MUUGLines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

Volume 36 No. 7, March 2024 Editor: Trevor E Cordes

Next Meeting: March 5th, 2024 7:30pm

In Person and Online

The March meeting will be held both physically in person, and online via our Big Blue Button videoconferencing server. We encourage all members to attend in person. If you cannot attend in person, you can watch and interact with the meeting online and partake of our professional-grade camera, microphone, and dedicated stream moderator.

If you show up in person you will be treated to more beverage choices than we've offered in over a decade: coffee, tea, and pop, as well as cookies. And parking is free, copious, safe, and just a handful of feet from the door.

Please stay home if you are sick that day.

To attend via internet, check and refresh the following link after 7:00pm. There is no need to create an account in BBB, nor login. Just enter any name as your screen name and hit **join**.

`https://muug.ca/meet`

Presentation: Fluentd

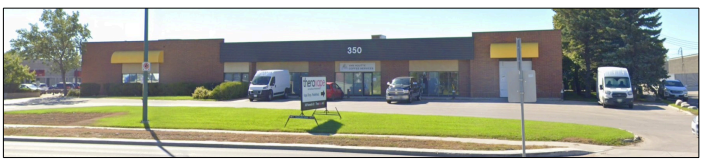
Alberto Abrao will present and demo ***fluentd***. According to their website, "Fluentd is an open source data collector for unified logging layer." Fluentd is lightweight enough that you can host it on a Raspberry Pi or similar low-end device. The presentation will walk us through the configuration of a machine that will serve as a "log aggregator," and a couple of others that will send their logs to it. All logs will stay in plain text, as the Gods of UNIX intended.

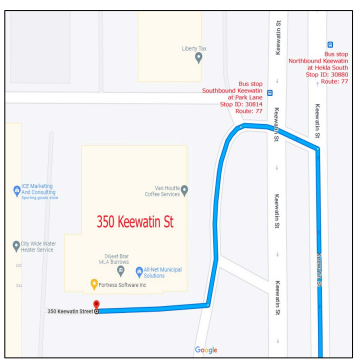
The latest meeting details are always at:
`https://muug.ca/meetings/`

Where to Find the Meeting

We are continuing to meet on the first Tuesday of every month.

Fortress Software Inc.
350 Keewatin St – Unit #2





Doors will open at 7:00pm. Meeting starts at 7:30pm.

If driving, enter the lot using the most north-eastern entrance (far right in the top picture) and drive around to the south west corner of the building (see route in map detail). You can use any of the free, ample, and safe parking spots that say "reserved" or "MUUG" in

front of units #1 through #4 before entering into unit #2. Look for the sign over the door!

Door Prizes

Pi day approaches, and MUUG is trying to obtain some Raspberry Pi to give away as a prize this month! This will be offered as a prize only to people who show up to the meeting in person. If we don't get it (them?!) in time for March, we'll give it away in subsequent months.

*NIX-themed stickers continue to be offered as a couple of prize draws, as well as *Communications of the ACM* magazines graciously donated by Dan Keizer.

As usual, we will be giving away a couple of e-books, including one graciously donated by Michael W. Lucas of Tilted Windmill Press (see advertisment on last page).

Everyone is encouraged to enter the door prize draw: both in-person and virtual attendees. You don't have to be a member to enter, but members have exclusive access to the first draw. Members also get the privilege of not having to be present (physically or virtually) for the draw in order to claim their prize.

Fedora Atomic Adds Desktop Spins

Fedora Atomic is getting new desktop spins. You can now run Fedora Silverblue, Kinoite, Sway Atomic (formerly Sericea), and Budgie Atomic (formerly Onyx).

While the term "immutable" used to be used to describe Atomic, it's a bit of a misnomer, and thus the project is changing to the term "atomic". The reasoning is provided thusly:

> *Fedora Atomic spins are not actually immutable. There are ways to get around the read-only aspects of the implementation even though it is much harder.*
>
> *The nature of the OS, where updates are only implemented when they successfully build and you can rollback or rebase between core host systems, is better described by atomicity than immutability.*

Got that? Clear as mud? So what is an atomic desktop? The introduction to Silverblue says:

> *Fedora Silverblue is a variant of Fedora Workstation. It looks, feels and behaves like a regular desktop operating system, and the experience is similar to what you find with using a standard Fedora Workstation.*
>
> *However, unlike other operating systems, Fedora Silverblue is immutable. This means that every installation is identical to every other installation of the same version. The operating system that is on disk is exactly the same from one machine to the next, and it never changes as it is used.*

It's basically to the desktop what Fedora CoreOS is to the server: container-based and minimal. They claim you can achieve more stability and ~~zarro~~ less ~~boogs~~ bugs. Apps and containers are separated from the host. Every single app you might want is implemented as a container. Interestingly, after every core update you must reboot. A main selling point is the ability to roll back to the previous version.

It's an interesting concept, and clearly Red Hat / Fedora believe it's worth investing in as they try to make everything cloud-y.

https://docs.fedoraproject.org/en-US/fedora-silverblue/

https://fedoraproject.org/atomic-desktops/silverblue/

https://news.itsfoss.com/fedora-atomic-desktops/

LibreOffice 7.6.5 Released

Beef up your LO stability, reliability, and security with this latest version.

Also, soon LO is phasing out the 7.6 series and moving to a Ubuntu-like date-based versioning scheme. The old version is going EOL in mid-June and at that time users will be encouraged to upgrade to 24.2.

Maybe they've fixed the disaster that is image positioning whilst making MUUG Newsletters! [Ed: don't hold your breath.]

https://9to5linux.com/libreoffice-7-6-5-office-suite-is-out-now-with-more-than-90-bug-fixes

Ubuntu 22.04.4 LTS Arrives

Jammy Jellyfish fans rejoice! It's been six months since the last point-release 22.04.3. What do you get this time? Newer kernel 6.5 and Mesa 23.3 graphics, both of which should interest gamers.

On top of that, a brand new LTS release is just around the corner: Noble Numbat 24.04 is due late April 2024. It will give you the 6.8 kernel, Mesa 24 and GNOME 46.

https://9to5linux.com/ubuntu-22-04-4-lts-jammy-jellyfish-released-with-linux-kernel-6-5-mesa-23-2

NVIDIA 550 Driver Is Here

Gamers, get geared up for an eagerly-awaited new version of the binary drivers for the popular video cards. 550.54.14 brings in support for R8, GR88 and YCbCr GBM formats, text section huge page support, 10-bits-per-component HDMI (experimental), HDR signaling, "PRIME render offload to Vulkan Wayland WSI", and "an application profile to improve KWin performance on hybrid GPU systems".

Also incoming is VR support (e.g. SteamVR) "on Wayland compositors that support DRM leasing", and VDPAU on Xwayland [Ed: it didn't have it yet? <grumble grumble Xorg better grumble>].

Your MUUGLines editor is most excited about the explicitly improved support for video games like Forza Horizon 5. With the previous drivers, your editor's son discovered that the game would freeze randomly, usually after exceeding 350 km/h, or having a huge car crash. [Ed: maybe those two things are related?]

Other games fixed include: Halo Infinite, Horizon Zero Dawn, Hogwarts Legacy and Metro Exodus.

Also promised is "support for installing the driver while an existing NVIDIA driver is already loaded". If that's what it sounds like it is, that is good news, as anyone who's updated the drivers with their package manager knows (even with akmods): if you updated you were basically forced to reboot or half the advanced features (such as VDPAU) ceased to function.

https://9to5linux.com/nvidia-550-54-14-linux-graphics-driver-released-with-many-improvements

Systemctl Mask vs. Disable

You've probably had to use systemctl to disable or mask a systemd service or unit. But what's the difference? Both seem to make the service "go away"...

"Disable" tells systemd not to start a previously-enabled unit on next boot. It does this by deleting a symlink in one of /etc/systemd/system's target directories. But, and here's the clincher, if another unit requires that service, it can still be started automatically.

"Mask", on the other hand, tells systemd to make it impossible for it to start the masked unit. It does this by symlinking the unit file in /etc/systemd/system to /dev/null.

So if there's a service you really really hate (probably due to the severe feature-creep of systemd) you can mask it and keep doing things the old fashioned (and probably better!) way. systemd-resolved, fprintd, or tmpfiles-clean anyone?

https://linuxtldr.com/systemctl-mask-vs-systemctl-disable/

GParted 1.6 Arrives

If you do anything remotely complex with disks or filesystems, especially regarding Windows or dual-

boot boxen, you probably have used GParted. It's a GUI that makes it super easy to resize partitions and filesystems, move them around, and generally do lots of scary things with impunity (mostly).

Included in this release is a fix for 0000-0000 exFAT UUID crashes, and the disabling of forced 1MiB gaps when moving partitions rightward. The "attempt data rescue" feature has been removed.

https://9to5linux.com/gparted-1-6-open-source-partition-editor-improves-exfat-support-and-fixes-bugs

Follow Your Tail

You'd discovered tail -f (--follow) and think it's the best thing ever. You can watch lines hit your log file in real time! But oh no... Every night logrotate messes around with the file and your tail -f sits there monitoring a stale file. You mistakenly think your bugs have miraculously stopped, when really they are just being logged to a new file.

This happens because tail -f opens a file and holds a file descriptor (FD) to that file. Logrotate works by renaming the old file to a new name, but that leaves tail still holding a FD to the old file, as descriptors are filename-ignorant.

Luckily, somewhere along the line, GNU decided to create --follow=name and --retry. Together they solve the logrorate problem by following the name, not the FD. Add in the retry option, which makes tail tolerant of slight delays in the operations of logrotate, and voila, you can rest easy knowing you'll always see the latest output.

Tail has made it even easier by providing a new option, -F, which turns on both features with just one letter!

Kids Game Review: GCompris

by Trevor Cordes

If I had to pick one piece of Linux software that kids love the most, and can keep them busy for hours "playing" (while they are really learning), it's GCompris (pronounced "gee-komm-pree").

It's an umbrella interface into more than one hundred individual mini-games encompassing many subjects and themes. It's aimed at kids 2 to 10, and I have found that 2-year-olds really can use it; and it's great at teaching basic mouse and keyboard skills.

The developers say they were motivated by the problem of existing games/tools being difficult to track down, install and manage simply because of their sheer number. So they created a suite where everything is easily accessible from a single interface. Once you're in, your child can navigate to and between activities with ease.

On Fedora, the rpm is named gcompris-qt, and you also need gcompris-qt-activities. A new version, 4.0, was released February 2024, with even more activities.

A 10-Year-Old's Take

by Merlin Cordes

Gcompris is a great game it has a lot of mini games and they're all really fun. My favourite is chess and there are games to help kids learn their letters and numbers. My little sister loves it and I think it is great too. I think it would be great for kids and there are games that you put the countries together like a puzzle. That game helps you learn places around the world. I learned about so many new places and world monuments.

Help us promote this month's meeting, by putting this poster up on your workplace bulletin board or other suitable public message board:

https://muug.ca/meetings/MUUGmeeting.pdf

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MUUG would like to thank Michael W. Lucas for donating one of

his ebooks every month as a door prize. You can view and purchase his tech books here:

https://www.tiltedwindmillpress.com/product-category/tech/