

The PCLinuxOS magazine

Volume 52

May, 2011

Scribus, Part 5:

Links & The Scrapbook

Ladies Of PCLinuxOS:

silverbirch

**Retrosahre: The Secure Social
Network, Part 2**

Video: Part 5 - HandBrake

**Video: Part 6 - DeVeDe
ts2mpeg & DVBCut**

Game Zone: FunBrain

**Basic Backup Plans
for PCLinuxOS**

**WindowMaker on PCLinuxOS:
Working With Backgrounds**

Photo Viewers Galore, Part 1

Alternate OS: Icaros, Part 3

Greek OpenFest

ms_meme's Nook:

Mr. Texstar

Forum Foibles: Bacon

Double Take &

Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

Plus more inside!



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The NEW PCLinuxOS Magazine is a monthly online publication containing PCLinuxOS-related materials. It is published primarily for members of the PCLinuxOS community. The Magazine staff is comprised of volunteers from the PCLinuxOS community.

Visit us online at <http://www.pclosmag.com>

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Welcome From The Chief Editor

Sometimes, it's easy to get lost among all that's going on with PCLinuxOS. In case you missed some of the highlights, here's a brief rundown. To start off with, the 2.6.38.4 Linux kernel has hit the repos, amid reports of it being the fastest ever. KDE 4.6.2 has hit the repos, and the monthly bug update (4.6.3) isn't very far off. Sproggy and Texstar have been working on Xfce 4.8.1. Gnome 3.0 is being given a very close look. Before long, new 2011 ISOs will be coming out.

Several PCLinuxOS developers have banded together to develop a home-grown PCLinuxOS web browser, called Hammer. It is still in development, but you can get a look at the alpha version (some are calling it pre-alpha) by going to the [topic](#) in the PCLinuxOS forum, as well as follow the development process. They have made amazing progress in a very short amount of time. Plus, if you have any Python coding skills, you can even join the team, since this is a development project by the community, for the community.

On the magazine staff, Galen (gseaman) has taken a break from his task of preparing the HTML version of the magazine every month, due to other commitments and demands on his time. So Galen, thank you for all your hard work on the HTML version of the magazine each month for the past two years. You've done an outstanding job, and your



hard work has been appreciated every step of the way. Meanwhile, Sproggy has agreed to carry on the layout of the HTML version of the magazine each month. Let's welcome Sproggy aboard in his new role with The PCLinuxOS Magazine.

In this issue of The PCLinuxOS Magazine, Meemaw continues her look at Scribus. I continue my series of articles on working with video files, examining HandBrake and DeVeDe. Patrick Horneker continues his look at running WindowMaker on PCLinuxOS, focusing on working with backgrounds in his latest installment. horusfalcon starts a series on backup solutions under PCLinuxOS.

Archie completes the second part of his Retroshare article. Stathis checks in from Greece, with a first hand report of the activities at the Greek OpenFest 2011 conference. Meemaw starts a new series of articles covering the myriad of choices available for graphic file viewers. She also wrote another Game

Zone entry, this time taking a look at an online game site that targets school-aged children.

We also get to learn about another of our female PCLinuxOS users this month, where silverbirch is interviewed for the recurring Ladies of PCLinuxOS article series. Darrel Johnston fills us in on more details surrounding the running of Icaros, in the third part of his Alternate OS article on Icaros. Leiche returns with an article about converting and editing MPEG transport stream (*.ts) files into something that you can work with on your computer.

Of course, all of your regular features are present, as well. ms_meme is back with ms_meme's Nook, as well as another installment of Forum Foibles. Mark Szorady is also back with another installment of his Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip page. Of course, we feature 10 more exemplary screen shots, in Screenshot Showcase.

So keep your ear tuned! There are lots of things happening, and I suspect they'll happen rather quickly once they start coming down the pipeline. Until next month, I wish each and every one of you peace, prosperity, serenity and tranquility.

Advertisement



Using Scribus, Part 5: Links and Scrapbook

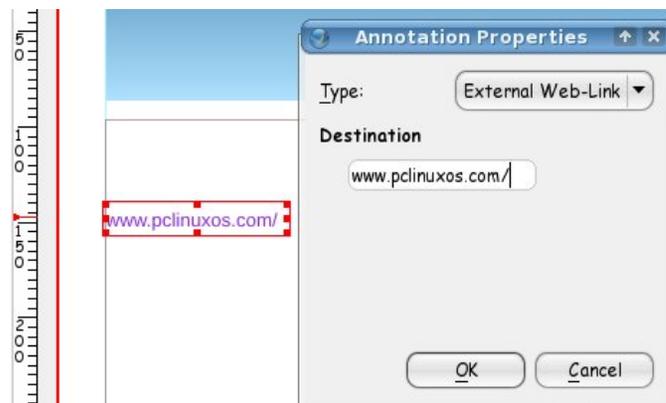
by Meemaw

We've learned much in our short time with Scribus! By now you should have most of your newsletter finished, with only the finishing touches to add. We'll cover a couple of those now, which should make your work a little easier.

Links

Many stories now have links to websites on them. If your story has a website associated with it, you may want to provide the link in your article. While it's not hard to format in Scribus, it is not readily apparent on the screen. In the default layout, you will see a pair of 'shoe-prints' on the left side of your window.

Click on them, and form a frame around your web address. It will look just like a text frame. Double-click on it and a link window will appear. You

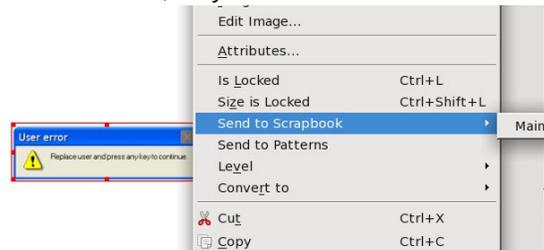


should choose 'External Web-Link' in the drop down box, and you will see a blank for your web address. When you get the correct address entered you can click OK. Also remember to lock your frame so it doesn't go anywhere. NOTE: If you want the text to be blue or something other than black, you will have to change the color of the text in your story editor and not in this window. It doesn't show it in the illustration, but you need to make sure your web address has the appropriate web service to use; http:// for web pages, ftp:// for ftp sites, mailto: for email addresses.

The toolbar up the side is the PDF toolbar. You can insert checkboxes, button boxes and more from there. Unless you are designing a fillable form or something that requires checkboxes or buttons, you may not use many of the tools there, but it is great that they are included.

Scrapbook

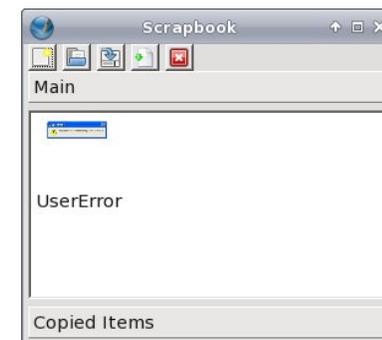
If you do several newsletters, you may have some graphics you use all the time, although not in the exact same place every time. Scribus provides a Scrapbook to store some of these graphics, kept right there for your convenience. When you first open it, you will have an empty window. However, as you use something and decide to save it you can select it, right-click on it and choose 'Send to Scrapbook'. (The default is called Main.)



You will be asked to name your item.



If you created an album besides 'Main', you also need to save it. Next time you need it, it will be there, and you can simply find it and drag it to your project.



My newsletter uses the company logo somewhere on one of the pages, and for this magazine, we display several ads. Those graphics don't change, so they are saved to the Scrapbook so that we

can just choose the one we want and drag it into the document wherever we want to put it. You could save four graphics representing the seasons, and use each somewhere in your newsletter during that season. I'm sure you have even more great ideas!

Next month we'll look at templates and master pages.

WindowMaker On PCLinuxOS: Working With Backgrounds



by Patrick G Horneker (phorneker)

When we first started using WindowMaker, we saw very few elements on the screen. The most prominent of these is the background. Like everything else in WindowMaker, the background can be changed.

What you see here is the default background for WindowMaker as installed from Synaptic. This is the

same wallpaper that is the default wallpaper for the original PCLinuxOS variant (with the KDE desktop), and for the MiniMe KDE version.

About the Background

WindowMaker has five types of backgrounds, namely solid color, pixmap, gradient, textured gradient, and interwoven gradient.

Solid color: The only configurable option here is a solid background color. The PCLinuxOS implementation defaults to solid white.

Pixmap: Standard wallpapers are displayed with this type of background. XPM, XBM, PNG, TIFF and JPEG files are supported here.

Gradient: This type of background allows you to create gradients of any number of colors. Options here are horizontal, vertical or diagonal gradient, and the gradient rendered starts with the first color on the list, transitioning to the next color, and the next until the end of the list is reached. The default PCLinuxOS installation provides a horizontal gradient starting at yellow, and transitioning to blue using only yellow and blue for colors.

Textured Gradient: This type of background layers a two color gradient with a horizontal, vertical or diagonal option on top of a pixmap. Like the Pixmap type, XPM, XBM, PNG, TIFF and JPEG files are supported. However, graphics used are tiled only, rather than scaled. This type of background was designed to be used with graphics that are textures, rather than photographs. Also, gradients are limited to exactly two colors. The other configurable option is the opacity of the gradient layered on the textured graphic.

Interwoven Gradient: This type of background superimposes one two color vertical gradient on top of another two color vertical gradient. The gradients are rendered with alternating rows of pixels on the background. That is, the first gradient renders the first, third, fifth, etc rows while the second gradient renders the second, fourth, sixth, etc. rows.

Installing Wallpapers

For WindowMaker to use pixmaps, WindowMaker has to be able to find where these graphics are located on your PCLinuxOS installation.

The WindowMaker installation on PCLinuxOS implements the following list of locations where graphics are stored:

```
/home/<your  
username>/GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Pixmaps  
/home/<your  
username>/GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Background  
S  
/usr/share/WindowMaker/Pixmaps  
/usr/share/WindowMaker/Backgrounds  
/usr/share/pixmaps
```

This list can be modified either through the WindowMaker Configuration Manager, or through the WindowMaker preferences utility (accessible by double clicking on the GNUstep icon on the dock itself, which should be on the upper right corner of your screen).

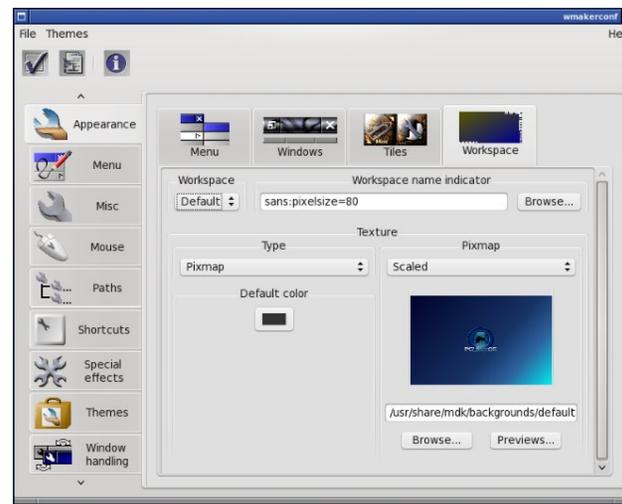
The first two items on the list are located in your user home directory. The other three items on the list are pixmaps and backgrounds accessible to all users the machine where you installed PCLinuxOS, hence the /usr/share prefix.

To install wallpapers for your use, simply copy them to the GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Pixmaps or GNUstep/Library/WindowMaker/Backgrounds directory within your user account. Of course, you can use any background anywhere in your user space, but this directory is where WindowMaker

looks for backgrounds by default. I will show you why in the next section.

Configuring Your Background

Like most everything else in WindowMaker, the background can be changed. The easiest way to do this is by right clicking on the background, then selecting More Applications → Configuration → WindowMaker Configuration Manager from the popup menu.



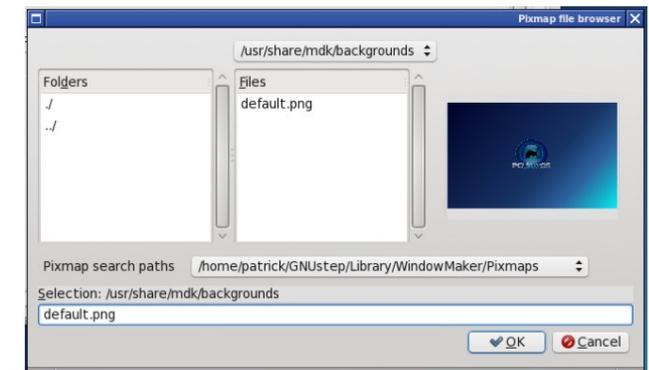
Like KDE and GNOME, WindowMaker comes with four desktops, called Workspaces. In the last article on icons, and the article before that on the basics, I mentioned a Clip on the upper left hand of the screen. The clip is used to change which desktop is displayed.

Click on Workspace to get the settings shown here. By default, you can change the background for all four workspaces. The Workspace pulldown menu allows you to select which workspace you would like to apply your background.

The Pixmap menu allows you to center, tile or scale your graphic to be displayed. The Default Color button (with a sample on the button) is what WindowMaker uses to fill in any space not taken up by the graphic. This is generally the case with graphics that are centered, or scaled retaining the ratio of the graphic.

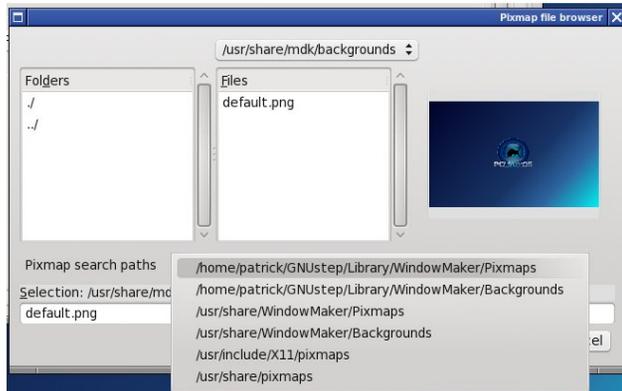
There are two options for scaling graphics. The first automatically stretches the graphic to fit to the screen resolution. The other option retains the original shape of the graphic.

To select a graphic to use as wallpaper, click on Browse... and a dialog will appear allowing you to select the graphic.



When you first open this dialog box, the contents of the /usr/share/mdk/backgrounds directory are

displayed. This is the default for PCLinuxOS, and only the standard PCLinuxOS background is showing. Like other file selection dialogs, you can change the directory to where your wallpaper files are stored. Notice that the dropdown menu next to Pixmap search paths shows the GNUStep/Library/WindowMaker/Pixmaps directory within your user space. Clicking on this dropdown menu will pull the list of directories WindowMaker uses to search for wallpapers.



Select one of these directories to change to that directory. Any supported graphics files found will be displayed under Files. As you select, the preview of that graphic will show up on the right side of this dialog box. Click on OK to select the graphic. You should return to WindowMaker Configuration Manager. The new graphic should be displayed in the preview. Then click on the Checkmark (on the upper-left hand corner of the Manager window below the menu. This will exit the configuration utility and apply the wallpaper to the Workspace as shown below.



This example wallpaper (January Sunset) is available for viewing at [my page](#) on the JPG Magazine website (called "Sunset after the Blizzard" there), and available for downloading at <http://horneker.com/downloads.html>.

Where to Obtain Wallpapers

There are many places on the Web where you can download and use wallpapers.

Your digital camera or camera-equipped cell phone [LinFX](#) [Picasa Web](#) [Flickr](#) [Image Shack](#) [Downloads page on my website.](#) [My page at JPG Magazine](#)

Of course, there are many other sources where photographs can be obtained. In fact, there are many sites devoted to providing only wallpaper images. Just be sure you have the right to use the images as wallpaper before downloading.

ms_meme's Nook: Mr. Texstar

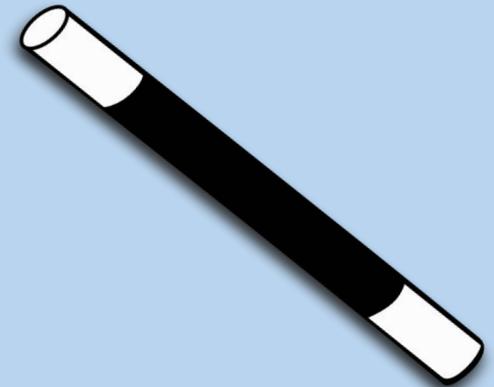
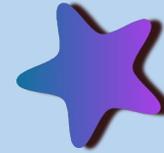
Mr. Texstar you made us a dream
It's the best OS that we've ever seen
Never again will we be a rover
Shout Hallelujah Windows' Frights are over

MAGIC

Texstar we're not alone
Thousands of users have come on home
So thank you for your magic touch
PCLOS we love it so much

Mr. Texstar we want you to know
Now our computer is never slow
What you've made is pure perfection
PCLOS needs no virus protection

Texstar you've saved the day
Away from you we never will stray
So thank you for your magic touch
PCLOS we love it so much



MP3



OGG

Double Take & Mark's Quick Gimp Tip

Double Take

by Mark Szorady



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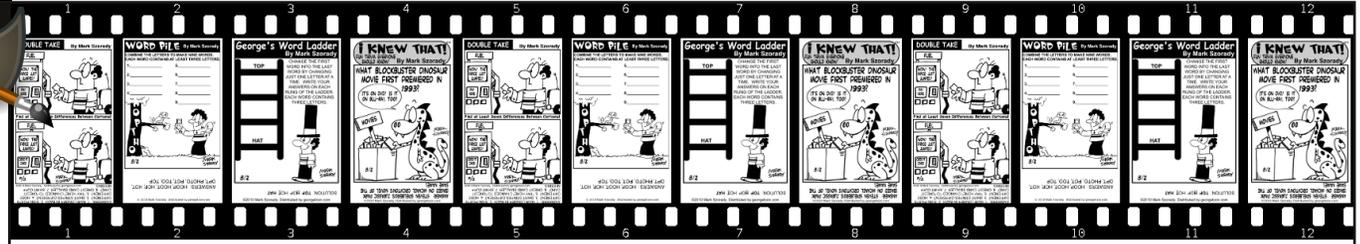
Find at least seven differences between cartoons.

Answers on Page 48.

Mark's Quick Gimp Tip



The Gimp has a lot of fun effects filters from which to choose. One such filter is called "Filmstrip." And it does just that. Open any number of images and, using Filmstrip, combine them into an image that resembles a long piece of movie footage. A filmstrip. To use the filter, simply open up the images you want to use. In my resulting filmstrip shown on this page, I used four images (the comic panels I create for georgetoon.com). Then, from Gimp's main menu, select



Filters > Combine > Filmstrip. When the dialog window appears, simply move the images you wish to use from the left column to the right column. If you like, adjust height and other variables. (You can repeat the use of images, reorder them, adjust height, spacing, etc.) Then click Okay. The Gimp does the rest! It really is

a fun filter to use and dresses up your images in a snap! Speaking of snappy images, [May 5th is Cartoonists Day](#). This sometimes coincides with [Free Comic Book Day \(the first Saturday in May\)](#). Whenever I attend either of these cartoon events, I bring along my laptop/notebook and show the folks Linux!

-Mark Szorady is a nationally syndicated cartoonist with georgetoon.com. He blogs at georgetoon.com/blog. Email Mark at georgetoon@gmail.com.

Video: Part 5 - HandBrake

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

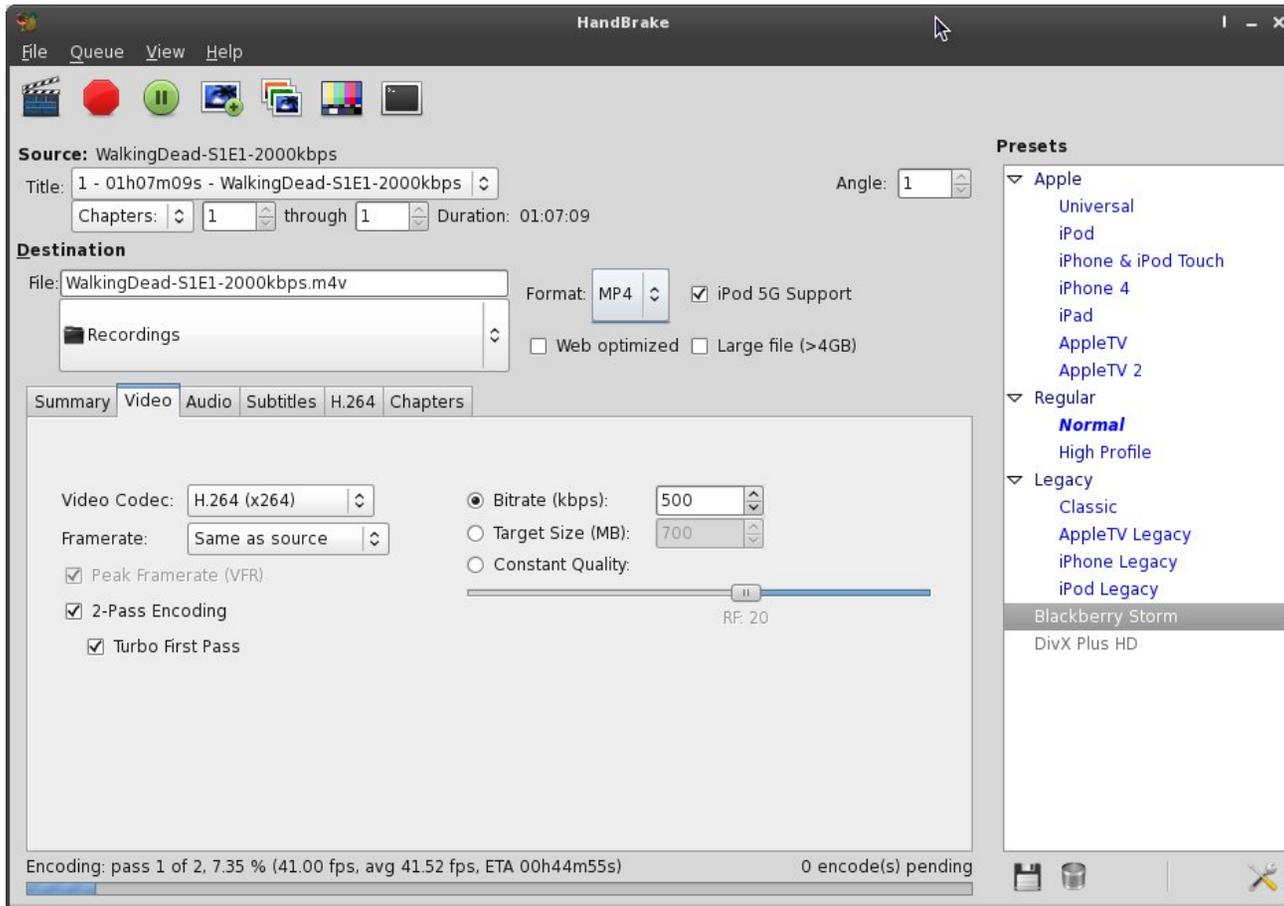
One handy tool to have in your “video toolkit” is an application that makes it easy to get your videos onto your portable devices. Those portable devices could be an iPod, Blackberry smart phone, an

Android smart phone, or a tablet, whether it’s Android-based or an iPad.

Enter [HandBrake](#), a GPL’d multiplatform, multithreaded Gtk+ application that makes the job of converting videos into a format playable on your portable devices quite easy. HandBrake can convert any video format that can be read by libavformat and

decoded by libavcodec. This includes *.flv files, *.mpg files, *.avi files, and most anything else.

HandBrake can also convert your DVDs to a format that can be viewed on your portable devices. Although HandBrake itself does not decrypt DVDs, on a Linux system, it will allow libdvdread to use libdvdcss2 to decrypt the DVDs on-the-fly.



Background

HandBrake was started in 2003, by “titer.” One of the first DVD-to-MPEG4 conversion programs out there, it was originally written to run on Be OS and Mac OS X. It has since expanded to be able to run on Linux and Windows.

“titer” dropped off of the radar in 2006, while work continued by Rodney Hester and Chris Long to reverse engineer the new 640x480 H.264 iPod firmware 1.2 format from Apple. They were working independently, but found that their work complimented one another, so they banded together to put out an unofficial version of HandBrake.



Unable to fully access the changes made in the HandBrake subversion repository (due to lack of

prior authorization from “titer”), HandBrake was forked to a parallel project, called MediaFork.

Finally, in February 2007, “titer” resurfaced and gave his blessings to the continued work on HandBrake. The MediaFork project was officially “reabsorbed” by HandBrake, and all work continues under the HandBrake project.

Labeling the *.avi and *.ogm formats as obsolete, the HandBrake developers later dropped support for outputting files in those formats. Today, HandBrake supports (mostly) H.264 MP4 video file conversions, with the lesser MPEG4 format created by ffmpeg.

Using HandBrake

The use of HandBrake is quite simple and straight forward.



Icon toolbar during transcoding



Icon toolbar prior to starting transcoding

Starting at the top left part of the HandBrake window, you will find a simple icon toolbar. The clapperboard icon allows you to choose the source video to convert from. Clicking it defaults to a pointer to the DVD drive, but you can also use the dialog

box that opens to point to a video file stored on your computer.

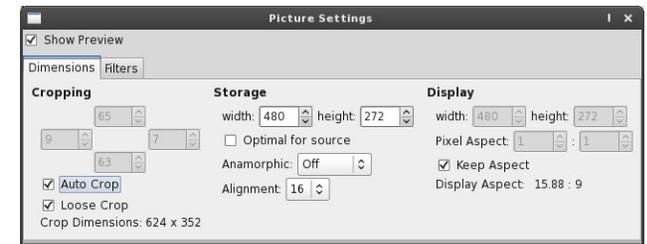
The second icon changes its appearance. When video is in the process of being transcoded, the icon appears as a “stop sign.” Clicking it halts the video transcoding. To start the video transcoding, click on the green icon with the arrow on it.

Clicking on the green “Pause” icon will pause the video transcoding. Clicking on the fourth icon (from the left) will add more videos to the cue for transcoding. The fifth icon will display the cue, when clicked.

We’ll take a look at the sixth icon, the Picture Settings & Preview button, depicting the color bars, separately. The last icon will show messages generated during the transcoding process.

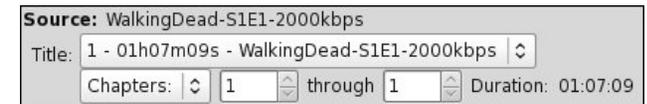


Clicking the “color bar” icon will open the preview window (above) and the Picture Settings dialog (top of next column). Here, you can set the final size of



the video you want (or need) for your portable device.

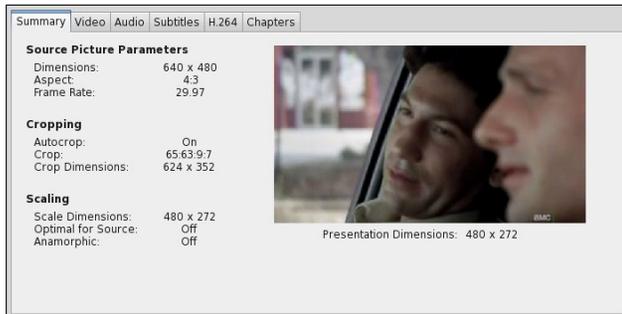
HandBrake will automatically crop your video image, by default, to remove any irregular edges or letterbox bars. You can, of course, turn off this behavior, if you like.



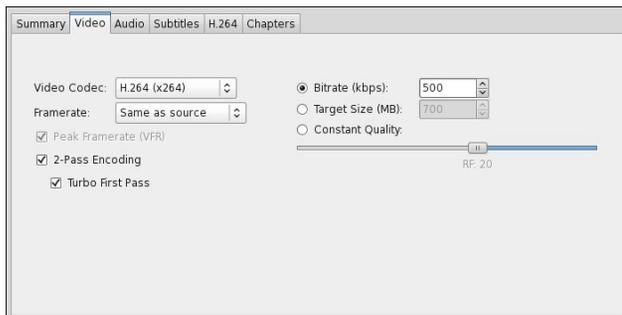
Immediately beneath the icon toolbar is the source for the video transcoding. In our case above, it is a file stored on my computer. If you are transcoding from a DVD source, then you can select from among the various titles on a disc. When transcoding from a DVD source, HandBrake will automatically scan the DVD (once selected as the source) and select the longest program on the disc, since this is usually the main title of the disc. You can, if you wish, select any of the other titles on a disc, via the drop down list box.



Next, you can specify where the output file is stored by selecting the destination directory, as well as the destination filename. You can choose between MP4 and MKV file formats. The *.m4v file extension is to assist certain models of iPods in recognizing the file as a compliant MPEG4 file. You can change it later (after the transcoding) to *.mp4, if you need.



The meat and bones of the settings for the video transcoding in HandBrake take place in the lower half of the HandBrake window. Above is the "Summary" tab for the current transcoding.



Under the "Video" tab, you can set various parameters for your transcoding session. Here, I've selected H.264 as the video codec. You can also select "MPEG4 (FFmpeg)" as the other output

codec, should your portable device not be 100% H.264 compliant. I've actually found the alternate "MPEG4 (FFmpeg)" setting to be less troublesome, in my tests. Even though my portable device touts itself as being H.264 compliant, I have been unable to get consistent results. With some videos, the video would not encode properly, giving me a blotchy green screen in place of the actual video image.

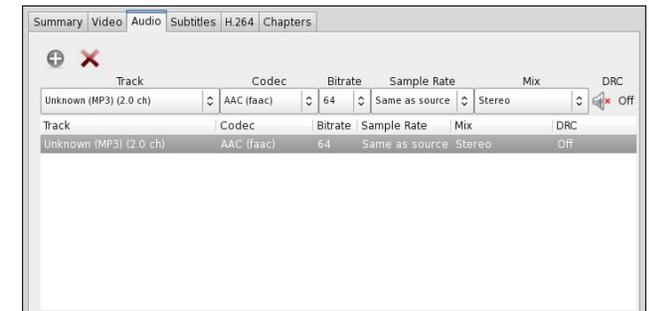
For "Framerate," it is probably best to leave this set to "Same as source." If you desire, you can transcode the video to match the framerate used by the broadcast standard for your region. This may be advantageous if you are saving videos to a media server that feeds videos to your television. For portable devices, this shouldn't make too much difference.

On the right side of the "Video" tab, you have three settings to choose from. You can select the "Constant Quality" setting (the default), and the file will be created without regards to file size, but providing consistent results throughout the video. You can also select a "Target Size" in MiB. This is helpful if you want to keep the size of your video transcoding small enough to fit on an optical disc, such as a CD or DVD. The default value here is 700 MB, for a CD.

For use on my portable device, I've elected to choose the bitrate for the video transcoding. Since my portable device is a Blackberry Storm (which I no longer use for phone service, but still use as a portable video player – a long story for another time, I'm afraid), the screen size allows me to reduce the bitrate and still maintain a quite decent image. I took

a look on the Crackberry forums for some guidance in what works well for video transcoding, and one recommendation was for a 500 kbps bitrate. As an added benefit, the lower bitrate results in a smaller file size, which means I can put more videos on the 8 GB microSD card. I can attest that the image looks quite good on my Blackberry Storm. I suspect that a similar bitrate will work equally well for other portable devices with similar smallish screens, such as an iPhone, iPod Touch, or Android phone.

To get the best video possible, especially when using the lower bitrates, I highly recommend using the "Two pass encoding" option, coupled with the "Turbo First Pass" option. On the first pass through the video, HandBrake will "study and analyze" the video. On the second pass, it will use the information gathered from the first pass to optimize the final video image that is saved. Trust me – the added time involved is definitely worth the increased image quality that results.



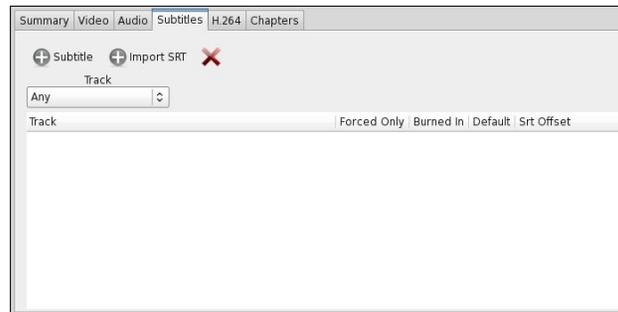
Under the "Audio" tab, you can set the parameters for the transcoding of the audio portion of the video file. My portable device prefers AAC as the audio codec. You can select from between AAC, MP3,

Vorbis, AC3 (FFmpeg), AC3 (pass-thru), DTS (pass-thru), or Choose for me. Not all codecs will be available at all times, and some may appear “grayed out” at times. To further save file space in the final transcoded video file, I’ve opted to reduce the audio bitrate to 64 kbps. It still sounds decent enough, in my opinion.

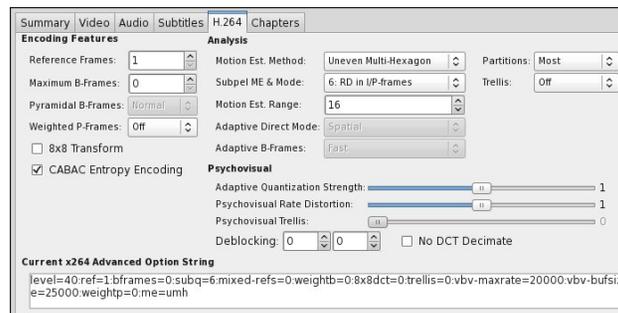
For “Sample Rate,” the default value is to keep it the same as the source. In my instance above, that is definitely the correct choice. However, if you are transcoding from a DVD, this may not work out so well, if your portable device does not “like” the sample rate at 48,000 Hz, which is the default sample rate for audio tracks on DVDs. You can set it manually to 44,100 Hz, or as low as 22,050 Hz. This may help make the file size of the transcoded video smaller, but in my estimation, the savings are minimal and not worth the trouble. Unless you are transcoding a video file to burn another DVD, you would be wise to keep the sample rate set to 44,100 Hz.

The “Mix” setting allows you to set whether you want your audio as stereo, mono, Dolby Surround, Dolby Pro Logic II, or 6-Channel discreat. For most portable devices, stereo works just fine. For transcoded files stored on a media server, you may prefer one of the more “advanced” mix choices. Finally, DRC stands for “Dynamic Range Compression.” This only works with AC3 audio, and makes the softest sounds a bit louder. This may help when listening to the audio of the transcoded file in noisy environments.

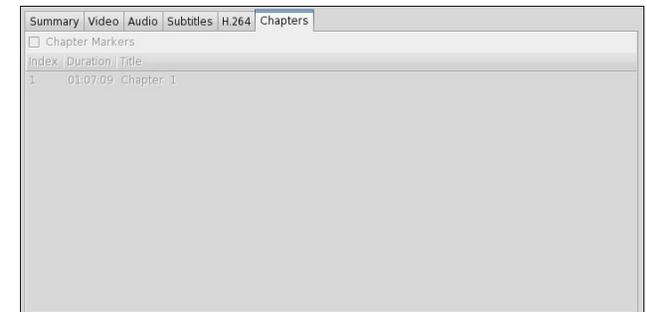
Under the “Subtitles” tab, you can specify any subtitles you might want to include in your



transcoded video. If you are transcoding from a DVD, you can specify the language that you want to use for your subtitles (from those on the disc). You can also specify an external SRT file containing the subtitles for your transcoded video. The HandBrake wiki has a whole section on [subtitles](#).



If you are transcoding your video as H.264 MPEG4 video, there are a host of additional settings you can make to fine tune the transcoding. Rather than turn this article into an explanation of what all of these settings do, you can mouse over each of the settings for a brief explanation, which will appear in a popup window. You can also visit the HandBrake wiki page for a discussion of [advanced x264 options](#).



The “Chapters” tab is particularly useful if you are transcoding video from an DVD, which has chapter information. In the example above, since I have chosen to transcode from another video file that does not contain chapter information, my options are “grayed out” and unavailable. But when you transcode from DVD, you can preserve the chapter information that is on the DVD disc. In fact, this is one of the advantages of using MPEG4 video. It can preserve and maintain chapter information throughout the file. It is also one of the reasons that output support for *.avi and *.ogm files were dropped, since both of those file formats do not support the inclusion of chapters. However, not all portable devices that support MPEG4 video playback support or recognize chapters in the MPEG4 video file.

At the far right side of the HandBrake window are presets for the transcoding of your video files. If it looks rather Apple Mac OS X specific, you are not mistaken. Given that HandBrake was originally written for the Mac OS X, coupled with the market dominance of Apple products in the field of portable media devices, it is no wonder.



Chances are high you will find that one of the listed presets will work just fine for your portable device, right out of the box. Even minimally, you are likely to find that one of the presets works particularly well with your portable device, with only a small amount of tweaking of the settings.

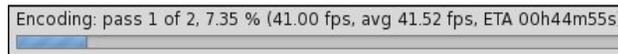
I found that the iPhone & iPod Touch preset works very well at producing video files that play back on my Blackberry Storm. While it works well “out of the box,” I have tweaked it to achieve a smaller file size. Once you

have your preset tweaked how you like it, simply click on the “disk” icon at the bottom part of this panel to save your custom preset for future use.

It is also possible to find other custom presets for HandBrake on the internet. For example, the custom “DivX Plus HD” preset was found on the DivX site.



Also, if you want to find custom presets for your portable device (or information on creating your own custom preset), you can perform a web search for “handbrake presets for htc incredible,” replacing “htc incredible” with the name of your portable device.



Once you have all of your settings as you like or want them, it’s time to start your video transcoding. Simply click on the green icon with the arrow on the icon toolbar, and go make yourself dinner. The progress bar at the bottom of the HandBrake window will keep you updated on the progress of the transcoding.

The video transcoding process is likely to take some time to complete. Remember that working with video files takes a fair amount of time, so I would recommend that you go do something else until the process is complete. How long the process takes is quite dependent on your processor speed and the number of cores your processor possesses. On my single core AMD Athlon XP 3000+, a video just over 1 hour in length takes over an hour and a half to finish transcoding. Meanwhile, on one of my laptops

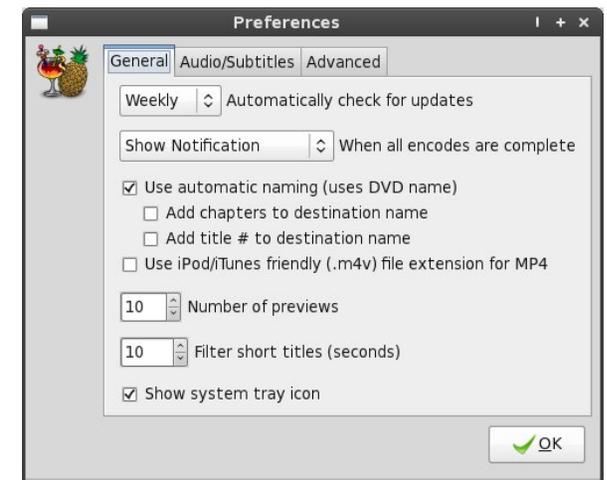
with a dual core Intel processor, I can transcode a two hour video from DVD in less than an hour.

Also, don’t forget that working with video files requires that you have plenty of free hard drive space. Video files tend to be quite large, and their size seems to grow exponentially when you select the higher quality settings for your transcoding.

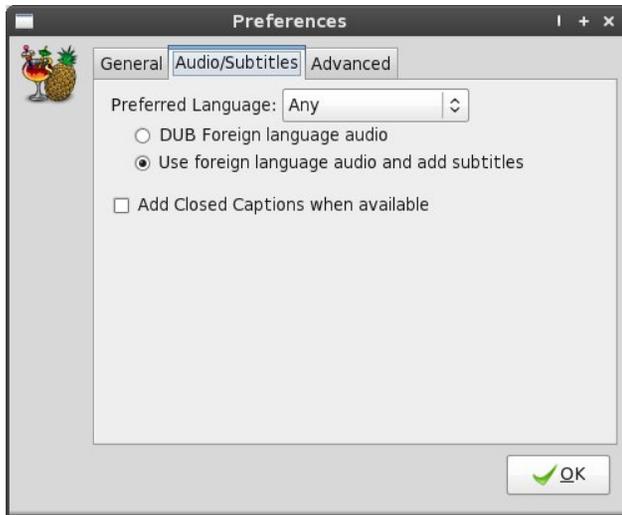
Menu Highlights

First of all, under the “File” menu, you will want to set the location of where you want HandBrake to save your transcoded video. Without doing anything at all, your video files will be stored in your /home directory. It would be much handier – and tidier – to store them in a subdirectory.

The second thing under the “File” menu that you may want to tweak are the “Preferences.”

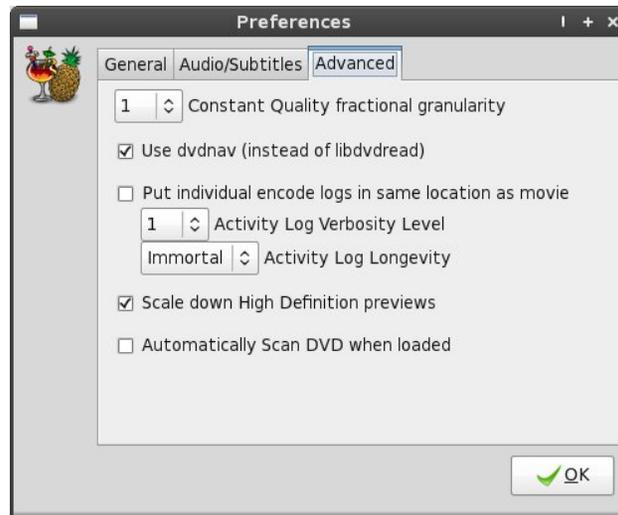


Under the “General” tab, there are two settings which you are likely to want to tweak. The first, “Use automatic naming (uses DVD name),” will use the name of the DVD as the filename for your transcoded video file. The default value is checked. The second thing you may want to tweak is the “Use iPod/iTunes friendly (.mv4) file extension for MP4” setting. Since I’m not using an iPod or iTunes, I prefer to have my *.mp4 files saved as *.mp4 files. Since the default is to have this option turned on, I have unchecked this option.



Under the “Audio/Subtitles” tab, you can set the preferred language to use for audio and subtitles. You can also choose to include Closed Captions, whenever they are available.

Under the “Advanced” tab, you can choose some options that govern the behavior of HandBrake. The only one here that may not be obvious is the



“Activity Log Verbosity Level” setting. A setting of “1” is default, and is medium verbosity. If you want a less verbose output in the activity log, choose “0” as the verbosity level. Similarly, if you want more information, select “2” as the verbosity level. You may also want to keep the encoding logs in the same directory as the encoded video, to make their access more convenient. Unless you check this box, all of your encoding logs will be stored in the /home/[user]/.config/gbh directory.

Checking the “Automatically Scan DVD when loaded” option will save yourself a little time, especially if you are transcoding from several DVDs during a transcoding session.

Summary

HandBrake is a very powerful tool that should fit very well into any digital video enthusiast’s chest of tools. It makes the transcoding of video for playback on portable devices quite simple, with a minimal learning curve. The quality of the video produced is quite good, as well. With more and more portable devices – such as tablets – hitting the market, PCLinuxOS users are going to find themselves turning to HandBrake more and more, so they can get digital copies of their content stored on those portable devices.

Personally, I find the lack of support for *.avi and *.ogm files as choices for output file format a bit limiting, especially the lack of support for *.avi files. I personally wouldn’t miss support for the *.ogm files, since there isn’t widespread acceptance or usage of that particular file format. Despite the declaration by the HandBrake developers that those formats are obsolete, I would prefer, as a user, to have the choice to use them. The AVI format does, after all, have widespread and near universal acceptance, and can be played back on the greatest number of platforms and devices.

I feel it should be my choice whether or not to use an “obsolete” format, and not left to the lofty agenda of a handful of developers who think they know better than me what I need. The HandBrake developers have made it abundantly clear in the [HandBrake FAQ](#) that support for AVI and OGM as output formats are gone from HandBrake for good and forever.

In the end, I could further transcode the MP4 file produced by HandBrake into an AVI file, using Avidemux. However, that added step will mean an extra step in the process, could adversely affect video quality, and will require additional time to accomplish.

Yet, even with this limitation, HandBrake comes highly recommended. It does what it does, exceptionally well. For more information, visit the [HandBrake web site](#), where a full wiki, user manual and forum can be accessed.

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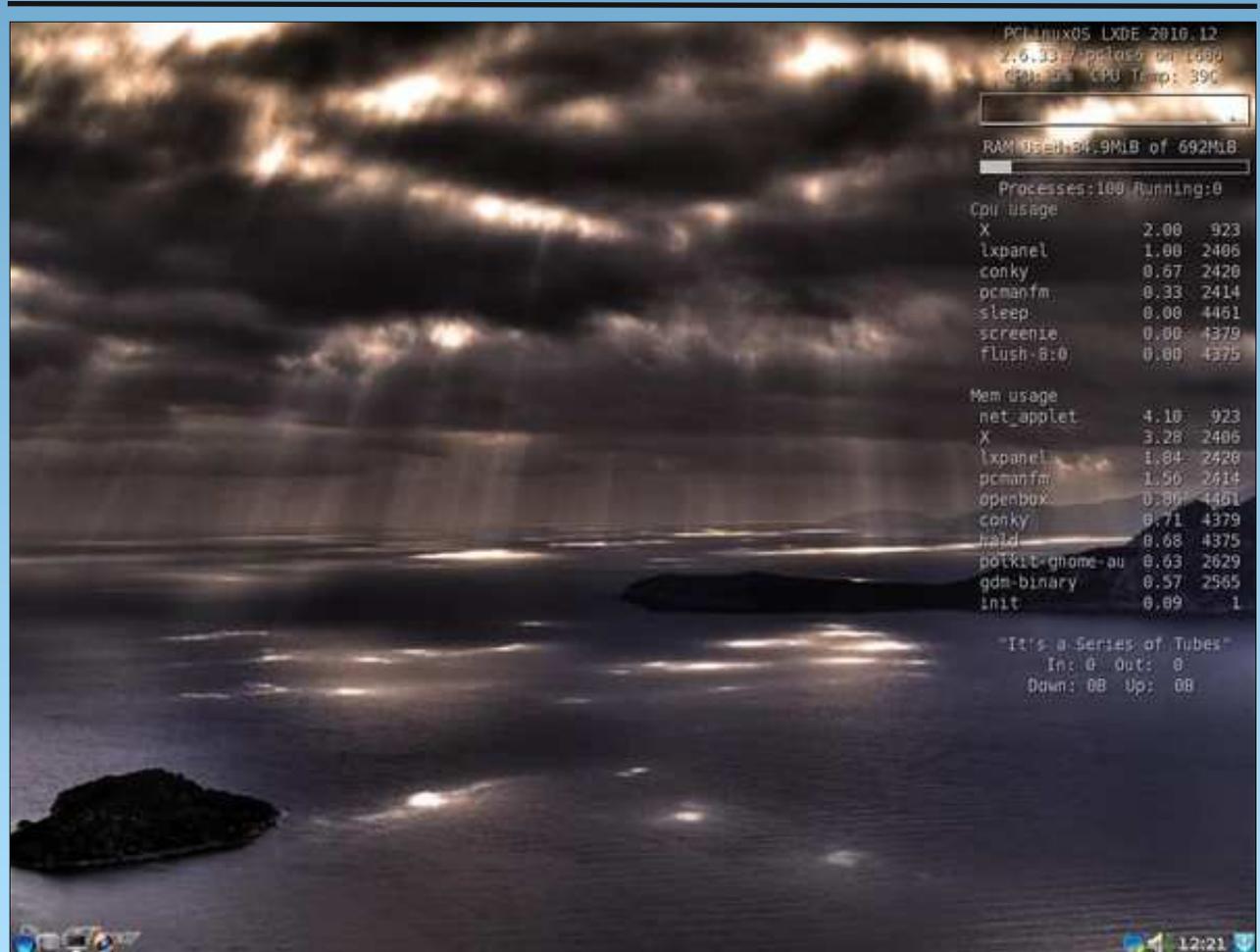
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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by weirdwolf, April 21, 2011, running LXDE.

Alternate OS: Icaros, Part 3

by Darrel Johnston (djohnston)

As stated in the previous article, the logical volumes SYS: and DEVS: are assigned during bootup.

Standard assigns that are generally present in an AmigaOS system include:

SYS:, which points to the boot drive's root directory.

C:, which points to a directory containing shell commands. At boot time, this is SYS:C, if it exists, otherwise SYS:. The command path defaults to C: and the current working directory, so putting executables in C: allows them to be executed simply by typing their name.

DEVS:, which points to a directory containing the system's devices. At boot time, this is SYS:Devs if that directory exists, otherwise SYS:.

L:, which points to a directory containing AmigaDOS handlers and filesystems. At boot time, this is SYS:L if it exists, otherwise L: is not automatically created.

LIBS:, which points to a directory containing the system's libraries. At boot time, this is SYS:Libs if that directory exists, otherwise SYS:.

S:, which points to a directory with scripts, including the startup-sequence which is executed automatically at boot time, if it exists. At boot time, this is SYS:S if it exists, otherwise S: is not automatically created.

PROGDIR:, a special assign that always points to the directory containing the currently running executable. So, if you run "SYS:Tools/Multiview" and

"SYS:System/Format", PROGDIR: points at SYS:Tools for Multiview while simultaneously pointing at SYS:System for the Format command. This feature was introduced in Workbench 2.0.

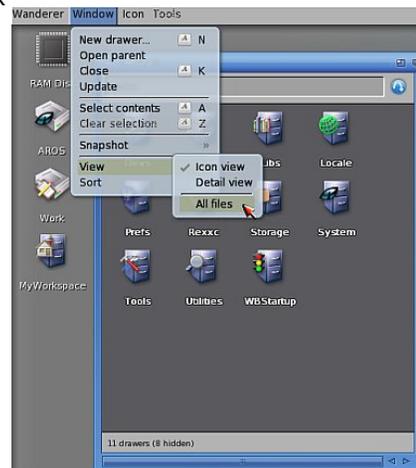
An application launcher is not part of the "stock" Workbench 3.x or AROS desktops. An application named **AmiStart** first appeared in January of 1998. It replicated the basic functions of the Windows Start menu and taskbar. Icaros includes a modified AmiStart taskbar for ease of launching programs, showing the date and time via a clock, and for docking minimized program windows. Without such a utility, the method for launching programs is by double-clicking a disk drive icon on the desktop, then browsing to the appropriate drawer to open the executable program file. (In Amiga terminology, a disk directory, or "folder", is referred to as a "drawer".) Not all of the drawers and files are normally visible. However, we can show all files and drawers by utilizing one of the functions of the Wanderer toolbar which appears at the top of the desktop. Right-click the Wanderer toolbar and select Windows > View > All files. ----->

The resulting view is shown at top right.



I did change the system theme, which results in a different window style. I also resized the second window to give a better view. To resize a window, left-click the mouse on the lower right-hand corner of a window. Hold the mouse button down and drag the window borders to the desired size, then release the mouse button. The "fancy-looking" drawers each have a different looking icon due to a corresponding "info" file which describes the icon. For example, the Devs drawer has a corresponding icon description file named Devs.info. Any drawer which does not have a corresponding info file is hidden in normal view, and is "plain-looking" when unhidden.

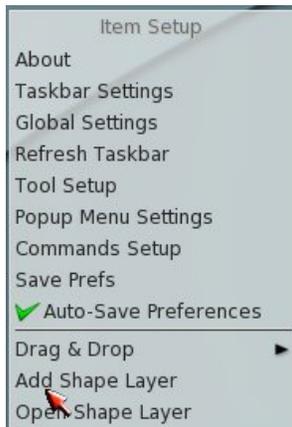
A bit of eye candy is implemented in Icaros in the form of "animated" icons, which were first implemented in Amiga's Workbench by a third party. The icons aren't fully animated, in that they aren't in constant motion, like some of the icons available for the e17 window manager. They are animated in the sense that they have one image when selected and a different image when not selected. Shown below



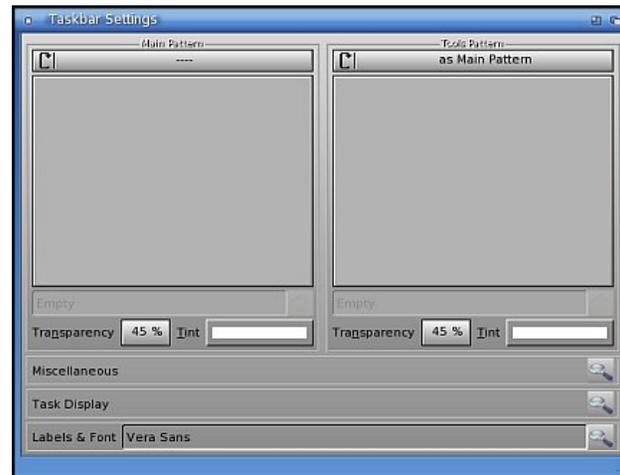
are all the normally visible system drawer icons selected.



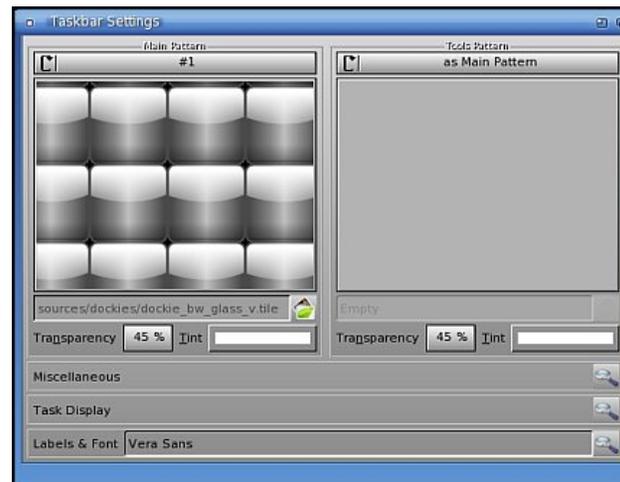
It should also be noted that navigating successive directory levels on an Amiga desktop will open a new window for each double-click. Icaros opens each new directory in the same window. Navigating backwards is done by clicking the round blue arrow icon in the upper right corner of the window. Now that we have some basic navigation tips, let's take a short look at the configuration of the AmiStart taskbar. By right-clicking on the taskbar, we can see there are a few configuration options.



I want to give it a bit more eye candy. I selected Taskbar Settings and saw the following window.



I clicked the Main Pattern selection bar and selected the following pattern.



After closing the Taskbar Settings window, the taskbar now has an opaque background, and the icons appear to float on the desktop.



Let's now take a look at some of the applications included on the Icaros CD by first looking at the programs located on the taskbar. The first icon on the left is the start menu button. Next, we have the Application drawer, which is a simplified file browser.

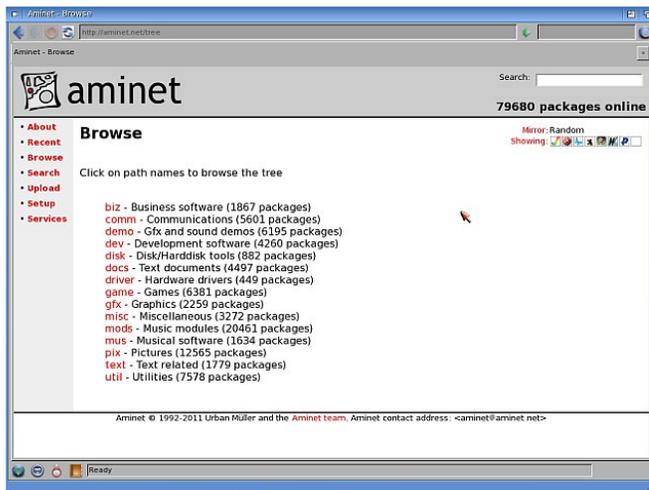


The globe icon starts the web browser application, Origyn. Origyn does not have a flash plugin. I should note here that I could not get networking started with the standard VirtualBox settings. At the time, the Icaros forum was offline for maintenance. I got on IRC and logged onto the #aros channel of Freenode. Within five minutes, one of the administrators advised me to change the VirtualBox network settings from NAT to Bridged adapter. As soon as I did, I was able to connect to the internet. Shown below is the web browser on the Aminet site.

In January, 1992 Swiss student Urban Müller took over a software archive that had been started by

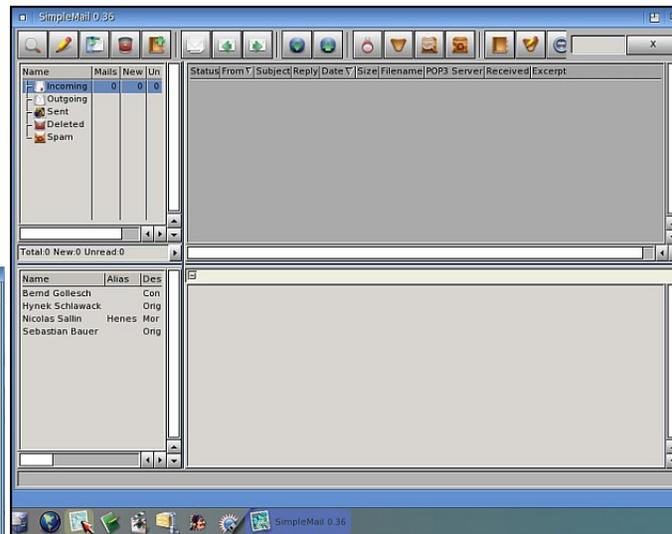
other members of a computer science students' club. Soon the archive became mirrored worldwide and in 1995 started being distributed on monthly CD-ROMs. Reports of daily additions to this software archive were posted automatically to Usenet (de.comp.sys.amiga.archive), or could be requested as an email newsletter. Most of the programs on Aminet were public domain or shareware, but software companies made updates and demo versions of their programs available as well.

Aminet was the first attempt by an internet community to create a centralized public archive maintained by the users themselves, and to keep the community united and free to download new open source software, new program demo releases, patches and localization of Amiga programs (AmigaOS and its modern programs are free to be localized by any single user into any country language). Its creation predates of various years any Linux archive or PC archive or archives for other platforms.



There are still a lot of packages available. The software was originally available only for AmigaOS systems. The packages listed there now are available for Amiga **Motorola 680x0** systems, Amiga PowerPC, PowerPC **MorphOS**, i386 **AROS**, i386 **Amithlon**, PowerPC WarpUp and PowerPC **PowerUp** systems. The icons shown next to each package will indicate which system the package is intended for. In some cases, the package will run on more than one system.

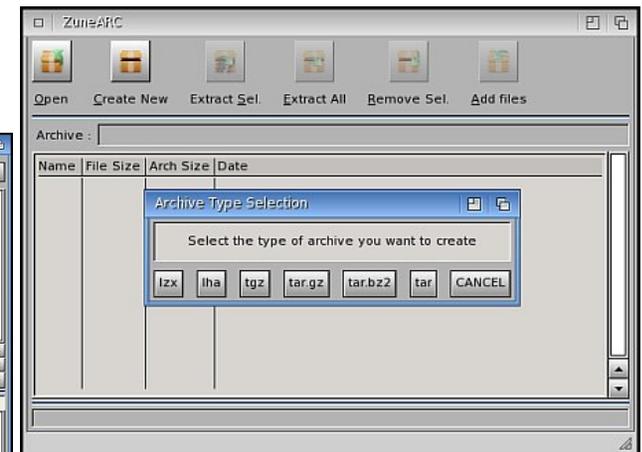
The fourth icon on the taskbar is for SimpleMail, an application similar in function to Thunderbird.



The fifth icon is for the edit application. It is very elementary and is a replacement for ed, the standard Amiga system editor. The sixth icon is for Mplayer, which does not have all the same functions as the Linux version (top right).



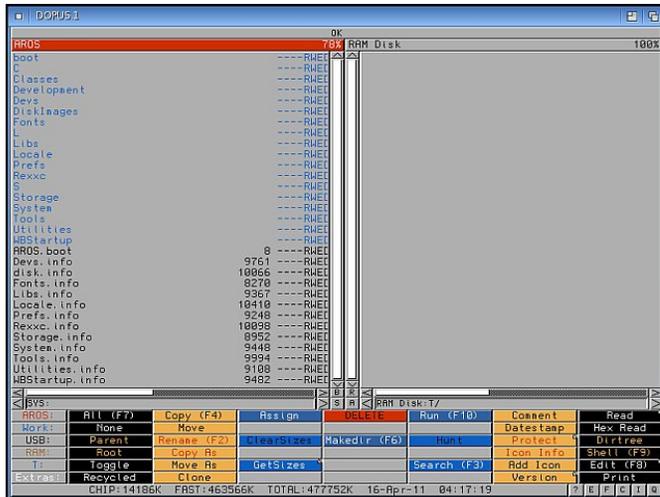
The seventh icon is for ZuneARC, an archive extractor and creator.



The next icon is for SCOUT, a system inspector.



The last icon on the AmiStart taskbar is for [Directory Opus](#). It is a very powerful and versatile file manager which began life as an Amiga utility and is now sold by GPSoftware as a direct replacement for the Windows file explorer.



Changing the system theme also resulted in a different start menu.---->



Here are a few of the demos running.



In the System apps section, we have Scout, a screenshot tool, a window manipulator tool, a PCI inspector, AAEDT (a networking tool), and the LiveUpdater, for updating the installed system.

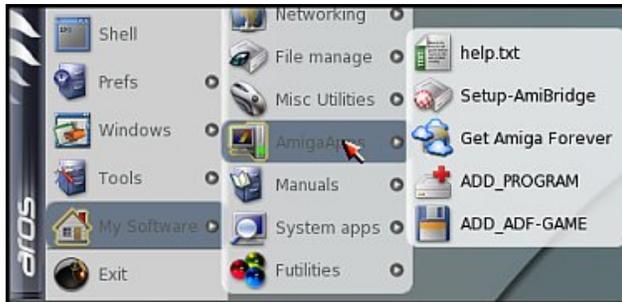


Icaros comes with a full range of documentation installed. Also shown is a page from the Icaros Desktop manual.

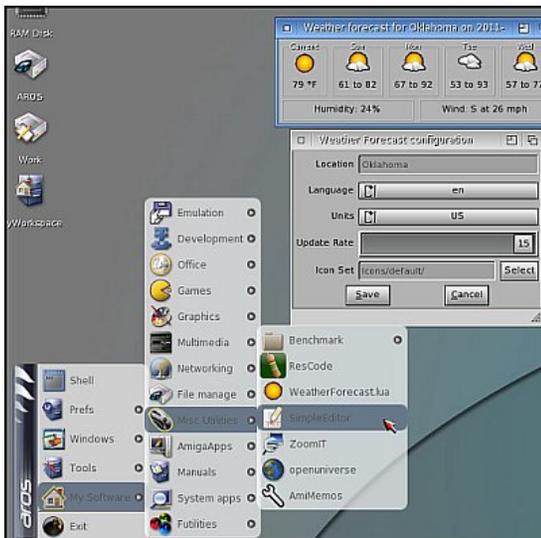


The next menu section is AmigaApps. Using the [Janus UAE](#) application, you can run the same applications that run on a real Amiga. AmiBridge is a set of scripts to both setup and run the Janus UAE, a port of e-UAE for AROS. (UAE is called both Universal and Ubiquitous Amiga Emulator). Please note that in order to run any version of UAE, you need access to an original Amiga in order to transfer the Workbench ROMs to disk. Alternatively, you can buy the [Amiga Forever](#) CD or enhanced DVD, which

contain all files needed to run UAE. If you use the ROMs from Amiga Forever, you get all versions of Workbench up to 3.1. e-UAE is also a package in the PCLinuxOS repositories.



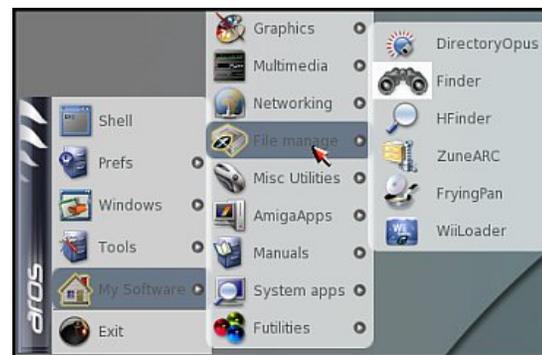
In the Misc Utilities section, we have a set of system benchmark tools, a resident code indicator and WeatherForecast, which is similar to desktop weather programs for Linux.



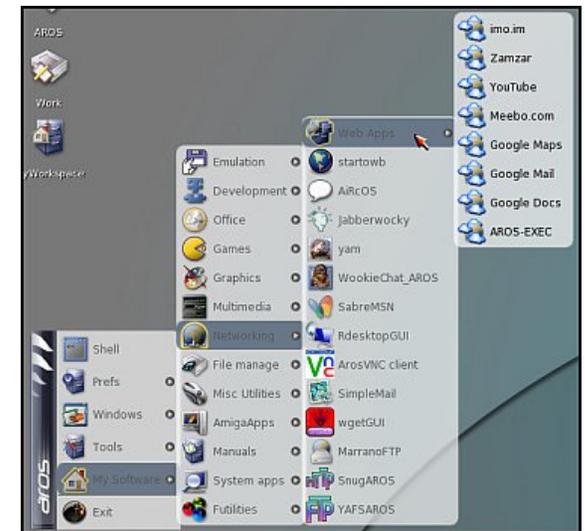
We also have a simple text editor which includes copy, cut paste, undo and redo functions, a screen zoom tool, [OpenUniverse](#) and AmiMemos, for displaying memos on our desktop. OpenUniverse is a program simulating the Solar System's bodies in 3D on your desktop. According to the website, the program is available for Windows, Linux and most "NIXes". It has been ported to AROS, as well.



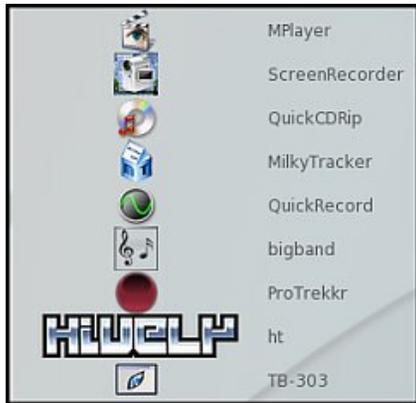
There are a few file managers. Besides DirectoryOpus and ZuneARC, there are two file finders, HFinder having the most options, and FryingPan, a CD burning program.



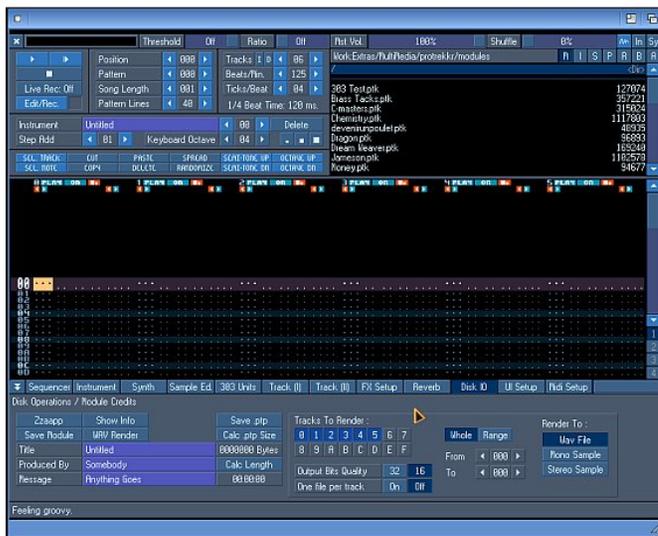
In the Networking section of the menu, Web Apps contains some URL shortcuts which will open in the Origrun web browser. There is an IRC client, a Jabber client, an MSN client, chat program, a GUI for wget, remote desktop and virtual networking clients, as well as an FTP client.



The Multimedia section has a screen recorder which will output to a motion jpeg file, a music CD ripper tool, a microphone recorder program, a program for use with a [Roland TB-303](#), and four different digital studio programs (top next page).



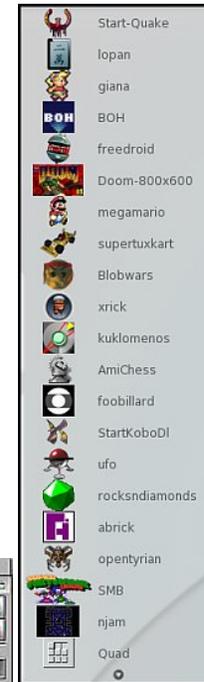
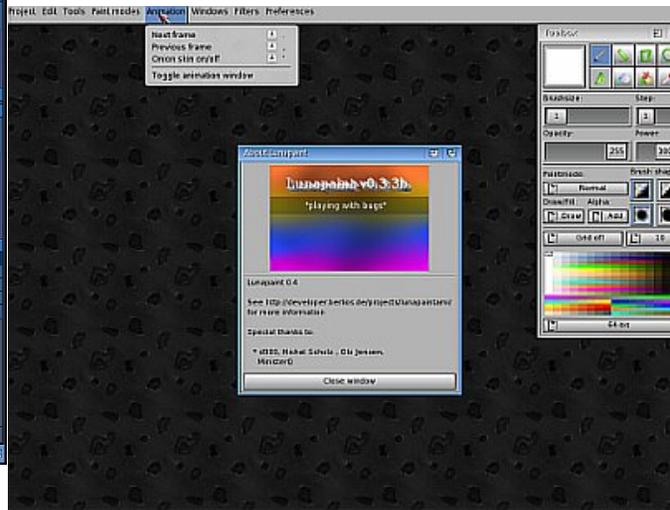
Shown below is the ProTrekkr program.



In the Graphics section, we have some picture viewers, some paint programs and a fractal mountain generator.



Shown below is the Lunapaint program.



How about a game?

<----

More games.

----->



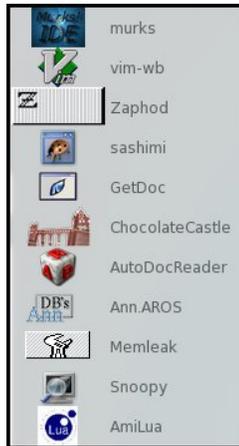
Doom, anyone?





There is no port of LibreOffice to AROS yet. There are still a few office tools.
<-----

The Development section is well populated.
----->



<-----
There are even a few emulators. There are three more Commodore emulators not shown.



Icaros has a web browser, (albeit without a flash plugin), mail client, plenty of games and emulators, multimedia programs and text editors. What is sorely missing is an office suite which, in my opinion, would round out the desktop for everyday use. It's certainly not short on eye candy, although it does not do 3D desktop effects, such as Compiz or ecomorph. Although there is

no memory protection, I've suffered no crashes when running many programs at once. This may be due to AROS programmers following a set of strict guidelines on program memory management. I cannot say the same about an Amiga. I've experienced my share of [guru meditations](#), the equivalent of the Microsoft's blue screen of death. Without a doubt, Icaros is very fast on any modern hardware. From the Icaros Desktop manual:

AROS doesn't need great horsepower, and can't take advantage from a multicore architecture. It can run in a 64-bit environment, but there is no need for a quad-core processor to speed things up. Frequency and front-side bus speeds are the only two variables to consider. Although AROS can run on low-power and lowend processors, like old 500-1000 MHz ones, you probably would like to choose a faster one. New AROS users often think that, since their old Amiga 500 or 1200 could run the workbench and many apps with a 7 MHz processor, AROS should do this as well on older, 200 MHz PCs. That's only partially true. Nowadays applications need more horsepower and can't definitely run in a obsolete machine. If your old 400 MHz K6-II computer didn't play DivX movies full screen and full framerate under Windows, it will absolutely not do that in AROS. There are also many aspects of AROS that are more advanced than bare AmigaOS 3.1: the decoration system, for instance, needs a good processor to run smoothly. Browsing the web with OWB requires power, so: the more, the better. To enjoy a good AROS experience, please choose a 1.600 MHz processor or a better one: low-end Athlons and Celerons are perfect and absolutely affordable. Working models are (top right):

Intel: Pentium, Pentium II, Pentium III, Pentium4, PentiumD, Core, Core2 DuoCore2 Quad, Core i7-i5-i3, Atom and derivates
AMD: K6, K6-II, K6-III, Athlon, AthlonXP, Athlon64, Athlon64 X2, Phenom, Phenom II Duron, Celeron and derivates

The AmiBridge installation and setup will be the subject of Part 4 of the Icaros series.



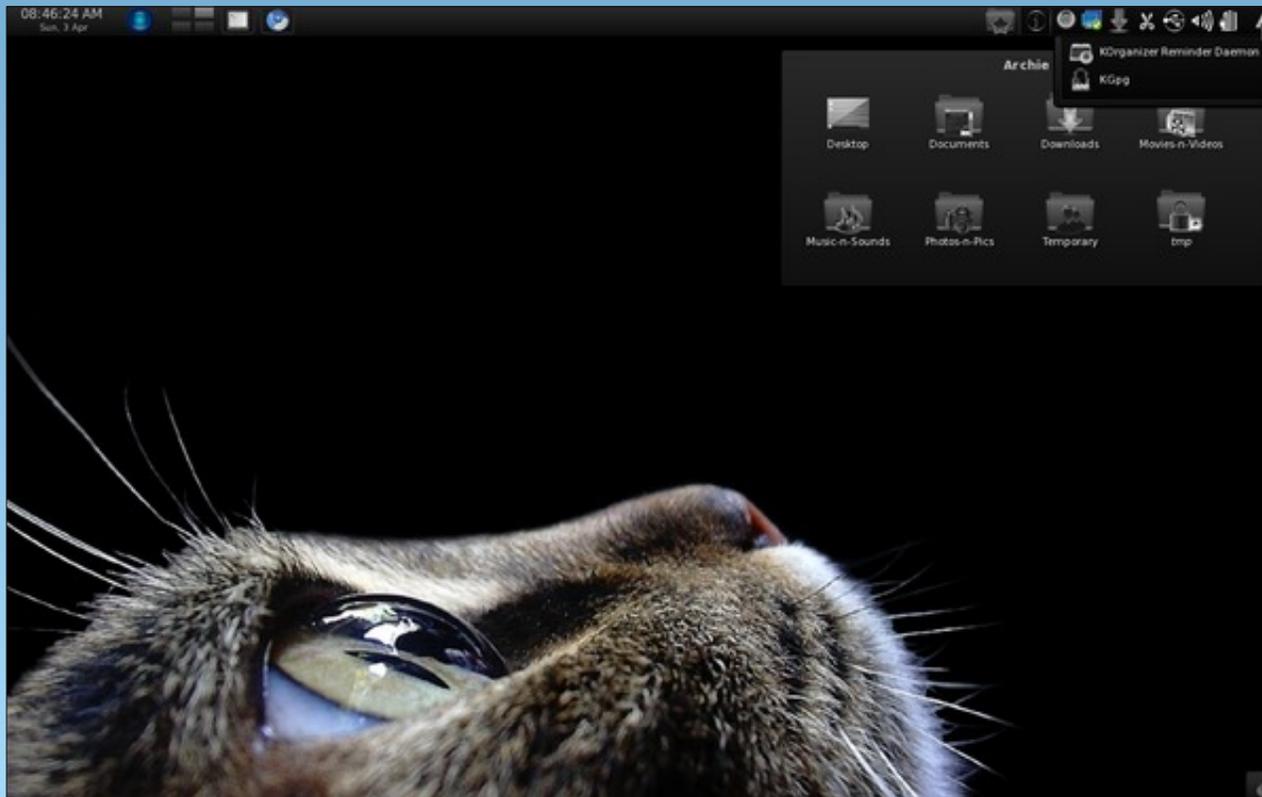
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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Archie, April 2, 2011, running KDE 4.



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

Ladies of PCLinuxOS: silverbirch

by meemaw

Can you start off by introducing yourself, and telling us a little bit about yourself? (Real name, where you live, marital status, children/grandchildren, hobbies/interests, etc).

Giddy PCLinuxers - I'm Rosemary McGillicuddy, however most of my friends call me Rose, and that's what I prefer, although the majority of my family still call me Rosemary. I moved to Hastings in the Hawkes Bay, commonly known as "The Bay" (New Zealand) a little over five years ago and really enjoy it up here - great climate for the most part, and huge sky. Probably my only regret about moving is that I have a lovely son Kieran who lives in the Wairarapa, about two and a half hours from me, so I don't see him as often as I would like. I divorced in 1995, enjoy my independence, and have a lovely Border Collie called Chip, and moggy called Patra to share my house and garden.

I guess I'll have to say I'm interested in computing, and especially Linux! I also enjoy walking/tramping, paper craft work, very amateur photography, listening to music - wish I'd learned to play something, but can manage three chords on the ukelele - gardening, genealogy, food, wine, and anything else that might take my fancy at a given time. At times I've done brief courses on things like computing, herbs, homeopathy, massage, Healing Touch, water colour painting etc. I have attended a few LUG meetings too, but don't go regularly. I'm an avid Googler, and when I

got a new cat a few years ago friends suggested her name might be "Google".

How did you get started in computers?

The very first time I think I used a computer was about twenty seven years ago, but all I did was play some games briefly. Later, in about 1995 or so I was sent on a basic computing course as there was talk we would be moving into using computers more at work (I'm a nurse). I was a bit frustrated by the course, as didn't have a machine at home to be practicing on, but was lucky enough that the receptionist would let me have a little "play" at work



sometimes. This was Windows of course, and Word I guess. My dates could be a little bit out.

At the end of 1997, my position at work was made redundant, and top of the list for my redundancy money, after paying off some mortgage, was to buy a computer. I was doing a nursing degree by then, after training in the hospital setting many years earlier, and had a little more experience with computers at tech, and realized how wonderful they were! I used a basic Word Processor for the first two years of my degree, and was absolutely "blown away" by the superiority of the computer! It was "state of the art" for the time, with a 2 GB hard drive,

32 Mb memory, and, sorry can't remember the processor. It ran Windows 95. From the beginning I was addicted - both to the computer and also the Internet!

The salesperson included various books to use with Word and so on, but I'm not that good at disciplining myself for self learning, and tended to try things until I managed to do what I wished to. From time to time, I would follow a tutorial from beginning to end, and I learned a huge amount from mailing lists, and IRC channels.

What drew you to Linux?

I read an article in a local magazine called Netguide, and was interested, especially as the magazine had a demo CD of Linux included. I think it was probably Mandriva, but no idea really now. I'd already had Windows 95 fail and lost everything, not being in the "back up" mindset at that time.

Linux was different, it offered new learning, it offered some freedom, as I had already begun to realize that every upgrade in Windows required greater resources, and I simply didn't have the money. I also liked the idea of learning a bit more about the computer and how it worked, and being more in control.

What was the first Linux distro that you used?

The first distro I actually used was Mandrake, Mandriva 10, and I was amazed at the support the Mandriva mailing list gave me. They were incredibly patient and tolerant, as I was very green, and struggled a lot, and frequently required step by step instructions.

I also bought "Linux for Dummies" and it came with the Red Hat Distro, but I had various issues with it on that hardware, and never really had it running. Unfortunately I can't remember what and threw away my notes when I moved.

For a while I used Windows 98 for my main computing, but must have been dual booting, as I was also "playing with" Mandriva. During this time, I acquired an old IBM computer with 500Mhz CPU, 256 memory and 20 G hard drive and used a KVM switch to toggle between machines. I began to experiment in earnest with Linux, and spent many hours in various IRC channels. What did I try, can I remember them all even? Not in any particular order - Mepis, Debian, DSL, Puppy, Knoppix, Mint, Ubuntu, Slackware, Suse, Vectorlinux and many more. In the process I began to learn a little of the command line, and understand something of Linux and computers.

In 2004 I bought a new computer, and initially thought I would forget about Linux. But it doesn't let you go does it, and soon I was playing again, and ended up dual booting PCLinuxOS with Windows XP.

When did you first start using PCLinuxOS? What attracted you?

As above I was trying lots of different flavours, I kind of had this challenge for myself to get older machines running. I was given another old machine as well, a 300Mhz CPU. Also Mandriva were having some issues, and lots of the people I knew from the mailing list were off trying other distros, and generally leaving Mandriva. I really liked Vectorlinux for it's speed, but it was incredibly difficult to configure for dial up, and in other ways too (for a newbie). I first heard about PCLinuxOS in IRC #Mandriva (I think someone there there knew Texstar). I went to the website and liked the look of it. It was beta at the time P97, but I installed it anyway. PCLinuxOS has been my main computing ever since. I also introduced it to another IRC friend and he uses it as his main distro too. I still dual boot on one machine, as keep Windows for a few things that I need, but my laptop is standalone PCLOS - up to date as of last night, and my day to day computer.

From the beginning, even in beta state, PCLinuxOS was stable, more stable than some so-called stable releases I had tried. More importantly the community was, and remains, incredibly open to newbies, and very supportive. I'm a KDE user, but still like to experiment occasionally. Now however, my experimentation tends to be with different DES, rather than different distros. Also PCLinuxOS is so easy to install and use, and does everything I need.

As they say, "radically simple" and "it just works".

With Linux having a reputation of being a realm predominately populated by males, do you feel that your being a woman has an impact on your treatment by the rest of the community? If so, in what way?

When using IRC I tried to make sure that I had a non-gender biased nickname, as I noticed that often the comments and help I received were kinder if they knew I was a female. Incidentally - I noticed that there seemed to be a culture in some channels of superiority towards people asking so called stupid questions which seemed to be more marked in certain distros. I know that on #LFD some years ago, certain mods who did know I was female were more tolerant of my needing detailed instructions, although I also received my share of RTFM in various channels who seemed to have an elitist attitude.

In real 3D life - I did join the local LUG and attended a few meetings. However I felt out of place as the only female, but also because my knowledge was so limited.

Do you feel that your use of Linux influences the reactions you receive from your computer peers or family? If so, how?

None of my friends muck about on the computer as much as I do. They tend to think I'm way cleverer with computing than what I actually am, as Linux still is mostly unknown among the general population in NZ. One or two call me names, like geek or nerd. They don't believe me when I say PCLinuxOS will do everything they need, and is easier to use, and more

secure and stable than Windows! Most of my friends have never even heard of Linux, until I mention it.

How do you feel you contribute to the PCLinuxOS community?

Unfortunately I think I don't contribute to the PCLinuxOS community. I do peruse the forums from time to time, and offer responses to posts if I can, but despite my long association with PCLinuxOS, I don't feel I have the knowledge to be able to offer help. The down side to PCLinuxOS - if you could call it a down side, is that because everything works, and it has GUI interface, that I've lost what little command line knowledge I knew! This reminds me that I need to pop a cheque into the mail, as I've been intending to do!



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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by tatsujin, April 19, 2011, running KDE 4.

Basic Backup Plans for PCLinuxOS

by horusfalcon

Most PCLinuxOS Forum members have seen the flat statement “you might want to back up your system before doing {whatever}” innumerable times, just like that. Just as if backing up a system were as easy as flipping a switch.

Modern systems range into the hundreds of Gigabytes in storage, and even, in some cases, into the Terabytes. Backing up that much data is not exactly a trivial task. It is, however, a manageable task, and one that should be managed systematically for best effect.

Backup strategies can range from those implemented by enterprise IT departments, all the way to simpler strategies for those of us using PCLinuxOS on their desktop or laptop machines. Instead of considering the truly broad range of possibilities here, we are, instead, going to focus on devising a backup plan for a “typical desktop” system that might be representative of most PCLinuxOS users’ systems.

This mythical system will have a fast dual-core 64-bit processor, two Gigabytes of RAM, a multi-format DVD/RW burner, and a 500 Gigabyte hard drive.

Plan From The Beginning

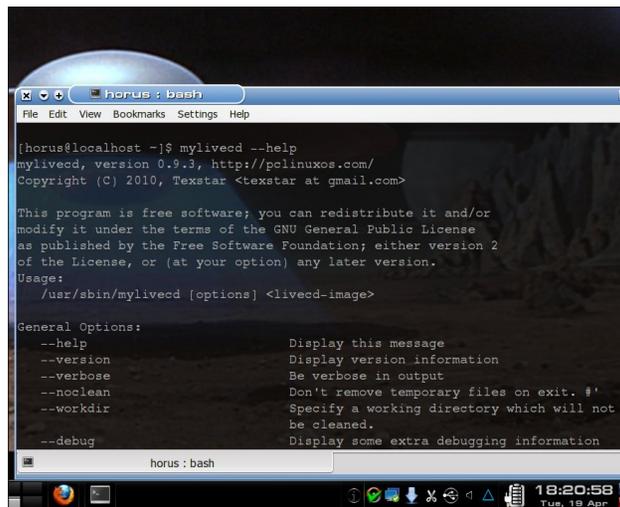
So, how would we begin to back up such a system? It would be best to begin before the system software is installed, by setting up the system’s partitioning scheme such that individual partitions compartmentalize system data away from user data. It would also pay well to become familiar with the

[Linux Filesystem Hierarchy](#) standard so that a familiarity with where system data is stored is attained. Knowing where the various data files are in a Linux system makes it easier to be selective when doing backups.

System Data: Baseline Configuration Backup

Once the system is installed and all the applications and user accounts are fully configured to suit their users, make a live CD or DVD backup or an image of the baseline configuration using either *mylivecd* (for a live backup) or [Clonezilla Live](#) (for an image).

How one decides which of these two methods to use is really a matter of individual choice, but the whole point of doing this exercise is to provide the user with a full backup of the basic system as it existed immediately after post-install configurations. It represents a starting point in the backup plan.



```
horus : bash
[horus@localhost ~]$ mylivecd --help
mylivecd, version 0.9.3, http://pclipinuxos.com/
Copyright (C) 2010, Texstar <texstar at gmail.com>

This program is free software; you can redistribute it and/or
modify it under the terms of the GNU General Public License
as published by the Free Software Foundation; either version 2
of the License, or (at your option) any later version.

Usage:
  /usr/sbin/mylivecd [options] <livecd-image>

General Options:
--help           Display this message
--version       Display version information
--verbose       Be verbose in output
--noclean       Don't remove temporary files on exit. #'
--workdir       Specify a working directory which will not
                be cleaned.
--debug         Display some extra debugging information
```

Each of these two methods has its advantages and disadvantages: *mylivecd* is built-in to PCLinuxOS as “standard equipment”. It is a command-line tool and has something of a learning curve, but it works reliably enough and produces a live backup that can not only restore a system but also serve to operate it temporarily for other purposes (such as data recovery if files need to be saved and backed up before recovery from a failure is started.)

Clonezilla Live, on the other hand, is an entirely separate product, a Linux distribution in its own right, and produces an image (which is to say a monolithic set of files) from which a system can be re-installed. It does not produce a live disk, and this image is not capable of being selectively restored - it is an all-or-nothing proposition, destroying any existing data on the disk or partition to which it is restored. With all this, it would seem to have little advantage over *mylivecd*, but this is not so. Where Clonezilla shines is speed and compact size.

(As an example, I used Clonezilla Live to backup a critical Windows Server 2008 machine at work, a Dell R410 rack server with 1 TB of total storage set up as a 500 Gigabyte mirrored RAID. I placed the image on an external USB 2.0 Seagate Free Agent hard drive. The total uncompressed data load was some 35 Gigabytes in size, and the compressed image set was on the Seagate in *116 seconds*, compressed to 17.4 Gigabytes. The server was offline for less than twenty minutes total. I have since restored this image to our new identical spare server and tested it successfully.)

The other advantage that Clonezilla images have is that they can be multicast using Clonezilla Server Edition to configure several machines

simultaneously over a network. I've never personally done this, and recommend that anyone interested check the [Clonezilla SE](#) website for more information.



One last thing and we'll move on: Clonezilla Live has a beginner mode. It still behooves the user to read carefully the instructions on each screen before making decisions, and to become familiar with how storage devices are named when gaining familiarization with Clonezilla's proper use. (I may do a follow-up to this article showing how to make and restore Clonezilla images and how to use *mylivecd* at a later date.)

Application Data Backups

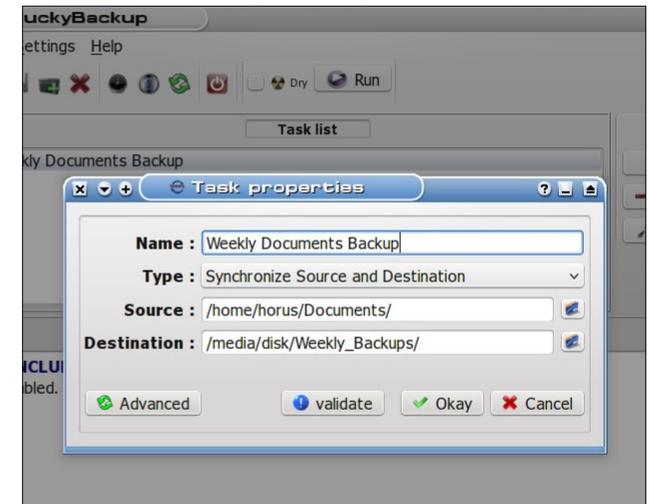
Applications are the programs we use with PCLinuxOS. By and large, these are provided via the Software Repositories by Synaptic package manager, or from the installation media.

If we've just made a baseline configuration backup, it includes applications too, right? So why am I talking about application data backups now? It's simple, really: PCLinuxOS is a rolling release and, more especially since KDE 4 has shipped, the Packaging Team is always aggressively releasing updates. With each set of updates, applications are changing on our system, so it becomes necessary to implement a backup plan that covers this change.

Because of how applications are handled in PCLinuxOS, it is well to place system and application data on separate partitions, or, failing that, to place system and applications data on a single partition separate from user data (PCLinuxOS does this by default). In our typical system, 12 Gigabytes have been set aside for system and applications, four Gigabytes are reserved for a swap partition, and the rest is set aside for /home, which stores all the user data, so it makes sense to back up systems and applications at the same time.

It would be convenient enough to use Clonezilla Live to backup just the system and applications data partition at regular intervals to an image, but let's not be the guy who just has a hammer in his toolkit. There are other tools that can be used, and some of them offer very sophisticated capabilities (e.g. scheduled, unattended backups, incremental and differential backups, etc.) which are worth looking at.

I pulled down and installed several other tools from the repositories prior to writing this, and I have to say, I'm sticking with what I know: [luckyBackup](#). This little gem is actually a slick GUI to control and use rsync, a command line tool for use in making compressed backup sets.



The [manual for luckyBackup](#) is decent enough, but it's easy to tell it was written by a programmer and not a technical writer. This is not a fatal shortcoming, though, and the author does cover the program's proper use and feature set well enough to get a handle on how to use it safely. Run luckyBackup as the super-user (root) for best results when backing up or restoring system and applications data.

(Again, luckyBackup could be the subject of another article at a later date, but it is simple enough to use that some light reading in the manual should get anyone wanting to know how to use it where they need to be relatively quickly.)

Regardless of which backup method you use, the medium for the backup should be dedicated solely to backup purposes. Resist the temptation to use the same removable drive you use for music or other

storage as a backup drive! There's no worse feeling that realizing that you just deleted your backups by mistake! Make the backups, then shut down and remove the drive from the system, and put it away in a safe location when not in use. If the data on the drive is sufficiently important, consider a lockable storage to keep it safe.

How often should system and application data be backed up? A good gauge for this would be "every time it changes *or is about to change significantly*". Why that last bit about "is about to change"? Because right before a major upgrade it's a good idea to preserve the present system state in case something unexpected goes wrong.

Is it necessary to schedule unattended backups? That really depends on how critical the system is, how valuable its output is, and how inconvenient scheduled backups might be. Regardless of inconvenience or other factors, though, it's a good idea to establish regular backup habits for all data covered by your plan. If, for example, we were to schedule a backup to be taken at 03:00 in the morning on Friday, we'd have the comfort of knowing that our data sets would be less than a week old in the event of a crash.

User Data: The Challenges of Growth

Data users place on a system can be thought of as coming from two sources: *downloads or copied files* such as music, video and other media files, and *original output* (personal photos, video, music, spreadsheets, documents, email, bookmarks, etc.) produced by the users using applications. PCLinuxOS (as most Linux distributions do) also

includes user-specific configuration data in a user's home directory.

In the beginning, user data might not be a lot, but as system use continues in time, user data sets on a system will almost certainly grow. The simplest approach to backing up user data is to copy the entire /home partition to an external hard drive large enough to hold it, but as the data set grows, so will the need for capacity in the backup storage device.

Compressed backups such as those produced by Clonezilla Live or luckyBackup can help offset this, but there needs to be an evaluation here of how to most efficiently back up this growing data set. We need to look at how often data in the user space is changing, and consign relatively static data to archival media for long-term storage.

In our "typical desktop" there's over 440 Gigabytes of capacity for storage of user data. Wow. That's a lot of data. How often is most of that changing? If our user is a music and movie lover, maybe not very often.

The best path here is to copy multimedia and other relatively static file sets to removable optical media (DVD+-R/RW or CD-R/RW) using a tool such as k3b, and to store those disks safely until we need them. Exclude such static data from the regular weekly backups made with luckyBackup because they are already stored on a durable reliable medium.

We won't get into archive management here other than to say that optical media have a shelf life and should be checked at least every two or three years for readability, and media over seven years old

should be copied to new disks for best results. (Obviously, it helps if disks are labeled as to the dates on which they are burned.)

User data that changes often should be backed up per schedule, and this can be easily automated in luckyBackup to occur after the system and applications data backup or on another day of the week. Data that changes especially rapidly (work in progress) might be better off copied to a USB flash drive or a separate USB hard drive from the other backup sets so that it is readily available.

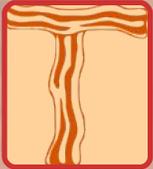
Summary

What we have done so far is discuss the bare bones of setting up a three-pronged approach to backup on a typical system: user and application data being backed up weekly by a luckyBackup automated task, and user data being handled by a separate task in luckyBackup, all begun with either a Clonezilla image or a live CD/DVD of the baseline configuration backup taken at installation.

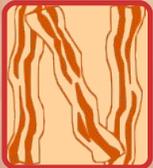
What we have not talked much about is web-based backup services. This is an area in which I have little personal knowledge. Let me issue an invitation to any who have knowledge in this area to add to our discussions.

What I hope we can talk about next time is the specifics of using the tools offered for consideration here.

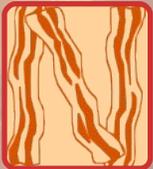
Forum Foibles: Bacon



here's a topic in the forum that simply cannot be ignored
Although to tell the truth with it some of us are bored
So it's time to explore this subject - bacon is its name
And discover why so many users its wonders do proclaim



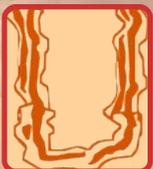
ow I cannot take the time to quote all those who do savor
But will try to expound on a few who enjoy all its flavor
It's so dear to our heart says one user with a tut
Excuse me but I think it's nearer and dearer to your gut



ew Friend *brilz* poses a question that surely is the key
What is bacon he asks oh so seriously
Tedlane Full Member replies with expertise
Bacon is that which makes better binaries



enotu bakes it in the oven what do you make of that
Texstar likes it too even feeds it to his cat
I boot my 'puter before my bacon *Neal* does confess
And somewhere in between perks his coffee with finesse



ncleV suggests bacon wallpaper for PCLinuxOS
Writhen and *fredbird67* provide sites where it's already in progress
Dragynn and *lucid_dream* whose works are well known
Produce bacon desktops of their very own



ontom jr provides bacon fonts for our use
 Oh dear he's been corrupted 'tis child abuse
 I Love Bacon *joechimp* writes with great emotion
 Posts pictures of his love causing a big commotion



oundrel likes bacon but prefers sausage with sage
 Oh blasphemy and treason oh what an outrage
Grnich so practical finds baconvodka for the crew
 You can now have your bacon and drink it too



ongtom admits he's bewildered by the bacon craze
 But he likes it too and continues with its praise
 Let's give a toast to bacon *rudge* says to the pack
 Salute...oink oink! replies *old-polack*



eirdwolf a scholar with Shakespeare
 He doth trieth to compete
 What's in a name that which we call bacon
 By any other name would taste as sweet



o on and on it goes this nonsense bacon chatter
 As they heap up the slices on their plates and a platter
 They love the aroma and the grease that they splatter
 And don't seem to mind that it's making them all fatter

Yes sir that's our bacon no sir we're not fakin'
Yes sir that's our bacon now

Yes ma'am bacon's delightful
Sorry ma'am talking with our mouthful
Yes ma'am we love bacon and how

By the way did you hear us say
When we walk up to that butcher we will pay
For greasy bacon hope it's not taken
We'd feel mighty forsaken
For lovely bacon we're on the prow

Yes sir we love bacon the smell helps us awaken
To that fat we all kowtow

Yes ma'am we're all flab but we love that bacon slab
On its blubber we like to chow

By the way we eat it everyday
It has such a wonderful bouquet
For greasy bacon we are taken
Please don't be mistaken
We love bacon oh wow



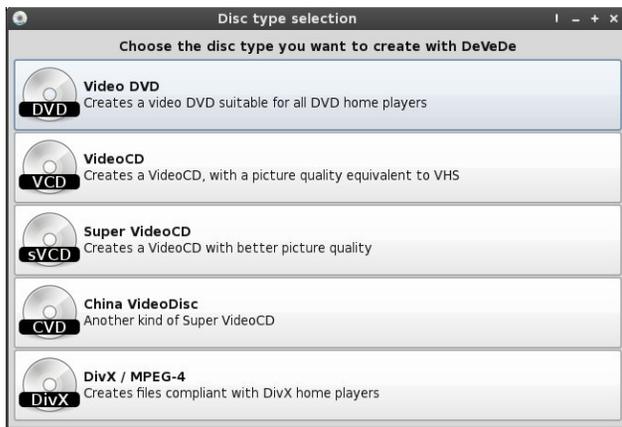
Video: Part 6 - DeVeDe

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

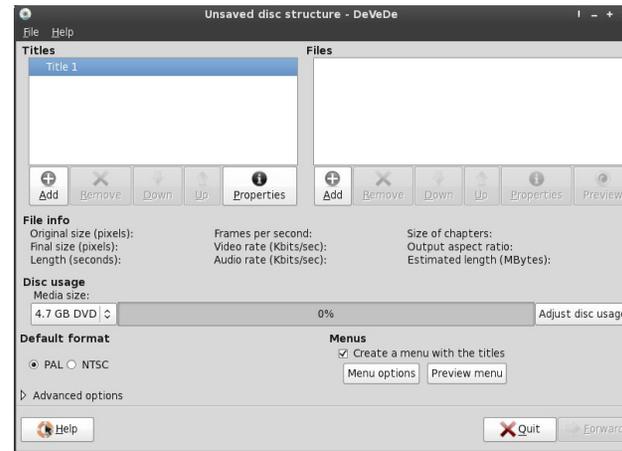
After all of this talk about video files, there reaches a point where you may wish to burn a copy to optical disc, most likely to a DVD. To be sure that you can watch it any time you want, wherever you want, you will want to make sure that you can play that DVD on a set-top DVD player.

Fortunately, one tool in the PCLinuxOS repository makes this job very easy to complete. It is called DeVeDe. Released January 14, 2006 by Sergio Costas Rodríguez under the RasterSoft name, DeVeDe is available for Linux and Microsoft Windows. It has only a handful of dependencies, namely mencoder, MPlayer, Mkisofs, DVDAuthor, VCDImager, Python, PyGTK and PyGlade.

Basic usage



When you first launch DeVeDe, you need to first select which type of optical disc you wish to create. DeVeDe gives you five choices.



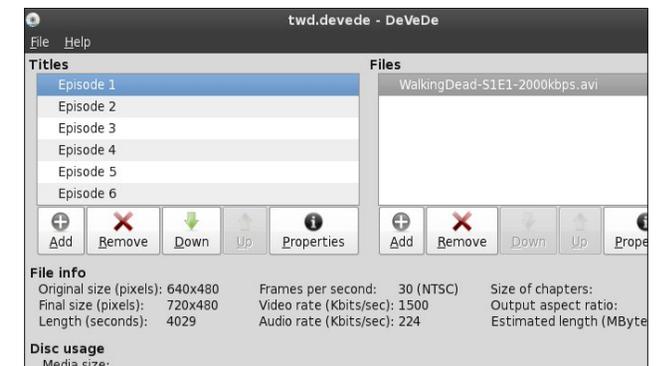
After selecting which type of optical disc you wish to create, the main window of DeVeDe will appear, as pictured above. I have chosen to burn my video files to a single layer DVD5 disc.



At the top left of the DeVeDe window, adjust the properties of "Title 1" by highlighting it, then selecting the "Properties" button immediately below the list box. The dialog box above will appear, and you can give a more proper title to disc content. In fact, the entry in the "Title name" text entry box is used by DeVeDe when it creates your DVD Menu. We'll talk more about that a little bit later.

You can also select the "Action to perform when this title ends." The default value is to return to and show the disc menu, but you can also choose from the remaining five options. For example, if this were a DVD that you were playing at a kiosk, you might want to choose "Play this title again (loop)" so that the DVD would just loop over and over again, until you specifically stop playback. The options, I think, are fairly self explanatory, so I won't belabor you with explaining them here.

After you've got the first title's properties set as you want, then you need to move over to the "Files" list box at the top right of the DeVeDe window. Click on the "Add" button and add the file or first file you want to use to make your DVD.



Continue adding content to your DVD by alternating the addition of a title, then the file. Each time you add a title, you need to add a file to associate with that title, basically creating a link to each file.

As you can see in the screen shot above, I've added all six episodes of the first season of "The Walking Dead" to a single DVD. Each entry in the "Titles" box link to a file in the "Files" box.

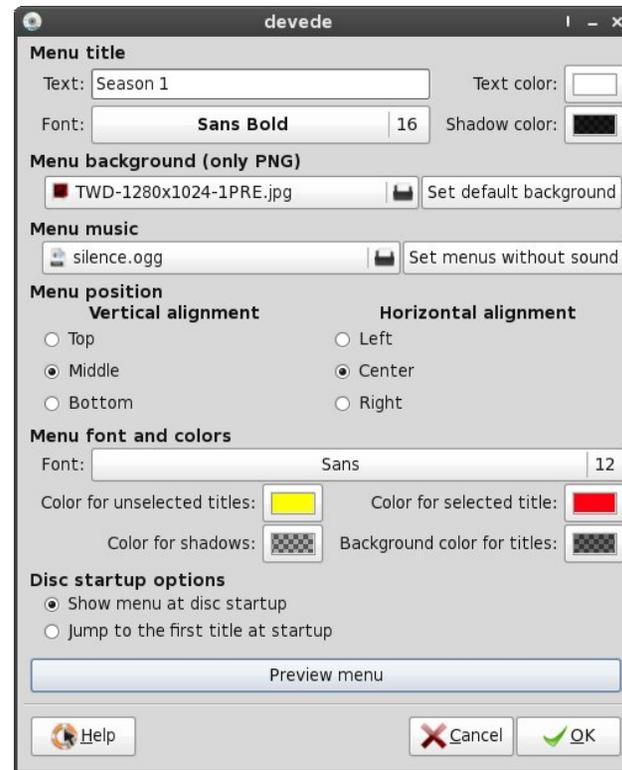
In the middle part of the DeVeDe window is a progress bar that displays how full your optical media is. Note that this may not read correctly, until you set the properties of each of the files on your disc, and which is something we'll discuss a little later when covering how to tweak the settings for your disc. If it says that your disc capacity is at 200% or more, **don't panic**. We'll make adjustments to that when we tweak the disc settings.

Immediately below that is the "Default format" selector. Select the format (PAL or NTSC) that is appropriate for your region of the world. To the left of that is the "Menu" settings. Check the box (the default is already checked) for DeVeDe to make a basic menu for your optical disc. Clicking on the "Menu options" button will allow you to customize the menu that DeVeDe produces. We'll discuss this further a little bit later, also. Click the "Preview menu" button to see a sample image of the menu that is created.

Click the marker next to "Advanced options" to display additional settings. Choose the "Action" you want DeVeDe to perform when creating your disc content. The default value is to create an ISO or BIN/CUE image, which can readily be burned to an

optical disc with your favorite CD/DVD burning software. You can also have DeVeDe create the disc structure of your optical disc on your hard drive, or you can have DeVeDe only convert your video file to compliant MPEG files.

Under the "Options" section of "Advanced options," you can select for DeVeDe to erase temporary files, which will save some hard drive space. If you have a multicore CPU, you can select the box that will allow DeVeDe to make use of all the cores. Using DeVeDe



on a computer with a multicore CPU will significantly speed up the process.

Tweaking your disc

You will want to customize and tweak your disc to not only make your viewing experience more pleasurable, but also so that you can optimize the disc so that you can fit all the content you wish on it. We'll start with the menu, which we access with the "Menu options" button in the main DeVeDe window.

At the top of the window that appears (previous column), you can set the "Menu title" for your disc, as well as the text color and the shadow color of the menu title text.

Next, you can set the "Menu background." Although it states that you can use only PNG files, I've found high resolution JPG images work just fine. Still, it might be best to heed the advice, avoiding the lossy compression of JPG images, opting instead for the lossless compression of the PNG files, and thus preserving quality.

You can then select any music that you might want to play while your menu is being displayed. For example, you may want to take or make a short sample of the theme music from a television show you've recorded and loop it over and over as the background music for your menu. The default is "silence.ogg," which as you might surmise, is silent.

Next, you can select the "Menu position," choosing if your menu text is centered horizontally and

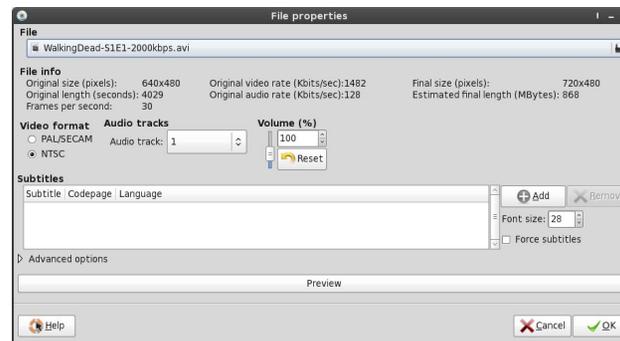
vertically, or left or right aligned, or top or bottom aligned.

“Menu font and colors” does exactly as you think it does: it allows you to set the menu font and the color of your menus. You can select the font and size to use by simply clicking on the font name, displaying a traditional font selection dialog box. Below that, you can select the color of the text for unselected and selected menu items, as well as the text shadow color and the background color for the menu text. You can also select the opacity of the background color for the text, making it totally transparent, semi-transparent or opaque, depending on your needs.

The “Disc startup options” allows you to decide if you want the disc menu to be shown when the disc is first inserted into a player, or if you want to immediately start playing the first title on the disc.

Clicking on the “Preview menu” button at the bottom displays a sample image of what your menu will look like. I suggest using this option often. It will help avoid any surprises. The more you check it, the greater the chance you will catch any errors you might inadvertently have (like misspellings).

The above screen shot (previous column) is the sample of my DVD menu, created in DeVeDe. At the top of the image is my menu title, followed by my menu entries as defined by the “Title” list box in the main DeVeDe window. As you can see, I set the background of my menu items to be semi-transparent, and the color of the unselected menu items is yellow. When I place the finished disk into my set-top DVD player and scroll through the menu items, the text of the active one will change to red.



Next, we need to start tweaking our individual files. Select one of the files in the “Files” list box in the DeVeDe main window, and select the “Properties” button. This is where we’ll start making the files fit onto our optical medium.

At the top of the properties dialog box is the file you are working with. If you need to change the file, click

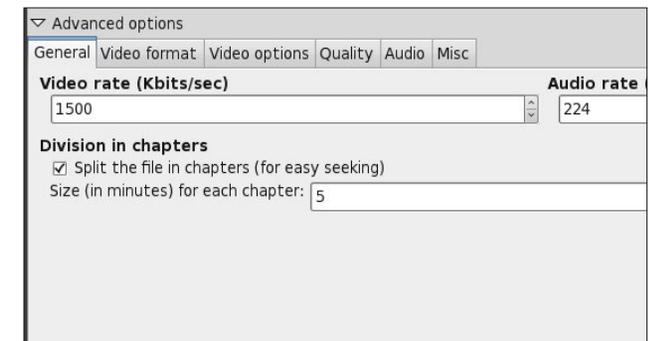
on the file name, then select the proper file. Below that is all of the information for that file.

Be sure that the “Video format” is appropriate for the format used for your region of the world. Next, select the “Audio Track,” if more than one is present. You can also adjust the volume of the audio track. This is handy if the audio seems to be a bit softer than what you think is appropriate.

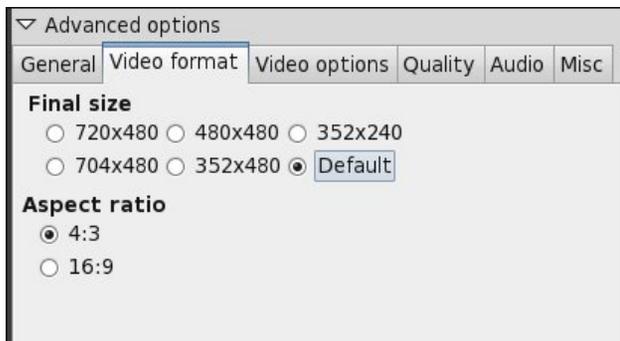
Below that, we can select any subtitles we may want to include. Typically, these are specially named text files, with a *.srt file extension. The addition of subtitles is optional.

Clicking on the “Preview” button will bring up a dialog box that asks you how long of a preview you wish to create. The default is 60 seconds. It’s a good idea to periodically check a preview of your project, just to be sure that everything is as you would like it.

Under “Advanced options” is where we’ll start making the tweaks to make all of our files fit onto our optical medium.



Under the “General” tab of “Advanced options,” you will notice the first field will be “Video bitrate (Kbits/sec).” The default value for each file added is 5001 kbps. I’ve reduced the video bitrate for each of the six files on my DVD to 1500 kbps, so that I can fit them all onto one DVD. To be perfectly honest, I arrived at the 1500 kbps video bitrate mostly by trial and error. Depending on how many video files (and the total running time of those files) you have on your DVD, you may be able to record your DVD at a higher or lower bitrate than I have done here. More files (longer total running time) will mean a lower video bitrate, while fewer files (shorter total running time) will mean that you can use a higher video bitrate, giving you better image quality. Remember that higher video bitrates typically mean a higher quality video image. For my purposes, a 1500 kbps video bitrate provides an adequate image quality.

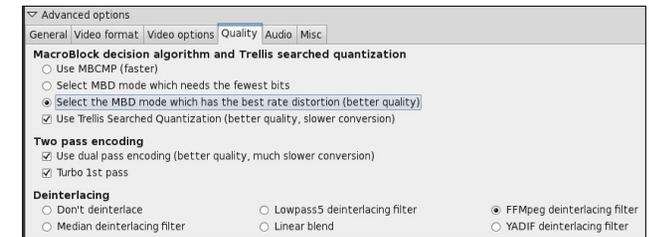


Under the “Video format” tab, you can select the final size and aspect ratio. The size choices under “Final size” change, depending on which video format (PAL or NTSC) you choose. Of the sizes shown above, 720x480 and 704x480 are DVD resolution, 480x480 is for Super VCD resolution, 352x480 is for China

Video Disc, and 352x240 is Video CD resolution. You **can** make a DVD with video sized for a VCD, albeit at a noticeable quality loss. You can also make a DVD with video sized for a SVCD, with less quality loss. Using smaller video sizes will allow you to place more content on a DVD, since a video with smaller video image size will also be smaller in file size. Choosing “Default” (which is the default setting) will set the video image size to the largest size (for DVDs), or the default size for the other video disc formats listed for you to choose from when you first started DeVeDe.



With the “Video options” tab, you can rotate the video, or mirror the video. The default is for “No rotation,” and for both of the “Mirror” options to be unchecked. Outside of special effects, I can’t see a lot of need to do either of these. You can also swap the field order of interlaced images. Some people feel that swapping the field order gives them a better image, although I’ve not ever noticed any difference. Under “Scaling mode,” you can “Add black bars” (the default setting), or “Scale picture” to make it stretch to the size of your video playback screen.

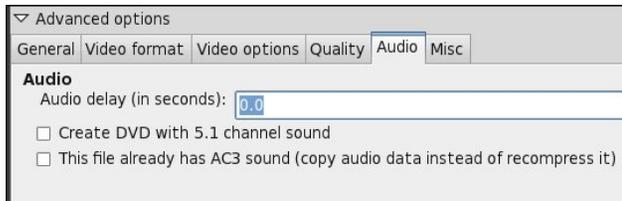


Under the “Quality” tab, you can make some settings that will have a profound impact on the quality of your finished DVD. Under “MacroBlock decision algorithm and Trellis searched quantization,” select the MBD mode that gives you the better quality, and check the “Use Trellis Searched Quantization.” While your conversion will take a bit longer, the payoff in the extra quality is definitely worth it.

Under “Two pass encoding,” check both options. With two pass encoding, the video file is analyzed on the first pass, with information about the video analysis stored, then on the second pass, the information gathered on the first pass is used to optimize the video quality. While this option will literally double your conversion time, the payoff in the extra quality is definitely worth it, again.

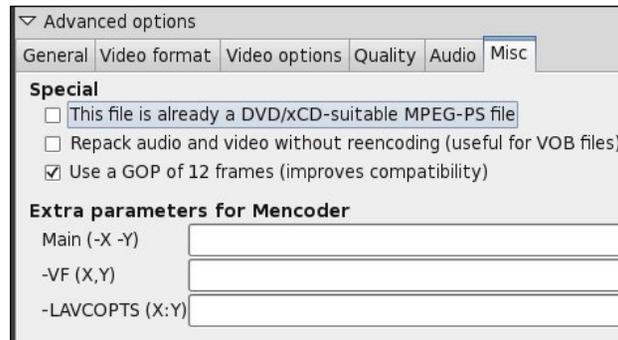
All of these quality settings gain even more importance when you decrease the video bitrate setting, as I have done with my DVD, decreasing the video bitrate to 1500 kbps. When decreasing the video bitrate, you will want to do as much as you possibly can to retain as much of the quality as you can. It’ll be a decision you won’t regret later on, especially when everyone else is marvelling at the quality of your video production.

The final setting is for deinterlacing. I chose the FFMpeg deinterlacing filter, because it's reasonably fast and produces adequate results from the interlaced video recorded from my cheap TV tuner card. The default value here is to "Don't deinterlace," and depending on your needs and expectations, it may serve you just fine. I just happen to prefer a deinterlaced, or progressive, video image. As for the other deinterlacing options, I'll leave the discovery of their capabilities to try out on your own. Give them a try with smaller video files and see which one gives you the results you desire.



Under the "Audio" tab, you can set an audio delay. This is especially helpful if you find that you are having audio-video sync problems. Positive and negative values are allowed. Use positive values when you find the sound to be ahead of the video, and negative values when the sound is behind where it should be, in relation to the video. You can also create a DVD with 5.1 channel surround sound, or to merely copy AC3 sound, instead of recompressing it.

The "Misc" tab (top, next column) has options that will further change the way DeVeDe works with file. Under the "Special" section, the first option, if your video file is already in the MPEG2-PS format, the video will not be recompressed (leading to a reduction in quality).



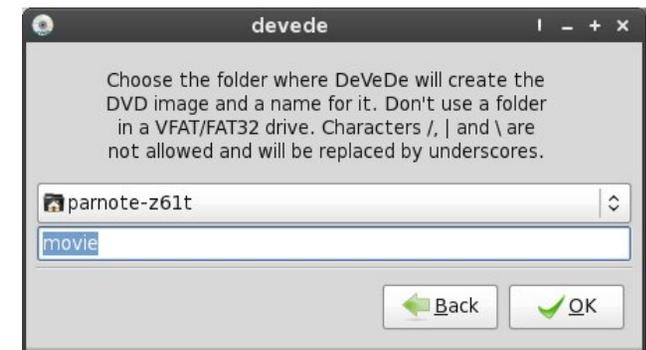
The second option is useful for repackaging audio and video files that are stored in VOB files already, or for MPEG2 video that is stored in an AVI container. The nice thing about this setting is that there is no loss of quality from the original, since there is no recompression of the audio or video portions of the program stream.

The third option causes DeVeDe to use a GOP (Group of Pictures) size of 12 frames, rather than the traditional 15 frames for PAL, or 18 frames for NTSC. Some set-top players balk when they encounter a GOP greater than 12, so this setting helps improve compatibility for playback of the disc.

Under "Extra parameters for Mencoder," you can specify extra parameters for mencoder that provide for hard-coded subtitles, improved picture quality, and many more options. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all the hundreds of possibilities this opens up. Instead, refer to the documentation for mencoder.

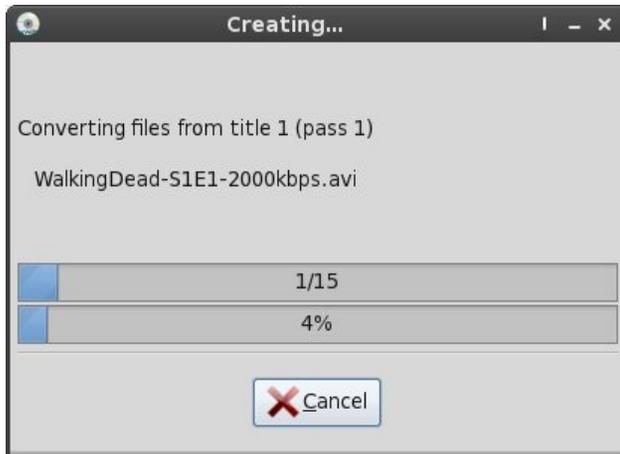
You need to make these settings **for each video file** you include on your DVD. In my case, since I had six video files, I had to make the settings, separately, for each of the video files on my DVD.

Once you have all of your settings tweaked for each of the video files on your disc, it's time to create the ISO file of your disc.



Clicking on the "Forward" button will display the dialog box like the one above. Specify a directory where you want to store your disc data. Be sure to choose a directory that doesn't already exist. DeVeDe will erase an existing directory, then recreate it, causing you to lose all data that you may have had stored there. Here, I'm using a directory simply named "movie."

Select the OK button and go out for dinner. Make that a full four-course dinner, with drinks and a movie afterwards. It may take two hours or more (depending on your processor speed and the number of CPU cores) to finish making the ISO file. The dialog box shown below will keep you updated with the progress of the conversion task. Just



please, do yourself a favor, and don't just sit there and watch it. It'll be two hours or more of your life wasted that you'll never get back. At the very minimum, you'll be comfortably numb after sitting and watching that progress bar for that long.

Summary

DeVeDe is a very powerful tool that should be in your video production tool chest. Even if you are not into recording programming from a TV tuner card, there may be instances when you may want to make a video compilation from files created with your digital camera, or from old videos that you've digitized.

DeVeDe makes the process very simple and straight forward for beginners, and allows plenty of options for those who are experienced with video production to accommodate any special needs they may have.

Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Dragynn, April 26, 2011, running Gnome.

Game Zone: FunBrain.com

by Meemaw

We all have our favorite games, whether it's card games, puzzle games or arcade games. At the same time, our children are developing their favorites. While we do want them to have fun, we also want them to learn, maybe even practice their skills to get better. Yes, even in math!!!

FunBrain.com is a collection of games for everyone, but at the same time, it has games designed to help those in grades one through eight practice their basic skills.

When you enter this site, you see 'FunBrain.com - The Internet's #1 Education Site for K-8 Kids and Teachers.'

The home page (right) contains loads of links to games you can play, or blogs or even the teacher section (bottom left of page). A few of the links are in a section called Webbooks/Comics, (I read the first few pages of 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' there), and another section next to it that says 'Movies'.

Clicking on the Entertainment link takes you to another site called Family Education. It has links for arts & crafts, movie reviews and even more games. On the FunBrain site, you can search by grade level (just beneath the Sudoku link), or choose one of the games listed.

If you click on All Games, you get the page at bottom right:

Notice in the middle of this page you can see an orange bar that says Flash Games >. Each icon is a different game. I haven't played them all, but so far I've really liked each one!

If you click on Math Arcade you will see the following:



Clicking on New Player ("New to Math Arcade? Click Here!") in the top center of the screen (left).

Choose your gender and skill level (below left) and your choice of game piece (below right), and you'll be taken to the first game, Bumble Number.

As you go through the 25 games, your game piece will go around the board at left. If you win a game, you get a password. You can use the password to get back into the series where you last won, or where you last stopped playing, rather than having to start over. The games start with the Flash games in the orange bar.

Here are the descriptions of a few of the games in the Math Arcade I've played:

Bumble Number - Blooming flowers hold math problems and the cloud in the sky blows out an answer. You have to guide the bumblebee to get the answer and take it to the flower which matches up problem with answer. Three right answers win.

Pig Toss - This is not as easy as it sounds. Your pig is on one side of the canyon. The farmer is on the other side. You have to set your height and distance to get him across the canyon, so the farmer can catch him on the other side. Three or four catches wins.

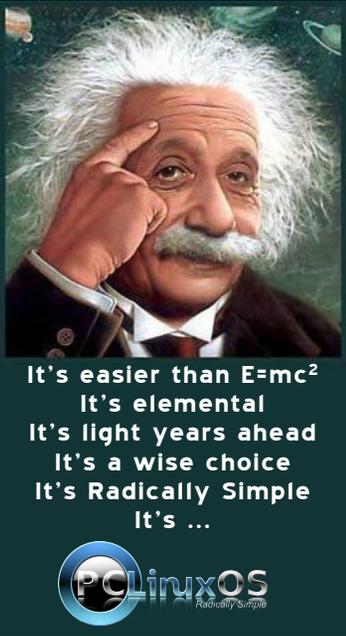
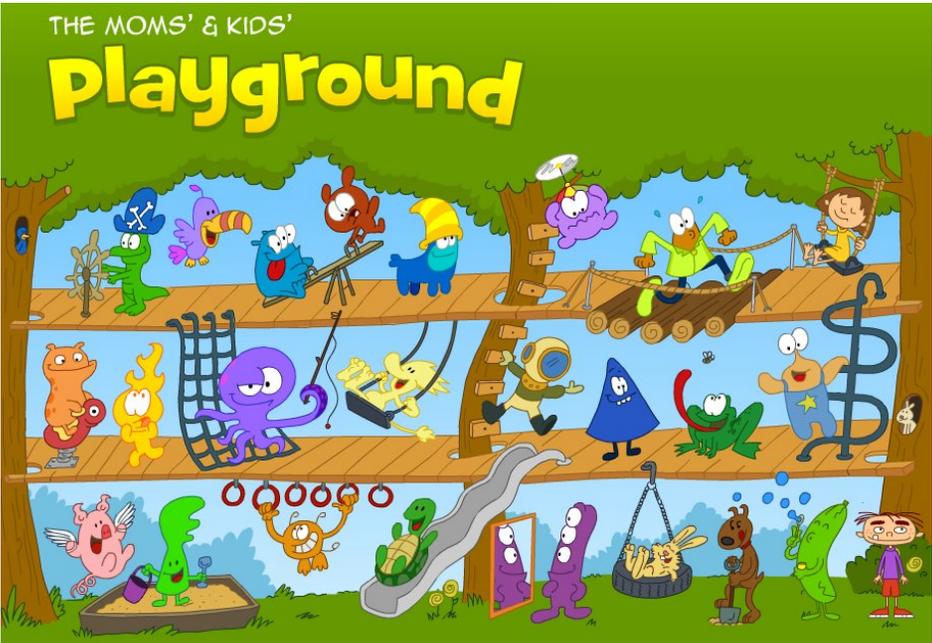
Math Basketball - You do math calculations to pass, dribble & make baskets. Four right answers wins.



Change Maker - You have a purchase amount and amount paid, and you have to choose the combination of bills and coins to give correct change.

At the top of the page is a button labeled 'Playground'. It has many games that you can play just with your mouse or keyboard (next page).

At the end of many games you are invited to enter [Poptropica](#). This is a different site with another type of game. You design a character for yourself and



then go through different places in a story. I didn't play it for very long, but you may really like it.

FunBrain is a really fun site! You'll have to explore it for yourself. I'm sure you'll find many games and activities I haven't tried yet. The best thing is that FunBrain is a site where your children can have fun, your children can learn while having fun, and is a site where you and your children can have fun together. While FunBrain is intended for children in grades K through 8, everyone will find something that appeals to the kid in all of us. Have fun!!!

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 **PCLinuxOS.nl**
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síla jednoduchosti

 **PCLinuxOS.it**
ITALY

 **PCLinuxOS** Polskie Centrum
POLAND

Greek OpenFest 2011

By Efstathios Iosifidis (diamond_gr)

In April 9th-10th, there was a FOSS event in Athens, Greece. The event called OpenFest (<http://openfest.teipir.gr/>) and it was organized by students of Technological Educational Institution of Piraeus.



The participants and the subjects of the talks were pretty interesting. First of all, we had presentations of the openSUSE, Fedora, Arch Linux, EyeOS, FreeBSD and Gentoo distributions.

There were also presentations of some programs such as Drupal, Firefox 4, platforms such as OBS and SUSE Studio, security of web servers and clients, FOSS in education, customizing Linux for academic purposes, and an introduction to Arduino. Some students had the opportunity to present their work. Four of them were the Self Balanced Robot (S-board), Quadcopter, Dingo-bot and Robo Avoider.

Other than that, there were booths from the openSUSE, Fedora and Ubuntu distros, where the visitors had the opportunity to learn about the features and also get new versions of the distros. There were also students with their work Self

Balanced Robot (S-board), Quadcopter, Dingo-bot and Robo Avoider.

Special events were an openSUSE 11.4 launch party and a Firefox 4 meet up.

The festival in general was successful, despite small problems. Congratulations to the organizers.

Here are some pictures from the event.



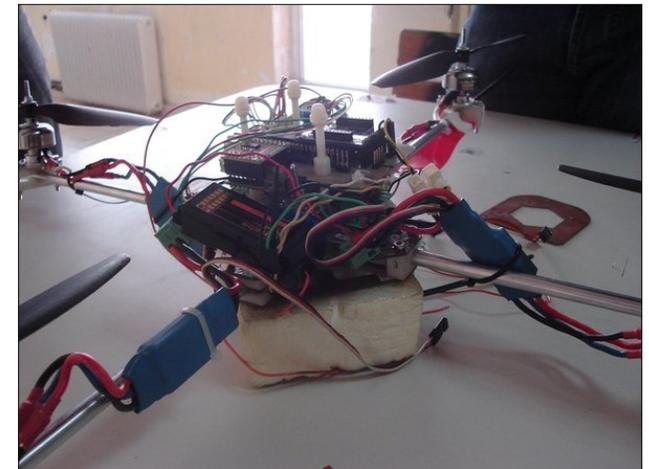
Above: One of the conference areas



Right: openSUSE



Above: Fedora



Above: Quadcopter



Above: Robo-avoider



Above: The Organizers



Above: The self-balanced robot

The next event in Greece will be FOSSCOMM, at Patras on May. There are plans to hand out PCLinuxOS discs at that event.



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Retroshare: The Secure Social Network, Part 2

by Archie Arevalo

The first part of this article guided a user in installing and setting up plus adding friends Retroshare. In this second part, we will look at the different features on the toolbar.

The toolbar or the sidebar can always be displayed or hidden but not both at the same time. I found out that if both are hidden, it will take a restart to reset both to display again. I still have to find a way to show/hide both at the same time. This can be done by right-clicking the mouse on an empty space on their the toolbar or the sidebar. Remember, it is just one or the other, but not both.

The Toolbar

Retroshare makes it easy to access the several sections of the application. The Toolbar is accessible at anytime as long as it is not hidden.

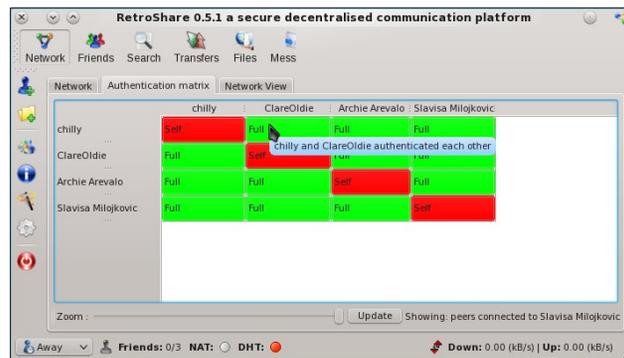
The Toolbar is made up of eight sections:



Network

This tool provides three tabs rendering a different visual list of who, among your friends, are on your list. The first tab, Network, is a color-coded numbered list with titled columns. Yellow is yourself and green are your friends. This tab makes it easy to search for a friend, especially if you already have a long list. If a friend has not authenticated you, or if

you have not authenticated a friend, you and your friend will not connect

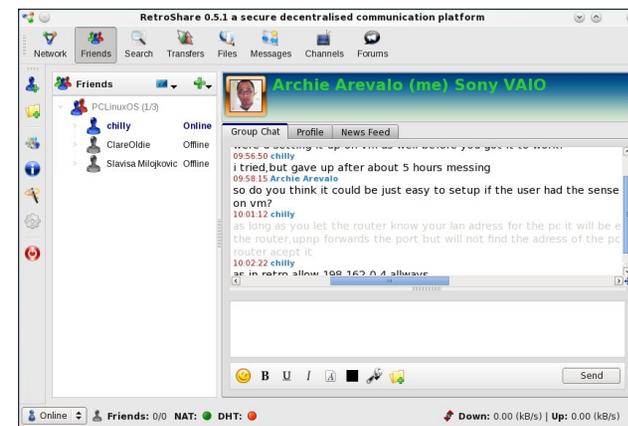


The Authentication Matrix is another tab that cross-references a color-coded (red, yellow and green) match. Red is yourself. Yellow means that one or the other of your friends, (or yourself), had authenticated while waiting for the other to complete the pair authentication. Green means both users have authenticated each other and can connect with each other.

The Network View is like a sub-atomic structure of your friends, (and possibly friends of friends), linked by a line with yourself in the center as a yellow ball. Think of it as a map.

Friends

The Friends tool has two panes. The left pane is your list of friends and indicates whether they are online or offline. The right pane has three tabs - Group Chat, Profile and News Feed. The left pane also has sub-functions that will sort the order of your friends' list, hide your offline friends, etc. It also has

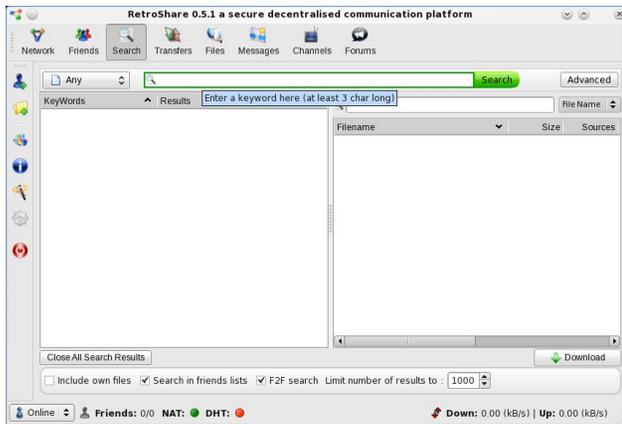


tools for adding a new friend or a new group, create a new forum, set an avatar or a personal message.

The right pane displays a group chat, views your personal profile or reads feeds that you have subscribed to. The Group Chat is what a user would be mostly using. As in any chat client, the input space is at the bottom of the right pane. A limited number of settings can change the typeface, its size and color, and add smilies, highlight part or all of a message sent, and even send a file.

Search

The Search tool switches the window to a two-pane view that is capable of searching for any type of files using simple and boolean expressions and strings. On the right pane, the number of results per keyword are displayed. A user can make multiple searches. The left pane is for filtering the files from a specific result on the right pane. Typing in a series of letters on the right pane's search box narrows the list to fewer items.



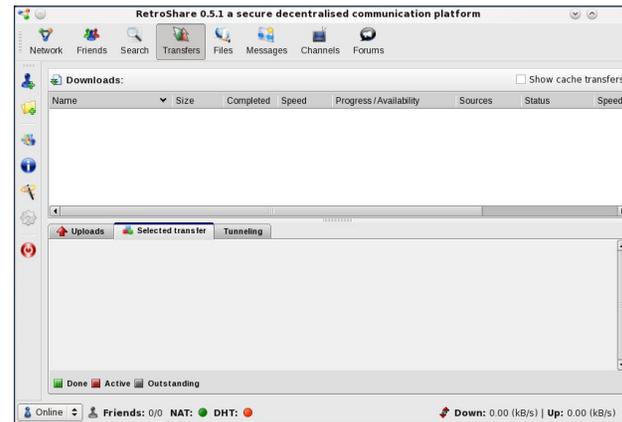
When a user finds a file he is searching for, he can just select the file and click Download to save a copy on his computer. Right clicking on either pane displays context menus from removing search results to sending a file's link to a friend via Retroshare's Composer.

As of this writing, I have not been able to ascertain the Advanced button parameters.

Transfers

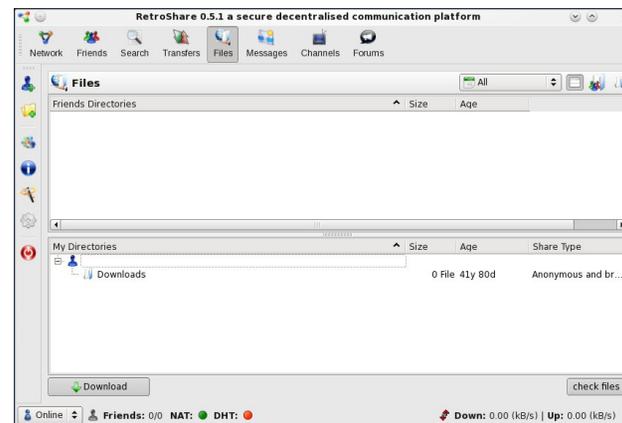
The Transfers window displays a top (Download) pane and a bottom (Upload) pane. This tool is used to monitor the progress of your downloads and view which of your files are getting uploaded to your friends' computers. The files you are sharing on folders that you set on the next section, Files, are available to your friends to download. Your downloads from your friends' computers are stored in folders you specified as the incoming directory,

which can be set on the Sidebar's Options > Directories.



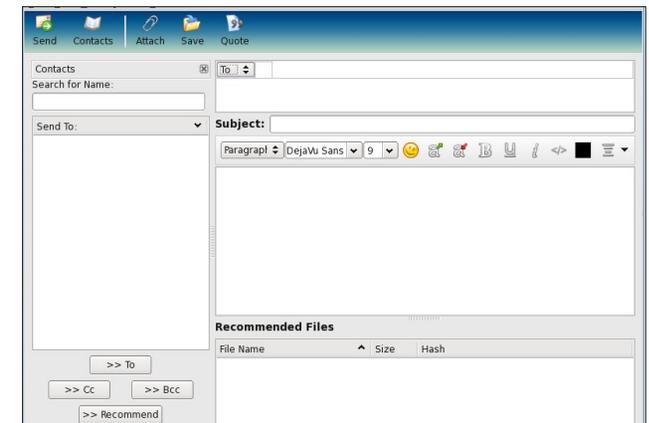
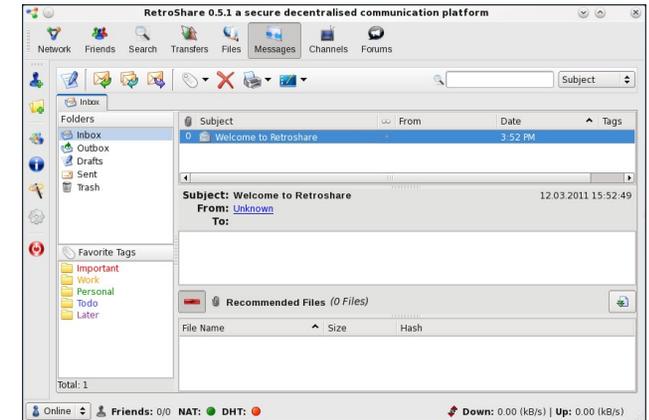
Files

The Files tool displays your connected friends' shared directories and files (top Pane) and your shared directories and files (bottom pane). It is another section where a user can manually search for files and folders and download them.



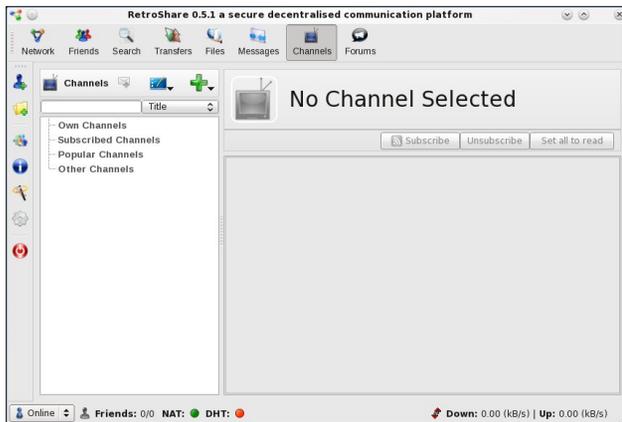
Messages

The Messages Tool is very similar to an email client, where you can send and receive email-like messages to and from any of your friends, even if they are offline. Like email clients, there is a Composer a user can use to type an email message, replies and forwards, print and file attachments. A user can even add tags to messages they receive.



Channels

The Channels tool is a similar concept to Real Simple Syndication (RSS) where a user can post anything of interest and friends who have subscribed to the feeds will receive these posts on the News tab of your Friends tool. It could be used for posting PCLinuxOS updates or test results, or even the funniest jokes at the forum. The prospects for using this tool are immense.

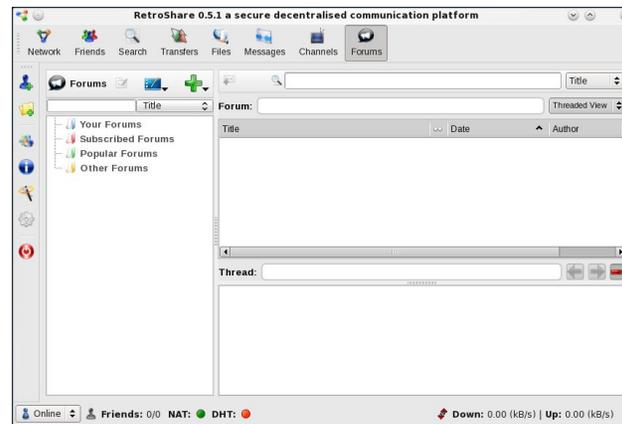


Users can create one or several channels and friends can do the same. Users can subscribe to friends' channels and friends can subscribe to yours. Although a user can create an unlimited number of channels, it is best to have one or two that your friends can easily subscribe to.

Forums

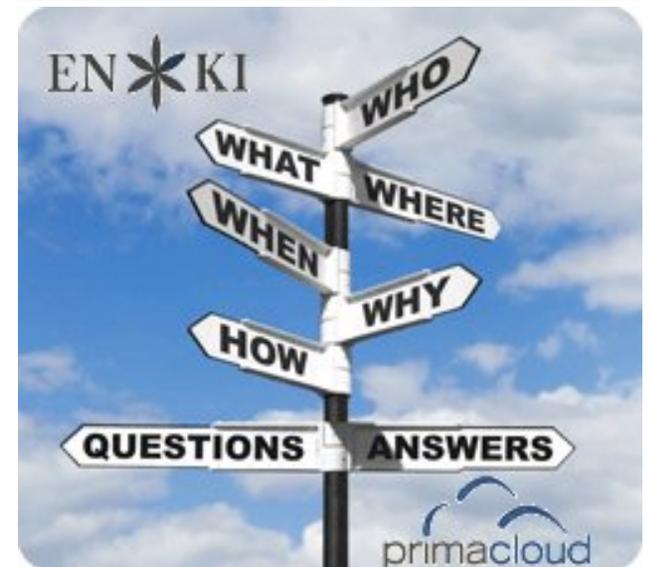
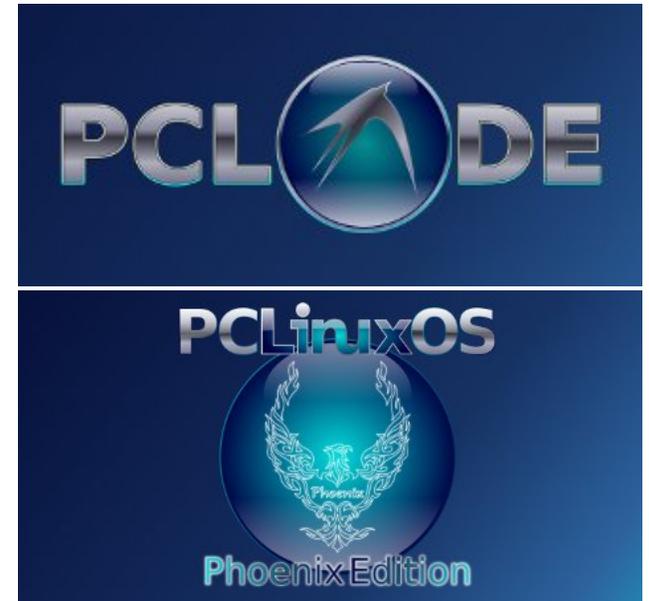
The Forums tool is unlike what we are used to in the PCLinuxOS Support Forum. Titles are threaded and look very similar to a threaded list on your favorite

email client. As with the Channels tool, there are also no limitations to creating forums, so I believe this feature should pretty much get a rework or a rethink. Settings can vary from non-members being able to read and post to having to be a member of the forum to read and post.



With all these tools available and a responsible use of these tools, Retroshare can be the ultimate P2P social network client.

Next issue, we will look at the sidebar and its functions.



Screenshot Showcase

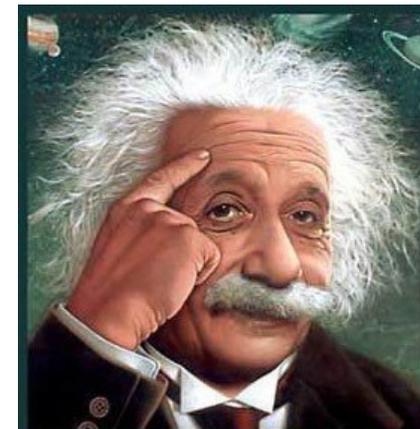


Posted by oneakim, April 27, 2011, running Xfce.

Answers to Mark Szorady's Double Take:



(1) Cartoonists Day logo tilted; (2) Lamp arm different; (3) Drawer missing; (4) Chair back shorter; (5) Picture smaller; (6) Table missing beam; (7) Ink puddle smaller



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 ...



ts2mpeg & DVBCut

by Daniel Meiß-Wilhelm (Leiche)

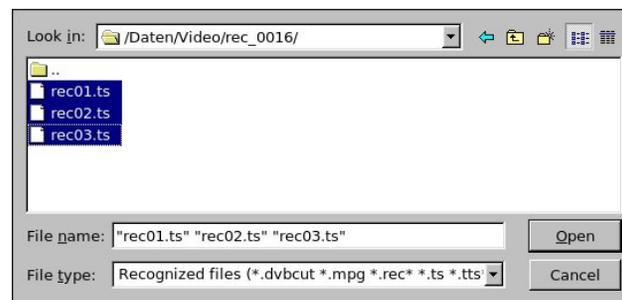
If you are like me, you like to capture movies on a hard drive player from satellite broadcasts. You will get some files, which are stored as rec.ts, meta.dat, rec.01, rec.02, rec.bm and rec.cp, as in the graphic below.

But which ones are the movie file or files? The biggest files contain your movie, and they are named rec.ts, then rec.01, and rec.02. The files are broken into 2.1 GiB "chunks," with the last file typically smaller.



When we have copied these files to our PC, we can use Mplayer to play them. But how can we edit these files? I don't like advertising in my movies, so I want to remove it. But how? We can use DVBCut, which you can install via Synaptic.

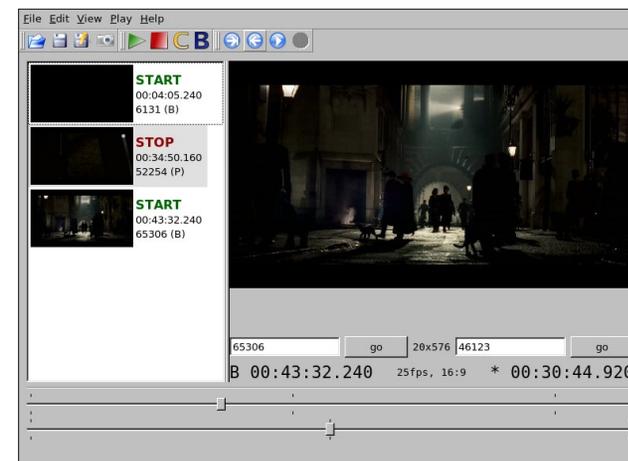
But there is one thing we should do, before we load our movie into DVBCut. We must rename our three files. I chose to rename them rec01.ts, rec02.ts, and rec03.ts.



Now, start DVBCut and load your files. Make sure that you load all associated files.

Once your movie is loaded, you can use the sliders to search out the advertisements in your file. It's a little crazy to work with the two sliders, but the advertisements will be gone in no time. Once you've eliminated all the advertising, and you have all of your crop points set properly, it's time to export your movie.

Now you can load your movie in any program, such as Avidemux, to convert it to a different file format. Or, if you choose, you can load it up in DVDStyler and burn the movie to a DVD.



A magazine just isn't a magazine without articles to fill the pages.

If you have article ideas, or if you would like to contribute articles to the PCLinuxOS Magazine, send an email to:
pclinuxos.mag@gmail.com

We are interested in general articles about Linux, and (of course), articles specific to PCLinuxOS.

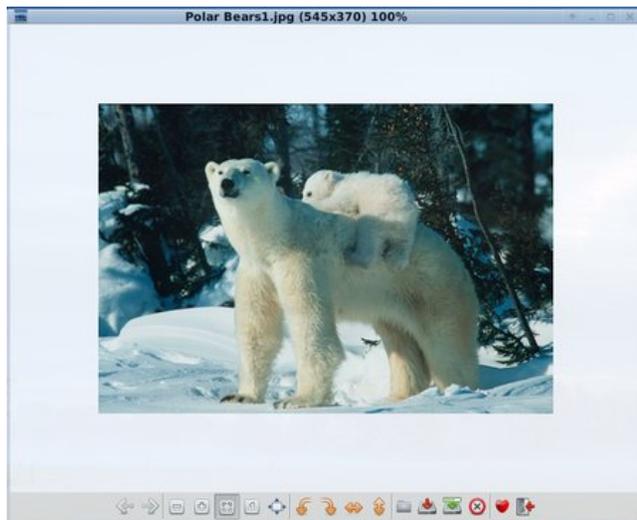
Photo Viewers, Part 1

by meemaw

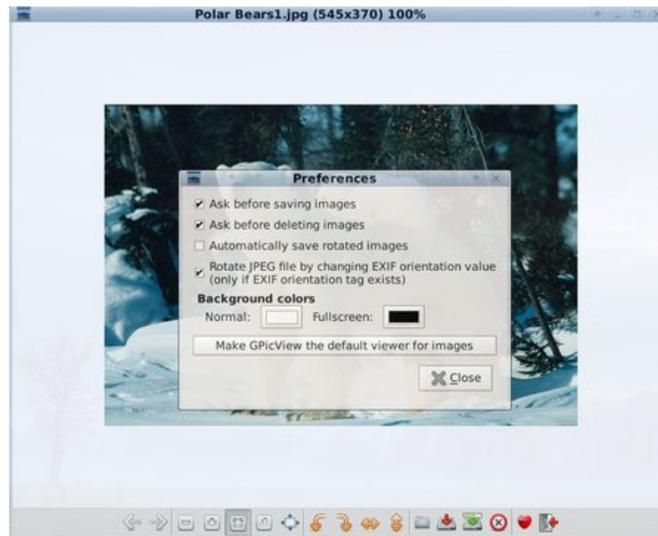
I had a conversation with a friend the other day. She said, "What do you use to view and edit pictures?" ("Well, first, I use Linux.") That got me thinking, though, about the photo viewers and editors we have. With some much-appreciated help from a few other PCLinuxOS users, I now have a list of many of the most often used photo viewers. I'm sure there are more, but maybe you will find something new in this list. I haven't included Gimp, because I think it's in a class of its own since it does so much.

Photo viewer programs range from those that only view through those that view, catalog, slideshow, edit and even email. Let's start with some of those programs that are only viewers.

GPicView



This is a viewer only, but you can rotate and flip pictures.



The toolbar is pretty sparse, but you can see all the controls right there. Most of them are pretty self-explanatory. The X in the red circle is Delete. The heart is the Preferences window, shown below. The open door is, of course, Exit Program.

Ristretto

This is the default photo viewer in Phoenix and Phoenix Mini. It is mainly a viewer with an editing option, (rotate only), and a slideshow feature. When you first start it you get a blank file requester with a folder ('Open') at the top.

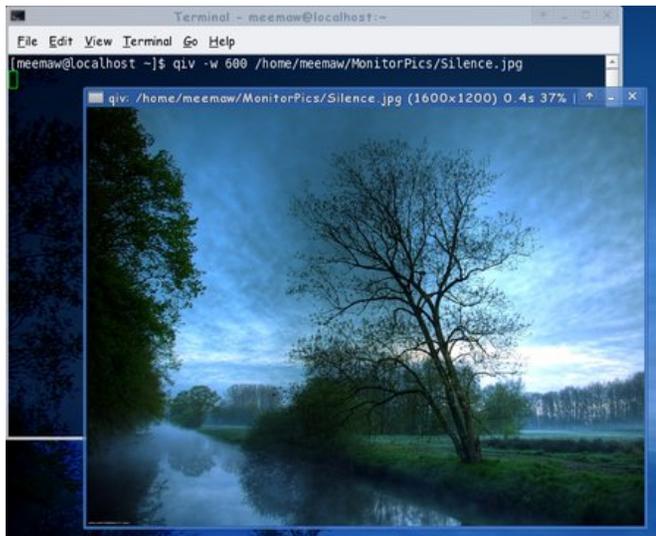


You can change the location of your 'filmstrip' in Preferences so it is at the bottom, down the side or not shown at all. The edit menu is to edit preferences, or open your picture for editing in whatever program you have on your system. (Mine would say 'Open with Gimp...')

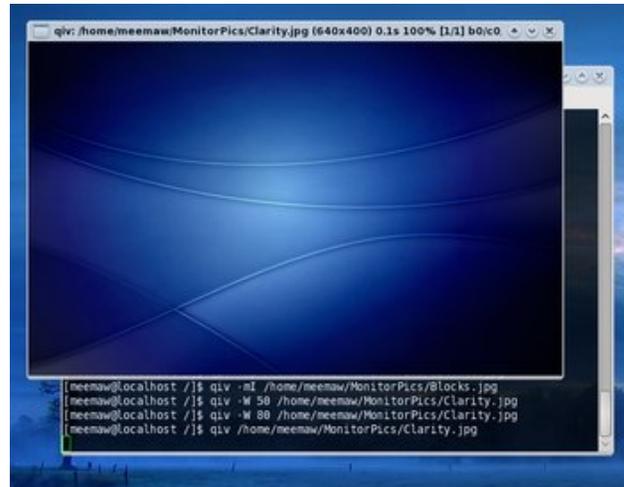


qiv

This is one of our CLI photo viewers. Opening a terminal, you can type `qiv /pathtoyourphoto` and the photo you want to see should pop up in another window. The window will be whatever size the photo is, so if you know the photo is larger than your screen size, you might want to put in a qualifier command. For example, you can type `qiv -w 800 /pathtoyourphoto` and `qiv` will open it in a window 800 pixels wide. The one below is 1600 x 1200, so I used the command to open it in a smaller window.



The example at top center is a smaller photo anyway, so when I only entered `qiv /pathtoispicture`, it opened at 100%.



Commands can be found by typing `qiv --help`. With the slideshow qualifiers, you can run a slideshow.

Picturewall

When you open Picture Wall, you get a blank screen asking for the image directory. In the lower right-hand corner, you can click on a button that has three dots on it, which will give you an Open File window. If you choose a directory, Picture Wall will load all the images in that directory. Scrolling with your mouse scroll-wheel can enlarge and reduce the thumbnail size. Notice the window-type images on the bottom row. As far as I can tell those are copies of the images directly above them only flipped. I can't figure out what the purpose of the windows is because they do nothing when you click on them, unless you click on the X..., then that window closes.

If you click on one photo, it will enlarge and stay

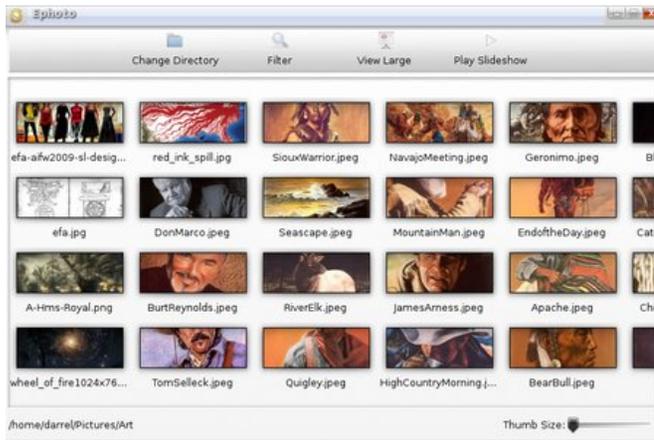


there as long as your mouse is in the window - when you move your mouse out of the Picture Wall window, your enlargement will disappear. I can't find anywhere to start a slideshow, so I am assuming that Picture Wall does no slideshow.



ePhoto

As we just finished a series on the e17 Enlightenment Desktop Environment, ePhoto had actually already been covered (in the February, 2011 Issue). However, I did want to mention it here, because it is in our viewer-only list. You can view single images or thumbnails of different sizes, and it does play a slideshow.



Next month we'll look at more viewers.

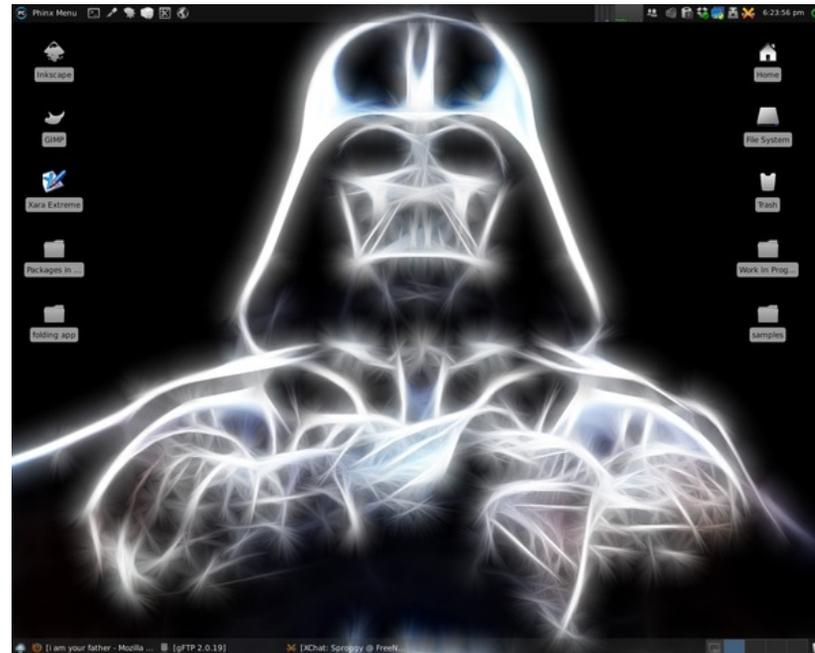
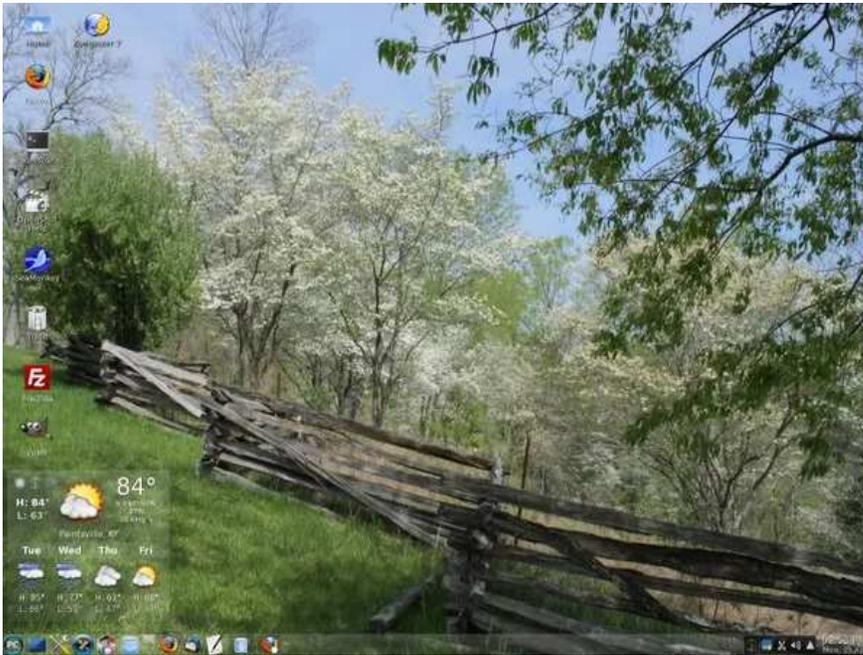


Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Linuxera, April 16, 2011, running e17.

More Screenshot Showcase



Top Left: Posted by ff103, April 25, 2011, running KDE4.

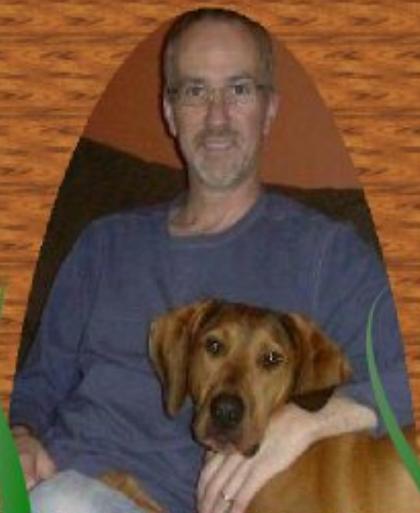
Top Right: Posted by ivanovnegro, April 16, 2011, running KDE4.

Bottom Left: Posted by LKJ, April 14, 2011, running Xfce.

Bottom Right: Posted by Sproggy, April 18, 2011, running Xfce.

Rudge & Molly

Home Sweet Home



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