

# The PCLinuxOS magazine

Volume 60

January, 2012



**Gnome 2.32: Gnome Schedule  
Puts Gnome On A Schedule**

**Gnome 2.32:  
gLabels Label Designer**

**Gnome 2.32:  
Metacity Window Manager**

**YAD: Yet Another  
Dialog Program**

**Everything Is Up-To-Date  
With ms\_meme**

**Alternate OS: Visopsys**

**Forum Family & Friends:  
Alan Kemp Is ElCuervo**

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# Welcome From The Chief Editor

The calendar has rolled over to another year. For many, it's the year – 2012 – that many doomsayers have interpreted as the end of the world as we know it. Some point to the Mayan calendar ending on December 21. Others point to “predictions” by other cultures. Personally, whether it's the Mayans or any other source, I think they just got tired of repeating themselves. If it was me making the calendar, I'm sure I'd have stopped making new calendar entries, thinking that (obviously) by now, anyone should be able to figure out the pattern. Just repeat. Maybe they had a hieroglyphic for that, but we've not been able to properly decipher it.

Only one thing is for certain, and that is change. Things WILL change. It happens every day, every week, every month, every year, every decade, and so on. Speaking of change, things are changing (read that, progressing) for PCLinuxOS. Texstar continues his steadfast march towards populating the 64-bit repository. Currently, the number of packages in the 64-bit repository is just under 10,000 packages. Still in testing, the 64-bit version of PCLinuxOS should be released to the public sometime in the first quarter of 2012.



Dragynn has released a pair of new Zen Mini remasters. While not “official” PCLinuxOS releases, they definitely build on Siamer's successful Zen Mini release. One offers just the basics, while the second

release, dubbed “Full Metal Jacket,” comes loaded with a wide range of “extra” applications that you are likely to find useful. Both feature the tried-and-true Gnome 2.32 desktop.

Sproggy is working on a 64-bit version of Phoenix, the Xfce flavor of PCLinuxOS, dedicated to fallen PCLinuxOS moderator and former Phoenix maintainer Joble. Like the 64-bit KDE version of PCLinuxOS, it is also currently in testing. Sproggy has also started early work on a 64-bit version of Phinx, based on PCLinuxOS.

Speaking of Joble, a pre-trial hearing for Joble's accused killer (his estranged wife, Michelle) is scheduled for March 8, 2012, according to news accounts. Jury selection is slated to begin on March 12, 2012, with the trial scheduled to begin April 2, 2012 at 9 a.m., Helena, MT local time. She has entered a not guilty plea.

Well, that is about it for now. I hope that each and every one of you had a happy holiday season, and I wish for a prosperous and safe New Year for you all.

# Forum Family & Friends: Alan Kemp Is EICuervo

by Archie Arevalo (Archie)

**Alan Kemp**, who usually goes by the PCLinuxOS forum name of EICuervo, had lived in 14 states before he was even ten. He settled down in the desert ... (I mean New Mexico), together with his hippie-joined-to-the-hip companion for the last 35 years.

“We never had any interest in getting married, but had the need to get her on my insurance, along with other legal issues.”

And would you know that Alan and his wife, Marilyn, compared notes of the places they've lived, and found out they had lived in the same towns at the same time five times before they finally gave in to the tug of destiny?

Since neither of them were really interested in the nuptial chains and blocks, but since they had to anyway, they decided to celebrate their wedding anniversary every four years on February 29th. Happy 9th Anniversary, dude!

“We first met in 1972, and I was very taken by her ability to drive her old floor-shift pickup and roll a cigarette with one hand, to say nothing of her obvious Irish beauty. When I kept bird-dogging her, she told me I had a very bad history with women. It's true ... I had already been married 3 times ... and I should go away and live by myself for a couple of years. I did, and five years later I looked her up again. This time, I got lucky and she's been my steadfast true love ever since.”



Alan was born in 1943, and is one of the MLUs at the forum who likes spending his time in the Sandbox. He lived in west Texas for a while with his brothers. He's been married four times, and he's quite confident that he's got the knack of it now.

Alan is also one of the many grandfathers in our midst. Yet, he is still on top of the heap being a great-grandfather to two great-grandchildren. Still,

he insists that he isn't that old. Well, isn't age simply a state of mind?

He described his picturesque home in the northern suburbs of Albuquerque, in a beautiful river valley, a quarter of a mile from the Rio Grande. One word draws his description: Nature. Alan and Marilyn share their acre with some animals. He highlights his hospitality to the migrating raven and sandhill cranes.

He majored in English and Philosophy in college, and spent the next thirty years of his life fixing cars!

“When my body started complaining too much, I switched to teaching younger guys how to troubleshoot those pesky automotive electronics. After ten years of that, I'm now semi-retired and knocking out technical manuals for the corporation that had me teaching.”

I asked him about his handle, EICuervo. Who would have guessed? It dates back to his high school mascot and has continued through the years, with his love affair for the cactus juice lasting throughout his adulthood. Other than that, he seemed to hint of his fondness to chirping passeriformes.

And what does your present signature tag, “All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another.” from Anatole France mean to you?

“Let me just point out that tag has changed quite often. But seriously, I have tried all my life to

embrace change; what else could a ten year old kid who lived in fourteen states do? No matter how happy any change may have made me, though, I've found that line to be true - there's always a bit of sadness and sometimes even resistance to leaving the 'old life' behind. You know, like leaving Windows for Linux, or KDE 3.5 for KDE 4.x."

### Regarding Linux and PCLinuxOS, how ever did you get yourself into this mess?

"I've always been a hands-on person and started tinkering around with the guts of computers back in 1988, and hardware led to an interest in software. I was indeed quite the distrohopper before I landed on PCLinuxOS. My first dabble was with Caldera sometime in the mid- to late-1990s, and damn I hate that I ever gave them money now! I found Mandrake to be pretty comfortable, and Knoppix knocked my socks off with that LiveCD - what a concept.

"There are still lots of distros that I think are great, notably Mint and Mepis. And of course, I can't help myself. I still look at others from time to time. I have seen lots of cool features in them, but PCLinuxOS captured me from the first time I tried it. Nothing impresses me more than a thing carefully designed and executed, and Texstar has never let me down in that regard. Even the bumpiest bumps and the gnarliest gnarls have come and gone so quickly that there's hardly time to notice. Of course, I uphold my end of the contract — the regular updates, attention to posted notices, etc."



**Author's note:** In the process of this interview, Alan's companion, Kayla, sadly passed away. On December 6, 2011, Alan posted the following message in the Sandbox section of the PCLinuxOS forum:

"Every morning at 4:00, my dog Kayla would start telling me it was time to eat. I didn't mind, heck, I like to get up early anyway. Yesterday, I woke up at the usual time and for the first time I could remember, she wasn't barking. I went to check on her, and she was up and walking around, but in the obvious distress my wife and I have come to call the "death walk". We called my vet and we made the arrangements to say goodbye. She left us peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, including my daughter and grandson. We all thought she would last forever, even though we knew that was impossible. She was an iron lady to the end

though, and out of more than 100 dogs in my life, she lasted the longest - she was 17 years old.

"Pulling her bowl from my daily dog-feeding rotation started the tears again this morning. They've been flowing off and on all day. Thankfully, I still have two little guys and a cat that are doing their level best to cheer me up. I'm just worried for their well-being now - Kayla was the seventh pet we have lost in fourteen months - not a good time to be one of ElCuervo's dog and cat family."

Well, life goes on, and as with this interview, Alan made every possible effort to conclude our interview, in spite of his setback in life. So, I asked him, "*In your own opinion, what do you think sets PCLinuxOS apart from other Linux distros?*" The answer? In short, Texstar, coder extraordinaire and perfectionist of the highest order. The mantra, "**It will be ready when it's ready**" says it all.

### What particular flavor of PCLinuxOS do you like best, and why?

KDE all the way. In my opinion, Texstar has done an incredible job of creating and maintaining it as the most stable, well-crafted, and finely-tuned desktop environment in all of Linuxdom. I have always appreciated fine craftsmanship in all endeavors, and Texstar's KDE work is the gold standard of Linux. He started with a great product, and through all the years I've been using it, he has only made it better.

I try to like some of the others, and not just by trying them out in VBox but installing to the hard drive. Yes, there are many nice DE's with lots of hard work



put into them, and more to be appreciated. It has been said by others before, though: the PCLinuxOS Control Center is unsurpassed in flexibility and, well, control! I admit I'm a control freak, and having spent a great deal of time learning the ins and outs of the PCC, so I am reluctant to go digging through the menus of Gnome, etc. I guess that just means I am as reluctant to change as anyone else, but really, I DO keep trying. And maybe, someday, I'll be convinced otherwise.

BTW, one of the ways I enhanced my knowledge of the command line was by turning on Options > Display Logs in PCC. Following those real-time "undercover" commands in that way has made it possible for me to fall back on a good ol' terminal in many of my forays into those other desktop environments, rather than dig around through sometimes obtuse GUI menus - heck, sometimes it's even easier in KDE!

### What gives you the most delight in our forum?

Finding a question that I spent a long time solving for myself and helping someone else solve it. Sure, there is the jocular and comradeship, and I feel very much part of a community there, but nothing spins my crank like helping another person get a positive result.

### What would be your message to all PCLinuxOS users in this New Year?

This year, 2011 was a bummer in so many ways, not the least of which was the loss of our dear friend, Joble. We have all suffered losses in this past year,

and I hope we can all use those experiences to remember how interconnected we are, and how much we depend on "the kindness of others". I will be doing my best to model my own interaction with other people with the same grace and dignity that Joble showed everyone.

And that, dear readers, is Alan Kemp ... our EICuervo.



*Alan Kemp and Zorro in one of their dearest moments*



## Disclaimer

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# Gnome 2.32: Metacity Window Manager

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

Metacity is a lightweight window manager written by [Havoc Pennington](#) from Red Hat. The first version was 2.3, which was released in 2001. It is implemented with the GTK+ 2.x toolkit, and so integrates well with the GNOME 2.x platform. In fact, the intention is to remove the traditional separation between window manager and desktop, and present to the user a single desktop interface. Before the introduction of Metacity in GNOME 2.2, GNOME used [Enlightenment](#) (e16) and then [Sawfish](#) as its window manager.

Metacity was the window manager used by default in the GNOME desktop environment until GNOME 3, where it was replaced by [Mutter](#).

From the [Gnome 2.2 Release Notes](#):

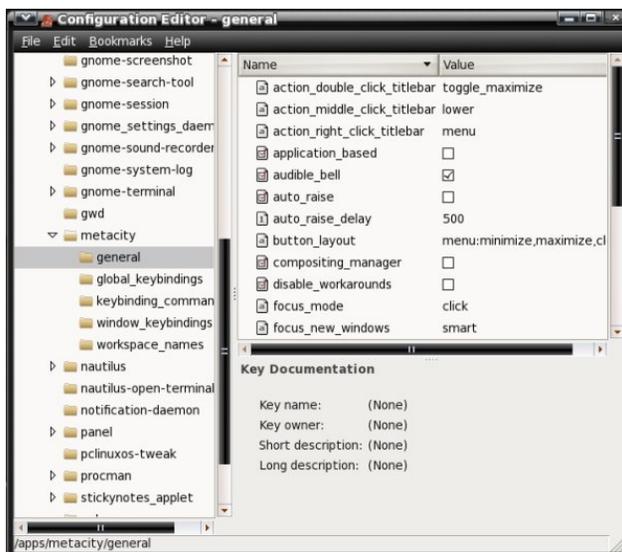
*"GNOME 2.2 officially incorporates the Metacity window manager, a fully integrated window manager that uses GTK+ for UI elements, communicates tightly with the panel and other desktop elements, and is configured straight from the GNOME preferences dialogs.*

*At the same time, all interaction between the window manager and the desktop is done via documented standards (see [Section 6 — Standards Compliance](#)), so you can substitute the window manager of your choice from a long list of available options: [Sawfish](#), [fvwm2](#), [icewm](#), [Waimea](#), [Openbox](#), are just some of them."*

Metacity window manager is the default in PCLinuxOS Zen Mini edition. In the window below, I used `wmctrl` to show the window manager in use.

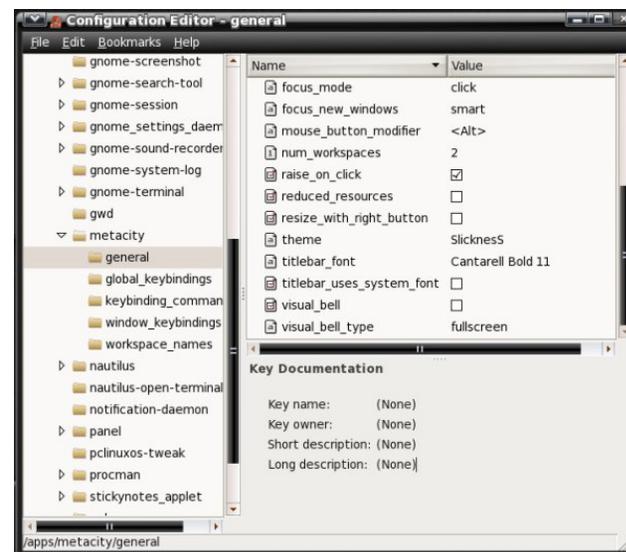


To configure the Metacity settings, you can open a terminal and enter `gconf-editor`. The GNOME



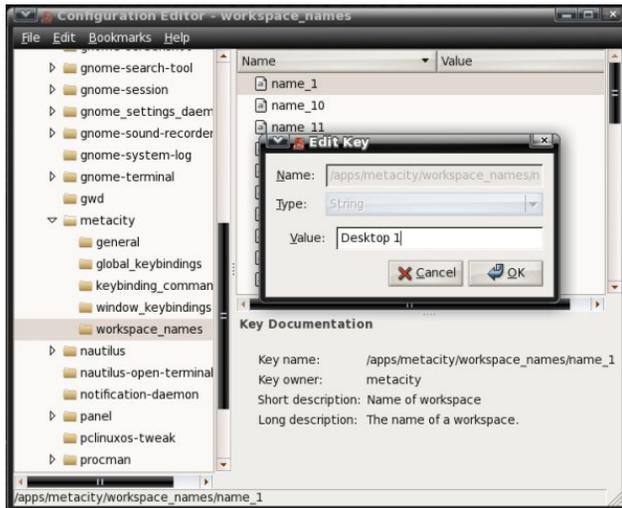
Configuration Editor window will then appear. You can get the same results by launching the Configuration Editor from the menu, System > Preferences > Configuration Editor. Once launched, open the apps folder in the left pane, then scroll down and open the metacity folder to see the configuration categories.

The general category gives us access to the compositing manager option as well as a few other audio and visual options.



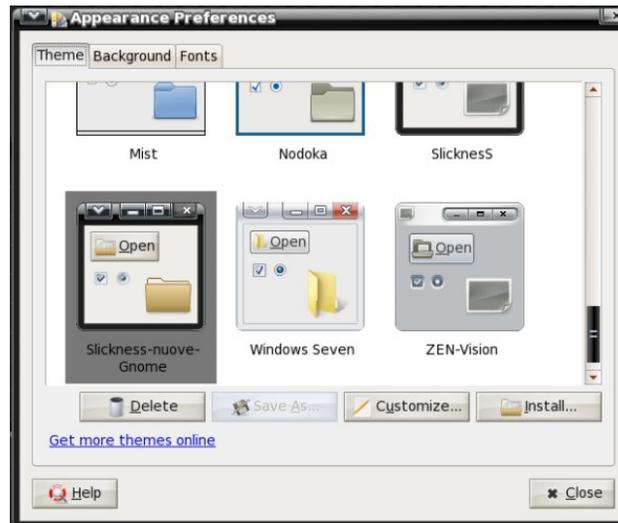
To change the values in any entry, double-click the entry in the right pane and a preferences dialog window will appear for that entry. The choices will be different for each entry, depending on whether the values are boolean, integer or a string value. In the window below, we see a string value entered for workspace 1 under workspace\_names options.

Although “Desktop 1” is the new value entered, it could be any descriptor.



To see a few more options, and to more easily configure Metacity, we can install the package pclinixos-tweak. After installing the package, we can launch it by going to the menu, System > Administration > PCLinuxOS Tweak. Then navigate in the left pane to Desktop > Windows. In the window shown below, I have just clicked the Enable Metacity’s Compositing feature box. A dialog window immediately appears with the message “To enable the compositing feature of metacity, you should manually disable Visual Effects in “Appearance””.

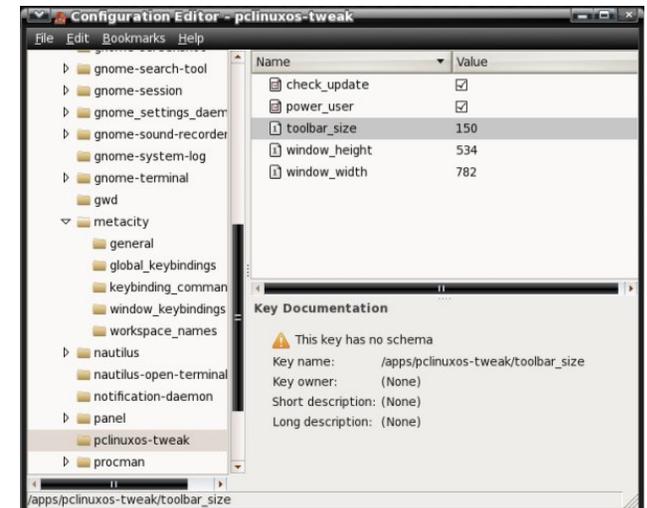
The dialog window is referring to a tab which no longer appears in the Gnome Appearance Preferences settings unless compiz is enabled. (From the menu, System > Preferences > Appearance).



Using the PCLinuxOS Tweak tool, we can set transparency levels for active and inactive windows, enable or disable use of a Metacity window theme, enable or disable compositing and set window titlebar actions with just a few mouse clicks.



And, going back to Gnome’s Configuration Editor, there are five options for the PCLinuxOS Tweak tool listed there.



The addition of the pclinixos-tweak package gives us a few more Metacity configuration options we don't have in Gnome's Configuration Editor.

## Want To Help?

Would you like to help with the PCLinuxOS Magazine? Opportunities abound. So get involved!

You can write articles, help edit articles, serve as a "technical advisor" to insure articles are correct, create artwork, or help with the magazine's layout.

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<http://www.pclinixos.com/forum/index.php?board=34.0>

**MyPCLinuxOS Forum:**

<http://mypclinixos.com/forum/index.php?board=157.0>

# Screenshot Showcase



*Posted by Pags, December 9, 2011, running KDE4.*

# Forum Foibles: PCLOS Happy

My box is **happy** with PCLinuxOS **daacosta**

The community is fantastic, the software is bug-free, and the ranks are filled with **happy** Windows converts. **ayearhasgone**

**Happy** computing to you all! **Jeddaboy**

We have another **happy** PCL user! **frazelle09**

Hi all, I'm so **happy** to join the forum. **potchan**

I've been around since somewhere in December and am also very **happy** with PCLinuxOS. **sandyv**

No virus, no malware, no spyware, a **happy** online community -- what's there not to love? **plankton172**

But surprisingly for me I have (or feel) real friends here in the forum. And I feel **happy**, you know, and thank you, people. **uncleV**

I'm really **happy** with PCLOS, but I am a bit new still. I love how either everything works or it is usually easy to fix, and it looks snazzy. I also love all the support, this forum is awesome! **aldendino**

Ultimately, I'm super **happy** with the 2010 PClos, been running PClos since the 2007 release and have not found anything I like better. **captain\_zero**



Greetings from a very **happy** user **Benny.W**

I have installed PCLinuxOS and I am **happy** that now I have switched to the Linux world from that of Windows. **pmurdia**

Here's one **happy** guy using PCLOS. **SilentSoul**

I plan to be a supporting member and look forward to many years of **happy** computing with PCLOS. **Bullitt**

Look forward to **happy** times ahead... Thanks to the Team who developed. **zbedeeboss**

I am very **happy** with this distribution, I want to thank the community for the great work **pclxd30s**

I am **happy** using PCLinuxOS and I am **happy** to be part of this great community. **Archie**

Hello Texstar and thanks for the excellent PCLinuxOS, I'm **happy** to be on this forum. **as**

**happy** PCLos-ing **DeBaas**

After testing various distros recently I discovered PCLinuxOS and I am very **happy** with it. **Fero31**

PS. I am very **happy** with PCLOS. It works like charm. **idan.slack**

I am just so overwhelmed and **happy** with PCLinuxOS. I would not switch to any thing else, no exceptions. **moniac**

*I want to be happy  
But I won't be happy*

*Till I get PCLOS*

MP3

OGG

*I want to be happy  
But I won't be happy*

*Till I get PCLOS*

*It really is snappy  
So very very snappy*

*Why don't you get it too*



*It really is snappy  
So very very snappy*

*Why don't you get it too*

*The other distros  
May look just fine*

*But PCLOS is the top of the line*



*The other distros  
May look just fine*

*But PCLOS is the top of the line*

*I'm gonna be happy  
PCLOS happy*

*Just say yes and be happy too*

*I'm gonna be happy  
PCLOS happy*

*Just say yes and be happy too*

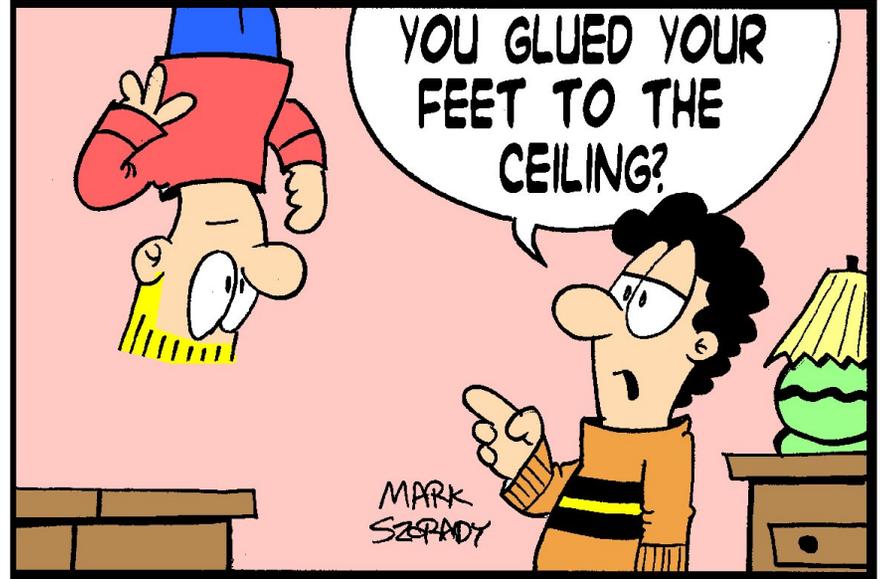
# Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

Double Take

by Mark Szorady



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Find at least seven differences between cartoons.

Answers on Page 14.

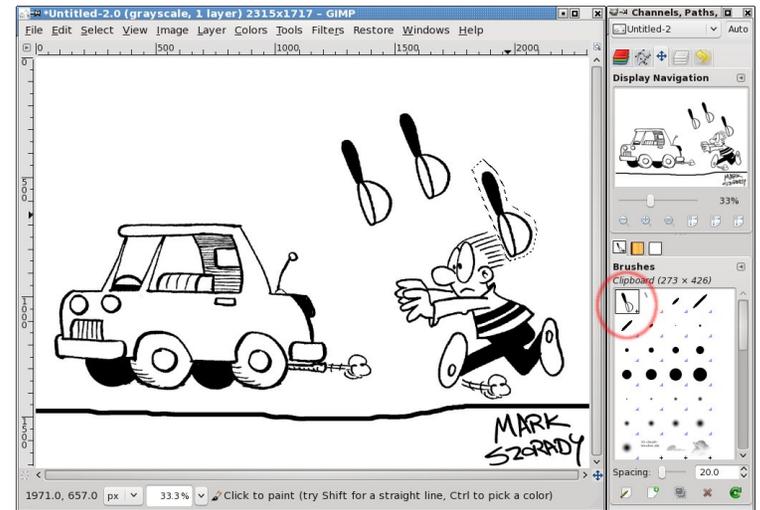
## Mark's Quick Gimp Tip



Create a new paint brush on the fly! It's easy to do with Gimp!

Sometimes, you want a unique brush in order to create a visual effect of some sort. You may see part of an image and use that as a new brush. Well, The Gimp does this right from its clipboard. Simply select the area you want to use as a new paint brush. Then, select **Edit > Copy**. The selected image is copied to Gimp's clipboard and pops up in the brush menu as the first brush selection. You can see an example of this in

one of my cartoons at right I've selected the man's hat and copied it to the clipboard. It's now available (see red highlighted circle). I then selected the brush and was able to paint a new hat with the brush tool. This new hat was dropped in with one click. But I could also hold down the mouse and paint a wavy sort of image using the hat shape. It's a fast and easy way to create brush effects in Gimp on the fly. And it's a lot of fun. Experiment and enjoy.



-Mark Szorady is a nationally syndicated cartoonist with [georgetown.com](http://georgetown.com). He blogs at [georgetown.com/blog](http://georgetown.com/blog). Email Mark at [georgetown@gmail.com](mailto:georgetown@gmail.com).

# Using PCLinuxOS In a High School Classroom

by Jim Wilkinson (jimwilk)

After a career teaching mathematics to high school students around New Zealand, I retired at the end of 2004. For most of the next 7 years, I continued to work as a “relieving teacher” at my last school. Other countries refer to relieving teachers as “supply teachers” or “substitute teachers.” Responding to a telephone call at around 6.50 am, I would then head off for a day in the classroom, standing in for someone who might be ill, or on a training course.

On arriving at school at around 8.15 am, I might find that I am to teach classes in mathematics, English, French, Maori, social sciences, science, technology, computing etc. The lessons would have been prepared by the absent teacher, and it is my task to get the students started, give them the work, and supervise.

Feilding High School has some 1400 students and is

situated in the small rural town of Feilding – just west of the City of Palmerston North in the southern North Island.

The photo below shows part of Feilding, with the high school campus outlined. The pale green field in the left foreground is the field hockey artificial turf. Until recently, my wife and I lived at the right hand end of the turf, in the little curved street. Three hockey balls broke windows in our house and at night time, the floodlights meant that after dark gardening was perfectly possible. The High School also has two training farms nearby so that students – mainly from rural communities – can study agriculture. A boarding hostel accommodates around 150 students from outlying areas.

In my last two years as a relieving teacher, I started taking my laptop along to school and demonstrating PCLinuxOS through the roof mounted projectors in each classroom. One real attention grabber was Extreme Tux Racer. I made sure to demonstrate the

use of LibreOffice, Firefox, and Thunderbird, plus Digikam and Gimp.

Recently I began taking along copies of the 2011.06 KDE live CD and giving them out to keen students. One 13 year old boy took home his copy of the distro, and installed it in his own machine. He was able to sort out dual booting with XP. He later told me that his parents were most impressed with the fact that

he could browse the web safely with PCLinuxOS and Firefox.

At the end of the 2011 academic year, I announced that I would not be available for relief teaching in the following year. Early in 2012, (I believe on a birthday that I share with Texstar), I will reach 72. Time to hang up the white board pens and spend more time helping my wife in our garden. Therefore, I will not get the opportunity to demonstrate PCLinuxOS to eager and receptive minds. However, if any other members of our forum are able to show off our favourite distro, I can thoroughly recommend it.

In closing, here is a photo of one of my mathematics classes from 2004. Followers of Rugby Union might recognize the tall student, seated in the front row. He now plays for the NZ “All Blacks” as one of the lineout jumpers. This group of 15 year old students were in Year 11. I called them “11 Wonderful” and they were a fantastic class to teach.



## About Jim Wilkinson



Two PCLinuxOS users from New Zealand ... Jim and Rita Wilkinson

Jim (a.k.a. JimWilk) has been a keen user of PCLinuxOS since the days of version 0.93 when a fellow Kiwi from Nelson drew his attention to its existence. Progression was made through 2007, 2010 and, finally, in June, to 2011.06 KDE. We have three computers between the two of us – all three of which are running the latest version. Along the way, other distros have been tried, but now, it seems that we are both here to stay.

As was reported in the forums recently, we celebrated our 46th wedding anniversary on December 4 this year. Well, here we are, at a family wedding three years ago.

## Answers to Mark Szorady's Double Take:

- (1) Hair longer in back;
- (2) Upside down hair shorter;
- (3) Shirt stripes different;
- (4) Drawer lower;
- (5) Lamp stripe thinner;
- (6) "Shoes" changed to "feet";
- (7) Eyes different



## Screenshot Showcase



Posted by exploder, December 11, 2011, running KDE4.

# I've Just Had A Horrible Run In With Windoze 7...

by Dragynn

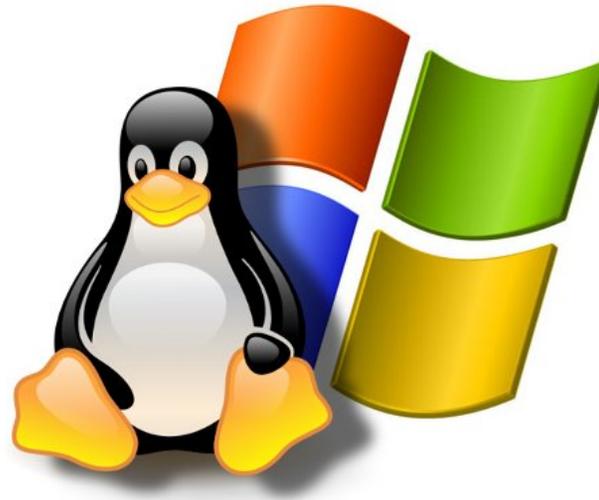
And it was truly a moment where I realized how grateful I should be.

My neighbor's mom, a nice little old lady, got an HP Mini, a little netbook with an Atom CPU and a gig of ram, asks me to look at her machine ... (arrgh) ... Windoze 7. In the first place, Windoze 7 should not be on a computer with specs this low. It was so eaten up with malware, trojans, OEM garbageware, toolbars (spyware) ... OMG ... it was running over 70 processes at idle, using 700-800 MB of RAM. If you even touched anything, the CPU spiked to 100%, and the mouse jumped all over the screen. Killed malware processes re-spawn themselves instantly, and she's already been locked out of un-installing programs.

I just couldn't do it; it was too much work. I told her I'd be happy to wipe the whole thing and install something that worked, but no way I'm cleaning up that mess.

And she's a little old lady. All she does is surf a bit, play some games, occasionally skype to her family ... there is no way that somebody like that should have her machine in that kind of state, in such a short amount of time. What a huge scam that is. It makes me a little sick to ponder on it for too long.

Then I come home to my shiny PCLinuxOS desktop, 100 times faster than her machine on hardware that's half a decade old (a lifetime in Moore's Law-years), humming along at barely over 100 mb of ram at idle. It has never known a virus, any software I choose to install has been specifically packaged for



my system, and absolutely safe...and FREE. Laptops that are over a decade old, and have 1/4 of the memory of her machine, run better than hers ever will.

So, thank you. Thank you Texstar and all the PCLinuxOS devs and contributors, for freeing me from the nightmare that is that terrible corporate cartel and their lifelong death-grip on my wallet.

## Update #1

I fired up a Live USB. She likes it a lot. I had to add a wireless package I missed putting on the ISO, and I was having some small issue with right-click. I don't ever use the touchpad on my laptops (I use a USB travel mouse), so I'll have to dig around in some settings, I reckon. Oh man it is soooooo much quicker on her machine. It's just unreal. She says it never ran that fast, even brand new with Windoze. It

even dims the backlight properly on this little machine, with no configuring needed. Ethernet was detected immediately when I plugged that in, and the wireless connected instantly, once I had the broadcom package installed. In fact, there were several managed and un-managed wireless signals found, and it auto-connected immediately to the strongest un-managed signal.

## Update #2

Ya know, I almost forgot to mention one of the coolest parts of the whole deal. It may seem like a small thing, but having taken my first baby steps towards learning some developer skills, I greatly appreciate the thoughtfulness and effort that went into this:

When I first tried to connect to wi-fi and didn't have the package I mentioned already installed, the network center didn't just give me a message that it wouldn't work. **The error message told me the exact package I was missing!** It further added a nice note that if there were any issues I couldn't resolve to please contact Texstar. So there was zero guess-work on my part. What an epic win moment that was. I looked like a total genius, when in reality the software was rolling it's eyes and saying "yeah, yer f'ing brilliant thar Dragynn ... figgered it out all on yer own, didja?"

## Update #3

Just a postscript to end this early lil' Christmas story:

After a couple of days of using the Live USB, yesterday afternoon my neighbor brought her machine over again, and said that she now would

like to fully install PCLinuxOS on her machine and **wanted me to wipe Windoze 7 completely off her machine**, since it would hardly even boot anymore.

BOO-YAHHH!!! I GOT TO METAPHORICALLY SACRIFICE AN INSTALL OF WINBLOZE 7!! MUAHAHAHA!! POW! SMASH!

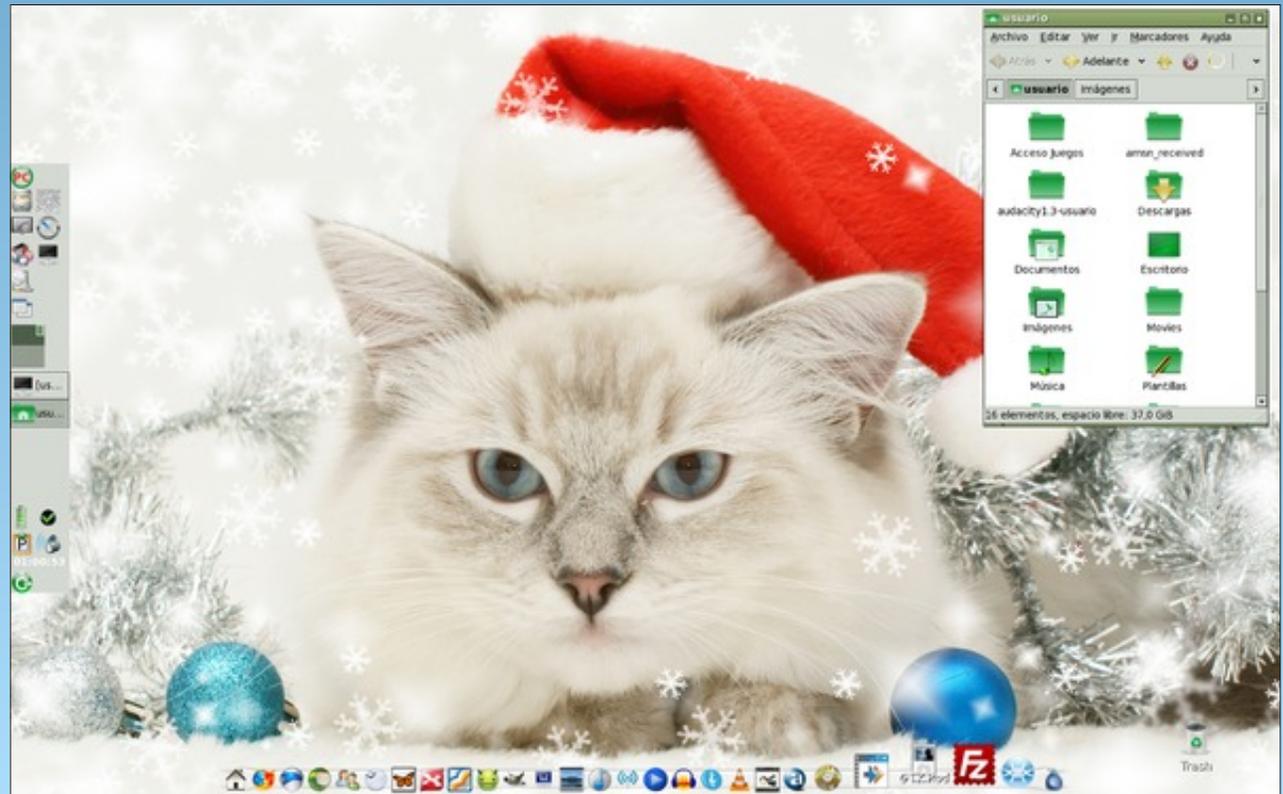


First, I stomped the NTFS partitions to death with G-parted, re-formatted to ext4 and a small swap part'. Then, since she doesn't require too many programs, I installed Zen 11.11.1 (the mini). I ran full updates, added her wi-fi package, VLC, Exaile, Abiword, Pidgin, Skype, Gnome-games, GTKam, Cheese, and a couple more. The machine has Intel graphics, so there were no extra drivers to add. It now idles nicely at ~120 mb of ram or so, everything nice and tight and quick. The difference between this and the former Windoze 7 install, is nothing less than mind blowing.

She left to go back home to Ohio early this morning, with a fine working virus-free machine. She will have total bragging rights when she and her church-lady

amigas get together next time and talk about her southern adventures. She got PCLOS'ed in Texas, and things will never be the same.

## Screenshot Showcase



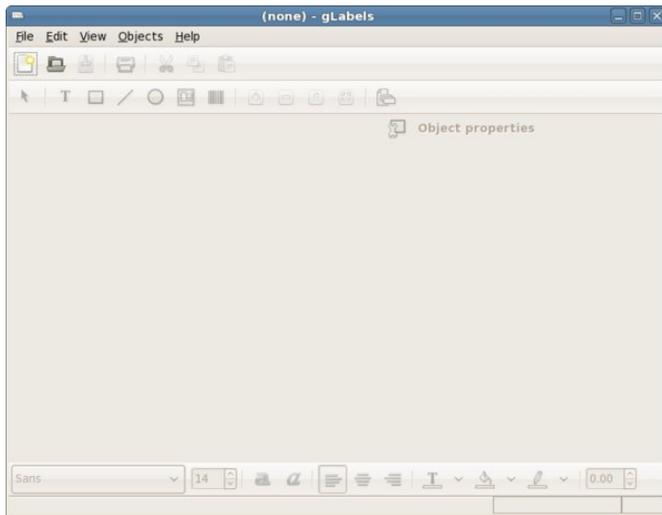
Posted by Crow, December 1, 2011, running LXDE.

# Gnome 2.32: gLabels Label Designer

by Meemaw

One program available in Gnome is gLabels. It is a very simple program that can do any kind of label or business card. While written for the Gnome desktop environment, gLabels will also run quite nicely on any other graphical Linux desktop environment. Like many Linux applications released under the GPL, it does one thing, and does it well. Unless you have Gnome 3, the version you are likely to see in the repo is version 2.3.0.

When you first open gLabels you get the following screen:

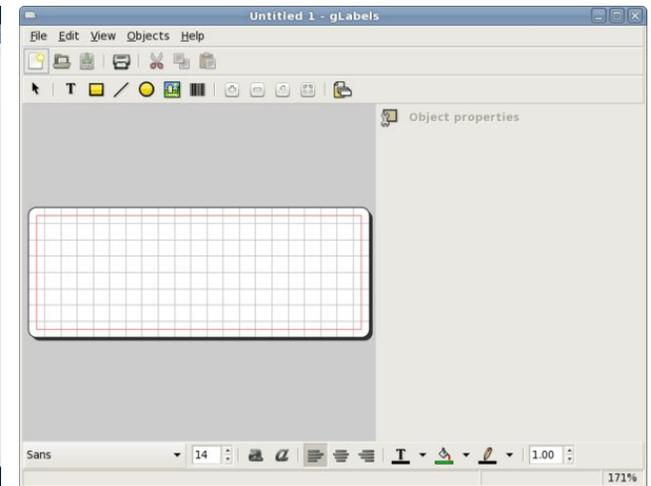


Notice that the only tools that are active are the 'New' and 'Open' buttons. When you click on 'New,' you will get a screen that asks which label type you wish to use.



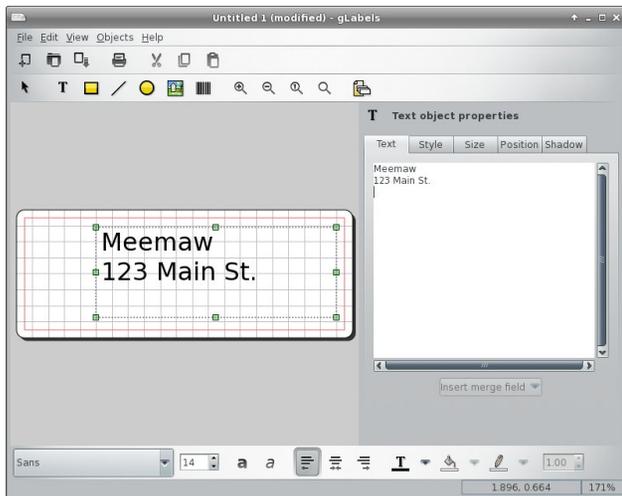
You can search for the one you want in the 'Search All' tab, or you can design your own in the 'Custom' tab. Any label you use will be saved in the 'Recent' tab, so it will be easy to find later. I chose the Avery 5160 address label because that's what I use the most. You will also get a screen asking if you want your chosen label oriented horizontally or vertically, and another window giving you a page preview of the sheet you have chosen. After clicking on the OK button to verify your choices, the window at right top is visible.

Notice that now all the tools are active. We have in the top toolbar: New, Open, Save, Print, Cut Copy and Paste. In the second line of tools you will see: Selection tool, Text tool, Add Rectangle, Add Line, Add Circle, Add Image and Add Barcode. The four buttons to the right of that are the sizing buttons, where you can increase or decrease the size of your label in the window (zoom in, zoom out, actual size

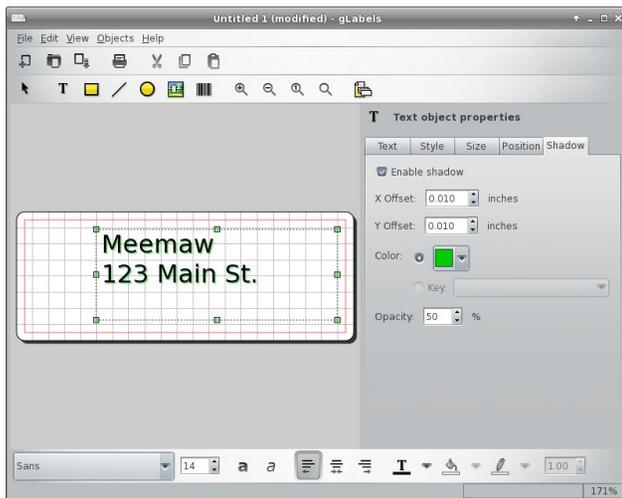


and fit in window). The last button in that row is the Mail Merge Properties button.

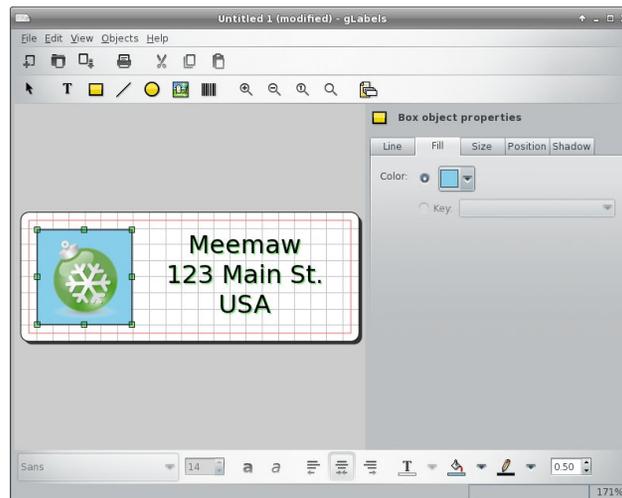
If you click the Add Text button, your pointer will change to a plus sign with the word Text next to it, and you can click on the label to place the text frame. Wherever you click will place the top left corner of the text frame. At right, the text formatting window will open and allow you to enter your text (the first tab in the section on the right is the text tab), then use the other tabs to format your text as desired. In addition, the toolbar across the bottom also includes text formatting items. You can always increase the size of your text frame by grabbing one of the corners and dragging and move it by hovering over the text until the cursor turns into a 4-armed cross, then clicking and dragging. In the other tabs, you can set the style and size of the text and the position of the text frame. At the bottom, you can change the alignment of your text.



One thing that is in gLabels that I haven't seen in other programs is a specific tab just for text shadow. You have to enable the shadow, and then choose the offset color and opacity of the shadow. I made the shadow green so you could see it.



Using the toolbar at the top, you can also insert a rectangle, line, circle or picture into your label. Each item you choose opens a set of tabs at the right side of the window with your configuration choices. In the screenshot below, I added a blue rectangle and inserted a photo of a green Christmas decoration on top of it. The rectangle is selected and can be edited.

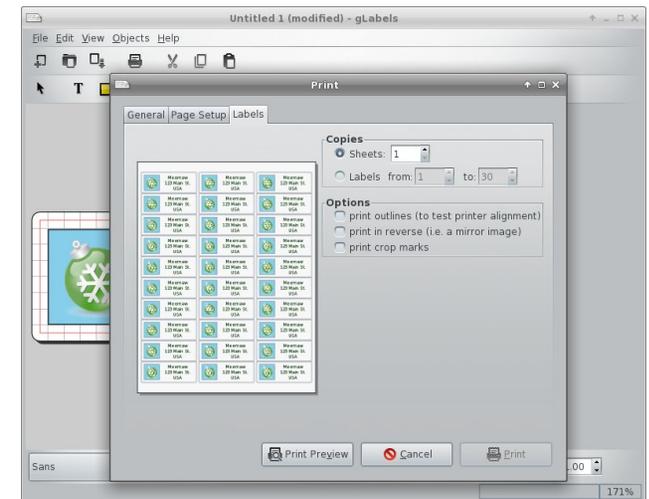


Don't forget to save your label design in a convenient place.

Printing is easy, as well. Clicking the print icon gives you a window that lets you designate your printer, verify your page setup (paper size, type, printer tray to use, orientation, etc.), and choose how many labels you want printed. The third tab, 'Labels,' shows you a preview of your page, and lets you print a certain number of labels on a page, or a certain number of full pages. I have printed 15 of one label on the top of one page, then turned the page upside

down and printed 15 of another label on the remainder using a 30-label sheet like this.

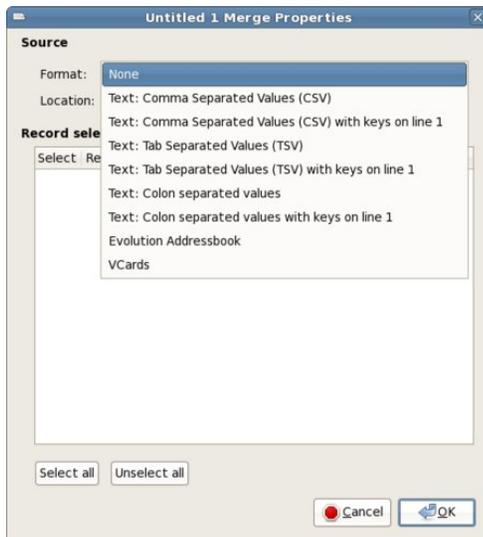
This latter feature is handy if you have a sheet of labels that have some labels missing. You can start printing from the first available label, and print out as many labels as you like (or use the rest of the labels on the sheet with missing labels) on the sheet with the missing labels. It sure beats having to throw away a sheet of labels just because some labels are missing. Just select the radio button next to "Labels" under "Copies." Then, adjust the label number you want to start printing from, to skip the missing labels. Label 1 is in the upper left corner, label 3 is in the upper right corner, label 28 is in the lower left corner, and label 30 is in the lower right corner.



While it's nice to print a sheet of return address labels, we usually want to print a group of mailing labels with different names and addresses using a mail merge list. Merging a mailing list in gLabels is

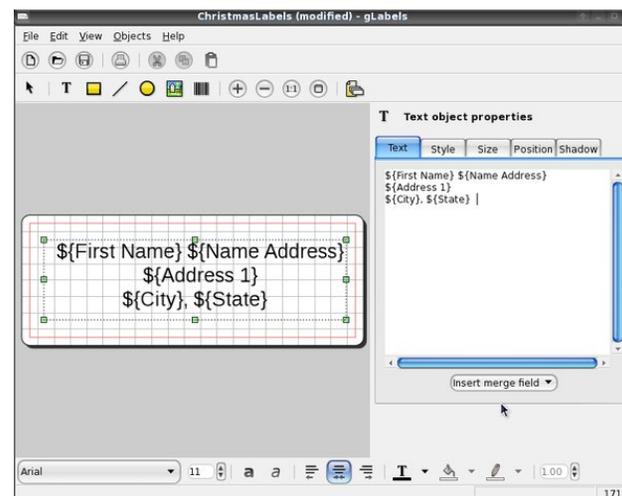
actually fairly easy. Many people use LibreOffice to do spreadsheets and labels. While I use LibreOffice for labels most of the time, I recently had gLabels open because I had some address labels designed in it. So, I decided to use it for the mailing labels for my Christmas cards. Click that last icon in the top toolbar, Edit Merge Properties.

Assuming you have your mailing list in a spreadsheet, the first thing you need to do to use it in gLabels is to open it in the spreadsheet program you use, then save your spreadsheet as a comma or tab-separated text file. In LibreOffice, I saved mine as MeemawsList.csv. You can also use your Evolution addressbook or Vcards if you use those programs.



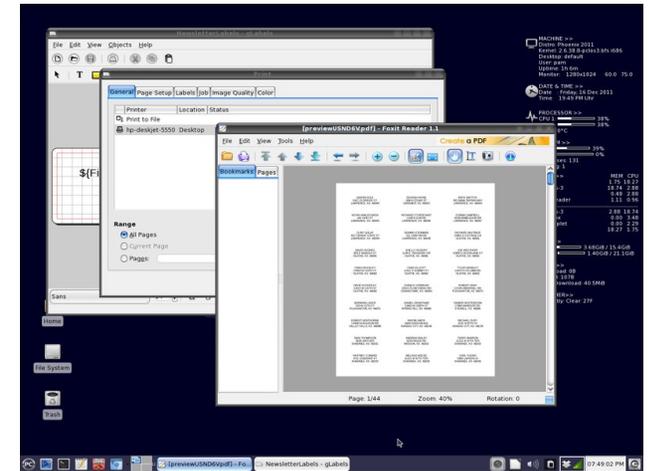
Select the type of file you are using and then designate the location of that file. You can even

choose which records you want to include in your merge by checking or unchecking the 'Select' column in the merge properties box. (I don't send Christmas cards to my whole address book.) Put in your text frame, then click 'Insert merge field' at the bottom of the text frame properties window. Choose your fields, and arrange them in your label the way you want them. Save your file.



You can now go to Print. When you click on the Labels tab you will see a merged sheet. If you click on Print Preview at the bottom of that window, gLabels will display the merged labels as a PDF document in whatever reader you are using. The Print Preview might take a minute or two, if your list is long (top right).

Having used more than one word processing program for labels, I will say that I found gLabels to actually be easier. I once had a glitch during a larger printing. My newsletter mailing at work was almost



1,300 labels. During the printing, I found that one sheet of labels had fed through the printer improperly, and all the addresses on that sheet printed over 2 labels, rather than each one on its own. I went back into the merge properties window, selected only those addresses that misprinted, and printed a new sheet. Perfect!

You don't have to use it for just address labels! Some of the pages made today are also business cards, name badges, file folder labels, disk and tape labels, CD case plates and even table tent cards. You can also create custom designs on one of the many full sheet labels or plain paper. Let your imagination be your guide!



# New Year's Fun: Hard Drive Upgrade

by Gary Ratliff, Sr. (eronstuc)

In my efforts to replace a failing hard drive, I soon learned that the PATA drives were now considered to be obsolete. You may see the PATA drives by looking at the article from the August 2008 issue of The PCLinuxOS Magazine, called [Uriel Unleashed](#). It details my fixing an old computer I purchased for \$5.00.

These were common from the time that the floppy drive became obsolete. They have either a 40 or 80 line grey ribbon cable, which connects the drive to the mother board.

After doing some research, I found a person who was going to sell me a 320 gig PATA drive for \$95.00, plus shipping. The drive was failing to load several different versions, one by one, and only an install of Debian seemed to make the drive functional.

The message from the system at boot-up was getting annoying. After seeing it once or twice, I knew that the drive failure was imminent. I also did not need to have the constant reminder of my lost systems. So I just detached the power connection to the drive, and the system was left with only had the 100 gig hard drive, upon which the Windows was installed.

This freed one of the connections to one of the two cables, and I had a brilliant idea. Now you know that I'm in trouble. As my late wife used to tell me: "If you're such a genius, why do you keep doing such stupid stuff?" I had a box full of old hard drives and wanted to learn what was on them. My idea was to

attach one of the drives to the freed end of the grey cable, boot into Gparted and have the system tell me what, if anything, was on the drive.

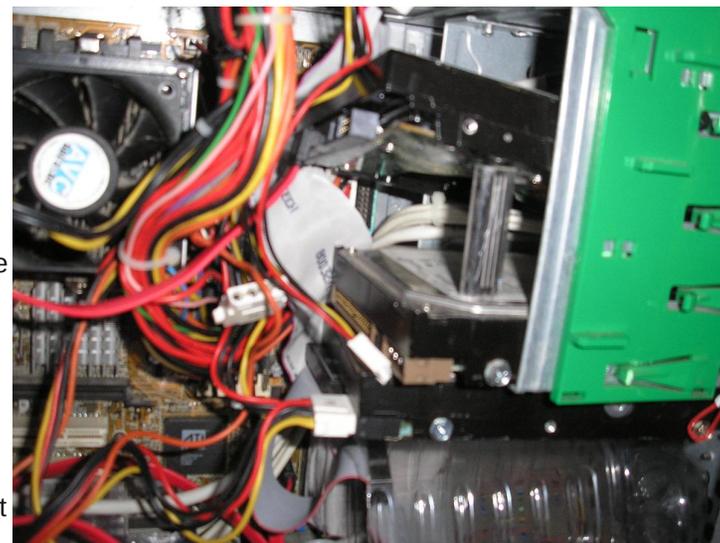
One by one, I learned the size and contents of my box of close to a dozen drives until I came to my very first hard drive from the first Windows system I had purchased in 1995.

This had a whopping 1.37gigs. The view reported from Gparted was that this drive was faulty and did I want the program to try to fix it? Ok, why not? Boy, did it ever fix it! Once the live CD was removed, the system now reports that no operating system was found. By this time, a message that one of my hard drives was near imminent failure would be refreshing. Now, this is funny, or at least it is funny to you. At the moment though, I wasn't doing much laughing at all.

By placing the CD back in the system and booting up, I learned that my once proud Windows Media Center Partition with nearly 87 gigs of programs and data now has now become one with 1.37gigs. So that number seems familiar. Now you know why you are constantly advised to backup your systems! The next few hours were spent climbing about, looking into closets, trying to find my set of Recovery DVDs for the HP system. You should be rolling on the floor laughing at this. Do you really know just how much effort it takes to recover a system that you have used for years, after fixing it to work just the way they want it to?

Oh well, the DVDs were located and a recovery operation successfully performed.

In addition to finding a replacement drive, my examination of the details of the system info revealed that there was a SATA system enabled. I had six channels and had only four IDE devices attached. I made a visit to Walmart.com and learned that a 500 gig SATA drive could be purchased for just over \$45.00. This was a bare bones system. The drive is in a box, no instructions. There was a video which showed just how easy it was to install a SATA drive. Also, a new cable would be required. I soon found a 22 page article which told me there were now three different versions of SATA, and since the HP system was manufactured in 2005, this had to be the very first version of SATA.



Here we see that one of the most obvious differences between the SATA and PATA drives is that the cable has only seven lines instead of at least 40. In this picture, the thick red cable is the

data cable. There is also a different type of power connection to the Sata drive. At the top of this picture, you may see the L shaped data connector. Beside it is the power connector. The power to the PATA drives is by the more familiar 4 pin molex connectors.

Installing the Sata drive proved to be as easy as depicted in the video, which was provided from the Walmart.com website. The cable and the drive cost a total of \$56.00, which is way below the \$95.00 for a much smaller PATA system and the technology is current. Now it is merely difficult to find a PATA. Soon, it will be nearly impossible.

### Webcam Bonanza & Shopping Tip

Also, here is a tip which you may find helpful if you do any gift shopping. A gift to a person who lives far away could cost big bucks to ship. However, if you purchase it from Walmart.com they will ship it to the closest branch store for free. I have since purchased two more webcams for my computer network. The additional ones were c110m Logitech webcams which costs \$18.88. I got one for my new computer and another for my son, Michael, who now lives in Nashville, Tennessee. I have discovered the joy of video chatting, so my daughter in Hawaii, my grandson Charlie who is in college in Athens, Ga, my daughter Mishelle (who lives in the same small town), and my son Gary II all have webcam equipped computers. Only my brother Dave, who is hosting Michael while he attends chef school in Nashville and Michael are without webcams.

If you examine the size of the box which the c110m comes in, you soon learn that the UPS box into

which it will fit will take \$14.95 postage. Michael told me the address of the nearest store, but if you enter it in WalMart's store search engine, a map of the stores near your friend will be shown. So, to save on your gift costs, you just tell the person to whom you wish to send the gift to go to their nearest store and pick it up in the Site to Store Dept. It's always fun to save money.

Santa thought I had been a good boy and since many of the USB ports on my old system were failing, I soon found that I would ask him for a new computer. I have learned how to make the new system load and use the Full Monty and Knoppix 6.5. Actually, I have installed many of the Open Source programs which I have grown attached to on the Windows 7 system. In fact, I am writing this article using LibreOffice. The new system only has SATA drives. So, like Daniel, some one may have to point out the writing on the wall as the days of PATA, like King Belshazzar, are numbered.

## Visit Us On IRC

- Launch your favorite IRC Chat Client software (xchat, pidgin, kopete, etc.)
- Go to freenode.net
- Type "/join #pclinuxos-mag" (without the quotes)

## International Community PCLinuxOS Sites



# Everything's Up-To-Date With ms\_meme

by ms\_meme

Many of you have heard the song "Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City" from the musical Oklahoma. Everybody and everything in Kansas City goes about as far as they can go.

I wrote a few new words to that song. Not singing it, but if you know the tune maybe you can hum it as you read the words.

*Everything's up to date with ms\_meme  
She's gone about as far as she can go  
She's got a new computer with two gigabytes of ram  
That's enough space for her to grow*

*Everything's like a dream for ms\_meme  
She feels like she's in a magic show  
None of her programs with each other have to compete  
Everything keeps a workin' she feels so complete*

*She can surf the net with pleasure it is so very neat  
She's gone about as far as she can go  
She's gone about as far as she can go*

About a month ago I got an email from a neighbor saying she was getting a new computer and was taking her old one to the recycling bin and did I want to fool with it before she dumped it. And like a salivating fool I said sure. It was brought to my house within the hour along with the disks etc etc etc from brand X. This gift was mystifying and Vistafying.



My husband does not compute. That is good because there is never any competition for computer time. It is bad because he thinks you just turn it on and do whatever. While I have rolled my eyes and gritted my teeth at his naivety, and I am forever grateful for the support and help he gave me and for the help and support he will continue giving me. He knows that when I am happy with my computer the whole house is happy.

Many people in the forum have aided me with various things. Some of my problems stemmed from the fact that my computer was just not powerful enough to do a lot of things I wanted to do. So I am sure those helpers are more than happy that I no longer have a slow computer to complain about. My old computer still was/is a good computer and would have seen me through. But getting this newer model was like Christmas.

Everyone knows you don't get free stuff without paying the price. And it didn't take long for the piper to appear.

I immediately wanted to see what was what. The good thing was my old monitor worked with the new computer. Next we tried my keyboard. I love my old keyboard. I have used it since 2000. It was back when they gave good keyboards. Ones that don't make any noise. But of course it didn't have the modern usb connection, so it would not work. And my mouse was the same way....no usb connector. I thought that would be easy to solve and went off to Walmart for a new keyboard and mouse.

In the mean time, in between time I needed a working computer. And I did have a working computer. It was sitting beside the new computer with all the wires etc on the desk/table. But I had to undo the monitor from the new and crawl around down on the floor unplugging and replugging to the old.

I am not complaining because most of us do this all the time. It just goes with computing. But how many times in a month is one expected to get down there? At least three or four times a day I would say.

Sounds like I knew what I was doing. Sounds like I was going step by step with just a few ups and downs under the table. Nothing could be further from the truth. And here is where I am going to mention forum member Just18. I will speak his name only once. Wouldn't want to embarrass him. But without his constant help and monitoring, I would never be relating this tale. I was never left by myself to solve something. Although he never gave help without



expecting me to learn something, he always made sure I was doing the correct procedures. I thank him and hope I retain a fraction of his lessons. He will be referred to as “the tech.”

With the new mouse and keyboard now connected I was ready to boot the new computer. And it opened up beautifully and I beheld the mysteries of an OS that I thought I had left behind three years ago. And my friend had left a lot of her secrets behind. So trusting.

Did I mention I had to go to the bios? To me the innards of my computer are actual physical places. When I access the Internet I refer to going “up to the news or up to the forum” because the choices are at the top of the screen. If I use Gimp, Inkscape or LibreOffice etc, I am going “into” the choice. Booting another install of PCLinuxOS, I imagine myself going “over to LXDE” because I see the partitions and it is “over there” to the right someplace.

When I need to go to the bios, I go down, down, down. It is like going to an old basement with no lights and a dirt floor and everything is unfamiliar and if you forget what you went down there for, you have to come back up and get the directions again. And there is a hidden passage to get you there and if you miss the F2 express you have to start all over again. On one of many, many trips there I copied in my very best handwriting everything on the boot menu, as I could not take a picture. It was like copying inscriptions from an ancient Egyptian tomb.

But I needed ...  
to go to the bios ...  
to change the order ...  
to boot the CD ...  
to partition the drive ...  
to install the OS ...  
on the house that Dell made.

But getting a bit ahead of myself.

Before I dared turn on the new computer to the internet, I needed some anti-virus. Fortunately I had a program on my old computer which was a dual boot. I transferred the exe of the anti-virus to my USB drive. Also on my USB was the live cd of 2011. I could then access the USB on the new computer and transfer the exe of the antivirus and run it. And it did work. So up and running on the new computer.

Or so I thought.

This narrative may seem confusing, mixed-up and out of order. And that is exactly how everything was happening. It seemed the new keyboard I bought did

not work. I had not realized this because I only needed the arrow keys to work in the bios. There was no reason to type. It was only after accessing the Internet and trying to type in passwords that I realized the keyboard was not working. So for the next four days I was back and forth to the store returning and buying new keyboards, connecting and disconnecting to my other computer, connecting to the tech and shedding copious tears.

And thinking “Dell = \_ell.”

Then relief came. My friend said her new computer came with a new keyboard and she gave me the original keyboard and of course it worked.



When you have been given such a nice gift from a friend, you dare not be too pushy. You must gently ask her for help and be humble when receiving. I needed her assistance with some things and had to bide my time until she was ready.

But with a tech it is different. I expected my tech to give help/advise 24/7. And business must have been rather slow for him, because he was always available and more than exceeded my expectations.

We wiped the HDD and did some partitioning and installed PCLinuxOS 2011. I say this with such ease, but for me it was not easy. But I am getting better and my understanding of the process is improving.

For the next week I went back and forth to the old computer making sure I saved what I wanted and transferred it to the newer computer.

Next my friend and I installed brand X on its partition. My friend insisted I install brand X. And because of a couple of bizarre reasons, I wanted the dual boot. That's my alibi and I'm sticking with it. I have told her all about Linux and tried to make sense of what I was doing. Mainly her response was, "I'm glad you're having fun." I must not have explained it very well.

The last thing to do was get rid of the old computer. My tech asked what I would do with it. I planned to hit the HDD with a hammer and be done with it. He suggested removing the HDD from the old and inserting into the new to give more storage. This never happened as it was not compatible. I mention it because once again I needed to unhook everything and open up the tower on the dining room table and take pictures and then put everything back together. Enter husband who did all the heavy lifting. He was ever so happy that it would not work.

We ended up wiping the old hard drive completely and setting up one new partition. I say "we", but all I did was copy paste commands into a terminal and crossed my fingers that the tech was not wiping my USB drive. So the old computer is ready to have a light Linux install if ever needed. I might just get it out and practice installing on it. And then I might not.

I have cleared my work area of all the extras and am now enjoying the computer.

There is still a lot to do with getting other things to work like I want, but the main install is completed. My old printer had a parallel port instead of the usb connector, so it can not be used. My friend donated the printer that came with the computer as she got a new one. I have yet to set it up. Am I lucky or what!

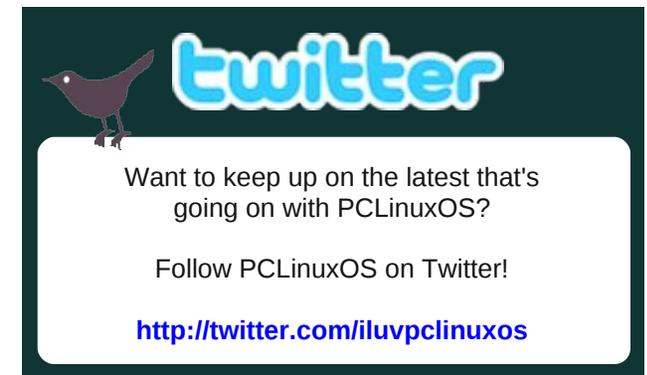
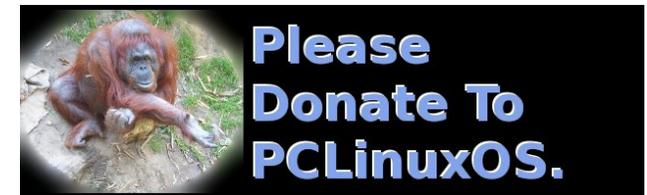


The experience I had for a month was nothing different from what others have done. But it could all have been completed in a day or two. And I know

that many of my forum friends would have come to help me in a second if they lived closer. There is something in us that wants something so badly that we will go through torture to get it. I wasn't going to give up on getting this computer to work.

While I was going through this experience, I mentioned my troubles to parnote. He was the one who suggested I write something about it. If parnote were to contact my husband and the tech to write up the experience, I wonder what it would read like. Three sides to every story.

Is this the end of my projects? Is this the end of the help I will need? Right now I'm up to date and I've gone about as far as I can go, but I don't think my favorite tech will be out of a job too soon.



# WindowMaker on PCLinuxOS: User Preferences

by Patrick G Horneker (phorneker)

Throughout this series, I have discussed configuration options for WindowMaker using the *WindowMaker Configuration Manager*. There is a second utility you can use to configure WindowMaker called *WindowMaker Preferences*.

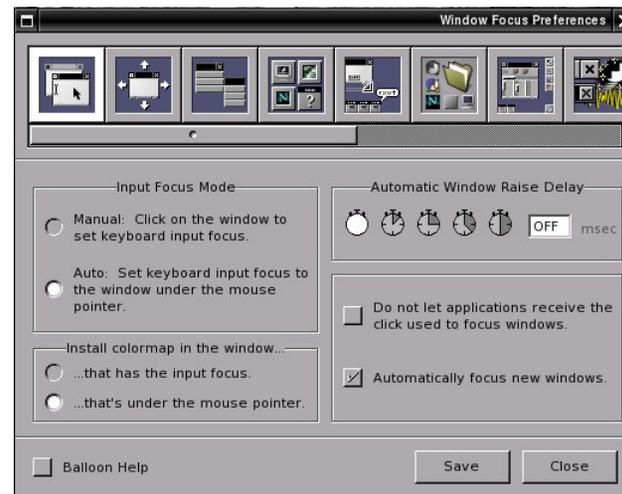
On PCLinuxOS, this utility is located at **/usr/GNUstep/Applications/WPrefs.app/WPrefs** on your hard drive.

You can launch this utility by *double clicking* on the Icon (which by default contains the WindowMaker/GNUStep logo) at the top of the Dock (which is located at the upper right hand corner of your screen, unless you moved the Dock elsewhere).



Many configurable options present here are also available in the *WindowMaker Configuration Manager*. This utility provides a convenient way to change configuration options on the fly. However, for some options, you will need to restart WindowMaker for the changes to take effect. This is not the case with the *Configuration Manager*.

On the lower left hand corner of *Preferences* is a checkbox labelled *Balloon Help*. Selecting this (and then restarting Preferences) will give you a pop-up hint as to what the icons here (and on the Clip, the Dock, and the desktop) represent.



Notice the changes made to the label on the title bar as you click on each icon within *Preferences*.

Generally, we want to leave the settings as they are for most PCLinuxOS installations for *Window Focus Preferences*.

The *colormap* option is nothing we need to worry about, unless you are running WindowMaker on very old video hardware, such as an ancient SuperVGA video board where only 256-color displays are configurable.

By default, the keyboard input focus is set to the window where the mouse pointer is located. As we defined in the last article, this setting determines if WindowMaker should automatically set the Focus for open windows, or if the user needs to click on the window to set the Focus. Though labelled as *keyboard input focus*, the focus also applies to mouse events.



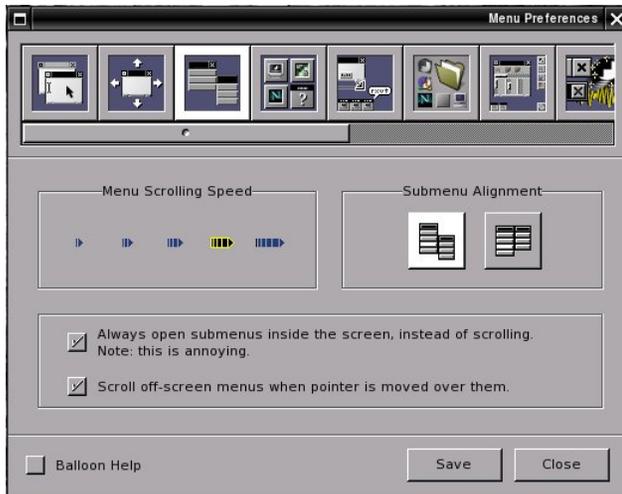
Here, there are a few more options to the *Window Handling Preferences* available in *Preferences* than in the *Configuration Manager*.

Window placement is set *visually* with Preferences where in the Configuration Manager coordinates are

entered manually. In addition, there is an additional option to enable an effect where dragging a window during a move displays an opaque version of the window being moved.

Also, notice how the layout of Preferences is more intuitive than the layout of the Configuration Manager.

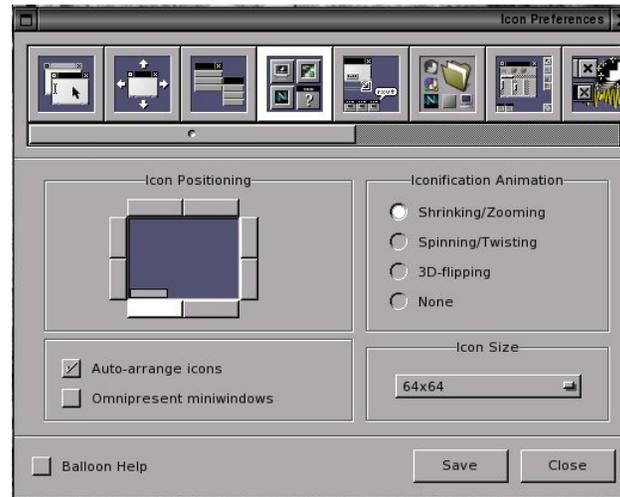
The next set of Preferences is **not** easily found in the Configuration Manager. These options have to do with the handling of the Applications Menu.



The options here are optimized for convenience of the user. The menu scroll up and down only if the displayed size of the menu is larger than the physical height of the screen in pixels. Scrolling happens when you move the mouse pointer over the opened menu beyond the top or bottom edges of the screen.

You may want to control the speed at which the menus scroll if you find the scrolling is too fast or too slow for your needs.

The selected options about opening menus should be left alone. These are set to make your WindowMaker experience more convenient.



These are the *Icon Preferences*. This has to do with how Icons representing running applications and their open windows are displayed on your desktop.

By default, Icons are displayed starting at the lower left hand corner of the Workspace (desktop), and expanding horizontally. The buttons at the edges of the preview allow you to visually select where you want Icons to be displayed on your desktop.

When application windows are minimized, by default, they zoom out to Icon size on the set of

Icons displayed on your Workspace (desktop). Only with *Preferences* can you change the animation of the icons. Here you can choose from simple zooming in and out, zooming while spinning the icon, or have the icon do a back flip when minimizing, or if you prefer, just minimize the icon without the animation.

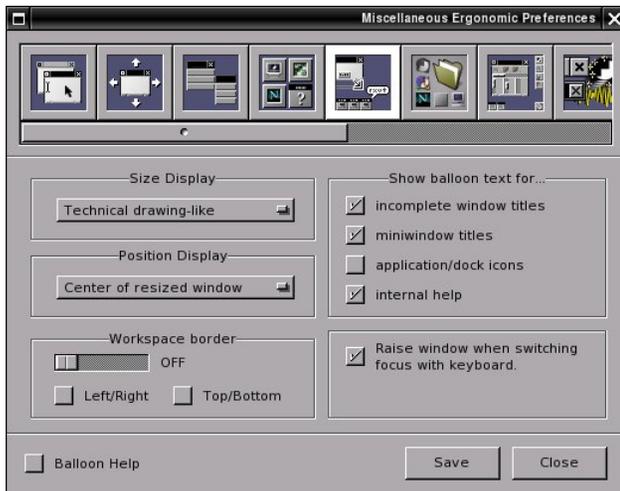
*Auto Arrange* means that when windows are minimized, Icons on the desktop are displayed in groups where each group consists of the running application and all of its opened windows. When groups of Icons are displayed, the Icon representing the running application is displayed first, then all of its running windows. This feature is enabled by default. Disabling this feature will only result in chaos. When disabled, Icons are displayed in the order the windows are opened *during the WindowMaker session*.

*Omnipresent Miniwindows* means that when windows are minimized, rather than displaying an Icon (usually associated with the running application), the *actual contents of the window* are shrunk to fit within the 64x64 space the Icon would occupy.

You can also change the default size of the displayed Icons, from 28x28 to 128x128 pixels. The installation defaults to 64x64 pixels in size.

*Miscellaneous Ergonomic Preferences* (next page, top left) has a few configurable features not found in the *Configuration Manager*.

When you resize a window, you can have WindowMaker display the sizing dimensions in a style similar to what can be found in a technical



drawing, i.e. the resized window will have the height and width displayed on the edges of the window being resized.

...or you can have the window size dimensions displayed on the center of the screen, the upper left hand corner of the screen, the upper left hand corner inside the window being resized, or not displayed at all.

When moving a window, there is an option that allows you to see the position of the upper left hand corner of the window displayed on the upper left hand corner of the screen, the upper left hand corner of the window being moved, or no display of the position at all.

*Balloon text* are similar to Tool Tips on the Windows desktop, only displayed in a cartoon-like balloon that appears when you hover your mouseover any of the following selectable options:

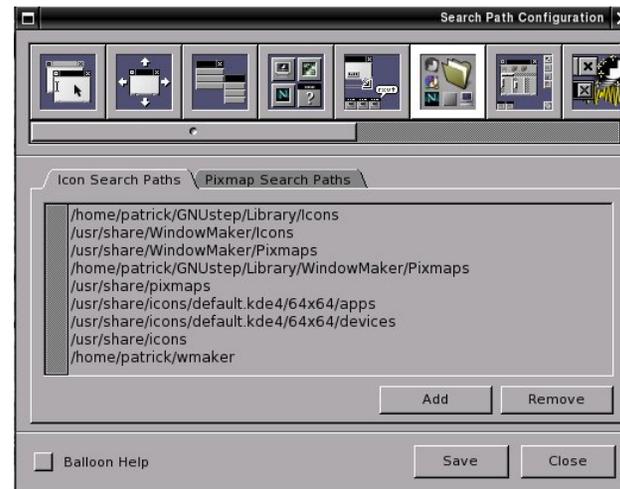
- \*Incomplete window titles (i.e. only part of the title of the window is displayed)
- \*Miniwindow Icons
- \*Application and Dock Icons (disabled by default)
- \*Internal Help (only when the Balloon Help box is checked in Preferences)

There are some options that override the settings from the *Configuration Manager*.

When you press **Alt-Tab** to switch windows, the selected window gets the keyboard and mouse Focus. This feature is enabled by default.

The other option defines the edge of the Workspace (desktop) in pixels, with edges being individually configurable. This is disabled by default.

When enabled, moving the mouse pointer within the edge tells WindowMaker to switch Workspaces (desktops).



*Search Path Configuration* allows you to set any and all directories that you want WindowMaker to access when finding Icons and Wallpapers. *Icon Search Paths* are used for assigning icon files to Icons, the Clip and the Dock. *Pixmap Search Paths* are used for assigning wallpapers (with the Configuration Manager) and background textures to Icons, titlebars, resize bars, and menus, all configurable from either the *Configuration Manager* or from *Preferences*.

By convention, **/usr/share/WindowMaker/Icons**, **/usr/share/WindowMaker/Pixmaps** and **~/.GNUstep/Library/Icons**, **~/.GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Pixmaps** are used for storing of icon files, and **/usr/share/WindowMaker/Backgrounds** and **~/.GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Backgrounds** are used for storing wallpapers.

As we can see, *Preferences* does not limit us to just the six directories for storing of graphical elements used by WindowMaker.

So why does **~/.GNUstep/Library/Icons** exist, and not **~/.GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Icons**? Because there is another window manager installable from Synaptic that is also based on the NeXT system called AfterStep.

AfterStep and WindowMaker were created about the same time (the late 1990s), share the same graphic elements, and even the same dock applications, but there are significant differences in the way the window managers are configured. AfterStep is configured *only* through text files and scripts, whereas WindowMaker has the Configuration Manager and the Preferences utility.



In the article on Workspaces, we discussed how to navigate the system set up with WindowMaker. *Preferences* shows us *visually* how to achieve the same.

There are two configurable options here not found in the *Configuration Manager*. The *Dock/Clip* have buttons that enable and/or disable adding and removing Icons from the Dock and/or the Clip. By default, you can add or remove Icons from the Dock and/or the Clip.

This set of Preferences (top center) allows you to control some of the eye candy WindowMaker provides, of which some of these features are not configurable from *Configuration Manager*.

*Icon Slide Speed* refers to the speed that Icons move when you either drag them, or when they are



dragged automatically with the Icon Attract function of the Clip.

*Shade Animation Speed* refers to how fast windows can be rolled up and down when you double click on the title bar.

*Smooth Scaling* adds anti-aliasing ability to graphics that need to be scaled up or down.

*Titlebar Style* allows you to select the look of the Close and Minimize Boxes. You can choose from original WindowMaker style, or the traditional NeXTstep style. By default, the original WindowMaker style is selected.

*Animations and Sound* controls some basic components of WindowMaker. Animations controls all graphic animation throughout WindowMaker. Superfluous provides some eye candy with some

animations, such as what happens when an Icon is removed from the Dock.

*Sound* provides audio effects to actions such as when a window opens, a window is minimized, a window is closed, and so forth. This module requires a separate module, such as **wmsound** or **WSoundServer**, neither project of which at the moment has been maintained. You may search Google for the source code if you wish to build this module.

Options for color dithering are usable if you are running WindowMaker on a 8-bit per color display, such as an ancient SuperVGA or VGA video board. Those of us with 16-bit or larger color depth displays (which should be most of us) do not really need to worry about this.

The next item in Preferences generates this warning message here in PCLinuxOS, and in the Mandriva/Megia distributions. This is due to the way the script contained with the installation generates the Applications menu. A similar message appears when you attempt to access the Applications Menu from *Configuration Manager* (next page, top left).

The default menu is stored as **/usr/share/WindowMaker/menu** (in readable text) and as **/usr/share/WindowMaker/plmenu** (in the Property List format).

*Programmer's Note: If you read the contents of /usr/share/WindowMaker/plmenu, you will recognize that the Applications Menu in this format resembles LISP code. Property Lists are one of the features that makes WindowMaker an efficient*



window manager. This type of coding is common in much of WindowMaker's configuration files.

WindowMaker will look in `~/GNUSTep/Defaults/WMRootMenu` before loading the default menu at launch time. Whatever WindowMaker files in this file will become the Applications Menu. For the PCLinuxOS installation, this happens to be the default menu maintained with Synaptic and other utilities that manipulate the PCLinuxOS menu system.

**If you choose to discard the existing menu, PCLinuxOS will not automatically update WindowMaker's Applications Menu when you update your software with Synaptic.** You will need to manually rebuild the Applications Menu, which may or may not be what you wish.

Doing this will provide you with menu access to WindowMaker themes, wallpapers, color schemes,

and other WindowMaker decorative gadgets. However, you will have to manually edit the Applications Menu if you add or remove software from PCLinuxOS.



If you did not intend to click Yes to the warning message, do not worry. Just close out *Preferences* and relaunch. The Applications Menu has not changed. This is because the file `~/GNUSTep/Defaults/WMRootMenu` is nothing more than a link to the `/usr/share/WindowMaker/menu` configuration file. Fortunately, the latter file cannot be changed as it is created at WindowMaker launch time with permissions set to *read-only* for the user.

If you do wish to create a custom menu, simply remove the configuration file `~/GNUSTep/Defaults/WMRootMenu`. A file called `WMRootMenu.bak` will exist here in case you wish to revert to the PCLinuxOS default behavior.

Editing the menu items is literally a drag and drop operation. Preferences will display a palette of items

you can include in the menu. The menu you are editing is to the right of the above graphic, which should be next to Preferences. You can include the following in a menu:

**Run Program:** This allows you to supply the name of a program or script, including any parameters.

There is a special case with the command line. If you specify *%a(your prompt here)*, A dialog box with the contents of *your prompt here* will be displayed allowing the user to enter a command line to execute a program or script *without opening a terminal window*, or to enter a required parameter if it is associated with a program or a script. (The *%a* means "ask the user".)

**Internal Command:** This allows you to select what action WindowMaker should take when the user selects this command. You can choose from the following:

- \*Arrange Icons. This groups application Icons with their associated open windows.
- \*Hide all windows except for the focused one. (The desktop will only show the application that has control of the keyboard and mouse.)
- \*Show all windows.
- \*Exit WindowMaker (and return to the Login screen)
- \*Exit X-Session (and return to the Login screen), same as the previous option.
- \*Restart WindowMaker
- \*Start another window manager (such as OpenBox)
- \*Save current session (which is the default for PCLinuxOS anyway)
- \*Clear current session
- \*Refresh screen (similar to selecting Refresh on

KDE or GNOME from the background popup menu)

\*Open Info Screen (This is the About WindowMaker dialog box)

\*Open Copyright Screen (This shows who is responsible for developing this window manager, and the fact that WindowMaker is distributed under the GPL.)



This set of *Preferences* makes it easy to configure keyboard shortcuts as described in the previous article. Here you can clear the keyboard shortcut with the *Clear* button, and set a shortcut using the *Capture* button, then pressing the key combination. Click on *Save* to apply the changes. Items that have been assigned keyboard shortcuts have a *checkmark* before the name of the item.

Here (top center) you can *visually* control what actions WindowMaker takes when you use the mouse. Parameters set here override parameters



set with the *Configuration Manager*. The default actions for PCLinuxOS are shown in the above graphic under *Workspace Mouse Actions*.



This is where the fun begins. The colors shown here are not the defaults for the PCLinuxOS installation of WindowMaker, but a sample of what you can achieve when we go to create our own themes. This is the start of what is going to be one of my WindowMaker themes.



This preference setting allows you to change the fonts displayed for WindowMaker windows.

**Window Title** selects the font to be displayed on the title bar of displayed windows.

**Menu Title** selects the font to be displayed on the title bar of displayed WindowMaker menus.

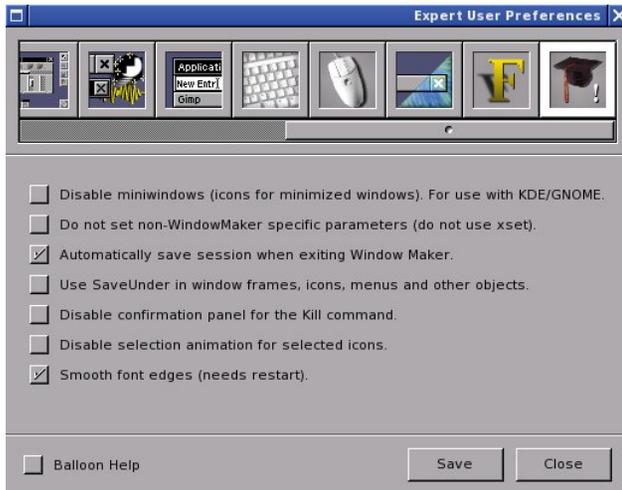
**Menu Text** selects the font to be displayed on all items within the displayed WindowMaker menus.

**Icon Title** is the font displayed for Icons representing running applications when the application's windows are minimized.

**Clip Title** is the font superimposed over the icon associated with the Clip.

**Display Caption** is the font displayed just after switching between Workspaces. This is usually centered on the screen unless the position of the displayed text has been changed.

Finally, this preferences selection is for miscellaneous configurable desktop behaviors.



**Disable miniwindows**, when selected disables display of minimized windows as icons. This function was designed for use when WindowMaker is running inside KDE or GNOME.

*Note: There is a little known function in both KDE and GNOME that allows you to select the window manager that is run when either KDE or GNOME is launched.*

**Automatically save session** is enabled by default. This allows whatever is currently running inside WindowMaker to be saved when you exit

WindowMaker. Then, when WindowMaker is relaunched, anything that was running will be restored to where things were when you left the session.

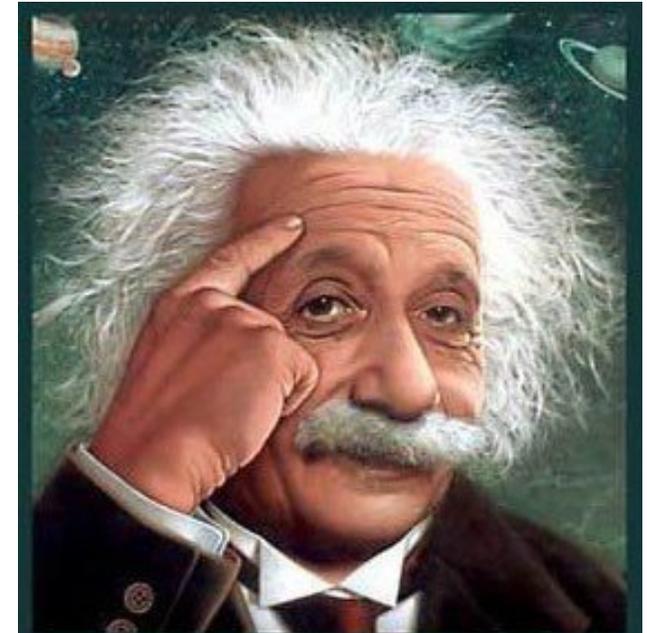
**Smooth Font Edges** is enabled by default. This allows for anti-aliasing of fonts displayed within WindowMaker, providing for a photorealistic effect for text display.

Other functions shown here should be left disabled, as many of these have no real effect on how we use WindowMaker.

As we can see here, there are some differences between *WindowMaker Configuration Manager* and *User Preferences*. The use of both tools provides the most flexibility when it comes to customization of WindowMaker.

**Coming Next...**

**How to create your own themes!**



**It's easier than  $E=mc^2$**   
**It's elemental**  
**It's light years ahead**  
**It's a wise choice**  
**It's Radically Simple**  
**It's ...**



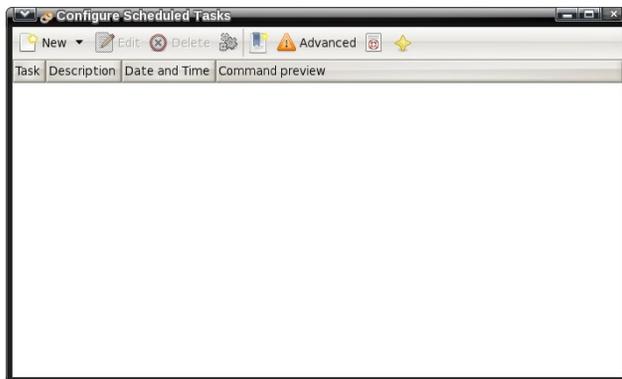
# Gnome 2.32: Gnome Schedule Puts Gnome On A Schedule

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

There are times when you may want to run an application while you are away from the computer. The things you may want to do are limited only by your imagination and your needs. You may want to run a script that allows you to record your favorite TV program from your TV tuner card. You may want to sync the files on your laptop with the files on your desktop or server. Or, you may wish to sync your locally stored repository with one of the PCLinuxOS repositories, using rsync. Whatever it is that you would like to accomplish while you are away from your computer, Gnome Schedule 2.12 is your answer.

While it isn't installed by default in Zen Mini, it's no further away than installing it via Synaptic. Once installed, it will be listed under your More Applications > Configuration menu as "Scheduled Tasks."

Once launched, you will see a window like the one below:



As it sits when you first launch it, it looks rather empty, devoid of any purpose. But don't let that fool you. With very little effort, and in the right hands, Gnome Schedule is a very powerful tool. Written in Python and using pygtk, Gnome Schedule provides a visual interface for scheduling tasks to be executed by the "crontab" and "at" command line utilities, insulating you from the command line that instills so much fear into so many users. With a few exceptions, which I'll point out as we go, Gnome Schedule follows most of the rules of crontab. You can view those rules by checking out the online [crontab man page](#).

By selecting the "New" button on the toolbar, Gnome Schedule will display the following window:

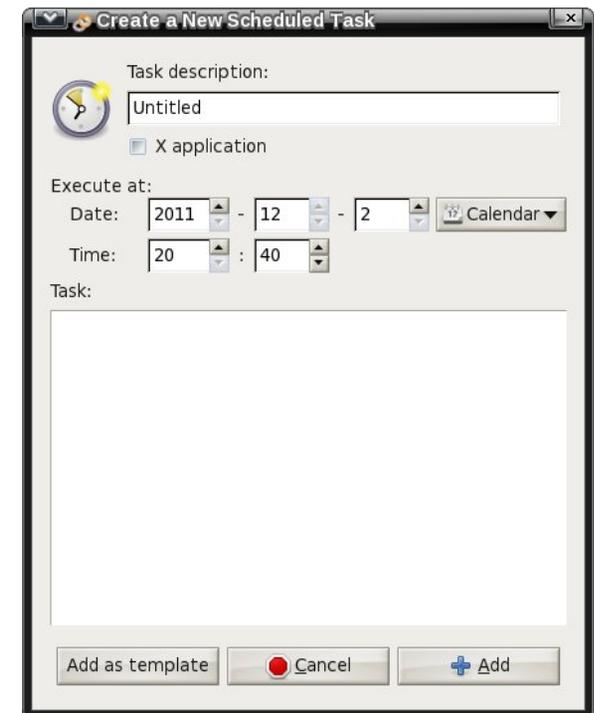


Here, you select whether you want to schedule a recurrent task (as you may wish to do when backing up your laptop's data to your desktop every Sunday

night after you're customarily in bed and your computer isn't routinely in use), schedule a one-time task (as you may wish to do when recording the airing of one of your favorite movies), or if you want to schedule a task from a predefined template.

For my personal use, I've found the one-time task option as the one that I use the most, since I currently use it to record TV programs aired on an irregular basis. However, your use, dictated by your individual needs, may differ.

Selecting the one-time task button, you will see a window like the one below:



At the top of the dialog box, you can give a title to your scheduled task. This helps keep your tasks separated and easily identified, especially when you have multiple tasks scheduled. If your task launches a GUI'd application that uses X, then check the box next to "X application."

Next, enter the date and time you want your task to start. You can enter the date directly, or you can use the "Calendar" button to select the date. If you choose the latter, the date fields will automatically be filled in for you. When filling in the time, hours are expressed based on a 24 hour clock. Thus, 8 p.m. becomes 20 (12 + 8), 4 p.m. becomes 16 (12 + 4), and 11 p.m. become 23 (12 + 11). The minutes are simply entered directly, ranging from 0 to 59.

Below, in the "Task" area, simply enter the command that launches the application(s) you want to run at that scheduled time. Once you have everything as you like it, simply click on the "Add" button. If you change your mind – or screw things up badly – you can click on the "Cancel" button to discard your choices. Clicking on the "Add as template" button allows you to save your scheduled tasks as a template, so you can reload it again for later reuse.

However, if you choose to schedule a recurrent task, you will get a different dialog box, like the one shown at the top of the next column.

Things become a bit more complicated when scheduling recurrent tasks. Just as when you are setting up a one-time task, the first line in this dialog box allows you to provide a title for your scheduled task. The second line is where you put the command(s) that you want to be executed.

The next control is a button that brings up four choices: default behavior, suppress output, X application, or X application: suppress output. The default is the first choice, default behavior. This allows you to specify the behavior of the application you are running.

Even though grayed out in the image above, your next choice is the "Basic" control. Here, you select if you want your recurrent task to run every minute,

hour, day, week, month or at every reboot. If you select anything other than running your task at every reboot, you will want to move the selection from "Basic" to "Advanced"

Under "Advanced," you specify the minutes (0-59), hour (0-23), day (1-31), month (1-12) and weekday (0-6) you want your recurrent task to execute. The latter setting, "Weekday," recognizes 0 as being Sunday, and 6 as being Saturday.

Alternatively, you can use the first three letters of the names of the days of the week (sun, mon, tue, etc.) and the month (jan, feb, mar, etc.) in place of the number designations. Normally, with crontab, case does not matter when using the names of the days of the weeks or the months. Thus, sun, Sun, SUN, suN, sUN and SUN all mean the same thing. But under the Gnome Schedule environment, you can only use all lower case letters. Otherwise, you will see an error message displayed under the "Preview" pane of the dialog box.

If you have everything set up properly, you will see the frequency of your recurrent scheduled task under the "Preview" pane of the dialog box. Once everything is as you like it, click on the "Add" button to add your recurrent task to the list of scheduled tasks. Selecting "Cancel" discards all of your selections. Clicking on "Add as template" adds your task as a template for later reuse.



Selecting the "Edit" button on the Gnome Schedule toolbar will display the appropriate dialog box

depicted above, depending on whether the task is a one-time or recurrent task. Clicking on the “Delete” button will delete the currently selected task. To run a task now, instead of at its scheduled time, click on the “gears” icon on the toolbar. The next icon allows you to manage your saved templates.

The sixth icon allows you to select from a basic or advanced view of the tasks displayed in the task pane of the main window. Personally, I can't see a whole lot of difference between the basic and advanced view, other than a rearrangement of the columns of information. The next to the last icon launches the help file for Gnome Schedule, if you happen to have it installed. The last icon displays the “About” dialog box for Gnome Schedule, when selected.

### Summary

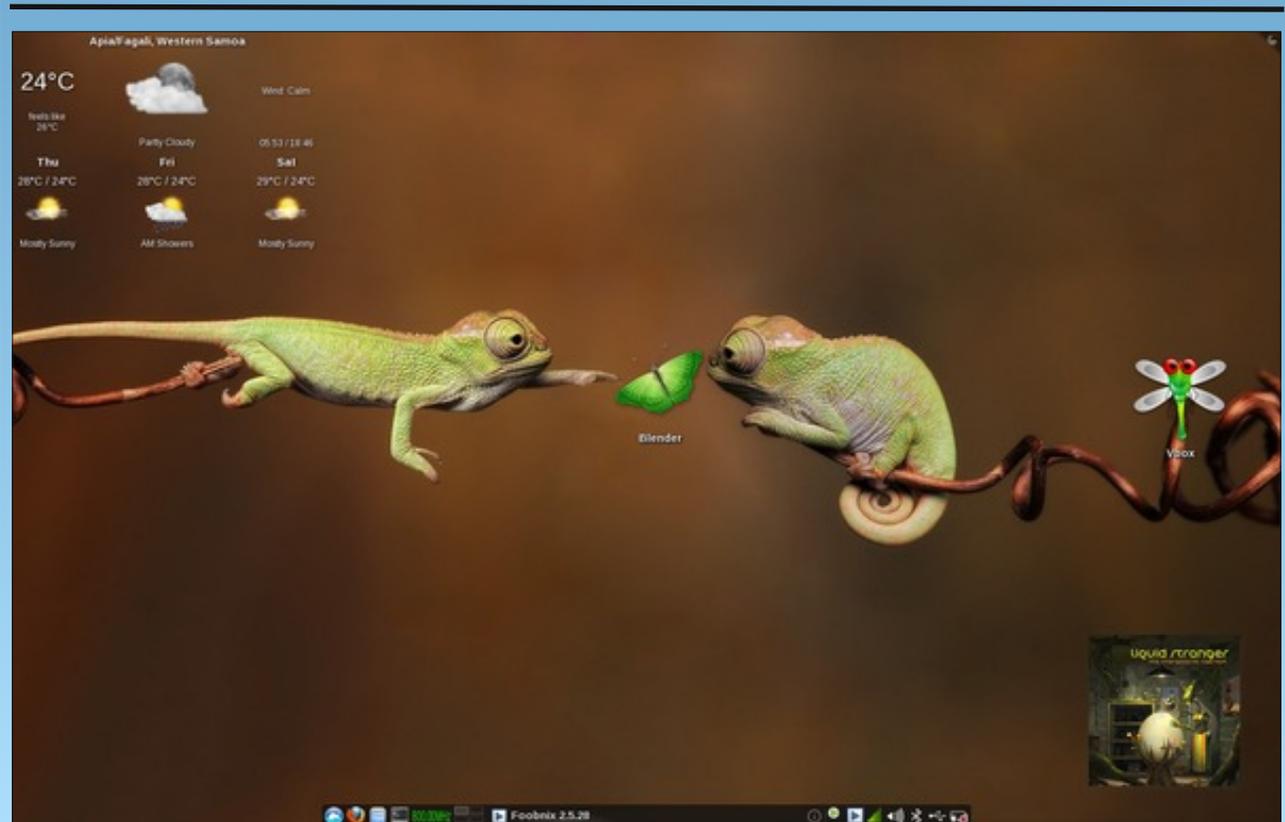
Because Gnome Schedule is a Python app, it doesn't pull in a lot of Gnome dependencies. As such, Gnome Schedule is included on my Xfce installations, which is where I first “became friends” with it.

Gnome Schedule is a powerful tool that allows you to perform tasks at a time when your computer typically isn't in use, like while you are sleeping. It also allows you to run virtually any command on a schedule. The latter is the way I use it. I have some custom scripts (meaning ones I wrote myself) that I run to record “The Walking Dead” off of my TV tuner card every week when it airs.

Gnome Schedule goes a long way in buffering the user from the often perceived complications of trying to hand-code a crontab entry yourself, on the command line. You definitely owe it to yourself to

give Gnome Schedule a look and discover how it can help you automate some routine tasks that you may repeatedly perform on your system.

## Screenshot Showcase



*Posted by coffeetime, December 2, 2011, running KDE4.*

# YAD: Yet Another Dialog Program

by Daniel Meiß-Wilhelm (leiche)

## What is it?

If you search in our repositories, you will find it under Development/Tools. The description follows:

*Display graphical dialogs from shell scripts or command line. Yad is a fork of Zenity with many improvements, such as custom buttons, additional dialogs, popup menu in notification icon and more.*

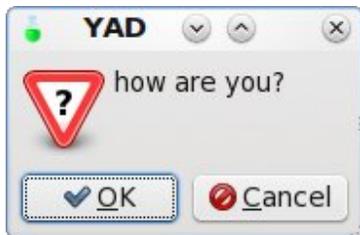
CLI usage example:

```
yad --image=dialog-question --text='how are you?'
```

When you now open a terminal and type

```
yad --image=dialog-question --text='how are you?'
```

you will see this:



Now you can see it is a dialog for bash, or **command line interface**.

## What can we do with it?

I'm sure it will help us to make some commands easier to handle.

Some samples are sleeptimer, alert\_clock, update-notifier, the latest version of screenie, and some more, not forgetting **repair-database** from glamdring.

I will pick alert\_clock to show how it works.

If you have installed alert\_clock, you get the following main window:



I know we all read the magazine, and know the articles of the Command Line Interface article series, by **Peter Kelly (critter)**, that ran in The PCLinuxOS Magazine in 2009 and 2010, so we can start directly with yad.

One thing, typing **yad --help** in a terminal/console gives lots of information about using yad.

## Here we go...

At first we need some variables, and to define it for a first command. A script often begins like this:

```
#!/bin/bash
#
# Alarm clock for PCLinuxOS
#
# Don't miss important times and events. Turn
your computer
# into the perfect wake up system. Set the alarm
and get the
# Pizza out of the oven in perfect time.
#
# Author: D.M-Wilhelm (Leiche)
# Email: meisssw01 at gmail.com
# Licence: GPL
# First build: May Wed 11 2011
# Last build: Jul Sun 10 2011
# fixed icon display in systray, move zenity,
# based now on yad.
#
Encoding=UTF-8
#
# i18n - Internationalization -
Internationalisierung
#
export TEXTDOMAIN=alert_clock
export TEXTDOMAINDIR="/usr/share/locale"
#
# define some variables - Definierung einiger
Variablen
#
TITLE=alert_clock
VERSION=0.33
ICON=/usr/share/icons/wecker.png
#
```

For now, we are only interested in the variables.

## Why?

When we define this, we must not write all the lines in our script. We need only to change the variables. We change the version, as in the example, because we have to add new features. So we define it as

**VERSION=0.33+**

We can define it also as

```
YAD=$(yad --title='alert_clock 0.33' --window-
icon="/usr/share/icons/wecker.png")
```

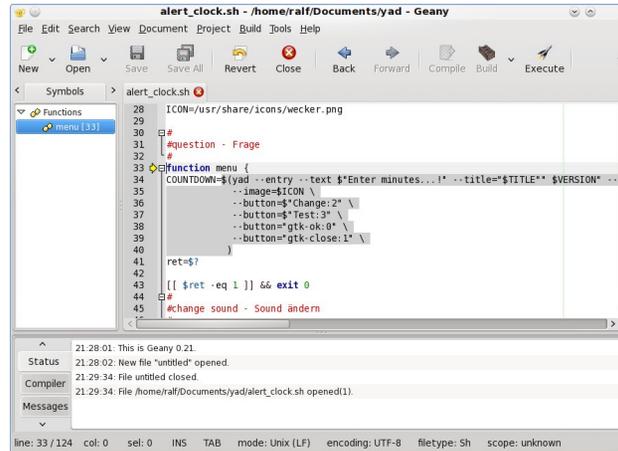
The main window of alert\_clock looks as follows:

```
function menu {
COUNTDOWN=$(yad --entry --text "$Enter
minutes...!" --title="$TITLE" $VERSION" --
window-icon=$ICON \
                --image=$ICON \
                --button="$Change:2" \
                --button="$Test:3" \
                --button="gtk-ok:0" \
                --button="gtk-close:1" \
)
}
```

If you now add } in the bottom line, and write menu on the next line, you can run this main window.

**Notice:** the script must be executable: the simplest way is to right click on script **properties > permissions > Make the file executable.**

**Tip:** Install Geany from Synaptic, and generate a file for testing, to see how YAD works.



Save it as sample alert\_test, make it executable, and run it with "F5". Does the main window display? If not, you get messages in an xterminal listing what has gone wrong. In the following picture can you see that I have forgotten { in line 8, and get the messages:

```
./alert_test: line 15: syntax error near unexpected
token `'$COUNTDOWN=$(yad --entry --text "Enter
minutes...!" --title="$TITLE" $VERSION" --window-
icon=$ICON \t\t\t--image=$ICON \t\t\t--
button="Change:2" \t\t\t--button="Test:3" \t\t\t--
button="gtk-ok:0" \t\t\t--button="gtk-close:1" \t\t )'`
./alert_test: line 15: `                )'`
```

Notice: You will not see the icon wecker.png, if you not have installed alert\_clock.



Tip: for localization you must set a \$ by --text "\$b1a". If it is not set, you get no translation for it.

I removed now \$, and we get only the original description.



Now our main window is displayed, but two of four buttons are not working. Can you figure out which of our buttons are not working?

If you guessed that the **Change** and **Test** are not working, then you guessed correctly. We must give them a job (task).

At line 15 set your cursor after `)`, and press `<enter>` tab. Type the following in your script:

```
ret=$?

[[ $ret -eq 1 ]] && exit 0
#
#change sound - Sound ändern
#
if [[ $ret -eq 2 ]]; then
    CHANGE=$(yad --title="$TITLE" $VERSION" --
window-icon=$ICON \
    --file --width=600 --height=500
\
    --text="$<b>Choose your own
audio file as alert!</b>"
)

    if [ -z "$CHANGE" ];then
        exec alert_clock
        exit 0
    else
        mkdir $HOME/.config/alert-clock
        rm -rf $HOME/.config/alert-
clock/alert sleep 1
        ln -s "$CHANGE"
$HOME/.config/alert-clock/alert
        yad --title "$TITLE" $VERSION"
\
        --button="gtk-ok:0" \
        --width 300 \
        --window-icon=$ICON \
        --text="$Your own sound is set!!"
        fi
    menu
fi
#
#Test sound - Klang testen
#
if [[ $ret -eq 3 ]]; then
```

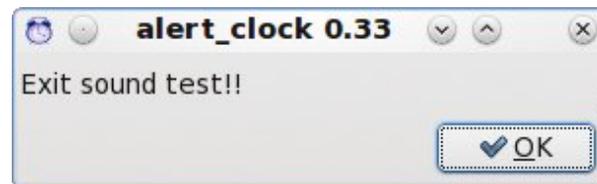
```
    if [ -f $HOME/.config/alert-clock/alert
]; then
        SOUND="$HOME/.config/alert-clock/alert"
    else
        SOUND='/usr/share/alert_clock/alarm.ogg'
    fi
    mplayer "$SOUND" | yad --title "$TITLE"
$VERSION" \
        --button="gtk-ok:0" \
        --width 300 \
        --window-icon=$ICON \
        --text="$Exit sound test!!"

    killall mplayer
    menu
fi
```

Press "F5" tab, to run your script. Click on Test button, if you have installed alert\_clock, you will now hear a sound output **IF** your mixer settings are correctly set. Follow the output from Geany:

```
Can't open joystick device /dev/input/js0: No such
file or directory
Can't init input joystick
mplayer: could not connect to socket
mplayer: No such file or directory
Failed to open LIRC support. You will not be able to
use your remote control.
```

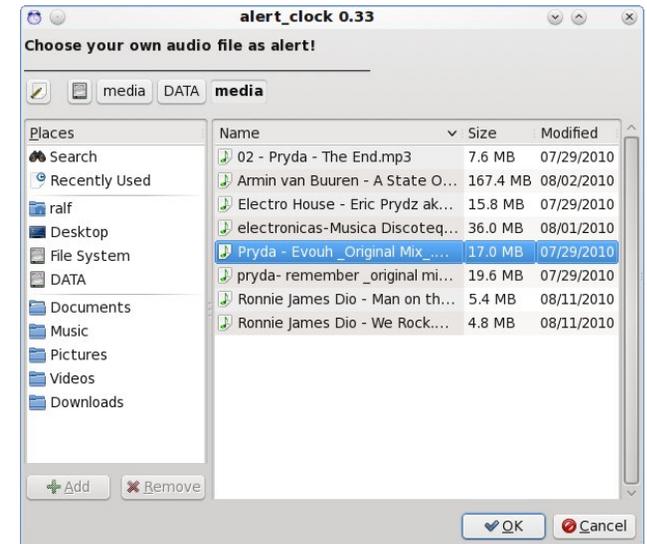
```
MPlayer interrupted by signal 13 in module:
play_audio
mplayer: no process found
```



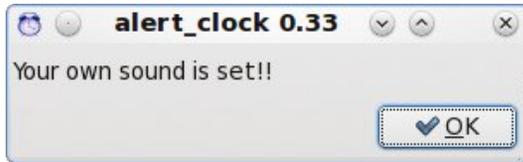
If you have no sound or wrong file is loaded, you could see the following output messages:

```
Can't open joystick device /dev/input/js0: No such
file or directory
Can't init input joystick
mplayer: could not connect to socket
mplayer: No such file or directory
Failed to open LIRC support. You will not be able to
use your remote control.
Invalid seek to negative position ffffffff!
mplayer: no process found
```

To set your own alert sound, click on the **Change** button. After you change your sound, test it again, to hear if it is working well for you.



But how well does it work now, when I click on the **Test** or **Change** button?



We defined the button as:

```
--button="$Change:2" \  
--button="$Test:3" \  

```

and was set here what it will do when we click a button.

```
ret=$?
```

So, now if we click on **OK** or **Cancel**, they behave the same, since they are the same function.

```
[[ $ret -eq 1 ]] && exit 0  
#  
#change sound - Sound ändern  
#  
if [[ $ret -eq 2 ]];
```

But our extra buttons have other functions, and this is they are designated as :2 or :3 or :5. To test, remove :3 by --button="\$Test:3" \. If you now click on the Test button, your script will be closed without any error messages.

I find I must restart alert\_clock with exec alert\_clock. When we don't change our audio, we can't enter a time to set alert\_clock in warning mode. This may be due to a bug in YAD.

With the line `if [[ $ret -eq 2 ]]`, we tell the application what to do when button=change:2 is clicked.

After `]];` comes the command.

```
then  
    CHANGE=$(yad --title="$TITLE" $VERSION --  
window-icon=$ICON \  
        --file --width=600 --height=500  
\  
        --text="$<b>Choose your own  
audio file as alert!</b>"  
)  
    if [ -z "$CHANGE" ];then  
        exec alert_clock  
        exit 0  
    else  
        mkdir $HOME/.config/alert-clock  
        rm -rf $HOME/.config/alert-  
clock/alert sleep 1  
        ln -s "$CHANGE"  
$HOME/.config/alert-clock/alert  
        yad --title "$TITLE" $VERSION  
\  
        --button="gtk-ok:0" \  
        --width 300 \  
        --window-icon=$ICON \  
        --text="$Your own sound is set!!"  
        fi  
menu  
fi
```

Whenever we have a `if`, we need `fi`, or our script will end with an error. Used correctly, it is `if ... ; then ... else ... fi`. However, feel free to test it with Geany.

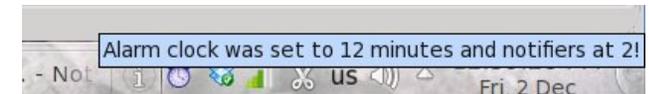
At this time, we have a perfectly working main window. Now we need to add the main command, which makes alert\_clock work.

Add the following to your script:

```
if [ "$COUNTDOWN" = "" ];then  
    exit  
else  
    echo you enter "$COUNTDOWN" minutes  
    TIMER=$(echo $(( $COUNTDOWN*60 )) )  
    TASK1=$(date -s "+$TIMER seconds" 2>/dev/null |  
cut -d " " -f4)  
    exec 3> >(yad --notification --command=CMD --  
image=$ICON --listen)  
    echo tooltip: "$Alarm clock was set to  
COUNTDOWN minutes and notifiers at $TASK1!" >&3  
    #sleep $TIMER  
    while [ $TIMER -ge 1 ]  
    do  
        echo -n "$TIMER "  
        sleep 1  
        TIMER=$((TIMER-1))  
    done  
    exec 3>&-
```

and start it. If you get the error messages `./alert_test: line 82: syntax error: unexpected end of file, don't despair`. We must make sure that the last line of our script is `fi`.

You have now this result:



If you don't get something similar to that pictured above, you have a typing error, or no icon. When the count is gone to zero, our program closes without error messages, and without the alert.

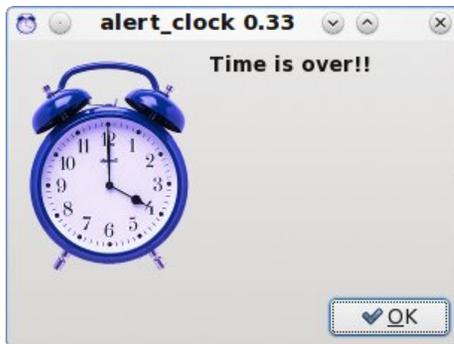
To get alert output add to your script:

```
#
#check which sound - auf Audio prüfen
#
if [ -f $HOME/.config/alert-clock/alert ]; then
    SOUND="$HOME/.config/alert-clock/alert"
else
qqq
SOUND='/usr/share/alert_clock/alarm.ogg'
fi
```

This is needed for our sound.

```
#
#alert output - Alarm Ausgabe
#
(mplayer -loop 0 "$SOUND") | yad --title
"$TITLE" "$VERSION" \
    --button="gtk-ok:0" \
    --width 300 --image=$ICON \
    --window-icon=$ICON \
    --text="$<b>Time is over!!</b>"
exit;
fi
exit
```

Test it again. Do you now hear an alert?



If not, check the messages that are generated when you run it from terminal.

Whenever you need a script, use YAD, Zenity, gtdialog or kdialog. This will make your day much simpler. By the way, you can download this script from my [web site](#).

## Screenshot Showcase



Posted by GermanTux, December 10, 2011, running Xfce.

# Demonstrating PCLinuxOS At NZ Linux Users Group

by Jim Wilkinson (JimWilk)

In my home town of Palmerston North, NZ, I am a keen member of the local Linux users' group.

This is the view from our venue, looking over the city of Palmerston North (above, right).

We meet each month, on the second Wednesday evening. Each meeting is divided into two parts, with a coffee break in between. During that break, members share problems and/or solutions. The two sessions are the beginner's session and the more advanced user's session.

For the October 2011 session, I volunteered to demonstrate the use of Google Earth. But, before I started on that demo, I outlined some of the features of PCLinuxOS to the group of about 12 members.

1. Rolling distribution – I updated via Synaptic on the go.
2. The very welcome and active participation in the forum by Texstar himself. Too many other distros hide their developers away from the forum. I mentioned that Texstar often points out solutions to problems raised by posters. That makes a welcome change from the "RTFM" seen elsewhere!
3. This wonderful magazine. One person asked, "How can the organization afford to put out such a high quality publication each month?"
4. I also showed off the PCLinuxOS Control Center (PCC), and that was very well received.

View from Palmerston North Linux User's Group (PLUG)



These three images show the development of a suburb of our city, taken in 2005, 2007, and 2011 respectively.

I used the same time line button to search for a disused rail turning triangle from an old rail line in another part of NZ (at bottom). Vegetation

When I moved on to Google Earth, I showed the group the time scale button. This enabled us to view three different images of the same area separated only in time.



2005



2007



2011

growth in later images obscured the view of the triangle. However, by sliding back in time, we were able to locate a feature that I knew was there – even though the rail line closed in 1967.

The turning triangle shows up inside the black "circle".



# *ms\_meme's Nook: My Favorite PCLOS Things*



*Easy to boot up as fast as blue lightning  
All of the desktops I find so enlightening  
A forum to play in it really swings  
These are a few of my favorite things*

*I read in the Sandbox for something to do  
Questions are answered for all who are new  
Mods of the topics they are all kings  
These are a few of my favorite things*

*Easy to update using Synaptic  
So many programs from which I may pick  
Beautiful artwork from users springs  
These are a few of my favorite things*

*No more worries no more virus stings  
I never ever feel sad  
I simply remember what PCLOS brings  
And that always makes me glad*

MP3

OGG



# Alternate OS: Visopsys

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

Though it's been in development since 1997, Visopsys is a relatively unknown operating system. It is developed and maintained by a single programmer, [Andy McLaughlin](#). His primary focus is not on the operating system, but on a partitioning tool, [Partition Logic](#). Andy created Visopsys as the vehicle to house the Partition Logic live CD. From Visopsys's About web page, Andy says,

*Visopsys is free software and the source code is available under the terms of the [GNU General Public License](#). The libraries and header files are licensed under the terms of the [GNU Lesser General Public License](#).*

*Other operating systems can do more than Visopsys; it doesn't include many applications. Needless to say, it's not as good as Linux or even SkyOS or Syllable. On the other hand, it's still a one-person project.*

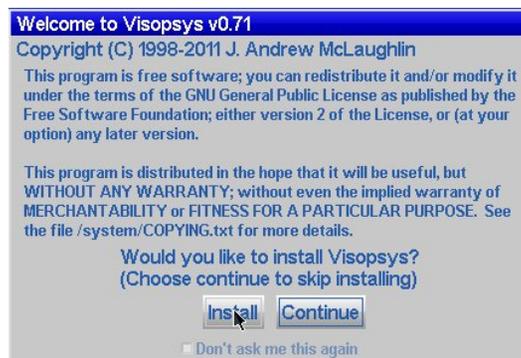
*From the perspective of a user — the "but what the heck is it good for?" perspective — its primary selling point is a reasonably functional partition management program (the 'Disk Manager') in the vein of Symantec's Partition Magic. Visopsys and its Disk Manager comprise the popular [Partition Logic](#) system. It can create, format, delete, resize, defragment, and move partitions, and modify their attributes. It can also copy hard disks, and has a simple and friendly graphical interface, but can fit on a bootable floppy disk (or CD-ROM, if you're feeling naughty).*

He further states that,

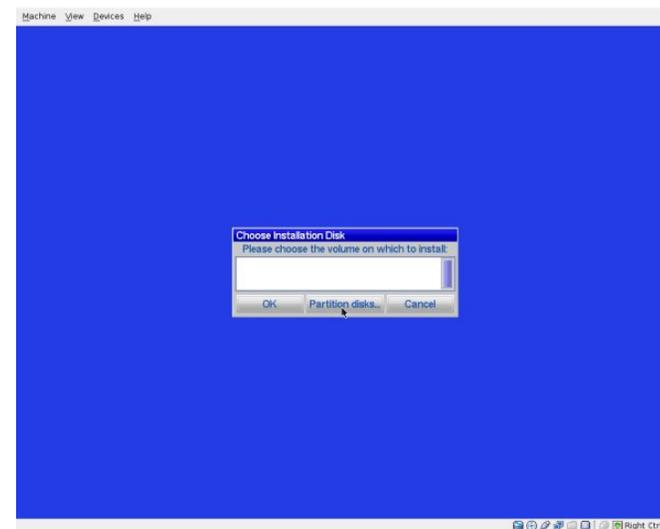
*The primary goal of Visopsys is to cherry-pick the best ideas from other operating systems, preferably contribute a few new ideas, and hopefully avoid (re-)introducing some of the more annoying elements.*

*However many ideas Visopsys borrows from other products, it is not a Windows or UNIX lookalike, nor a clone of any other system. On the other hand, much of what you see in Visopsys will be familiar. There are a number of command line programs that are superficially UNIX- or DOS-like, so you shouldn't have too much trouble finding your way around. It is compatible with existing filesystems, file formats, protocols, and encryption algorithms (among other things).*

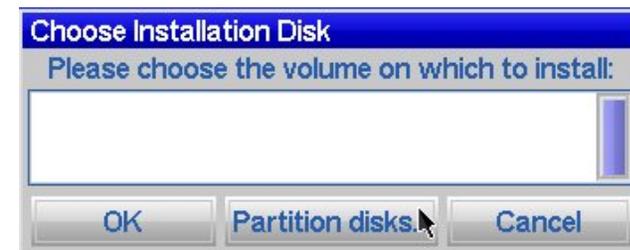
You can download the current version's iso image (0.71) from [here](#). After decompressing the 6.5MB zip file, you will have an 11.9MB iso. That's certainly small by today's standards. I set up the VirtualBox environment with 512MB of RAM and 64MB of video RAM, which is my standard practice. In addition, I allocated 512MB for a hard disk. After booting from the iso, we see the following window on the screen.

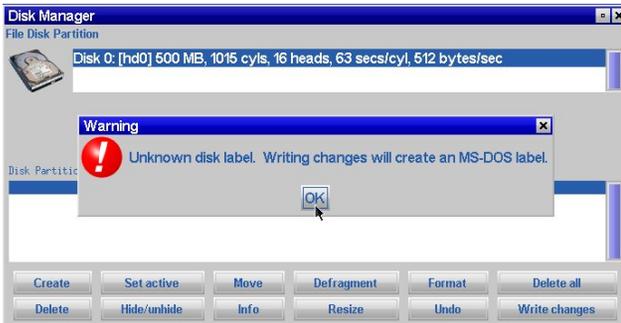


I elected to install. You can select Continue here to boot into the live Visopsys environment. However, I learned from trial and error that running the Install option at bootup would prompt for an admin user password. Installing from a live session would not. Since the allocated hard drive has no partition table yet, the Partition Logic program is automatically launched.

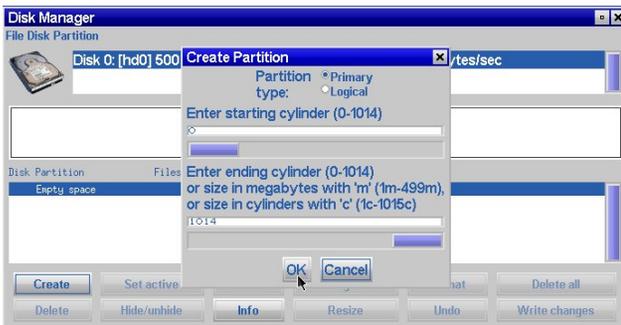


Here, we choose to partition disks. The following window is the one shown on the screen above.

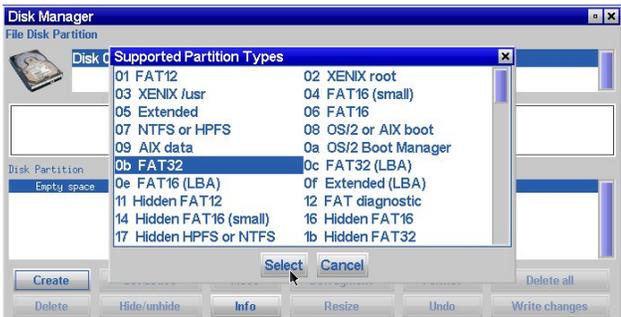




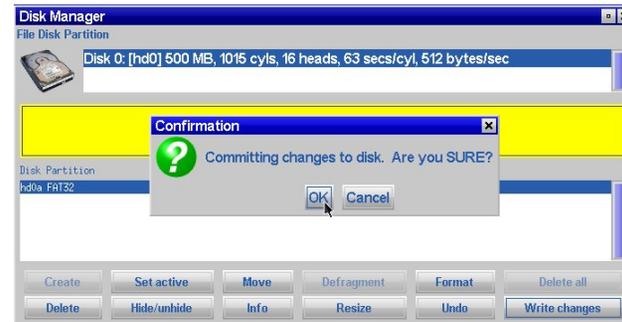
Selecting OK in the above window will create an MSDOS type master boot record.



I created a primary partition the size of the entire hard drive.



I chose partition type hexadecimal 0B, FAT32 without long block addressing (bottom, left).

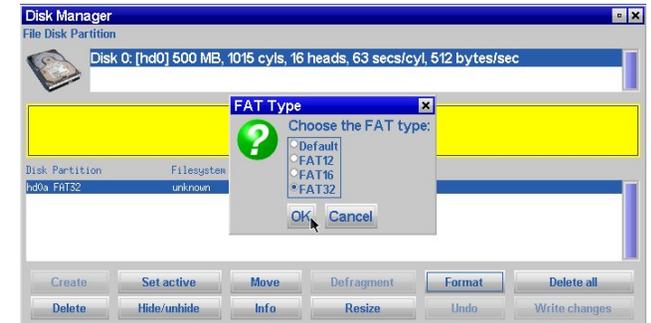


Select OK to commit the changes to the partition table. After doing so, click the Write changes button to make the change permanent.



Next, we need to format the partition. Click the Format button to get the format partition dialog window.

I chose FAT32 filesystem. Any other filesystem wouldn't work properly for the partition type I chose (top, right).

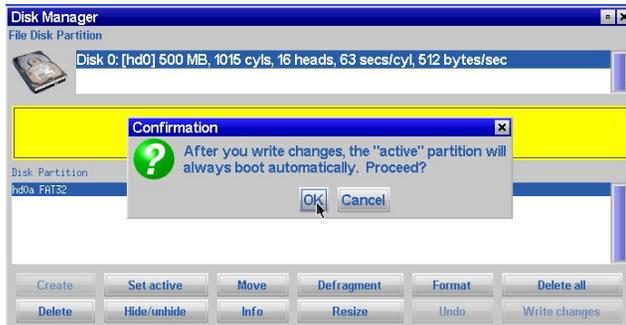


The actual formatting step must be done.

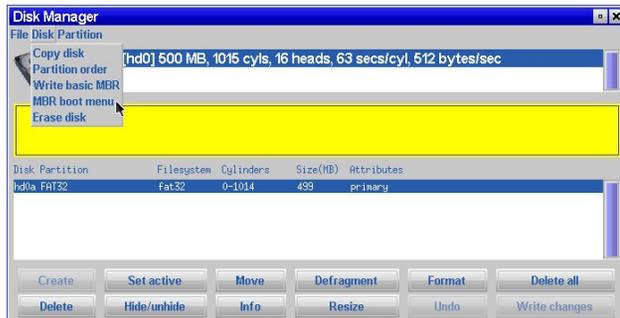


The Write basic MBR option in the Disk pull-down menu is a bit misleading. The MBR has already

been written, or we wouldn't be able to format the created partition. However, the partition has not been set to active, allowing the partition to be bootable, which is what we want.

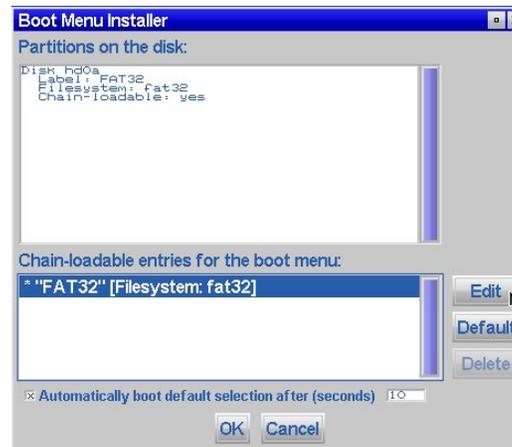


We want the partition to be bootable. However, from trial and error after rebooting, I discovered there was one more step necessary in order to boot from the hard drive.

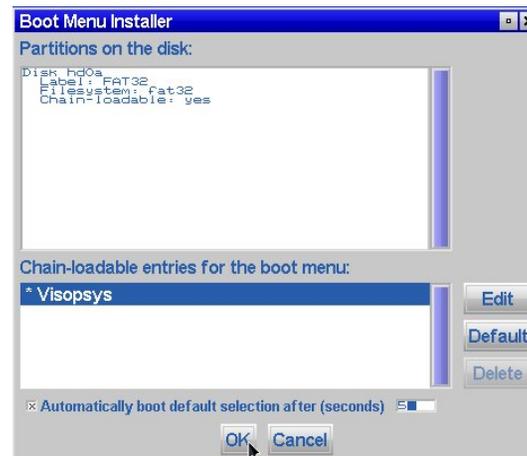


We want to create a boot menu in order to be able to boot from the hard drive (center, top).

FAT32 is not very descriptive. Let's change that. Click the Edit button.



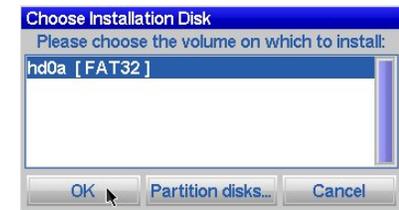
Visopsys is a more fitting boot screen label. Click OK.



I also changed the boot screen wait time from 10 seconds to 5. Click OK to save the boot menu (center, bottom).



After closing the Disk Manager window, the installation procedure continues. We want the operating system installed on the partition we just created.



Choose the full install. There's no need to format the partition, as that was done in a previous step.



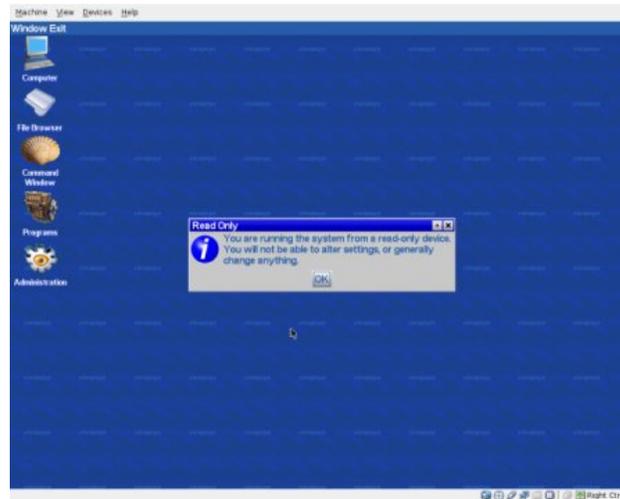


The installer copies files to the system partition.



Although the default option is to reboot after installation, there is still only the admin user on the system. We want to create a regular user without admin privileges, as well. Although I haven't shown the password dialog which runs for admin user, it is the same as the one shown for a regular user.

The Read Only dialog window says we cannot save changes. Actually, we can save them to the hard drive. The routine is called because we are still running from a Live CD (center, top).



The program launch icons are shown on the left side of the desktop. Select the Administration tool by single clicking its icon to see the window above.

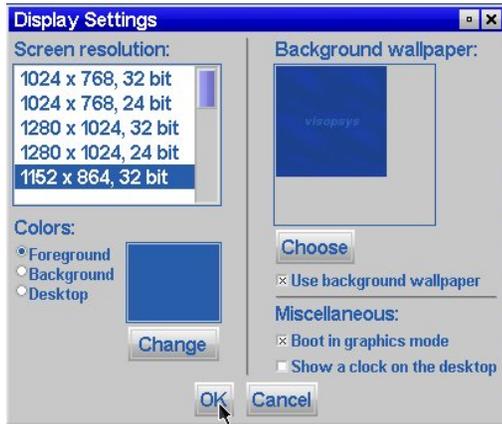


Click the Add User button to add another user to the system.



Enter a username, then click OK.

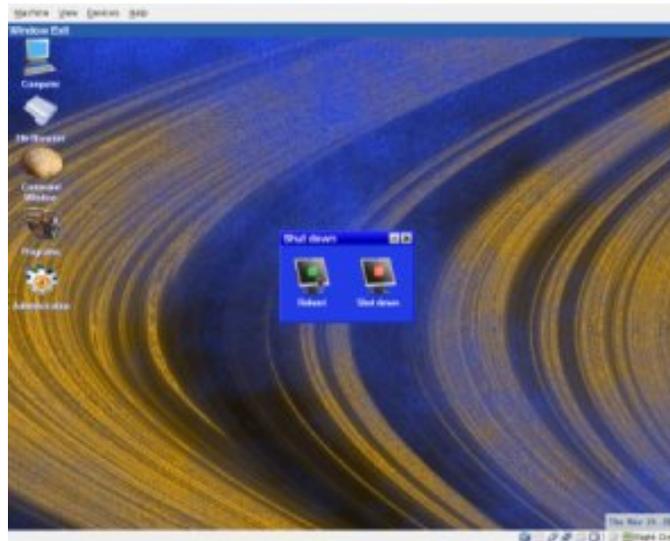
Set the password for the new user. Use the TAB key to get from the New password field to the Confirm password field, or this step will fail. After entering the password a second time, click OK (next page).



To make system changes, you must be logged in as the admin user. I want to change the screen resolution before rebooting, without having to log out as one user and log in as admin, and then reboot. Click OK to save changes.

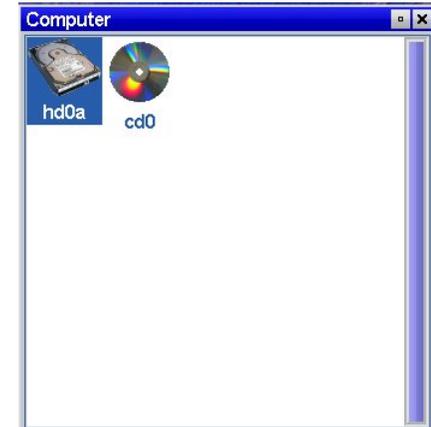


I'll make the desktop background, or wallpaper, a bit more spiffy than the stock blue one.



The wallpaper takes effect immediately. The screen resolution change won't take effect until the next reboot. Select Exit from the desktop toolbar, then

Shut down from the pulldown menu to see the dialog window shown. The Shut down dialog window choices are reboot or shut down.



Clicking the Computer icon on the desktop brings up a device browser. Selecting a device will bring up the file browser.



Clicking the File Browser icon on the desktop brings up the window shown above. The file browser is

always in icon view, and there are no other options. Once you browse into the directories and subdirectories, an icon labelled (up) will always be displayed in the upper left corner of the File Browser window. Clicking (up) will bring you to the parent directory.



The results of clicking the Command Window icon on the desktop. The Command Window's icon is a shell. Typing the word help will show a screen by screen list of all commands, each with a brief description.



At bottom left is the list of application programs. As you can see, the list is small. The calendar program shows the current month and day, and can be scrolled forwards or backwards through the months and years. Text Editor has no copy and paste functions. The only program option is to save a file. Mines! and Snake! are both games. I took a screenshot and displayed it, using the Screenshot and View programs.

Visopsys is very sparse on applications. However, as stated before, Andy's main focus is the Partition Logic partitioning tool, [which can be downloaded separately](#) from the Visopsys live CD. Like SkyOS, only one man works on Visopsys. But, unlike the [developer](#) of SkyOS, Andy has never charged anyone a fee in order to be able to download and use a beta release. Also, unlike SkyOS's developer, Andy is still working on his creation. The previous version of Visopsys crashed a few times on me with page faults. To Andy's credit, version 0.71 has not crashed once.



# Installing Moodle On A PCLinuxOS Server

by Archie Arevalo (Archie)

**Moodle** is a Course Management System (CMS), also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is a system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses. The software is used all over the world by universities, schools, companies and independent teachers. Moodle is open source and completely free to use.

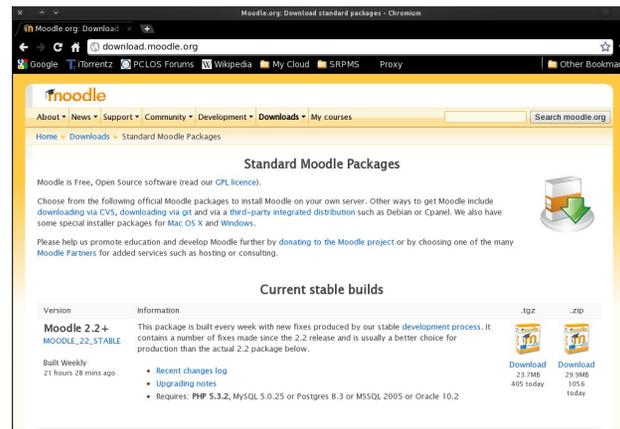


We will install it on our localhost for evaluation. You will need to install task-lamp. Note that you have to check whether the packages meet the requirements, i.e. Apache 2.2.17, MySQL 5.0.25, PHP 5.3.2. I also use phpMyAdmin 3.4.8 to manage my database. Once you have installed the essential packages, you will also need to install the following:

1. php-curl
2. php-iconv

3. php-intl
4. php-mysqli
5. php-soap
6. php-xmlrpc

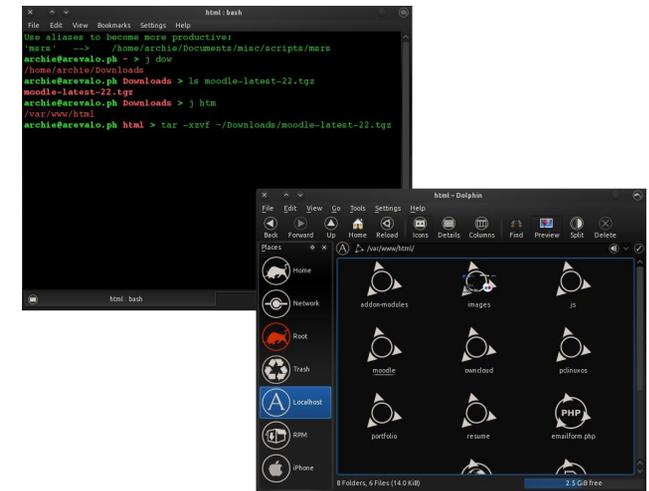
From the Moodle website, click Downloads and download either the .tgz or .zip file. Save the file anywhere on your desktop or on your preferred download location.



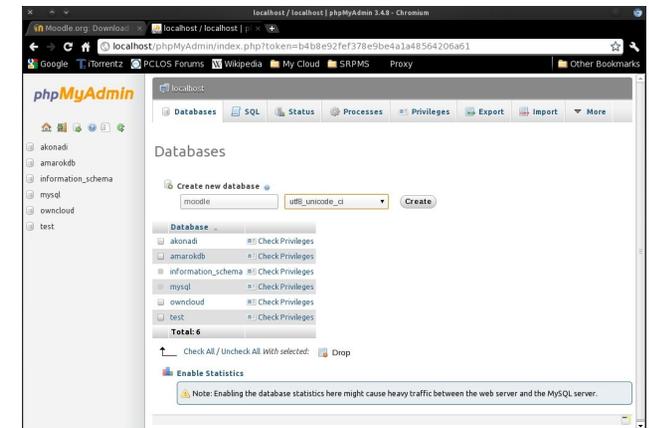
There are several ways to extract the archive. The most important thing and what we needed to do is to move the whole moodle/ folder to your /var/www/html folder.

Once the whole folder had been moved to your web document root location (/var/www/html/), change the owner/group to apache and the permission to 0770.

Create a new database called **moodle**. Don't worry about creating the tables; these will be automatically generated during the installation. I used

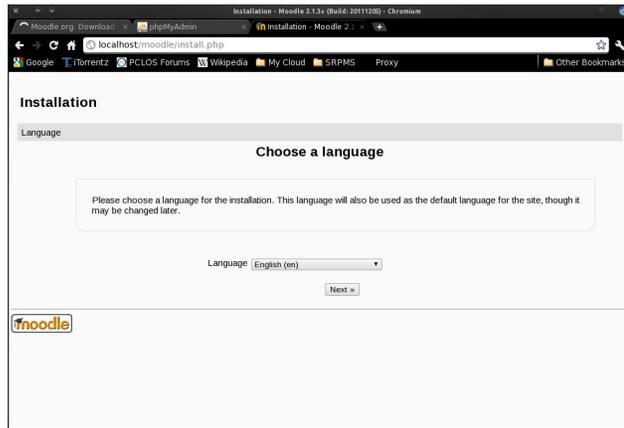


phpMyAdmin for this task. Note on the Privileges the Users having access to the DB.



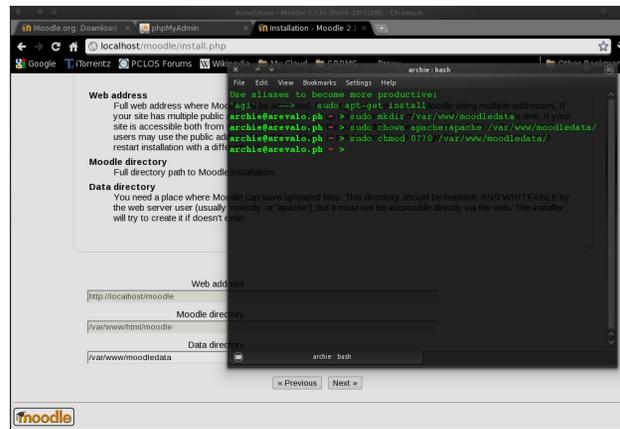
Great! We are ready to start the installation of Moodle. From the same browser, type in http://localhost/moodle on the address bar, and the

first page of the Installation wizard wants you to choose a language.

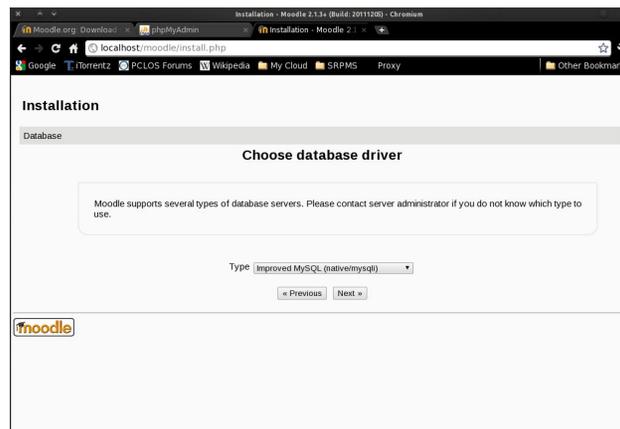


I opted for the default English (en) and clicked Next. The next page needed our confirmation of the application's paths. Other than the Data directory, the Web address and Moodle directory need not change. So, we'll need to manually create the /var/www/moodledata folder and change its ownership and permission. Once done, click Next.

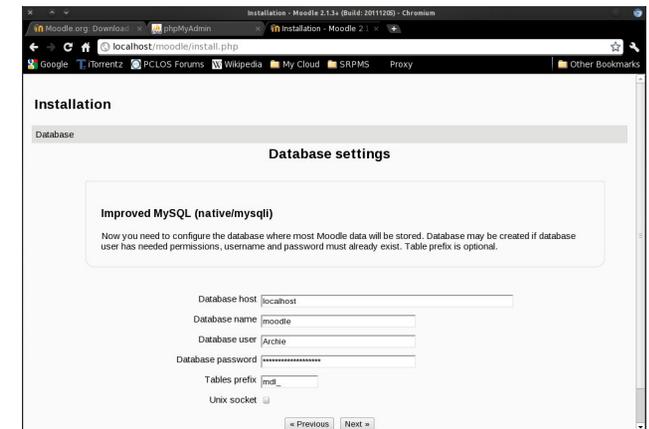
**Editor's Note:** The author of this article makes use of **sudo**, despite its use being discouraged with PCLinuxOS, due to the vulnerabilities it brings to your system when used incorrectly, improperly or injudiciously. **sudo** is available for installation on your PCLinuxOS system, via a special section of the repository that is not enabled by default. For more information about installing **sudo**, along with the hazards associated with its improper use, refer to the discussions in the PCLinuxOS forum.



On the next page, we need to Choose database driver, and this is why we needed to install the package php-mysqli. The selected default, Improved MySQL (native/mysqli) would be good unless you'd rather use one that you are already familiar with. Click Next.

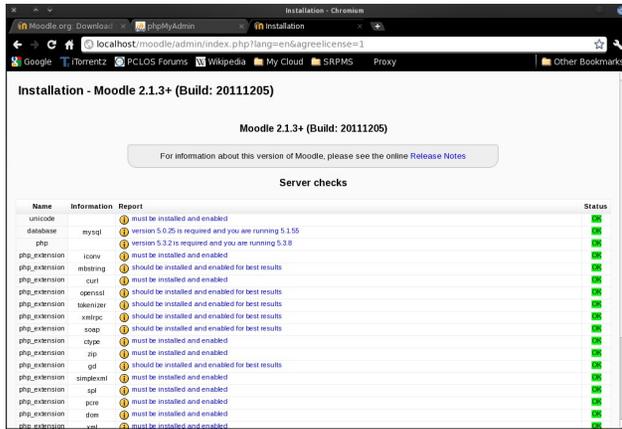


On the Database settings page, we'll need to provide a few information regarding the database Moodle will be using. The Database host and Database name have the default that we will be using (remember we created "moodle" in phpMyAdmin?). We only need to supply the Database user and Database password. You can leave the Tables prefix as is or change it to another 1-to-3 character prefix. You can enable the option Unix socket or leave it as is. Click Next.

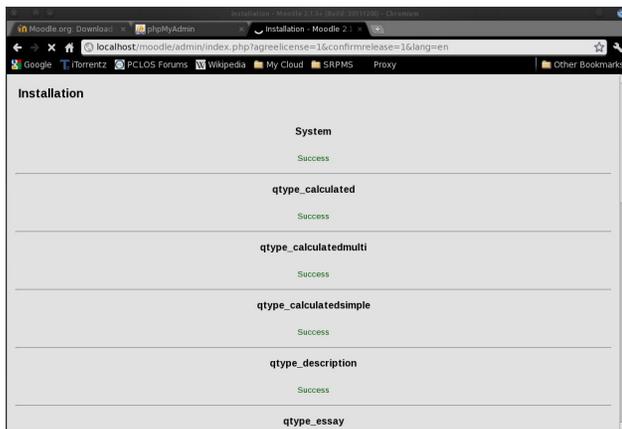


Moodle is GPL and you need to agree with the author's license. Click Continue.

The next page is the Server check page. It displays a visual confirmation that our installation is either good to go, or we needed to fix the issues highlighted in red and yellow. I see mine is all green; yours should be as well. Click Continue and wait for the application to be installed on your localhost server. It may take a while so be patient.

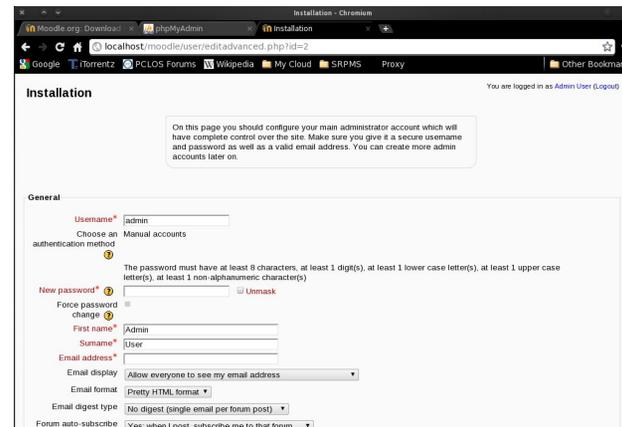


Once the application has been installed properly, we are presented with a list of items and modules installed on our copy of Moodle. When all items and modules are installed, the page will automatically scroll to the bottom of the page. click Continue.



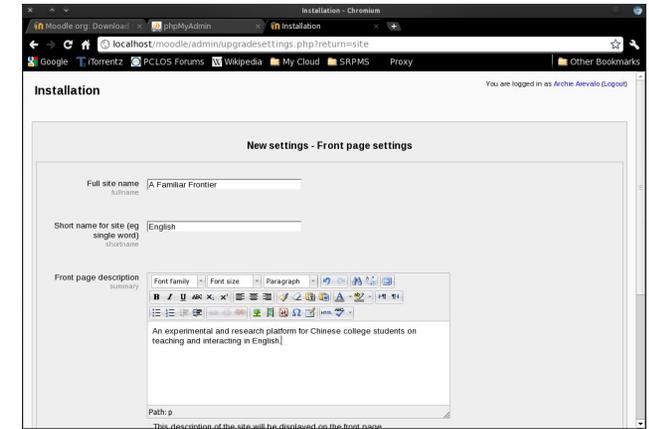
Our application has been installed properly and we'll need to set up the first user, which is the Main

Administrator Account. The fields with the asterisks (\*) are all necessary fields. Fill in your information appropriately ... and do not forget the admin password - it must be at least 8 characters with at least one number, a capital and a lower letter, and a non-alphanumeric character. If you are not sure what you are typing for the password, enable Unmask. Take time on each item. When you are satisfied and feel you can proceed, click Update profile at the bottom of the page.

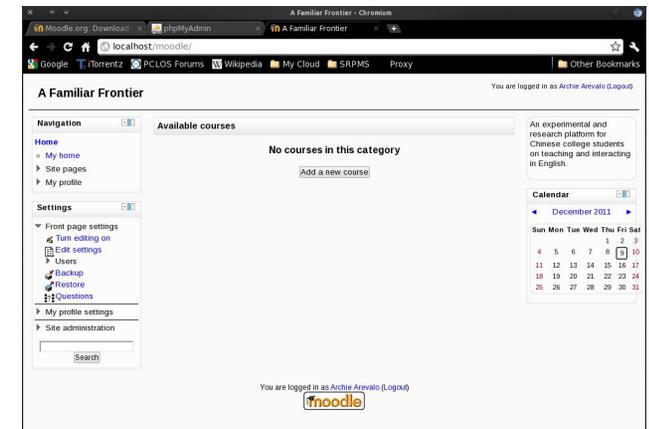


We are almost there. The next page is the Front page settings. Remember that Moodle is a Learning Management System meant to provide materials for education. Take the time to think of an appropriate name and description for your site.

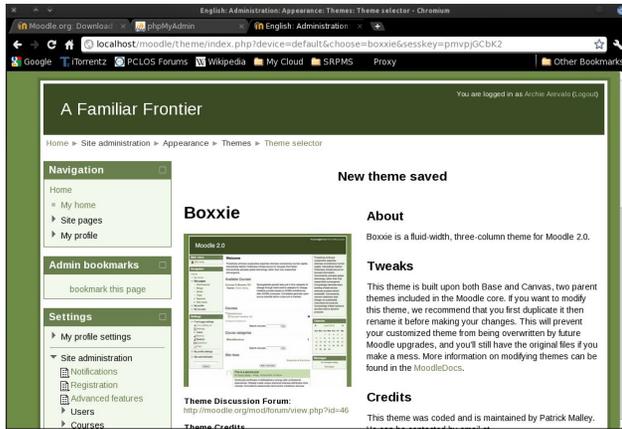
Consider the New settings - Manage authentication section as well. I had mine set to Email-based self-registration. Other plugins are available. When done, click Save changes.



And that's it! All you need now is to tweak and fine tune Moodle to your preference, and your site is good to go!



Changing the themes is easy as choosing one from the several themes with Theme Selector.



If you are an educator like myself, you might also consider installing Moodle on your webserver, or having your site hosted on one of the [Moodle Partners](#), and support the Moodle development.



# Screenshot Showcase



Posted by JohnW\_57, December 6, 2011, running KDE4.



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# More Screenshot Showcase



Top Left: Posted by ferry\_th, December 11, 2011, running KDE4.

Bottom Left: Posted by Archie, December 21, 2011, running KDE4.



Top Right: Posted by bones113, December 4, 2011, running KDE4.

Bottom Right: Posted by tschommer, December 20, 2011, running KDE4.



# 2012

## January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

# longtom

