



Letters

Date: Saturday, December 01, 2001

Topic: Linux Journal

Readers sound off.

Letters

Formerly Too Informal

I was very impressed with the September 2001 issue of *LJ*. The new look is great. It even seems the writing is more professional in these last two issues than it had been in the past. I initially thought this issue was the best I'd read! But the October 2001 issue is right up there, if not better! I had considered dropping my subscription to *LJ* because the articles read too informally. I don't know if that makes sense. But these last two issues have been excellent! Keep up the good work.

--

Matt C.

Shorter UPFRONT?

I must say that overall I like the new format of *Linux Journal*. I am disappointed, however, in the reduced content of the UPFRONT section. I really enjoyed all the quotes and odd statistics in the old format of the UPFRONT section. I hope that the lack of these items in the September 2001 issue is only a temporary condition.

--

John Metzner

Not to worry, John--the amount of UPFRONT content varies somewhat month to month.

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Editor

Disallowed Dirty Phrase

I could not resist trying the small driver from the article "Loadable Kernel Module Exploits" (*LJ*, September 2001). But there were some problems: 1) there are too many headers in Listing 1, 2) `char * temp_buf` is unused, 3) `wrapped_write()` should stick whether to `"n"` or `"count"` as one of its parameters and 4) `wrapped_write` I would put as `wrapped_write(int fd, void *buf, size_t n)`.

I liked the idea about replacing all "Linux sucks" phrases to "Linux rules", so I tried to implement it. I extended the `wrapped_write` function to do such a replacement. The function `strstr()` gave me problems while compiling, and I did not find an implementation of it on my Mandrake 8.0 laptop. "extern `strstr`" was everywhere. So I used a simple loop with `strncmp()`, and it proved to be more useful because it can replace several occurrences of a phrase. To do so and please the compiler, I removed `"const"` from the `wrapped_write()` parameters to write back to `"void *buf"`. Also, I had to change the `linux/version.h` file because I had compiled the kernel myself, and `insmod` was swearing at the difference. But in the end when I had succeeded, I really enjoyed playing with such a kernel module: whenever I tried to type that dirty phrase it was immediately replaced. I tried some editors, sent naughty e-mails to myself and so on...great! Thanks a lot to the author; now

I agree with Linus Torvalds: the real purpose of Linux is to have fun.

--

Vladislav Belogroudov

Agrees with Jones

I would like to express my strong agreement with Daniel D. Jones, whose letter you published in the October 2001 issue of *Linux Journal*. The French chef gag employed in Marcel Gagné's Cooking with Linux column is irritating and tiresome. While the content of the column is of some value, I doubt I'm alone in finding the style annoying and unhelpful.

--

John Doherty

Satisfied Diner

I look forward to my monthly visit to *Chez Marcel*. His topics are always interesting, his explanations have that extreme French lucidity, and I live in hope that François will pour me some of that Chambertin 1998. Perhaps Mr. Jones has a touch of the *mal de mer, non?*

--

Peter P. Chase

El Cheapo Offends

``El Cheapo Linux" Mr. Rosen? Come on. How about ``CheapLinux"? Living next to a major city like San Francisco in the state of California, I guess one just starts speaking Spanish without realizing it. A Spanish name does not imply low quality. But are you sure you haven't stepped on some legal toes using the name El Cheapo Linux? Google finds 2,440 pages with El Cheapo Linux.

--

Steven M. Ruiz

***Rosen replies:** Mr. Ruiz, I'm sorry you took offense at my Spanish-sounding name for Linux. I suppose I could have used the made-up mark ``Cheap Linux" to make the point that a trademark eventually becomes associated with a product and conveys many marketing messages based on the meaning of the words in common parlance as well as the mental associations created by advertising dollars. I didn't have to go to Spanish for that point. I used a foreign-sounding mark for another reason, although I failed to explain the reason in my article. (There is only so much one can say in about 500 words!) Many people assume that translating a trademark into a foreign language (or foreign-sounding language) will help them avoid trademark infringement claims. The law doesn't work that way. I doubt the US Trademark Office would allow registration of Manzana computers, or Linux Sombrero Rojo, or that Apple Computer or Red Hat would stand idly by while those marks were applied to competing goods. I suppose I could have chosen more precise Spanish (Linux Barato), French (Linux Vulgaire) or German (Linux Billig) for my example. Perhaps then someone else besides you would have taken umbrage, or I could have escaped without criticism at all. I did a quick Google search on ``El Cheapo Linux". Indeed there are many hits. But my quick scan found none that would qualify as a valid trademark. (That's a relief!) It appears that, even were a person to seek trademark registration for that mark, it would be disapproved as being merely descriptive, or perhaps now, generic. For what it is worth, I meant no disrespect. I represent a number of Spanish-speaking clients, I do pro-bono work for nonprofit Hispanic groups in the Bay Area, and I even lived in Guatemala when I was a child. So I'm not trying to sound like I'm disparaging your language (or any language) or the people who speak it.*

Love the MUD

In the October 2001 issue Marcel turned me on to that delectable project called ALICE. In his article, he gave notice of an age old net entertainment called MUDs. I want to thank Marcel in cooking up such fine recipes in the past, and for adding a bit of MUD seasoning to his cuisine.

MUD games and Linux fit together hand in hand. Ask a few of the local geeks in the office, such as Alan Cox or Illiad, what a MUD is. Graphical games are greatly enjoyed, but you just can't beat sitting down and role playing or hacking up your best bud through a text-based interface. Huzzah Marcel and *LJ*! Perhaps Monsieur François has a MUD pie recipe, no?

--

Calvin ``Kyndig" Ellis

Errata

The October 2001 issue of *Linux Journal* stated (on page 44):

Since then, universities like Berkeley and companies like VA Linux have developed efficient software packages for cluster monitoring and have made them open source. We use a node-cloning package called SystemImager from VA Linux (www.valinux.com) to do software upgrades.

I would like to make the clarification that SystemImager was actually created and developed by yours truly, Brian Finley. VA Linux did release a version of my software, as did SGI, in a similar way that Red Hat and SuSE release their versions of Linux. Current and future official releases of SystemImager are available at systemimager.org.

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