

TECH TOOLS

Professional users are always searching for an edge. Whether you work with Linux as a webmaster, programmer, system administrator, or security consultant, you know the best solution depends on finding the right tool for the job. We thought you might be interested in the following new products and updates.

Astaro Command Center 2.1 Released

Astaro Command Center 2.1 Central Management Utility, a free platform for the central management of multiple Astaro installations, can be used by all Astaro partners to oversee multiple Astaro installations and offer managed security services. Version 2.1 has the ability to share global definitions across multiple organizations, saving time by letting managed security service providers push configuration objects to multiple locations.

The Astaro Command Center 2.1 is available at no cost to all Astaro partners who provide multiple managed security installations, as well as to end users who have multiple Astaro installations deployed across several locations. For more information and to download Astaro Command Center 2.1, visit <http://www.astaro.com/>.

Get MariaDB 5.1.42

MariaDB 5.1.42 is a new branch of the MySQL database and is the first final release of this database. Based on MySQL 5.1.42 and XtraDB 1.0.6-9, MariaDB works just like MySQL, including all of the common commands, interfaces, libraries, and APIs.

MariaDB can be installed from binaries, Debian *.deb* files, or source. Community testing is encouraged and, although bugs involving

Windows and Solaris have been fixed in the current version, there continue to be issues with warnings and a few other bugs.

Go to http://askmonty.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page to learn more, to try out MariaDB, and, if so moved, to contribute to its further development.

What Is the Titan Framework?

Titan is an open source JavaScript web framework built on jQuery and boasts of being the easiest, smallest, and fastest web framework you've ever experienced. If you already are reasonably well versed in JavaScript and jQuery, it takes no time at all to learn how Titan works.

Titan interfaces with JSON, letting you put JSON data into HTML elements using either JavaScript or CSS Class Names. It also has the ability to query the server using REST methods to retrieve JSON data. Titan doesn't require you to use the Titan interface; rather, it lets you use whatever interface you create in HTML.

Titan is free to all and available now. To read the full description and view some instructional videos, visit <http://code.drewwilson.com/entry/titan-an-introduction>.

Updated SUSE Appliance Toolkit for ISVs

The SUSE Appliance Program by Novell just became a better, faster, and easier way for ISVs (Independent Software Vendors) to build their own software appliances with applications running on top of SUSE Linux. SUSE Studio online is completely stable and is now updated on a weekly basis. The frequency of the online service updates outstrips both the on-premises and on-site versions, which are still regularly updated but can't match the speed of SUSE Studio online.

The "dark side" of SUSE Studio is that the local installation still must be provisioned on bare-metal servers because the app doesn't run in a virtualized environment. However, although SUSE Studio doesn't run in a local virtual platform, it can still produce virtual images for deployment. Also, given the apparent advantages of SUSE Studio online, the SUSE Lifecycle Management Server (SLMS), which is used to manage software licenses and entitlements as well as distribute software patches, is only available via the on-premises solution.

If any of this has attracted your attention, you can find out much more at <http://www.novell.com/partners/technology/isv/appliance/>.

Get Firefox for Mobile Now

The good news is that the mobile version of the Firefox web browser has been released. The bad news is that, as of this writing, it's only available on Nokia's Maemo5 platform. That means if you own a Nokia N810 or N900 smartphone, you have the good fortune to be able to install and use Firefox for Mobile. All other mobile users aren't so lucky ... yet.

Firefox for optimized Windows Mobile devices has an Alpha 4 version available for download, but don't expect to experience full Firefox functionality if you decide to take it for a test drive on your Samsung Omnia II or HTC Touch Pro. If you are looking forward to eventually using Firefox on your Blackberry or iPhone, I'm sorry to say that Firefox has no plans to develop for those mobile platforms. However, Android users can look forward to using Firefox eventually, although no information about development or release is available yet.

Firefox mobile development is a dynamically changing landscape. To learn more, go to <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/mobile/>.

OS Hardening Tool Supports Novell SUSE

Speaking of Novell SUSE, Trusted Computer Solutions (TCS) has just released an updated version of its automated Operating System (OS) hardening tool, Security Blanket, and now supports Novell SUSE, OpenSUSE, and Fedora 11, as well as continuing support for Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL), Oracle Enterprise Linux, and Solaris.

This latest version of Security Blanket offers role-based access control (RBAC) and a Java-based administration console. With a name like "Security Blanket," it's probably not a surprise that RBAC has advanced security, which is attributable to its ability to allow users to perform operations specific to their particular roles.

Security Blanket's Java-based administration console is touted as more flexible and intuitive, and the new Profile Builder tool allows easier implementation and management for users who need to develop their own customized security policies.

Security Blanket is available now. For pricing and more information, go to <http://www.trustedcs.com/>.

Pandora FMS 3.0 Is Here

Pandora FMS, or Flexible Monitoring System, is an open source monitoring utility designed to watch all of the hardware devices, applications, and operating systems functioning in your infrastructure. It can then alert you via SMS to a wide range of problems, such as a memory leak on a server, a network interface that is down, and even a website that has been defaced. It also monitors movement of values in the NASDAQ new technology market.

Pandora FMS 3.0 now supports CentOS, Debian, SUSE, and Ubuntu. Pandora also continues to offer support for AIX, Solaris, and Windows Server 2003. An ISO installer and a VMware image are available, as well as updated documentation in both English and Spanish.

You'll find all you need to know about Pandora at <http://pandorafms.org/index.php?lang=en>.

By the Light of the Silvery Moonlight 3.0

As you probably know, Microsoft's Silverlight project has an open source shadow in the form of Moonlight. A preview of Moonlight 3.0 is now available for early testing. Actually, release notes for previews 1 and 2 have been published online with an empty space on mono-project.com's Moonlight preview page for preview 3.

By the time you read this, the Winter Olympics will be over, but preview 2 comes with Olympics support, working well on the NBC Olympics site. A number of memory leaks have also been fixed, and effects such as the blur effect, DropShadow, and ShaderEffects have been implemented.

XPIs for both 32- and 64-bit versions of Linux are available, but the source code for the preview releases can be checked out only from SVN rather than being available in TAR files. Go to <http://www.mono-project.com/Moonlight/Preview> to see the latest Moonlight.

Try Out Terminator 0.90 Alpha 1

The purpose of the Terminator project is to produce an efficient method of filling a large area of screen space on your computer with terminals, letting the user access multiple terminals in one window, and using keybindings to switch between them. It's definitely a work in progress, and, as of the last report, items such as directional navigation, drag and drop, and some command-line options still weren't working. Instructions for installing the required software are available on the author's site, and installation and configuration seem to be optimized for Ubuntu (Debian). It's not much to write home about yet, but worth keeping an eye on. Go to <http://www.webupd8.org/2010/01/try-new-terminator-090-alpha-1.html> for the full details.

HAST Project Ready to Test

Recently the [freebsd.org](http://www.freebsd.org) forums announced that HAST, a method for providing storage that is filesystem and application independent, is now available for testing. HAST operates on the block level, so it is transparent to devices and applications, and information is accessed as if the `/dev/hast/` directory were the same as a raw disk or partition.

The current release of HAST was announced on the FreeBSD forums and at the FreeBSD Foundation blog: <http://freebsd.foundation.blogspot.com/2010/02/hast-project-is-complete.html>. HAST is available for download via SVN at <http://svn.freebsd.org/viewvc/base?view=revision&revision=204076>.

NameBench Speeds Up the Internet

One way to speed up your Internet experience is with NameBench, an application that will search for and compare the various DNS servers in your area. You can then edit your connection settings and configure the IP address of the fastest local DNS server on your computer. NameBench is available as a free download from code.google.com and can be installed on Linux, Mac OS X, and Windows. You can work with NameBench either in the GUI or at the command line. Find out more and download NameBench at <http://code.google.com/p/namebench/>.