all systems go for an April 2000 launch.

Barnes & Noble, one of the nation's largest retail chains for periodicals, reports that the September '99 newsstand issue of Maximum Linux had an 85% sell-through rate. In addition, Walden Books had a 92% sell-through rate.

Maximum Linux is the ultimate resource for everything Linux. During 2000, Maximum Linux will be a bimonthly publication; it will appear on newsstands six times during the year. Consistent with Imagine's hands-on editorial style, Maximum Linux will focus on delivering clear, step-by-step information to improve readers' skill level. An editorially driven CD-ROM will be included in each issue and will include full versions of Linux; application demos; shareware and utilities; and upgrades that compliment the magazine's "how-to" features.

"The Linux market is ripe for a magazine like Maximum Linux," said Cheryl England, President of Imagine Media's Computing Division. "Our editors support the platform with unparalleled passion. Because Linux users are so passionate about 'their' OS, it's no surprise that sell-through rates on the newsstand were so high."

"Reader response has been tremendous," stated Bryan Del Rizzo, editor in chief of Maximum Linux magazine. "The general consensus from the more than 1,000 e-mails we received was; 'Finally! An on-target easy-to-read magazine that's packed with powerful, useful, and fun Linux information. When's the next issue?'"

Maximum Linux is just one of three new launches planned for 2000 from Imagine's Computing Division. Two other publications that will surface next year are Digital Foto, and a to-be-named consumer electronics magazine. Also under the auspices of Imagine's Computing Division are the award-winning MacAddict and Maximum PC magazines and their respective on-line network of web sites, The MacDaily Network and the MAXIMUM PC.COM network. Both MacAddict and Maximum PC magazines were nominated by the Western Publishers Association for 1999 Maggie awards.

Any MUUGlines reader who has an opinion on the quality or content of this new magazine is encouraged to send comments to editor@muug.mb.ca!

Linux on Itanium

Will Windows be the only OS on Itanium at launch? No way: The Trillian Project, an industry initiative to port the Linux operating system to Intel's forthcoming IA-64 server and workstation architecture, announced that the four leading Linux distributors — Caldera, Red Hat, SuSE and TurboLinux — have officially joined the initiative.

The goal of the Trillian Project is to have IA-64 Linux available for distribution when the first systems based on the Intel Itanium(TM) processor (formerly code-named Merced) begin shipping — expected in the second half of 2000. Caldera, Red Hat, SuSE and TurboLinux, which combined accounted for 76 percent of 1998 worldwide revenue shipments of the Linux operating system, will make their commercial distributions of Linux operating system available at the Itanium processor launch. The Trillian team plans to release its development efforts to the Open Source community early next year.

"Thanks to the tremendous efforts of the Trillian team members thus far, the kernel for IA-64 Linux is rapidly approaching full functionality," said Sridhar Chilukuri, director of business development for VA Linux Systems. "The major Linux distributors provide additional resources to assist the Trillian Project in reaching its goal of having IA-64 Linux ready for the Itanium processor launch next year."

"As the 'Linux for eBusiness' company, we're excited about the Trillian Project because it augments the eBusiness infrastructure," said Benoy Tamang, vice president of marketing for Caldera Systems. "A Linux-enabled IA-64 architecture will allow our eSP's (electronic Service Providers) to create eBusiness solutions for high-end performance platforms."

"Red Hat sees the Trillian project as a catalyst for the further enterprise adoption of Linux-based OSes in IA-64 server and workstation environments, where the speed, reliability and scalability of open source software is essential," said Paul McNamara, general manager, enterprise business unit, Red Hat. "The Trillian project is another step in Red Hat's collaboration with Intel, which has been based on our commitment to bring Linux-based OSes to the enterprise."

"Our commitment to the kernel development for Itanium(TM) processor enables us to provide the same powerful 'mission critical' support for the new Intel server platform as we do for other platforms," said Dr. Stefan Werden, vice president of SuSE business development. "SuSE's membership in the Trillian Project means that our customers will not only receive a distribution optimally tuned to the performance of Itanium, but will also be able to rely on complete SuSE support services right from the start."

"With our focus on high performance Linux, clustering technologies and internationalization of Linux, we are committed to assisting the Trillian Project to optimize Linux on the IA-64 platform," said Cliff Miller, CEO of TurboLinux. "This exciting new Intel processor architecture will help drive Linux into the enterprise."

The Trillian Project was formed in early 1999 to port the Linux operating system to Intel's IA-64 architecture. The project currently includes Caldera, CERN, Cygnus Solutions, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Intel, Red Hat, SGI, SuSE, TurboLinux and VA Linux Systems, and represents the first major effort by the server and workstation industry to support an Open Source project of this depth and scale. For more information on Project Trillian, visit http://www.linuxia64.org. See http://developer.intel.com/technology/itj/q41999/articles/art_4.htm for comments on porting issues.

Adobe Support for Linux

Here's an item to get a newsletter editor excited: Adobe has made some announcements that suggest the day may not be too far off when this newsletter can be produced entirely without Microsoft products.

With the Linux operating system gaining momentum as a significant platform for helping companies build their Internet infrastructures, Adobe Systems (Nasdaq: ADBE) announced its initial support for Linux(R). Beginning in the first quarter of 2000, Adobe will offer a Linux version of Adobe(R) Acrobat(R) Distiller(R) software. Starting now Adobe customers can download a beta version of Adobe FrameMaker(R) software for Linux from the Adobe.com Web site.

"Adobe monitors its markets closely to keep apprised of customer trends and requirements, and we've seen a growing interest among our customers in the adoption of the Linux operating system," said Bruce Chizen, Adobe's executive vice president of Worldwide Products and Marketing. "As we seize new opportunities to provide solutions that can be easily scaled to take advantage of the Web, we are encouraged that Linux seems to have potential as an alternative platform for our customers."

As Adobe Acrobat software has become the essential tool for document exchange in the enterprise, Adobe customers have requested a server-based solution for high-volume conversion of PostScript files to Adobe PDF. The Adobe Acrobat Distiller Server on Linux, Sun SPARC Solaris and Windows(R) NT(R) will provide users with a flexible, automated mechanism for creating Adobe PDF documents. In addition, a Linux version of the Adobe Acrobat Reader software is already available at no charge from the Adobe.com Web site.

Adobe FrameMaker 5.5.6 is an integrated solution for document creation and publishing. It provides many sophisticated features including, full featured WYSIWYG word processing, sophisticated formatting controls and powerful table designing facilities. Productivity enhancing features, such as template reuse, book building tools, support for cross-references, index and table of contents creation, help users make short work of long documents. Additionally, FrameMaker documents can be output to HTML, XML or Adobe PDF, as well as to print, making it an all-in-one publishing solution.

Adobe Acrobat Distiller Server software for Linux, Sun SPARC Solaris and Windows NT is expected to be available in Q1 2000. The beta version of Adobe FrameMaker for Linux is available now from the Adobe.com Web site: http://www.adobe.com/products/framemaker/fmlinux.html.

Bitstream Interest, Too!

Okay, while we're on the topic of things of interest to newsletter editors, here's something new from Bitstream.

Bitstream Inc. (Nasdaq:BITS) announced that the company is developing a font server for the Linux operating system that can render PostScript Type 1 fonts, in addition to TrueType and other industry standard font formats. More importantly, this development will also provide the first font manager for Linux, which makes font management comparable to what is available on Windows or the Macintosh. Users can install any commercially available fonts, and preview fonts before they are installed. They can also group fonts into catalogs, create, change, or rename font groups, and delete font groups or individual fonts.

This technology will help the Linux platform overcome one of its most significant barriers to acceptance in the corporate desktop and home computer markets. Bitstream's Linux font server succeeds in making fonts on Linux user-friendly, by providing robust and intuitive font management never before available on the operating system.

With a long history of delivering technology that makes fonts easy to use anywhere, Bitstream is uniquely positioned to introduce a font rendering and font management solution for Linux. Built on technology acquired from Gallium Software, Inc. in 1996, this solution will provide Linux developers with an essential font technology for future product considerations.

"We are confident that Linux developers will welcome Bitstream's new font server," said Paul Trevithick, president of Bitstream. "This development will succeed in creating new opportunities for Bitstream in the surging Linux market, and allow Bitstream to play a pivotal role in the success of the Linux operating system, particularly for the desktop platform."

We're hoping this "is developing" comment really means "are about to release", because font servers under X are still too hard to set up and use. In a related announcement, Corel indicated they would be using Bitstream's new font server.

SGI Tech Note

To end on a techy note, SGI has rolled up all its contributions to the Linux kernel with this announcement. Leading the charge to bring enterprise-class capabilities to the Linux(R) operating system, SGI (NYSE: SGI) announced its recent release of several performance technology features to the Open Source Software community. Additionally, SGI(TM) has released tools to enable Linux developers to greatly simplify the process for resolving bugs in enterprise Linux installations.

To facilitate optimizing database performance on enterprise-class Linux systems, recently released SGI technology includes support for database machines with large disk farms and efficient, parallel access to I/O. These features are based upon the company's industry-leading experience and expertise in developing large multiprocessor machines. The key performance-enhancing components are:

Parallelization of the I/O path.
POSIX-compliant Asynchronous I/O Interfaces.
Direct Access to Disks.

SGI has leveraged its considerable experience in developing and supporting multiprocessor UNIX(R) systems to provide a large number of tools to help accelerate the development of Linux and to efficiently diagnose problems at customer sites. These tools include the following:

Linux Kernel Crash Dump
Built-in Kernel Debugger
Kernel GNU Debugger
Performance analysis tools

All of the technology features and development tools, in addition to details on the full release, are readily available by downloading from http://oss.sgi.com/projects/sgilinux11/.

Odds & Ends

The year in review: The Linux Weekly News has put together another summary of the year's events from a Linux perspective. The current version (not yet finalized) can be found at http://lwn.net/1999/features/Timeline/. For comparison, check out where the Linux world was at a year prior to that: follow the links.

The 'preview version' of Opera, a non-free web browser, is available at http://metalab.unc.edu/pub/Linux/apps/www/browsers/. Until recently, Opera (yes, www.opera.com) has only been available for Windows users in search of a lighter-weight, fast web browser. Porting efforts are under way and in various stages for MacOS, BeOS, Linux/Solaris/Unix/X11, Epoc and OS/2. If you know what Epoc is, please tell us at editor@muug.mb.ca.

Dell continues to provide products and support for Linux, without drawing too much attention to it. For many details, see http://www.dell.com/us/en/biz/topics/linux_peripherals.htm. There are also links to white papers, case studies, overviews, a Linux and Year 2000 statement and more.

You might want to show off the fact that you're a geek. If you aren't already aware, there are many geeky wearables (and other items) to be found at http://soberbia.com/ and http://www.thinkgeek.com/. We like the one that says "Bow before me, for I am root". Nothing like a little megalomania to start a new millennium.

We know you were dying to know, so here's how to remove Linux and install Windows 2000, direct from Microsoft: http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q247/8/04.ASP?LNG=ENG&SA= ALLKB. We would like to point out that Microsoft recommends using the Linux version of fdisk to remove the Linux partitions. It seems Microsoft's products are still too primitive to deal with partitions from advanced operating systems.

MUUG Contact Information

To contact the MUUG board for membership information or anything else, send e-mail to board@muug.mb.ca. We have a Web presence as well, at http://www.muug.mb.ca/, where you can find all kinds of information, including details of upcoming and past meetings and presentations and references related to them. We're always interested in article submissions. Submit your articles and ideas to editor@muug.mb.ca.