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Add Album Art To Your MP3s With Ease

Inkscape Tutorial: Create An Abstract Background

Good Words, Good Deeds, Good News

Short Topix: Google Confirms Browser Attacks, With Explanation

Repo Review: Cryptomator

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The **PCLinuxOS** magazine

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The 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.

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From The Assistant Editor's Desk...

April Fools!

This isn't the Editor! It's the Assistant Editor.

As you can imagine, sometimes we're all at a loss for words. So it is with this column. I don't think I could write a column every single month. Heck, I have trouble with the welcome column for the Graphics Special Editions, and I'm only working on my third! My point is, I want to congratulate parnote on his awesome writing from month to month. I don't think I could do it.

I registered on the PCLinuxOS Forum on August 23rd of 2006 (it was actually my birthday). I've been here ever since. I've met loads of wonderful people (on the forum, anyway), and I hope many of them are good friends. Many of the forum members that were here when I registered are still here, and very helpful to those of us who aren't quite experts yet. Yes, I've been here for nearly 16 years, and I still don't consider myself an expert! I knew next to nothing about computers when I started - I got my first computer in 1995 - and have learned a lot, but I'm still amazed at all the huge gaps in my knowledge.

When the idea for the magazine came up, with our friend Tim Robinson as editor, I signed on to be a proofreader. I figured since I had been a teacher, I could at least check grammar and spelling on an article (not content, because in most cases, I didn't know enough). I've been on the magazine staff ever since, except for a short break in 2009. I even started writing articles on subjects I know a tiny bit about. I've even ended up doing several series of articles. Amazing for a newbie, huh? I'm thankful to parnote, who has continued to encourage my writing. Hopefully, one of these days I can meet him and his family in person.

Through the years, we have lost some good friends, and made some new friends. Some of us have more problems than we used to, and some are doing all right. I miss the ones we have lost and pray for those who are having problems.

I always enjoy browsing the forum because of the many comments, screenshots, jokes and photos. A few years ago, our musically-inclined members got together, sort of, and did a song. Many played instruments- drums, horns, etc - and our wonderful ms_meme wrote and sang. It was beautiful. In the whole forum, it is amazing how we all get along together, like a big family. We don't always agree on everything, but we recognize each others' talents and help each other with our computer and other problems. Tex and the programmers keep us all running perfectly (or nearly perfectly), and we all get updated so our machines run great most all the time. We cheer each other on, sympathize with problems or mourn with someone who has lost a loved one. One big happy family.

This month's cover, fittingly for a Linux magazine, celebrates World Penguin Day on April 25.

As parnote says, and it is my wish too, I bid you peace, happiness, serenity, prosperity ... and continued good health!





KDE Connect On PCLinuxOS

by Matt Hartley (ctsdownloads)

I like to believe I have a pretty decent marriage. See, my wife is a Mac user. And with this comes the benefit of being able to interact with iMessage on her iPhone. So in the spirit of "one-upping" my smarter half, I decided to see what was available to PCLinuxOS users. After all, surely I could duplicate her ability to interact with her text messages on her computer!

After a few minutes of digging around, I realized that using a Linux tool called KDE Connect would fit the bill quite nicely.

What is KDE Connect?

KDE Connect is designed to blur the lines between your KDE desktop environment and your smartphone. One simply needs to install KDE Connect onto their PCLinuxOS computer and then repeat the process on their smartphone. In my case, I am an Android user. So I looked up KDE Connect on the Google Play Store on my Android phone and installed it. Once set up, KDE Connect allows me to get all my Android alerts on my home computer running PCLinuxOS.

Why would I want to install KDE Connect?

Everyone reading this may have different ideas about how KDE Connect might benefit them. Speaking for myself, I use it because of the following features.

- Being alerted to my text messages and reply to them without having to grab my phone.

- Easily send files back and forth without needing to do so using Bluetooth.
- Locate my phone when I lose it by making it ring using KDE Connect on my laptop.

Now there are other features I don't use that you might find interesting.

- Share Desktop and phone copy/paste clipboard(s).
- Slideshow controls for your desktop using your phone.
- Remote mouse control from your phone to manage the cursor on your desktop.
- Receive remote key presses from your computer to your phone.
- Managing file system access between devices.

It's important to remember that features like desktop text messaging access and ringing your phone to locate it will require you to grant access from KDE Connect on your phone. I recommend only giving access to those services on your phone you plan on using.

Installing KDE Connect onto your PCLinuxOS (KDE desktop) computer

The first step to running KDE Connect is to install it onto your computer. Start by opening Synaptic and searching for KDE Connect. Once the search is complete, you will see something that looks a lot like this at center top.



Installing the package for the handbook is optional. For my PCLinuxOS installation, I decided to install everything seen in the image below. The two most essential packages we're installing here are kdeconnect-kde and indicator-kdeconnect.

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Reload Mark All Upgrades	Apply	Properties	Search	
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Once I've marked my packages for installation, I clicked apply to begin the install process. If the KDE Connect indicator doesn't appear immediately, you

 \bigcirc

KDE Connect On PCLinuxOS

will want to reboot or log off, log in to allow the changes to take effect.

Installing KDE Connect onto your Android phone or tablet

The phone I'm using is my Google Pixel 5, fully updated with the latest version of Android. I imagine this will also work on older Android devices. However, I recommend making sure you're using the latest version of Android available for your mobile device. I've heard there is a limited version of KDE Connect for iPhones, but I have had no personal experience with it.

On your Android phone, open up the Google Play Store and search for KDE Connect. Then install it. Once the installation is completed, choose to open the app.



After you've opened up KDE Connect on your Android phone, you'll be presented with a similar screen to this one below. Note: your PCLinuxOS computer and Android phone must both be on the same network. Otherwise, your available devices won't show up.



Other devices running KDE Connect in your same network should appear here.

Available devices

🔲 localhost.localdomain

Your next step is to "pair" your Android phone to your PCLinuxOS computer. No Bluetooth is used for this process. The entire pairing process will take place over your local network. For my installation, I grabbed my phone and clicked on the device name shown above.



Once you've clicked the pairing button, your desktop computer is going to alert you that your phone is trying to pair to your computer. Choose the accept option, and you're now connected (right, top).



The next steps are critical as they allow permissions to provide seamless functionality between the two devices. Take a look at the following image located below. This is KDE Connect on my phone.



Anything listed under "Some plugins need permissions to work" is not set up to communicate with your computer yet. You'll need to click each phrase to grant permissions. In my case, the only phrases I needed were "Send SMS" and "Connectivity Report." Note: You may see completely different plugin permissions, so read each entry carefully and grant those you wish to allow your computer to interact with.

Learning to use KDE Connect

Assuming everything went as it should, left-clicking on the KDE Connect indicator for PCLinuxOS should display something very much like this below.



This indicator gives me the name of my phone, the battery level for the device, and a menu for additional options. This opened indicator can also read any missed pop-ups from your phone notifications as they happen to come in.

Now let's click on the menu to see what options are available. Note, remember the permissions we granted previously from the Android phone? What is available in this menu will be based on the permissions you decided to select previously.



I can share a file with my phone based on the permissions I granted. I can ring my phone (to locate it), and the SMS Messages option is where I would manage my text messages. I can also browse the file system on my phone and share files/images with it.

Pro tip: If anything in this menu isn't working, it's usually because you forgot to grant the needed permissions for each function from the Android phone's KDE Connect app. For example, "File system expose" and "Share and receive."

Some Plugins need permissions to work (tap for more info):

Receive remote keypresses

Mouse receiver

Some plugins have features disabled because of lack of permission (tap for more info):

Filesystem expose

Share and receive

Status Battery: 48%

KDE Connect On PCLinuxOS

Now let's left-click our KDE Connect indicator again, select the menu as shown two images above, and choose SMS Messages. Assuming your phone and computer are both connected to the same network, your phone isn't completely asleep; this should bring up something like this image below.

Sending and Receiving text messages on KDE Connect



While the contact names might not make it through transit to your computer, each phone number and relevant messages will. Click on one of the entries to bring us to the next screen.



Here you have your messages from this person, the ability to reply to them, and even insert images for MMS messaging. Before we get too excited, there is one "gotcha" to be aware of before going further. When composing a message to be sent via SMS (text message) to this recipient, the message will be shown as "sent" in this window. However, it won't actually be sent until I unlock my Android smartphone. Once I unlock my phone, it usually sends the message within a couple of seconds.

Viewing and Dismissing Android notifications

Viewing incoming notifications from your Android phone is a snap using KDE Connect. In the image below, I have an incoming email that my Android phone's email client. Notice the pop-up directly above the KDE Connect indicator.



When this happened, I was engrossed in Barney Miller and missed the notification. No problem, simply left-click on the KDE Connect indicator to see the message. This works with incoming app alerts, email, and text messages (center, top).

Now I can see what the missed alert message was. Additionally, I can choose to dismiss the single message, or if there are multiple messages, I can dismiss them "in bulk." The X opposite of Notifications is a bulk dismiss and the X opposite of the email alert dismisses that alert only.



Sending and Receiving files to your Android phone or PCLinuxOS computer

In the image below, you can see an image file I have selected to be sent from my computer to my Android phone. I simply locate the file in question, right-click on it, and choose "Send to device."

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🖻 Сору	Ctrl+C	
🖍 Rename	F2	
D Move to Trash	Del	
Delete	Shift+Del	
Send with NitroShare		
Root Actions	>	
🖪 Set as Wallpaper		
Compress	>	
음 Activities	>	
< Share	>	ධ් Imgur
Send to 'Pixel 5' via KDE Co	onnect	🗳 Send via Email
		Send via Bluetooth.

KDE Connect On PCLinuxOS

Now had I paid closer attention, I could have achieved the same result by choosing "Send to 'Pixel 5' via KDE Connect." The good news here is either approach from this menu dialog will send the selected file to your phone.

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To receive files from your phone to your desktop, you would reverse the process. Choose your share options for the file from your Android phone. Select KDE Connect as the sharing tool from the phone's sharing options.

Once you've shared the file with your computer, you'll see your indicator display something similar to this on next page, top left.

KDE Connect On PCLinuxOS



PCLinuxOS being awesome, you will have already selected Gwenview to open any incoming images from your phone.

Closing Thoughts

Wrapping up this article, I figure I would address some common issues you might face.

KDE Connect indicator says that your phone is not connected.

- Check to make sure your computer is connected to your home network.
- Is your phone asleep or turned off? Turn it on or unlock it, then check your indicator on the computer again.
- KDE 'SMS Connect' is stuck loading messages. Unlock your phone, close SMS Connect and reopen SMS Connect.
- Everything is just super slow. Usually, this is network speed-related. This is especially true on saturated home networks.

There you have it. Connect your Android phone to your PCLinuxOS computer. This should also work with Android tablets as well. Enjoy!

About the author

I'm the community manager for the Old School Community on Locals. I handle the community management elements of OldSchool.Locals.com. Additionally, I have worked with Linux desktops for well over a decade. My operating system experience consists of both Windows and Linux operating platforms. I've also worked as a podcast producer, co-host, and technology writer. For general inquiries, you can reach me at matt(at)matthartley.com.

The PCLinuxOS Magazine

Created with Scribus

Screenshot Showcase



Posted by Ximru, March 6, 2022, running Mate.

Add Album Art To Your MP3 Files With Ease

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

As I wrote last month, I recently "discovered" podcasts. This has led me to renewing my "relationship" with MP3 files. Last month, I wrote about resampling a collection of MP3 files so they all fit on a 700MiB CD-R that I can play in my truck's MP3 CD player.

As you can imagine for something that is "new" to any noob, I have a lot of "catching up" to do when it comes to podcasts. So, I've spent some time exploring, downloading some to my computer, while adding others to my "lists" on the various services that offer podcasts.

One thing that I noticed is that some of the podcasts have each "episode" or "chapter" displaying the cover art for that particular podcast. Others, though, only display the bland "generic" MP3 icon in my file manager (Thunar). Hey! I want those to have pretty pictures on them, too!



Notice how the icons for the MP3 files at both ends of the image are the generic MP3 icon used by my file manager. But then look at the nice, colorful, bright images that represent the three icons in the middle. This is called "album art."

None of the "pretty pictures" are displayed on my truck's MP3 CD player. It couldn't care less. But, when I view the files on my computer, having the MP3 files all displaying the same cover art (or album art) lets me know that this particular group of MP3 files are all part of one bigger package. It also helps them stand out from the crowd, so to speak.

So, I embarked on a "mission" to figure out how to add album art images to my MP3 files. Some of the solutions I found weren't ... solutions. The method(s) didn't work. That is, until I tried one method that I tried to steer away from initially. In the end, it ended up being the easiest solution.

That solution was to use **ffmpeg** to embed the album art into the MP3 files. What caused me to steer away from it initially was a couple of comments that made

sense to me at the time. They were along the lines of "Using ffmpeg to insert album art into a MP3 file is like using a sledge hammer to drive a tack." Another criticism warned about the risks of re-encoding MP3 files, since the MP3 compression algorithm is most assuredly a lossy compression method. That means that every time you re-encode a MP3 file, you risk losing more and more sound fidelity. Fortunately, with ffmpeg, that last criticism is easy to circumvent.

So off to the bash drawing board I went! Just like with last month's MP3 Bitrate Convertor script, I wanted to create a bash script that could run either as a standalone script, or that could also be tied to a custom action in Thunar (which is primarily how I would use it). It also had to have a GUI element to it, to help insulate those who prefer to stay away from the command line ... well, away from the command line. The script turned out to be much easier than I anticipated.

Below is the script. As you can see, it's not very long. It's only 18 lines, and that's counting five blank lines. You can download it from the magazine website, or you can just type it in as you see it here. The line numbers are there just to delineate the lines of the script, and shouldn't be entered if you are typing it. The entire script is only 534 bytes long, so I doubt you'll go over any speed limits or download quotas by downloading it. The file is named mp3-album-art.sh.txt.

```
1. #! /bin/sh
2.
 3. n=1
4.
5. img="$(zenity --file-selection --title "Select the album art
JPG, PNG or WEBP file" --file-filter="*.jpg *.png *.webp")"
    if [ $? == 1 ]; then
6.
7.
        exit
8. fi
9.
10. for file in $@; do
       echo "# Processing file: $file"
11.
       ffmpeg -i "$file" -i $img -map_metadata 0 -map 0 -map 1
12.
-acodec copy out-"${file#./}" && mv out-"${file#./}" "$file"
       echo $(($n * 100 / $#))
13.
       let "n = n+1"
14.
15.
16. done | (zenity --progress --title "Adding Album Art..." --
width=450 --height=100 --percentage=0 --auto-close --auto-kill)
17.
18. exit 0
```

Add Album Art To Your MP3 Files With Ease

When you download it to your computer, place it in the directory where you store your bash scripts, remove the .txt file extension, and make the file executable.

So, let's look at what's going on in this bash script. Of course, since it is a bash script, it starts off with the typical bash shebang on line 1. Line 3 sets up an integer in the variable "n", which will be important later on when we are displaying the progress dialog box.

Lines 5 through 8 display the file selection dialog box. This is where you will select the image to embed into your MP3 file as album art. Keep in mind that your MP3 files will "grow" by the size of the album art file, so choose something on the smaller side. This may require you to resize your album art image. Also, your album art image must be either in JPG, PNG or WebP image formats.

Lines 10 through 16 sets up a for-do loop to walk through all of the files provided to the script as command line arguments. With line 11, it then also sets up the information to display in the progress dialog box.

Line 12 is where the "magic" happens. Ffmpeg is launched, with both the input MP3 file and the selected graphic file imported. The most important part of the ffmpeg command is the **-acodec copy** parameter, which tells ffmpeg to merely copy the audio information, rather than re-encode it. This allows us to avoid having to re-encode the audio file, and risk further audio quality degradation. The rest of the ffmpeg command line options write out a temporary file, and then copy that temporary file back into the original file.

Line 13 increments the progress dialog box as it works through multiple files. Line 14 increments the integer that we set up in line 3, as it keeps track of where it is in the list of files to process.

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Line 16 closes out the for-do loop, and displays the Zenity progress bar dialog box, so you know where in the process you are. Line 18 exits the script cleanly.

Using The Script

Of course, the script runs from a command line, as intended, with a full graphical interface ... which consists only of a Zenity file selection dialog box. As is my usual goal, I also want to be able to run it from a custom action in Thunar. As I stated last month in the MP3 Bitrate Convertor script article, this should also be able to function in a similar manner in Caja on the Mate desktop, or in Dolphin on KDE Plasma. Since I don't run those desktops and haven't for a while, I'm no longer familiar enough with how to add them to those file managers' context menu to walk you through it. There are plenty of external resources that cover how to do so, anyways.



In Thunar, go to the Edit > Custom Actions... menu and click on the "+" symbol that is at the top of the row of buttons on the right side of the dialog box. In the "Create Action" dialog box (above), under the "Basic" tab (left), fill in the Name (which will be the menu item name that will appear in your context menu). I named mine "MP3 Album Art." You can add a brief description in the "Description" field, if you want. It's not required, but may be appreciated if you go back in to look at it eight months from now. On the "Command" line, enter **mp3-album-art.sh %N**. I keep all of my bash scripts in my ~/bin directory, which has been added to my \$PATH statement. That way, my scripts can be located and run

Add Album Art To Your MP3 Files With Ease

without having to provide a fully qualified path to my bash script. Otherwise, if you don't have your bash scripts stored in a directory in your \$PATH statement, you'll have to provide a fully qualified path to where you stored your script. Under the "Basic" tab, you can also choose an icon to display and represent your script.

Under the "Appearance Conditions" tab (right), enter ***.mp3;*.MP3** on the "File Pattern" line, and check the box next to "Audio Files." Click OK and your new Thunar custom action will be saved.

Caveats

You'll want to keep your image files as small as possible, of course. Watch your file sizes of your album art, because when you embed the image into your MP3 file, your MP3 file will grow by that much, as a general rule. So, you might have to resize your image file to something smaller. Some album art you download can be as large as 500KiB, which is way too large to be adding to your smaller MP3 file. Usually, resizing your image file to something between 250 and 300 pixels in width should be sufficiently large enough to see well, but shrink the file down to a much more reasonable size.



While you can use PNG and JPG files for your album art, you might want to opt for images in the WebP format. They are typically significantly smaller than either PNG or JPG files. If you're unfamiliar with WebP images (I was until very recently), you can read up on them in the WebP article, elsewhere in this issue of the magazine.

Summary

Adding album art for your MP3 library can be fun. At the very least, it can brighten up your file manager. As an added bonus, your album art will be displayed in VLC or Parole or any of your other audio file players, instead of a blank, empty screen.

Everyone needs a little splash of color and a sense of belonging. Adding album art to your MP3 files helps keep all of the files from one "album" appearing the same, so you know at a glance that they all belong together.

PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner



Ukrainian Borsch

This is a staple in many Ukrainian homes, a bowlful of sweet, sour and savory flavors. **Serves: 4-6**

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound beef shank 4 cups onions, chopped 4 cups chopped celery 3 cups diced carrots 1 - 2 cups chopped cabbage 1 or 2 beets, cut into strips 1 small can tomato paste 1 tsp vinegar 1 tsp sugar 2 or 3 potatoes, diced 1 fresh tomato 1 garlic clove 2 bay leaves Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper as needed

DIRECTIONS:

Boil roast in a little water until done. Remove from the pot and chop into small pieces. Save broth.

Pour several tablespoons of oil in a skillet and saute onions, celery, and carrots. Pour sauteed vegetables into reserved broth. Add beef back to the broth and put into the chopped cabbage. Turn on low heat and simmer.

In a skillet place a little broth, tomato paste, and cut up beets. Cook until beets are tender. Add vinegar and sugar.

Pour beef mixture into pot, add the chunked potatoes, and bring to a boil, boil for 10-15 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

Cut up the tomatoes into tiny pieces and add 1/2 tsp salt. Press garlic cloves and add into tomatoes, then pour into the pot. Continue simmering for 10-15 minutes. Add bay leaves and let set for up to an hour to blend flavor.

Serve with sour cream.

NUTRITION:

Calories: 479 Sodium: 500mg Protein: 32g

Carbs: 28g Fiber: 5g





PCLinuxOS.



Radically Simple.



Available in the following desktops: KDE LXQt Xfce MATE Trinity Enlightenment



Screenshot Showcase



Posted by kalwisti, March 7, 2022, running Mate.

Inkscape Tutorial: Create An Abstract Background

by Meemaw



I've been back to YouTube, watching tutorials! I found one from the channel Logos by Nick which has one called Vector Abstract Background. I thought I'd share it.

Create a rectangle for the background in your desired size. The tutorial used $1280 \times 720 \text{ px.}$ Choose **Path > Object to path**.

For fill, choose **Mesh Gradient**. Click each corner and set the fill on each a different color.



Create a new layer above the one you have. On this layer, create a little circle, fill it with a color you can see over the ones you have and place it in the upper left corner of your background. Choose **Path** > **Object to path**. Align the dot with the top and left edge using the **Align and Distribute** dialog. Duplicate the circle for each corner and make sure they are aligned vertically and horizontally in the corners.

While you are duplicating, put several across the top and bottom and down each side, all aligned with the border they are along (top to top, etc). An easy way to do this is to duplicate one, and while you are dragging it to a new location, press the **<SPACE>** bar several times. Each time you press the **<SPACE>** bar, a new circle will appear.



After you get them all aligned, duplicate one again, and pressing the **<SPACE>** bar several times, arrange the circles randomly inside the rectangle (top, right).

At this point, you want to lock Layer 1 so it can't be selected. Select everything else, and go to **Extensions > Generate from path > Voronoi Diagram**. When the window appears, choose **Delaunay Triangulation** for the type, and



Automatic from selected objects under Bounding Box. Make the colors Black stroke and no fill. Press Apply. It should look similar to this:



Now, select everything on Layer 2, then hold the **<SHIFT>** key, and deselect the lines. Press **<DELETE>** to delete the circles, which you no longer need (next page, top left).

With the wire frame as it is, we can't color it the way we want. Choose your wire frame and click on **Un-Group selected groups** (next page, left).

Deselect all, then select only one triangle. Using your color picker tool (the eye dropper) click inside

Inkscape Tutorial: Create An Abstract Background



the triangle. It will fill in with a shade from the background that is under that particular triangle. We'll want to do that with each triangle. There are a couple of ways to do this. In the YouTube video, he said you can use the function keys to toggle back & forth between the select tool (**F1**) and the color picker (**F7**), but that doesn't work for me. You can choose each triangle and then choose the color picker to color it. You can choose one triangle, color it, and then press **<TAB>**, which will move your selection to another triangle. It might jump around a lot, but you'll get there. Anyway, you want to select and color each triangle. If you aren't sure if you got them, turn off the visibility on layer 1. See, I missed a couple (center, top).

When you get them all filled, you can actually delete Layer 1 as you no longer need it (center).



Now, select all, and in the Fill & Stroke dialog, or at the bottom of the main window, set the Stroke to none, then group them all.



You might see some white spaces between your triangles. If you do, duplicate your drawing a time or two, and it seems to take care of them. Export your drawing and you're finished.

You can use bright colors or pastels. It looks pretty cool, I think.







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.





Posted by tuxlink, March 4, 2022, running KDE.

C

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Would you believe me if I told you there was a newer graphics file format that had better compression than JPEG files with comparable image quality? Would you believe me if I told you there was a newer graphics file format that supported transparency and lossless compression just as good as – if not better than – PNG files? Would you believe me if I told you there was a newer graphics file format that supported animation better than GIF files?

Well, believe it. And it isn't three newer graphics file formats. It's just ONE, that does all of these things. You've likely seen images from the graphics file format around on websites you've visited. It's called WebP.



Why I'm Writing This

I have been increasingly encountering WebP graphics as I traipse around the web. Quite by accident, I discovered that GIMP and ImageMagick could see and work with WebP graphics, but not much else but my web browsers. Certainly, Scribus (which is what we use to layout the PDF of the magazine) cannot see or use images in the WebP format. So any WebP images that I needed to use had to first be converted either into JPG or PNG formatted images. One thing I noticed almost immediately was that the WebP images appeared to be high quality images, and they were typically significantly smaller file sizes then the JPG or PNG files I converted them into. It piqued my curiosity, to say the least.

If you recall, I recently got interested in podcasts. Most of the "cover images" for the podcasts I'd find and download were in the WebP format. But, to view them, I either had to load them into my web browser, or convert them to the much more common JPG or PNG formats. So, I wanted to know more about this mysterious, "new kid on the block" graphical file format. What I discovered is contained here in this article, that I'm sharing with you.

WebP History (In A Nutshell)

In February 2010, Google completed a purchase of On2 Technologies for just under \$125 million in Google stock shares. On2 Technologies main area of interest was in video compression technologies, such as VP3, VP4, VP5, VP6, VP7, and VP8. These video compressors offered high quality images with (at the time) maximum compression, resulting in lower file sizes.

Google subsequently tweaked the VP8 video compression library, and open sourced the code as the WebM video compression library. Smaller files meant less traffic over already-bulging and overloaded internet data servers, improving throughput. The WebM video compression library is licensed under the BSD free software license.

The WebP graphical file format is a sister project of WebM, derived from VP8, using technology and techniques from the video compression library. Like its video big sibling, WebP is open source, and is released under the BSD free software license.

WebP was first announced by Google in late September 2010 as a new format for lossy compression of true-color graphics on the web that was capable of producing smaller files than JPEG, with comparable quality. In October 2011, Google added support for animation, ICC support, tiling, and XMP and EXIF metadata. Then, in November 2011, Google announced support for a new lossless compression mode, as well as support for transparency and alpha channel in both lossy and lossless modes. When Google made the announcement for the lossless compression mode, it reported roughly a 45% reduction in file size versus the same image in PNG format.

The desire for high quality images with maximum compression is easy to understand. The greater the compression, the smaller the files. And, the smaller the files, the less bandwidth is used, and the faster web pages load.

It has taken a little while, but today, there is support for WebP graphics in the most popular web browsers that serve over 96% of the web browser users. Safari

was one of the last to add support, as recently as 2020. Meanwhile, Firefox originally considered supporting WebP graphics as early as 2013, but official support didn't come about until January 2019 (with Firefox, Pale Moon, and Waterfox). All the Chrome and Chromium-based browsers (including Opera, Edge, etc.) officially support WebP, as does Gnome Web, Midori, and Falkon.

Support also exists for WebP graphics in many graphics software packages. XnView, GIMP, IrfanView, gThumb, and ImageMagick all support it natively. GIMP's support is builtin from version 2.10, but was accomplished in previous versions by way of a GIMP plugin. That plugin "shipped" with GIMP 2.9, and was downloadable for GIMP 2.8 and earlier versions. The commercial Adobe Photoshop also natively supports WebP graphics, from version 23.2 and up.

Users can also count on support for WebP graphics from ffmpeg, Gmail and Google Photos. Telegram Messenger uses WebP graphics files to display their "stickers," while Signal uses the graphics file format for their non-animated stickers. Largely unsupported (natively) by content management systems, support can usually be added on with the addition of a plugin. WordPress, however, supports WebP graphics natively since June 2021.

If you want to dig deeper into the history of WebP graphics, Wikipedia actually has some great information, as well as information on the more technical aspects of the file format.

Likely because of the support of all of the major players in the browser market and among graphics tools, you're likely to find WebP images supported natively on PCLinuxOS. A cursory look in Synaptic shows three different versions of libwebp installed on my computer (libwebp4 from 2013, libwebp6 from 2017, and libwebp7 from 2021), and I suspect the reason for three different versions of the same library is to insure backward compatibility. I also found libwebpdemux2 and libwebpmux3 installed. I installed libwebp-tools to my computer, to give me a couple of command line tools to use with WebP image files. That installed the webpinfo and webpmux command line tools for my use.

Finally, since I'm a Xfce user, my go-to file manager is Thunar. I can tell you that, out of the box, Thunar doesn't have support for WebP graphics. So, I took a shot in the dark and installed lib64webpdecoder3 from Synaptic (it wasn't installed on my computer previously), and ... ta-da! ... Thunar now shows me thumbnail images for WebP graphics. It's not 100% for all WebP graphics, but it definitely works for the majority of WebP graphics I've "collected" as I've prepared to write this article.



WebP Graphics: The "New" Kid On The Block

So, How Does WebP Compare?

When researching this article, I found it difficult to find much of anything that offers a direct comparison of file formats. By now, everyone should be grossly familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of JPG and PNG files. So, I won't rehash all of that information. We all know that the greater the compression with JPGs, which use a lossy compression (resulting in loss of fine details), the lower the quality of images and the smaller the file size ... and vice versa. PNG files use lossless compression, which preserves image quality, but typically with a larger file size than their JPG counterparts.

So ... I decided to make my own comparison. While it's far from scientific, I think it's a fairly accurate representation of what a typical user can expect.



To make my comparisons, I loaded a random PNG file (in this particular case, a screenshot of my desktop from 2020, above) into GIMP, and converted the PNG image to a WebP image. I did this several times, with each time at a different WebP "quality" level. Those levels, using *lossy* compression, are 100%, 90%, 70%, 30%, and 10%. Then, I loaded all of those WebP images and the original PNG file into GIMP with cascading windows, so we can see the same section of the image in each case. Each image was zoomed to 400%, so we can see the individual pixels. The area bounded by the red box in the lower left corner of the image above is roughly the area we are looking at in the zoomed images below.





that the file size difference is remarkable is an understatement. Stay tuned. We'll talk about several differences all at once.

The next thing that is very evident (to me, anyway) is the quality of the images, particularly when it comes to preserving detail. So, let's break this down.

The PNG file is 1.4MiB in size. It is difficult to discern much (if any) difference between the PNG file and the WebP images at both 100% quality and 90% quality. Of course, the WebP 100% quality file is only 31.1% of the size of the

PNG file. And, the WebP 90% quality file is only 17.3% of the size of the original

PNG file. Those are, without a doubt, very significant savings in file size.

When we get to the WebP file done at 70% quality, you can just start to see some degradation of image quality, but it is very minor. Zoomed back out from a 400% zoom to a normal, 100% zoom of the image, it is very difficult still to tell much (if any) difference between the original PNG file and the 70% quality WebP file. Most importantly, the WebP 70% quality file is only 8.4% the size of the original PNG file! If you're a web author, these savings are enormous, both in bandwidth usage and in how fast your images load.

Once we get down to a quality setting of 30%, the loss of image detail becomes

С

fairly obvious. But when zoomed out to a 100% viewport, the loss of image detail is hardly noticeable. The WebP image done with a 30% quality setting, though, is only 4.4% of the size of the original PNG file. With a quality setting of 10%, the WebP image's loss of quality becomes abundantly evident when zoomed to 400%, as in these examples. But even when you change the viewport to 100%, the image quality loss is difficult to see, at least with a cursory glance. And, unless you're doing side-by-side comparisons like I'm doing here, I question how many people would notice. At the 10% quality setting, the WebP image is only 2.6% of the size of the original PNG file.

So, let's compare lossless PNG (how do you like that for redundancy?) to



lossless WebP. In the image above, the PNG is on the left and the lossless WebP image at 90% quality setting is on the right. To me, they look nearly

WebP Graphics: The "New" Kid On The Block

identical. Unless I already knew (because I created the graphic), I wouldn't be able to tell you which one is which. But, what isn't identical is the file size. The WebP lossless image is only 67.8% of the size of the original PNG file, or about $\frac{1}{3}$ smaller in file size. That is significant, especially when you have multiple images in a project.

Creating Your Own WebP Images

So, why might you want to create your own WebP images, you might be asking? Well, if you're designing a website and need to reduce bandwidth and/or have images load quicker, WebP would help with that. As a regular user, you could also save some precious disk storage space by converting some of your images to the WebP format.

If you want to go "command line commando" with the conversion, you can enter the **ImageMagick** command **convert** to perform the conversion. Your command line might look something like this:

convert -quality [your-quality-setting] [your-input-image] [your-ouptut-image.webp]

or

convert -quality 80 this.jpg this.webp

Using the command line, it would be a trivial task to set up a bash script with a for-do loop, and convert multiple files at one time to the WebP format. In fact, I have a custom bash script I use for converting image files from one format to another that is tied to a custom action in Thunar that I use all the time. This is the method I normally use any time I'm converting between graphic file formats.

Google has also provided a command line tool for Linux and MacOS users, called **cwebp**. I found it already installed on my computer, but I do not know if it was there before I installed the libwebp-tools package, or if it was installed when I installed that package. From the Google Developers page for WebP, they recommend the following command for converting multiple files to WebP formatted files:

\$ for F in *.jpg; do cwebp \$F -o `basename \${F%.jpg}`.webp; done

Of course, their example assumes your "other" files are all JPGs. If you have PNG files that you need to convert, just change all of the "jpg" references to "png" and you'll be good to go.

However, if you decide to shy away from the command line, you can still create your WebP images with GIMP. That is how I created the WebP images for this article, in fact. I did them this way for the article for the sake of consistency. But you will have to do them one at a time. GIMP does have a batch processing tool (under the Filters menu item), but that tool doesn't yet support output files in the WebP format. Maybe someone with more GIMP-Fu than me can figure out a different solution, but I don't see any other option than doing the conversions one at a time via GIMP.

Export li	mage as WebP	 		
Lossless				
Image quality:	8	90 🌻		
Alpha quality:	(8)	100		
Source type:	Default	~		
× Save Exil data				
× Save XMP data				
× Save color (profile			
Help	Cancel	Export		

Load the image you want to convert, then select File > Export as... from GIMP's menu. Change the file extension to "webp" and select the "Export" button. You should see the dialog box shown above. In the dialog box, setting your desired image quality is your primary concern.

Also note the checkbox in the upper left corner of the dialog box. If you leave it unchecked, your WebP image will be created using lossy compression (think JPG files here). However, if you check the Lossless box, your WebP image will be created using lossless compression, similar to how PNG files are compressed. I point it out because it's easy to overlook. I didn't really notice the option until I had already converted a few images to WebP with GIMP.



"Other" New Competing Formats In The Wings

WebP isn't the only new image format poised to emerge. Despite their wide use and acceptance, there's a push for formats that compress images better while retaining more of detail.



The **Joint Photographic Experts Group** has come up with JPEG XL. Despite pretty much failing to see previous alterations to the JPEG standard gain traction (think JPEG2000), they are trying again with JPEG XL. You can recognize JPEG XL files by their JXL file extension. The new JPEG format is supposed to be backwards compatible with the old format, and allows for losslessly converting the older format to the newer one. It also adds support for transparency (alpha channels). Having been granted ISO/IEC status (ISO/IEC 18181), you can read more about the new JPEG XL format by clicking on the first link in this paragraph. Not everyone is exactly thrilled by the new format.

Good luck trying to view JXL files on PCLinuxOS. While I have quite a few graphics utilities and viewers installed on PCLinuxOS, I couldn't find any capable of displaying JXL files. Nope. Not even GIMP. ImageMagick, however, will create/read/write JXL files. Fortunately, Google Chrome can load and display JXL files, but then you have to do a small modification to Google Chrome, first. On Chrome's address bar, type **chrome://flags**, and then search for "jxl." Change the setting from the "Default" setting to "Enabled." You can also set the same flag on other Chrome-based/Chromium-based browsers. With the ability to display JXL files present since Chrome 91, you can use Google Chrome (or other Chrome/Chromium-based browser) as a JXL file viewer until the other graphics utilities catch up.

Mozilla is looking at implementing support for JXL images in the near future, but I can't find a timeline on exactly when that might happen. Some of the support is already present (about:config > search for "jxl" > change support/display from FALSE to TRUE), but JXL images simply don't display yet in Firefox.

The image above is from a zoomed in JXL image in the Brave browser. To call me unimpressed would be an understatement. The lack of sharpness, pixelation/grain, and general "noise" in the image is really just rather "nasty," at least to my eyes. Maybe it's just the image that I chose, but it's rather difficult to find JXL image examples. Unless things improve significantly, JPEG XL files will be on my radar just as much as JPEG 2000 files are or were. And in case you're wondering, that's not at all.



AV1 Image File Format (AVIF) is another new (and open) image format, based on the AV1 video format. You're likely to find better AVIF image support than for JXL images, since it has been out a little longer than the JXL format. Netflix published the first AVIF images in December 2018, with the first HDR AVIF images coming in November 2020. You can read all of the technobabble about AVIF files from the Netflix TechBlog article, "AVIF for Next-Generation Image Coding."

There are quite a few "image slider" files on the medium.com website article comparing image formats. You can view the one pictured above here. I picked the image above because my family goes to this location fairly frequently. It's on the

namesake trestle of the High Trestle Trail multi-use trail in Iowa. It's my kids' favorite bike trail to ride, and about three hours from our house. But besides its personal familiarity, I also picked this image because it represents a difficult image to typically get really good photos of. There's a very wide dynamic range from bright lights to really dark shadow areas, and represents a type of photo that's difficult to get really good quality at both ends of that dynamic spectrum.

Support for AVIF files is very good, especially under Linux. Thanks to lib64avif, currently at version 0.9.1-2pclos2021 in the PCLinuxOS repository, encoding and decoding AVIF images is trivial. Native support exists in GIMP, Krita, VLC, IrfanView, XnView and gThumbs, all of which are in the PCLinuxOS repository. Gnome and GTK+ desktops/apps have full support via the avif-pixbuf-loader package in the repository, as well. KDE Frameworks added support for AVIF files to the KImageFormats library in January 2021, which enabled most KDE and Qt applications to support viewing and saving AVIF files. Google Chrome, Firefox, and most Webkit browsers (except for Safari) all currently support the display of AVIF images.

AVIF files typically feature twice the compression of WebP images, and are often smaller than JXL files, at a higher image quality. To be honest, it makes me wonder why work is proceeding on further work on JXL files. AVIF files do have limitations. For one thing, it renders details in water (waves, ripples, etc.) with something left to be desired. There is an "image slider" file on the Medium website linked to earlier which illustrates the trouble AVIF has with rendering details in water.

Still, AVIF files deserve to be on your radar. They offer excellent compression, while maintaining a fairly high image quality. The BlobFolio article, "JPEG XL, the New Image Format Nobody Wanted or Needed," lays out the differences between AVIF, JXL, WebP and PNG files quite nicely.

Summary

As much as I hate to admit it, I give Google "props" on the WebP format. Heaven knows how much they've taken away from the open source community without really giving back. Yes, I know they have given back in some ways, but in many other ways, they have taken way more than they have given back. I, like many other Linux users, grow weary of Google supporting their various services with "official" tools for every other platform but Linux. Picasa, when it existed, was merely the Windows version wrapped in a Wine wrapper. It was the same thing for Google Sketch. Google is reported to have an AWESOME Linux desktop client for Google Drive that they use internally, but they steadfastly refuse to release it (or anything like it) to the Linux community. Internally, Google uses a customized version of Linux on their multitudes of workstations.

It's good that Google open sourced the WebP format. That means they can't pull the plug on it just as it gains popularity, as Google is known for doing. That list can go on for eons. Because it's open sourced, not only can the open source community pull together and keep it alive, but they can also contribute to the project in meaningful ways.

WebP is young as far as graphic file formats go. GIF, JPG and PNG have been around for quite a long while. I can only hope that WebP picks up increasing support in the years to come. I can see the WebP format helping to create smaller file sizes from the PDFs we create with Scribus, should the Scribus developers decide to implement support for it. And, interestingly enough, The CrankyZombie noticed that despite Google being a supporter for WebP graphics, Google Docs does not allow you to use/import WebP graphic files. If you try, you will get an error message that the image type is not supported.

I can foresee a time when WebP graphic files become the de facto standard on the web. Much like H.265 video is supplanting H.264 video with superior quality and smaller file sizes, WebP graphics will someday supplant JPGs, GIFs, and PNGs on the web with its superior quality and smaller file sizes.

If you're a person who likes to be on the "cutting edge," WebP graphics currently, in my opinion, are the current cutting edge for raster image file formats.

Additional Resources

Wikipedia: WebP

Google Developer's WebP Reference pages

Adobe CreativeCloud WebP Image Formats page

Hostinger Tutorials: What Is WebP? A Guide For Beginners

DuckDuckGo: webp file format



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Repo Review: Cryptomator

by CgBoy

Cryptomator is a useful tool for easily encrypting any data that you may wish to store online. It allows you to create a securely encrypted folder, or vault, containing your files, that you can then upload to any online cloud hosting service. Cryptomator uses AES 256 bit encryption to ensure that your data is always kept safe and secure while stored in a vault.

Cryptomator has a sleek, modern user interface that's very easy to use. To the left side of the window is a panel from which you can select a vault from the list. Clicking on Add Vault brings up a small window giving you the option to create a new vault, or import an already created one into Cryptomator. To import a vault created with Cryptomator, you simply have to navigate to the directory where the vault is stored, and load in the *masterkey.cryptomator* file.



Creating a new vault is a simple and straightforward task. You'll have to enter a name and provide a file location for the vault. Cryptomator allows you to automatically save your vault to a cloud-synced directory for online storage providers, such as Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, etc, depending on what services you have installed on your system. You can also choose to simply save the vault to a custom location. Next, you'll have to choose a password for your vault that is at least eight characters long. Cryptomator also gives you the option of creating a recovery key in case you forget your password.

This works by generating a human-readable version of the vault's masterkey in the form of a long string of words. This recovery key you can then save somewhere secure, and then, if you happen to lose your vault password, simply input the recovery key to reset the password. When you're finally ready, just hit Create Vault.

\$ ×	Add Vault	× ×
Enter a new pas	sword	
5 1 2		 Very strong
Confirm the new	password	
	~	Passwords matchi
	e to access your data without y rery key for the case you lose y	
 Yes please, b 	etter safe than sorry	

No thanks, I will not lose my password

Back

This will create a new folder in the location that you specified, securely storing the contents of the vault, and always remaining encrypted. You can then upload this folder to an online cloud hosting service, knowing that the data it contains will be kept safe from anyone wanting to access it.

Opening a vault you've created is very easy. Simply select the vault from the side panel, click Unlock, and provide the vault's password. Now just hit Reveal Drive to mount the vault and open it in your file manager. You can then copy files to and from the vault as if you were simply accessing a flash drive.



Cryptomator gives you a number of vault options you can configure, such as a custom mount location, custom mount flags, and you can set the vault to be read-only. When you've finished accessing a vault, just click Lock to unmount it. You can be sure that all your data is safely and securely encrypted within the vault.



Create Vault

Repo Review: Cryptomator

Summary

Cryptomator generally worked very well during my use of it. When using it on KDE Plasma, however, I did occasionally encounter issues where a vault would not want to unmount properly, and Cryptomator would allow you to force-unmount it (Your data is still kept securely encrypted). I did not have this issue on other desktop environments, though. On the whole, Cryptomator is a great option for anyone wanting a simple way to keep their data safe when stored in the cloud.



Screenshot Showcase





Posted by jogurtmen, March 22, 2022, running Mate.

Short Topix: Google Confirms Browser Attacks, With Explanation

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

The War On Your Privacy: Monthly Update



To be perfectly honest, things seem to have been really quiet on this front lately. All of the data worth vacuuming up has already been assimilated, or media outlets just aren't reporting on them as much as they were. I'm not sure which it is. This section of the Short Topix article last month wasn't included, because there really wasn't anything to report, which in some ways, is news in and of itself. So, we got one month off, but now there are some new "threats" to your privacy for this month.

RICHMOND, VA: NEW RESEARCH FROM HIVE SYSTEMS FINDS ANY 8-CHARACTER PASSWORD CAN BE CRACKED IN LESS THAN AN HOUR. In its most recent research in password security, Hive Systems found that any 8-character password can be cracked in less than an hour through brute force. Further, any password containing less than seven characters can be cracked instantly. These are just two major findings from extensive research conducted by the cybersecurity firm.

"While passwords aren't the only method to keep your information safe" said Alex Nette, CEO and founder of Hive Systems. "a strong and unique password is the best way to stay safe online."

The research also found that advances in technology over the past two years have cut the amount of time it takes to crack a password through brute force exponentially. In 2020, a complex eight-character password could be cracked in eight hours – a number that has now decreased to less than an hour. The rise in affordable cloud computing has contributed to this trend.

The use of a password manager for creating and storing passwords significantly increases the safety and security of passwords. In fact, a 12-character password created by a reputable password manager could take up to 3000 years to crack through brute force the research found.

"Password best practices have been well documented, but as technology improves, passwords become less secure," said Corey Neskey, VP of Quantitative Risk at Hive Systems. "The safest option for consumers is to use a password manager to create and store all of your passwords. Never use a password twice, and always be aware of sites that have had a password breach. If you reuse passwords, your information can be stolen instantaneously."

The table of results – shared thousands of times across Twitter, Reddit, and other social media platforms – is available for download here.



IN FEBRUARY, A CHINESE-BACKED HACKING **GROUP NOTED AS APT31 TARGETED EMAILS** AFFILIATED WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WITH PHISHING ATTEMPTS, according to TechRepublic article. The emails, all to Gmail accounts, were all successfully marked as spam by GMail. In a subsequent Google blog post on March 7, Google alerted users to a variety of threats emanating from Russia, Belarus, and China. Especially with the war in Ukraine raging on, users are urged to maintain vigilance over their accounts and data, as cybersecurity experts anticipate an increase in threat vectors. Sanctions imposed on Russia may escalate those threats, as they attempt to circumnavigate those sanctions.

There is no doubt that **RUSSIAN THREAT ACTORS ARE TARGETING UKRAINIAN SYMPATHIZERS AND THOSE ATTEMPTING TO AID UKRAINE** as the Ukraine-Russian war goes on, according to a threat advisory from Cisco Talos. Cybercriminals are attempting to exploit Ukrainian sympathizers by offering malware purporting to be offensive cyber tools to target Russian entities. Once downloaded, these files infect unwitting users rather than delivering the tools originally advertised.

Do you have "Craftsart Cartoon Photo Tools" installed on your Android device? If so, you might want to remove it ... now. More than 100,000 users have installed this "cartoonifier" app from the Android Google Play Store. THE APP CONTAINS TROJAN "FACESTEALER," WHICH THE ATTEMPTS TO STEAL A USER'S FACEBOOK LOGIN CREDENTIALS, ALLOWING THEM UNFETTERED ACCESS TO A USER'S FACEBOOK ACCOUNT. Security researchers and security firm Pradeo discovered the malicious app in the last half of March 2022.



Short Topix: Google Confirms Browser Attacks, With Explanation

GOOGLE'S DIALER AND MESSAGING APPS HAVE BEEN COLLECTING AND SENDING DATA TO GOOGLE WITHOUT SPECIFIC NOTICE OR CONSENT, possibly in violation of Europe's GDPR, according to an article on The Register. The data collection does not appear to have an ability to "opt out," either. Google has countered that the data is stored in a hash, and is ONLY used for internal diagnostics to help figure out problems with the services. (Anyone want to buy a bridge in Brooklyn I'm trying to sell?)

New NSA Report On How To Secure Your Networks



The (U.S.) National Security Agency (NSA) has released a new report (PDF) on "best practices" to secure your network against cyberattacks. Called the "Network Infrastructure Security Guidance," the report covers network design, passwords, password management, remote logging and administration, security updates, and key exchanges, as well as services such as SSH, NTP, HTTP, and Simple Network Management Protocol.

Google Confirms Browser Attacks, With Explanation



Google confirmed the (obvious) increase in cyberattacks on Google Chrome and other Chromium-based browsers in a recent blog post. They also told users to expect an increase in "zeroday attacks."

Since the (long overdue) death of Flash, malware threat actors have refocused their attention on the Chromium-based browsers (Google Chrome, Chromium, Brave, Opera, Microsoft Edge, etc.). The blog post goes on to explain what Google is doing to help minimize and mitigate those security concerns.

Surprisingly, the graph provided by Google on their blog post shows no significant threats to Firefox. And that same graph shows how much Chromium-based browsers have taken the place of Flash as an attack vector.

So, if Google Chrome or any other Chromium-based browser is reminding you to update, perhaps you should listen and grab the update.

Sabotage Code Added To Popular NPM Package



The war in Ukraine has spilled over to the digital world, as well, according to an article on Ars Technica. One developer of a popular open source package embedded code that erased files for users in Russia and Belarus. The software would read the IP address of the user, and if they were found to be in either Russia or Belarus, the payload/damage was delivered. This was to protest Russian aggression in Ukraine, and the support by Belarus for that aggression.

Many are calling this software (and any software like it that performs similar actions) a black eye on the open source community. Now, instead of apolitical

Short Topix: Google Confirms Browser Attacks, With Explanation

software, end users have to wonder if a developer is going to impose their own belief system upon the end users. And what if that software was being used for mission-critical functions ... such as life support? Now, innocent people are being deliberately harmed, which is no better than the aggression that's being protested.

The developer in question has since issued updates with the offending code removed. While the wrong has been righted, doubts now exist (especially for that developer) if future updates will bring further (or more severe) forms of protest.

First Images From James A Webb Space Telescope Exceed ALL Expectations



In the planning and construction stage for what seemed to be forever, the James A. Webb Space Telescope, launched last December, has finally reached its destination and is undergoing the process to fine tune, focus and align its 18 hexagonal mirror segments. Combined, those 18 hexagonal mirror segments combine to make a 6.5 meter wide primary mirror. Extensively covered in multiple media outlets, the article at Cosmos Magazine provides an excellent discussion of the JWST.

Orbiting the Earth at **1** million miles (\sim 1.5 million Kilometers) at Earth's Lagrange Point 2, the telescope is too far away for a service mission, a la

Hubble, were "things" to run afoul. So there was a lot of nervous trepidation as the JWST mirrors unfolded and deployed. Then, the lengthy process of aligning those mirror segments absolutely perfectly began in earnest.

As a part of that process, the mirror was pointed to a rather "boring" star that is 100 times dimmer than can be viewed with the naked human eye. Yes, it's a pretty picture of a rather unremarkable star. But what really got the astronomers and scientists excited was the background of that image. Each of the little dots of light that make up that background are dim, distant galaxies, too dim to be viewed. Yes, those galaxies are now viewable for the very first time.

Those galaxies pop into crystal clear view, exceeding the lofty expectations mission designers have maintained throughout the planning and construction of the telescope. For all of the remarkable discoveries that the Hubble Space Telescope has delivered from it's near-Earth orbit (and continues to deliver), the JWST is 100 times more sensitive. It is estimated that the JWST will allow astronomers to peer back in time to within a few hundred million years of the start of the universe, observing things about our universe never before seen.

Currently, only the Near-Infrared Camera (NIRCam) is currently online. The other three scientific packages are expected to be online by June or July. Once that happens, JWST mission members are

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The **PCLinuxOS** magazine

warning to watch out. This is only the first of many, many finely detailed images to come from the platform, which is expected to set a new standard for astronomical space exploration. In other words, stay tuned! The best is yet to come!

The PCLinuxOS Magazine Short Topix Roundup



UBLOCK ORIGIN IS NOW THE MOST POPULAR FIREFOX ADD-ON, according to an article on gHacks. After landing in the second most popular spot behind Adblock Plus for quite some time, it has finally surpassed the former leading add-on. The content blocker is expected to widen its lead over Adblock Plus in the coming months.

According to an article on Phoronix, **REACTOS IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON SMP (SYMMETRIC MULTI PROCESSING) SUPPORT.** This support is becoming increasingly important for today's hardware, which most often supports multiple core processors.

Short Topix: Google Confirms Browser Attacks, With Explanation

V7 has created a new AI-BASED GOOGLE CHROME PLUGIN THAT DETECTS ARTIFICIALLY GENERATED PROFILE PICTURES with a 99.28% accuracy rate, according to an article on PetaPixel. Called "Fake Profile Detector," the plugin should be available for most Chromium-based browsers. Rightclick your mouse on a profile picture and select "Check fake profile picture" from the context menu. The results will be displayed in a popup window in the upper right corner of the web page.

FIREFOX IS FINALLY ADDING SUPPORT FOR AV1 VIDEO, a full two years after support has been added to Chromium-based browsers.

A photographer who had been photographing some of the biggest names in Rock and Roll music since the 1960s, **HAS OVER 3,200 UNDEVELOPED ROLLS OF FILM** sitting in his Boston home. Those rolls likely contain a never-before seen historical record of the early days of some of the biggest names in rock and roll, according to an article on PetaPixel.





Screenshot Showcase



Posted by mutse, March 15, 2022, running Mate.

Good Words, Good Deeds, Good News

Compiled by Meemaw

NFL Player Dances The Extra Mile



After Audrey's father and grandfather both passed away in 2021, they were having a hard time. The Father-Daughter Dance at Audrey's school was coming up and there was no one to take Audrey. Audrey's mother Holly contacted her favorite NFL player, Eagles safety Anthony Harris, via social media. She explained the situation and asked Anthony if he could help by taking her. Surprisingly, he was willing to do it, so he came and took Audrey to the dance. Audrey was stunned. *"This was truly a night to remember, and I don't think I'll ever fully wrap my mind around it,"* she wrote.

Holly was very thankful, because the last year had been so difficult for them.

When interviewed, Harris said he was simply trying to be human. *"Trying to take off the helmet, trying to take off the cape of what I do professionally and* show some sympathy for that family and try to show some support there," he explained.

Bus Driver Saves Passengers



A school bus stalled on the railroad tracks in Illinois, and was hit by a passing train, but the passengers were already safe.

The local fire department received a call that the vehicle had stalled on the train tracks. The bus driver had stopped for the tracks, as required, but when she tried to move across the tracks and continue her route, the bus stalled out. A train was approaching, and the gate came down on top of the hood of the bus. Thinking quickly, the bus driver escorted the five students off the bus and moved them to a safe distance from the tracks.



The Fire Chief explained that no one was hurt, thanks to the quick actions of the bus driver.

Coast Guard Rescues 18 From Ice Floe



The United States Coast Guard and a good Samaritan successfully rescued 18 people who were on an ice floe that separated from shore.

The mass rescue was conducted on February 6 in Ohio after snowmobilers became stranded on the floe, according to tweets from Coast Guard Great Lakes.

Dustin, an Air Taxi pilot, saw that there were people on the ice of Lake Erie near Catawba Island, and that the ice had broken, leaving them on a floating ice shelf with no way to get back to shore. He radioed in to the Coast Guard, saying, *"There's a huge crack that's just opened up. There's a bunch of guys stuck on the wrong side of the crack, can you guys go check on them?"*

The Coast Guard sent out a helicopter and a rescue boat. In the following hours, they rescued all 18

people who had been stranded. No one fell in, and no one required medical treatment.

The Coast Guard urged people to "take precautions, not chances" when engaging in recreational activities on the ice. "Remember to dress appropriately for the water temperature, not the air temperature; to wear a life jacket and carry a reliable form of communication; and to carry icepicks or screwdrivers that can help them self-rescue if they go through the ice," the release said.

10 Year-old Assembles Chemo Comfort Bags to Honor Grandfather



Sophie, a fifth-grader from New York, was very close to her grandfather, Terry. She was his only granddaughter, and they spent a lot of time together, with him telling her family history stories or taking her for rides in his red Corvette.

He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and was in the midst of his treatments, telling her about the treatments and why patients have such a hard time. It was then that she got the idea to assemble Chemo Comfort Bags, which contained pillows, blankets some of which her great-grandmother crocheted cozy socks, snacks, tea, and games. She made ten of them, and donated them to the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, where Terry was receiving treatment. Sadly, he passed away shortly after that. Sophie intends to keep making the comfort bags, and wants to donate 20 by the end of March in honor of her grandfather's March birthday.

95 Year-old Veteran Writing Third Children's Book



In 1942, just four months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, a young Sam Baker enlisted in the Marine Corps. He served at Guadalcanal, and was discharged in 1947, joining the U.S. Coast Guard and Geodetic Survey — which became the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) — where he worked for 30 years before retiring.

A few years ago, with his son's encouragement, he wrote his first children's book, named *The Silly Adventures of Petunia and Herman the Worm*, which was published in 2018. *Oscar the Mouse* was published in 2020, and he's writing another now, at age 99, to be published this year.



Good Words, Good Deeds, Good News

Couple Adopts Baby Left At Police Station

A couple named Ben and Gina have four older children, but when they decided to become foster parents, they got some exciting news.

In 2020, a baby was left at a police station, the mother apparently being aware of the Texas Safe Haven Law.

"The Safe Haven law, also known as the Baby Moses law, gives parents who are unable to care for their child a safe and legal choice to leave their infant with an employee at a designated safe place," according to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) website. "Remember, If you leave your unharmed infant at a Safe Haven, you will not be prosecuted for abandonment or neglect," the DFPS website noted.

When they were called, Ben and Gina rushed to buy some necessities, and picked up the baby girl, who they named Hope. They adopted her soon after.

Social media posters also praised the mother for leaving the baby in a safe place so she could be cared for.





Firefox Tried To Simplify The Download Workflow. Here's How To Change It Back.

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

I hate it when developers try to make things "simpler," especially when something has been one way for a very, very long, LONG time. That's the case with the most recent Firefox 98.0.1. Developers, in their misdirected zeal to "simplify" the download workflow, managed to ROYALLY screw it up. Hey, I've been using it ONE WAY for so many years, and now the download workflow isn't doing what I expect or what I've become accustomed to. I literally have adapted Firefox's time-honored "download workflow" to the way I work, and the new way is a HUGE disruption to the way I work.

Grrrrrrrrrr!

So up until the "update" that brought Firefox 98 to my desktop, Firefox would ASK me what I wanted to do with certain download links. Did I want to open it in Firefox? Did I want to open it in an associated program? Did I want to download it? And then I would tell Firefox what I wanted to do with that particular download link.

But, very recently, Firefox started just doing those download actions without first asking me. All of a sudden, I found PDF files opening in Firefox (not what I wanted!), and all sorts of other download links taking on a mind of their own, doing exactly what I didn't want them to do, but what Firefox thought I would want to do with them. So much of the time, what Firefox "thought" I wanted to do with them was completely off the mark.

Fortunately, it's pretty easy to return the new, "delinquent" download workflow behavior to the old, tried-and-true "standard" behavior.

Applications

Choose how Firefox handles the files you download from the web or the applications you use

while browsing.

Content Type 🔺	Action	
AV1 Image File (AVIF)	📧 Always ask	
BitTorrent seed file	□i Save File	
CSV document	Always ask	
📄 electronic book document	🗵 Always ask	
Extensible Markup Language (XML)	📭 Save File	
(ℤ) ftp	🔃 Always ask	
Gzip archive (application/gzip)	📭 Save File	
Gzip archive (application/x-gzip)	📭 Save File	
I irc	🗇 Always ask	
I ircs	🔃 Always ask	
JPEG image (binary/octet-stream)	Always ask	
🔳 JPEG image (image/jpeg)	🗵 Always ask	
[7] JPEG XL Image File	Open in Firefox	

First, go to the "hamburger" menu (upper right corner of Firefox toolbar), and select "Settings" from the menu. Within the "General" settings, scroll down until you find the "Applications" section. This is the section that tells Firefox what to do with the different download data types that you might try to download. Review each entry, because this is where the "royal screw up" has happened.



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Firefox Tried To Simplify The Download Workflow. Here's How To Change It Back.

Portable Document Format (PDF) (application/binary)	Always ask		
Portable Document Format (PDF) (application/pdf)	Always ask		
📕 RAR archive	😸 Open in Firefox		
RPM package	🕫 Always ask		
 Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) VCS/ICS calendar 	Di Save File		
	Use system default application Use other		
📳 webcal	🖾 Always ask		

To change it back to the standard download workflow behavior, click on the "Action" in the rightmost column. Choose the default action you want Firefox to do when you download that particular type of file. For me, that choice is to "Always ask," which gives me ultimate control over what to do with each file I download. And, sometimes, I want the file to open in Firefox, sometimes I want to save it to my hard drive, and sometimes I want the file to open in some other application.

See. It's simple! Now you have the default download workflow behavior that Firefox has always had since, it seems, time immemorial. While the newer "simplistic" way of handling downloads might work for some users, it shouldn't be a "one-size-fits-all" proposition. There are those of us who still need control and choice.

Sorry Mozilla developers. You can't take choice away from us today!



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Screenshot Showcase



Posted by OnlyHuman, March 9, 2022, running Enlightenment.

PCLinuxOS Magazine

PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner Bonus



Slow-Cooker Caramel-Toffee Bread Pudding

Serves 6

Ingredients:

Bread Pudding

8 cups cubed (day old) French bread (1-inch pieces) 4 eggs 2 cups half-and-half 3/4 cup packed brown sugar 1/4 cup butter, melted 1 teaspoon vanilla 1/2 cup toffee bits

Topping

1/2 cup caramel topping 1/4 teaspoon vanilla Whipped topping, if desired

Directions:

Generously spray 5- or 6-quart oval slow cooker with cooking spray. Place bread in a slow cooker.



In a medium bowl, beat eggs and half-and-half with whisk until well mixed. Add brown sugar, melted butter and 1 teaspoon vanilla; beat until well mixed.

Pour over bread; toss to evenly coat in custard mixture. Let stand for 10 minutes. Toss again to make sure as much of the custard mixture as possible is soaked up by bread. Press down slightly on top of bread, and sprinkle with toffee bits.

Cover top of insert with large kitchen towel folded in half. Place the lid on top of the towel. (This will prevent condensation from dripping onto bread during cooking.) Cook on Low heat setting 2 1/2 to 3 hours or until edges are golden brown and temperature is at least 160F when instant-read thermometer is inserted near center.

Meanwhile, in a 1-cup glass measuring cup, mix caramel topping and 1/4 teaspoon vanilla. Serve with warm bread pudding. Top with whipped topping.

Nutrition:

Calories: 630 Carbs: 83g Fiber: 1g Sodium: 530mg Protein: 12g





PCLinuxOS Magazine

PCLinuxOS Puzzled Partitions



SUDOKU RULES: There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. The only way the puzzle can be considered solved correctly is when all 81 boxes contain numbers and the other Sudoku rules have been followed.

When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be prefilled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the dame.

Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same.

Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same.



SCRAPPLER RULES:

1. Follow the rules of Scrabble®. You can view them here. You have seven (7) letter tiles with which to make as long of a word as you possibly can. Words are based on the English language. Non-English language words are NOT allowed.

2. Red letters are scored double points. Green letters are scored triple points.

3. Add up the score of all the letters that vou used. Unused letters are not scored. For red or green letters, apply the multiplier when tallying up your score. Next, apply any additional scoring multipliers, such as double or triple word score.

4. An additional 50 points is added for using all seven (7) of your tiles in a set to make your word. You will not necessarily be able to use all seven (7) of the letters in be able to use all seven (7) of the letters in your set to form a "legal" word.

your set to form a "legal" word. 5. In case you are having difficulty seeing the point value on the letter tiles, here is a list of how they are scored: 0 points: 2 blank tiles 1 point: E A LO N R T L S LL

- 1 point: E, A, I, O, N, R, T, L, S, U
- 2 points: D, G
- 3 points: B, C, M, P
- 4 points: F, H, V, W, Y
- 5 points: K 8 points: J, X
- 10 points: Q, Z

6. Optionally, a time limit of 60 minutes should apply to the game, averaging to 12 minutes per letter tile set. 7. Have fun! It's only a game!









Possible score 255, average score 179.

PCLinuxOS Puzzled Partitions

Word Find: April, 2022 In The Back Yard

N O N E D R A G E L B A T E G E V L B D B G M L H N Y Q Q L C G Z H U M M I N G B I R D F E E D E R U G L G U 0 A J E V Z J Q B N P B B B J K M T R A M P O L Ι Ν E R S R B Y H S X B T Z K H N S B Z J I U W N I O C B X L NΡ P W E D I X I S Z Y R T K I Q E Q C P R O E P J G W Z G C G W V D T W C U E C B I R D B A T H B Z M P M 0 I ΕU В R M R R D U W E K V A R E T T U G F N J O T A P V M U E Z I T M U K V J C P G S A J S S D M W Y L O F S R C P O W O V D A I T S Q P O P C N L I A O J L O Q G E O W J M K N X Z D A M N I R F O R I Q W Z Q O P Q I S A Q W E I U P M Y F V E G N E G R E N L L H X Y M N S Z R E J V N R I W R A Y R E M P R W J C L G H W A W W O T I A J O H C G O K U N W R H Ι 0 0 U 0 G H K S T W W D B C Z V L R Q H S F K I A D N K D U C O F M O S N T O B L K B Y V W A I W C L L T E BXI IOJDCHDOADJ Z Y 0 0 N Ζ W Ρ E D I W E I R N V O O O L R F F L O W E R B E XJU D G W J T A U N P E M D O U D S I Y Z E E ΒK R E 7 R A A L N G S M J I O R J Q G V R O E T R ΖU D Ζ L U P I A U A K U P J G U I K P E S L X U S I Z W A O H I R K I U Q Y H J X O B O B H L F X C W Y H C O D Q F U C H NC H I U M Z B K D H K F Y Y O J L N A A D H Y P Q T Y L E E Q E D N H W H V S I Z C A Q U W E G P Y V N R S E M A P WΝ G G R M E H S Q L L N H Z B H S F V L T I Z U G Ν GW DYG SNABDBJF DKMDMOKZE G Ζ F GΑ R Α Ι В Х T X H O G V X F N Z N H F W M B P P N D A F Y E K L O V Z G Z B C F E A A I F S J K U O G S J D T R A S H C A N C O R J S Z R E X J O F Y K I T X R E P RZW SΥ T I O R B S M D G N Z J H Z K O X W R D D W D Q N H T Z A X Q T O X B A S K E T B A L L H O O P Y M P P W F U O P X A F K G A R D E N B O N S G H D F P W X F F S W R C G P L S L F

AWNING	BACKYARD
BASKETBALL HOOP	BENCH
BIRDBATH	CARPORT
COMPOST BIN	DOG HOUSE
DOWNSPOUT	DRIVEWAY
FENCE	FLOWER
FLOWER BED	FRUIT TREES
GARAGE	GARDEN
GUTTER	HAMMOCK
HEDGES	HERB GARDEN
HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER	LAWNMOWER
ORCHARD	PATIO FURNITURE
PLANTER	PORCH SWING
SPRINKLER	STEPPING STONE
STOOP	SWIMMING POOL
SWING	TERRACE
TRAMPOLINE	TRASH CAN
TREE	VEGETABLE GARDEN
VINE	WADING POOL
WELCOME MAT	YARD

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

Back Yard Crossword

Hints rather than definitions... Word list is the word search list.



1. Place your patio furniture here to enjoy the outdoors. 2. This is where all your favorite blooms are planted. 3. You can grow your own food here. 4. Lots of jumping and flips can be done on this. 5. Rows of fruit trees. 6. Great place to see the tiny wings moving so fast. 7. Lie in this for a lazy swing. 8. Waters the yard or flowers when it hasn't rained. 9. Relax on these soft chairs. 10. Moves the rain from the roof to the ground. 11. Machine to keep the yard uniformly trimmed. 12. You can plant these and shape them for a barrier between neighbors. 13. Plant some basil or chives here. 14. Like an umbrella for your window. 15. The kids can "dunk" the ball through this. 16. You can cool off in the water!

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

PCLinuxOS Puzzled Partitions

Mixed-Up-Meme Scrambler

	Yarns SLFEAB	
	Spin TIWST	
	Tape EROCRD	
Kit for making Free Open Source	Wet KASODE	
Yours for only \$19.99 Plus Shipping and Handling		Use the clues to unmix the letters to make a new word. Remix the letters in the red boxes to solve the puzzle.

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

More Screenshot Showcase



Posted by sam2fish, March 23, 2022, running KDE.



Posted by The CrankyZombie, March 5, 2022, running KDE.



Posted by tbschommer, March 5, 2022, running KDE.



Posted by parnote, March 8, 2022, running Xfce.