

The Open Pitt



What's cooking in Linux and Open Source in Western Pennsylvania

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Hot Off the Grill...

Spring has seen a bumper crop of new software releases, so take your laptop to the poolside and try these out!

March 14 brought us **Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5**, the latest from the leading distributor among business users. A major focus of this revision was tools for managing virtualized services. Pre-canned offerings are available for datacenter, high-reliability database, and supercomputing applications. www.redhat.com

Sabayon Linux 3.3, an up-and-coming distribution based on Gentoo, was released on March 16. It features plenty of 3D eye candy and games, but is still suitable for "real work." It comes on a live CD that can also be installed. www.sabayonlinux.org

Owners of PowerPC-based Macs or the Sony PlayStation 3 will celebrate the March 27 availability of **Yellow Dog Linux v5.0.1**. Along with improved device support, the new version now includes the E17 desktop. www.terrasoftsolutions.com

The Free cross-platform **Open-Office.org 2.2** office suite was released on March 29. Display of text on the screen has been significantly enhanced, and bookmarks can now be included in exported PDF files. Compatibility with Microsoft Office file formats has also been improved. www.openoffice.org

SimplyMEPIS 6.5 for 32- and 64-bit x86 processor machines came out

on April 4. Retaining much of the base of the 6.x series, it features upgrades to many applications and the kernel as well as an improved look. Video and wireless support have been enhanced, keeping the focus squarely on its intended use as a desktop system. www.mepis.org

The long-awaited **Debian GNU/Linux 4.0** release, code-named "etch," came on April 8. Supporting eleven different machine architectures and installable in 58 languages, the latest version of this granddaddy of distributions offers over 18,000 software packages. For those who want to stick with the previous "sarge" release, **Debian GNU/Linux 3.1r6** appeared the previous day. It bundles the latest security and bug fixes for the 3.1 series. www.debian.org

Marking the return to a twice-yearly release schedule, **Mandriva Linux 2007.1 Spring** became available on April 10. It incorporates the VirtualBox, Xen, KVM, and VMware virtualization technologies. Laptop users will appreciate the improvements to power management and hibernation. Among many updates to the applications and desktop environments, one standout new feature is Metisse, which uses 3D effects to offer new ways of interacting with windows. www.mandriva.com

CentOS 5, a community-maintained distribution created by re-compiling the Red Hat Enterprise Linux sources, appeared on April 12. Versions for 32- and 64-bit x86 processors were released with others to follow. www.centos.org

The **Thunderbird 2.0.0.0** e-mail client was released for Linux, Windows, and MacOS on April 18. New features include message tagging and advanced folder views. Improvements have been made to message alerts and searching. www.mozilla.com/thunderbird/

April 19 produced **Ubuntu 7.04**, code-named "Feisty Fawn." In addition to many upgraded applications, this Linux distribution includes a new tool to migrate settings and favorites from Windows systems. There's also a friendly new auto-detection wizard to install codecs for playing multimedia files. www.ubuntu.com

Ubuntu's KDE-based counterpart, **Kubuntu 7.04**, came out the same day. www.kubuntu.org

The educational variant **Edubuntu 7.04** was released on April 19 as well. It incorporates version 5.0.7 of the Linux Terminal Server Project software for thin client configurations and is offered in separate desktop and server editions. www.edubuntu.org

Rounding out the set, **Xubuntu 7.04** features the Xfce 4.4 desktop environment. xubuntu.org

See **GRILL**, p. 2

April Roundup

Apr. 14 General User Meeting: **Beth Lynn Eicher** covered some basic principles of administering a Linux system, concentrating on rookie mistakes to avoid. After a brief review of how to tell Richard Stallman apart from other bearded members of the Free and Open Source Software community, she discussed setting up your

filesystem and swap space and dealing with USB storage devices. Also included were tips when setting up disks in an LVM and/or RAID configuration as well as network storage using NFS, Samba, and AFS. Next up was configuring the X Window System correctly, closing with some discussion of proper software selection.

Coming Events

- Jun. 9:** General User Meeting,
Topic: Linux Kernel Input/
Output. 10AM to 2PM, 3002
Newell-Simon Hall, CMU
- Jul. 14:** General User Meeting.
10AM to 2PM, 3002 Newell-
Simon Hall, CMU

The public is welcome at all events

GRILL, from p. 1

Ardour 2.0, a pro-level audio editing tool which offers multi-channel recording, non-destructive editing, and powerful mixing capabilities, was released on April 30. Major improvements include the ability to undo changes made in previous sessions and user interface updates. ardour.org

An update release in the 4.x series, **Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4.5** came out on May 1. www.redhat.com

OpenBSD 4.1 appeared the same day. The latest version of this highly-secure operating system features many new hardware drivers, software improvements and updates, and enhanced compatibility with non-native filesystems. www.openbsd.org

The good guys moved ahead in the battle against spam e-mail with the May 2 release of **SpamAssassin 3.2.0**. spamassassin.apache.org

Derived from Red Hat Enterprise Linux, **Scientific Linux 5.0** was announced on May 4. It offers an environment tailored especially for mathematical modeling and other computation-intensive applications. www.scientificlinux.org

Formerly known as Gaim, the popular **Pidgin 2.0.0** instant messaging client came out May 4. pidgin.im

The **DOSEMU 1.4.0** emulator was announced on May 5. It runs FreeDOS, DR-DOS, or MS-DOS in a virtual machine under a Linux system. www.dosemu.org

Gentoo Linux 2007.0 was released on May 7. Versions for a dozen processor architectures are available. The system installer included on the live CD and DVD for x86 and AMD64 has been completely rewritten. www.gentoo.org

You likely don't run it yourself, but be thankful for the May 9 release of the **Bugzilla 3.0** bug-tracking software. It's used by a multitude of Free and Open Source Software projects to keep tabs on problem reports and their solutions. www.bugzilla.org

A distribution based on Fedora but containing only Free Software, **BLAG Linux and GNU 60001** contains nu-

merous updates to the base 60000 release. It appeared on May 10. www.blagblagblag.org

The same day also saw the release of **Ubuntu Studio 7.04**. A Linux distribution customized for those who create and edit multimedia, it offers install options to optimize your system for audio, video, or graphics work. ubuntustudio.org

rPath Linux 1.0.6, a distribution built using the unique Canary packaging system, came out on May 15. It has strong support for virtualization and is designed to make building and distributing self-contained software "appliances" easy. wiki.rpath.com/wiki/rPath_Linux

Also on May 15, programmers greeted the appearance of the **GCC 4.2.0** compiler. Notable is the inclusion of support for OpenMP, used for developing parallel applications to run on clusters. Many general performance enhancements have also been made. gcc.gnu.org

A minimalist system that fits in less than 90 MB, **Puppy Linux 2.16** was released on May 17. It runs from a live CD or USB drive and offers the ability to save your session between system reboots. A large number of improvements to the infrastructure and configuration tools have been made. www.puppylinux.org

Following up on the Red Hat Enterprise Linux maintenance release, **CentOS 4.5** was announced on May 17. www.centos.org

Its first version not designated as beta, **PCLinuxOS 2007** came out on May 20. Originally based on Mandrake Linux but incorporating many significant enhancements for desktop users, this distribution is rapidly increasing in popularity. It features the latest versions of OpenOffice.org, Firefox, and Thunderbird as well as strong support for 3D desktops. www.pclinuxos.com

The OpenSolaris-based live CD **BeleniX 0.6** was released on May 23. Significant improvements include the integration of the Compiz 3D desktop into KDE and Xfce and an upgrade to

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<<http://www.wplug.org/top/>>

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What is Linux?

Linux is a *kernel*, the core of a computer operating system, created by Linus Torvalds. It is typically packaged as a *distribution*, which includes the extra programs necessary to make a computer functional and useful. Since 1991, it has grown from a one-man project which ran on one computer to one with thousands of contributors running on everything from personal organizers to million-dollar supercomputers.

What are Open Source and Free Software?

Open Source and Free Software provide you, the user, with the opportunity to see the source code of the programs you use. You are free to use it, share it with others, and even make changes to it if you wish. While the Free Software and Open Source communities differ in their philosophical approach, in practical terms they share nearly identical goals. Learn more at <<http://www.opensource.org/>> and <<http://www.gnu.org/>>.

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version 7.2 of the X.org window system. www.genunix.org/distributions/belenix_site/

The eagerly-awaited **Fedora 7** Linux distribution hit the streets on May 31. This release combines the "Core" and "Extras" into a single repository. Live CD functionality is now built in, and support for writing to Windows NTFS partitions has been added. Improvements have been made to increase battery life on laptops, support more wireless devices, and add KVM virtualization capability. fedoraproject.org