

## Practical Multimedia Techniques in Linux

# MOVIES AND MUSIC

You've been through the basics of playing sound and editing videos on your Linux system. Now take a step closer to the tools and techniques of the experts. **BY JOE CASAD**

**H**ardware and software vendors long ago solved the problem of integrating computers with standard peripherals like printers and disk drives. The emphasis of the last few years has been on incorporating devices that were once considered quite separate from the realm of the home computer.

Your computer, of course, is quite good at helping with anything digital, so it is no wonder developers have focused on using computers to manage the output from tools such as digital cameras and digital audio equipment. Linux users, who are technically curious as a group, are often the first in line to try these new techniques. The mainstream Linux systems are packed with multimedia software – media players, video editors, CD burners, sequencers, and synthesizers, and even more tools are available on the Internet. But it is often difficult to find practical documentation for how to use these tools in real situations.

This month's cover story takes a practical look at some tools for Linux multimedia. Of course, we can't tell you everything you'll need to know about editing digital video or setting up your own recording studio, but we'll highlight some common tasks and show you some useful tools, and maybe the discussion will lead you to your own new discoveries.

We start off this month's collection with a look at the MainActor video editing program. Specifically, we'll show you how to give your videos a professional look by adding titles and other text messages. Then we'll follow with a pair of other articles on digital video in Linux. The article "Cut and Toast: DVD Authoring on Linux" introduces the Q-DVD Author tool, which lets you convert your digital videos to DVD. And "Handyman: Converting and Processing Videos with Transcode" looks at the Transcode utility, a fast and flexible tool that lets you manipulate video images and convert video file formats from the command line.

Finishing the set is an article for those who have ventured into the treasury of available Linux audio software. Linux has made great advances in the

audio industry and now competes for the attentions of the experts, but the Linux audio infrastructure is a world unto itself. The thousands of VST/VSTi audio plugins developed for Windows and Macintosh systems were once unavailable to Linux systems, but now you can access the VST audio archive through some simple Linux tools. In the article "Audio Crossover: Playing VST Audio Plugins in Linux," Linux audio expert Dave Phillips, author of the book *Linux Music and Sound* (No Starch Press), shows how you can access VST and VSTi plugins from Linux systems. We hope you enjoy this month's Multimedia cover story, and good luck with your efforts in Linux audio and video recording. ■

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Sure you can make home movies, but can you add a title, credits, and other text messages? We'll show you how to add text to your videos with MainActor.

**Q-DVD-Author .....27**

Q-DVD-Author is a handy tool that helps you put your videos on DVDs.

**Data Conversion .....32**

Transcode is the Swiss Army knife for video manipulation in Linux. Use this simple command line tool to convert video file formats and resize video images.

**VST Audio Plugins .....36**

The Internet is full of VST audio plugins written for Windows and Macintosh systems. We'll show you how you can integrate these VST and VSTi plugins into your Linux sound studio.