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MUUGlines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

February 13, 2001: Locking Down Linux

This month, MUUG member Shawn Wallbridge returns with a follow-up to the November meeting topic, Vulnerability Scanning. The many benefits of using Linux also make it a prime target for attacks. The power of Linux also increases its usefulness to crackers/hackers.

This presentation will cover various tools and methods to secure your Linux machine. Some tools covered will be the Bastille hardening script, PortSentry, and Tripwire. We will take a basic installation and lock it down to limit the risk of a remote exploit.

March 13, 2001: Usenet News Readers

This month, MUUG member Chris Hill will be giving us a look at Usenet. The session will cover a brief history of the Usenet and news groups, how to get a new news group assigned in the hierarchy, how to use news readers such as Pine, Pan, and others, what `uuencode` is, what the binaries news groups are, and the meanings of the hierarchies.

Please note our meeting location: IBM Canada's offices in the TD Centre, at the corner of Portage and Main. We gather in the lobby on the main floor – please try to be there by about 7:15 PM. Steve Moffat will then take us up to the meeting room just before the meeting starts at 7:30. Don't be late, or you may not get in.

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. Either way, parking is a $1.25 flat rate for the evening. You purchase your ticket from a dispenser, so make sure you've got exact change – a loonie and a quarter, or 5 quarters.

And Door Prizes Too

As if you needed more reasons to attend this month's meeting, we have some exciting door prizes, too. We have received a limited number of both OpenLinux eDesktop 2.4 and the Linux Technology Preview Developer Release (featuring the 2.4 kernel) from Caldera Systems.

OpenLinux eDesktop 2.4 comes as a boxed set with a 500-page User Guide, a boot diskette and four CDs: Binaries, Commercial Packages and Source Code, plus the OMNIS Studio Rapid Application Development tools. Also in the box you'll find two "Powered by Caldera Systems" stickers for your computer AND a Caldera Systems bumper sticker! The Technology Preview box includes an Installation Guide, plus Installation Disk and a Source Code disk.

To round out the prizes, we'll be burning a *very* limited number of the Red Hat "Fisher" beta (see more below).

SGI XFS Pre-release

SGI has made available the pre-release version 0.9 of its high-end XFS file system ported to Linux®. Code and detailed information are at http://oss.sgi.com/projects/xfs/prerelease.html.

Widely recognized as one of the industry's leading high-performance journalled file systems, XFS is a mature technology that has been proven on thousands of IRIX systems for over six years. SGI has open-sourced and optimized XFS for Linux users, providing the same flexible, high-capacity, and reliable file system that is available under IRIX.

Thanks to the extensive interest and contributions from the community, the XFS file system for Linux has made significant progress since its Beta release in September 2000. Although there are still some features to be finalized, the pre-release code is currently stable in a majority of normal environments. SGI welcomes and encourages interested users to try out the code aggressively in your test environments, so that they can work through the final stage of the development and bug fixes to meet your production needs.

SGI XFS Pre-release 0.9 is available in the following three fashions: As a patch against linux-2.4.0; as a set of RPMs; or as a complete system installer which works with Red Hat 7.0 media to run XFS on the root partition. SGI will be demonstrating XFS as the root file system for high availability and clustering solutions in SGI systems at LinuxWorld New York from January 31 to February 2. Free XFS CDs will also be available at LinuxWorld. For more information on the open source project of XFS for Linux, please see http://oss.sgi.com/projects/xfs/index.html.

Red Hat "Fisher"

Red Hat, Inc. presents a beta release of Red Hat Linux for your hacking pleasure. First, the regular drill: This is a beta release of Red Hat Linux. It is not intended for mission critical applications. It's not even intended for non-mission critical applications. Important data should not be entrusted to Fisher, as it may eat it and make loud belching noises. Significant changes have been made since the last version of Red Hat Linux, including a shift to a 2.4-based kernel.

As in Red Hat Linux 7, this beta is large enough that the binary packages have been split between two ISO images. The installation program handles reading packages from multiple CDs. Fisher can be downloaded from MUUG's public FTP site or Red Hat: ftp://ftp.redhat.com/pub/redhat/beta/fisher.

What's new in this beta?

- General system improvements: Itanium™ support; installer improvements; basic firewall configuration; workstation installs are network-secure; and a graphical kickstart configuration program.
- Core system components: 2.4.0 kernel + patches; glibc 2.2.1; XFree86 4.0.2 and XFree86 3.3.6; and the KDE 2.1 beta release snapshot.
- Expanded hardware support: Improved USB; IDE UltraDMA 66/100; IEEE1394 (FireWire™); ATM networking; WiFI wireless ethernet cards; ESS Maestro3 and newer Crystal audio
- System service changes: New network-transparent configuration subsystem; configuration tools for BIND, Apache, and printing
- A sampling of package upgrades: GIMP 1.2.1, Tcl/Tk 8.3.2, BIND 9.1.0, Pine 4.32, Vim 6.0 prerelease, XMMS 1.2.4
- Package additions: OGG/Vorbis audio encoder/decoder and Mozilla

rhn_register, the registration client for Red Hat Network, is included, but registrations for the beta will not be accepted. However, up2date will be fully functional in anonymous mode, and Red Hat encourages people to make use of this functionality. They will be attempting to synchronize fixes with Update Agent on a nightly basis, so if you report a problem and it gets fixed, you can get a new version of that particular package on the following day.

Major known issues: PCMCIA support is touch-and-go; upgrading computers reliant on PCMCIA may not work at all; systems that include both floppy and IDE ZIP devices will fail to install (a fixed boot disk has been made available to correct this problem); minimal installs do not support NFS out of the box; partitionless installs and upgrades are not currently working; applications using dlopen() to load threaded libraries (such as kdm) may crash with the i686 version of glibc; X and KDE have known failures on Itanium. Enjoy! :-)

SOLE Call for Papers

Southern Ontario Linux Exposition 2001
May 28th-30th, 2001 in Hamilton, Ontario.

We have received an invitation to participate in the first Southern Ontario Linux Exposition (SOLE).

The purpose of SOLE is to bring together Linux enthusiasts and professionals to exchange information, discuss Linux uses, and promote the use of Linux in general. There will be three streams of content for the conference: Technical, Linux for Business, and End User Linux. The papers should be written with either strong technical content, business development/use content or targeting the end/new user of Linux.

Timeline

Paper Proposals are due by March 1st, 2001
Abstracts are due by April 1st, 2001
Final Papers are due by May 1st, 2001

Confirmation of accepted papers will be made prior to April 1st, 2001. Presentation time slots are 60 minutes long, including 15 minutes intended to be used as a question period. 90 minute and 120 minute presentations will also be accepted based on content. LCD projectors will be available to display slides from any VGA source. If you require any additional AV equipment please let us know when you submit your proposal.

Authors must submit a minimum of a two paragraph paper proposal. The proposal should cover the goal of the paper, and define the scope, and target audience. Proposals and abstracts must be submitted in plain ASCII text. Proposals should be 2 paragraphs in length. Abstracts should be 1 paragraph in length.

Final papers should be submitted in HTML. ASCII or proprietary format documents will be accepted - but may be altered in conversion. HTML is recommended. Proposals, abstracts and papers should be submitted to harwoodr@linux.ca

Papers will be reviewed by the members of the committee, and accepted authors will be notified by e-mail. Authors of any papers not accepted will also be notified. The conference requires publication rights to the accepted papers, including the publication of the audio proceedings as well as publication and reproduction rights to any video filmed during the presentations. Copyright ownership is retained by the author. These rights are nonexclusive.

ITtoolbox UNIX

Information Technology Toolbox, Inc. (ITtoolbox), an on-line information network supporting information technology and business professionals, announced the launch of ITtoolbox UNIX. ITtoolbox UNIX (http://UNIX.ITtoolbox.com) is a vast database of Unix information contained in an integrated, human-edited directory for new users seeking training, to those who operate their own servers.

UNIX has become a standard operating system for large corporations, academic institutions and governmental departments because of its versatility. A recent report issued by Rutgers University states, “the strength of UNIX is its portability across multiple vendor hardware platforms, vendor independent networking, and the strength of its application programming interface.” The strengths of UNIX (from various vendors) are available for comparison at ITtoolbox UNIX.

ITtoolbox UNIX assists both IT and business professionals by acting as an on-line support structure in this ever-changing field of technology. As with all other portals in the network, ITtoolbox UNIX is free to use. ITtoolbox UNIX offers:

- Focused discussion forums
- A comprehensive vendor solutions directory
- Daily industry news
- A documents section featuring peer publishing, industry articles, vendor white papers, guides and tutorials.
- A job listing database

Eazel and Red Hat

Eazel Inc., the developer of software and services to make computers easier to use, and Red Hat, the leader in developing, deploying and managing open source solutions for Internet infrastructure, announced plans to deliver a superior desktop experience for Red Hat Linux users. The companies have agreed to partner to deliver an integrated solution combining Red Hat Network with Eazel’s suite of Internet services for individual users.

As part of their agreement, Red Hat has agreed to integrate Eazel’s Nautilus software into forthcoming versions of Red Hat Linux. Desktop users will benefit from the superior user experience provided by Eazel’s Nautilus interface and Internet Services while maintaining the security and scalability benefits provided by Red Hat Network. Through the integration of these two technologies, large enterprises can provide end users with a Network User Environment that integrates access to files, applications, media, Internet-based services and the Web while maintaining the security, control and scalability demanded by the IT staff.

A sneak preview of Nautilus can be downloaded on Linux systems today at http://www.eazel.com/download. As part of the deal, Eazel will feature the Official Red Hat Linux RPM packages within its Software Catalog service. Users will be able to access these packages from Eazel's Nautilus interface.

Borland Kylix – RAD!

At LinuxWorld Expo in New York, Borland Software Corporation announced its highly anticipated Borland® Kylix™. Kylix is the first native rapid application development (RAD) environment for Linux® combining an intuitive visual design environment, optimizing compiler, interactive debugger and comprehensive component suite to give developers the tools they need to deliver Web, desktop and database applications on Linux fast.

"To bring Linux into the mainstream, it needs professional applications," said Bill Claybrook, research director for Aberdeen Group. "Linux developers need a simplified and standardized environment for creating these applications faster, and Kylix meets this need like no other development environment has. Kylix builds on the existing skills, and maintains the same development paradigm that Windows developers already have, to considerably speed their time-to-market."

Kylix may have a dramatic impact on the Linux marketplace. Millions of users developing today with Borland Delphi™ and Microsoft® Visual Basic® will now easily move their skills, knowledge and applications to the Linux platform and quickly catapult Linux into the corporate mainstream.

With Kylix, developers will quickly and easily create sophisticated high-performance Linux applications with the ease of drag-and-drop development. Kylix includes CLX™, the component library for cross-platform development. With CLX, developers will exploit the power of component-based development to produce high-performance web, database and desktop applications. Modelled after the award-winning component library of Borland Delphi and C++ Builder™, CLX will simplify the migration of today's Windows-based applications onto the Linux platform. Kylix delivers a comprehensive palette of over 165 reusable, customizable and extensible CLX components for immediate productivity out of the box.

Apache developers will accelerate their web server development with NetCLX™. NetCLX combines browser, server and database development technologies to quickly deliver scalable Web applications that support a large number of users and large volumes of data. With DataCLX™ and dbExpress™, developers will easily integrate corporate information into applications via high-speed database drivers for IBM® DB2®, Oracle® 8i, InterBase® and MySQL™. Kylix supports major Linux distributions, RedHat, SuSE and Mandrake.

Kylix's state of the art optimizing compiler is seamlessly integrated to produce high-performance applications at high-speed. For more information about Kylix, visit http://www.borland.com/kylix.

Kylix is available in three versions: Server Developer for professional and corporate Apache Web developers for $1999, Desktop Developer for professional application developers for $999, and Open Edition for open source and free software (GPL) developers will be available for free download or for purchase at $99 (with hardcopy documentation and CD). Kylix Server Developer and Kylix Desktop Developer will be generally available before the end of the first quarter 2001. Kylix Open Edition will be available by mid-2001.

Upcoming articles

We know, we know, we promised to begin publishing a series of articles this month on floppy-based servers. However, due to the large number of momentous announcements that have shown up recently, we felt that we could more easily make room for that next month. Also waiting to be printed are reviews of Caldera's OpenLinux eDesktop 2.4 and Caldera's Linux Technology Preview Developer Release. Don't forget, we have free copies of these to give away, and we won't even require you to write a review!