LINUX VOICE YOUR LETTERS

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Or a great discovery? Email us: letters@linuxvoice.com

LINUX VOICE STAR LETTER

FREE YOUR CARPALS

This is my first letter/email ever to a magazine but I felt compelled to write it as Linux Voice is such a good read (subscription to it from my girlfriend – an amazing present).

This year, spurred on by your magazine, I have been compelled to try as much as possible to banish the mouse. I am doing my damnedest to remove the rodent from my desktop to increase long term productivity. However, I am finding it very tricky.

It's tricky as there does not appear to be a clear and obvious path to doing this. Increased use of the command line (using *Yakuake* and *Terminator*), changing/learning desktop environment shortcuts and software shortcuts are the areas I am concentrating on.

I think I have got the areas I need to target but knowing which shortcuts to learn straight away and which to ignore or put lower down on the priority list is very much prone to trial and error (my desktop environment is KDE which can be baffling at times) Learning a whole slew of new shortcuts can be terminally off putting. Is there a site/book/font of knowledge that can help with prioritising which shortcuts to learn first to dramatically increase productivity. I do recommend people reduce mouse usage. Its amazing what the meta key and a cursor key can achieve together.
Laurie James, London

PS Thank you for the great *Vim* tip of always pressing the Esc key after inserting text. PPS This email was

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         tutorf3bWxd (/tmp) - VIM

 6. After reading the above steps and understanding them: do it.

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                              Lesson 1 SUMMARY

 1. The cursor is moved using either the arrow keys or the hjkl keys.
      h (left)       j (down)       k (up)       l (right)

 2. To start Vim from the shell prompt type:  vim FILENAME <ENTER>

 3. To exit Vim type:      <ESC>   :q!   <ENTER>   to trash all changes.
          OR type:         <ESC>   :wq   <ENTER>   to save the changes.

 4. To delete the character at the cursor type:  x

 5. To insert or append text type:
      i   type inserted text   <ESC>          insert before the cursor
      A   type appended text   <ESC>          append after the line

NOTE: Pressing <ESC> will place you in Normal mode or will cancel
      an unwanted and partially completed command.

Now continue with Lesson 2.
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There's a learning curve with all-singing, all-dancing text editors like *Vim*, but once you're used to living with it, you'll never look back.

composed in *Vim* – I'm a new convert.

Mike says: Hurray! Another convert for the *Vim* cause. Welcome to our ranks, Laurie. While we do occasionally try to go cold turkey on the mouse (RSI gets a bit much when you're constantly clicking and typing), *Terminator* is brilliant for anyone wishing to improve their productivity – if you haven't tried it yet, give it a go!

MORE TO LATEX

Of course it's important to understand the principles of markup of TeX and *LaTeX*, as Dr Sinitsyn elucidates [in LV009], but the easiest way is surely to use *LyX*, which should be available in all distro repositories. As for virus checking, it is useful to do so to avoid passing on any infected document which some Windows user might have sent to you and which you distribute further.

Clamtk is a useful graphical front end, but some distros only provide *ClamAV*, which needs use at the command line.
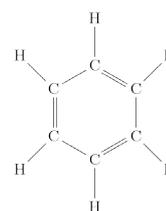**Dave Postles**
From my Trisquel Linux desktop

Andrew says: Cheers Dave – although there are no viruses out there for Linux, it's good if you're running a mail server to help keep the internet clean for poor old Windows users.

To neutralize an acid, add some alkali to get salt and water:

$$2\,\mathrm{KOH} + \mathrm{H_2SO_4} \longrightarrow \mathrm{K_2SO_4}{\downarrow} + \mathrm{H_2O}$$

Benzene ($\mathrm{C_6H_6}$) looks like this:

If you want most of power of *Latex* but with a shallower learning curve, give its graphical cousin *Lyx* a go.

IT'S ONLY WORDS

In your December edition you replied to Richard Bosworth about explaining free software to 'the masses'.

In a somewhat similar situation I finally worked out that the message was not so much not getting through as being totally inverted in translation. The person I was talking to turned out to treat 'free' as a synonym for 'worthless' and 'volunteer' as meaning 'someone who isn't serious'. Given that to him 'proprietary' meant 'valuable' and only a company could possibly be relied upon for support and that was it: I was snookered.
Tom Groves, Ashford, Kent

Mike says: We've had a few replies on this subject, and it's troubling that so many people are finding the

same problem. The Free = Worthless interpretation is fixed in many people's heads by years of experience, so it'll be hard to overcome. Next issue we'll go back to basics with a look at why free software matters – not just an exploration of the features (though do feel free to turn to page 20 for our thoughts on Windows vs Linux), but as an ethical choice.

The ethical stance taken by Richard Stallman and the Free Software Foundation is exactly right – it's just getting it across to the masses that's proving difficult.

AN ODD TYPO

I looked at your Issue 8 DVD and the envelope for it and was surprised to see a typo in what seemed an unlikely place – the legal disclaimer. "Legal: Linux Voice cannot accept s for any disruption, damage and/or loss to your data or computer that may occur while using this DVD." Granted, this is the typical legalistic covering of your posterior. Your readers most likely understand that and would never consider giving you any S. I can only guess what other letters of the alphabet you wouldn't want to accept.
Roy Birk

Andrew says: Hmmm. It's true, we do not accept any S. We prefer pounds, euros or dollars. Or bottles of whisky. I'm as baffled by that as anyone.

PRAISE. KIND OF

I love your magazine and podcast, keep up the great work!

However in reading issue #6, I found something that my pedantic nature could not reconcile. On page 9 when discussing Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, the article ends with "The CentOS team are working on the community build, which may even be available by the time you read this."
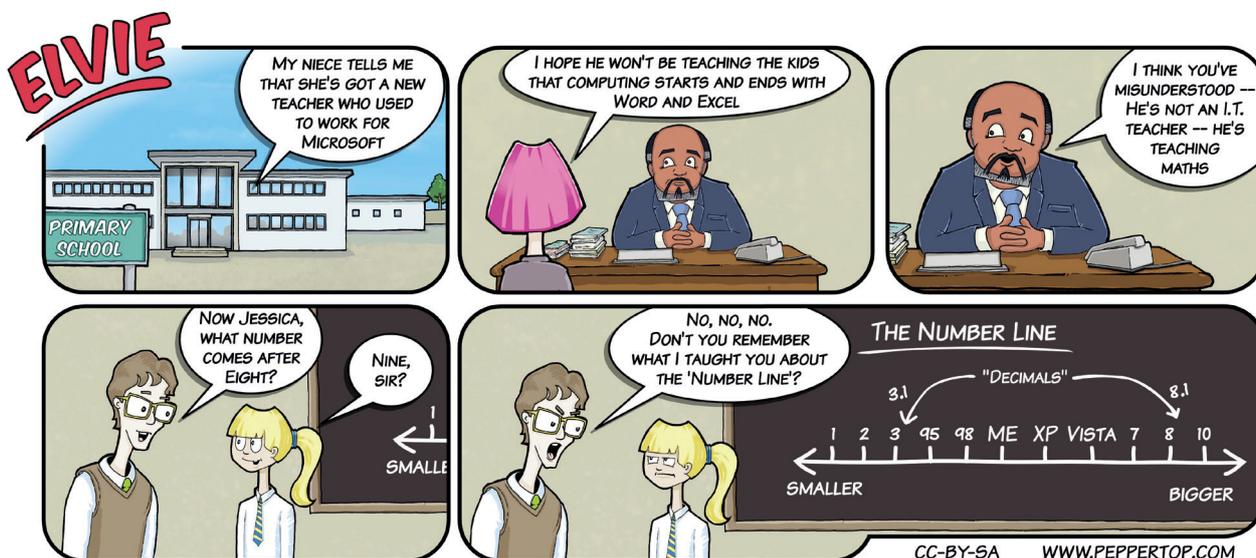
If you move on to page 46, there is a review of CentOS 7. Obviously, it was available in time for a review to make it to print. Thanks again for the hard work and dedication to the open source community.
Todd Campbell

Graham says: Rations have been reduced and the team will be flogged until performance improves.

Rest assured that we won't be accepting any S relating to this issue's DVD either.

MORE TINKERING!

I would first like to congratulate your entire team for a job well done. I got interested in Linux Voice the moment I saw your second issue, and have since become a subscriber. Just the core technology section makes the magazine a must read. I am a hardcore Windows user and though I use Linux at work I wasnt particularly attracted to it until I started reading your magazine. LV has encouraged me to try out new distros in the past few months and after trying CrunchBang, Bodhi, Manjaro, CentOS and Arch I have finally settled down with Gentoo. Formatted my Windows box and put in Gentoo! And loving every moment of it. Thanks a ton LV!

I would like to request that you include an article type for tinkerers like myself in every issue which could be about say writing your own Linux device driver (something a little more in-depth than issue 2 or perhaps a series) or tinkering with Awesome WM's configuration or just some

hardware diagnostics utilities etc.
Saptarshi

Graham says: Wow! Welcome! I know a few hardcore Windows users and none would give up their OSs without a fight, so it's wonderful to see you've found your way over to

Linux and are loving it, despite the culture shock. We'd really like to delve deeper into some subjects/projects, as you suggest, and we've got some great plans for longer form projects that spend more time relishing in the details. If anyone has a great idea for an in-depth project, let us know.

There's more tinkery fun in the pipeline – like the driver we wrote for this USB toy car.

WHAT DISTRO?

I started using Linux with Slackware 96, or was it 3.0, and went through Red Hat and Gentoo but failed with Arch Linux. Now I'm running Linux Mint 17 – with KDE, of course.

My requirements are simple, the internet, some games, email and multimedia. I do have a *PostgreSQL* database using *Tcl* and *Tk*.

With progressive upgrading and updating I have not gained in functionality, but have lost things. I can't get *Compiz* to do the impressive rotating cubes anymore, giver has been and gone, and now *World Of Goo* (I was up to chapter 2). I get segment faults, which I presume means incompatible libraries.

Where can I find a distribution, which is stable and "old fashoned", to get these back? I can understand security and UEFI need serious attention, but a basic distribution, without updates, would give me, at least, some relief.
Ron Petch, East Gosford NSW

Andrew says: Clem Lefebvre, the chief boss of Mint, says "As a general rule... unless you need to, or unless you really want to, there's no reason for you to upgrade", which is probably a good sign that you shouldn't. We've started to fall out of love with Arch recently due to some breakages, so I wouldn't recommend that. How about Debian? You get the security updates, but there's no risk that the developers will rush forward a feature causing your software to break.

Slow and steady wins the race, if the race is all about not breaking things.

WE HAPPY FEW

I first became aware of and interested in Linux some years ago through Micro Mart magazine, which I read for three or four years. However, gradually there was less to interest me in it than hitherto. Then I spotted a Linux magazine, which must remain unidentified, and I started to take it on a regular basis (despite the wife's tut-tutting about the cost!). However more recently I have found that more of the content has been 'over my head' (I'm not in the first flush of youth) and I had begun to wonder whether I ought to overcome my innate product loyalty thing and discontinue.

Last week in WH Smith's I noticed Linux Voice 008, but didn't pick it up. Until, that is, in the supermarket on Friday, when I saw it again and decided to have a look. And there, to my amazement was a familiar face, Graham Morrison, no less, and then three more familiar faces hirsute editions of Andrew Gregory, and Mike Saunders, with Ben Everard

sandwiched between them. (Come back Jonathan Roberts, all is forgiven!) And there among the contributors another familiar name, Mayank Sharma. What I have read so far I have understood. I like the style and appearance of things so I fancy you have just gained a regular reader.

I have an issue you may well be able to help me with. I have for the last two years been intending to install a Linux distro on my machine. At the moment I use Windows (excuse the language!) XP and have absolutely no intention at all of upgrading. However, not being overly knowledgeably about computers and computing, I have yet to take the plunge. I wondered if there might be an experienced Linux user in the Bolton area, which is where I live, upon whose guidance and help I could call. If there is someone they can email me at

AGeoffMort @tiscali.co.uk.

Finally, I noticed the letter in Linux Voice by David Walker. It

struck me as more than a little odd to expect a magazine devoted to Linux to be expected to promote something which, I quote, "has nothing to do with Linux." I was not all that surprised that you have ignored it.
A Geoffrey Mort

Andrew says: If you're looking for a version of Linux to choose, you could do a lot worse than try Lubuntu from this issue's DVD. It's low on system requirements and we've included it in its 32-bit version, which, if your machine is still running XP, I'm guessing will probably fit your hardware better than the KDE version.

And if you're looking for help with Linux, the north west of England is a fantastic place to be. Preston and Blackpool have active hacker communities, and the Manchester Raspberry Jam (the Raspberry Pi is just a Linux box, remember) is one of the biggest around – not sure about Bolton itself, but I'm sure there are people near you to offer a helping hand. And I'm glad you've found us! LV