

Re: File servers, web servers ?

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/alt.os.linux/2004-02/2218.html>

From: Lew Pitcher (*Lew_Pitcher_at_td.com*)

Date: 02/24/04

Date: Tue, 24 Feb 2004 10:23:19 -0500

Oz wrote:

- > *What exactly are file servers, web servers and ftp servers?*
- > *I hear these terms many times in relation to linux OS.*
- > *Also what are its uses? I've tried a google, but found no basic*
- > *explanation.*

A lot of networked tools are built to the "client/server" model. In this model, two components are built: a centralized "server" that handles all the activity for the tool, and a distributed "client" that converses with the "server" to perform the activity. Web services, ftp services, and "file" services are usually built to this model.

In the case of "web services", the distributed client is your web browser. When you enter a URL, or click on a link, the web browser contacts the web server named in the URL, and asks it for the data that the URL represents. The web server, processing client requests from all over, finds the data that your browser asked for, and returns it to your browser.

In the case of "file services", the distributed client is likely your OS, or an add-on product (like Samba). When you ask your system for a remote file, the client in your system contacts the "file server" named by your request, and asks it for the data that the filename represents. The remote file server, processing client requests from all over, finds the data that your system asked for, and returns it to your system.

Finally, in the case of "FTP services", the distributed client is your FTP application. When you enter a remote system and filename, the FTP application contacts the FTP server named in your input, and asks it for the data that the filename represents. The FTP server, processing client requests from all over, finds the data that your FTP application asked for, and returns it to your FTP application.

Now, what does this all have to do with Linux?

Your average desktop machine that's loaded with Microsoft Windows doesn't come with many of these sorts of services enabled. If you

alt.os.linux: Re: File servers, web servers ?

/really/ want to run a webservice or an ftp service, you might have to install third-party software. In any case, your home machine isn't /licenced/ by Microsoft to provide these sorts of services on a widespread basis; you're not legally allowed to use WinXP Home edition as a "corporate" web server, or file server.

OTOH, there are no legal or software encumberences preventing you from running industrial-strength "corporate" services on a Linux machine, even if it is your home machine from Gateway or Dell. In fact, most Linux distributions come with most of these services ready to install and use.

--

Lew Pitcher, IT Consultant, Enterprise Application Architecture
Enterprise Technology Solutions, TD Bank Financial Group
(Opinions expressed here are my own, not my employer's)