

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.

Arkeia Announces Network Backup 8.0

On April 1, Arkeia announced that its Network Backup Version 8.0 is available for download. Arkeia Network Backup v8.0 is the industry's first virtual appliance for backup and is the first application to support backup servers in any combination of system software and physical and virtual appliances.

Rather than requiring distinct backup solutions for remote offices, the Arkeia application is designed to deploy and manage a consistent backup solution across the entire network infrastructure. The three deployment alternatives offered are virtual appliances, physical appliances, and traditional software. Version 8.0 provides identical capabilities and features for all three. They also all use the same backup agents, allowing admins to develop and modify their servers without having also to modify the agents.

Other features of Version 8.0 include an enhanced GUI, easy-to-use tape library management, and wiki-formatted documentation. To learn more about this network backup solution, including how to download it, go to <http://www.arkeia.com/>.

Fish Takes the Fear out of the Command Line

Although Linux for the desktop is becoming more user friendly all the time, some tasks still are better performed in the shell than in the GUI.

One of the last user fears of computing is using the command line. What if you could use a shell that was designed to help you learn commands as you went? Now there is: Fish.

Fish is a shell that provides suggestions or hints to the user. Although you can use the help command to get a list of options for a command, Fish anticipates your needs and even provides auto-completion of commands (without having to hit the Tab key). Although Fish won't be a big attention-getter for the Linux shell veteran, it will certainly appeal to the traditional home or small business user who is considering Linux on the desktop but is still anxious about issuing shell commands.

Find out the latest on Fish at <http://fishshell.org/index.php>.

Nettop Shuttle X270V Comes with openSUSE

Shuttle Incorporated is now shipping its X270V mini-PC based on its mini-ITX X27 platform, which was released last August and runs openSUSE Linux. The X270V features a dual-core Intel Atom 330 processor clocked at 1.6GHz, possesses 1GB of DDR2 RAM (which can be upgraded to 2GB), and offers gigabit Ethernet and USB connectivity.

You can purchase the X270V now for EUR 299 or about US\$ 390. A Windows-based version is available for EUR 394 or US\$ 514. Contact <http://sys.eu.shuttle.com/home.jsf> for more information.

XO Laptop Gen 1.5 Being Developed

This refresh of the Gen 1.0 project continues to use an x86 processor with VIA chipset to remain compatible with the existing software packages and remain separate from the Generation 2.0 project. The 1.5 uses a VIA C7-M processor, with clock ranges from 400MHz (1.5W) to 1GHz (5W).

Other enhancements are 1GB of DDR2 SDRAM and 4GB of NAND flash storage, which can be upgraded to 8GB.

The goal of the 1.5 project is to maintain the power consumption parameters of Gen 1 while allowing for easier suspension and, ideally, decreasing costs. Read the complete announcement at <http://lists.laptop.org/pipermail/development/2009-April/024127.html>.

Moxa's Industrial Automation

Moxa's rack-mounted DA-681 computer is available and designed for use in difficult environments such as power substations.

Running Linux, it offers a 1GHz Celeron processor, four RS232 ports, eight RS485 ports, six Ethernet ports, and dual power inputs. It also offers isolation protection for all of its serial and Ethernet ports.

Linux is run from Flash storage with additional SATA and IDE connectors for HDD storage. Its operating temperature range is 10 to 60C (14--140F), allowing this robust device to serve in a wide variety of challenging locations.

A product overview and other data can be found at <http://www.moxa.com/product/DA-681.htm>.

Envizons' Linux Gaming Console

The beta version of the EVO Smart Console began shipping on April 10. Based on a 2.4GHz Athlon, the Smart Console and Mirrors Evolution distribution is a Fedora derivative and features game play, HD video playback, Internet access, and VoIP. Console users can locate Amiga-based games and an Akimbo-based VOD (video on demand) service courtesy of the Envizons "cloud" computing service.

The most recent information on the Console's specifications include an AMD Athlon 64X2 5600 processor, an ATI HD 3200 graphics processor, up to 2GB of DDR memory, and 6 USB 2.0 ports. The H.264 VCI and MPEG2 video codecs are supported, and the console boasts 120GB of hard drive storage, with 10GB of free online cloud storage.

The beta program, which ended April 17, offered consoles between US\$ 280 and 350 per unit. The production device is available for US\$ 380 with three pre-loaded open source games.

To learn more, visit <http://www.envizonsinc.com/news.html>.

Ubuntu-Based eBox Server

eBox Technologies has just released version 1.0 of its open source server appliance based on Ubuntu Linux. The server offers DHCP, DNS, LDAP, and NTP server role abilities and targets the small- to medium-sized business environment. The device's main objective is to provide management for internal communications of network services. The latest version includes enhanced backup and reporting features and new templates that let users define data models and back-end functionality.

Major features include the User Management Center for managing user and group accounts, allowing authentication against Windows domain controllers. The Shared Resource Manager provides file and print sharing with Windows networks, and the Network Gateway manages virtual interfaces and 802.1q-enabled trunk interfaces and sets up default gateway and static routes.

Version 1.0 of the eBox Server is available as a free download from <http://ebox-platform.com/>.

Palm Pre Running Open Source

The Palm Pre, Palm's up and coming hand held device, runs the Linux-based WebOS, which is quite a switch from the more expensive software used in older Palms. Its 3.1-inch multitouch display offers a resolution of 320x480 and a slide-out keyboard, as well as Bluetooth and WiFi networking and 8GB of storage.

Plenty of third-party applications and services come under the hood, including Google Maps, Fandango Movietime and Ticket, Pandora Internet Radio, and SprintTV. Information on pricing and availability isn't currently available, but you can register at <http://www.palm.com/us/> to be notified when it is.

Alcatel-Lucent's Embedded Linux Network Switches

Industry pundits state that Alcatel-Lucent plans on replacing VxWorks with embedded Linux for its Alcatel-Lucent Operating System (AOS). The current AOS 6.3.4 release is likely to be the last to use VxWorks before Alcatel-Lucent moves to an as yet unannounced Linux distribution, although last March it became known that they were using Red Hat's new Red Hat MRG (Messaging, Realtime, Grid) for communications systems aimed at the SME market space.

Details are not yet available as of this writing, but visit <http://www.alcatel-lucent.com/> for the latest updates.

Dual-Mode Wi-Fi and HSPA Huawei Netbooks

Huawei's EM772 wireless module is targeting the low-end notebook and sub-notebook space with the goal of capitalizing on the development of WiFi/HSPA integration. Huawei's miniature EM772 allows mobile computing devices to be made smaller, giving sub-notebook users the ability to go online anywhere at anytime. All other manufacturers in this space can only provide networking through the use of a separate USB 3G dongle plugin, and then, only at WiFi hotspots.

To learn more about the EM772, visit <http://www.huaweidevice.com/>.