

Linux UI vs Mac?

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My wife will soon need a computer for business and she has vetoed the idea of using Linux for it. She wants to be able to get done what she needs without having to call me every time something goes wrong. She finds e-mail attachments particularly awkward to deal with (save to file, remember where you saved it, open application and then each app looks in a different place for your file, etc etc).

No problem, thought I. Just get Konqueror or something suitable working for file browsing and let her drag and drop just like she does on her Mac at work. So I do that and send myself an e-mail with attachment (using Mozilla for e-mail). Ah! There's the attachment – let's just drag it over to the desktop. Oh, I see it wants a file name – well that's inconvenient but I'll live with it. Enter file name and save and there is the icon on the desktop. Click on it – nothing. Open it any any app – nothing. Look at properties – it's *one byte long*, ie empty. Saving the attachment from Mozilla opens up the dreaded file/directory box, but I do save it and verify – nothing wrong with the attachment and I can open it – once I have saved it by typing in name/location etc. GUI drag and drop? Forget it.

Oh well, let's drag'n drop instead onto a Konqueror window. The Konqueror window disappears and a seg fault window comes up to "report this bug", or whatever.

!@\$!!! I thought this would be easy, but it really isn't. It doesn't look possible to recreate "the Mac experience", or something close, on my KDE desktop. (Running Debian sarge btw). So i will probably get an i-mac mini for my wife, instead.

Does it have to be this way? My usage is very different, all command line and only a little gui use. But if one wants to be able to "just use it" for business, sending/receiving attachments, dragging files around, click to open (on Mac you can even open an attachment you are about to send by clicking on it – to check, if you want, that it's correct; not on Linux/Mozilla), and so on – I am having a hard time seeing how any of my desktops, or any Linux desktop, can do that reliably, where "reliably" means – it has to work every time the same way.

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Maybe I do better by carefully selecting the applications? Does anyone else have any experience/suggestions for setting up a Linux box as a Mac substitute, with primary requirements ease of use (especially consistency of user interface), and reliability? I have been a Linux user for about 7 years and there's plenty of stuff *I* can't fix.

Example: the Mozilla printer pull-down, where I can't for the life of me keep stuff I don't want, permanently out of it, like "blah@64" etc etc. I just want the printer (by default) and maybe an option to print to a file. I edited Mozilla startup files several times but the other entries aries from the dead after a few uses. !@!~!! Or on the pdf reader apps, how to get rid of kprinter as the default and have cups be used instead. I am sure there are config files for some of this but many of the application quirks appear unfixable; different apps have different use designs and that's it.

BTW I have used a Mac and can't say I like it much, personally (nothing liek a perl one-liner for getting real work done :-)).. But I can see how the computer non-literati like the Mac – it really is easy and *it works*. I am pretty frustrated that after all this time, the Linux desktop can't get it together to do the same, at least not my desktop anyway :-) I can do many things the average Mac user cannot – decipher unknown attachments, change file formats, and so on ad infinitum, but this "simple stuff" is just beyond me.

Thanks,

Don Pettengill