

Fedora: Re: Re : Re: Deploring *nix Philosophy (Was Re : Splitting archives across floppies)

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From: Robin Laing (*Robin.Laing_at_drdc-rddc.gc.ca*)

Date: 06/08/04

Date: Tue, 08 Jun 2004 09:32:39 -0600

To: pbhat@ongc.net, For users of Fedora Core releases <fedora-list@redhat.com>

Parameshwara Bhat wrote:

> *On Mon, 07 Jun 2004 12:37:46 -0600, Robin Laing*

> *<Robin.Laing@drdc-rddc.gc.ca> wrote:*

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>> *Parameshwara Bhat wrote:*

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>> *But should every account have sound enabled? Reading and playing CD's*

>> *is another issue as well. Do I want my children playing CD on the*

>> *computer? Again this is an administration issue. Default setups can*

>> *be configured to work across the board. I haven't played with the*

>> *settings but I haven't had the need to. Remember some hardware won't*

>> *work in Linux and from an article I read this morning, not all*

>> *hardware will work in Windows.*

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> *Yes, I believe computer is a tool, getting more and more cheaper, like*

> *tv, many other players and other gadgets like fridge, microwave ovens. Now each*

> *has its own safety/security issue. But in a family, they are all*

> *accessible to different family members (setting different limits is*

> *ok, like child lock in tv). Computer cannot be on a different plane. This*

> *adaptability and configurability are more important. It should not*

> *require a computer guru. Linux is entering new markets in Desktop / home*

> *PCs and it should present tools so that any educated person (not a*

> *computer professional) can install it, configure it and maintain it for*

> *normal everyday uses where a PC is more of a typing / publishing machine*

> *and a great multimedia entertainer. I would like Linux distros to see*

> *the requirement of this segment and cater to this and provide good*

> *security / reliability in this environment. It has far higher abilities*

> *which it can keep and augment for other segments of users. If this is*

> *ensured, hardware makers will come to Linux with support, You do not*

> *have to go beg.*

>

I agree that computers are becoming a commodity and almost a necessity in the home. Look at the price of new computers in

comparison to 6 months ago. But as we have seen in the past, networked Windows computers that have been compromised have cost billions of dollars. I have yet to hear of a TV or smart coffee maker doing the same damage (other than a fire). Of course as they get smarter, the problem will occur.

A computer can be either a tool that is secure and headache free or full of holes and a major pain. How many home users throw their hands up when their computers start acting funny and call their "computer" friend to help them. I have seen so many systems that have never updated their systems or virus software. I have seen systems that don't even have anti-virus programs.

Now tell me how a typical home user cleans his registry file in Windows other than doing a re-install? How many home users even have heard about the registry? How many home users do a clean install once a year. I have a friend that schedules a re-install each year. Yuk.

Last full install I made was on a brand new computer and on an old computer when a HD failed.

Ease of use isn't the best in all cases. A stove is a handy tool but I wouldn't let my daughter use it at her age. I will make sure she is capable before using the stove. She can use the computer (linux) and does on a daily basis. She can add icons to her desktop and tool bar.

She can play CD's and ogg/mp3 files. She doesn't have any email though.

One thing I will say about Linux over Windows is once it is configured, it keeps working the way it is supposed to. With FC1, I have only had one issue with sound and another with screensaver locking up the terminal in 6 months. I had more problems with Win2kPro in less than 2 days just trying to install some software.

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> *Security and safety precautions are fine but as everytool in the modern world is getting complex and coplexer, not everybody can learn everything and to use a tool, you should not be required to know all its internal mechanisms. That's an unfair demand on the user. By your response, I see we both diverge here. Security /safety of any tool should be so designed as to enable / empower a normal intelligent person in its usage.*

I agree but in the terms of security, the tool should have limited access. A gun is a tool that can provide security but in the wrong hands it is very dangerous. A normal person can use a gun and doesn't have to know how gun powder is made or anything about the firing pin or trigger mechanism. A baseball bat can be a fun tool or a weapon in the wrong hands. As I stated before, in the cases where a person cannot configure the workings of his computer, hire someone to do it.

People hire service techs all the time. People hire furnace service personal each year to do regular maintenance that any home owner could/should be able to do. How about an oil change on a car? This is an easy task but most people I know wouldn't even think about doing it.

For all those Windows people out there, they are in for a learning curve when SP2 comes out. The security features are already reported to break many applications. There are going to be alot of unhappy windows users due to these changes. Microsoft is already putting notices out. Some applications will not work with SP2. Security in Windows is going to change the way "normal" people use their home computers. They are going to have to learn more about the workings. Actually Windows is moving more towards *nix all the time.

As stated in another article I read. Most peoples experience is with a computer that comes pre-installed with Windows already configured. Someone else has dealt with the driver issues. They don't have to install anything to the hardware. When it comes to Linux, it is a user that normally installs it. This is a major difference. Of course if someone updates their hardware or has to do an install they may learn the hardway.

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>> *We are here to learn and any civil discussion. Some of the issues that have been in this thread are issues that I have thought about as well. I learn look at other issues due to discussions. I never looked at the comparison between cars and using computers before reading this post.*
>>
>> *I would rather learn how to work within Linux security than deal with all the headaches of having to re-install Windows once a year just to clean up the registry.*
>
>
> *I think I am putting quite a good deal in learning. I was only talking about the macro configuration which could obviate tinkering with half knowledge.*

The problem with macro configuration is that it can get corrupted and then there is a major problem. I feel that this is the idea behind the registry in Windows. A single configuration file. A single point for all configuration info. Limited knowledge can destroy a windows system if the registry is corrupted. A single configuration tool can be quite dangerous in the wrong hands. A single mistake is much easier to correct than a system wide configuration change. A single point of failure is not a good way to ensure security.

I do remember linuxconf from some years ago but I didn't really use it. It was a single point of system configuration. I did try it but it didn't work well enough to make me feel happy. Of course I have

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had issues with Control Panel in Windows not working as expected and causing problems.

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> *Regards,*

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> *P Bhat*

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Robin Laing

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