



PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux – Part 15 by Alan German

As I write this, Lucid Lynx, the next version of Ubuntu, is just a month away from being released. Since this will be a long term support (LTS) version, it is a candidate for updating the copy of Ubuntu that I use on my production machine. Some of you may recall that the "Toaster" just has to work. Plug it in, let it warm up, and its main job is to reliably provide E-mail and web surfing capabilities. The "Primary User" allows no surprises on this machine, so a stable operating system and core applications, with incremental updates over a two-year support period, are ideal. But, am I going to be allowed to update Ubuntu from Version 8.04 to 10.04 when the latter becomes available? To help answer this question, I thought I should check out the Beta 1 test version of Lucid Lynx that has just been released.

Obtaining the ISO file from the download mirror hosted by our friends at the University of Waterloo's Computer Science Club was simple using the Linux *wget* command. But, then I started thinking about the subsequent process. Sure, I could simply burn a CD with the beta version, but this would almost certainly be a waste of fifty cents, not to mention the creation of yet another coaster, sadly depleting the nation's supply of plastic. The chances were good that the beta version would be buggy, and it was certain that the beta version would eventually be abandoned in favour of the final release

version. So, any CD version of the OS at this point would necessarily have a very short shelf life.

However, I knew that it was possible to create a bootable USB key as an option when running a live CD. So, could I bypass making the CD, and burn the ISO file, in a bootable form, directly to a USB drive? Ubuntu's Brasero CD burner utility definitely wouldn't do, since it insisted on seeing a CD or DVD in a drive. So, it was off to Mr. Google to find another candidate piece of software.

One program, that works just fine for the purpose is UNetbootin, the Universal Netboot Installer, that comes from SourceForge. As the program's author states: "UNetbootin allows you to create bootable Live USB drives for a variety of Linux distributions, from Windows or Linux, without requiring you to burn a CD." Perfect!

UNetbootin is available from Ubuntu's repositories and so the software downloads and installs effortlessly. The only trick is to find out how to run the installed program, but even that isn't too difficult. It turns out that a menu item is added to Applications – System Tools. Running the program brings up a screen where you specify the distribution and version of the operating system (or certain other system

utilities) that you wish to install, and the target USB drive that is to be made bootable.

The program will download the required software, or you can specify that you already have the installation file to be loaded. In my case, I simply checked the radio button for a Diskimage, left the default file type set as ISO, and browsed my hard drive to identify the Ubuntu distro image file that I had previously downloaded. UNetbootin automatically found the only USB drive present in my machine, a 2GB USB key (/dev/sdb1), and set that as the target. Clicking on OK started the installation and displayed a progress screen. Once the process completed, I was instructed to restart the machine in order to boot from the newly created bootable USB drive.

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Raffle

Thanks to the generosity of Corel, we have a copy of **Corel WordPerfect Standard x4** for the September raffle.

This suite features the venerable, flagship word processor Corel WordPerfect in addition to programs for spreadsheets, presentations and email.

Complete routine tasks faster and with better results. Create high-quality documents, spreadsheets and presentations, manage email, and share work seamlessly with enhanced Microsoft Office compatibility and built-in PDF tools. Extend your office suite even more with new data analysis software and online services.

As always, tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three or \$5 for ten.

Coming Up...

September 8, 2010

Speaker: Paul Godin

Topic: Linux 101 - What Every Windows' User Should Know

Linux has come a long way since the days of complex command line instructions that were only understood by geeks. Today's distros have live-CD's that let you try Linux without installing anything on your hard drive.

And, if you do decide to install Linux, the process is really easy. The operating system sports a Windows-like graphical user interface, and a huge number of applications programs are built right in. Best of all, the entire package is absolutely free. So, come to our "Linux 101" introductory session and find out what you might be missing with the new Linux software systems!

Paul Godin is an Ottawa-based IT professional and a co-founder of Club Linux Gatineau (<http://www.linux-gatineau.org/>). Paul was the author of the LINUXstuff column for Monitor magazine, and of the Linux News column in the successor M2 magazine.

June Prize Winners

The winner of a copy of CorelDraw Graphics Suite X5 at the June 2010 meeting of the OPCUG was **Eldon Gaw**.

Many thanks to Corel for the prize donation.

And from the looks of the annual Pizza fest the other members of the OPCUG in attendance looked happy with their free pizza meal as well.

2010 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, September 8 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, September 8 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, September 8 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, September 8 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

Getting Things Done by Chris Taylor

Windows Explorer in Window 7 has some really nifty features. One of them is the *Favorites* section in the left-hand pane. It is normally populated with *Desktop*, *Downloads* and *Recent Places*. Wouldn't it be great if you could add your own "favourite" locations to this section? You can!

For example, let's imagine you frequently access files in the folder *D:\Data\Personal\Banking\Current Accounts*. Click the Start button and then Computer. Navigate as you normally would to the folder. Make sure the folder *Current Accounts* is highlighted in the navigation folder on the left and the contents of the folder are showing in the right pane. Then, right-click on *Favorites* (the line with the star to the left of it) in the left pane and choose *Add current location to Favorites*.

You can also drag any folder to the *Favorites* pane.

Once you have added a location to the *Favorites* pane, you can rename it to something more meaningful by right-clicking on it and choosing Rename. This will not rename the folder itself, just the link in *Favorites*.

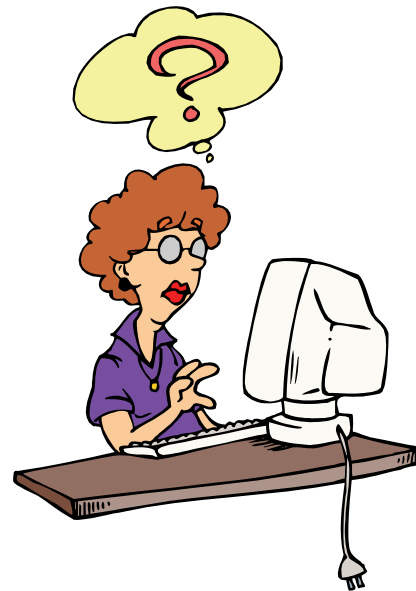
If you don't like the order of the items in *Favorites*, you can drag and drop them to any order you want.

If you want to get rid of an entry in *Favorites*, just right-click it and choose remove. As with Rename, this will not remove the original folder, just the link in *Favorites*.

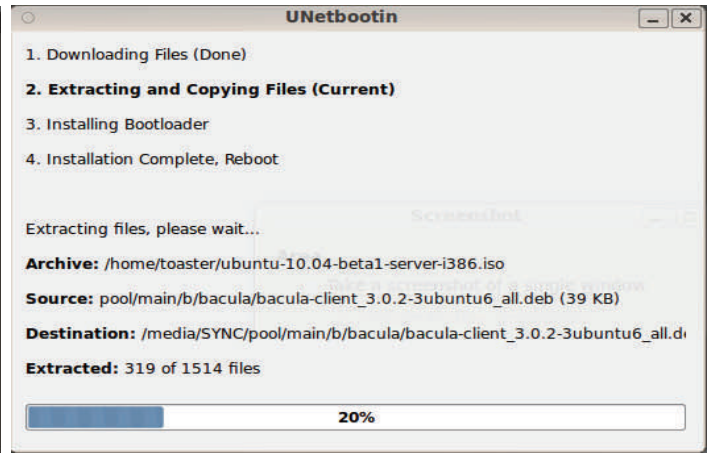
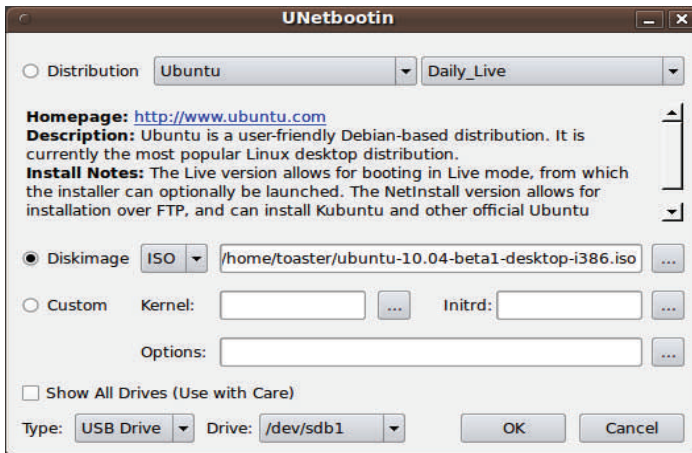
Is your computer turned on?

by Chris Taylor

I had to chuckle when I came across a web site recently. If you ever wonder if your computer is on or not, go to <http://www.ismycomputeron.com/>



Exploring Linux—Part 15 *(Continued from page 1)*



Many current computers are able to boot directly from a USB drive. This may require tweaking the BIOS to enable this capability, and it will almost certainly need a function key to be pressed (F12 in my case) to bring up a menu of bootable devices. Once I selected the USB Storage Device as the boot drive, the LED on the USB key flashed for a short time, and then Lucid Lynx came up on the screen in all its beta – and light purple – glory.

So, let's hear it for UNetbootin. A handy little utility for creating bootable USB drives, and the world's saviour in eliminating the creation of coasters through the burning of temporary CD-ROM's.

But, wait. What about Lucid Lynx (Version 10.04) I hear you say? Is it going to be a worthy successor to Hardy Heron (Version 8.04) as a long term support version. Well, the answer is - I don't really know. The beta version on the live USB doesn't support the video card in my test bed machine very well. The screen flickers for a little while, and eventually goes blank, so that I am unable to do any extensive testing.

It looks like I will have to install Lynx to my hard drive, and update the video driver to the proprietary version provided by the card's manufacturer, in order to be able to conduct a detailed review. But, this only reinforces my contention that UNetbootin is a very handy little program. I can always reuse my USB key – I saved fifty cents – and, I don't have a coaster to throw away!

But, I can provide a few quick observations on features of the new version. Firstly, it looks like GIMP is no longer included in the distro. No big deal since my favourite image editor can always be added from the software repositories. Secondly, because there's no GIMP, a new utility called Simple Scan has been added to provide support for scanning text documents

and graphic images. This may be a welcome addition since the scanning process under GIMP was always somewhat cumbersome. The new program has very simplified controls, based on many fewer features, but should have sufficient power for the majority of users.

Finally, to my mind, there is a really weird development. All on-screen windows now have the minimize, maximize and close buttons in the top-left corner of the window rather than in the top-right corner that has been the norm until now. If this sticks for the final release version, it will take some getting used to. Every time I went to close a window, the mouse cursor was drifting up and to the right – until I remembered that the window header was now blank in this area!

This will be a major issue for the Primary User. I had hoped to load Lucid Lynx, but set the wallpaper back to the Hardy Heron version, so that the underlying change in the operating system would have essentially been transparent. But, with the major shift in window controls, this strategy may be quite literally out of the window! So, my question now is – can one run an old LTS version of Ubuntu forever?

Bottom Line

UNetbootin (Open Source)
Geza Kovacs
<http://unetbootin.sourceforge.net/>

Ubuntu Version 10.04 (Lucid Lynx) Beta 1 (Open Source)
<http://www.ubuntu.com/testing/lucid/beta1>

OPCUG Free Software Guide – Part 17 Compiled by Alan German

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the programs useful. If you try one of the listed items, you are encouraged to share your experience, good or bad, by providing a brief review of the program for a future issue of the newsletter.

SIW - System Information for Windows

This utility program gathers detailed information about your software, hardware and network and creates an HTML report file. The software inventory includes license details (product keys/serial numbers) and installed codecs. One of SIW's special tools is Eureka! - a password recovery program. The EXE program does not require installation and can be run from a USB key or a network drive.

Current Release: SIW 2010 (Build 0512)

Web Site: <http://www.gtopala.com/>



Artweaver

This painting program is suitable for both beginners and advanced users. Artweaver lets you paint creatively with the help of a huge range of tools, and features like layers and special effect filters. You can create sketches from photos or just experiment with colors. You can record all your steps and replay them afterwards or provide them to other users.

Web Site: <http://www.artweaver.de/>

Yahoo! Widgets

Widgets are small, specific applications that you can run on your Windows or Mac OS desktop. A Widget can do almost anything from displaying a weather forecast to playing a game. There are literally thousands of widgets to choose

from. Get a joke every 60 seconds, an on-screen eject button for your CD/DVD drive, a Christmas count-down timer or, if your computer is really bugging you, there is even a widget to shoot holes in your desktop!

Current Release: Version 4.5

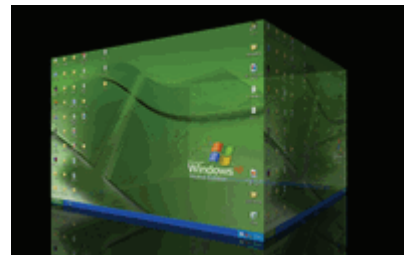
Web Site: <http://widgets.yahoo.com/>

DeskHedron

This open-source utility allows you to access multiple desktops on a single monitor using a three-dimensional graphical user interface. DeskHedron can organize up to nine desktops, and lets you switch between them by using the mouse wheel or the left- and right-cursor keys.

Current Release: Version 1.00

Web Site: <http://tokyodownstairs.blogspot.com/>



Visipic

This program automatically finds your duplicated files – but with a graphical twist. Visipic looks for image files and will detect the same picture saved in different resolutions or in different image file formats. It can also detect image files where only minor cosmetic changes have taken place. All detected duplicates are shown side by side and specific files can be easily deleted.

Current Release: Version 1.30

Web Site: <http://www.visipics.info/>

Microsoft Fix it

The web-based Microsoft Fix it Solution Center attempts to automate solutions to common software problems in an easy and intuitive way. Searchable categories include Windows, Internet Explorer, E-mail, Windows Media Player, and Office. Fix it lets you apply automated fixes, workarounds, or configuration changes so you don't have to perform a long list of manual steps.

Web Site: <http://support.microsoft.com/fixit#tab0>



OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

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