WRITE ACCESS

Modem Woes

In the May 2007 issue, Klaus answered a sweeping query from a newbie (like myself) who wished to escape the clutches of Microsoft (like myself!). As someone in the same situation, I was disappointed by the answer. Telling the poor guy to look on the net for information when his first question indicated that he *could not* access the net was not at all useful.

It seems to me that someone wishing to migrate from Windows is willing to make some sacrifices, but the essential hardware needs to be working adequately from the first install. The Help files for setting up a modem should be on the distro CD/DVD, not on the net.

The general responses on the Help sites you mention are that "Newbies with problems should have done more research before trying Ubuntu." I ask how one would know that? I didn't need to research Win3.1/ Win98 / Me / XP or Mac OS X before using them; they just worked out of the box.

Anyone with experience with other operating systems does not expect to need to do research that early in the process. I do understand the problems of WinModems, USB Modems, and their drivers. All I can say is that, until Linux developers stop fixing the blame and start fixing the problem, Linux will only ever be a second rate product designed to alienate the vast majority of computer users.

Rob Pilgrim

LM Regardless of the tone on display in some Linux Help forums, every Linux user was once a newbie, and most users have been through the frustration of expecting something to work and discovering complications. For some users, this experience evokes fascination and the thrill of the hunt. For other users, it is merely annoying. These responses are not just based on the level of intelligence or technical skill – factors such as personality, the presence of a support group, and the availability of free time also figure in.

Just as Linux is developed by informal collections of programmers around the world, its Help sites and user support forums are largely staffed by informal groups of volunteers. It is unlikely that this situation will change anytime soon. If you really want to learn Linux, it is simply essential to learn to work with Internet information sources. Even the experts do this. In fact, the experts seem to spend *more* time looking for answers on the Internet than beginners. This is part of the culture and part of the experience of using Linux.

The modem problem really does come down to hardware. Vendors need to provide more information and better support for Linux. Until Linux receives an equal share of attention from the vendors, these hardware-related issues will require an extra share of attention from the user.

Laptop Wireless

Jack Tyler writes that he is having problems with Linux on the Centrino platform. I'm currently running an Advent

Stephen-Mcsweeny, Fotolia

T5500 (Core 2 Duo Centrino). I tried SUSE 10.2 and Ubuntu (probably Edgy) before settling on Fedora 7. All of them work with the built-in Intel 3945ABG device. For reference mode, the SSID and speed are all set to Auto.

One point to look out for is the wireless kill switch. On the Advent, this button, adjacent to the wireless indicator LED, isn't mentioned in the handbook. It was off by default; I wasted about a day before discovering this.

Ian Goddard

LM Thanks very much for the tip. We'll pass this on to other readers who are puzzling through the problems of Linux wireless support.

Please send your comments and suggestions to letters@linux-magazine.com