

Clarification to "Year of the Linux desktop? Who cares!"

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Back in my last blog entry: [Year of the Linux desktop? Who cares!](#) [1]

...Some people have interpreted that I suggest everyone be programmers.

NO! That's not what I am saying.

I'm saying its not that hard to get into programming, IF YOU CHOOSE that path. You don't have to. Its YOUR CHOICE. There are other (non-programming) avenues in supporting open-source.

Take for example, my current limited programming skills have got me into writing guides for now.

I have contributed to...

(1) The **Arch Linux** project's wiki.

Enable XvMC for Nvidia video cards http://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Enable_XvMC_for_Nvidia_video_cards [2]

(2) The **DD-WRT** project's wiki.

(DD-WRT is third-party firmware for Linux-based routers like the Linksys WRT54g series)

Mitsubishi R100 Gateway and Asus WL500G (Original) entries. http://www.dd-wrt.com/wiki/index.php/Installation#Mitsubishi_R100_Gateway [3] http://www.dd-wrt.com/wiki/index.php/Installation#Asus_WL500G_.28Original.29 [4]

(3) My own little piece...

For the new: How do I give Linux a go? <http://forums.techwatch.com.au/viewtopic.php?p=32306> [5] (I need some feedback here).

I've even helped influence two separate projects to combine their efforts (as they were attacking the same goal)

(4) **Proposal to the PhoenixLabs team.**

<http://forums.phoenixlabs.org/t11280-proposal-to-the-phoenixlabs-team.html> [6]

(You can see later on that "Morpheus", the developer of MoBlock, joined PhoenixLabs. This was because PeerGuardian for Linux isn't regular maintained like it was).

That's one avenue.

Others could be:

(1) Help test distros and report bugs.

(Be sure to ask what is expected from a bug report. Often, you need to be as detailed as possible for the developer to reproduce the problem).

(2) Donate a few bucks to a worthy open-source project.

(Maybe one of your fav apps?)

(3) Help a beginner.

(But keep your biased opinions out of it! Let them decide.)

(4) Provide feedback to developers.

(They really don't know if something sucks until you tell them! Of course, be polite and constructively explain why something sucks. Maybe even suggest an alternative approach.)

(5) Help promote open-source in general.

(But remember to try not to force it onto people. Again, let THEM decide.)

On a side note, whenever you're writing a guide of some sort. ALWAYS explain why a command is used and what's it for. Beginners have a hard time trying to understand what all that gibberish they're typing actually means. If you explain it as you go, it makes understanding better. (People feel more confident when they understand what's going on...It also helps break down the initial fears when they start using Linux).

You'll also notice I keep saying "Let them decide". The reason being, is that the typical desktop user has always been pressured and cornered into upgrading when they don't need it.

Take for example, my sister's case. A Windows 2000 user. Not only do they NOT get Internet Explorer 7, but Microsoft recommends they upgrade to Windows XP if they want to install Windows Live Messenger...The thing is, there's nothing wrong with Win2k for her needs! It does the job for her.

Open-source represents the first opportunity where the user is in control and dictates when they need to upgrade. Not because some corporation or an industry needs to maintain a regular flow of profits.

So despite all the politics, controversy, FUD, and bickering that is stirred up by others, don't ever forget that open-source is about the "Freedom to Choose".

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/13778>

Links:

[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/13138>

[2] http://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Enable_XvMC_for_Nvidia_video_cards

[3] http://www.dd-wrt.com/wiki/index.php/Installation#Mitsubishi_R100_Gateway

[4] http://www.dd-wrt.com/wiki/index.php/Installation#Asus_WL500G_.28Original.29

[5] <http://forums.techwatch.com.au/viewtopic.php?p=32306>

[6] <http://forums.phoenixlabs.org/t11280-proposal-to-the-phoenixlabs-team.html>