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MUUGlines

The Manitoba Unix User Group Newsletter

December 14, 1999: Play That Funky Christmas Music

This month, we'll once again be covering a lighter topic, in keeping with the season. We'll be looking at various programs and utilities under Linux for working with audio content. Kevin McGregor will be describing and demonstrating Bladeenc, an MP3 encoder for WAV files, and XMMS, the X Multimedia Sound system, which allows recording and playback of audio from various sources. Gilbert Detillieux will focus on a couple programs for dealing with audio CD content: cdparanoia, for ripping (extracting) audio tracks, and cdrdao, a program for doing Disk-At-Once recording of audio and multimedia CD-Rs.

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.

XFree86 Becomes Honorary Member of X.Org

X.Org, an organization of The Open Group, announced that it has signed an agreement whereby XFree86 will become an Honorary Member of X.Org and receive a voting seat on the Executive Board of X.Org. Together, X.Org and XFree86 will ensure the future of the X Window System technical standard and co-develop the Sample Implementation (SI). The SI is the current and adopted version of the X Standard, which is X11R6.4. XFree86 gains a clear voice in the stewardship of the X Window System standard.

This agreement establishes direct contact between X.Org and XFree86, the leading X Server provider in the Open Source Software market. With the success and popularity of the Linux operating system, this brings a vital and unprecedented market dimension to the standards body. X.Org and XFree86 will work together to ensure that future development of the X Window System SI will meet the requirements of both the Open Source Software and commercial markets. XFree86 has been working closely on the upcoming release (XFree86 4.0) with many of the leading Linux vendors such as Red Hat, Caldera and SuSE. This cooperative agreement will enhance the ability of the two groups to effectively service the needs of over 30 million X users worldwide.

"We are excited to have XFree86 as part of X.Org," says Gary Tyreman, Chairman of X.Org. "XFree86 possesses considerable engineering talent, innovation and energy that X.Org is well positioned to leverage. This cooperation will certainly benefit all users of the X Window System, especially ISVs looking to capitalize on the Linux open source software market."

"We are pleased to join X.Org," said Dirk Hohndel, Vice President of the XFree86 Project, Inc. "XFree86 has long been a cornerstone of the Open Source movement and our participation in X.Org will give the Open Source community a voice in the ongoing evolution in the X Window System standard. We look forward to continuing our work within the framework of X.Org."

"I am very happy that XFree86 has joined X.Org. It brings together two great development teams to allow for the exchange of ideas and continued interoperability in the X Window System arena," said Jon "maddog" Hall, Executive Director of Linux International.

Creative Announces Move to Open Source

Creative Technology Ltd. (Nasdaq: CREAF), the leading provider of multimedia solutions for personal entertainment and productivity, announced that a driver for its award-winning Sound Blaster Live!(TM) family of sound cards is now available to the Linux development community for open-source development under Gnu General Public License (GPU). The availability of this new driver provides members of the Linux community with the opportunity to create optimized support for Creative's highly acclaimed Sound Blaster Live! family of sound cards in Linux applications.

The release of this open source driver marks a "first" for Creative, and is expected to generate a wealth of supporting applications for the Sound Blaster Live! family of cards running on all major Linux kernel versions. With a huge installed base of Sound Blaster Live! users today, this is an exciting opportunity for Creative and the Linux community to deliver powerful 3D audio capabilities to a new operating system.

"The Sound Blaster Live! audio cards are a key component of Creative's Environmental Audio(TM) program," said George Thorn, director, Audio Marketing for Creative. "This is an exciting move for the company as it has provided driver support for the Linux operating system for some time, but not in open source form. We look forward to seeing the Linux community continue to do what it does best — collaborative engineering — the upshot of which will be an array of applications running on the Linux platform that feature integral support for Creative's Sound Blaster Live!"

"The Advanced Linux Sound Architecture (ALSA) team is very pleased that Creative has released drivers for open source development to the Linux community," said Jaroslav Kysela, ALSA team leader. "We anticipate releasing the ALSA code for Sound Blaster Live! sound cards later this month and look forward to continuing to work closely with Creative to enhance audio on the Linux platform."

"We are very pleased with Creative's announcement today to provide sources under GPL for its popular Sound Blaster Live! audio cards," said Markus Rex, director for development of SuSE, the leading provider of comprehensive packages of Linux-based applications. "We look forward to contributing to the enhancement of this driver together with the ALSA team."

The driver source code will be maintained on a dedicated server at Creative; project guidance and status will also be provided on this server. From the server, Linux developers will be able to check out the code, work with it, and resubmit it with any new enhancements. This type of Internet-based "Massive Online Development" has proven effective within the Linux community and has successfully delivered the majority of the Linux content thus far.

"Games being written for the Linux platform will obviously benefit from enhanced Sound Blaster Live! support," said Scott Draeker, president of Loki Entertainment Software, a leading provider of game titles for the Linux platform. "By opening its driver source code, Creative Labs has not only embraced the Linux community, it has also ensured that its audio hardware will continue to provide users with a superior listening experience. Loki enthusiastically supports Creative's move today, and will work with Creative and the Linux community to provide comprehensive support in its games for Creative's hardware."

The distribution of open source Linux drivers for Sound Blaster Live! is the first publicly announced step in an ongoing program to bring Creative's audio expertise to new platforms. This driver is now available, free of charge, to Linux developers at: http://opensource.creative.com .

Debian GNU/Linux Goes Retail

VA Linux Systems announced that the company is partnering with Loki Entertainment Software to coordinate direct sales of the Debian GNU/Linux retail package. The Debian GNU/Linux retail bundle, co-sponsored by VA Linux Systems, O'Reilly and SGI, is available through valinux.com for the introductory price of $19.95, and now includes a mail-in offer for a free StarOffice(TM) CD from Sun Microsystems.

Debian GNU/Linux is developed by over 500 volunteer developers worldwide over the Internet, and is being made available for the first time as a major retail product. Starting this month, major retail stores such as Micro Center, Electronics Boutique and J&R Computer World will be carrying the Debian GNU/Linux retail package. VA Linux Systems will donate its profits from Debian GNU/Linux sales to Software in the Public Interest, a non-profit organization for Open Source projects including Debian.

"The initial response we have received for the Debian GNU/Linux package demonstrates widespread appreciation for the high quality and exceptional Internet functionality of Debian GNU/Linux," said Brian Biles, vice president of marketing for VA Linux Systems. "Our new relationship with Loki will facilitate wider distribution of the Debian GNU/Linux package, giving more users an easy way to try Debian for the first time."

The Debian GNU/Linux package features a CD of 1,440 open source software packages, as well as Bill McCarty's "Learning Debian GNU/Linux," published by O'Reilly. The bundle also includes the StarOffice personal office productivity suite from Sun Microsystems and a demo CD of "Myth II: Soulblighter" from Loki Entertainment Software. One of the most popular features in Debian GNU/Linux is "apt-get" — a tool which automates free network downloads of all software package updates, making the Debian CD the last CD a user would ever need to keep a system up-to-date with Linux.

"Loki is thrilled to be part of this effort to give back to the open source community," said Scott Draeker, president of Loki Entertainment Software. "We are excited about the debut of Debian GNU/Linux at major retail stores, and are committed to working with VA Linux Systems to make the product available worldwide."

Get "Using Samba" Now

O'Reilly & Associates has announced the release of "Using Samba", which has been officially adopted by the Samba team under an open content license. This new book is a comprehensive guide to Samba administration, including such recent additions as integration with Windows NT domains and the SWAT graphic configuration tool.

"The O'Reilly Samba book is a great step forward for the Samba project and open source documentation. The Samba Team are delighted that a high quality book has been made available as part of the Samba documentation, making good docs on Samba available to a wide audience. We look forward to working with O'Reilly to further develop the book as Samba develops," says Andrew Tridgell, of the Samba team.

"Samba is a cross-platform triumph," says Andy Oram, Editor, O'Reilly & Associates. "It turns a Unix or Linux system into a file and print server for Microsoft Windows network clients. Now you can let users store their files (and even important executables) in a single place for easy sharing and backup, protected by Unix or NT security mechanisms, and still offer such transparent access that PC users don't even realize they're going to another system. The magic behind Samba is that it recognizes and speaks the SMB protocol developed by Microsoft for file and printer sharing on its own systems."

Basic Samba configuration is simple, but you'll want to make sure your security settings are just right and find out about the full range of options (how do you like your filenames mangled?). Trouble-shooting, security, connectivity, performance, and logging are thoroughly covered with examples in "Using Samba".

Samba is so robust, flexible, and secure that many people are choosing it over Windows NT for their file and print services. Furthermore, Samba is proving to be a necessity for the many organizations that have an existing Unix or Linux system and want to tie in PCs running Microsoft software. Samba is also Open Source software, licensed under the GNU General Public License.

The authors, Robert Eckstein, David Collier-Brown, and Peter Kelly, present the most common configurations and problems in an easy-to-follow manner, along with instructions for getting the most out of Samba. Whether you're playing on one note or a full three-octave range, this book will give you an efficient and secure server. The included CD-ROM holds sources and ready-to-install binaries, plus other useful information.

Chapter 5, Browsing and Advanced Disk Shares, is available free on the web at: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/samba/chapter/ch05.html

For more information about the book, including Table of Contents, index, author bios, and sample chapter, see: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/samba/index.html

For a cover graphic in jpeg format, go to: ftp://ftp.ora.com/pub/graphics/book_covers/hi-res/1565924495.jpg

Using Samba Robert Eckstein, David Collier-Brown & Peter Kelly 1st Edition November 1999 (US), 1-56592-449-5, 416 pages, $34.95 (US$) order@oreilly.com 1-800-998-9938 http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/samba/index.html

Enterprise Ready – Soon: CA

Computer Associates International, Inc. (CA) announced the formation of the CA Enterprise Linux Advisory Council, a comprehensive business initiative that will focus on identifying and defining new projects and products that will address the unique and specific needs of Enterprise Linux users. The Council will work with CA's development team with the goal of helping to enable businesses to maximize the capabilities of Linux operating systems within IT environments.

The Council will initially comprise a diverse group of industry leaders including Amerada Hess, Center7 Inc., eToys, Fidelity Investments, Georgia Institute of Technology, Red Hat, Inc. and The Revere Group/American Horizon Insurance.

These members will lend technical expertise and business perspective to offer insight and direction to CA in terms of what functionality is needed to make Linux a viable platform within various IT environments. In the first meeting, which was held on Nov. 9 at CA's corporate headquarters, council members discussed the unique challenges of using Open Source software in the enterprise, barriers to entry, and the kinds of solutions that might address and remove those barriers.

"Maximizing resources and enhancing business value for Linux users is the impetus behind the formation of this council," said Michael Danziger, director of strategic business alliances at CA. "By seeking the input of influential companies that deploy Linux, CA is committed to developing technology that will maximize the management capabilities and reliability of the OS, while maintaining the low cost of ownership enjoyed by the growing universe of Linux users."

"Linux and Open Source software continue to make tremendous inroads in enterprise organizations across a wide variety of industries," said Paul McNamara, general manager of the enterprise business unit at Red Hat. "The Linux Advisory Council brings together leaders from all of those industries to identify key user needs and help further accelerate the adoption of Open Source software."

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.