

Re: file system inconsistency

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- *From:* The Natural Philosopher <a@xxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 10 Sep 2006 09:47:47 +0100
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Allan Adler wrote:

Bill Marcum <bmarcum@xxxxxxxxxx> writes:

On 09 Sep 2006 21:38:55 -0400, Allan Adler
<ara@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

I'm running RedHat 7.1 on a HP Pavilion 6635 PC with
Netscape 4.76.

Why are you running RedHat 7.1? If you bought your PC when 7.1 was new,
your hard drive is probably on its last legs.

Does this mean you're not going to answer my questions, which don't have
anything to do with how old the PC or its version of RH are?

Regarding the PC:

- (1) I made a mistake: it is not my HP Pavilion 6635 PC; I write about it
so often that I just wrote it again without thinking. Actually, this
time it is the Dell Latitude CsX laptop that is the afflicted PC.
- (2) I can't afford to buy computers. This was a gift from its former owner
who had gone on to better hardware some 6 years ago. If you want me
to have a better computer, give me one.
- (3) Even if you do give me one, I'll still hold on to this one because I
have a lot of uses for computers, some of which are better carried out
on old expendable ones. Also, I've found that sometimes a computer that
I've considered expendable can turn out to be the only computer that can
do a particular job. That was certainly the case with this Dell Latitude
CsX and now it is my only decent access to the internet from a computer
of my own. Also, I like to study old computers.
- (4) The reason it still has RedHat 7.1 is as follows:
 - (a) This laptop has a floppy drive and a CD drive, both of which have
to be plugged into the laptop externally. The CD drive can only
read CD's, not write them. For several years from the time I
acquired the laptop, that meant that I had no viable way to back
it up. I asked the person who gave it to me, and also people on
various newsgroups, probably including this one, how to get around

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this problem which threatened everything I had on this laptop, and got no answers, or at least none that I felt I could implement. Then one day, not very long ago, a friend of mine showed me a 256 MB flashdrive. I tried inserting it in the USB port of the laptop and, after a lot of experimentation with the mount command, and probably some help from this or another linux group, I managed to get it to work. I then backed up the laptop, 256 MB at a time, to the HP Pavilion, which does have a CDRW drive, and burned it all onto CD's. This solved my previously insoluble problem of backing up the laptop. Now I think flash drives are the greatest thing since sliced bread.

(b) One reason the problem of backing up the laptop had such urgency is that I had accidentally dropped the AC adaptor of the laptop on the floor and damaged its cable right at the point where the cable enters the AC adaptor box. HP's phone representative in India told me that it would cost me \$80 to replace the AC adaptor, which I didn't want to spend and which is probably more than the laptop is presently worth. The AC adaptor, after this mishap, only worked marginally. More precisely, it would only conduct electricity to the laptop if the wire was bent in a very precise position and, as time went on, it became more and more difficult to find that position. Once I managed to backup the laptop, I considered it expendable due to this hardware problem, which I didn't consider it worthwhile to fix.

(c) That being the case, my only access to the internet from my own PC's, was via an even more ancient PC with 16 MB of RAM, since I prefer to separate the machines I work on from the machines I use for surfing and email, just as a security precaution. The laptop has been hacked into twice over the internet and I think such precautions are justified. It was after the last such break in that I upgraded to RedHat 7.1. Before that, it was running RedHat 6.3. This upgrade to RH 7.1 took place in 2001, I think. This ancient machine is extremely slow and inconvenient to use on the internet, but it had the advantage of discouraging me from spending so much time online.

(d) Whatever my feelings might have been about upgrading the OS on the laptop, it simply was not feasible as long as the AC adaptor was broken. Happily, it finally became completely impossible to use the AC adaptor. I say "happily" because that meant that I could finally make an attempt to repair it without the risk of losing the little functionality it did provide. As it turned out, contrary what I had expected, it turned out to be quite easy to repair. I fixed it a few weeks ago and now it is the solution to the problem of getting better access to the internet on my own PC's than is afforded by the ancient PC with 16 MB RAM.

(e) Therefore, it is only within the last few weeks that all of the major hardware problems I have had with this laptop have been solved to the point where I can contemplate upgrading the operating system to a more recent version of Linux. And I am indeed contemplating doing so. At the moment, I have the RedHat Fedora 2 installation CD's. I'm not sure if the hardware on this laptop will support such an upgrade. It only has 64 MB RAM, for example,

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and only about 4 GB of hard disk space. I found out that 64 MB RAM is not even enough to boot the hikarunix 0.4 CD. If I destroy the operating system presently installed on the laptop in the process, and such an outcome is not at all unlikely given my experiences trying to upgrade on other machine, some of which have been duly reported on this newsgroup, I need to have a plan for what I am going to install on this laptop in case that occurs. One possibility is to install the UMBC RedHat 7.3 distribution that I downloaded using a friend's laptop that is equipped with wifi and which I used to install that version of Linux on the ancient 16 MB PC mentioned earlier. Another is to try to install the UMBC RH 8 distribution which I downloaded the same way. The wifi laptop isn't available to me at the moment, but when it is I intend also to get the UMBC versions of RH9, Fedora 1 and Fedora 3. So, the maintenance of this laptop goes forward but there is a lot to think about.

(f) Another reason I like to keep RedHat 7.1 and other old versions of Linux around is that some of the books I am trying to learn from are based on these old Linux kernels. For example, I've been trying to learn some of what is in the book, Linux Device Drivers, 2d ed. Maybe much of what is in the book is obsolete, but I'll be glad to get to the point, after reading it, where I can appreciate how obsolete it is. I can't afford to keep throwing money at the moving target that is Linux by constantly buying books that I can't read fast enough to keep up with the changes that will make the books obsolete before I'm even a few chapters into them. I have no problem with the trailing edge of technology and, that being the case, I'm content for the moment to study the books I have that are suited to the machines and operating systems I have. There is nothing wrong with that. Everyone has his own way of learning and his own limit on the resources he can commit to the learning process. This is mine.

(5) But Bill Marcum asks about the age of the laptop and the condition of its hard drive. I don't really know how old the laptop is but I think its former owner had it for at least a couple of years before giving it to me. So, maybe it is 8 years old or so. I think the machine is in pretty good shape, all things considered. I tend to give computers a lot of credit for durability. But why should this be a matter of speculation on my part or on the part of Bill Marcum? Is there something I can do to determine whether the hard drive is in a bad way and to test all the other hardware?

Anyway, as I mentioned at the outset, none of this has anything to do with my original questions. If anyone knows the answer to them, I'll be very interested in what they have to say.

And that. Bill Marcum, is a PROPER answer to YOUR question.

Now, how about spending one one hundredth of the effort answering his?

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