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PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux – Part 6 *by Alan German*

While Windows won't even acknowledge the presence of a Linux partition on a hard drive, Linux does not exhibit any such mean-spiritedness. Linux is quite willing to report the existence of Windows partitions and in fact, with the right sequence of commands, will happily let you access the files that they contain. This can be very handy on a machine running in dual-boot mode where the same files can be shared by both operating systems. For example, since the Open Office suite of applications is more-or-less compatible with Microsoft Office, we can maintain one set of data files (Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, etc.) on a Windows partition and access the same files using Open Office in Linux or Microsoft Office running under Windows.

We first need to find out what partitions Linux has at its disposal. Let's fire up a Terminal window and type the command: `sudo fdisk -l`. This will produce a table something like the following:

```
Disk /dev/hda: 30.0 GB, 30005821440 bytes
255 heads, 63 sectors/track, 3648 cylinders
Units = cylinders of 16065 * 512 = 8225280 bytes

Device Boot      Start      End      Blocks      Id      System
/dev/hda1 *         1        765      6144831     b      W95 FAT32
/dev/hda2          1250     3648     19269967+    f      W95 Ext'd (LBA)
/dev/hda3           766     1249      3887730     83      Linux
/dev/hda5          1276     3648     19061091     b      W95 FAT32
/dev/hda6          1250     1275      208782      82      Linux swap / Solaris
```

It should be obvious that hda indicates a hard disk partition, hda1 being the Windows c: drive, while hda3 is a 4 GB Linux partition, and hda6 is the Linux swap space. It's also obvious to me (since this is my machine) that hda5 is my Windows data drive.

It's this partition that we want to make accessible to Linux which we do by mounting the volume. However, first we must create a mount point which we do in the Terminal window by issuing the command: `sudo mkdir /mnt/windows_data`. As the command name suggests, this makes a new sub-directory named **windows_data** under the **mnt** directory in the Linux file structure. Now we need to tell Linux about the details of the data partition such as the format type (FAT32 or NTFS). In my case, the partition is formatted as FAT32, so the command to be entered into the Terminal window is:

```
sudo mount /dev/hda5 /mnt/windows_data -t vfat -o iocharset=utf8,umask=000
```

If your partition is NTFS, then the appropriate command is of the form:

```
sudo mount /dev/hda5 /mnt/windows_data -t ntfs -o nls=utf8,umask=0222
```

Note that we are specifying the particular device (in my case /dev/hda5) that is to be mounted, giving it the name of a pre-defined mount point (/mnt/windows_data), and setting parameters appropriate to the disk format.

If we now run Nautilus, the Linux file manager (using the menu sequence – Places – Computer), we will find that we have an 18GB volume named **/mnt/windows_data** available. And, if we run OpenOffice.org Writer, we will find that we can load the file **linux_06.doc** (this newsletter article on my machine) from this partition, edit the file in Writer, and then save

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Next Meeting: THIRD WEDNESDAY, September 19th, 2007

September Raffle

Because we were unable to hold a raffle in May, we will now be raffling off our third and final copy of **Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007 with GPS** at the September meeting, thanks to the generosity of *Microsoft MindShare*. This nifty package not only has street-level maps and over 1.2 million points of interest for almost all populated areas in Canada and the U.S., but with the included GPS receiver and your portable computer, you can pin-point your location within metres, have the program speak out directions to you as you drive, mark a trail where you have been, and much more. This is your last chance to win this package!

For details on this product (street value \$150), see <http://www.microsoft.com/streets/default.mspc>.

You can also read a review on the previous release at <http://opcug.ca/public/reviews/s&t2006.htm>.

Tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Coming Up...

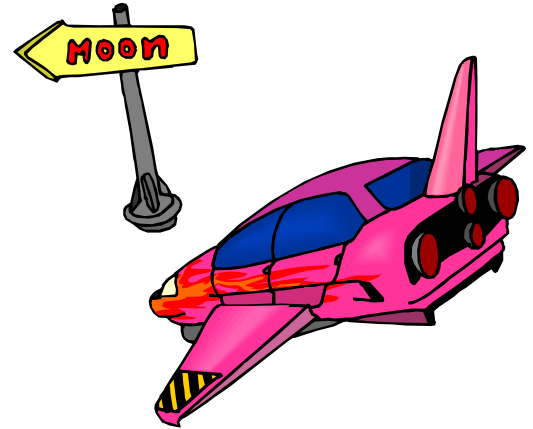
The September meeting will be held on September 19th, the **third** Wednesday in September.

The topic and guest for the September meeting are **TBA**. Please visit the OPCUG website between now and September 19th at <http://opcug.ca> for updates. Click on the **MEETINGS** button.

June Prize Winners

The raffle prize (a Vista Launch Kit) was won by **Jacques Cadieux**.

Frank Rogers took home the door prize, a copy of Norton System Works.



2007 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, September 19 th (third Wednesday in September)	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, September 19 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, September 19 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, September 19 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, September 19 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, September 19 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

2007 OPCUG BEGINNERS' WORKSHOP



Ottawa PC Users' Group **Beginners Workshop**

Saturday, November 17, 2007
9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Heron Road Community Centre, 1480 Heron Road

Need some information on computers?

Let our experts give you the basics on:

- Hardware solutions
- Operating systems
- Open source applications
- Security issues



Registration fee of \$50 includes: lunch and coffee breaks, a one-year membership in OPCUG (\$25 value), and a CD-ROM containing all the presentations and reference information.

Plus, there will be draws for a variety of door prizes.

Registration is limited to 60 participants. Sign-up now at <http://opcug.ca>

(see article next page)

2007 OPCUG BEGINNERS' WORKSHOP

Once again, we are planning to host a fall workshop. While the last two workshops were somewhat focused on specialized topics, this year's event will be aimed more at beginners. So, tell all your friends who are not yet members of OPCUG that we have a deal they shouldn't miss. We will provide them with everything they need to know about computer hardware, operating systems, open-source applications, and security issues – or at least everything we can cram into a one-day workshop on these four topics – at an unbelievable price!

Our hardware expert will cover all the bases on current and future technologies, and provide some considerations for those planning on purchasing a new computer versus upgrading an existing machine. Vista and Linux always seem to be in the news. What does Vista have to offer over XP? Should you consider moving to Linux? Can you do both? We have all the answers. We will also discuss the basic concepts behind the open-source movement and take a look at the best of the available applica-

tions. Finally, if you are concerned about viruses, worms, Spam and phishing schemes, our security expert will give you the lowdown on how to keep the black-hat guys at bay.

Our Beginners' Workshop is scheduled to run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 17th, at the Heron Road Community Centre. The cost to attend the entire day's workshop sessions is just \$50.00. This includes a catered lunch and coffee breaks; a complimentary one-year membership in OPCUG (a \$25 value); a CD-ROM containing all of the presentations, speakers' notes, and associated information. Plus, we will be holding a draw amongst workshop participants for various prizes including computer books on workshop-related topics.

Space at the workshop venue is limited and participation will be restricted to the first 60 registrants. So, get all of your friends, colleagues and relatives who are not members of OPCUG to register today by visiting <http://opcug.ca> and clicking on the "WORKSHOP" link.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Below is an article about the OPCUG and a couple of ads that appeared in the Ottawa Citizen on August 31, 1992.

10th year for Ottawa PC Users' Group

At the first meeting of the season for the Ottawa PC Users' Group, Sept. 8, Corel will demonstrate CorelDRAW! version 3.0.

Borland is scheduled for the Sept. 29 meeting to show one of its new Windows products.

Other upcoming events include debates a computer animation competition and a swap meet. The Ottawa PC Users' Group was formed in 1982/83 with 20 charter members.

At that time an IBM PC cost about \$5,000. For that you got an IBM-PC with 64K of RAM, a 160KB single-sided floppy drive, a monochrome graphics card and monitor, one serial port and DOS v1.0.

Now, ten years later, the club has about 500 members, and big blue is making clones!

This year OPCUG is again meeting at Sir Robert Borden High School. Tentative dates for 1992 are Tuesdays Sept. 8, Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Nov. 24, and Dec. 15.

This year's meeting format is a little different from previous years. The meeting will begin at 7:30 P.M. with the main presentation which will run until 8:45 p.m., followed by a 15 minute break. At 9 p.m., after the break, the special interest groups will meet in their designated classrooms.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are organized by members within OPCUG.

Current SIGs are DPT (desktop publishing), Windows, Fox and the Beginners' Corner.

The group also has a project fixing up orphaned computers for the Ottawa Community Foundation. These computers will be placed in needy organizations which could not otherwise afford them.

"The OPCUG always welcomes new members and wants to hear from everyone including new members, old members and potential members with ideas and suggestions for improving the group," says Harald Freise, chairman of OPCUG.

The OPCUG mailing address is 3 Thatcher Street Nepean, Ontario K2G 1S6. You can leave a message on their answering machine at [discontinued], or the electronic bulletin board, [discontinued].



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ARTICLE

Upgrade Envy—Part 3

by Peter Hawkins

Dear Reader. You can be forgiven for thinking that I might have been able to complete this easy-to-do upgrade by the time you returned to reading the exciting pages of this fine September 2007 document that you are either reading as a .pdf file on your monitor, or holding a printed version in your hot little hands. Such is not the case! However, let me digress by saying that I hope that you, as an environmentally aware computerphile, have saved 1/650th part of a tree by reading this electronically.

When last I was heard from, I was just about to begin the process of "authenticating" my Windows XP Operating System. According to Microsoft, in their usually polite way of personally communicating with each and every one of their terribly loyal customers, when I reached the point in the boot-up process that my much more local and certainly distinctly friendlier computer store assured me they too had arrived, a pop-up window pleasantly informed me that I could use my system for 30 times or I could now "activate" my OS. Just take a few minutes I was informed. Yeah right!

First I was asked for a registration number. Easy I thought. I'll just look on the Cicero disk that came with the original computer box. What follows was what was written on this very important disk: "Windows XP Home with SP1 Recovery CD - For Distribution Only With A New Cicero PC". In smaller print underneath was written: "V 1.7 - Part No. 5215-1136 or all Cicero computers.. This was going nowhere fast.

As an option, my computer appeared to have generated a random series of alpha-numeric characters, neatly arranged into 9 blocks of 6 characters. It was suggested that I could enter them into the appropriate boxes carefully arranged at the bottom of the pop-up message, and by doing so, my version would be "authenticated". Alright (I said to myself) I can play this little game. Won't take more than a minute or two and everything will be right as rain. (Got your umbrella out yet?)

It did, in fact, take no more than a couple of minutes to perform the aforementioned task. When I hit the ENTER (or was it ACCEPT) button, it visually depressed, and then absolutely nothing happened for at least 60 seconds. I'm a patient fellow, and becoming more so due to this pleasant experience with Microsoft. At last! A new pop-up opened and said something about needing to call a Customer Care Representative as I couldn't "Authenticate" my OS. And to

provide further excellent assistance, I was presented with a list of phone numbers for nearly the entire world, depending upon what country I resided in. Canada I would add is found under the USA & North American listing. And the phone number was a freebie.

Call, talk, enter, run. What could be simpler. And really, I had a good book to read while I waited the 20 minutes or so for a "live" person to walk me through the process. The very first thing I was asked to do was to describe my problem. That took a few seconds. (As a by-the-way, you really don't want to have to do this procedure with a dial-up connection as it will take forever!) Secondly I was told to re-boot my computer to take me back to the position I was in when I first started, that is to say, to the pop-up window that wanted my registration number. In fact, it wasn't quite where I began because the window informed me that I now had 29 times to run my OS. Surely that would be enough to get something up and running!

When informed that I didn't have a registration number on my disk, he thought about it for a while and then asked me if there was a "Certificate of Authenticity" someplace on my computer case. What does it look like, I wondered. Bluey-green, numbers on it, firmly glued down, was the answer. Well, as you probably know, computer cases inhabit the dark, dingy, dusty, dungeon-like spaces at the back underneath all computer desks, and I am now assured that mine is no different. Fortunately my emergency flashlight was in the room next to me, and I could investigate further. Lo and behold, out of the darkness, at the very back, under a mass of wires, firmly attached to the case, was a Certificate of Authenticity. It had 5 blocks of alpha-numeric characters and a bar-code. I will admit that I had to crawl on my side and wiggle in around all the wiring balancing a flashlight, a pencil, and a pad of paper to record this important information, but at least I had it. And the pain in my back and side lessened in intensity over the ensuing weeks as physiotherapy and massage worked their magic once more!

Armed with this valuable information, I triumphantly informed the Rep that I was now going to enter it in the approved boxes, and await my validation. You believe this, right? What he said next is painful to remember: "We have no record of this registration". What am I going to do? Don't worry, I was informed, I'll just generate a new array of alpha-numeric characters in (you guessed it!) 9 blocks of 6 characters which you will enter in the appropriate boxes below. Which he did, and which I did. As an aside, since I wrote the first batch of numbers down, the second batch looked nothing like the first batch at all. Maybe really

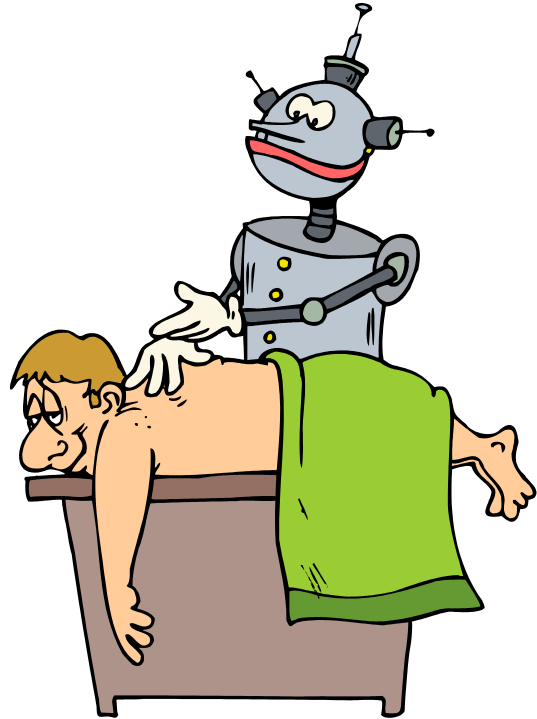
(Continued on page 7)

Upgrade Envy—Part 3 *(Continued from page 6)*

random number generation! After what seemed like a small eternity but was not likely any longer than 60 or 90 seconds, I received a Hallelujah pop-up. (It took nearly 60 minutes to arrive at this point.) Congratulations it said, you have now "Authenticated" your copy of Windows. Please record the following numbers and keep them in a safe place.

That little phrase, right at the end, looks quite innocuous, doesn't it. Little was I to know at that point in time, just how important those 6 little words were!

PS: I don't want you thinking that this story is at all like the penny-dreadfuls that some newspapers were like in the 19th century. It is just that this experience has to be lived moment to moment. In that fashion, the agonies will be distributed over a number of readers and my allotment will dissipate faster!



Exploring Linux—Part 6 *(Continued from page 1)*

the modified version back to the Windows data partition where it will be available for subsequent processing in Word next time we boot into Windows.

But, the mount command is rather long and complex to have to issue every time we log on to Linux. And, knowing the power of Linux, we can guess that there must be an easier way. Actually, one way that will work right now, is to open Terminal and press the up arrow, at which point the mount command in all its glory appears as if by magic. Of course, it does so because Linux maintains a command history and we are merely selecting the last command used from the buffer. The permanent fix is to edit the `/etc/fstab` file and insert an entry for our Windows data partition. So, in Terminal, let's enter: `sudo gedit /etc/fstab` to produce the following listing in the editor's window:

And, let's add the following new line to the end of this file to specify a permanent entry for the Windows data partition:

```
/dev/hda5 /mnt/windows_data vfat iocharset=utf8,umask=000 0 0
```

Save the file and reboot the computer. If you now check Places – Computer, you will now find that your Windows data partition has been mounted automatically and is ready for immediate use.

So, now we have the best of both worlds – access to our working office files – from both Windows and Linux. What more could you want?

Bottom Line

Ubuntu 6.06 LTS (Open Source)
<http://www.ubuntu.com/>

Mounting Windows Partitions in Ubuntu
<http://www.psychocats.net/ubuntu>

```
# /etc/fstab: static file system information.
#
# <file system> <mount point> <type> <options> <dump> <pass>
proc /proc proc defaults 0 0
/dev/hda3 / ext3 defaults,errors=remount-ro 0 1
/dev/hda6 none swap sw 0 0
/dev/hdc /media/cdrom0 udf,iso9660 user,noauto 0 0
```

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

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