Newsdesk

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● **Neverwinter Nights Linux client** ● **LRP RIP** ● **Graphics Muse GIMP updates** ● **Linus leaves 'day job'**
● **HP's new dedicated Linux unit** ● **Big Medium CM** ● **Portable Ogg hardware** ● **2.4.21 kernel released**

SCO LAWSUIT
SCO vs the world

T he SCO saga rages on and, it seems, the former Linux vendor is intent on spreading its litigious tentacles well beyond its first target IBM, hinting that Microsoft, Apple and almost every other operating system vendor could have their day in court. The exception is Sun Microsystems whose Solaris OS is said to be bullet-proofed against legal action, a fact that the company is attempting to exploit in its latest 'we're not IBM' marketing campaign.

Defying the accepted logic of IT news, the story is getting more complicated as time passes and the accusations from SCO become ever more insidious.

■ On June 13th (a Friday, superstitious folks...) SCO announced it had revoked IBM's UNIX licence, which forms the core of AIX, and is at the heart of the dispute. SCO alleges that by contributing AIX code to Linux, IBM has weakened UNIX and misused the source code it had licensed. IBM countered by assuring users that its UNIX license was "irrevocable, perpetual and fully paid up" and that it would vigorously defend the lawsuit.

■ A SCO insider (who elected to remain anonymous) said that portions of the Linux kernel were copied wholesale into the System V code tree to aid the

Demonstrators young and old took part in a recent protest at SCO's HQ.

company's Linux Kernel Personality project which allows SCO UNIX to use Linux applications. Use of the kernel is covered by the GPL, so changes should have been made publicly available. In response, one kernel hacker emailed SCO to say that he would begin legal proceedings against the company – and urge the other 400 main kernel developers to do the same – unless they ceased distributing his code and stopped their efforts to undermine Linux. "I've granted everyone the right to sell, distribute and use my work under the condition that they obey the restriction of the GPL...I've never authorised any other use of my work."

■ Around 70 members of of the Provo Linux User Group (PLUG) visited SCO's offices in Lindon, Utah to protest against the company's actions. However, SCO staff attempted to hi-jack the demo by mingling with genuine protesters and

displaying banners like 'I Love Software Piracy', 'Try Communism – Use Linux' and 'Stealing Software is not a Crime'.

■ One of the 'players' behind the scenes is said to be The Canopy Group (**www.canopy.com**) an investment group whose Chief Executive, Ralph J Yarro III is also the Chairman of SCO board. Yarro was involved in Caldera's 1996 legal win against Microsoft. Other associated companies with Canopy involvement include Trolltech and LinuxNetworx.
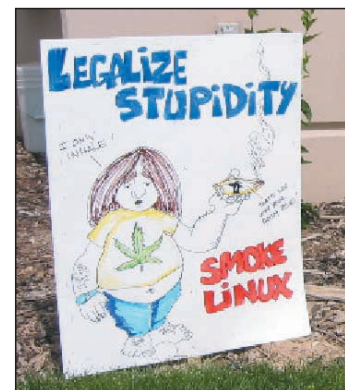
■ Back in February 2000, *Linux Today* reported that SCO had made the source code for old versions of their UNIX OS (Mini UNIX, UNIX V6, PWB UNIX, UNIX V7) available to 'permit hobbyists and enthusiasts to have access to the source code of these historic releases, for personal and non-commercial use'. (**http://makeashorterlink.com/?L5BF 65205**) A day later, Bill Baxter, pointed

SCO staff attempted to raise the debate by infiltrating the protest.

out that these releases were not Open Source. "SCO retain rights to the source code," he wrote. "Maybe they even hope that some of their code will wind up in Linux, so that they can then sue, and render the Linux license terms invalid. Or would they be that spiteful? My guess = yes." Give that man a crystal ball!

If everything seems to be moving too fast the most readable and extensive *precis* of the issue, the Open Source Initiative's (OSI) positional paper at **www.opensource.org**, has recently been updated. It's a long read, but well worth it if you are concerned by the validity of the claims and the affect it may have on future Linux development.

linuxformat.co.uk

Visit the Linux Format website at www.linuxformat.co.uk for an update on the latest events in the SCO saga as well as opinion from other readers of the magazine in the site's forums.
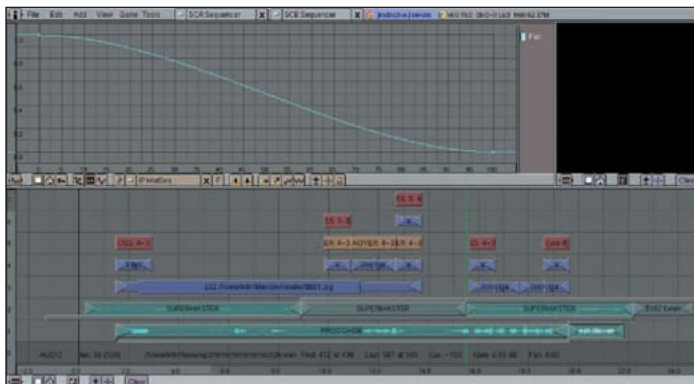
Blender finally gets fully integrated audio support.

3D MODELLING
Blender gets loud

Blender, the pro-quality 3D modelling package which was recently Open Sourced, has gained a new tool in its quest to become a fully featured production environment. *Instinctive-Blender* is an audio sequencing and syncing applet which brings facilities such as lip-syncing and effects compositing within the main application suite. The developers say it will improve efficiency, especially in projects with pre-existing audio. The impressive feature list includes unlimited audio tracks, non-destructive cut and paste, output to CD (44.1 kHz) or DAT (48kHz) quality, full video/audio synchronisation and preview scrubbing. Audio playback is also available from all views including 3D views and can resample all loaded sound files (stereo or mono) to the project's defined sample frequency.

BEOWULF CLUSTERS
Penguins band together

Penguin Computing, one of the most well-known clustering hardware vendors, has acquired Scyld Computing, which develops high-availability Beowulf cluster management software.

Penguin CEO Sam Ockman said the acquisition would make the outfit the definitive provider of Linux-based high-performance computing solutions.

"Don Becker pioneered Beowulf clustering under Linux in 1994 and has been one of the industry's staunchest advocates," he said. "Over the past four years, Scyld has invested aggressively in the development of its software and has earned a strong reputation in the Beowulf clustering market, reducing the complexity of provisioning and managing a Beowulf cluster to that of administering a single Linux workstation."

Don Becker, who will retain his position within Scyld, said the joint venture would soon be in a position to offer alternatives to the traditional monolithic supercomputers. "Our software addresses Beowulf users' dual concerns of cluster manageability and scalability and our technology brings both better performance and greater ease of use, whether your cluster is made up of eight computers or over 1000," he said.

NEWSBYTES

■ Nullsoft could be without its guiding light after Justin Frankle, developer of *Winamp* and the Gnutella protocol (loved by file sharers the world over), said he would be leaving the company which is owned by AOL/Time Warner, following the release and withdrawal of *WASTE. WASTE* was a private file sharing and chat application which limited sharing of groups with up to 50 users. AOL pulled the Windows client software very quickly, though it is still available on a number of mirror sites and a Linux port has already been completed.

■ IBM has updated its eServer Directory Server for i and p-Series systems with improved security and performance and advanced replication support. Product manager Eric McNeil said the release of v5.1 of the software is an important advance for Linux bringing a new level of performance and scalability to our favourite operating system. "We think we have made some significant advances there that should satisfy most companies' requirements," he said.

■ America's Department of Defense has become the first US government agency to officially put Open Source software on the same footing as its proprietary cousin. Linux and Open Source have been used in the background for a number of years – one study suggested that the DOD have some 251 active OSS projects underway – but this is the first time its use has been officially sanctioned.
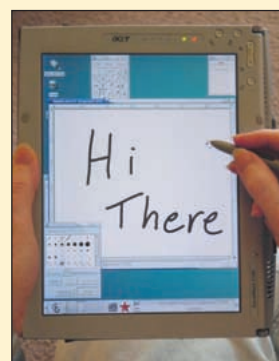
■ The EnGuard secure Linux distribution from Guardian Digital has received an update. Featuring an industrial strength firewall, gateway facilities and intrusion detection, the software is available in a number of editions including a free community version.
Dean Townsley has brought Linux to his Acer TabletPC, detailing the process of installation and configuration on his website at **http://prometheus.physics.ucsb.edu/~dean/TmC100/AcerTmC100.html**

■ Linux kernel 2.4.21 has been released after a six-month wait. It's available at **http://kernel.org**

David Cartwright
David Cartwright is an IT consultant who specialises in providing Linux systems and solutions.

COMMENT
Linux? Ja!

"It's happened at last. Not only has Linux usurped a Microsoft monopoly (in the case of the city government of Munich's 14,000-seat Windows-to-Linux migration) but the mainstream press have got hold of it and realise it's important. I didn't spot this one in the various Linux news outlets; instead, I read it last night as I sat with a glass of wine and the latest edition of *Private Eye*.

Though I'm chuffed with Munich's realisation of the potential cost benefits of running Linux, I'm far more happy that Linux now seems to have expanded beyond 'techie' publications like this one into the media that the bean-counters and the guys who sign off the budgets actually read. This is a massive leg-up for Linux as a business tool.

The traditional impetus to move to Linux comes from the techies who've see it to be stable and a potential business benefit, and urged the management to go for it. Too many times, management believe sound business ideas and technical staff to be mutually exclusive. Even though the likes of IBM are great advocates of Linux as a real, stable business platform, there's always a healthy dose among management of "They would say that – they get it free, so their margins just got healthier".

That's all changed now, though. We're finally at the stage where the MD reads this stuff on the train in the normal publications, and is in a position to ask his fellow board members: "The city of Munich just saved millions on this deal, and their requirements must be more complex than ours, so shouldn't we be investigating it?"

The guys who lead the business decisions can't fail to have an "I want one of those" moment. And if that's not a watershed for Linux, I don't know what is."

MMORPG LINUX CLIENT

Neverwinter Nights now shipping

After a very long wait and accusations of vapourware, Bioware have finally released the native Linux client of *Neverwinter Nights*, the online roleplaying game (RPG). The client currently supports English, German, French, Italian and Spanish and requires the purchase of a valid licence for the game, which means the Windows version (approx £30), plus a downloadable Linux patch, available from **www.fileshack.com/ file.x?fid=2508**. On the plus side, Bioware say, you do get three Windows-branded shiny *NWN* coasters with every boxed game.

Set in a dungeons and dragons style mediaeval fantasy land, *Neverwinter Nights* allows players to build and populate their own worlds and comes complete with the tools needed to build new maps. The game was released last year and there was talk of this being the first game that would ship with Windows, Linux and Mac clients in the same box. However, the Linux version has been the subject of so many delays that it was feared it would never see the light of day.

http://nwn.bioware.com/downloads/linuxclient.html – are you brave enough?

Linux Web Watch/

Read the reasons for quitting – it's a common Linux problem.

And hello Coyote Linux, ascendant champion of the small-install.

Latest version of Knoppix includes a complete MAME installation.

Gentoo's Live CDs are available for various architectures.

The end of the Linux Router Project

Little distros – tiny, tiny ones that fit onto a single floppy disk.

Dave Cinage, the author of the Linux Router Project (**www.linuxrouter.org**) has killed his pet project, citing, among other things, a lack of financial support for his efforts from those who had based products and, in some cases, their whole enterprise on his project.

There are still other tiny distros out there though with similar aims. One which is based on the **LRP** and is still maintained is **Coyote Linux** (**www.coyotelinux.com**). This has both Windows and Linux installation procedures and will run on a very basic machine with no local storage.

One of the more famous single disk distros is tomsrtbt (**www.toms.net/rb**) which is the perfect rescue system, though there is rather more to it than simple first aid!

If **1.44MB** seems a bit limiting and you have a bootable **CDROM** drive, you have a lot of space for a moveable Linux distro. The current king of 'Live' distros is the Debian-based Knoppix (**www.knopper.net**) which includes a full graphical installer, office suite, GUI and development tools. The most recent Knoppix project is a bootable arcade system using Linux and **MAME**. Carry your /home directory on a 64MB **USB** storage device and you can take your own Linux system anywhere!

All these distributions mentioned so far are fine if you're using x86 hardware, but if you have a **PPC** machine, you can put it to use with Gentoo Live distro. Just like Knoppix, this includes a full graphical installation routine, desktop environment and wide selection of applications providing the full range of functionality. The are Gentoo versions for many other architectures too.

NEWSBYTES

■ After news that the Thai government was subsidising the production of low-cost Linux laptops, Microsoft has launched a specific package including a limited version of Windows XP Home and a copy Office XP for the bargain basement price of 1,490baht (£22). Lindows founder Michael Robertson also claims that MS has been offering deep discounts on XP to buyers of Lindows PCs at Tiger Direct. Tiger disputes his claims.

■ Romanian AntiVirus vendor GeCAD has announced it will no longer develop its RAV range of products for either Linux or Novell. The company, which has recently been bought by Microsoft, will now be concentrating solely on creating a new antivirus engine for the next version of Windows.

■ The third release candidate for *Mozilla 1.4* has been released. The project's organisers say this will be the last 'unified' product release. Subsequent versions will be built around the spun-off browser and mail client projects.

■ The *Mozilla* side project *Jazilla*, which implements the browser in Java, has achieved its first milestone release 10 months after it was rescued from development hell. The 100% Java browser uses *Mozilla*'s Rhino engine and is now compatible with standard *Mozilla* chromes.

■ Feeling the heat from Safari, the Mac OS X web browser built on the KDE project's HTML rendering engine, Operasoft has said it may discontinue its Mac browser. The news follows Microsoft's decision to abandon development of *Internet Explorer* for Mac, citing the difficulty of competing with a project with such ready access to the underlying operating system.

■ The patent which prevented Open Source applications such as *The GIMP* from using files based on Unisys' GIF image format has now expired. The patent for the LZW form of data compression, on which GIF is built, expired on June 20 in the USA. Users in countries such as the UK, Canada, Italy and France will have to wait another year before they can 're-adopt' the format.

■ NVIDIA has released a kernel patch (for kernel 2.4.20) finally bringing GART support to the nForce2 chipset.

■ SuSE has launched a Desktop distro aimed at corporate customers (review next issue) looking at alternatives to MS Windows. It includes *StarOffice*, *OOo* and *CrossOver Office* (allowing install of *MS Office*), as well as a licence to connect to SuSE Open Exchange Server.
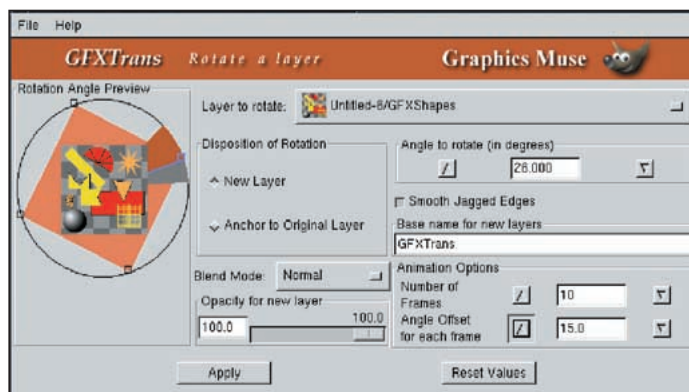
GFXTrans goes beyond the standard 'Rotate' tools in The GIMP.

ART APPLICATION
Plug in a GIMP upgrade

Graphics Muse has updated its range of plug-ins for *The GIMP 1.2*. Distributed on CD, the package features tools which extend the functionality of the application in seven areas including layer management, business card creation and over/under exposure problems. There are also a number of additions to the suite including *GFXShapes* for drawing common shapes such as stars, polygons, triangles and grids.

The $24 CD also features a complete mirror of *The GIMP* plug-in registry, including 110 compiled plug-ins, 30 Perl scripts and 90 Script-Fu scripts, as well as 150 brushes and 130 patterns.

The previous version of the suite is also available for both Linux and Windows for $15.
www.graphics-muse.com

OSDL'S FIRST FELLOW
Linus: full-time kernel hacker

Linux Torvalds has decided to take a leave of absence from his 'day job' at Transmeta to concentrate on kernel development. "Transmeta has always been very good at letting me spend even an inordinate amount of time on Linux, but as a result I've been feeling a little guilty at just how little 'real work' I got done lately," he wrote.

After spending over a decade managing the development of the Linux kernel in his 'spare time', Torvalds will now be paid a salary by the Open Source Development Lab (OSDL), a project set up by a wide ranging consortium to bring more high-end features to Linux. In a joint statement from Transmeta and OSDL, Torvalds said it felt a little strange to "finally officially work on what I've been doing for the last 12 years." But, he said, "with the upcoming 2.6.x release it makes sense to be able to concentrate fully on Linux. OSDL is the perfect setting for vendor-neutral Linux development."

Transmeta said that it was happy to release Torvalds on a undefined 'leave of absence' and that the company would welcome him back when his work on the 2.6 series kernel was completed.

Torvalds has also been pulled into the SCO affair by accusations that his method for validating contributions and identifying the intellectual property origins of code led to 'a very significant amount of Unix protected code' finding its way into Linux 2.4.x / 2.5.x releases. Torvalds told CNET that, as the personal holder of "more IP than the average bear" he cared deeply about the issue. "I personally manage more valuable IP rights than SCO has ever held, and I take it damn seriously," he said.

OSDL was founded three years ago by a consortium including Hewlett Packard, IBM, Intel and NEC. Torvalds will become the organisation's first Fellow, guiding kernel development and setting priorities for OSDL's data centres.

Transmeta, meanwhile, announced a joint operation with China's Chinese 2000 Holdings to develop and promote the company's Midori Linux distribution in the Asia-Pacific region, especially China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. Midori Linux targets mobile / embedded apps.

Hoyt Duff
The author is one of 800 Hoyts living in the USA and runs a little fishing pier when he's not dabbling with his computers.

COMMENT
Wasting time

" A recent convert to Linux said he was returning to MS Windows. Why? The learning curve was too steep, he was frustrated in finding answers, and discouraged by the rancour he found in various "religious" wars within Linux. He felt Linux was a waste of time.

Showing me how he tried to solve a problem he had, he had posted his question to a LUG where he was a member; no one answered. It was easy to see that he had done no research himself and had asked a poorly phrased question.

First, I suggested he read the essay by Eric S. Raymond *How To Ask Questions The Smart Way*. While some have issues with the tone of this missive, it contains many valid and useful points and is an insight into the culture wherein lie the answers we seek.

Secondly, I told him www. google.com/linux is the only true friend he will ever have. He was a newbie Googler, so a quick trip to www.google.com/help/basics.html started him on the path to Power Googling. It's up to us to separate the wheat from the chaff with advanced search techniques.

Here rises the Linux Conundrum: What do I look for if I don't know what it's called? One of my favourite tools, *kdict*, is a search engine front-end for words and phrases. It has often provided a clue for further Googling.

Third, I let him know that while some people find great personal solace in devoting their energy to unresolvable (and ultimately unimportant) debates, his path to Linux enlightenment needn't take those detours.

Finally, I reminded him that the smartest man is not the one who knows all the answers, but knows where to find them. That alone saves lots of time. "

UNDERLINING COMMITMENT

Hewlett-Packard creates new Linux division

HP's commitment to Linux and Open Source development is boosted with the creation of a separate business unit to promote the company's expanding range of Linux products and services. Headed by Martin Fink (previously VP of HP's Business Critical Systems dept) it will be part of the Enterprise Servers and Storage group.

The new unit is said to be a response to HP's projected growth in Intel Itanium 2-based hardware and, said a spokeswoman, reflect the prominence accorded the OS. "This is just a way to make [Linux] more prominent both within HP and in the industry."

Hewlett Packard has also launched a joint venture with *VMware* to bring robust virtualisation solutions to the company's range of ProLiant servers. The tie up would, said HP's Ron Eller, lower total cost of ownership especially in production, testing and development environments.

"Enterprise customers need solutions to help them increase server utilisation, reduce IT costs and benefit from improved system and application management," said Ron Eller. "With *VMware* complementing our *ProLiant Essentials* management tools, customers can gain more agility, accountability and a better return on IT."

VMware and HP bring virtualisation to Proliant servers.
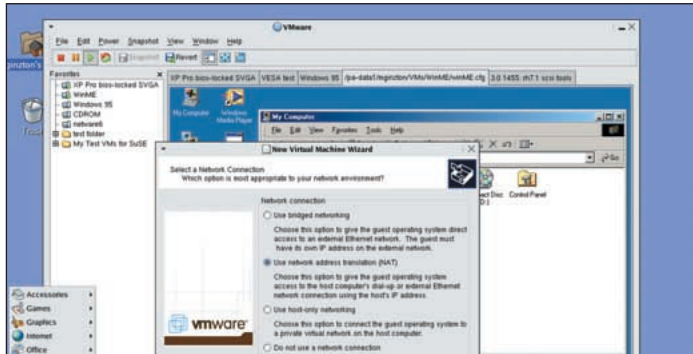
It's not an emulator as such... See page 18 for our *VMware* review.

Embedded Linux News

PhotobaseTV will bring image editing to your television.

● **ArcSoft** has created an photo editing package aimed at users of 'Linux-based TV-centric' devices. PhotobaseTV can be used to do basic editing tasks such as rotation, cropping, colour adjustment and red eye removal and also features a full range of media management tools.

● **Radionet** has released a full set of Open Source tools to create a Linux based 802.11 wireless access point. The Radionet Open Source Environment (ROSE) has already been used to build a city-wide WLAN in Finland and is suitable for use with both embedded devices or standard PCs and laptops. Full source and documentation is available from **www.rosewlan.com.**

● **Prismiq** claims the WiFi upgrade for its Linux-based Media Player device is the first to bring DVD quality streaming over a wireless network.
The device can be used to play video and audio wirelessly from a PC and also works as a web browser and general Internet access device. It is based on a customised Debian distribution, and you can find more details about it on the Web at **www.prismiq.com**

WEB MANAGEMENT

CMS for the masses?

The content management system (CMS) sector is very crowded, with many high-quality solutions available under the GPL. Global Moxie has updated its mid-range suite of Perl scripts ($129) designed to simplify the creation and management of websites by non-technical staff.

Big Medium 1.1 is a fully featured CMS featuring simple installation and unusually modest system needs; no MySQL (or any other database) is needed, just the ability to run CGI scripts on your Linux/UNIX webserver. Despite this, Global Moxie claims the system will handle thousands of articles and millions of visitors without putting too much pressure on the server, due to the 'elegance' of its Perl scripts.

Josh Clark said the software delivers the power and results that would have previously cost thousands of dollars in development time, while freeing web designers from the need to deal with the minutia of web content, so they can concentrate on designing. "Too many creative pros have devolved into glorified typists, as webmasters and designers are relied upon to make even minor editorial changes to websites. Big Medium empowers editorial and business staff to make changes themselves" he said.

OPEN SOURCE NEWS
The engine of development?

A conference supported by the United Nations has concluded that one of the key engines to growth in developing economies is Open Source software, which could be used to build and improve infrastructure without the costs associated with proprietary software. World Bank spokesman Bruno Lanvin said developing nations needed cheap and efficient technologies to make the "giant leaps necessary to catch up with the rest of the world." He added that many were mandating the use of Linux, which looks like it may become the number one OS in countries such as India and China very soon.

Meanwhile in Brazil, the government has announced its intention to migrate 80% of computers in the public sector (including state owned commerce) from Windows to Linux over the next three years. The project will begin with a pilot in one ministry and then spread throughout the administration.

Sergio Amadeu de Silveira, from the National Institute of IT told the country's leading financial newspaper, *Valor*, that the intention was to save money. "We are not just going to do a hasty migration", he said. "Our main concern is the security and the trust of our citizens. The biggest resistance to any change comes from the existing cultural inertia."

De Silveira said the adoption of Linux would promote its use among businesses and consumers in the country and could promote the development of local software and "the democratisation of knowledge."

The situation is also changing in Europe, according to a new report by Bloor Research. Report author Robin Bloor says that if governments adopt Linux in a big way, it will "boost the momentum for Linux everywhere." The analysis details the various migration programs taking place across Europe (like in Germany) which suggests that the UK is playing catch-up to its continental partners.

LINUX MUSIC LIBRARIES
Neuros gets Linux and Ogg friendly

Users of the Neuros Media Jukebox can now use a Linux PC as the host for syncing their music files, thanks to the beta release of Positron, developed on conjunction with Xiph.org. Announcing the availability if the second Beta, Neuros also said that full support for the Ogg Vorbis format, an Open Source rival to MP3, was in the 'final stages of development' and a testing program would begin before the end of the summer. The new releases are the result of a deal signed between Neuros and Xiph.org back in February.

NuRosseta, as the project has been christened, will make Neuros the first hard drive–based media player with support for .ogg files and the new
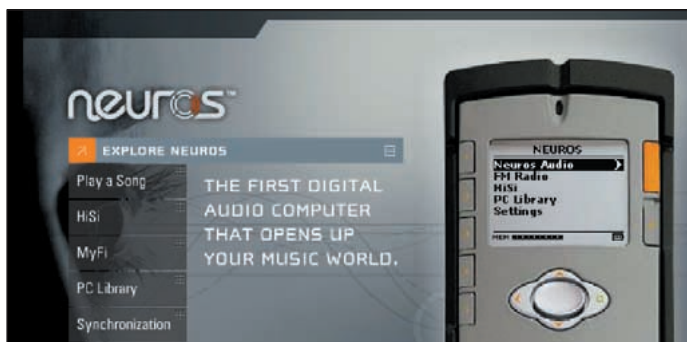
Neuros users will soon get an Ogg flavoured firmware upgrade.

functionality will be available as a simple firmware update.

Neuros has also launched a development site for Open Source

hackers who want to extend the capabilities of the device to buy devices at a reduced cost. **www.neurosaudio. com/dev/dev_index.asp**

Jono Bacon
Founder of UK Linux, *KDE* developer and all-round nice guy, Jono Bacon has finished Uni and is looking for new projects to work on...

COMMENT
Standards?!

"" **Hey, who needs web technology standards? Who needs rules to be set out so web developers can ensure their code runs on a variety of browsers and not just a single, overrated commercial browser? Who needs people like the W3C doing this? Well...me for one.**

Recently I have been messing around with CSS a lot; now my site www.jonobacon.org is entirely controlled by CSS. As I have been working on the site, I have had to consider the amount of browsers to be compliant with: *IE5, IE6, Moz, Konqueror, Lynx, Googlebot* etc. What has been making me increasingly annoyed is the sheer lack of standardisation in some browsers...most notably *IE*.

What is the point in the W3C developing standards if they are simply not implemented in *every* browser properly? The Internet by its nature is an open medium, and though I cherish this freedom, the standards forming the heart of the web should be mandated by the W3C. How this imposition would be implemented I don't know, but something should be done before the W3C loses its rightly placed authority on the technology of the web and have it replaced by a corporation and its agenda.

It's fascinating how difficult it is to be completely browser compliant so your site looks good in each browser. The problem seems to not be massive rendering problems, but small glitches here and there. IMHO, if I design a site in *Mozilla Firebird* (which is 'purely standards driven') it should work in *every* browser. It is difficult enough developing a quality, user-centric, efficient, secure site without having to mess around with CSS all day to ensure it avoids Browser A's quirk here and Browser B's bug there. ""