

PCLinuxOS MAGAZINE

Issue 1

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<http://www.pclinuxos.com>

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From the desktop of the Chief Editor

Hello PCLinuxOS users and friends,

It is with great pride, especially for me, to be part of a worthwhile project for an enthusiastic community serving an outstanding Linux distro, PCLinuxOS. The magazine project is another good example of how we can "give something back" to the developers and the whole community.

Do we really need another on-line magazine in this ever-so-bloated information library? What would be in the magazine? Who would be doing it? And most important, who is it for? These were the very first questions that came to my mind when I took up this post. My only answer is PCLinuxOS.

The contents of the magazine will be mainly contributions from community members. PCLOS users, like you or me, can participate in the project. It will, as Canonical likes to say, always be free of charge to the community and the digital universe.

Look around you. Aren't we among, if not the first Linux community to publish our own on-line magazine? This feat alone makes me very proud, and I hope you will be too.

In our milestone issue, we have put together the first collection of material from our users. It was going to be a simple layout; and it still is; and it was to be minimal yet we believe we have exceeded the expectations with our community's accomplishments in this project.

Finally, a request. Let us all work together, in whatever small ways we can, to make PCLinuxOS the best Linux distribution.

Peace to the world,
Archie

PCLinuxOS Magazine is a community project of MyPCLinuxOS.com to provide an additional means of communication to the PCLinuxOS community.

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Home on the Net:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com>

<http://www.mypclinuxos.com>

Announcement: PCLinuxOS 0.93a Trinity Released

Texstar announced on August 21, 2006 the availability for download or online ordering of **PCLinuxOS 0.93a Full Edition** aka **Big Daddy**.

The full edition comes with Kernel 2.6.16.27, KDE 3.5.3, Open Office, Firefox, Thunderbird and Nvu. Digikam, Gimp and Gqview for your digital photo needs, Amarok, Audacity and Audio Creator for your digital music needs, Frostwire, bittorrent and gftp for file transfers and p2p file sharing, Mplayer and Kaffeine for video viewing. (libdvdcss2 required for dvd encrypted playback), Kopete and Xchat for online chatting, and Blogging and podcast software also included. PCLinuxOS Big Daddy is the full monty!

PCLinuxOS 0.93a Big Daddy

PCLinuxOS 0.93a - Full Edition aka Big Daddy is now available. This is our full version of the PCLinuxOS Distribution.

Internet Suite

PCLinuxOS Internet suite includes Mozilla Firefox Web Browser, Thunderbird Email Client, Kopete Instant Messenger, and more!

Complete Open Office Suite

PCLinuxOS comes with a complete Open Office suite for word processing, spreadsheets, drawings and slide presentations.

Digital Photos

Digikam is a pre-installed photo management program that allows you to download, organize, edit, and share your entire photo collection. Easily connect your digital camera to your computer and import all of your pictures with a few mouse-clicks. In addition to Digikam, PCLinuxOS also includes the powerful GIMP image editor.

Digital Music

Manage your favorite tunes with Amarok, an all-in-one music player built into PCLinuxOS. Burn and rip your favorite music with Audio Creator. Fileshare through Frostwire.

Web Publishing Tools

PCLinuxOS includes Nvu, a powerful, easy-to-use web design program that is open-source. Anyone can create web pages now, even those with no technical expertise or knowledge of HTML.

PCLinuxOS allows you to try it in Live mode without touching your current system. If you like PCLinuxOS you can easily install it to your computer using the easy to use installation program. After installing PCLinuxOS to your computer, you can access an additional 5000 programs and libraries from our free software repository.

If you are tired of Windows crashing constantly, the blue screens of death, the nasty viruses/trojans, constant pop-ups, and sluggish performance then PCLinuxOS is for you.

Switch to PCLinuxOS today!!!

The current list of programs on the Full Edition of PCLinuxOS 0.93a can be found at <http://www.pclinuxos.com//page.php?131>.

Read about PCLinuxOS 0.93a Junior on page 26

mv elitism >> /dev/null

Where and when did Linux and open source become about the mentality "you must be this knowledgeable to ride?" It pains me to see people do this to new users...distancing themselves from potential advocates of open source...zealous ones at that. It's a real testament to some of these new users STILL wanting to plug open source and Linux, despite being squashed by elitists in forums.

by Derrick Devine, devn3t@gmail.com

(The original article can be found at <http://linux-blog.org/index.php?/archives/90-mv-elitism-devnull.html>)

Jn the beginning, open source was about open everything. I remember joining an IRC (Internet Relay Chat) channel on Efnets back in 1993 and chatting with people who could make things happen with computers — really make things happen. Coders, managers, hackers — they were all there and a tight knit core of about six of us stayed in touch for approximately seven years, until we went our separate ways and began to use IRC less and less. The thing that I remember most is when I

joined their little group, I was a complete and total n00b. Not just a n00b to open source —but to computers altogether. I had a Texas Instruments computer back in 1985 but only messed with that for about a year. Mice were new to me; I didn't know anything at all. In the short time that I began chatting on IRC, I was shown how to do things. When I didn't know how to do something, I could count on one of the guys or girls in the channel helping me solve my problem within a matter of minutes. These people stepped down from their level of operation long enough to educate me in the ways

of the open source. I look back at this time fondly and have spoken about it before—not because I don't think something like this exists now—just that I think it is a rarity. There was a time when this "spirit of open source" was all about educating and furthering the program/application that you were working on. Now it seems that when a new user comes in to any channel on IRC or forum, they are told off with a hearty RTFM (Read the 'Friendly' Manual), and in other cases, they're told off with a snappy put down or a not so funny insult.

Where did this elitism come from? Where and when did Linux and open source become about the mentality "you must be this knowledgeable to ride?" It pains me to see people do this to new users—distancing themselves from potential advocates of open source—zealous ones at that. It's a real testament to some of these new users still wanting to promote open source and Linux, despite being squashed by elitists in forums.

I'm sure that some of you are saying, "This kind of thing doesn't exist in my application/project/distro's community. We are open to all users, be they new or experienced." It sounds like nirvana

to me. I challenge you to take a closer look at your community and if you find elitism, squash it. Having personally been involved in quite a good share of communities of major Linux distros (let's just say, some major Debian and RPM based ones) I can assure you that despite the claims of being new-user friendly, most had a fair share of elitists swimming in their help channels.

Elitism has no place in open source. Open source is about freedom of everyone to look at the source of a program—*everyone*. There are no country clubs for open source; you do not need to pay to get in. There are no qualifications for people to use open source. Since there are no criteria, why are people holding new users and others with limited knowledge to a measurable standard as if there are criteria?

It's ridiculous for current 'expert' users or developers to withhold information or help from new users simply because, "new users need to cut their teeth." Why? Because not everyone learns the same way. In the past, the only people who used Linux and open source were those that learned by reading and poring through

documents. A more coder mentality existed among those flocking to open source banners then. Fast forward to today's learner and you'll see many differences. Among them is the visual learner.

The visual learner learns by examples and seeing things happen with his/her own eyes. There has been vast advancement in this arena on the Internet. Today, we have websites with embedded videos, flash tutorials, and audio blogs with step-by-step processes and how-tos. Despite all this technology, people still send new users to the same avenue to learn. RTFM or do a search. What if that isn't good enough for the person you're telling it to? What if that person can't learn things this way? What if they need to see things in action?

In closing, we must rethink our approach to answering questions on forums and in chat clients. I challenge each and every one of you to think about your responses to new users or those limited in knowledge. Helping these people to attain knowledge in different manners can make or break their will and create a friend of open source for life...or through not helping, a foe.

Announcement

eduPCLOS is a PCLOS community project which will create a customized PCLinuxOS distribution focused on classroom use.

According to **patred**, the project lead of eduPCLOS, the LiveCD/DVD will include two parts - the desktop and the server.

The project is in need of volunteers "with experiences in script writing (mostly PHP) and database knowledge (most likely MySQL and PostgreSQL)." eduPCLOS also needs designers with skills to give "the look and feel" of the desktop and server.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.mypclinuxos.com/forumdisplay.php?fid=34>, and help in any ways that you can.

Our children are the future. Let's bring them up to the spirit of PCLinuxOS. Let's give them freedom.

Susan Linton & the Tuxmachines

"Yeah, sure. It might be fun," was Susan's first reply when I requested an interview with her. First impression? I am not wrong when I say that Susan, the dynamic flow of energy guiding Tuxmachines, does waddle the waddle! In our short but friendly email exchanges, she revealed a bit more of herself, and Tuxmachines.

by Archie Arevalo, mag at mypclinuxos dot com



Tuxmachines' Susan Linton

Archie Arevalo (AA): You are considered by many as a POWERade™ in the Linux world. You were at the driver's seat of DistroWatch for three weeks while making sure everything gets done over at Tuxmachines. How do you do it?

Susan Linton (SL): Well, it wasn't that hard really. I just carried on business as usual at Tuxmachines, but I worked on the DistroWatch all week long. More specifically, as a new Linux version was released, I'd add it to the column

draft or as I heard some news worthy enough for DWW, I'd write it up then – instead of waiting until Saturday or Sunday and doing it all in one swoop.

As far as Tuxmachines and the reviews, it was really just an extension of a hobby I've had for years. I'd test new distros and write friends about them, and they'd do the same. So, when I started Tuxmachines, I'd just take more screenshots than previously and try to make the descriptions into a more readable and interesting article – try to

make it a bit more sequential, add more detail, and try to use proper grammar.

For the news posts/links, I have many feeds in Akregator and many, many bookmarks. I try to hit the bookmarks at least once a day and refresh the feeds several times a day. I check some web search engines a couple of times a day as well. Basically, it's a lot of virtual leg-work.

AA: In the light of the increasing popularity of Linux, more computer users are expected to join the bandwagon. Many of these new users will be young people dissatisfied with the proprietary OS that came preinstalled in their machines. They will have limited amount of monies to buy new software and upgrades. Do you think Linux IS the answer for them?

SL: Oh sure, Linux is the answer.

Linux has been making steady progress since even before I began using it. It's only logical that after so many manhours, Linux has become not only a viable option for geeks, but also for the general population. Just about any common task that I can think of can be performed on Linux faster and more efficiently.

Just in the 6 years since I began using Linux, I've seen a lot of improvement in many areas. The key areas are hardware detection and auto-configuration. Many users are coming from Windows where all they need do is load a driver disk, click OK several times, and reboot; or they have no experience at all. Linux hardware support has come to the point of merely booting their system.

Software and desktop improvements are abundant as well. They have evolved into polished, complete solutions. For example, KDE is so complete that I've seen several distros ship with just it on top of a base system. With OpenOffice.org, they have almost complete compatibility with Microsoft Office.

Unless someone needs to use proprietary or commercial software only available for Microsoft, then I think Linux could very well be a complete solution for them.

AA: Three of your "favorite bands" are SUSE, PCLinuxOS and Gentoo. There must be certain similarities and notable differences why they are your favorites. What would these be?

SL: For me, Linux is Linux is Linux. What's similar? The underlying base system. Not that they are identical by any means, but as long as someone learns some of the more common tools. I kept that list short for the sake of rhythm of the article. My list of favorites includes many others. I hate to say it though, but one of the common factors in my list of favorites, with few exceptions, is the system's initial impression or curb appeal. I like the pretty distros. That's the main similarity between SUSE and PCLinuxOS – polished, professional, and beautiful. Also in that list are Wolvix, Elive, KateOS, DreamLinux... even Xandros and Freespire. I've always been a sucker for a pretty face.

Exceptions to that criteria on the list are Slackware and the traditional Gentoo. Slackware doesn't dress-up their desktops, but I have a long-standing love for it because of its simplicity and stability. Slackware is kind of like Linux after a good spring cleaning. Gentoo I began using when you could build your own environment from the ground up, with your optimizations, your choices. I found it to be the most liberating computing experience one could have. This is why I continue to use it daily to this day.

AA: **A pretty face... and indeed, a large slice of the Linux pie goes for those suave, well-dressed new releases. But there are literally a hundred different distros to choose from, and for many users, distro-hopping seems more of a quest than a chance. In the end, most users do manage to settle down. If you were the digital Zeus and had your way with all things Linux, would you just flash your thunderbolt and create the Adonis of the Linux distros?**

SL: I suppose if I was the digital Zeus I might try, but I'm not sure I could improve upon the current offerings available. As Ladislav once said, making a LiveCD these days is so easy that every Tom, Dick, Jane has made one - and yes, I've thought of it myself. I've spent a lot of my time over the last 5 years testing and reviewing others' so you'd think I could possibly design the perfect distro. But the truth is, what is the best method of package management? What is the best desktop environment? What is the best startup and services method? Or even, what are my favorites? Answer: I don't think I have preferred methods. I like apt-get, I like rpm/urpmi, I like portage, I like source tarballs - all pretty much equally. They all have their pros

and cons. KDE, Fluxbox, Xfce4? Pros & cons. And when it comes to eye candy - isn't that in the eye of the user? So, what would be the most functional, efficient, stable, inclusive, and beautiful distro in the world? Ask 100 people and get 100 different answers. So, long answer short: No, probably not.

AA: Going back to Tuxmachines, it seems that the hobby has grown to be one of the most preferred Linux sites on the Web. What could account for its success?

SL: I've been lucky enough to have gotten a few links with some of the bigger boys regularly and with the big dawgs on occasion. If it weren't for PCLinuxOnline and DistroWatch, I probably would have never been heard of.

I suppose folks like to hear what a distro offers and see what it looks like. Many wonder which distros work well and which might need further development. Seems that even the most loyal of users sometimes want to try out other distros from time to time and perhaps they use my reviews to help decide what to test. I reckon some folks like to just keep up with the development of some of those distros I watch

closely like (open)SUSE or Mandriva. I think some of my visitors must be Windows users looking for their first Linux distro as I sure see a lot of IE hits in the logs. I was surprised to see a lot of Mac hits too. And then I have my regulars that I think come for the links to news and other interesting things I find around the net. I have a really cute logo too! :D

AA: Do you have any plans for it in the future?

SL: Just keep on keeping on. I'd like to get a second in command, someone to help out with hunting down stories and perhaps writing one once in a while. I have someone in mind, but I haven't asked him yet. Alternatively, I've thought of posting for a co-editor; I still might.

I am also looking forward to the day I can afford to move the site to a high-speed dedicated server. I tried out a couple of virtual dedicated servers, but they didn't work out so well. So for now, we're back where we started.

I'd like to expand my testing equipment as well so as to accommodate more users. So many wonder about wireless and laptop support. I

hope to be able to cater to them in the near future.

AA: Will you continue your involvement at DistroWatch?

SL: Well, it was just the one time thing. Ladislav (Bodnar) usually uses Adam (Doxtater) of MadPenguin to do his Weeklies on the rare occasion he's on vacation or something. He just asked me this time because Adam was going to be on vacation during the same period this year. But if he needs me again, I will surely be there for him.

AA: I agree that you really do have the cutest logo. Free Online Dictionary defined waddle as to walk with short steps that tilt the body from side to side... sort of the slow and sturdy Tux walk. Can you explain to our readers what "Do you waddle the waddle?" on your logo means?

SL: Well, it's a play on the old saying "You talk the talk, do you walk the walk?" that means 'do you do as you say you do?' or 'do you practice what you preach?' So, I guess in the logo it means 'do you use Linux in your daily life?' or 'you say you use linux - do you really?' Do

walk the walk? It's not meant to be condescending, just an inspiration – or a goal.

AA: One last question, and I've taken so much of your time already. You've tested, reviewed and use PCLOS. Where do you think it'll be, say in a year?

SL: In 0.94 and working on 0.95. :D I don't know how many users they have now, but the number is sure to keep rising. The developers are honing their skills and their distro just gets better and better. They listen to their users and design around the feedback. They have earned a large and loyal following as a result. I look for them to continue their growth and take a larger percentage of the userbase. I think PCLOS can have a real bright future.

AA: Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

SL: Thank you.

Windows Vista Rant

by Stan Whalley, mag at mypclinuxos dot com

Where is computing taking us? I ask myself this question quite often and I never get near to answering it.

Will future computing applications be web-centric like the Microsoft wants them to be? Microsoft would love to rent us applications (it does already) and charge us for support. Companies like Red Hat and Suse Linux have made a tidy living out of selling support for what is, essentially, free software.

Who really wants their valuable data to be unnecessarily bounced back and forth over any network with the potential risks involved? Most people like to have their data within arm's reach and to work on it with software installed on their own computer. I certainly do, it feels like I'm in control that way. Control is very important, ask Microsoft, Sony *et al.*

I don't have an issue with paying for support but I don't want to pay for support to a product that

is seriously flawed to begin with.

The situation is that corporations believe in the survival of the fittest and this works well, particularly if you have created a virtual monopoly for your products.

The chink in the armour is that if the product isn't the fittest then someone will pull the rug from under you, no matter that you have a monopoly, sell a poor product and you won't be top dog. Ever.

This is why I feel that Windows Vista is the wrong product for tomorrow; it has some interesting and potentially useful features but is still built on a foundation of poor architecture. For example, Symantec has already voiced concerns about the stability and security in early builds of Vista and these may not be that simple to rectify.

Microsoft will rectify most of the problems that Vista will come with in the first version released

to manufacturing as it did with Windows XP. I used Windows XP from release client one and the differences between that and Windows XP SP2 are almost enough to consider it a new operation system in its own right.

Why is Vista still flawed and why is it taking so long to bring to fruition?

The Vista concept (Longhorn) came about before Windows XP was released and is (if I'm not mistaken) based on the NT kernel like Windows 2000 and XP are. As all the problems with securing XP became apparent this should have forced close examination of any future NT based operating system. There must have come a point when the choice to stay with the NT kernel or abandon it and create a new one was reached.

In my opinion Microsoft took the wrong path; re-writing and patching something that hackers know inside out is not what the clever money would do. But is this issue down to cost or the inability to innovate? Or even down to arrogance?

I saw a lot of security fixes in Windows XP from RC1 through to SP2 and over the course of Vistas

life I think its users will see much the same.

Windows XP SP2 is reasonably safe and stable if you look after it; it is certainly a better environment to work in than the Windows (9x) series of operating systems were. Many XP users are happy with that product and will be looking to Vista to provide something better, not just a fancy new GUI but also in the engine compartment where it matters. Security has become a major issue in computing and customers don't just expect to be secure, they want to be so with the minimum of effort and expense. Users don't want to have to pay for software to secure a flawed product.

What about Microsoft, will the Vista delays have an impact on how people perceive the company?

Will Vista sell? Of course it will; it will be the only option for most people who buy a new computer, as was Windows XP. But will people upgrade to Vista as willingly as they did from Windows 9x to XP? I doubt it; XP was a far better product than Windows 9x even at RC2 level. It was based on a better kernel after all.

Yes, I think they will. Not just the shareholders but also those who were led to believe that Microsoft was omnipotent because it made a superior product. You can play the "keep them on the edge of their seats" trick when you don't have the Internet hawks on your back as with Windows 95 but that won't wash these days.

The pen is mightier than the sword but not the big mouth.

It's not only the delays to Vista that will colour people's perception of Microsoft, it is also the obvious incompetence, blatant greed and desire for control over its customers that is making many of those with a voice in the IT world look for alternatives to Microsoft's wares.

Where is computing taking us? I don't know but I suspect that if Microsoft doesn't change its business model and get its software right then piracy will be the least of its worries.

ode to **T E X S T A R**

a mighty hero, lean and bold
came from texas, so i'm told
he came to rescue you and me
from durance vile and penury

he took a little bit of code
and turned it into pclos mode
remastered, tinkered, made it
right
released it on a friday night

we all installed it straight away
and roared and hollered hip
hooray!
it looks so good, it works so fine
it loads on all computers mine

productivity is now assured
with leisure time also ensured
a working os that needs no
tweaks
will run untended weeks and
weeks

now there's time to go outside
walk the beach, watch the tide
rolling in and rolling out
while throwing frisbees, laugh
and shout

a life beyond the grinding bore
of doing yet another chore
to fix that awful box of woes
the one that's fitted with windows

three cheers for texstar loud and
clear

so the whole damn world can
hear
it's here for you, a better life
without the struggle, tears and
strife

all thanks to texstar and his gang
for us they got out bells and rang
a clarion call to welcome all
and hence be held in texstar's
thrall

long may he live to do his thang
together with his little gang
of dedicated coders clever
here's to you, for ever and ever

jaydot, mag at mypclinuxos dot com

the above tribute can be originally found at
<http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php?topic=8371>

Ten Reasons To Try PCLinuxOS

by Tim Robinson, trobins2006 at gmail dot com

When I first came to Linux more than 6 years ago, I tried to get Red Hat to install. It came as a CD with a copy of “Linux for Dummies.” I was not successful and finally gave up in frustration. I stayed in the Windows world until 2004, when I saw a copy of SUSE on the shelf at CompUSA. I'm cheap, so I got on the web, downloaded the ISO and burned a CD. It installed and ran, but Linux was a foreign environment and I felt uncomfortable. Then I found Distrowatch.com.

From then on, I downloaded and tried to install a new distro about every two or three days. Many didn't find my hardware (some couldn't see my Logitech Marble Mouse or the Logitech Internet Navigator keyboard), others were just plain *ugly* (I won't identify those), and a few actually

remained on my system for some time as environments where most things worked and I could be productive.

I stayed with only a handful over the next year. These included Yoper, SUSE, Vector and Mepis, and then I began to notice the frequent positive mentions of PCLinuxOS in the comments section at Distrowatch.com.

In November 2005, I downloaded an ISO available here:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com/page.php?7>

I selected one to take advantage of my NVIDIA® card; I checked the MD5SUM and burned the CD. This was also my first “Live CD,” one that could be run strictly from the CD without the hassles of doing an install to hard drive.



Tim Robinson

What a surprise! I arrived at a clean, good looking desktop and began to explore – and I haven't looked back. Your mileage may vary, but if you try PCLinuxOS and give it a chance, I believe at least one of the reasons for doing so listed below will be the reason you may stay with us.

1. LiveCD

As mentioned above, PCLinuxOS is a “Live CD” which means it can run, and run effectively from the CD, without requiring you to make any changes whatever to your existing hard drives or their contents. It runs slightly slower that way than if it were installed to hard drive, but Live CD mode gives you the chance to see exactly how it looks, feels and what software packages are included by default.

The initial bootup was flawless. I pressed esc so I could watch the messages fly by. I saw no errors. PCLinuxOS apparently found everything on my system. Soon I was presented with a standard login window with two choices: root or guest. The initial boot message had already alerted me that the passwords were “root” and

“guest” respectively, so I selected guest and waited while the desktop started.

I spent a couple of hours exploring the menus and noted that once I began, the delay from the CD shortened. Apparently once accessed, the menu resides in memory. Programs started in reasonable times, and I was on the Internet in just a few clicks. PCLinuxOS had found my eth0 and set it up automatically.

Surprise! Sound worked from the start, something I had previously become used to having to set up and adjust manually, sometimes even at the command line.

All the usual applications were there, but not the glut I had become accustomed to. This is a single CD distribution, so there were one or two choices for each thing I wanted to do. I remember a distribution that had no fewer than 10 editors/word processors. PCLinuxOS takes a different approach, providing a good starting selection and letting the user decide whether to add something else. For most tasks, many people find the default packages to be quite adequate. I did.

Intrigued, now, I decided to install to hard drive.

2. Painless Installation

This is where PCLinuxOS shines. An icon on the desktop starts the installation to the hard drive. Each step presents a single window with well worded instructions and simple choices. The most complicated, as with any installation program, is the hard drive setup. PCLinuxOS makes that simple. The entire process is graphical and the default choices make sense under a wide range of situations.

After setting up the hard drive partitions, the next step is the actual installation. Simplicity here, also, as there are no packages to select. It all gets installed. Feedback is provided to reassure the nervous that things are progressing nicely.

Ultimately, I set up a user account for myself, assigned passwords for myself and root, and elected to leave the guest account on the system (in case my brother wanted to use the system). When all the questions were answered, I exited the install, went back to the desktop, logged out, and selected “reboot” so I could try out the

installed system.

I logged in to my own account and began to play. The desktop is clean and uncluttered, and the speed is impressive. Everything worked exactly as it did in LiveCD mode, only faster.

3. Adding Software

On the desktop is an icon for Synaptic Software Manager – a graphical front end for apt. This is your gateway to the PCLinuxOS repository of tried, tested and useful software – currently more than 5000 choices. If PCLinuxOS didn't come with something you need, a few minutes in Synaptic and it's installed, ready to use. And there are no hassles about dependencies, either. I've been to dependency hell with other Linux distributions and I didn't like it. No more. When you use Synaptic to install an application, all the dependencies are taken care of automatically. The application won't get into the repository unless it works and does so without breaking something else. The developers are very careful about this. It makes life easier for us users.

4. Default Applications

As mentioned above, PCLinuxOS includes a

wide range of software for most uses, with only a basic selection in each category. The developers spent a lot of time picking and choosing one or two applications that a) work, and b) are light enough to fit within the one CD limitation. The menu is well laid out and most things are easy to find.

PCLinuxOS includes what may be the most valuable application available: `mklivecd`. This gem allows you to quickly and painlessly make an ISO that reflects the current state of my system, complete with all my customizations, installed applications, even my data files, if I so desire. Sometime in the near future, PCLinuxOS Magazine will have a tutorial on how to use this gem. Until then, if you are interested, visit the wiki at:

<http://www.pclinuxonline.com/wiki/HomePage>

5. PCLinuxOS Control Center

One application of note is the PCLinuxOS Control Center, or PCC. This is a goldmine for those of us who wish to change configuration settings, but for whatever reason prefer to do so from within a graphical environment. Virtually

everything you could ask for is there in a carefully crafted user interface.

6. Multimedia Ready

Got an audio disk you want to play? Just pop it in. Want to view video on the Web? Go for it. PCLinuxOS comes ready to use out of the box. No more hunting through forums and mailing lists, just get sound to work on your box.

7. Current Software

Looking for the latest and greatest? Check in Synaptic for it first. You'll be surprised how quickly after release a new version of software appears there (sometimes literally within hours). Need something that's not there? Visit the PCLinuxOS forum Package Request section:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php?board=21.0>

and request it. If it's practical, it will get added. Be sure to provide enough information to the developers so they can find the sources, and understand what the software is, does, and why it would be valuable to the community.

8. Look and Feel

The PCLinuxOS desktop is clean, uncluttered and highly customizable. Everything “feels” smooth (subjective, I know) and “just works.” This is mainly due to the developers' position that nothing is released/added to PCLinuxOS until/unless it is ready, tested, and stable.

9. Hardware Support

PCLinuxOS has amazing hardware detection. It runs on a very wide range of systems. I had it up and running, usably fast on an AMD K6II, 350MHz with only 196MB of RAM, and others on the forum are running it on less than that. The basic system requirements are 256MB of memory and not much else, but as I indicated, that minimum is subject to being busted.

PCLinuxOS comes in several “flavors” as ISOs already set up for either NVIDIA or ATI video board. There is also a general ISO which you can then customize for your video board.

Additionally, there is now a “MiniME” version of PCLinuxOS which is a very stripped down version. It comes with only enough software to get you up and running in a KDE desktop and

with basic software to get online to the repositories. From there, you can pick and choose which applications YOU want on your box and make PCLinuxOS exactly what you want it to be.

10. The Support Forum

I saved the best for last, and though I could write ad nauseum about the PCLinuxOS Forum, I'll keep it short. It beats every other forum I ever joined for friendliness and wealth of information. So you're a noobie and are ashamed that you can't figure out how to change your desktop wallpaper? Post a request and sometimes within minutes you'll see a response from a patient, helpful forum member. In fact, I personally have had responses from all the developers to what turned out to be the simplest requests. They all haunt the forum, and they pay attention to the rest of us. 'Nuff said about that. Here's the link:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php>

Come visit. Take your shoes off. Sit a spell. You'll be most welcome.

Conclusion

There you have it. Ten reasons why you should try PCLinuxOS. If you are already using PCLinuxOS, then send this article to that friend you've been talking to about how great it is. If not, then download the ISO of your choice and give PCLinuxOS a whirl. I promise a good ride.

Notes about the author:

Tim Robinson is a long-time resident of El Paso, in far West Texas. He loves Mexican food and collects legends of the Old West and amusing anecdotes of all kinds. As a technical writer, resume writer, and legal assistant, Tim earned his living as a writer for more than 25 years. In 2002, he published "Undying Love", Double Dragon Publishing (<http://www.double-dragon-ebooks.com/>).

Tim now makes a living as a retail sales manager for an auto parts chain. He often writes for, and is a member of, several Internet diabetic support groups, and of course is an Editor for PCLinuxOS Magazine. He lives alone with two Chihuahuas, Goldie and 2K (born in 2000) in Denver Colorado, USA.

Running MiniMe Live from the Hard Disk Drive

by ClareOldie, mag at mypclinuxos dot com

LiveCDs are a marvellous innovation. They allow testing of the Operating System to see if it suits you, before installing it. CDs are very portable and allow you to carry your favourite OS with you easily. When used frequently their drawbacks begin to show. I find that running an OS from a CD is much slower than that from a Hard Disk, and also much noisier. On the other hand, it is a hassle to install the OS, particularly if it is only for a short time.

With PCLOS there is a half-way measure available. The files in the ".iso" can be copied to a HDD and run "live" from the HDD. This releases the CD Drive for other operations, eliminates the noise of a fast spinning CD, and also runs much faster – much closer to the speed of an actual install than running live from a CD. I will try to describe the steps I took to implement this on an old HDD and using the

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PCLOS MiniMe release. It could, I guess, be done with a re-master of an install which included all the extras you might need. For this exercise that was not necessary.

I attached the HDD (only 1.6G in this case) as the only HDD in the system, booted from Minime CD, partitioned and mounted the HDD into three primary partitions -

1. 50Mb to hold the bootloader hda1
2. 500Mb as swap hda2
3. Approx 1Gig for the OS hda3

I then copied the iso from a USB stick to the 1Gig partition (hda3) and mounted it using

```
mount -r -t iso9660 -o loop  
/path/to/iso /mnt/iso
```

as root in a console. Next, I copied the `isolinux` directory, from the mounted `iso` to `hda3`, and the file `livecd.sqfs`, which is rather large, to be in the same location. When this was done I unmounted the iso (delete it from `hda3` if you wish).

What we have at this point is a HDD partitioned to suit, with the OS files on partition `hda3` and a swap partition on `hda2`. We also have the partition `hda1` awaiting our bootloader. I used

GRUB for this as I had a copy handy and am familiar with it.

I installed GRUB to `hda1` and ran it to put the bootloader into the MBR of `hda`. I then edited the `menu.lst` file to boot `hda3`. The entry is:-

```
title    PCLinux Live from HDD  
root     (hd0,2)  
kernel   /isolinux/vmlinuz  
root=/dev/hda3 ro ide=nodma  
bootfrom=/dev/hda3  
initrd   /isolinux/initrd.gz  
boot
```

Note: The `ide=nodma` is to allow the OS to run on old hardware that is not DMA compatible. `bootfrom` tells it to boot from the HDD not the CD as would be done normally.

Bugs:- Proper (clean) shutdown is not achieved – yet. This is no great problem, as it is a live session and nothing is written permanently to the OS. Just shut down as normal until it stops and then turn off the computer.

After that it was just a matter of rebooting the computer, taking out the Minime CD and letting the new “install” boot. It was noticeably faster than the CD, and quieter.

A Simplified Look at Basic RPM Packaging

© David Wunderlich, 2006

Preliminary Stuff

You should be doing all of this logged in as a standard user and not as root.

You will have some root windows open during this process if you do things as I do. If you haven't been told before, you should always be careful when doing things as root. I would suggest changing the color scheme for the root account, either by logging in as root or by running "kcontrol" (without the quotes) from a root terminal. Doing this helps me a lot because it's a lot easier to distinguish root and non-root windows from each other.

Most programs compile using the "standard" way of the three commands: `./configure`, `make`, and `make install`. Some, most

notably Python-based programs, do not. Such programs are beyond the scope of this article because I don't know enough to give good advice in the matter.

If a program asks for a newer version of a library than is already in the repositories, be very careful when thinking about upgrading it yourself. You could hose your system very easily. Often times the best move in such circumstances is to be patient, note the need for the library update in order to build the package, and wait for it to show up in the repositories.

Some Lingo

If you're told you need headers of some kind (usually KDE headers), that means you need the development packages for whatever it asked for. Installing the `kdebase-devel` and `kdelibs-devel` packages, for example, should resolve

KDE header requests.

If you are told that you need a particular package to compile something, that usually means you need not just the package but also its development package. If a package requires `libarts`, you may find that `libarts` is already installed. In order to compile a program that uses it, you must also install `libarts-devel`.

Intro to Compiling

If you already know about compiling source, you can skip this section.

As stated above, there is a standard way to compile software: using `./configure`, `make`, and `make install`. It makes more sense to see an example. For this, I'll highlight Solseek, a kicker applet that displays pictures of the sun. Download the source from here:

<http://www.kde-apps.org/content/show.php?content=31311>

Pick a directory (I use the `tmp` folder inside my home folder) for compiling sources. It doesn't matter, but it's handy always to do it in the same place so you don't end up with random stuff everywhere. Put the Solseek source here and

unpack it with `Ark`.

Enter the directory and open up a command prompt (in Konqueror, press `F4` to open a console for the folder being displayed - a very useful shortcut). Now type `./configure` without the quotes. This will check to make sure you have all of the required libraries for building your application. Install any unmet dependencies from Synaptic, and repeat until you land back at the prompt with no errors.

Now type `make` (without the quotes). `Make` is one of the GNU utilities and it does all of the dirty work for you when it comes to compiling software. This is the step that takes the longest, and the bigger the source, the longer it takes. Solseek is small and has no complicated dependencies, so this should be fairly quick and painless.

Next, you will need to elevate to root privileges using the `su` command because the next step is installing. After you have typed in your root password, type `make install` (without the quotes) and it will install your freshly-compiled application. You should now be able to add Solseek to your kicker panel like any other

applet. Congratulations, you have successfully compiled and installed a package!

Now we're going to remove Solseek as it will prove useful later and we don't want this installation of it to cause trouble. Remove Solseek from you kicker, then still as root, type "make uninstall" (without the quotes). This will uninstall Solseek. In order for "make uninstall" to work, it must be done from a console in the same directory as the program was compiled with the source still there. It's not like using apt-get at a root console where the directory doesn't matter.

Where the Magic Happens

RPM packages are always made in the same place in PCLinuxOS - the /usr/src/RPM directory. There are several folders in here to look at:

- **The BUILD folder** is where sources will be unpacked. You will probably need to go here to manually delete the unpacked sources after building an RPM to prevent wasted space.
- **The RPMS folder** is where finished RPMs go.

Inside are more folders corresponding with processors. The one we're concerned with here is the i586 folder because by default, that's what PCLOS optimizes packages for.

- **The SOURCES folder** is where sources and spec files go. Spec files will be discussed more in depth later.
- **The SPECS folder** sometimes holds spec files. I personally don't really use it much, if at all.
- **The SRPMS folder** is where the SRPMS you build will go.

A Quick Note on SRPMS

SRPMS are source packages done up RPM-style so it's easy to compile them. They have .src.rpm file extensions. In order to compile one into an RPM, simply place the SRPM in the SOURCES folder, and from there as root type "rpm --rebuild foo-1.2.3-1.src.rpm" where foo-1.2.3.src.rpm is the one you want to compile.

SRPMS are easily unpacked using this command:

```
rpm2cpio foo-1.2.3-1.src.rpm | cpio -  
idmv --no-absolute-filenames
```

where once again foo-1.2.3-1.src.rpm is

the SRPM you wish to compile. This will yield the sources used and the spec file. Using others' SRPMs is often a great place to start.

For building PCLOS RPMs, start with Mandriva SRPMs because the spec files for them are done the same way as are PCLOS's spec files and the library naming scheme between the two is also the same.

A Few Good Links

Official PCLOS source RPMs:

<ftp://ftp.tuxmachines.org/pub/pclinuxos/rpms/>

PCLOS contrib source RPMs:

<http://texsrc.trident.kicks-ass.net/contrib/>

Thac's source RPMs:

<http://www.mde.djura.org/pclinuxos/2005/SRPMs.thac/>

Mandriva source RPMs:

<http://mirrors.evulva.ro/mandriva/official/current/SRPMs/>

RPM Search: <http://rpm.pbone.net/>

Spec Files

So what are these spec files anyway? Well, they are the recipe for building RPMs. They have a distinctive way of doing things, but once you get the hang of it, they're not bad.

Grab the Solseek SRPM from here:

http://files.filefront.com/solseek_07_1texsrcrpm/;5269539;;/fileinfo.html

Pardon the ads, but it is free hosting with no bandwidth restrictions.

In any event, copy it to SOURCES, then unpack it using the command from above. The folder will now have three files: the SRPM, the Solseek source, and the solseek.spec file. Open the spec file with your favorite text editor (e.g. Kwrite).

There are certain predefined attributes for RPM files that you must supply, and you can see them in bold now. These should make sense. Sometimes you'll see more than these, sometimes less, but the important thing is getting the important ones covered. Here are a few notes on some of these.

Summary: this will be displayed in the description field in Synaptic.

Release: this tells what version of the RPM we're on. It says 1 because it's the first, and tex to signify that it goes with Texstar's distro. You'll need to change this field if you're rebuilding off of others' SRPMs.

Group: this is the section within Synaptic that the package will appear in.

For source, you'll see "%{name} - %{version}.tar.bz2" given. %{name} and %{version} are placeholders for the Name and Version fields already defined. This means you only have to update them once at the top rather than everywhere else they are used throughout the file.

Under %description is a longer description that will appear in the lower right pane of Synaptic. I find it easiest to fill in this and Summary by copying and pasting material from the website of whatever it is I'm trying to package.

Skip down over the odd-looking stuff to the bottom where %changelog is. This is where

people keep track of what changed across each version or release change. The format is standardized, so always keep it in the format as shown. Here is the format in generalities:

```
day month date year yourname
<your@email.address> version-release
- comments about the changes
```

If you like, you can change the date to today and the name and email address to yours. If you get something wrong, it will complain about it when building and refuse to do it. Save the spec file and proceed.

Building Your First RPM

For this next part, you'll probably want to have a root-level Konqueror window open (from the K menu: Applications > File Tools > File Manager - Super User Mode). This is why I suggested giving root a different color scheme because it will stick out like a sore thumb and reduce mistakes. I personally have the following directories open in tabs in that window: SOURCES, your home folder, i586, and SRPMS.

Open up a console in the SOURCES directory (use F4 in Konqueror, remember?) and type "rpm -ba solseek.spec" (without the quotes). This invokes the RPM command line interface in order to build your package. The "-ba" option signifies that you want to build both the RPM and the SRPM; using only a "-b" option will just build the RPM without the source package.

Once this is done, a fresh solseek-0.7-1tex.i586.rpm file will appear in the i586 directory, and a solseek-0.7-1tex.src.rpm file will appear in the SRPMS directory. You can now install the Solseek RPM either by right-clicking and selecting "Open with KPackage" if you have KPackage installed, or at a root console from the i586 directory typing "rpm -i solseek-0.7-1tex.i586.rpm" (without the quotes).

You now should be able to add Solseek to your kicker. If so, then congratulations, you have built your first successful RPM!

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PCLinuxOS 0.93a Junior

Texstar announced the release of PCLinuxOS 0.93a Junior on August 9, 2006

PCLinuxOS 0.93a Junior was the next step up from MiniMe. Junior comes with just the basic desktop allowing full user customization.

PCLinuxOS 0.93a Junior is a self booting Live CD with advanced hardware detection. In addition to running Junior in Live CD mode, you can also install it to your computer. Easy to follow instructions are included on the Live CD as well as a chat channel for instant help.

Junior comes with a set of pre-selected programs for Web Browsing, Email, Instant Messaging, Blogging, IRC chat, Music, Graphics, Video (additional software required for encrypted DVD playback and proprietary formats), Digital Camera, Games, Ftp, Bit torrent transfer, CD/DVD burning and more.

If you are first time Linux user or someone migrating from Windows then PCLinuxOS 0.93a Junior is a great way to get started using Linux. After installing PCLinuxOS to your computer, you can access an additional 5000 programs and libraries from our free software repository.

The current list of programs on Junior can be found at <http://www.pclinuxos.com//page.php?121>.

Read about PCLinuxOS 0.93a MiniMe on page 36

Scanning for Rootkits with Rootkit Hunter

by magian, support@magiansystems.com

The Internet can be a wild and dangerous place. We, as Linux users, are generally spared the worst of the viral and malware infestations, but there are times when overconfidence can lead to a false sense of security. Linux is still susceptible to having a rootkit installed.

What is a rootkit you ask?

“A rootkit is a set of software tools intended to conceal running processes, files or system data, thereby helping an intruder to maintain access to a system whilst avoiding detection. Rootkits are known to exist for a variety of operating systems such as Linux, Solaris and x86 versions of Microsoft Windows. Rootkits often modify parts of the operating system or install themselves as drivers or kernel modules.” (from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rootkits>)

Luckily for us there is a great tool for scanning your system for these nefarious invaders. It's called Rootkit Hunter and was created by developer Michael Boelen. Some of the more salient features of Rootkit Hunter are as follows:

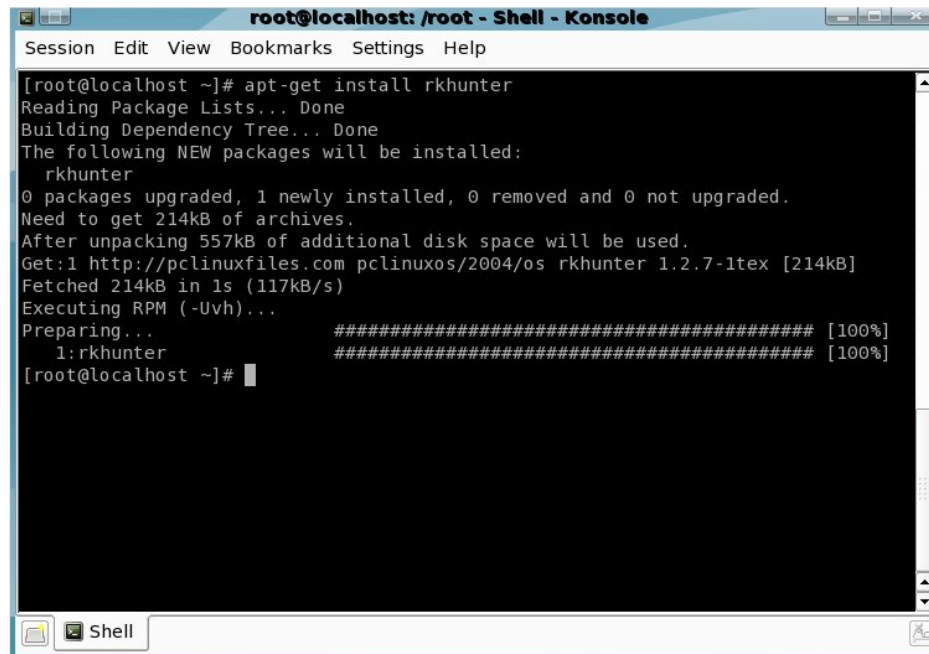
- MD5 hash compare
- Look for default files used by rootkits
- Wrong file permissions for binaries
- Looks for suspected strings in LKM and KLD modules
- Looks for hidden files
- Optional scan within plaintext and binary files
- Rootkit Hunter is released as GPL licensed project and free for everyone to use

I will now show you how to install Rootkit

Hunter from the PCLOS repositories, update it, and run a complete check of your system. These actions need to be done as a superuser.

APT-GET will locate and install Rootkit Hunter by typing:

```
[root@localhost ~]# apt-get install rkhunter
```



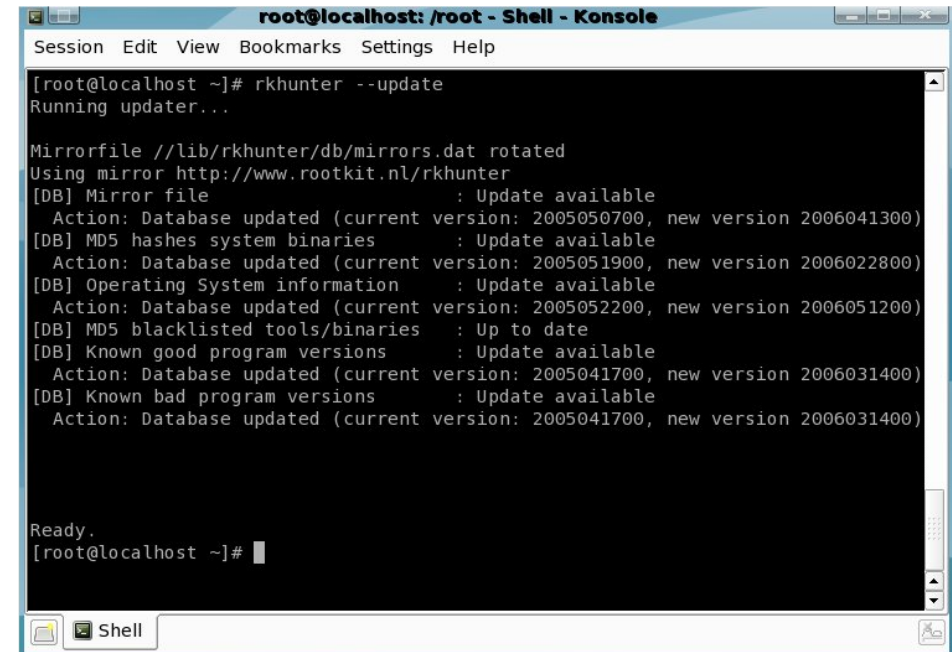
```
root@localhost: /root - Shell - Konsole
Session Edit View Bookmarks Settings Help

[root@localhost ~]# apt-get install rkhunter
Reading Package Lists... Done
Building Dependency Tree... Done
The following NEW packages will be installed:
 rkhunter
0 packages upgraded, 1 newly installed, 0 removed and 0 not upgraded.
Need to get 214kB of archives.
After unpacking 557kB of additional disk space will be used.
Get:1 http://pclinuxfiles.com pclinuxos/2004/os rkhunter 1.2.7-1tex [214kB]
Fetched 214kB in 1s (117kB/s)
Executing RPM (-Uvh)...
Preparing... ##### [100%]
 1:rkhunter ##### [100%]
[root@localhost ~]#
```

Next we update the program with **rkhunter --update**:

```
[root@localhost ~]# rkhunter --update
```

Rootkit Hunter will download and install all the current signatures.



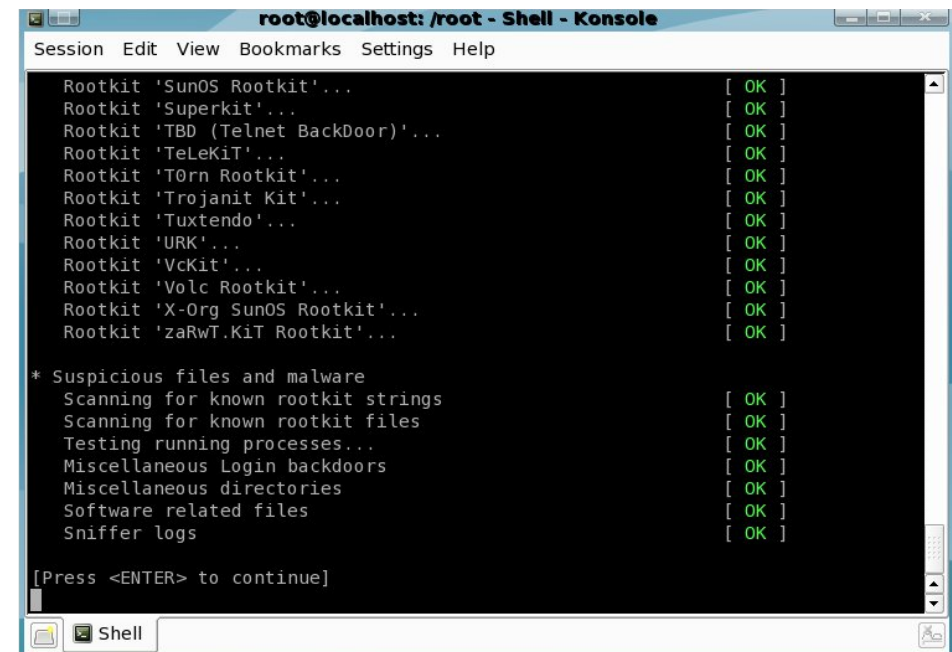
```
root@localhost: /root - Shell - Konsole
Session Edit View Bookmarks Settings Help

[root@localhost ~]# rkhunter --update
Running updater...

Mirrorfile //lib/rkhunter/db/mirrors.dat rotated
Using mirror http://www.rootkit.nl/rkhunter
[DB] Mirror file : Update available
  Action: Database updated (current version: 2005050700, new version 2006041300)
[DB] MD5 hashes system binaries : Update available
  Action: Database updated (current version: 2005051900, new version 2006022800)
[DB] Operating System information : Update available
  Action: Database updated (current version: 2005052200, new version 2006051200)
[DB] MD5 blacklisted tools/binaries : Up to date
[DB] Known good program versions : Update available
  Action: Database updated (current version: 2005041700, new version 2006031400)
[DB] Known bad program versions : Update available
  Action: Database updated (current version: 2005041700, new version 2006031400)

Ready.
[root@localhost ~]#
```

Next we run a complete scan with **rkhunter --checkall**:



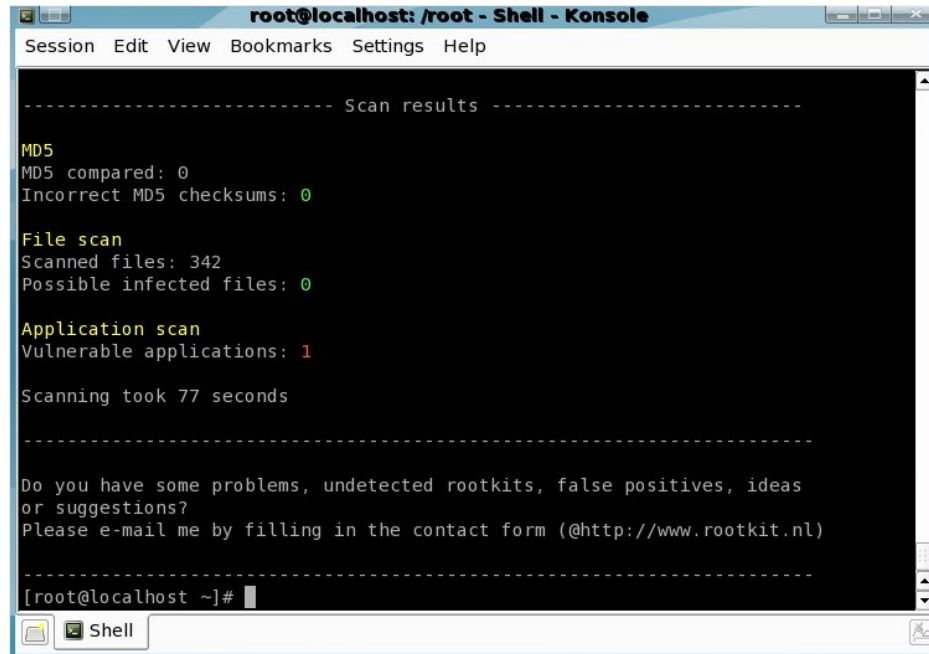
```
root@localhost: /root - Shell - Konsole
Session Edit View Bookmarks Settings Help

Rootkit 'SunOS Rootkit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'Superkit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'TBD (Telnet BackDoor)'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'TeLeKit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'T0rn Rootkit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'Trojanit Kit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'Tuxtendo'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'URK'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'VcKit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'Volc Rootkit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'X-Org SunOS Rootkit'... [ OK ]
Rootkit 'zaRwT.KiT Rootkit'... [ OK ]

* Suspicious files and malware
  Scanning for known rootkit strings [ OK ]
  Scanning for known rootkit files [ OK ]
  Testing running processes... [ OK ]
  Miscellaneous Login backdoors [ OK ]
  Miscellaneous directories [ OK ]
  Software related files [ OK ]
  Sniffer logs [ OK ]

[Press <ENTER> to continue]
Shell
```

Once the tests are completed, you will be presented with a summary of scan results.



```
root@localhost: /root - Shell - Konsole
Session Edit View Bookmarks Settings Help

----- Scan results -----
MD5
MD5 compared: 0
Incorrect MD5 checksums: 0

File scan
Scanned files: 342
Possible infected files: 0

Application scan
Vulnerable applications: 1

Scanning took 77 seconds

-----
Do you have some problems, undetected rootkits, false positives, ideas
or suggestions?
Please e-mail me by filling in the contact form (@http://www.rootkit.nl)
-----
[root@localhost ~]#
```

You can run **rkhunter** with no arguments to see a complete lists of options. Rootkit Hunter can be included in shell scripts and can be run as a cronjob.

Now, you have one more reason to feel safer and superior to your poor Microsoft Windows-running brethren.

Rootkit Hunter

<http://www.rootkit.nl>

MyPCLinuxOS

Got any GREAT ideas for a PCLinuxOS project?

People are naturally creative and imaginative. We come up with outrageous, practical, silly, feasible, and maybe unique ideas. There's a place for you at MyPCLinuxOS.com.

Many great projects started with a small step, and with a bit of dedication and work, we can make a dream come true.

Lost for one? Or your idea was taken? No problem. There are several ongoing projects at MyPCLinuxOS.com. Join one of them, and be a part of a team that "gives something back" to PCLinuxOS.

Speed Up Your Boot Process

This is a short guide on how you may be able to speed up your booting time a little. It is not meant to be an exhaustive explanation of how the booting process works, but hopefully to provide enough information to allow you to understand why this may help.

From the writings of IKerekes, mag at mypclinuxos dot com

Booting Process

Most computer systems can only execute code found in memory (ROM or RAM), but modern operating systems are mostly stored on hard disks (or occasionally LiveCDs, USB flash drives, etc.). When a computer is turned on, it doesn't have an operating system in memory. The computer's hardware alone cannot perform the complex actions of which an operating system is capable, such as loading a program from disk, so a seemingly irresolvable paradox is created: how to load the operating system into

memory. The solution involves using a special small program, called a bootstrap loader or boot loader. This program doesn't have the full functionality of an operating system, but is tailor-made to load enough other software to start the operating system. Often, multiple-stage boot loaders are used, in which several small programs summon each other, until the last of them loads the operating system.

In modern computers the bootstrapping process begins with the CPU executing software contained at a predefined address in ROM, for

example, the BIOS. The CPU is designed to execute this software after reset without outside help. This software contains rudimentary functionality to search for devices eligible to participate in booting, and load a small program from a special section (most commonly the boot sector or MBR) of the most promising device. The boot process is controlled by the Bootloader, which is placed in the Master Boot Record (MBR) of the first booting device.

The Initrd and Booting

In this document, I am referring to GRUB or LILO bootloaders, and am assuming that the booting device is an IDE hard disk drive with an installation of PCLinuxOS already present.

The bootloader, as many of you will know, loads the kernel and the initrd (**I**nitial **R**am **D**isk) of the installation. These then take care of the operating system boot up processes. The initrd.img file is usually a link to an .img file that is specific to the kernel being used. The specific file is generated when the kernel is installed and is named something like "initrd-<kernel_version>.img?". To see what initrd files

you have on your computer type the following into a terminal:

```
ls -l /boot/init*
```

This should give you an output somewhat similar to this

```
[root@localhost boot]# ls -l
/boot/init*
root root 124605 Jul 19 07:09
/boot/initrd-2.6.16.27.dev2.img
root root 25 Aug 7 07:43
/boot/initrd.img ->initrd-
2.6.16.27.dev2.img
```

Note the second entry is the link we spoke of earlier.

The specific initrd contains an initial root filesystem with enough code to boot the OS with that kernel. When this file is generated the information in the installkernel file (/etc/sysconfig/installkernel) is used – particularly for extra drivers that might be needed for the hardware present. When the original installation took place the livecd loaded all the available drivers to ensure that all hardware possible could be used. Most

machines will never need majority of these drivers so they are redundant and can be removed. Removing these should therefore speed up the boot process.

Creating A Custom Initrd

To speed up the boot process by creating a custom initrd file you can either install a new kernel or re-install an existing kernel.

The small difference in the method used is due to the fact that if an `initrd-<kernel_version>.img` file specific to a kernel is present, then a new one will not be generated when that kernel is re-installed. To cause the new `initrd.img` file to be generated it is necessary to rename or delete the existing `initrd-<kernel_version>.img` file for that kernel.

So in summary, the information contained in the `installkernel` file, (more specifically on the `? INITRDOPTS= ?` line), is used when generating an `initrd-<kernel_version>.img` file for the kernel being installed or re-installed. Remember there is also a file called `initrd.img` which is simply a link to the last `initrd-`

`<kernel_version>.img` file created.

If an `initrd-<kernel_version>.img` file exists for the kernel you are installing, rename it.

Open the `/etc/sysconfig/installkernel` file as root and edit the `"INITRDOPTS="` line to suit your needs. The reason I recommend renaming the `initrd-<kernel_version>.img` file is that if an error occurs the old file is always there to use again. It can be deleted when you are sure all is OK.

Great care must be taken here to ensure you do not delete any driver that your installation is using.

Having edited the `installkernel` file to your satisfaction it is now ready to be used by the kernel installation, to generate an `initrd-<kernel_version>.img` file for that kernel. Simply installing or re-installing a kernel will cause this to happen automatically.

So, decide on the kernel.

Rename the specific `initrd-<kernel-version>.img` file for that kernel, if it exists.

Edit the "INITRDOPTS=" line in /etc/sysconfig/installkernel (example below).
Install or re-install the kernel you have chosen.
Re-boot the computer.

That's it. You are now booting without the extra drivers you didn't need.

The following is just an example and is not to be used as an indication of what may be suitable for your computer.

Contents of old Installkernel file InitrdOpts line:

```
INITRDOPTS=" --with libata --with  
sd_mod --with ata_piix --with  
scsi_mod --with sr_mod --with sg --  
with aic7xxx --with BusLogic --with  
ahci --with sata_qstor --with  
sata_sis --with sata_sx4 --with  
sata_uli --with sx8 --with sata_sis --  
with sata_nv --with sata_promise --  
with sata_sil --with sata_svw --with  
sata_via --with sata_vsc --with  
scsi_transport_spi "
```

The above contains all the SATA and SCSI disk device drivers. You need only the drivers specific to your hardware.

For example if you need the 'sata_sil' driver, the line would look like:

```
INITRDOPTS=" --with sata_sil"
```

If you don't have SATA or SCSI drives, and just IDE, the contents of the new Installkernel file InitrdOpts line might look like this:

```
INITRDOPTS=" "
```

If you don't know which driver you require for your Hard Disk go to "PCLinux Control Center/Hardware/Manage your system hardware" and select your drive, then read the information from the right panel.

More detailed information on Booting, and Initrd can be found here:-

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bootloader>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initrd>

The usual caveats apply — you make changes to your operating system entirely at your own risk.

A Look at Freespire

by Myrddin, mag at myplinuxos dot com

Well, it has arrived. The release candidate for Freespire, derived from Linspire, is available for download from their website,

<http://www.freespire.org/> or by bittorrent.

Freespire legally supports, or has one-click access to legal support, for QuickTime, MP3, Java, Flash, Windows Media, Real, DVD, ATI and nVidia graphic drivers, proprietary WIFI drivers and more. Freespire is the first distro to include all of these proprietary codecs, applications and drivers as legally part of their release.

All together, download and burn required less than an hour and a half to have a working cd of Freespire on my 1Mb DSL connection. I used the slowest burn time my media would support for the best possible outcome of the burn. This extends the burn time, but it reduces the chance of a bad burn.

You are given four choices on the CD's boot

prompt, installation to your hard drive, run as LiveCD, create or modify partitions on your hard drive or advanced options. I recommend running it as a LiveCD first, to see if your hardware is detected properly and if you like using Freespire.

The boot up time of the CD wasn't fast, but there is a pretty splash screen in shades of silver and a medium blue for eye candy while you wait. Once booted, you are presented with a license agreement and three choices of the type of system you want. You can choose between the free version with all of the proprietary extras, a complete OSS version or a commercial version. Click on your choice and then click in the "I agree/disagree" box. If you choose to agree to the license, you will be presented with the Freespire desktop.

The Freespire team has created their own versions of common applications, such as Firefox and Thunderbird. The blues that they

have used are paler than those used by most distros and are quite attractive. The reds of the fox of the browser's icon appear more fire-like than any I've seen previously, though the browser itself functions just as you would expect from Firefox. On the whole, Freespire's eye candy is quite attractive.

Just as the boot up of the cd takes time, the first access of any application will be slow. Restarting any applications for the second time is faster as they will be loaded in memory already.

The cd comes with Audio and MP3, Business and Finance, Games, Home and Education and Internet applications. If you need or want any applications that are not included on the cd, Freespire has CNR (click and run), a one click download, install and run system for acquiring them. This program is free to try for the first fifteen days and \$20 per year, or \$50 for gold membership after that time. Commercial software, as well as open source is available through CNR. For those who prefer it, the apt-get command may be used.

The command and control center is easily

accessible with a 'tree' layout that puts things in a logical order. If you need to make changes or adjustments, you should have no trouble finding the section you need.

Freespire was developed by the people at Linspire as a community project. It is offered as an always free to download OS and has similar features to the original, Linspire. The two OSes use the same software repositories, though separate repositories may be available in the future.

If you want or need both open source and commercial applications, Freespire has an abundance of them. Either type is available and can be installed and run from it. For those who prefer that no commercial products be on their system, Freespire has an OSS version.

If you're interested in an operating system that can run both open source and commercial software, Freespire may be the one for you. Bear in mind that those commercial applications do have costs. If you're wanting an easy switch from Windows and have the need for those commercial applications, give Freespire a try.

A note on hard drive installation —

I've tried several times to install Freespire on a partition of my hard drive. The first attempt resulted in my other Linux partitions becoming either unbootable or impossible to run the OS. Subsequent attempts to install have resulted in errors on every attempt at booting to the partition it is installed on. Being new to the world of Linux use, I have limited knowledge of ways to fix the problem. I believe it to be the bootloader that is causing the error, but I do not know for certain. The issue may be hardware specific; that is, it could be no problem with your hardware.

I used an HP Pavilion a1016x desktop, with a 160 GB hard drive, 512 MB RAM, a PTGO motherboard and a lightscribe DVD R/RW drive for this review.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with PCLinuxOS being a ten, I'd rate Freespire as an 8.5, if I can get the hard drive installation to work. It isn't quite as fast as PCLinuxOS nor is the installation process as easy, though it does seem to be above the average.

PCLinuxOS MiniMe 0.93a

Texstar announced on August 9, 2006 the availability of PCLinuxOS 0.93a MiniMe for download.

PCLinuxOS MiniMe 0.93a is the minimal version of our Live CD for those who just want a basic desktop without the bloat allowing for full user customization. Simply put the CD into your CD or DVD drive and run it in live mode without ever touching anything on your computer. In addition to the Live CD mode you can also save your changes to a usb key disk.

PCLinuxOS MiniMe can be installed to your computer by simply clicking on the install icon on the desktop and using the easy to follow instructions provided you like PCLinuxOS and it runs well on your computer.

After hard drive installation, you can access over 5000 programs to fully customize your desktop the way **YOU** want.

PCLinuxOS MiniMe comes with the latest 2.6.16.27 kernel, a basic KDE 3.5.3 desktop, CD Installer, Synaptic Software Manager and Control Center.

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