MUUGLines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

Next Meeting: May 13th, 2008

NAS Smackdown!

FreeNAS is freely-downloadable software based on FreeBSD which turns nearly any old PC into a Network-Attached Storage (NAS) device with a web-based management interface. It supports software RAID, disk encryption, can be an iSCSI target, implements CIFS, FTP, RSYNC, and much more. NexentaStor is a very similar commercial product which is available in a free 1-terabyte-limited version. NexentaStor is based on OpenSolaris.

Kelly Leveille and Kevin McGregor will compare and contrast FreeNAS and NexentaStor, and time-permitting will show how to turn an old computer running Windows 2000 into something useful!

Editor's Note: Please don't worry, they have promised to not wear spandex.

Where to find the Meeting
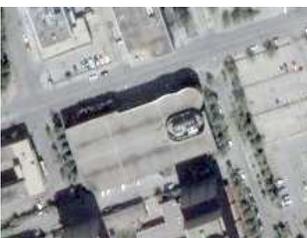
Meetings are held at the IBM offices at 400 Ellice Ave. (between Edmonton and Kennedy). When you arrive, you will have to sign in at the reception desk, and then wait for someone to take you (in groups) to the meeting room. Please try to arrive by about 7:15pm, so the meeting can start promptly at 7:30pm. Don't be late, or you may not get in. (But don't come too early either, since security may not be there to let you in before 7:15 or so.) Non-members are welcome, but may be required to show photo ID at the security desk.

Limited parking is available for free on the street, either on Ellice Ave. or on some of the intersecting streets. Indoor parking is also available nearby, at Portage Place, for $3.00 for the evening. Bicycle parking is available in a bike rack under video surveillance located behind the building on Webb Place.

Upcoming Meetings:

June 10th, 2008: To Be Announced

Future meeting topics may change.

Ubuntu 8.04 – Digital Jesus

May1st, 2008 / Montana Quiring

So a penguin walks into a bar and sits next to a heron. "I'm Hardy!" says the gangly bird while offering a wing. "Ya, I know who you are... they call me Tux" says the penguin. "How do you know me?" asked the puzzled heron. "You run on Linux, don't you?" exclaims the slightly annoyed penguin. "What's Linux?" shrugs Hardy.

My poor attempt at a "walks into a bar" joke is to illustrate one thing. Ubuntu is the new Linux. Like it or

lump it. Ubuntu is here to stay and it's making inroads into the non-geek world like no other distro. Yes, we know why we should say GNU/Linux. We know how Linux has been built from the ground up to be superior to other OS's (like the corporate driven one from Redmond). But maybe what some of us haven't understood yet is how important Ubuntu is.

Ubuntu is the digital Jesus. It brings hope to a world of people who are drowning in the sins of malware and BSoD. Unless you have tried supporting a home or small business where people (and kids) have free unadulterated reign on a Windows computer, it's hard to comprehend the severity of the warzone. People don't care about GNU/Linux. People don't care about Microsoft. People care about computers wasting more of their time. People care that their brand new $1000 computer has Vista on it and runs slower than their old 486-DX100. Many of them think their options are to buy XP, install Ubuntu, suffer on with Vista, or return the computer and get a Mac. Lets hope they give Ubuntu a try.

Ubuntu 8.04 – What's New

April 21, 2008 / **ubuntu.com**

Enhanced photo experience: The enhanced default photo manager, F-Spot, together with improved camera and phone recognition means users can upload, tag, manage, display, delete, print and share photos with friends and family more easily.

Music sharing and download: Users can plug in a PSP, share playlists with friends, buy from the Magnatune online music store, stream live radio and plug in more devices than ever (with UpnP).

Better video: The new default movie player now allows users to browse YouTube and other video sources across the web and to share their videos with others. It integrates with Myth TV, the open source TVR, so users can watch their favourite TV shows straight on the desktop. Brasero allows them to easily burn all content to CD or DVD.

Productivity enhancements: Clock and calendar integration is available to manage time across the globe with a single click to set, attend and receive alerts about appointments.

Slick desktop: Ubuntu 8.04 LTS combines the latest GNOME applications with desktop visual effects, giving users a smoother, better-looking and more intuitive experience.

Longer support: Ubuntu 8.04 LTS is supported with security updates and maintenance for three years so corporate and individual users have a longer upgrade planning cycle. Those who want the newest applications will be able to upgrade to Ubuntu 8.10, due in October 2008, those who prefer longer deployment cycles can stay with Ubuntu 8.04 for three years before moving to the next LTS release.

More accessibility: Gesture support allows users to navigate Ubuntu in a more natural fashion. Also available are increased language support for voice command, support for keyboard accessibility, slow keys, zoom and more.

Windows Works Well on the XO

April 24, 2008 / **itnews.com.au**

Hot on the heels of the excellent MUUG presentation, here is an except from the **itnews.com.au** article.

Microsoft's Windows software works well on the One Laptop Per Child Foundation's XO Laptop, the group's founder said in an e-mail posted on his group's website Wednesday. Nicholas Negroponte also said that, after several months of discussions with the world's largest software maker, his foundation plans to adapt its Sugar software package, which runs the XO Laptop, so it is compatible with Windows.

In October, Microsoft Corporate Vice President Will Poole told Reuters the company was spending "a nontrivial amount of money" on adapting a basic version of Windows so it would be compatible with the XO laptop. Now the nonprofit group and Microsoft plan to develop a version of the XO that runs both Win-

dows and Linux software, Negroponte said in his email.

Distros to Watch For

May 4th, 2008 / **Distrowatch.com**

openSUSE 11.0 - New changes include countless bug fixes, as well as the import of the new openSUSE 11.0 artwork for login, splash screens and more.

Gentoo Linux 2008.0 -
http://www.gentoo.org/proj/en/releng/

Fedora 9 -
http://fedoraproject.org/wiki/CategoryAcceptedFedora9

GUI or not to GUI, That is the Question.

April 22, 2008 / Eric Berard

The other day, I was checking out some of the ideas at Ubuntu Brainstorm (**http://brainstorm.ubuntu.com/**). There were lots of great ideas about creating GUI's to handle tasks that until now have been solely command line driven. I'm thinking that as the popularity of Ubuntu keeps increasing we are going to see more demand for GUI tools from Ubuntu users. And who better to suggest GUI tools than everyday Ubuntu users. Interestingly, there seemed to be an underlying attitude that permeates many of the comments on the Ubuntu Brainstorm site. The attitude is, "Linux shouldn't have GUI tools because then people don't have to understand Linux in order to use it." It seems to be an ongoing debate. What drives people to say that? What drives people to want GUI tools?

I am more of a GUI dude than a CLI dude. I'll admit it. I'll also admit that the CLI, once mastered, is faster than any GUI. I also believe that someone who knows the CLI has a better understanding of how the operating system works. I say this from experience.

I've known people who were far better techs than I and they were more proficient with CLI than with a GUI. So why am I still a GUI guy? Part of why I am so engrained in the use of a GUI is because most of my technical training was on the job when I worked for a Microsoft reseller. At the time, that's all any company was, a reseller of MS products. As MS products evolved, most of the tasks could be accomplished with the GUI and therefore you didn't need to know any command line. Now I am a sysadmin (admittedly not the best) who understands enough of how computers and networks function to be of value to a company. But yet, I lack the knowledge of the CLI. Should I be "bashed" because of it?

I am also of the opinion that, to the right person, the GUI can be a tremendous learning tool. Some people (like me) learn things better visually. Let's take, as an example, what I know today about SQL databases. I had very little knowledge of how an SQL database worked. Our company purchased Microsoft's SQL Server 2005 to accommodate a new software package that we purchased. By watching the software vendor set up and configure the new database with the GUI, I was able to learn a lot about how a database engine controls access to data, as well as how databases were constructed. I believe I was able to learn all of this by having an easier time visualizing something that was already "visible". When we went on to purchase another piece of software (which also used MSSQL2005), I was not only able to assist this other company in the set up of the database, but also I was able show their techs a thing or two. Just because I don't know all the SQL commands by heart doesn't mean I don't know how they are supposed to be set up. And even though my knowledge of SQL servers isn't as in-depth as someone who knows the CLI, what difference does it make if I bring the right level of knowledge to the company I'm working for.

The third thing I'd like to ask is, "What's the harm in making it easier for Linux Network Hobbyists and Newbies?" The more GUI tools that exist, the more likely that the techie friend or relative will be to suggest Linux to all the people who he or she already helps. If it can be made easy to do complex things, then Linux will become more attractive to these

"hobbyists." I think that this would help Linux become more main stream. From what I've read, it's one of the wishes of many Linux enthusiasts. Microsoft is reaping the benefits of having their OS in the main stream. Don't the CLI dudes want the same for their distribution of choice?

Interest Links: **http://tiny.cc/uEjmw** - **http://tiny.cc/RsZ6a**

Why MUUG Online 4.0?

Gilbert Detillieux

MUUG began its online presence in 1992, with a small Sun 386i called MONA (MUUG Online Network Access), and that system was finally retired in 1995.

In 1994, MUUG started to run its second-generation server, code named LISA. This server took over the remaining functions of MONA, which included e-mail handling and FTP. This server was also used to launch MUUG's first World Wide Web server. All of this was accomplished on a donated Sun SPARC-station 2 board, a spare 1 GB disk drive from MONA, and a new 1 GB disk and a system enclosure purchased by the group. Main memory was a mere 16 MB initially, which was sufficient to support a small SunOS 4.1.3 kernel and the services we needed to run.

In February of 2000, after several months of planning and delays, we introduced the third generation MUUG Online server. This system's initial configuration was an Intel Celeron 400, with 128 MB of memory, and two 27 GB IDE disk drives. A SCSI controller was also included, which allowed our existing SCSI disks to be migrated to this server once the SPARCstation 2 was retired. The operating system was Red Hat Linux 6.1. The system was later upgraded to an AMD Opteron 833, with 384 MB of memory, and an extra 400 GB of IDE disk drives, running Fedora Core 3.

In April of 2008, after a couple false starts and revised plans, we're proud to announce the arrival of the fourth generation MUUG Online server! This system's current configuration is an Intel Pentium 4/2.6GHz, with 1 GB of memory, two 180 GB IDE and two 750 GB SATA disk drives, running CentOS 5. The IDE drives are set up as a RAID1 mirrored pair, for the system and local data storage. The SATA drives are set up as a RAID0 striped pair, for 1.5 TB of ftp mirror space, used to mirror several Linux distributions and software repositories. Services are essentially the same as before, so migration should be easy. Users should see a significant increase in performance, however. We went with CentOS to have a familiar environment to Fedora, still free and open source, but with a longer expected life span than current Fedora releases.

The additional mirror capacity will allow us to add additional distributions to the server. We've already added CentOS 5, OpenSUSE 10.3, and we're awaiting the arrival of Fedora 9 on May 13th. We're also planning to build (at long last) a new, online membership database, using LAMP tools, in the near future.

Send Us E-Mail and Share Your Thoughts

E-mail us with your comments on the newsletter, whether it's criticisms or commendations, and continue to send in articles or ideas for the same. Specifically, what sort of material you would rather see: Announcements, technical articles, new products, etc. 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. Why not look at **http://www.muug.mb.ca/about.html#contacts** first? If you have a How-To or other idea, and aren't ready to give a presentation at MUUG, an article is a great alternative! If you can write better than the editor, that's terrific; if you can't, submit it anyway and we'll get it into shape for publication. We know that many of you have some great ideas and lots of knowledge. Why not share? Send Mail to: **editor@muug.mb.ca**.