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MUUGlines

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November 14, 2000: Vulnerability Scanning

Do you want to know what the 'Bad Guys' can find out about your computer? There is no better way to find out what they can see than to use the same tools they use. This month, MUUG member Shawn Wallbridge will cover the basics of Vulnerability Scanning using Nmap, Nessus, Whisker and Hping. With the proliferation of high-speed, always-on Internet connections, security is becoming more of a concern for the average home user.

KDE 2.0 released

The KDE Organisation announced KDE 2.0, code-named Kopernicus, on October 23. Kopernicus includes the core KDE libraries, the core desktop environment, the initial release of the KOffice suite, as well as the over 100 applications from the other standard base KDE packages: Administration, Games, Graphics, Multimedia, Network, Personal Information Management (PIM), Toys and Utilities. Kopernicus is currently available in 15 languages and translations into 20 additional languages will be available in the coming weeks.

Konqueror is KDE 2's next-generation web browser, file manager and document viewer. Widely heralded as a technological breakthrough for the Linux desktop, the standards-compliant Konqueror has a component-based architecture which combines the features and functionality of Internet Explorer®/Netscape Communicator® and Windows Explorer®. Konqueror will support current Internet technologies, including JavaScript, Java®, HTML 4.0, CSS-1 and -2 (Cascading Style Sheets), SSL (Secure Socket Layer for secure communications) and Netscape Communicator® plug-ins (Flash™, RealAudio™, RealVideo™ and more).

KDE pushed in Norway

In other KDE news, it appears that there are other reasons to use non-Microsoft products. Microsoft products are only available in one of the two official Norwegian languages, Bokmål, and the roughly 500,000 speakers of the other, Nynorsk haven't been able to convince Microsoft to translate its products to that language. Since Norwegian law states that schoolchildren's books and equipment must be available in their own language, KDE has the advantage, since it has been translated for both languages.

Microsoft products are available in Icelandic, with only half as many speakers as Nynorsk, but the Icelandic government paid for the translation. An organisation, Norsk Målungdom, is campaigning for a boycott to Microsoft products to encourage them to translate it.

VMS to Linux

Accelr8 Technology Corporation announced the availability of its MIGR8 OpenVMS conversion toolset on Linux, the increasingly popular low-cost alternative to other more expensive operating platforms.

Accelr8 has sold and delivered its first release of its Linux migration tools to Lordacs Software, Inc., a provider of job cost accounting and inventory control software applications sold to the electrical, plumbing and HVAC contracting industry.

Don B. Mohler, President of Lordacs, described his market as a "One billion dollar opportunity where old business processes are in dire need of modernization to new economy strategies that feature web access of data as well as real time billing and inventory updates from remote locations."

Mohler went on to describe the desirability of running his applications on Linux because of lower licensing and maintenance costs and the trend towards COTS (commercial off-the-shelf) software packages being developed for the Linux operating environment.

While Accelr8 has witnessed a trend towards Linux by many customers, it is only recently that hardware vendors such as IBM and Compaq have started marketing lower cost platforms that feature the Linux operating option.

Thomas Geimer, CEO of Accelr8, noted that the increasing preference by corporations to implement the operating system has encouraged Accelr8 to devote part of its development budget to providing migration solutions to Linux. "We see Linux as a growing operating system choice by large IT environments as they try to reduce the Total Cost of Ownership," Geimer stated.

Mohler pointed out that his original 4 million lines of source code could not be rewritten soon enough to meet market demand so he engaged Accelr8's expertise in migration as a cost-effective "time to market" strategy. The improvement in performance was dramatic according to Mohler, "A 400-person payroll program that took 4.5 hours to run before Accelr8's conversion to Linux now runs in under 27 minutes!" That will make quite an impression to the end users according to Mohler.

Accelr8 expects other business sectors such as consumer products distributors, automobile dealers and any business with multiple locations or field personnel to see the advantages of this low cost, high speed method of keeping track of costs and inventory on a real time basis.

Accelr8 Technology, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, offers a full suite of systems modernization solutions, including migration tools, training, and software integration services. Contact Accelr8 at www.accelr8.com or Lordacs at www.lordacs.com. Source: Accelr8 Technology Corporation.

Jabber Hits 50

Jabber.com, Inc., a subsidiary of Webb Interactive Services, Inc., announced that the Jabber Open Source Project has surpassed 50 active sub-projects, all focused on extending functionality of the Jabber real-time XML instant messaging platform. The accelerated growth is attributed to increased interest in Jabber within the open source development community, along with an increase in the number of companies who view Jabber as the most flexible and forward looking platform upon which they can deploy instant messaging applications and services.

Of the over 50 active projects, at least 17 have offerings available today, ranging from Jabber clients which combine features of Napster for file-sharing to clients specifically designed for use within highly important projects such as Netscape's Mozilla browser.

"The current list of active projects is just the tip of the iceberg," stated Michael Bauer, vice president of Open Alliances at Jabber.com, Inc. "We know of many more projects which are not yet public and are being developed internally. The viral power of an open source project is clearly being demonstrated."

Highlights of sub-projects being developed as open source include integration with Palm, a Java client and an HTTP client. Other projects under commercial development include Jabber.com's integration of the Jabber server with Sun's Java™ 2 Platform Enterprise Edition (J2EE™) and Sun's iPlanet™ LDAP directory server. Many of these projects add significant value to businesses that plan to use Jabber for extending real-time messaging applications throughout their corporation.

"We see a continued base of momentum in Jabber both as a platform and as a solution to enterprise demands for an instant messaging system. The growing number of these open source projects enhances the value of all Jabber development activities, particularly the value of our commercial offerings in enterprise servers, hosted solutions, professional services and support agreements," said Andre Durand, founder and general manager of Jabber.com, Inc. "Momentum with new applications are one of the fundamental drivers of increased demand for our commercial products and services."

"It's astonishing at how many people are really digging into the platform and beginning to use it in ways which I never imagined. I think some of the most powerful technologies are at their core, quite simple. Jabber is no exception," said Jeremie Miller, founder of the Jabber Open Source Project. "It's exciting to hear of new projects and companies that are finding the platform straightforward, easy-to-use and manipulate. XML is a great language for developers because it provides them with a lot of flexibility."

A partial listing of the projects mentioned in this release are available at www.jabber.org and at www.jabbercentral.com.

Jabber.com, Inc., a subsidiary of Webb Interactive Services, is the premiere provider of commercial enterprise Jabber solutions, products and services. Jabber is the only open source instant messaging (IM) platform which leverages XML and a distributed architecture designed to extend and bridge IM applications while providing a foundation for any application requiring real-time messaging. Jabber's web site can be found at www.jabber.com.

Test Drive IA64 Today

Compaq Computer Corporation is the world's first platform vendor to offer the information technology community the opportunity to try out the emerging Intel Itanium 64-bit processor technology via Compaq's ground-breaking New Technologies Test Drive program.

Compaq New Technologies Test Drive is a year-old program that allows visitors worldwide to sample Compaq's industry-leading Alpha and ProLiant server technology on-line for free. Further, member companies of the Compaq Solutions Alliance (www.compaq.com/csa) can securely access behind a firewall Compaq's IA64 ProLiant Server and other Compaq systems, for in-depth testing of legacy code and development work. The popular Test Drive website (http://www.testdrive.compaq.com) has generated more than four million hits as visitors have tried out more than 40,000 "test drives" of Compaq and partner products.

"This is the only Web site where developers can, without charge, access an IA64 system running Linux," said Matti Virtanen, Compaq Vice President for Worldwide Distribution Channels. "We will also continue to add value for our CSA members by incorporating additional operating systems, allowing them to work securely on the IA64 behind a firewall and giving them a competitive advantage with this new platform."

New BIND 9

The Internet Software Consortium (ISC) has announced the release of BIND 9, written by Nominum, Inc. under an ISC outsourcing contract. BIND, an acronym for Berkeley Internet Name Domain, is the most commonly used domain name server on the Internet and implements the Domain Name System (DNS) suite of protocols. DNS enables virtually all internetworking applications such as e-mail, web browsers and file transfers.

Available as Open Source from the Internet Software Consortium, BIND 9 is the world's first DNS implementation to fully support IPv6 and the DNS security enhancements specified by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) standards body in RFC 2535. Russ Mundy, Manager of Network Security Research for NAI Labs, affirms the importance of BIND 9's security features, "As a leading provider of security solutions, Network Associates is pleased to have contributed to the security-related design and development of BIND 9. The improved security and performance capabilities of BIND 9 help to secure the name system for the Internet. Our researchers at NAI Labs continue to work with the ISC, the Internet Engineering Task Force and key network operators to help bring long-needed security to critical elements of the DNS."

Based on a multiprocessor scalable, multithreaded architecture, BIND 9 is a complete rewrite of BIND, which was originally written in 1983 at the University of California at Berkeley. This latest release features modularized code for security auditability, use of "programming by contract" development paradigm for internal consistency checking and much greater RFC conformance while maintaining a large degree of backwards compatibility with earlier versions of BIND.

David R. Conrad, Executive Director of the Internet Software Consortium, commends the enhancements of the much-anticipated BIND 9 release: “I want to thank all the members of the Open Source community who contributed to this important effort. The newest implementation of BIND has been completely re-architected, with clean interfaces between internal modules and a streamlined architecture that is light-years ahead of previous versions. Nominum’s development team took the time to build BIND 9 from the bottom up, and their hard work has really paid off, resulting in extraordinary speed, scalability and security”.

Nominum President and CEO Will Thomas is very pleased with results of the development effort. “BIND version 9 is a major rewrite of the underlying BIND architecture, resulting in significant improvements that are certain to have positive global impact on the Internet’s Domain Name System. BIND 9 is the first Open Source Domain Name Server to provide full IPv6 support as well as incorporating significant security enhancements. Enterprise customers, ISPs, e-commerce businesses and the telecommunications industry are sure to benefit from the advanced capabilities of the software. Our experts at Nominum are here to offer assistance with BIND 9 upgrades in the form of technical support, training and consulting services.”

The development team at Nominum has been focused on developing BIND (Berkeley Internet Name Domain) and DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol) software for the Internet Software Consortium. The ISC is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and maintaining quality Open Source reference implementations of core Internet protocols. BIND version 9 development was underwritten in part by:

- Compaq Computer Corporation
- Hewlett-Packard
- IBM
- IPWorks, Inc.
- Network Associates, Inc.
- Silicon Graphics, Inc.
- Stichting NLNet
- Sun Microsystems, Inc.
- U.S. Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA)
- USENIX Association
- Verisign, Inc.

Bernie Volz, CTO of IPWorks, Inc, says his company is proud to have been a sponsor of the BIND 9 effort: “We believe BIND 9 is the next generation DNS server on which to support IPv6 and large scale DNS deployment. It will be important to our customers over the next few years as the explosive growth of the Internet continues, especially when considering the new kinds of devices to be connected to the network. The ISC and Nominum have done an outstanding job in delivering this technology”.

“USENIX is always supportive of projects like Bind 9,” says Andrew Hume, Vice President of the USENIX Association. “It directly helps our members who are system and network administrators, and facilitates our other members who use the Internet to do their research or to build their products. We also appreciate that Bind 9, like nearly all the software that the USENIX community has historically used, is Open Software.”

To download a copy of BIND 9, users should go to http://www.isc.org/products/BIND/bind9.html and follow the instructions outlined therein. For BIND 9 documentation, including system requirements, configuration references, troubleshooting and security considerations, please visit http://www.nominum.com/resources/Bv9ARM-091200.pdf.

Sending Us E-Mail?

Due to the amount of e-mail MUUG receives, we’ve set up an auto-reply to give you immediate feedback, and redirect some of the e-mail to the appropriate places. We will try to personally respond to your e-mail promptly, but please note that our group has a very small board of directors, consisting of a few very overworked volunteers. Please make sure you have used the right address, and are requesting information that is not found on our web site (www.muug.mb.ca).

For a full list and description of the addresses, see http://www.muug.mb.ca/pub/muuglines/pdf/muug0004.pdf. And while I’m at it, send me some interesting articles! Submit personal anecdotes, stories of your use of Unix, Linux, BSD or related operating systems to editor@muug.mb.ca. We really appreciate everything you send in!