On the disc

Distros, apps, games, podcasts, miscellany and more...

The best of the internet, crammed into a massive 4GB of quality DVD.

Distros

Open source software is great: if there is anything you are unhappy with you can change it. This doesn't only apply to code; many programs have plenty of configuration options to make the software work exactly how you want. The software should adapt to what you want to do, not the other way round. Sadly, this is much underused. Look at the number of complaints when Ubuntu changed the colour of its desktops, even though it was less effort to change the colour back, or even use something you chose, than to complain about it.

However, first impressions count for a lot and adding configuration options is no excuse for not giving decent defaults. I'm a fan of KDE but the default appearance and operation of KDE 4 is not exactly inspiring, and knowing how and where to look to change things is not that easy. We've put Bodhi Linux on the DVD before with its beautiful *Enlightenment* setup, and ROSA Fresh does something similar for KDE. If nothing else, it shows how different the same desktop environment can look and work.

The next time you try a new distro or app don't judge it by its cover, have a look at the Settings editor first before having a moan at the devs.

Neil

Linux distributions

ROSA Fresh

This is an aptly named distribution, as it's one that gives a completely fresh look to KDE. In fact, if we hadn't just told you it was KDE, you may not have realised straight away. While Gnome 3 and Unity desktop environments are still going through their growing pains, KDE 4 has put all that behind it to become a stable and mature desktop, and now it looks much nicer too.

We have included the 64-bit version of ROSA on the DVD because if you want the latest desktop, you don't really want to be running it on ten-year-old hardware.
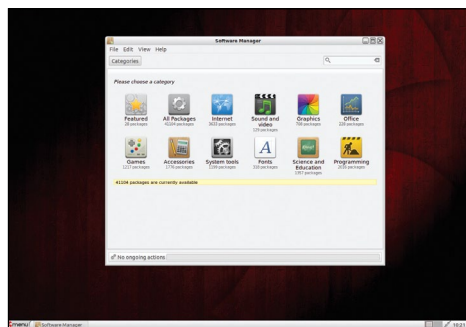
Linux distributions

Peppermint Four

You don't seem to be able to get away from cloud computing these days... unless you have an OS that relies on it. How useful is a Chromebook when the internet is no longer available to you? PeppermintOS is described as a hybrid OS. Its main focus is as a lightweight OS using cloud services, making it good for netbook usage. However, it keeps enough code and data on the hard drive to still be useful when you can't find a Wi-Fi hotspot or a 3G signal.

Sonar

Sonar Linux is an Ubuntu respin, but one that's specifically for the visually impaired. With the likes of screen readers installed by default, it makes life easier for those with restricted eyesight. We also have two small distros aimed at rescue and maintenance: Parted Magic and 4M Linux.

❯ **Peppermint Four: it's head and heart are in the clouds, but its feet are firmly on the ground.**

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New to Linux?
Start here

» What is Linux? How do I install it?
» Is there an equivalent of *MS Office*?
» What's this command line all about?
» How do I install software?

Open **Index.html** on the disc to find out

Are you reading this on a tablet?
Download your DVD from
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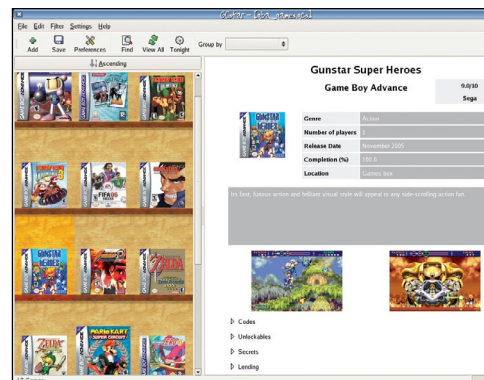## From the magazine

Distro builder
Take control! All the software you'll need to build your very own personalised distro.

Tutorial code
Including the HTML Skrollr that runs from the DVD.

Answers
All your open source problems solved this issue.

LXFHotPicks

Potamus
A lightweight *GTK*-based audio player with an emphasis on high audio quality.

Ioping
Shows disk latency in the same way as the *ping* command line tool shows network latency.

Vinterm
A terminal emulator that simulates the (rather green) looks of a 1980s monitor.

Dateutils
Work with dates and times on the command line.

Griffon
A text editor and IDE for with a special emphasis on creating with HTML.

Puddletag
An audio tag editor that presents songs and their tags in a spreadsheet-like layout.

Berusky
A free logic game, based on an ancient block-pushing puzzle classic called *Sokoban*.

Mobiki
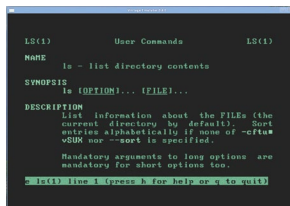A small wiki engine implemented as one PHP file.

PyHIDS
Host-based intrusion detection for verifying a system's integrity.

S2png
Converts binary data files into PNG images and back.

uBee512
Go retro and emulate a 1980s Microbee microcomputer.

And more!

System tools
Essentials

Checkinstall Install tarballs with your package manager.

GNU Core Utils The basic utilities that should exist on every operating system.

Hardinfo A system benchmarking tool.

Plop A simple boot manager to start operating systems.

RaWrite Create boot floppy disks in Windows.

SBM An OS-independent boot manager with an easy-to-use interface.

WvDial Connect to the internet with a dial-up modem.

Reading matter
Bookshelf

The Cathedral and the Bazaar Eric S Raymond's classic text explaining the advantages of open development.

Linux Kernel in a Nutshell An introduction to the kernel written by master-hacker Greg Kroah-Hartman.
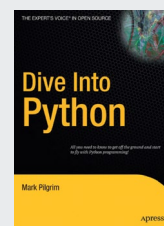
Debian Administrators' Handbook An essential guide for sysadmins.

Linux Dictionary The A–Z of everything to do with Linux.

Dive Into Python A masterclass in this popular language.

Bourne Shell Scripting Guide Get started with shell scripting.

Podcasts
TuxRadar

S5 E14 Daft Punk
News Tor cracked, Ubuntu Edge progress and Android open source concerns.
Open Ballot Is the internet dead?
Discoveries of the week Tanzania is in Middle Earth and Graham is into audio software.

S5 E13 Edgy Ubuntu
News Ubuntu's crowdfunding, Linus gets into an argument and the end of The H.
Open Ballot Will the Ubuntu Edge campaign succeed?
Discoveries of the week Discover what polar bears have to do with tape measures. Not a lot, as it turns out.