

One computers' Linux experience

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I have a trusty old IBM sitting next to me. Yep, An actual IBM, pre selloff. I have had this machine for a pretty long time actually.

Not much to it. I added an Nvidia GeForce FX 5500 Video card a year or so ago and a Western Digital 120 gb hd. It only has 768 mb of ram and an Intel p4 processor.

Despite not being what most would call a super powered machine, this computer runs Linux on it. Actually, it dual boots Windows XP Pro and PCLinuxOS 2009.1

This install of XP Pro has been installed since the HD was installed. I have had no trouble with it, it has not had one single virus. I run a good firewall on it and anti-virus at all times. Truth be told, XP only gets booted about twice a week for an hour or so at a shot. Only when the kids or the wife wants to run an app that is Win only they really liked.

Since the HD was installed, It had PCLinuxOS 2007 installed on it. On the old had, It had started with Ubuntu 6.4 which lasted about 6 months then went through a flurry of installs from about five other distros.

It finally settled on PCLOS 2007 before the HD died.

Why PCLOS? That's the one the family agreed on. It stays a permanent fixture on this one machine. On the other machines, laptops, servers, etc.. I run here, there is only one other instance of PCLOS running and that is as a test bed as a LAN server. That's another story though for an other time.

I myself lean toward Debian most often. Well, Debian or a derivative, like Sidux.

Anyway, I digress. This IBM was just updated to 2009.1 over the whole time there was only one 'bad' incident running Linux on this machine and that was my fault, because being the genius I am, I didn't back up a partition before I resized it. Heh, heh heh . hmmm. Not so bright, but, not the distros fault, just my incredible overconfidence and being in a hurry.

Cameras, mp3 players, USB sticks, all kinds of devices get plugged into this install and so far not much trouble to talk about. Admittedly, I try to search and buy products I find are noted to, or should, work with Linux

Homework assignments are done using OpenOffice. Reports and spreadsheets made and printed for business and day to day stuff.

It gets used like a normal computer should on a daily basis. Games get played on it , a lot, the kids love the Linux games for the most part. there's a motorcycle one and one where you move Tux like the old Mario Bros, games and a 3d one with dwarves or something. A 3d golf and ball-on-a-table game. I can't keep track. my kids are younger, so there aren't any FPS games or the like installed.

They watch movies on the computer (especially when a brother or sister is watching something else on the living room TV.) Play music, they even watch old TV shows online. They say they are OK with the slow playback online, but I admit, this machine could use a RAM boost to playback more smoothly.

The range of ages of people using this computer is from 5 to 40 years old. Mostly KDE is used on it, the default from PCLOS, except when I am using it. Then it's Xfce. HA.

When asked, the computer phobic wife and the kids all say that using the system, finding the way around menus and just 'doing' things in general isn't really much different from learning to get around in Windows and in some cases even prefer the Linux setups.

Here's something kind of cool.

On this older, low powered computer, one can, run a remaster, play a DVD movie, have a web browser open, Xchat, pidgin and, burn an ISO to cd all at the same time. Not one messup. I kid you not. Nothing slowed down, nothing had an error.

Now, I don't recommend people actually do that type of thing all the time, but, as usual, I wasn't really focusing on one thing and got carried away. Nice to know Linux can handle that.

XP Pro will choke just playing back music and burning a file to cd. Same machine, same specs. I've done it.

So, this old machine likes Linux. It performs at it's best using Linux.

I suppose , in answer to the question "When will Linux be ready for the user desktop?"

It was ready almost two years ago in this house. Children use it daily, as well as computer phobic wives and memory challenged mad computer geniuses. (The 'genius' part is up for speculation.)

Have fun, Learn lots.

Big Bear

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