

/DEV/RANDOM/

Final thoughts, musings and reflections



Nick Veitch was the original editor of *Linux Format*, a role he played until he got bored and went to work at Canonical instead. Splitter!

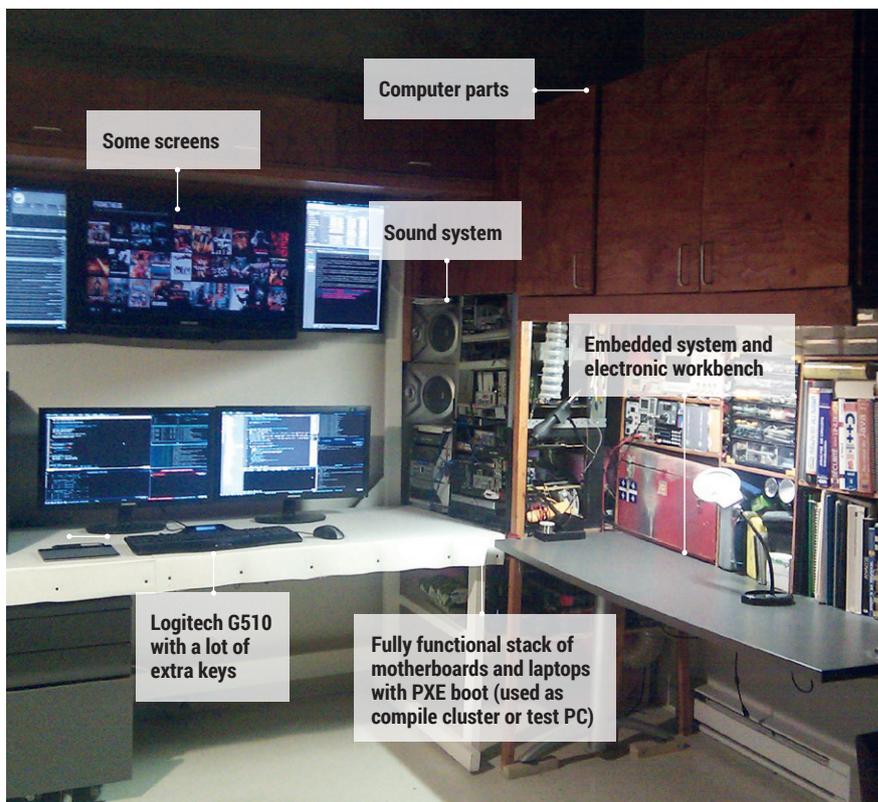
In the olden days, things were better. Or maybe safer. At least when it came to communications. When transmitting messages to his commanders, his senatorial chums or whomever he needed to contact, Julius Caesar used a simple alphabetical shift system (still known as a Caesar cipher) to render his messages unintelligible to whomever was the latter-day equivalent to the NSA. It was presumably pretty effective, mainly because most of the people who may have intercepted the traffic didn't even know what language it might have been in, and were probably not very literate anyhow.

These days, prying eyes don't have to intercept a horseman riding through the treacherous high-alps – they have computers. Since the very first electronic computer was invented specifically for decrypting messages (very successfully), it is a safe bet that they are a bit better at doing it now the average desktop has 10 billion times the power. Encrypting messages securely is probably more important than ever.

Google recently took a pop at other mail providers (notably Outlook.com, the artists formerly known as Hotmail) for failing to turn on TLS encryption for its users by default (a system where mail providers encrypt the traffic between their servers). It is most admirable that Google is so concerned for your privacy.

I muttered to myself that they would never go so far as to implement PGP on Gmail. But apparently I was wrong.

End-to-end encryption should mean that Google itself won't be able to spy on your email, by rummaging through it and looking for things to sell you – or who knows what else it does with the data. The cynical side of me can't wait to see exactly how this gets implemented.



My Linux setup Emmanuel Lepage Vallée

Awesome window manager developer, KDE contributor and Free Software consultant <http://awesome.naquadah.org>

Q What version of Linux are you using at the moment?

A I have been using Gentoo since 2005 – I never looked back. I also use Debian on my laptops.

Q What desktop or window manager are you using?

A My own. It is based on the Awesome window manager framework with a fully custom user experience (<https://github.com/Elv13> to cherry pick some of my own work).

Q What was the first Linux setup you ever used?

A Technically (in Unix terms) that would be Solaris and an early

version of KDE in fall of 2000. As for my first true Linux desktop, it was the first few versions of MEPIS, then Debian, Fedora Core and finally Gentoo.

Q What Free Software/open source can't you live without?

A Tiled window managers - they make my work so much more efficient. I started with DWM then moved to Awesome in early 2008. KDE software such as Dolphin, Kate and Okular would also rate high on my list.

Q What do other people love but you can't get on with?

A Minimalism. ☹