

MUUGlines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

Next Meeting: December 14th, 2006: Round-table and Holiday Mingle

As the year winds down, it's time for MUUG to take things at a more relaxed pace. So, we'll allow the round-table discussion to go a bit longer (rather than cutting it short as we sometimes have to), then instead of a very short coffee break, we'll have a more laid-back mingler with some holiday treats and more time for informal discussion.

Not sure if the fat guy in red will show up, but rumour has it there will be some gifts given out... So, whether you've been naughty or nice this year, don't miss out on the fun!

Where to Find the Meeting

Meetings are held at the IBM offices at 400 Ellice Ave. (between Edmonton and Kennedy). When you arrive, you will have to sign in at the reception desk, and then wait for someone to take you (in groups) to the meeting room. Please try to arrive by about 7:15pm, so the meeting can start promptly at 7:30pm. Don't be late, or you may not get in. (But don't come too early either, since security may not be there to let you in before 7:15 or so.)

Limited parking is available for free on the street, either on Ellice Ave. or on some of the intersecting streets. Indoor parking is also available nearby, at Portage Place, for \$3.00 for the evening. Bicycle parking is available in a bike rack under video surveillance located behind the building on Webb Place.

Coming Up: January 9, 2007: IBM Server Virtualization with VMware ESX

Scott Jordan, IBM's Technical Support for the Prairies System x Sales Team, will talk about IBM blade server technology, and demo VMware ESX. Larger disk arrays, faster processors, and more dense memory packaging is making virtualization a very attractive solution for running multiple operating systems on one hardware platform. Add this to the centralized management, redundancy, and high availability features of VMware and you have a powerful business solution. Come and see Scott put his pet "rack" through its paces.

Motorola Ships First Linux-based Phone

Motorola is shipping the first model in its Scpl ("scalpel") line of Linux-based phones set to replace the ubiquitous Razr. The Motofone F3, available today in India, is an extremely low-end phone featuring an "electronic paper" display, breakthrough battery life, and usability features for the illiterate.

Motorola announced the Motofone back in July, as the first model in a new Scpl ("scalpel") line of Linux-based phones. At the time, it positioned Scpl as a replacement for the Razr in the U.S. and European markets. Thus, the Razr line, which includes the Razr, Krazr, and RazrMaxx, is expected to be the last series of Motorola phones based on the company's aging, proprietary "P2K" OS.

To date, Motorola does not appear to have registered the Motofone or any other Scpl models with the FCC, a necessary precursor to U.S. distribution. However,

BetaNews quotes Motorola officials as saying that the Motofone could sell for as little as \$50 when it does eventually reach the U.S. – “even without carrier subsidies.”

The Motofone is targeted squarely at one of the fastest-growing sectors of the mobile phone market -- the low end. It aims to be simple and intuitive to use, even for those who have never used a computer or a phone before, and who may not even know how to read, according to Motorola.

Interestingly, with many mobile phone markets reaching saturation and relying on replacement business, low-end phones today represent “the major driver behind future subscriber and handset market growth,” according to ABI. In a recent report, the research firm noted that Nokia and Motorola -- number one and two in the phone market -- have gained marketshare by dealing with mobile phone market segmentation better than smaller vendors.

The Motofone eschews fancy smartphone features such as video and MP3 playback, instead focusing on the basics -- making and receiving telephone calls. It does also include a text messaging client, and of course, the capability to download ringtones.

Due to its simplicity, the Motofone will offer “extended battery life,” Motorola says. Some reports from around the Internet put the expected battery life at 400 hours (over two weeks) of standby, and 450 minutes of continuous talk time -- presumably figures for stationary use. Other reports suggest that the Motofone uses a very small, inexpensive battery that yields about 8 hours of talk time.

Additionally, MIT Technology Review says Motorola is developing a bicycle-powered dynamo that will be capable of giving the Motofone a full charge in two hours of leisurely riding.

E-paper display

In place of the power-hungry color TFT LCDs found in nearly all mobile phones today, the Motofone

sports a monochromatic “electrophoretic” display (EPD) dubbed “ClearVision.” Sometimes referred to as “electronic paper displays,” EPDs feature sunlight readability comparable to newsprint, yet require no power to hold an image, once set.

According to BetaNews, the Motofone's ClearVision EPD is sourced from E-Ink, which offers a Linux-based EPD development kit. An E-Ink EPD display was previously used in a Linux-based ebook reader from iRex.

Motorola calls the Motofone's interface “innovative,” in part thanks to its ability to deliver voice prompts in local languages. The prompts guide the user in navigating menus, placing calls, and sending text messages, the company says.

The Motofone's interface also features graphical icons that “visually demonstrate the menu features,” along with battery life and network status. Previously, Motorola officials said the Motofone's interface would resemble the Linux/Java based “Chameleon” interface used in the Rokr E2.

As with Motorola's previous Linux-based interfaces, Chameleon is based on Trolltech's Qtopia Core (formerly “Qt/Embedded”) UI framework and middleware. The Motofone is also based on MontaVista Linux, MontaVista confirmed.

Additional touted Motofone features include:

- Stylish thin design
- Durable housing for optimal performance despite dust and sun
- High-contrast screen using new ClearVision display
- Large font size for easy readability
- High-volume for call clarity in loud environments
- Automatic notification of current prepaid balance
- Embedded polyphonic ringtones in eight voices

A few additional details about the Motofone are available in a BetaNews story, [here](#)

(http://www.betanews.com/article/Motorola_Unveils_9mm_Entrylevel_Phone_with_EInk_Display/1164730034).

Ubuntu, etc

The people over at DebianAdmin have compiled a massive list of Ubuntu based distributions and live cd's. They are at 25 so far.

<http://www.debianadmin.com/list-of-ubuntu-based-linux-distributions-and-live-cds.html>

Ten-Minute Mail

Ever needed a temporary email address to register for a site that you know is going to spam you until the end of time? Head over to <http://www.10MinuteMail.com/> and you can get an email address that is good for 10minutes.

MythTV on Ubuntu

I found this handy guide to installing MythTV on Ubuntu.

http://tvease.net/support/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.5

IBM's Take on the Novell/Microsoft Deal

Just about everyone has expressed an opinion on the Novell/Microsoft patent agreement -- except, that is, for the 800-pound gorilla of Linux: IBM. Today, Scott Handy, IBM's VP of Worldwide Linux and Open Source, decided that enough was enough and it was time to state IBM's position.

In an interview with Linux-Watch.com, Handy opened by saying that, "IBM has long supported interoperability between Windows and Linux. As supporters of open source and open standards," he continued, "we applaud any effort to bridge this gap."

Handy added that, as a member of the OIN (Open Invention Network), "We fully support the OIN statement." The OIN is an intellectual property company formed to further Linux by acquiring patents and ensuring their availability.

In that statement, OIN CEO Jerry Rosenthal said, "Hearing Microsoft agree that Linux is a major force in the information technology industry is welcome news. Many IT customers and software programmers have recognized that Linux is a first-rate computer operating system with performance, stability and cost-of-ownership that compares well with all its competitors, including Microsoft's own offerings."

Handy put it more strongly, though. From where he sits, Microsoft's Novell deal indicates that "Microsoft is coming to terms with the fact that Linux is an unstoppable force in the marketplace."

Rosenthal continued, "Unfortunately, embedded in Microsoft's recent endorsement of Linux are claims regarding customers' needing protection from patent attack. Those claims are baseless. In fact, there have been no patent suits against Linux. While patent disputes are not unheard of between and among software developers and distributors, they are almost always resolved between these commercial entities -- not by dragging in end-user customers. Isn't the real issue the fact that Microsoft is making such a threat against its own customers?"

Handy agreed and added, "We aren't sure what Microsoft's intentions are [in regards to patents]." However, "We have never seen any need for patent protection for Linux, and we don't see any need for it now. If legal claims exist, they should be resolved between vendors and not involve end-user customers."

In any case, Handy added, Novell has been quite clear that they had never agreed in any way, shape, or form that Microsoft had any proof of Microsoft patent violations in Linux.

Looking ahead, Handy said that despite the outcry in some circles about Novell's deal with Microsoft, IBM will be making "No change in our partnership with Novell."

"IBM has two strategic Linux partners, Red Hat and Novell. This has served us very well for seven-years. Over 90 percent of the Linux server market now belongs to those two companies and the industry has consolidated around those two leaders," he added.

"This dual supplier strategy has worked well for us and for our customers," continued Handy. "Some customers have asked questions about this, and we tell them that if there were two or more Windows operating system vendors don't they think customers would get better deals? That usually ends it."

Indeed, Handy thinks that the Novell and Microsoft deal will be good for Linux. "Yes, we had had questions about the arrangement, but Novell's explanation of the patent agreement and the Novell CEO open letter have helped answer most of those concerns for our customers," he said.

Besides, "Many customers prefer vendors to not be at odds with each other. There are a lot of pragmatic decision makers, CIOs, that think Windows and Linux interoperability is a good thing. A larger set of pragmatic customers are finding [the Novell/Microsoft deal] makes Linux more interesting."

Handy then said, that he had talked with Novell's sales force in Paris on Saturday, and IBM's sales force, and "While there are still some questions, there's more enthusiasm because with the [Novell/Microsoft and the Oracle Linux announcement], all this attention by large vendors to Linux shows that Linux is unstoppable."

To many IT buyers, Handy said, "This is sign of Linux's unstoppable growth. It's Linux's time. The only strategy is how to grow with it."

"It's not unlike the introduction of the Internet," Handy added. "Once people understood that it wasn't going away, no one fought it any more; instead every one threw their hat in the ring."

So it is that, from Handy's viewpoint, the end result is that "Linux growth rates will increase because of what has happened in the last four-weeks."

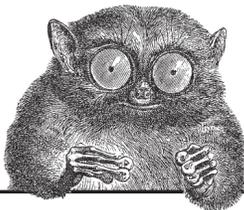
Sending Us E-Mail?

Due to the amount of e-mail MUUG receives, we've set up an auto-reply to give you immediate feedback, and redirect some of the e-mail to the appropriate places. Why not look at <http://www.muug.mb.ca/about.html#contacts> first?

Share Your Thoughts

E-mail us with your comments on the newsletter, whether it's criticisms or commendations, and continue to send in articles or ideas for the same. Specifically, what sort of material you would rather see: Announcements, technical articles, new products, or...?

If you have a How-To or other idea, and aren't ready to give a presentation at MUUG, an article is a great alternative! If you can write better than the editor, that's terrific; if you can't, submit it anyway and we'll get it into shape for publication. We know that many of you have some great ideas and lots of knowledge. Why not share? Send Mail to: editor@muug.mb.ca.



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