R.I.P. Alain Baudrez, a.k.a. Wamukota

In This Issue ...

From The Chief Editor's Desk ...

Ahhhh! Things are looking up a bit, at least in my little corner of the world!

After a labor dispute that resulted in a 99 day lockout, baseball is back. Yep, the American pastime is back. I'm a baseball fan. More specifically, I'm a Kansas City Royals fan. I'm a fan of my hometown team, through thick and thin, good times and bad times. They've certainly had their bad times since winning the World Series in 2015, but I remain a fan, nonetheless.

I've been a Royals fan since their inception in 1969. Even when I lived in the Chicagoland area, I would only go to a baseball game there if the Royals were in town – when I could afford it and fit it into my schedule. When I couldn't make it to games, listen to the games, or watch the games on TV, I would spend the next day pouring over the box scores of the game to see how my favorite players and the team were doing. Many times, it wasn't necessarily what anyone would call good, but I was still a fan all the same.

One of my earliest and fondest memories was attending a Kansas City A's game at the old (and now gone) Municipal Stadium. I attended that game in 1965 or 1966 with my parents and maternal grandparents. Of course, the Kansas City A's pulled up their tent stakes and moved to Oakland after the 1967 season, paving the way for the 1969 expansion of Major League Baseball, which gave birth to the Kansas City Royals.

As a kid, I would often sit on the porch at my grandparents house, and listen to the baseball games on the radio with my grandfather. So, I was exposed to it all at quite an early age. I wasn't able to play baseball well, but I was still a fan. On most nights today, you will find the Kansas City Royals

games playing on my TV. If I'm driving somewhere, you'll find me listening to the games on the radio. But just like with anything, there are things that I find annoying about the play-by-play announcers. And this happens on both the TV and radio. For me, it's like fingernails on a chalkboard.

Let's say there's the start of a pitching duel. The score is 0-0. The announcers, as they break for commercials in between every half inning, will say something along the lines of "and after three innings, there's no score."

ARGH! SCREEEEEECH! (fingernails on a chalkboard)

Yes, there is a score! It's 0-0!

To be honest, I'm willing to meet halfway. I'll accept "after three innings, we remain scoreless." Technically and linguistically, even that is inaccurate, but it sure sounds a whole lot better than "there is no score." And, to give fair credit, the announcers do actually say that … sometimes. But the "there is no score" utterance remains the most common thing they say.

It's not just our local announcers who are guilty of this, either. I've heard the announcers on games with a national audience say it, too.

We all have little items like this that just grate on our last nerve. This one resurfaced for me, as it usually does, when the new baseball season got underway. I'm sure if you think about it, you also have similar "things" that annoy you, especially when it concerns something you're really interested in.

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This month, we mourn the loss of our long time friend, forum member, Linux user and enthusiast, and all around GREAT guy, Alain Baudrez, a.k.a. Wamukota. To honor him (and to allow those who didn't have the privilege of getting to know him to experience his enthusiasm), we're reprinting some of the articles Alain wrote for the magazine. R.I.P., our dear friend!

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This month's cover is by Meemaw. It commemorates Kite Day, on May 12. Click on the previous link for instructions on how to make your own homemade kite.

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Until next month, I bid you peace, happiness, serenity, prosperity, and continued good health.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by tuxlink, on March 31, 2022, running KDE.

Alain Baudrez/Wamukota: In Remembrance

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

On April 20, 2022, we lost one of our longtime PCLinuxOS forum users. Alain Baudrez, who often went by the nickname Wamukota, chose euthanasia to end his suffering from ALS, or Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis.

Alain was one of the founders of the PCLinuxOS.nl site and forum back in 2005. There, he helped moderate the Dutch forum, and was active in Linux user groups around his area, including Brutux - LinuxCafé. He also wrote some tutorials to help Dutch users adapt the English-language PCLinuxOS to Dutch for those whose native language was Dutch.

Word about Alain's deteriorating condition was forwarded to the PCLinuxOS forum family by his friend and colleague **mutse**, also known as Maurice.

You can view mutse's forum thread here. In early February of this year, mutse reported that Alain's condition was worsening after undergoing back surgery. At that time, mutse reported that Alain was ceasing all Linux related activities, due to his condition.

In early March 2022, Alain got the news that he had ALS. While he could still talk, Alain set about making his last will and testament, and filling out euthanasia paperwork.

ALS, more informally and more commonly referred to as "Lou Gehrig Disease" after the famous New York Yankees baseball player, is a dastardly and insidious disease. It can progress rather slowly, or it can move with lightning speed. Unfortunately, Alain appeared to have had the latter form.

Mutse continued to update the forum about Alain's worsening condition. On April 24, 2022, mutse reported that Alain had passed away by euthanasia on April 20, 2022. Alain leaves behind his loving wife, Brigitte. He was 65 years old.

Here at The PCLinuxOS Magazine, me and Assistant Editor Meemaw decided that the best way to honor Alain would be to re-run his contributions to the magazine over the years. We not only hope you enjoy them as much as the first time they appeared, but that you also remember Alain and his contributions to his PCLinuxOS family via his forum posts. What better way is there to "get to know" or remember Alain except through his own words.

Rest in peace, our dear friend. Your memory lives on in each of us whose lives you touched.

PCLinuxOS Dutch Community :: PCLinuxOS.nl

from the August 2009 issue

Most of you will know the Netherlands as the country where Dutch is the native tongue, but Dutch is also spoken in the northern part of Belgium (Flanders). A total of 20 million people speak Dutch, so our community is an international community of 550 members with Dutch and Belgian admins, mods and users.

How It All Started

In November 2006, Mike (NewMikey) and Jos (DutchWolfie) set up a forum to support Dutch speaking PCLinuxOS users, and NewMikey rolled out a localized PCLinuxOS remaster. It may seem strange to some Linux users, but quite a lot of people have problems with English-based software and the localized remaster was a big success. Success means more users, more users means more support and since the release of PCLinuxOS 2007, the Dutch community has grown significantly.

What Do We Do Nowadays

The core business is of course maintaining an active forum and proving the much needed info for new users. Alain J. Baudrez (Wamukota) created a Dutch 'Get started with PCLinuxOS' tutorial, along with some basic Linux tips on the Dutch website.
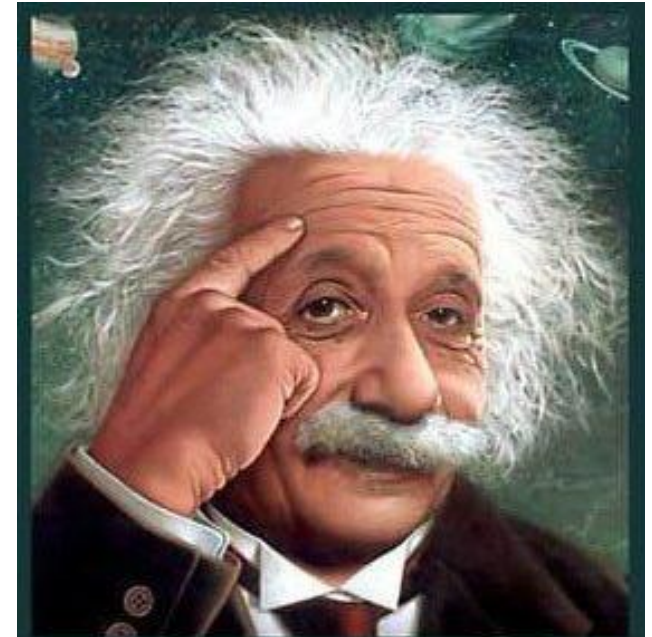
DutchWolfie added a Google Map so that new users can look-up a nearby PCLinuxOS user if help is needed. Wim (JohnW_57) is known as mod on the regular IRC channels, and both he and Jan (Smurfslover) are also known for their outstanding support on these channels and in testing for development. Both are team members who joined us very early on, since last year we added two new members to the PCLinuxOS.NL team. Ed (DeBaas) and Oliver (Oli4) have expanded the Mods, and are regular visitors of the international PCLinuxOS forum, acting as a go between for those users who don't speak English. NewMikey created a special remaster aimed at the photography fan (http://www.dfpe.pclinuxos.nl/) *[inactive link]*.

There is no need to create a localized Dutch version of the 2009, thanks to pinoc's AddLocale tool. He created a great piece of software, and it helps us a lot. Thank you, pinoc.

As PCLinuxOS is broadening its horizons with Gnome, XFCE, LXDE and other community remasters, we recently opened new forums for them.

Our long term plans

We can state that our community has finally mustered a crew of enthusiastic PCLinuxOS users, so that we now have a solid base to expand our activities. The first new item is the translation of the PCLinuxOS Magazine to Dutch and to get a "video" handbook out on our site as well.

It's easier than E=mc²
It's elemental
It's light years ahead
It's a wise choice
It's Radically Simple
It's ...

Linux IS Ready For The Desktop

by Alain Baudrez (Wamukota)
Reprint from August 2010

I've read many postings and rants about Linux not being ready for the desktop, while my experience tends to state the opposite. **Linux is** – and has been for the last couple of years – **ready for the desktop**.

It all boils down to the type of audience you speak to.

Windows has been developed with the industry in mind. That implies that you have a group of well-trained IT guys who do the Windows laundry while you, at your desk, can work without bothering whether the latest patches are applied, the AV is up to date, Anti-malware filters are in place, …

But let's look at a typical home user.

What does 'Jane Doe' do (or would like to do) with her computer?

• Browse the web

• Send & Receive eMail

• Instant Messaging

• Twitter

• Skype

• Rip audio to MP3

• Play and organize her music collection

• Transfer music between PC and MP3 player

Alain Baudrez, a.k.a. Wamukota

• Upload pictures/movies from a digital camera

• Red eye removal and minor enchantments of pictures

• Watch movies on DVD

• Edit her own video recordings

• Burn CD/DVD

• Write a few letters

• Keep budget in check with a simple spreadsheet

• Make small posters for festivities

• Create and maintain a website

• Play games

• Install new software

• Interact with wireless networks and bluetooth devices

Those actions seem familiar and they 'can' all be done with the pre-installed Windows. Correction. Not if you stick to your pre-installed Windows. For most of those actions, you need to buy expensive software, which for most of us is not tax deductible.

Looking at that list through Linux glasses, with the exception of some games, all can be done using a free modern state of the art Linux distribution.

So, Linux clearly has the edge on Windows here, and Windows being pre-installed anyway, we always have a fall-back for the few things that can not be done through Linux. Should Windows not come pre-installed, Linux would struggle, especially in the games area. But the simple fact that Windows comes pre-installed plays into the hands of a dual-boot Windows/Linux solution.

What should the same Jane Doe not have to do?

• Tamper with the system

• Bother about the legal status of the OS

• Fight malware and other nastinesses of the Internet

• Be responsible for maintaining system integrity through updates and patches

• Buy new hardware every 3 years to be able to accommodate the latest imposed upgrades

• Buy expensive software

When using Windows, this is just what Jane Doe has to do to keep her box running. The problems and performance loss inherent in the Windows system are a far cry from the fun and joy of having a computer she expected.

A modern Linux distribution is much simpler to maintain. Its concepts prevent a user crippling the system by disallowing her to venture in typical system folders. There are no legal issues. The distribution can be copied, passed on, etc., without problems.

There are almost no risks that viruses or malware will cripple the system.

Installing software is free and comes from a certified single set of servers.

Linux runs much longer on the same hardware.

All in all, Linux has the edge on Windows here too.

The general consensus is that Linux is hard to install. One cannot expect an average user to install Linux to dual-boot with their current Windows installation.

In fact, Linux is no harder to install than any other Operating System. But since Windows comes pre-installed, all the user must do is to activate the end user license to get going. The only thing we – Linux users - must do, is to install it on their computer in dual-boot mode, and give them a few how-tos on how to work with it. Isn't that something we all have done in the past many times?

Linux is ready for the desktop if you never hear back from those converted users again. It works and just keeps on working, something that cannot be said about the other pre-installed operating system.

Available in the following desktops:

KDE   LXDE   Xfce

MATE   Trinity

Enlightenment

Behind The Scenes: Wamukota & PCLinuxOS.nl

by Paul Arnote (parnote)
Reprint from May, 2010

> *Editor's Note: Please keep in mind that this article is 12 years old, so some of the topics discussed are no longer relevant, and items are discussed that no longer exist. As the saying goes, time marches on.*

Let me thank you for the opportunity to express myself through the Behind the Scenes series. As a community is more than just one person, this article also covers 'The Making Of PCLinuxOS.nl' and has inputs from other PCLinuxOS.nl members (as indicated by their [alias]). — Alain J. Baudrez

Alain J. Baudrez

Can you start us off by introducing yourself, and by telling us a bit about you (where you live, age, full name, marital status, children, hobbies, etc.)?

In cyberspace I am known as Wamukota — an African male name meaning 'left-handed' in the Abaluhya language (Kenya) — while in meatspace I listen to the name of Alain J. Baudrez. I am a 53 years old retired sysadmin/programmer from the Belgian Navy. I am married to Brigitte. Having no children, our common hobbies are our pets (2 dogs and 3 cats), while I have taken up photography (again) as I have plenty of time now ;-).

I live in Brugge, a small semi-medieval town in the North-Western part of Belgium. In the Northern part of Belgium (Flanders) we speak Flemish, which is a dialect of the Dutch language. In the Southern part of Belgium French is the main language. The written language is the same in both the Netherlands and in Flanders, which comes in handy when setting up a multinational community.

In 2001 I was diagnosed with ESRD (End Stage Renal Disease) which resulted in both my kidneys shutting down in March 2002. I had to go to the hospital three times a week to have my blood filtered using dialysis. Luckily I got a donor kidney on April 23, 2003. I can not express how grateful I am towards the unknown donor who saved my life.

When did you first get started with computers, and what were you running?

It all started somewhere in 1976 when I received a portable calculator (Texas TI SR-56) from a cousin who preferred the HP series as they were using the RPN (Reverse Polish Notation) method of entering data. The SR-56 was programmable (100 steps and 8 memory registers) and I made my first programs on it. The next major step was the Tandy TRS-80 Model I where I learned how to program in a kind of Basic language. From there the usual evolution followed such as the first SS/SD floppy drives for the model I, and consequently learning TRS-DOS. I did work with the CP/M based Schneider 6128 and enjoyed IBM OS/2 2.0.

As an autodidact, my 'wizardry' with computers did not go by unnoticed on board the frigates I was assigned to. I had a portable Tandy Model 100 with me at that time, and my CO suggested that I apply for an ICT job in our Navy. So, in 1986 I stopped sailing and became one of the first programmers/sysadmins of the Belgian Navy running Microsoft products, and it has remained Microsoft for the rest of my professional career.

My first encounter with Linux was S.u.S.E Linux 4.2 (around 1996-97), where a colleague used it to run a kind of gateway between our intranet and our ISP to collect and distribute POP3 mails.

I switched from Microsoft being my main OS at home to Linux with Suse Linux 9.2.

When did you switch to running PCLinuxOS, and what attracted you to PCLinuxOS?

I started using PCLinuxOS with version 0.93 and the first TRs of the 2007 version. At that time, I was still using openSUSE, but problems getting wireless up and running (ndiswrapper through console) and multimedia woes made me look for a snappier and more complete distro. It didn't take long to find PCLinuxOS which, even in its 2007 Beta state, was just what I was looking for. It was simple, complete, fast and it was the first distro where productivity was the focus, not 'making the thing work.' Moreover, there was already a nice and fresh Dutch community emerging.

As an administrator of PCLinuxOS.nl, can you please tell us about the Dutch community using PCLinuxOS? (how many members, when it was formed, who are the moderators and administrators there, forum activity, etc.).

The Dutch PCLinuxOS community was founded by Mike Bing (NewMikey) and Jos Wolfkamp (DutchWolfie) who had met on the Dutch language forum at pclinuxos.com. NewMikey was a PCLinuxOS "convert" from then-Mandrake as far back as PCLinuxOS Preview 81a. The website in its actual form was brought online November 30, 2005, but it took until Xmas of 2006 before we saw any other members besides our little group and some family and friends (NewMikey's son, Rayman has been using PCLinuxOS since age 9 and became a contributor to the forums as well).

[NewMikey] We would be amiss if we did not recognize the help and support of Lars of PCLinuxOS.de, the German site. One of the very first emails said:

On Wednesday 30 november 2005 17:03, Mike Bing wrote:

Lars,

Thanks for your speedy reply. Just a few questions: in order to register pclinuxos.de did you get authorization from Tex first? How do you finance it? Instead of registering pclinuxos.nl would it be possible to join forces on pclinuxos.org and make it truly multilingual? (A bit like the Mandrake Club site.)
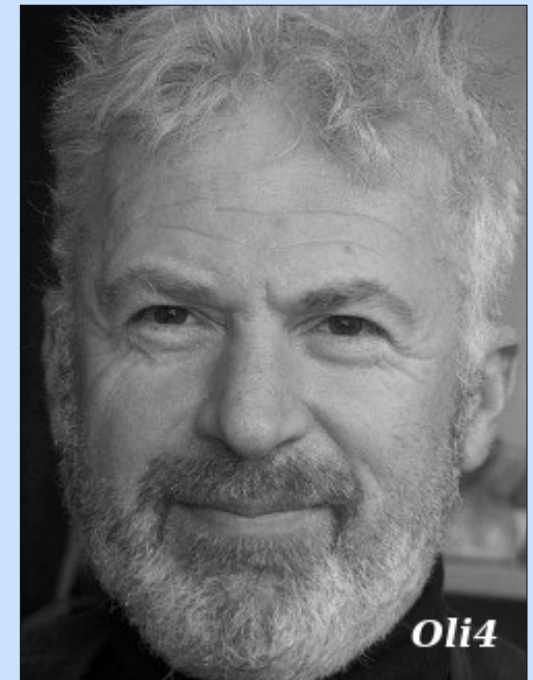
I would not want to host packages because of the risk of losing compatibility with the main PCLOS, what is your opinion? Could there be a "PCLOS Club"?

Jos, I know you are interested in the distro from our exchanges on the PCLOS Dutch language forum (the.com), would you be interested to join up to accomplish something like that?

To both of you: thanks for thinking (meedenken).

Mike

We went straight to Tex for his permission/approval as we felt very strongly about not using the name

PCLinuxOS unless Tex liked the idea. We received our reply a few days late as Tex turned out to have been very busy with P.A.S.S.

His elaborate reply, on December 4th, 2005, after being asked whether he was OK with us setting up pclinuxos.nl, was:

Subject: Re: Dutch website Tex?
From: Texstar

Yes, it's fine with me.

[Wamukota] There are currently four admins being both founders NewMikey and DutchWolfie, Ed M. Berntsen (DeBaas) and me. The moderators are Jan T'Jaeckx (Smurfslover), Wim Willemsen (JohnW) and Oliver van Praag (Oli4). As of today we count just over 600 names on our member list.

Another unique fact is that PCLinuxOS.nl, is a pure bi-national team effort. Admins, mods and members come from the Netherlands, as well as from Flanders in Belgium. It is actually a bonus, as both cultures are slightly different; the vocabulary differs slightly; the Dutch are more outgoing while the Flemish are more conservative. We even type on two different keyboards: the Dutch use the standard QWERTY, while in Flanders we use the French AZERTY keyboard. We even differ on religious and political ideas, but that has never been an issue. It is just the other way round. We learn much about our neighbors.

The activity on the forum cannot be compared with what you have on the US forum. First, the number of Dutch speaking people (population 16,500,000 for the Netherlands and 6,100,000 for Flanders) running Linux is small. Secondly, many of those speak/read/write English fluently, so we won't see them very often.

How would you describe the average Dutch PCLinuxOS user?

[DeBaas] I'd like to jump in, as Linux started for me as PCLinuxOS. 93. It was the first one that changed my view on Linux from 'impossible to get working' to 'easy and one time install.'

From here, 2007, I found PCLinuxOS as the OS that demonstrated the power of Linux at PC clubs, even family parties and other reunions, with help of only a CD or USB stick.

So in my opinion, the average Dutch PCLinuxOS user is caught by surprise, overwhelmed by the ease of PCLinuxOS and never looks back.

What particular challenges face Dutch PCLinuxOS users that English-speaking users don't have to face?

[DeBaas] The use of Pinoc's addlocale and the getopenoffice scripts, including the install of different dictionaries, are the only challenging options to be included for the Dutch users. (Side-note to the Dutch magazine readers: Your help with program translations is still appreciated).

How has Pinoc's addlocale impacted the adoption of PCLinuxOS among Dutch users?

As NewMikey had already made a localized (Dutch) remaster of PCLinuxOS. 93 and PCLinuxOS 2007, most PCLinuxOS users never did experience the 'manual' way of changing the default English language to Dutch. We also provided an extensive how-to on our forum — just in case.

Today, Pinoc's tool is a great way to let non-English users change the localization of PCLinuxOS to any given language. A largely unknown fact is that study of foreign languages is very popular over here. Pinoc's tool now provides users with an easy way to create an extra user for whatever foreign language they study. On my box, I have 3 separate users, one for Dutch, one English and one French. As I intend to study Russian from September onwards, I will create an extra user with the Russian localization. Pinoc's tool is just super for it.

Two versions of PCLinuxOS DPE (Digital Photography Edition) have come out of the efforts of the Dutch community. First, can you give us a little history on the DPE version, and second, what special enhancements are made to the base installation to make the DPE version?

First of all, the two DPE's weren't the only thing to come out of this community, we had a fully Dutch localized mainstream PCLinuxOS ISO on our servers for some years now (see previous paragraph), which was renewed upon every fresh release. We have discontinued the habit because Pinoc's excellent work now makes it possible for everybody to localize his/her install in minutes.

The first DPE was actually a snapshot of NewMikey's running installation. Being a die-hard photography addict, this install had a lot of stuff floating around that came out of this photography hobby, such as color profiles, contrast curves, RAW development scripts in Bash and Kommander and a great collection of scripts and plugins for GIMP. There even was a Konqueror service menu dedicated to RAW development. As this install was only used for image editing, gradually the collection of graphical programs expanded.

At one point in time, the standard updates of certain packages through the repos did not keep up with the rapid technical progress in Linux-photography land and some software packages were either built from source, or old SPEC files were used with new(er) source tarballs to create customized RPMs. This was done particularly with DCRAW and UFRAW, to keep up with new camera models that were not recognized in the older versions, but also with LuminanceHDR (formerly known as QTPFSGUI) and the Hugin panorama editor, due to their rapid rate of development.

There was also a stage where we received approval from Gábor Horváth, the author of RawTherapee (back then not yet open-sourced) to include his excellent package, and we went through some close cooperation with David Tschumperlee — author of the GreyCstoration (now GMIC) noise reduction and image manipulation package — on making the software more accepting of large images and small memory spaces by a process called tiling.

Eventually, the install had become so photography-specific and the collection of tools such a great showcase of what was available for photo-editing in Linux. It became obvious that it would be a great idea to provide an ISO, website and forum to promote the software and drive more users directly to the authors' websites, as well as promoting and popularizing PCLinuxOS as a distro. We always stressed that DPE was not a distro, but merely a remaster showcasing the versatility of PCLinuxOS. For that particular reason, the donation links on the Dutch website always pointed one way only … to Tex's donation page.

As the versions of PCLinuxOS progressed, we trusted that DPE would upgrade as any PCLinuxOS install would, through the repos, until it became obvious about a year ago that certain tools (like RawTherapee) would need a more invasive upgrade of core libraries like libstdc++, as well as a newer C compiler version. When Linuxera and the rest of the team started on a major overhaul of the whole toolchain, that opportunity seemed to come closer and work began on DPE2.

At the same time, NewMikey upgraded his camera yet again (an illness also known as CBA: Camera Buying Addiction — somewhat related to LBA: Lens Buying Addiction — both incurable) and this time the 14.6 megapixel files resulting from this new and wonderful camera began slowing down the 1GB Dell laptop with external USB drive that DPE was running on. A memory upgrade was out of the question on the aging Dell laptop and therefore, sacrifices had to be made.

This resulted in a switch to LXDE as a lightweight low-memory, yet functional and esthetically pleasing desktop environment as a basis for DPE2. Ever since, a release candidate has been available for download on http://hamsta.net/pclinuxos/, web-space donated by a very friendly Linux-fan.

As for now, the waiting for PCLinuxOS2010 is over and the final version of DPE2 will be available just as soon as we can update.

What are the plans for a new DPE version based on the upcoming releases, and upon which version will the DPE version be built?

[NewMikey] The new version of DPE, DPE2 Final will be built upon PCLinuxOS 2010 LXDE, which seems all set to become a rock-solid platform.

Is there an anticipated release date for a new DPE version?

[NewMikey] Well, I am tempted to say that it will be ready when it's ready. I am waiting for Gabor to release RawTherapee 3, which is a major upgrade, but I'm willing to consider doing a DPE 2 as soon as 2010 final is out end then DPE 2.5 when Gabor releases. Again, between a busy job with international travel and a family with 2 teenage kids, things do tend to get sidetracked now and then, so YMMV.

What closing words of advice or wisdom would you like to leave us with?

I would like to end with a tribute to and quote of Bruno Knaapen (Amsterdam 28 November 1950 — 20 February 2010), one of the great open-source and Linux advocates, a friend and Linux mentor to many in the Linux Community.

"We try to avoid the word 'newbie', it does no justice to the efforts we, also the beginners, put in to learn a new operating system. I think the wish to learn Linux shows a brave attitude and deserves a better qualification."

WWW Collapse

Prologue

On April 17, 2010, Alain Baudrez (a.k.a. Wamukota) sent me a short story he had written, and asked me if I would be interested in running it in The PCLinuxOS Magazine. Set in the not too distant future, it's a story depicting the collapse of the World Wide Web.

Liked it? I loved it! I read it through three times upon receiving the story, and each and every time, my mind envisioned this story being told via a comic strip. I definitely wanted to do this story justice, so I started "shopping around" for someone with some graphic skills who might be able to tackle such a project. This was no small task.

I looked everywhere. I checked with the usual PCLinuxOS artists, but all said that this was something that they felt was outside of their graphics abilities. However, one such contact did lead to another lead, which I pursued. Timeth, an Australian PCLinuxOS user and artist who teaches in Japan, had some students who were quite skilled at anime-type drawings, and he thought that they would be able to do a good job.

So, I sent Alain's manuscript to Timeth, and he shared it with them. They were interested. So off they headed, working in their spare time to create a multi-panel comic book style presentation for Alain's story. After several months, their outstanding work appears here.

"One of my other hobbies is writing short stories. I've done that since I was a teenager and now, at the age of 54, I still love to write. I normally write stories in Dutch, but once in a while, I like to try it in another language. When I write some SciFi or Fantasy stuff, it just makes sense to do it in English," said Alain about his story.

"I really can't recall what gave me the idea, but this story is simply one of the many plots I came up with, where I play with the infamous Dec 21, 2012 date. According to some, that date means the end of the world, and in my story it is simply the end of the WWW as we know it.

"I also hint at the freemasons at the end of the story. You know they exist, but you don't know who is a member. Between them, they have special secret signs, which I refer to with the i-letter."

I would like to share the names of the students in Japan with the rest of you, but privacy laws in Japan prevent me from publishing their names here. So, we've given their nicknames. They are two female junior high school students, Moto-san and Hina-san. So to Moto-san and Hina-san, if you are reading
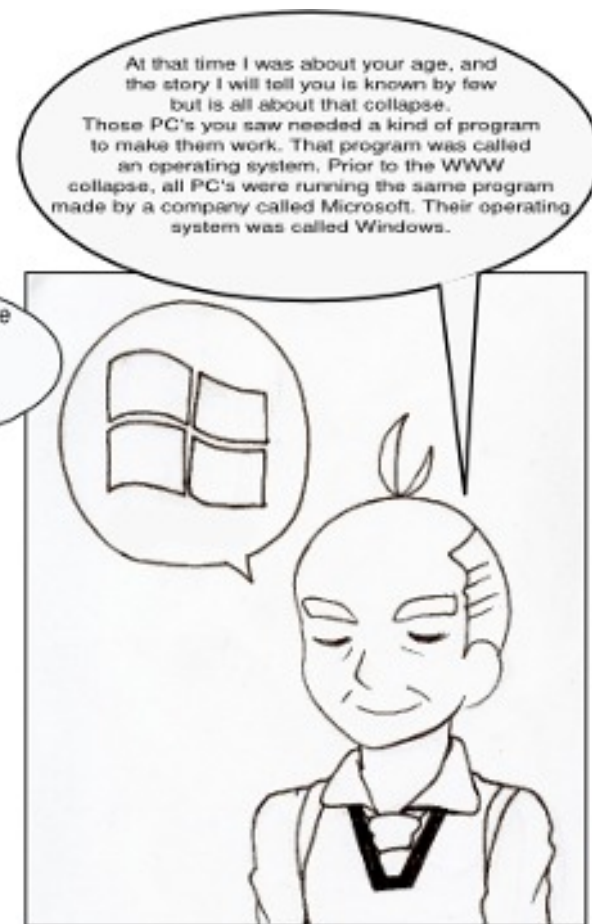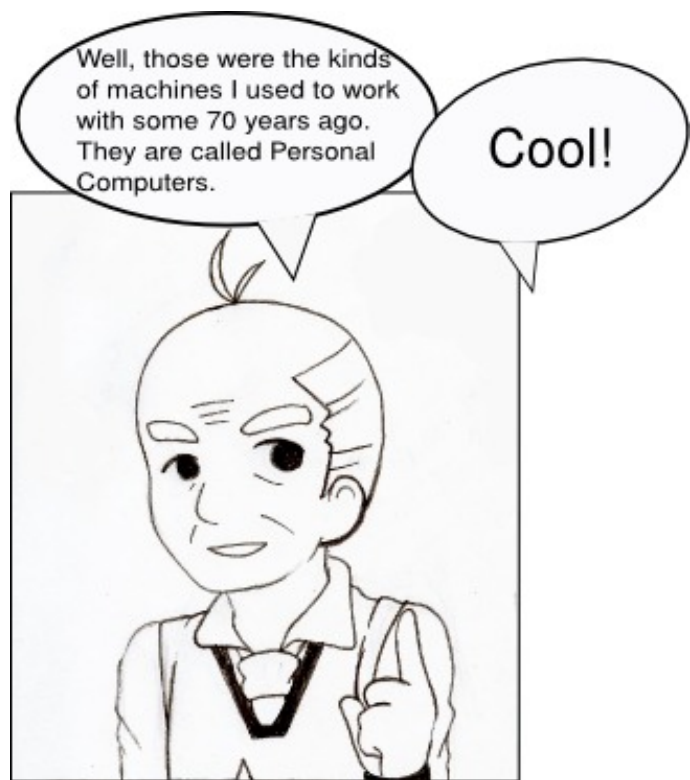
this, I'd like to personally congratulate you on the outstanding job you did with this project. You can certainly be very proud of what you have helped create here. Plus, I would like to thank you for your hard work on this project.

This has truly ended up being an international endeavor. Alain Baudrez, a PCLinuxOS user from the Netherlands, wrote the story. He sent it here to me, in the United States, to publish it. I sent it to an Australian, teaching in Japan, to find a way to illustrate it. And his students, from Japan, came through with the illustrations.

I hope you enjoy the story, along with the comic-book presentation, exclusively here in The PCLinuxOS Magazine.

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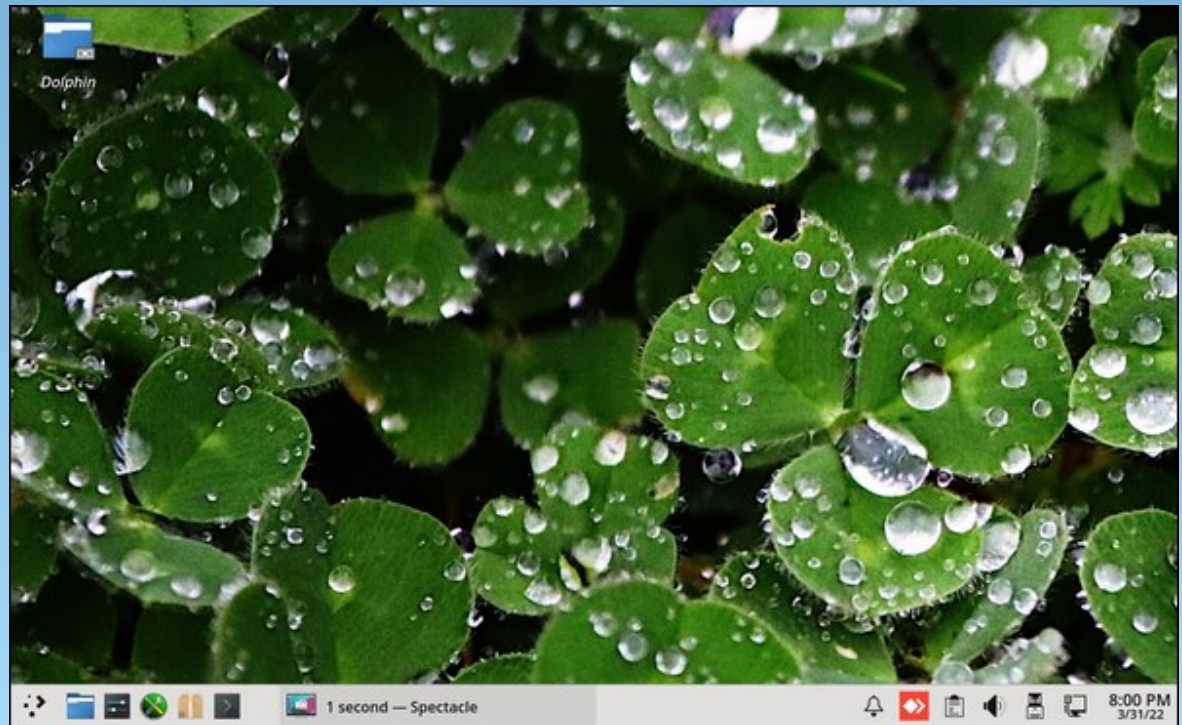
Screenshot Showcase

Posted by The CrankyZombie, on March 31, 2022, running KDE.

PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner

from the kitchen of youcantoo

Slow-Cooker Lemon Pepper Chicken

Low Carbohydrate   3g

INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons butter
8 bone-in skin-on chicken thighs (2 1/2 to 3 lb total)
1 teaspoon lemon pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
1 cup chicken broth (from 32-oz carton)
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel and 2 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 large lemon)
2 tablespoons cold water
2 tablespoons cornstarch

DIRECTIONS:

Spray 3 1/2- to 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.

In a 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium-high heat. Season chicken with 1/2 teaspoon of the lemon pepper and the salt. Place half of the chicken thighs skin-side down in a skillet; cook for 4 to 5 minutes or until the skin is golden brown and chicken releases easily from the surface. Turn chicken over; cook for 2 minutes. Repeat for remaining chicken.

Layer chicken thighs, skin-side up, inside slow cooker; sprinkle with garlic. In a 2-cup measuring cup, mix chicken broth, lemon peel, lemon juice and remaining 1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper; pour over chicken thighs. Cover and cook on Low heat setting 3 to 3 1/2 hours or until chicken is tender (at least 165 degrees F).

Remove chicken to a serving platter; cover and keep warm. In a small bowl, mix water and cornstarch; beat with whisk into cooking juices in slow cooker. Cover and cook on High heat setting 20 to 30 minutes or until slightly thickened and bubbly around edges. Stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter.

TIPS:

If desired, garnish with fresh slices of lemon or chopped Italian (flat-leaf) parsley.

Add a green vegetable and rice or noodles for a complete meal.

Want To Help?

Would you like to help with the PCLinuxOS Magazine? Opportunities abound. So get involved!

You can write articles, help edit articles, serve as a "technical advisor" to insure articles are correct, create artwork, or help with the magazine's layout.

Join us on our **Google Group mailing list.**

MP3 Files: Creating Order From A Jumbled Mess

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Three months into my discovery of/journey with podcasts (yeah, yeah … I'm late to the podcast party), I have amassed a fair collection of podcasts from a variety of sources.

When I first started, I wanted to put each serial podcast (like "The Agent") on a MP3 CD to play on the MP3 CD player in my pickup truck. That led to my first article in March 2022 about resampling the MP3 files at a lower bitrate so they could all fit on a single 700MiB CD-R. Since then, I discovered the USB port on my dash that is read by my truck's audio system. So, I bought a few inexpensive 32GiB USB flash drives from Newegg.com. Now, with 32GiB of space to play with, I'm not as concerned about the need to shrink the files down to fit onto a standard CD-R.

But regardless of the medium – CD-R or USB flash drive – one problem persisted that had me perplexed. The files were all jumbled on my truck's audio system, as well as on the audio system in my wife's car. Granted, all of the files remained in their folders, but within those folders, the files were all jumbled up, and not in the order I had planned. Not only were the files jumbled, but the playback order was jumbled, too. I soon discovered that the problem was also present on my SanDisk Sansa Clip+ personal audio player, which I covered way back in October 2009. Yes, I still have it, and it still works perfectly (although it might be nice to have a version that connects to my Bluetooth earbuds).

This is my Sansa Clip+. This image is pretty close to its real life size.

Sure, I could just stream the podcasts over my cell phone. But then what happens when I'm traveling in one of the vehicles, and I'm in a fringe reception area? Yep. You guessed it. No more streaming. This happens for us more frequently than you might imagine. We also like to spend time outdoors, where cell phone reception is spotty at best. So, it's better to have a physical copy of the podcast playing, either on CD, USB flash drive, or in the case of the Sansa Clip, a microSD card. That way, the podcast playback isn't dependent on whether or not I have cell phone reception.

So, the first thing I tried was making sure there was a *.m3u playlist file in each folder, hoping that would set things right. Nope. That had absolutely no effect whatsoever.

Then, I tried renaming the files with numbers, usually starting with "000" and incrementing all the way up to however many files were in the folder. I thought that just maybe the audio system in the vehicles (and on the Sansa Clip) might be using the filenames to determine the order of the files. Nope. That also had absolutely no effect whatsoever, either.

So, the only other "thing" I could think of was that both my Sansa Clip and the audio system in the vehicles were using the track number embedded into the MP3 as ID3v2 data to determine the proper order of the tracks.

Upon checking the tag data in the MP3 files I had downloaded, each and every one had a track number of "1." So, none of my playback devices had any idea of which order to play the files. You certainly don't want to listen to chapter 1, and then hear chapter 9 before you've heard chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. As a result, the order seemed very random, although consistently so.

I checked the file order on my Sansa Clip. Yep. It was a jumbled mess, with files not in the proper playback order. I went through and "edited" the tag info on one of the smaller serial podcasts I had downloaded to my computer, and then copied them over to the Sansa Clip. Specifically, I assigned each MP3 file a specific track number within that folder. Voila! All of the files appeared on the Sansa Clip in the proper playback order.

Since I use Thunar on Xfce, editing that info is fairly easy. Right click on the file, select "Properties" from the context menu, then select the "Audio" tab in the dialog box that appears. The very top left field is the "Track" number. Set the track number for that particular episode, so the tracks play in the desired order. Then, select the "Save" button, and then the "Close" button. I'm fairly certain that the process is similar on other desktop environments, such as Mate, KDE Plasma, LXQt, etc., and their associated file managers.

Yes, this method works fine. But the drawback is that you have to do each individual file, one at a time. That would be fine if you have just a few files to do, but if you have hundreds, this is going to take up a LOT of time. Just one of my podcasts, a reading of the Federalist Papers from colonial times in America, has 85 separate files.

There has/had to be a faster, easier way than doing them all one individual file at a time.

Thanks to some command line tools and executing them in a bash script, there is a much easier way to assign a unique track number to each file in a folder. So what did I do? I created yet another bash script to handle the task!

Just as when I created the bash scripts to handle the bitrate resampling and to handle adding album art to your MP3 files, I created this script to be run either from the command line, or from a Thunar custom action. It even has a graphical progress bar, courtesy of Zenity.
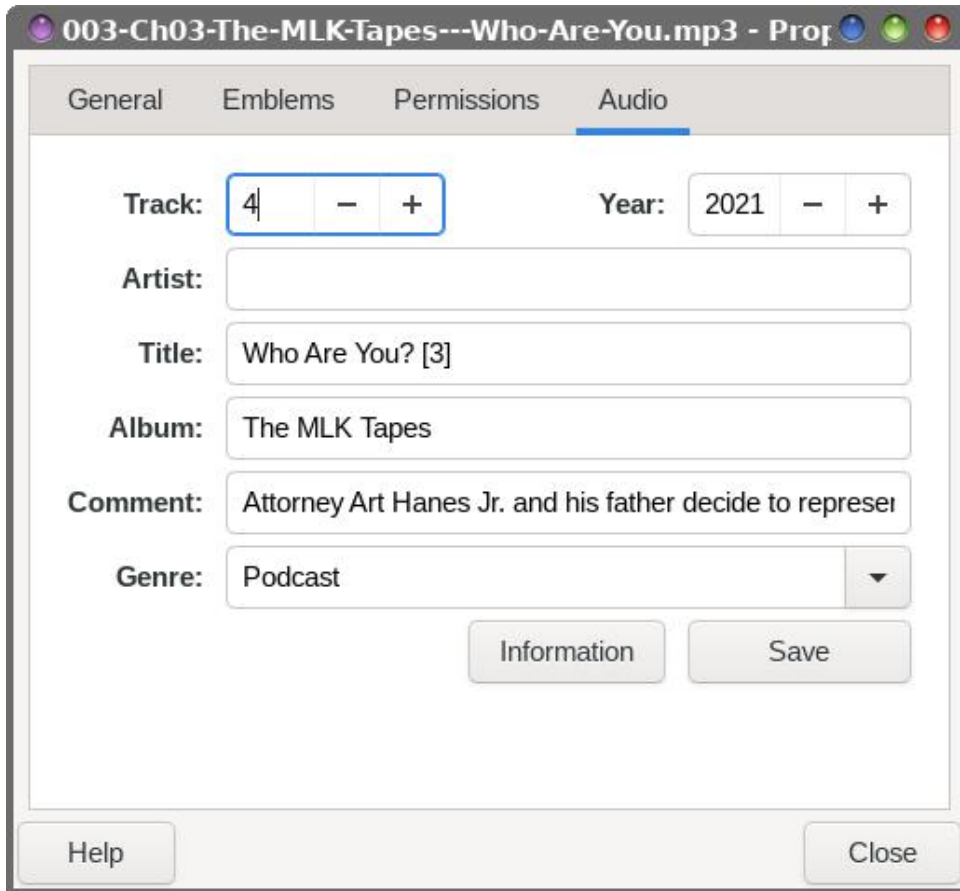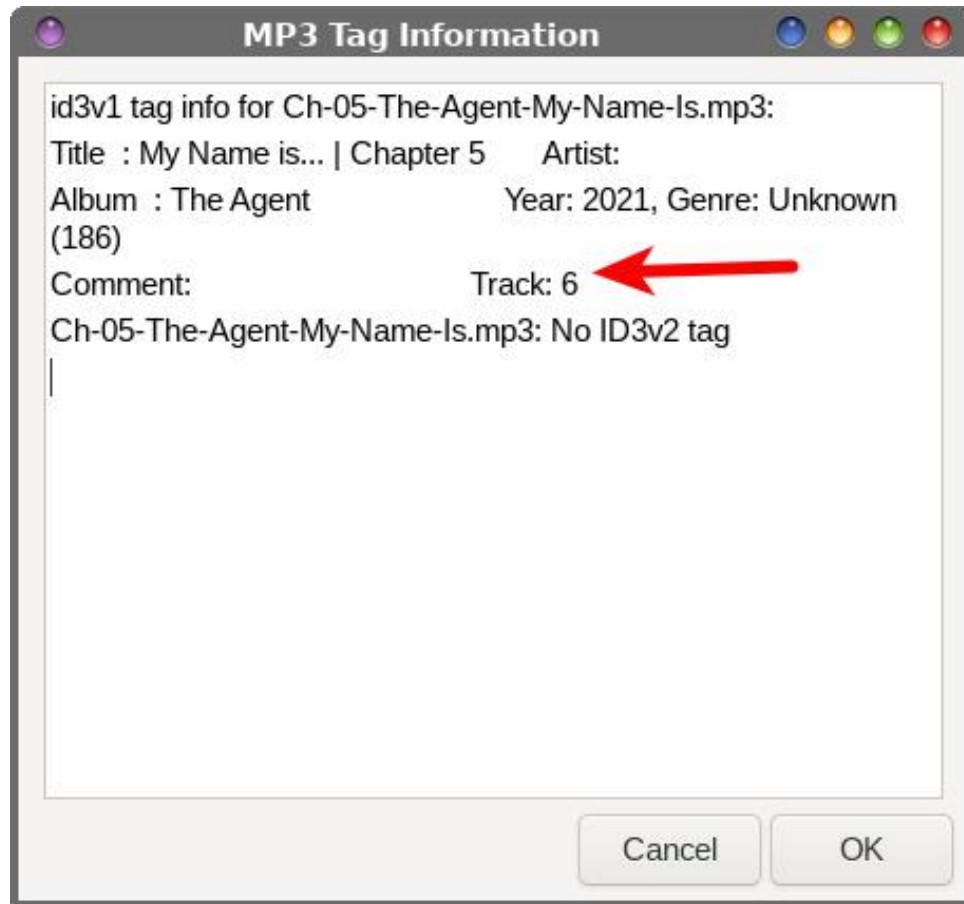
So, below is the script I came up with. You can type it in (it's definitely short enough), or you can download it from the magazine website. The download file is named mp3-track-renumber.sh.txt. As with the previous two bash scripts, save the file to where you keep your bash scripts, remove the ".txt" file extension, and make the file executable.

```
1. #! /bin/sh
2.
3. n=1
4.
5. for file in $@; do
6.     if [ ! -e $file ]; then
7.             continue
8.     fi
9.
10.    echo "# Processing file: $file"
11.    id3v2 --track $n $file
12.    echo $(($n * 100 / $#))
13.    let "n = n+1"
14.
15. done | (zenity  --progress --title "Applying Track Number..."
--width=400 --height=100 --percentage=0 --auto-close --auto-kill)
16.
17. exit 0
```

This is the shortest of the three MP3-related bash scripts that I've written over the past three months. Including five blank lines, it's only 17 lines long. Size-wise, it's only 388 bytes, so it's not going to break the download quota bank.

Being a bash script, line 1 is the typical shebang that starts off every bash file. Line 3 initializes "n" as an integer we'll need later as we loop through multiple files. It's also the number used to assign a unique, incremented track number to each file later on.

Lines 5 through 15 are the for-do loop that walks through multiple files supplied as command line arguments. Lines 6 through 8 check to see if the supplied filename actually exists. If it doesn't, then it continues on with the next filename. If the file exists, it then processes that file.

Line 10 sets up the text to display in the Zenity progress dialog box. Line 11 calls on the command line program **id3v2** to set the track number using the integer that we set up in the third line. I cannot remember if I had id3v2 already installed, or if I had to install it from Synaptic. If you don't have it installed on your computer, definitely install it from Synaptic.

Line 12 sets up the percentage to be displayed in the Zenity progress dialog box, while line 12 increments the integer by one for every file processed.

Line 15 closes out the for-do loop, and displays the Zenity progress dialog box. Line 17 exits the script cleanly.

To be perfectly honest, the script often completes so quickly that I'm not able to get an image of the Zenity progress dialog box when it is displayed. So instead, I
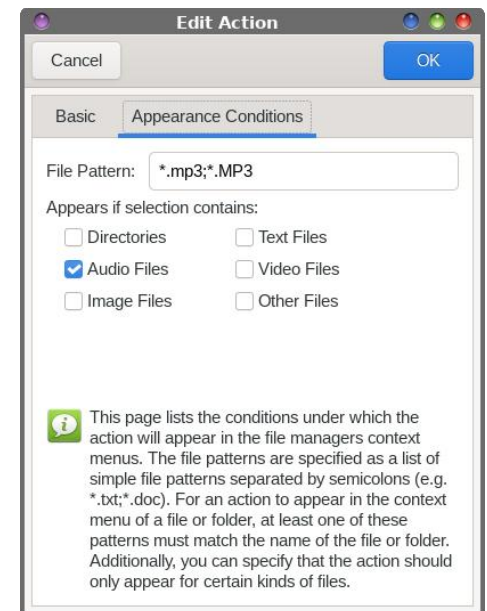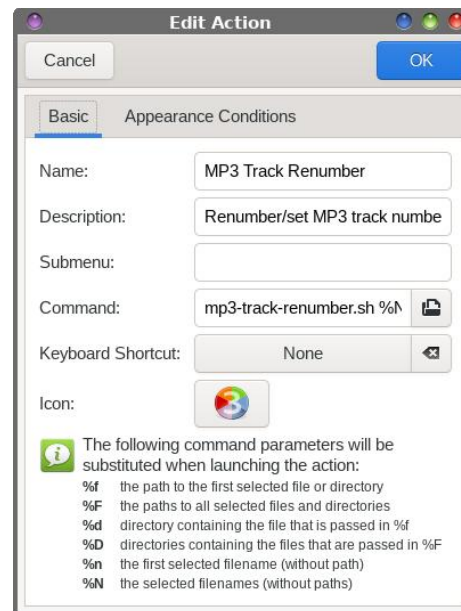
can show you the MP3 tag data (above) *after* the script has been run, which shows the track number set in the ID3v2 data.

Using The Script

Like I mentioned earlier, I designed this script to be run either as a standalone bash script from the command line, or as a Thunar custom action (which is how I will mostly use it). As I've mentioned in my previous articles, I'm sure that this can be added to the context menus of Dolphin or Caja, but because I haven't run KDE Plasma or Mate in quite a while, I'm no longer familiar enough with them to be able to lead you through that process. However, I'm sure fans of those desktops will have no difficulty finding a suitable guide to achieve similar functionality. That isn't within the scope of this article, though.

To ensure that the files are in the order that I want/need, I use Xfce's multi-file renaming utility. Using that, I preface every filename with numbers, usually starting with "000" (I do it this way because I usually also download the "trailer" or "prologue" for the serial podcasts I download, and number that file as chapter zero), and using a dash as a separator between the numbers and the filename.

From the command line, you can specify individual files as command line arguments, or you can use wildcards. If you specify individual files, each file is separated by a space. Using wildcards, first cd to the directory where the MP3 files are stored, and then execute the command **mp3-track-renumber.sh *.mp3**

on the command line. In short order, your MP3 files will have the appropriate track number recorded in the MP3 tag information.

I've set up the Thunar custom action as shown above (bottom of previous page). I've named the custom action "MP3 Track Renumber." The command is entered as **mp3-track-renumber.sh %N**. I've also selected an unused icon from my system to represent the custom action in Thunar's context menu. Under the "Appearance Conditions" tab, I've checked the "Audio Files" selection, and entered ***.mp3;*.MP3** as the "File Pattern" to match. Then, all I have to do is select the MP3 files I want to renumber the track numbers of, and select the custom action from Thunar's context menu.

On a side note, your MP3 file names **cannot** contain spaces. I've covered this previously with the other two MP3 scripts. Because spaces are used as delimiters for command line parameters, spaces in file names will cause the script to not work. At all. It's best practice to eliminate spaces from file names anyway, to avoid any such issues.

Summary

While I was glad to find a couple of ways to listen to podcasts while driving in the vehicles, it was maddening to not have the files listed (and not played back) in the proper order. It took me a bit to figure out exactly why this was occurring, too. To be perfectly honest, I was a bit surprised that a *.m3u playlist didn't resolve the issue, as well. It's not as if *.m3u playlists are anything new, so I felt confident that they should/would be recognized by even the most basic MP3 player. Or so I mistakenly thought. I was also surprised to discover that the filename had no bearing on the playback order, as well.

Nope. The playback order is ruled by the track number assigned to the MP3 file in the MP3 tag information. Who'da thunk it, right? Now that I've discovered the proper way to ensure the proper playback order, I literally have created order out of chaos, and my MP3 files now play in the proper order.[a] And along the way, I created an easier, faster way to number (or renumber) the track/playback order of my MP3 files.

Google Fights Dragnet Warrant For Users' Search Histories Overseas While Continuing To Give Data To Police In The U.S.

Google is fighting back against a Brazilian court order to turn over data on all users who searched for specific terms, including the name of a well-known elected official and a busy downtown thoroughfare. (Brief in Portuguese and English*) While we applaud Google for challenging this digital dragnet search in Brazil, it must also stand up for the rights of its users against similar searches in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Background: Keyword Search Warrants

Keyword search warrants like the one in Brazil are far broader than traditional search warrants described in the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Fourth Amendment requires police to establish probable cause to search a particular place or seize a particular person or thing before the court authorizes the warrant. But keyword search warrants don't start with a suspect person or device. Instead, they require Google to comb through the search histories of all of its users, including users who are not logged into a Google account when they search.

Keyword warrants allow the police to learn anyone and everyone who may have searched for particular terms on the off-chance one of those people could have been involved with the crime. Like better-known geofence warrants, keyword warrants allow police to conduct a fishing expedition and sweep up data on innocent people, turning them into criminal suspects. Police are using both types of expansive, suspicionless searches with increasing frequency.

Google Takes a Stand Against Keyword Search Warrants—in Brazil

The Brazilian case arises out of the assassination of Rio de Janeiro City Councilor Marielle Franco. Franco was murdered, along with her driver, Anderson Gomes, near Rio de Janeiro in 2018. It was a terrible crime that stirred up public outcry.

As part of the investigation into the assassination, police ordered Google to trawl through its users' search histories, scanning for searches of certain terms—including the name of a heavily trafficked street in Rio de Janeiro ("Rua dos Inválidos"), Franco's name, and the name of a nonprofit cultural space intended to support Black women (Casa das Pretas), where Franco had participated in an event earlier on the day she was killed. The order required Google to turn over identifying data about all users who searched for these and other related terms over the course of four days.

Google has challenged this order, eventually appealing it all the way to Brazil's Supreme Federal Court, arguing that this kind of indiscriminate search violates the Brazilian constitution. (Google's brief in Portuguese and English*) As Google rightly explains, the warrant is wildly overbroad. The search terms would all have been popular and common queries, and many people are likely to have used them—including citizens and journalists interested in the activities of a city councilor, or people interested in collaborating with or receiving support from the nonprofit cultural center Casa das Pretas.

This particular keyword search warrant is particularly egregious, given the sheer number of people likely caught in its dragnet, but even a more narrow warrant should trigger human rights concerns. These types of warrants inevitably sweep in users whom police have no reason to believe were involved in the crime, and they give police unbridled discretion to determine which of these people to target for further investigation. In the Fourth Amendment framework, the unbridled

discretion inherent in keyword search warrants, like geofence warrants, makes them an unconstitutional "general warrant."

As Google emphasized in its brief, this case in Brazil has far-reaching implications. This method of investigating transforms a platform intended to provide access to information into a tool for the government to collect highly revealing private data from innocent people. And Google receives thousands of law enforcement orders to provide user data in Brazil each year, affecting tens of thousands of users. If Brazil's Supreme Court signs off on dragnet keyword searches, the number of impacted users could skyrocket.

Google Fails to Challenge Keyword Search Warrants in the U.S.

Keyword search orders are becoming increasingly common in the U.S.—but Google seemingly hasn't fought nearly as hard to protect the privacy of its U.S. users. We aren't aware of any cases in which Google has pushed back against keyword search warrants in the U.S. In fact, we have no idea how many keyword warrants Google receives or how it responds to them at all, because Google has kept that information entirely secret. That secrecy surrounding keyword warrants contrasts with

Google's recent reporting on geofence warrants; Google has now shared the number of geofence warrants it receives and the three-step process it uses to respond to them.

It's remarkable that Google has taken a strong stand in favor of user privacy in Brazil. But this problem isn't limited to one country, and Google could do much more to protect its users. Google can and should take proactive steps to address the highly revealing capacity of its databases and adopt robust data minimization measures on how user data is processed and for long it is stored. And it should take a stand in the courts to protect users in the U.S. and other countries from dragnet keyword searches, just like it's doing in Brazil.

* The official copy of the brief that Google submitted to the Brazilian court is only available in Portuguese. We used an online tool to translate the brief into English so there may be some inaccuracies in translation.

Posted by tbschommer, on April 1, 2022, running KDE.
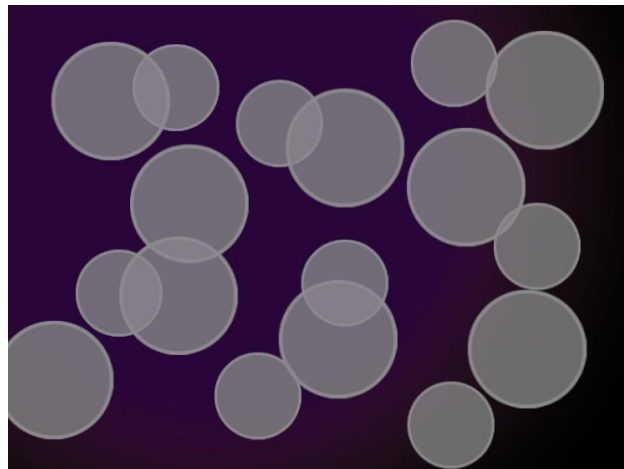
GIMP Tutorial: A Bokeh Effect

by Meemaw

When I search for tutorials, I always find something from a different site than I have seen before. Starlight86 does tutorials as well, and posts them on his blog. He has done a tutorial for a bokeh effect in GIMP and it looks fun. He has a brush that he created to do the effect, so I went to Deviant Art and downloaded it (you have to sign on to get it - here's the link). I also noticed that this was a Photoshop project that he tested to see if it would work in GIMP.

OK. Open GIMP and start with a black rectangle the size you want it. He used 1600 x 1200 px, but I'm using 800 x 600 on this one. The next thing you want to do is add a transparent layer, then fill it with a radial gradient. Make your foreground purple and your background black, then choose FG to BG. Lower your Opacity to 50 and offset your gradient a little.

Now we're going to add a transparent layer. Change your foreground color to white and use the brush.

Change it to the Bokeh brush and make a few Bokeh circles on the layer in different sizes. Click on **Filters > Blur > Gaussian Blur**. Your setting for this layer should be 4.50 at least (using the newer tools). We're going to do this two more times and you want some to look like they are farther away. This is one where you use your own judgment.

(without the blur)

(with the blur)

You want to make two more layers of brush strokes, each with less blur. I used 2.50 on the second, and 0.50 on the third.

Create a new white layer. Click on **Render > Noise > Difference Clouds** (it is an older tool that used to be in Render > Clouds). Use these settings:

After it is applied, go to the layers settings and change the **Mode** to **Overlay**. It should now look like this:
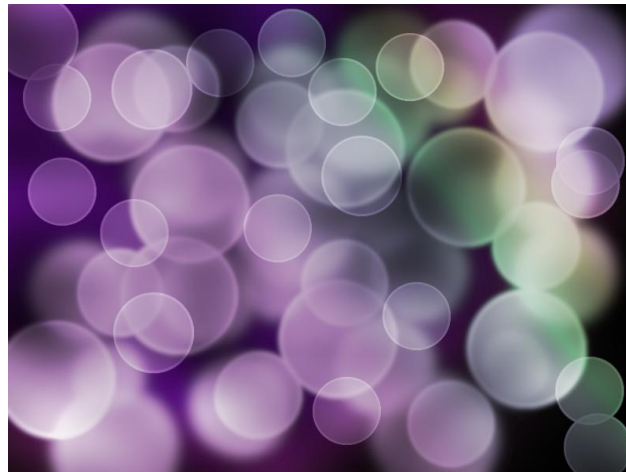

There is a bit of difference, but it looks sort of like it did before and not how the clouds settings window looks.

Now, create a new transparent layer (I named mine Gradient2). Choose your Gradient tool and use a linear, multi-color gradient. Make sure the Opacity is 100. After you apply the gradient, go and change the **Layer Mode** to Overlay.

Go to your top Bokeh layer and change the layer mode to **Grain Merge**. Then go to your 2nd Bokeh layer and change the layer mode to **Hard Light** (I didn't see much of a difference on the 2nd one but you might). You can export it now.

I hope yours turns out kind of like those at right.

It'll change depending on the gradient you use. I did three.

Short Topix: Okular First Ever Eco-Certified Computer Program

by Paul Arnote (parnote)

Assault On Your Privacy: Monthly Update

I'm changing the graphic for the monthly update on your privacy section, starting this month. With the vast majority of the privacy threats emanating from three principle countries hosting the threat actors (People's Republic of China, Russia, and North Korea), let's just "celebrate" their malfeasance to the rest of the world by displaying their flags.

According to an article on BleepingComputer, **Mars Stealer malware has been spotted in the wild, delivered via OpenOffice ads on Google**. The malware is a redesigned version of Oski malware that ceased development in 2020. This malware steals auto-fill information, browser extension data, credit cards, IP address, country code, and timezone. They were discovered when the Russian threat actor inadvertently infected themselves with the Mars Stealer malware during a debugging session. That inadvertent infection exposed the hacker's GitLab accounts, along with stolen credentials to pay for the Google Ads, according to Morphisec, who discovered the new threat. They also discovered that the information thieves are focused on stealing cryptocurrency assets.

North Korea recently exploited a recently uncovered remote code execution flaw in Google Chrome (imagine that) to target U.S. based news media, IT, cryptocurrency, and financial-technology industries, according to an article on The Hacker News. The new vulnerability, CVE-2022-0609, is a[nother] "use after free" zero-day flaw discovered in the Chrome browser. The exploit kit, according to the Google TAG (Threat Analysis Group), is fashioned as a multi-stage infection chain that involves embedding the attack code within hidden internet frames on both compromised websites as well as rogue websites under their control, according to the article.

In another article from The Hacker News, **another unidentified threat agent has been spotted employing a "complex and powerful" malware loader**, with the ultimate goal of deploying cryptomining malware on the infected computers. Dubbed "Verblecon," it uses polymorphic qualities to evade detection by security software.

A group of hackers, some of whom may be minors in the U.K. and the U.S., duped Apple and Facebook (Meta) into providing private customer data, according to an article on Bloomberg. That data included customer addresses, phone numbers, and IP addresses. Posing as law enforcement officials, the hackers sent forged "emergency data requests" to the companies, who then handed over the information. It is suspected that the hackers gained access to bona fide law enforcement computer systems, and thus actual emergency data requests. It's speculated that they then used those actual documents as a template to create their forged documents.

Yet another Google Chrome browser vulnerability was discovered that **allows hackers to exploit the V8 Javascript engine to allow the reading and writing of data on an infected machine without permissions**, according to an article on Review Geek. The vulnerability, CVE-2022-1096, affects all Chromium/Chrome browsers, including Chrome, Edge and Opera.

In the turn-about-is-fair-play department, **a Ukrainian computer researcher struck back at one of the most formidable Russian ransomware gangs**, according to an article from CNN. The article says the researcher "published the biggest leak ever of files and data from Conti, a syndicate of Russian and Eastern Europe cybercriminals wanted by the FBI for conducting attacks on hundreds of US organizations and causing millions of dollars in losses." The article continues, "The thousands of internal documents and communications include evidence that appears to suggest Conti operatives have contacts within the Russian government, including the FSB intelligence service. That supports a longstanding US allegation that Moscow has colluded with cybercriminals for strategic advantage."

Six "antivirus" apps were discovered in the Google Play store recently by Check Point Research that were caught stealing banking information and credentials red-handed from users, according to an article on Laptop Mag. The six malicious apps CPR spotted included "Atom Clean-Booster, Antivirus," "Antivirus, Super Cleaner," "Alpha Antivirus, Cleaner," "Powerful Cleaner, Antivirus," and "Center Security - Antivirus." Google has since removed these apps from the Google Play store. If you have one of these apps installed on your mobile device, it would be best to remove them *yesterday*.

If you use Google Chrome (or one of its Chromium-based "siblings"), **you may want to make sure you are running updates REGULARLY**. Like, every other day or so. Over the past month, I've read about two to three new Google Chrome browser vulnerabilities *each week*. In fact, there are way too many to list here and do so accurately. So, the best defense is a strong offense. Be proactive, not reactive. If you continue to use the Google Chrome browser as your daily driver browser, run updates frequently to keep your data/information as safe as it deserves.

Mozilla's Vision For The Evolution Of The Web

I admit it. I'm a diehard Firefox fan. I like how Mozilla approached the browser, and the steps it takes to keep its users safe from the assorted riff-raff out there on the interwebs. I like Mozilla's philosophy. I've been a Firefox user since its earliest days, and have remained a faithful user ever since. Nothing else quite feels "like home" to me as I'm browsing the web as it does when I'm using Firefox.

Well, if Mozilla had their way (and I hope they do), the web would be a much safer place for all users. Mozilla holds to their goals expressed in the Mozilla Manifesto. They put out their mission statement for all to see. They invite everyone to participate, to have a seat at the table, if you will.

They have even gone so far as to publish their *vision* for the continued evolution of the web. In a nutshell, they want to build an internet that has openness, agency, safety, privacy, security,

performance, and user control at the core of web principles.

I wish them well and much success in their efforts. Know that they have my full support, as they most likely have broad support from all around the world and from many different corners of our human existence.

At the very least, it's a good, refreshing read, and well worth your time.

First Ever Eco-Certified Computer Program: KDE's Popular PDF Reader Okular

Okular, KDE's popular multi-platform PDF reader and universal document viewer, has officially been recognized for sustainable software design as reflected in the recent award criteria for software eco-certification. In February 2022 Okular was awarded the Blue Angel ecolabel, the official environmental label awarded by the German government. Introduced in 1978, Blue Angel is the world's earliest established environmental label, and Okular is the first software product to be certified with its seal. What is more, Okular is the first ever eco-certified computer program within the 30 organizations of the Global Ecolabelling Network! This network, of which Blue Angel is a member, represents over 50 countries.

You can read more about the award here.

Increase Privacy With Brave Browser

Out of the gates, Brave browser is much better about guarding your privacy than Google Chrome, despite having similar DNA as the Google Chrome browser. BUT, you can make Brave help protect your privacy even more.

You can change what appears on your default home screen in Brave, prevent it from calling home (ever), control what information is shared with the websites you visit, block social media tracking, and lots more.

For the full rundown on making the tweaks to the Brave browser, head on over to the article on Lifehacker, and follow the steps laid out there.

DuckDuckGo Removes Pirate Sites, Youtube-dl From Search Results

Reprinted from TorrentFreak under CC-SA-3.0 license. April 15, 2022. Privacy-centered search engine DuckDuckGo has completely removed the search results for many popular pirate sites including The Pirate Bay, 1337x, and Fmovies. Several YouTube ripping services have disappeared, too and even the homepage of the open-source software youtube-mp3 is unfindable.

Launched in 2008, search engine DuckDuckGo is a go-to service for Internet users who value their privacy.

Unlike many competitors, the site doesn't keep a record of users' IP addresses or other sensitive information.

In recent years, the site also stood out by returning cleaner results than competitors such as Google, which actively alters its algorithms to downrank pirate sites. At one point, Google even pointed users to DuckDuckGo when they searched for Pirate Bay proxies.

DuckDuckGo Fears Liability

The privacy-focused search engine is not immune to potential copyright issues, however. This first became apparent when it removed several search shortcuts for 'pirate' sites. These "bangs", as they are called, were seen as a potential copyright infringement liability.

"We operate globally, as do bangs, and products that actively facilitate interaction with illegal content can have us and our employees face significant legal liability, and jeopardizing the entire service," DuckDuckBang's Tagawa explained.

DuckDuckGo ended up removing roughly 2,000 bangs for popular sites including The Pirate Bay, 1337x, and RARBG. At the time, the search engine stressed that these sites were still listed in search results. However, that appears to have changed now.

Pirate Domains are Deindexed?

When doing some research earlier today we noticed that several popular pirate sites were no longer showing up in DuckDuckGo's results globally. Initially, we thought that some popular pages had been removed following DMCA takedown notices, but there is clearly more going on than that.

Update April 17: DuckDuckGo informs us that no domains were removed but they are having some issues and we still have questions. More details are at the bottom of the article.

For example, searching for "site:thepiratebay.org" is supposed to return all results DuckDuckGo has indexed for The Pirate Bay's main domain name. In this case, there are none.

The lack of results is not tied to a specific country and manually fiddling with the region settings didn't change anything either. Apparently, DuckDuckgo has simply removed all thepiratebay.org URLs from its index.

This whole-site removal isn't limited to The Pirate Bay either. When we do similar searches for 1337x.to, Fmovies.to, Lookmovie.io, and 123moviesfree.net, no results appear. For RarBG.to and Fitgirl-repacks we only get one result, instead of the hundreds of thousands we see on other search engines.

The absence of results doesn't only apply to pirate sites themselves. For example, there are no results for the streaming portals Flixtor and Primewire. In addition, the associated status pages, which merely include links to the official domains, are not indexed either.

Even several popular stream-rippers have been completely wiped from the search results. That includes 2conv.com, Flvto.bid, and several others.

Youtube-dl Gone?

The most surprising omission, by far, is that the official site for the open-source software youtube-dl is not indexed by DuckDuckGo. This site certainly doesn't host or link to any copyright-infringing material.

The youtube-dl code repository was previously removed from GitHub, following a takedown notice sent by the RIAA. After looking more closely at the matter, Github eventually restored it.

We don't know why the official youtube-dl.org website is not in DuckDuckGo's search results, but at least the official GitHub repository is still findable.

Why?

TorrentFreak reached out to DuckDuckGo to discover why these domain names are not showing up in its search results. At the time of publication, we

have yet to hear back. It wouldn't be a surprise if the move is copyright-related, though.

A few months ago, Google also started to remove several pirate site domains from its search results. However, in Google's case, these delistings are regional and linked to ISP blocking orders.

It's worth pointing out that many pirate sites are still findable in DuckDuckGo. However, the search engine could certainly provide some transparency to help clear up what's happening exactly.

Rightsholders will be happy to see that pirate sites are removed from DuckDuckGo, but it's not without risks for users. While seasoned pirates can probably still locate the sites in question, more shady knockoff sites will now appear higher in its search results.

—

Update April 17: DuckDuckGo has responded to our findings and says that no domains were removed, according to their records.

Before publishing the article we searched for YouTube-dl and The Pirate Bay without the "site:" operator the official domains were not showing up at our end. They do now.

DuckDuckGo's statement below seems to contradict our initial findings, however.

"After looking into this, our records indicate that YouTube-dl and The Pirate Bay were not removed from our search results when you searched for them directly by name or URL — as you noted in your piece. This is how the vast majority of people navigate to a page."

"As our CEO & Founder shared in this tweet, we are having issues with our site: operator, and not just for these sites, but now at least the official site should be coming up for people when they use the site: operator for them."

Interestingly, both YouTube-dl and Thepiratebay.org still don't show up on Bing. We asked DuckDuckGo whether this could be related to Bing data they use and will update this article if we hear back (see update 2 below).

Still Unfindable?

Also, there are other "pirate" sites that we didn't mention in the original article that are still unfindable in DuckDuckGo.

For example, YTMP3.cc, which is one of the most popular YouTube rippers with millions of monthly visitors. According to the "site:" operator there are 0 results indexed. And searching for YTMP3.cc or YTMP3 doesn't bring up the site either. Google has no trouble finding this domain (but Bing does).

Or what about the torrent site Prostylex.org? According to the "site:" operator there are zero results indexed and searching for Prostylex.org or Prostylex doesn't bring up the official site either. Again, the domain is findable in Google.

We don't doubt that DuckDuckGo hasn't intentionally removed any URLs but there still appear to be strange issues with pirate-related searches.

Update 2: A DuckDuckGo spokesperson confirmed to TorrentFreak that the issues are related to Bing data.

Update April 18: The unfindable domains we pointed out in the update are back now as well, after we informed DuckDuckGo about the issue.

Then, on **April 19**, TorrentFreak wrote a follow-up article.

Last week we noticed that several high-profile "pirate" sites were unfindable in DuckDuckGo's search results. It wasn't clear why these domains had been 'removed' but after some back and forth, Bing is now mentioned as the culprit. DuckDuckGo

is working hard to mitigate the problem, which is more widespread than we initially reported.

It's not a secret that Google and Bing are tweaking their search results to accommodate copyright holders.

However, it was a surprise to see that pirate and related sites also started to disappear from DuckDuckGo, as we reported last week.

An initial review revealed that the official domains for sites such as The Pirate Bay, Fmovies, and YouTube-DL were no longer showing up. This led us to conclude that they had been removed for some reason or another.

Not Removed?

DuckDuckGo didn't immediately respond to our findings but after two days DuckDuckGo founder and CEO Gabriel Weinberg reacted on Twitter.

According to Weinberg, the search engine never removed anything. Instead, the problems were attributed to the "site:" search operator we used as an example in our article. Apparently, that is broken.

"We are not 'purging' YouTube-dl or The Pirate Bay and they both have actually been continuously available in our results if you search for them by name (which most people do). Our site: operator (which hardly anyone uses) is having issues which we are looking into," Weinberg wrote.

These comments suggest that our coverage was wrong. However, that's not the full picture, far from it.

When we wrote our article, we didn't only use the "site:" operator. We also searched for keywords directly, without the domain names showing up. This means that the sites were unfindable for another reason.

DuckDuckGo Restoral

Coinciding with the tweets from DuckDuckGo's CEO, several of the domains we listed in our article started to reappear in the search engine. The Pirate Bay homepage reappeared, and the same applies to YouTube-DL and Fmovies, even when we use the 'broken' "site:" operator.

These restorations supported the suggestion that this was merely a temporary technical issue. However, it wasn't hard to find other examples of domains that were still unfindable.

On Sunday, we updated our article to add that YTMP3.cc and Prostylex were not appearing in search results; a few hours later these reappeared as well.

While we were amazed by this magical superpower that allows us to revive websites by simply mentioning them, someone else was pulling the strings. Behind the scenes, DuckDuckGo was working hard to restore sites that were mentioned in the media.

It's Bing

At this point, it became clear that the search engine wasn't at all happy with what was happening. They never actively removed any of these sites. Instead, a third-party data provider 'removed' the results for them.

Like many other smaller search engines, DuckDuckGo uses hundreds of data sources, including Bing. After some back and forths, DuckDuckGo's spokesperson informed us that Microsoft's search engine was the culprit.

"Yes, this is related to using data from Bing," DuckDuckGo's Senior Communications Manager Allison Goodman said.

Goodman also asked us to share a list of additional sites that were affected, so they could look into these. And indeed, a few hours after we sent over more affected domains such as 1fichier.com, 2embed.ru, and torrentgalaxy.com, these were restored as well.

Broader Issue

It's understandable that DuckDuckGo wasn't happy with the coverage. However, the problem was real. And since it's emanating from Bing, other smaller search engines that rely on that data may be affected as well.

"Since these occurrences originated on Bing, they were passed down to our results, as well as other Bing syndication partners," Goodman clarifies.

For DuckDuckGo, it may be tricky to resolve the issue permanently as long as it relies on Bing. Aside from the potential legal implications of actively restoring pirate sites, there are dozens, if not hundreds of other domains that are still unfindable.

We don't intend to keep hammering on this but, at the time of writing the streaming service gimy.app is not showing up in the search results.

Inaccurate DMCA Removals?

While looking into these issues, we noticed that Bing also affects DuckDuckGo in other ways. From what we can see, the DMCA removals also spill over, including the inaccurate ones.

For example, some news articles from TorrentFreak are not available in Bing, presumably due to takedown requests. That includes this news report about a leaked Game of Thrones episode.

A few weeks ago Warner Bros. asked Google to remove this article. Google refused to do so, but it looks like Bing complied as the article is unfindable

there. When we search for the title or even the URL, it's not there.

The same applies to DuckDuckGo, where the article is not listed. Instead, the top hit is a copy of our reporting. In Google's search results our news article is the first result, as expected.

All in all, we want to emphasize that these issues are not caused by DuckDuckGo, which has been trying hard to mitigate the problem. However, the issues do exist and it is clearly more than a broken search functionality.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by parnote, on April 1, 2022, running Xfce.

Adjusting Firefox Settings To Enhance Your Online Privacy

by Privacy International
Reprinted under GPL v3 license

Firefox provides you with several mechanisms to protect your privacy. However, some of them are not enabled by default. In this guide you'll learn how to configure your Firefox browser settings to strengthen your online privacy.

Changing settings in Firefox menu

To change basic privacy settings in Firefox, access the preferences menu by clicking on **Edit > Preferences** on the menu-bar, or by entering about:preferences in the URL bar, and then click on **Privacy & Security** (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1: Firefox privacy settings page

Enable content blocking

Content blocking should be enabled by default on your Firefox installation. If not, find the **Enhanced Tracking Protection** setting and set it to **Standard** (Fig. 2). If

you want stronger protection set it to **Strict**, but keep in mind this can prevent some pages from displaying correctly.

Fig. 2: Firefox Tracking Protection settings

Enable Do Not Track

When browsing the web, your browser can warn websites that you do not want to be tracked. Beware that not all websites respect this! For more consistent protection, please see our guide on installing an ad-blocker. Still, warning

websites that you do not want to be tracked is an added protection. Scroll down until you see the **Send websites a "Do Not Track" signal that you don't want to be tracked** and then click on **Always** (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Firefox Do Not Track setting

Disable telemetry services

To improve its services, Firefox collects technical and interaction data that it later sends to Mozilla for processing. Part of this also includes the ability to remotely install extensions on your browser, which can pose a privacy risk. To disable telemetry services, find the section titled **Firefox Data Collection and Use** and make sure to un-tick all boxes (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Disable Firefox telemetry

Changing settings in the about:config page

To manage advanced privacy settings, type about:config in the URL bar and press Enter. You'll then be greeted by a warning stating that some settings may affect Firefox's performance and security (Fig. 5). Click **Accept the Risk and Continue** to enter the settings page.

Warning: This settings page gives access to advanced features that might affect Firefox ability to function properly. Make sure you understand what you do. All changes are reversible.

Fig. 5: Firefox advanced settings page

Table 1 shows some of the advanced settings you can change to better protect your online privacy. Next to each setting is the value we recommend applying, as well as a brief summary on what that setting concerns. To enable or disable an option, enter its name in the search bar, and then double click to change the value. When you do so, the updated value is highlighted in bold and is automatically saved (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Set an advanced Firefox setting

Setting	Value	Why
media.navigator.enabled	false	Prevent websites from checking the status of your microphone and camera
privacy.firstparty.isolate	true	Isolate first party domain cookies to reduce tracking across multiple websites
privacy.trackingprotection.cryptomining.enabled	true	Prevent websites from running crypto miners in your browser
privacy.trackingprotection.fingerprinting.enabled	true	Attempt to reduce your online fingerprint
geo.enabled	false	Disable location services, since they go through Google's servers
network.prefetch-next	false	Disable pre-fetching of webpages as this can pose a privacy risk
network.websocket.enabled	false	If you use a VPN, the use of WebSockets can leak your real IP address
dom.event.clipboardevents.enabled	false	Prevent websites from getting a notification when you copy, cut, or paste something from the page
media.peerconnection.enabled	false	If you use a VPN, the use of WebRTC can leak your real IP address
dom.battery.enabled	false	Prevent websites from reading your battery level
browser.send_pings	false	Prevent website from tracking your clicks on pages
browser.send_pings.require_same_host	true	Allow click-tracking if send and receiving host match
extensions.pocket.enabled	false	Disable Pocket integration

Table 1: Recommended settings to strengthen your browser privacy

Do You Trust Technology?

by Alessandro Ebersol (Agent Smith)

The everyday aspects of technology are so ingrained in our daily lives, that we don't even think about whether we can trust this technology. We use the services and gadgets in automatic mode.

Have you ever stopped to think if the technology you use can be trusted? That in a Google search, you trust that the search engine will return the best results? That Google maps will show you the best route to a certain destination? The Google example was a figure of speech, the same questions can be asked about Microsoft's products, Apple's, Amazon's services and so on.

If you still trust technology, let me take the veil off the mass propaganda that sells us that Google is not evil and that Microsoft loves Linux.

Google manipulates results...

Mike Wacker, a former Google engineer, has repeatedly claimed that Google engages in manual manipulation of search results. Not only that, Mike Wacker called out CEO Sundar Pichai for lying to Congress about the matter.

This was in addition to then-anonymous claims that he himself had been advised to reorder search results. Google has been repeatedly criticized for manipulating search results, especially by burying and censoring conservative content while raising positive results for left-wing content.

In testimony before the House Judiciary Committee in December 2018, CEO Sundar Pichai was asked directly by Representative Zoe Lofgren (Democrats-CA) if "there wasn't a little man sitting behind the curtain figuring out what we [Google] are going to show the user."

Sundar Pichai said, "We don't manually intervene in any particular search result."

Mike Wacker explained in a post on Medium that he was able to find where Google had actually altered search results regarding abortion. Google had a special file regarding blacklisted topics, and if searches were performed regarding these topics, an alternative algorithm would trigger alternative search results.

Another former Google engineer, Zack Voorhies in a recent interview with The Epoch Times, said that Google tweaked its algorithm to ensure that the negative stories in the mainstream media about former President Trump were what people saw when they used its search engine, the world's most popular search engine. Zach Vorhies said that the tech giant specifically changed its news algorithm to harm the former president.

"As a Google whistleblower, Vorhies turned over 950 pages of internal Google documents to the Justice Department's antitrust division detailing Google's extensive censorship project. This project is called "Machine Learning Fairness," which has already corrupted Google Search, YouTube, and News products. This, along with various blacklists and secret page rankings, is being used by Google to manipulate public opinion according to a hidden agenda."

Waze doesn't know where to go

On October 3, 2015, Francisco and Regina Stringari Múrmura, 70, had just entered the Caramujo community when they were met with gunfire. They were going from Rio to Niteroi and put their

peace, but in fact stirring up hatred. In my view of what is happening, it is a repeat of the Cuban missile crisis, only in reverse, in simple lines.

But now we have, in all the technology and communications companies, censorship and repression of anything concerning the conflict other than the official NATO version, that the Russian president is a mad aggressor.

Facebook allows hate messages against Russians

In times when users and experts are clamoring for more efficient content moderation on social networks, Meta Platforms has made a controversial decision. Last March, it decided to allow hate speech against Russian officials and military personnel on Facebook and Instagram.

YouTube censors Russia Today and Sputnik channels

Google has decided to censor the Kremlin-linked channels Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik. The tech giant will cut the reach of these publications in Europe during the Ukraine War, with the excuse of preventing the spread of fake news from the Kremlin. However, this decision, since most people nowadays inform themselves through YouTube or via Google News, creates mass disinformation and no chance for contradiction, which creates a spirit of Russian phobia. Yes, the media is instilling hatred for the Russian people and everything related to Russia.

Russophobia: a great evil for everyone

Russophobia could not come at a worse time: when the world is trying to get back on its feet from two years of pandemic, a conflict, with sanctions on both sides, which, instead of speeding up the process of

world reconstruction, will only worsen the conditions and situations that we are all living in, in this "post-pandemic", quotation marks, since the pandemic seems to have weakened, but is not over.

Poster found on the door of a Russian restaurant in NY

All the anti-Russian propaganda, created to justify the sanctions against Russia, creates a climate of hatred and xenophobia, something that should be long over, a page turned.
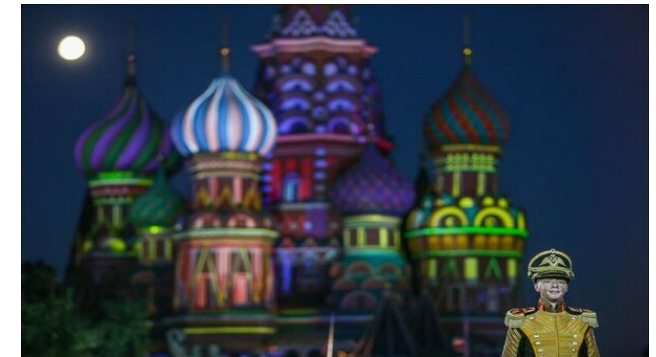
But this is not what is happening.

We can't forget to mention that Google has sent a message, to all content creators, valid for Youtube,

blogs and apps monetized by Google Adsense.

In short, the message warns that any content that spells out that "Ukrainians are responsible for the tragedy itself or similar examples of victim-blaming, such as statements claiming that Ukraine is committing genocide or is intentionally attacking its own citizens." And, this is not what happens, with several examples of human shields of the civilian population, something similar to what happens in Brazil in the slums, where bandits hide among the innocent population and use them as shields.

The Evil Effects of Sanctioning Russia

The effects of the sanctions against Russia are already being felt:

• Oil and gas: Russia is the world's leading exporter and second largest producer of natural gas. It is also the second largest exporter and third largest producer of oil globally, accounting for about 12% of global supply. Thus, a shakeup in the production and financing chains in the country has direct repercussions on the supply of these commodities worldwide, economists point out.

• Fertilizers: Russia is among the largest producers of fertilizers in the world, being an important supplier of Ammonia, Phosphate Rock, and Potassium Chloride. Brazil is one of its main clients. The interruption or reduction in the supply

of these items in the global trade chain affects the costs of food producers and, consequently, generates inflation.

• Wheat: If we add production and sales in international markets, Russia and Ukraine account for almost 30% of world wheat exports. A reduction or even interruption in the supply of this part of the commodity has a direct impact on several food chains.

• In the food industry, for example, it affects the supply of pasta manufacturers. And, in the raising of pigs and poultry, the scarcity of this input increases the costs of breeders, affecting the final price to the consumer.

Although it affects Europe first, the effects of the sanctions are already being felt around the world, with food and fuel prices rising, increasing inflation.

When free speech is controlled by private companies...

Yes, exactly this. Today we see that free speech, a relative democratic right, but one that should be enabled for all, is not possible. The big technology companies, acting as gatekeepers to everything related to cyberspace and internet telecommunications, threaten the free debate of ideas and create one-sided narratives.

Thus, they create a situation of constant tension, of a regional conflict that can spiral and involve the whole world.

American diplomacy, however, also leaves something to be desired, instigating conflict instead of seeking peaceful ways out of this situation.
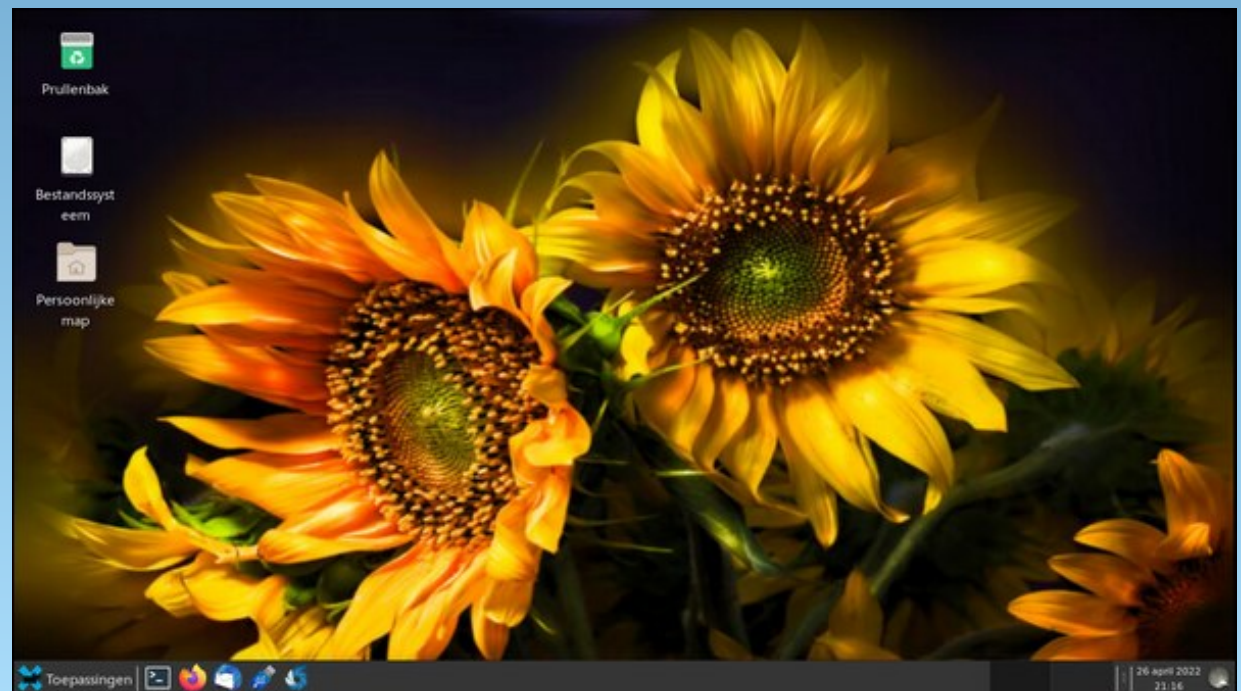
Hope for peace must prevail

When several Western countries began to sanction Russia, they did not realize that globalization was not a one-way street, but that everyone depended on everyone else. So much so that today several countries are already feeling the effects. The USA started to import oil from Venezuela, and other countries like France and Germany may face an energy crisis, due to their dependence on Russian oil and gas.

As I mentioned above, US foreign policy has gotten much worse since former President Trump. Some of the media presented him as an orange buffoon, but he would never have let this situation escalate as it has, and we still don't know how it will end.

Again, do not blindly trust the technology companies, as they have already proven to be biased and have their own interests, which do not contemplate the collectivity. Here, I am praying for peace. A big hug and see you in the next article.

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by mutse, on April 26, 2022, running Xfce.

Esperanto Characters On PCLinuxOS

by David Pardue (kalwisti)

I enjoy dabbling with languages -- including constructed languages (conlangs) such as Esperanto, Interlingua and Ido. My longest as well as fondest involvement has been with Esperanto, the most successful conlang to date. I recently began brushing up on my *internacia lingvo* ('international language') and realized that I did not know how to correctly produce its six special supersigns in Linux. The special supersigns -- also known as the "hatted letters" (*ĉapelitaj literoj*) -- are: ĉ, ĝ, ĥ, ĵ, ŝ and ŭ.

Although the *Fundamento de Esperanto* ('Foundation of Esperanto') [1905], which lays out the basis of the language, allows the use of an alternative method for these supersigns when one cannot properly type them, it is preferable to use the correct diacritics whenever technically possible. The so-called "h-system" allows the workaround of using *ch* in place of ĉ, *gh* for ĝ, *hh* for ĥ, *jh* for ĵ, *sh* for ŝ, and ŭ is replaced by *u*.

Since the advent of Unicode, it is much easier to add Esperanto keyboard layouts in the major Linux desktop environments. Unicode is a character encoding standard with the capacity to support over one million characters. It is being developed with the goal of   having a single character set that supports all characters from all scripts, that are in common use around the world today. The era of legacy Latin-3 encodings and special TrueType fonts has fallen by the wayside as application support for Unicode improved. The Latin-3 (ISO-8859-3) encoding standard, which supported Esperanto, Turkish and Maltese, was popular from the late 1990s until the early 2000s. As we will see with KDE and MATE, it is

even possible to type these characters without installing a separate keyboard layout.
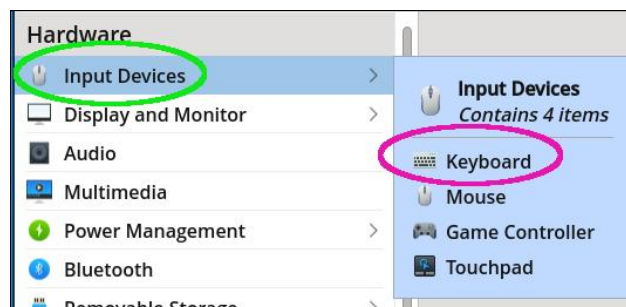
This tutorial explains how to properly type Esperanto's diacritical letters via Unicode with minimal fuss in KDE, MATE, Xfce and Openbox -- without needing to change your system locale. (In my case, the locale remains set as English (US) [en_US.UTF-8]). I initially made notes just for my sysadmin journal but later decided to expand them, in case they might prove helpful to Esperanto students in the PCLinuxOS community.
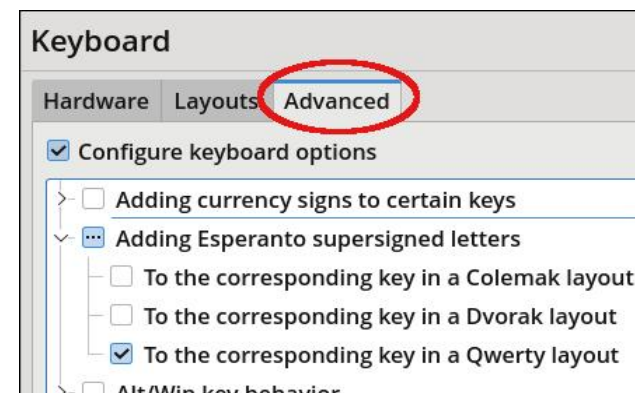
KDE

Without Separate Keyboard Layout

KDE Plasma 5.24.x allows you to type Esperanto's supersigns right out of the box, without having to install a separate keyboard layout. To configure this, follow these steps:

Go to the **PCLinuxOS (Start) menu > Configuration > KDE System Settings > Hardware > Input Devices > Keyboard**:
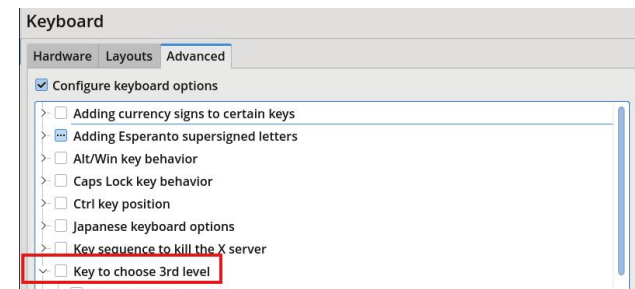

Adding Esperanto Supersigned Letters

Click on the **Advanced** tab, and locate the option **Adding Esperanto supersigned letters**. Under it, select / tick the option **To the corresponding key in a Qwerty layout**:
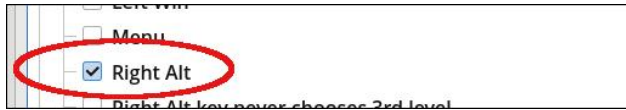

Key to Choose 3rd Level

Next, scroll down to the section labeled **Key to choose 3rd level**. This is where you will choose your **AltGr** key (also known as the **Alt Gr**aph key or the **Alt**ernate **Gr**aphic key) as a "Compose key." It is located where the **Right Alt** key is normally found (to the right of the spacebar). When pressed along with a keyboard key, it enables the entry of special characters.
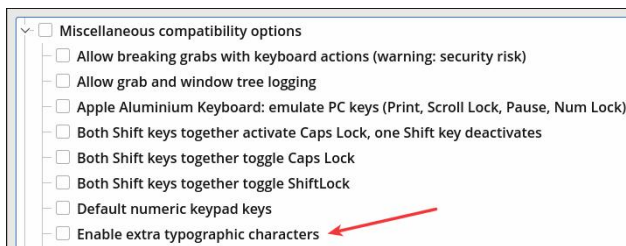
You will notice a variety of options available; you can choose whichever key you wish. I selected the **Right Alt** key:

I was puzzled by what "3rd level" means until I found a blog post by Timothy Boronczyk which provides a clear explanation of the term:

• Each key can be thought of as having multiple levels. For example, the first level of the C key would be a lower-case "c". The second level would be an upper-case "C" (the second level is accessible [via] the Shift key as a modifier). The supersigno option maps the accented characters to the third and fourth levels of the keys of their respective base glyphs. That is, the third level of the C key is now "ĉ" and the fourth is "Ĉ".

• Just as a modifier key is needed to access the second level (Shift), a modifier is also used to access the higher levels. In my case I set this as the **Right Alt** key, a key traditionally used for this purpose.

One last item to verify is under the section labeled **Miscellaneous compatibility options**. Make sure that the option "Enable extra typographic characters" is **not** selected / ticked:

Finally, click the **Apply** button and you're ready to type the supersigned letters. This method works well, providing that you do not mind typing the two-key combinations listed below. (You must press both keys simultaneously to produce the supersigns):

3rd Level Key (Prefix)	Key	Result	3rd Level Key (Prefix)	Key	Result
< *Your choice here* >			< *Your choice here* >		
Right Alt +	c	ĉ	Right Alt +	C	Ĉ
Right Alt +	s	ŝ	Right Alt +	S	Ŝ
Right Alt +	g	ĝ	Right Alt +	G	Ĝ
Right Alt +	h	ĥ	Right Alt +	H	Ĥ
Right Alt +	j	ĵ	Right Alt +	J	Ĵ
Right Alt +	u	ŭ	Right Alt +	U	Ŭ

Testing with Esperanto Pangrams

People who have taken touch-typing classes are probably familiar with the sentence "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." This kind of sentence is called a pangram6 because it contains every letter of the English alphabet. Pangrams have been used for years to teach typing, as well as to test printers, typefaces and software. Graphic and font designers often use pangrams to illustrate their work. Pangram is derived from the Greek roots '*pan*-' (all) and '-*gram*' (letter). Two other fun English pangrams are: "Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs" and "When zombies arrive, quickly fax Judge Pat."

Esperanto has a couple of famous pangrams you can type to demonstrate that your keyboard is working properly:

Laŭ Ludoviko Zamenhof bongustas freŝa ĉeĥa manĝaĵo kun spicoj.
('According to Ludwig Zamenhof, fresh Czech food with spices tastes good')

eĥoŝanĝo ĉiuĵaŭde
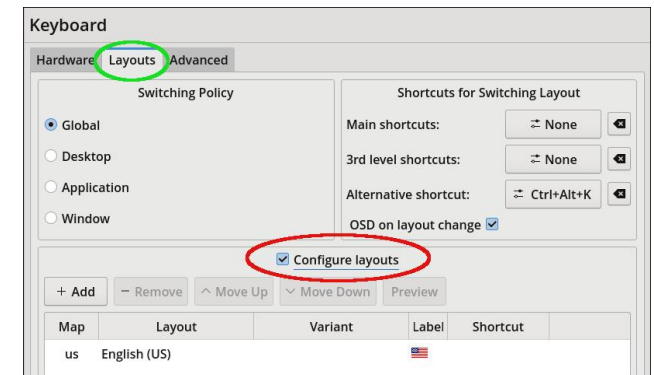('echo change every Thursday')

This is technically not a pangram, but is a popular nonsense phrase used as a lorem ipsum to test whether Esperanto's supersigns are working on a computer keyboard. It contains all six of Esperanto's diacritical letters.
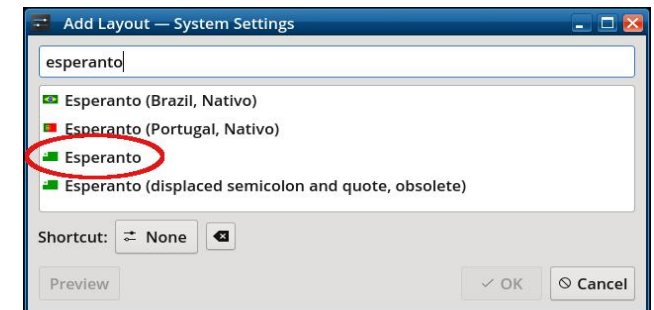
With Esperanto Keyboard Layout

KDE also offers the option of using a dedicated Esperanto keyboard layout; this is my preference.

The procedure for installing and configuring this keyboard is similar to the steps described above, so I will focus on the steps that differ.
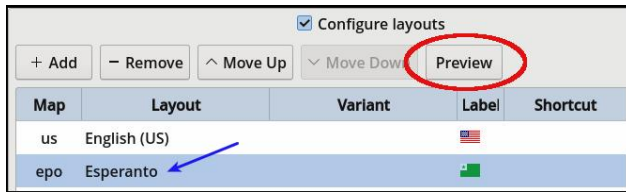
Go to **Configuration > KDE System Settings > Hardware > Input Devices > Keyboard**. Click on the **Layouts** tab. If the **Configure layouts** option is not already selected, tick the box to activate it:

Press the **+Add** button; an "Add Layout" pop-up window will appear. In the Search box, type **esperanto** to locate the keyboard layout:
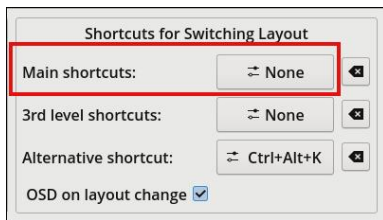

Select the (plain) **Esperanto** layout, then click the **OK** button to add the keyboard layout (next page, top left).
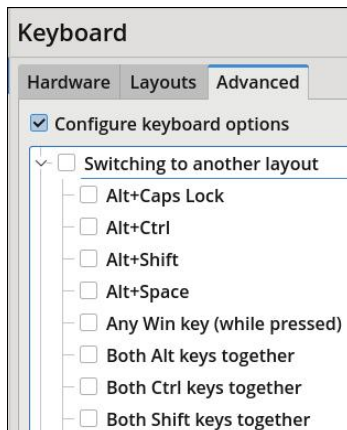
One handy feature is the **Preview** button, which allows you to see a preview of the new layout in a pop-up window. You can use Spectacle to capture a screenshot of the layout for future reference, if you wish.
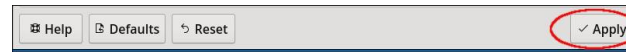
Next, we need to select a key shortcut for switching between the two keyboard layouts. Under the **Shortcuts for Switching Layout** section, click the button to the right of **Main shortcuts**:

This will open up the **Advanced** tab and take you to the subsection labeled **Switching to another layout**. You will see a lengthy list of available keys and key combinations you choose from. I opted for the **Win Key+Space** combination (at the bottom of the list):

To complete the installation, click the **Apply** button (in the bottom right corner):

At this point, the keyboard layout abbreviation(s) should appear in your system tray:

If you wish, you can change the display style of the keyboard layout icons from their text labels to flags. To accomplish this, right-click on the text label in the systray, and select **Configure Keyboard Layout**:

In the pop-up window that appears, choose the **Display style** as a flag icon by clicking the radio button next to it:

Click the **Apply** button to save this change:

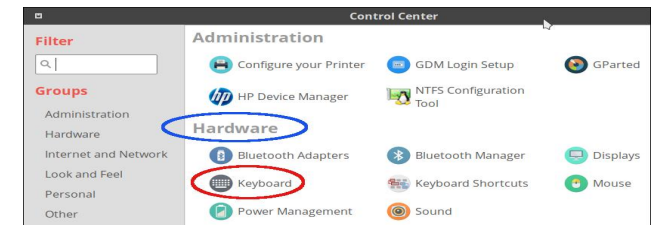It is simple to type Esperanto's diacritical letters using this layout:

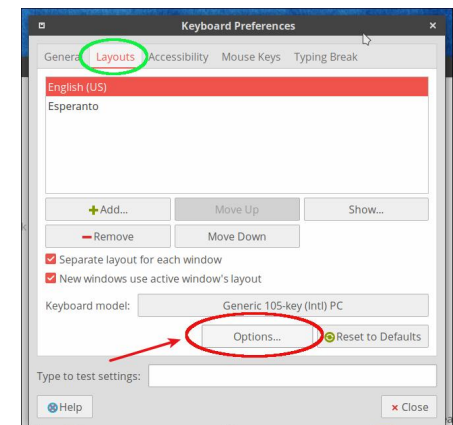| Key	Result		Key	Result
q	ŝ		Q	Ŝ
w	ĝ		W	Ĝ
y	ŭ		Y	Ŭ
[	ĵ		Shift + [({)	Ĵ
]	ĥ		Shift +] (})	Ĥ
x	ĉ		X	Ĉ

MATE

Without Separate Keyboard Layout

MATE 1.26 allows you to type Esperanto's supersigns right out of the box, without having to install a separate keyboard layout. To configure this, follow these steps:

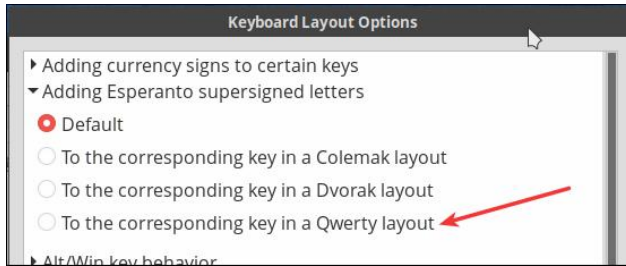Go to the **System menu > Control Center > Hardware > Keyboard**:

Click on the **Layouts** tab to bring it forward, then click on the **Options** button:

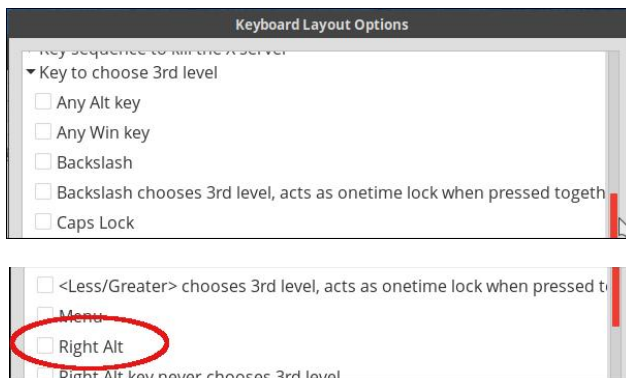**Adding Esperanto Supersigned Letters**

A **Keyboard Layout Options** pop-up window will appear. Find the option **Adding Esperanto supersigned letters**. Under it, select the radio button labeled **To the corresponding key in a Qwerty layout**
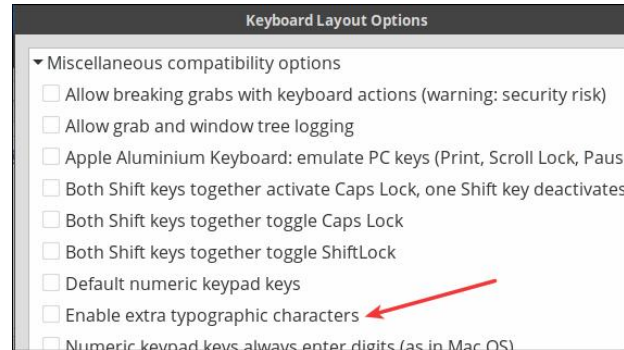

Key to Choose 3rd Level

Next, scroll down to the section labeled **Key to choose 3rd level**. Here you will choose your **AltGr** key (also known as the **Alt Gr**aph key or the **Alt**ernate **Gr**aphic key) as a "Compose key." It is located where the **Right Alt** key is normally found (to the right of the spacebar). When pressed along with a keyboard key, it enables the entry of special characters.

You will notice a variety of options available; you can choose whichever key you wish. I selected the **Right Alt** key:

(For a more detailed explanation of what "3rd level" means, consult the subsubsection "Key to Choose 3rd Level" of the KDE subsection "Without Separate Keyboard Layout," at the beginning of this tutorial).

One last item to verify is under the section labeled **Miscellaneous compatibility options**. Make sure that the option "Enable extra typographic characters" is **not** selected/ticked:

Finally, click the pop-up window's **Close** button and you're ready to type the supersigned letters. This method works well, providing that you do not mind typing the two-key combinations listed below. (You must press both keys simultaneously to produce the supersigns):
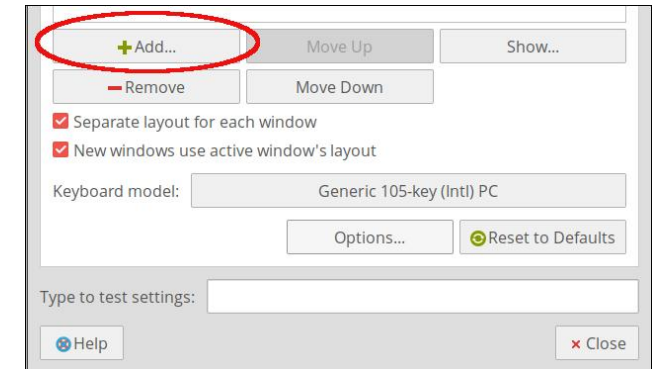
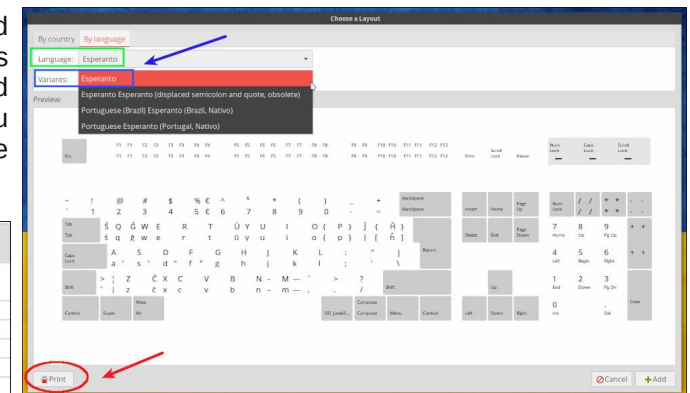| 3rd Level Key (Prefix)	Key	Result	3rd Level Key (Prefix)	Key	Result
< Your choice here >			< Your choice here >		
Right Alt +	c	ĉ	Right Alt +	C	Ĉ
Right Alt +	s	ŝ	Right Alt +	S	Ŝ
Right Alt +	g	ĝ	Right Alt +	G	Ĝ
Right Alt +	h	ĥ	Right Alt +	H	Ĥ
Right Alt +	j	ĵ	Right Alt +	J	Ĵ
Right Alt +	u	ŭ	Right Alt +	U	Ŭ

With Esperanto Keyboard Layout

MATE also offers the option of using a dedicated Esperanto keyboard layout; I find this faster and more convenient.

Begin by going to the **System menu > Control Center > Hardware > Keyboard**. Click on the **Layouts** tab to bring it forward:
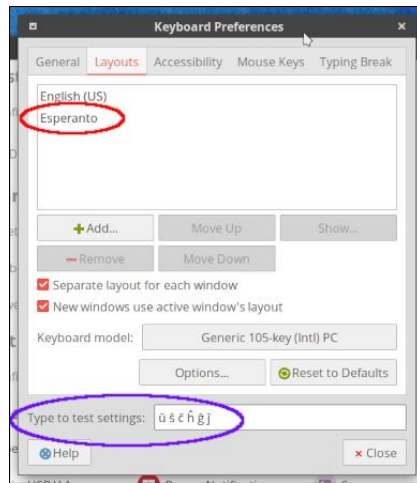

Press the **+Add** button. A "Choose a Layout" pop-up window will appear. Click on the **By language** tab, and choose **Esperanto** from the **Language** drop-down menu. From the **Variants** drop-down, select (plain) **Esperanto**:
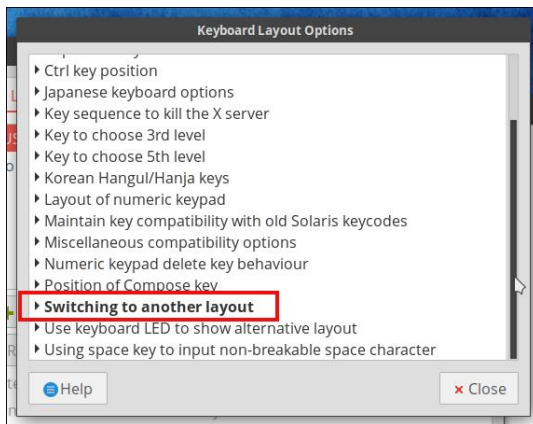

A welcome feature is that MATE displays a preview of the keyboard layout, and even offers you the chance to print it. (The **Print** button is in the lower left corner of the pop-up window).

Click the **+Add** button to install the dedicated Esperanto keyboard and to close the pop-up. The new keyboard will be listed under **Layouts**; MATE also provides an empty box in which you can type to test it. You are almost finished …
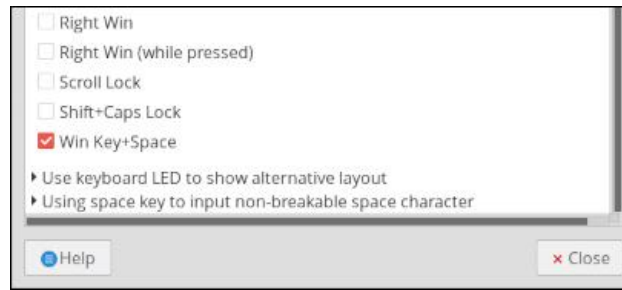
The final step involves selecting a key shortcut to switch between the two keyboard layouts. Under the **Layouts** tab, highlight the entry for **Esperanto**. Next, click on the **Options** button.

After the pop-up window appears, scroll down to the **Switching to another layout** section:
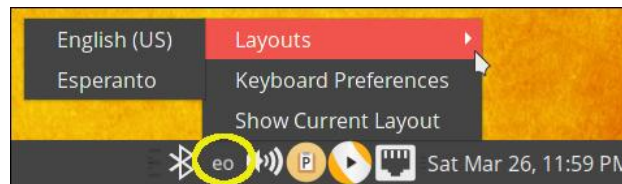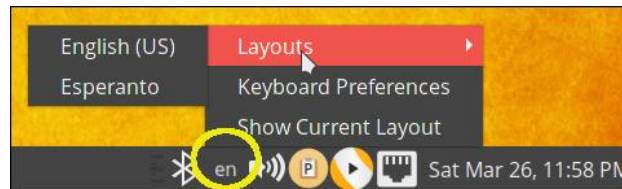

You will see a lengthy list of available keys and key combinations you choose from. I opted for the **Win Key+Space** combination (at the bottom of the list - see image, center top):

Finally, click the **Close** button; you're now ready to type the diacritical letters with the dedicated keyboard layout. Congratulations!

The keyboard layout text label(s) should appear in your system tray:

It is easy-peasy to type Esperanto's supersigned letters using this layout:

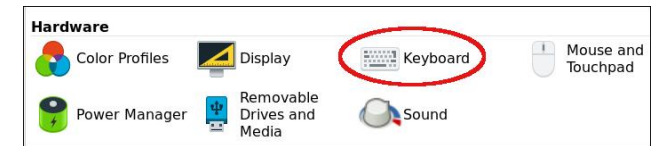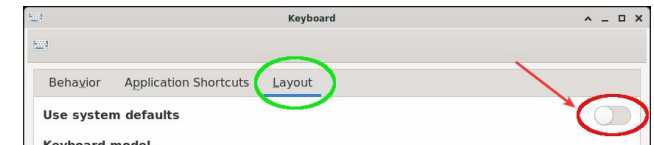| Key	Result		Key	Result
q	ŝ		Q	Ŝ
w	ĝ		W	Ĝ
y	ŭ		Y	Ŭ
[	ĵ		Shift + [(**{**)	Ĵ
]	ĥ		Shift +] (**}**)	Ĥ
x	ĉ		X	Ĉ

Xfce

With English (international AltGr dead keys) Layout

This method involves installing a second keyboard layout which uses the AltGr key (whose function is described in the KDE section above).

Begin by going to the **PCLinuxOS (Start) menu > Settings Manager > Hardware > Keyboard**:

Next, click on the **Layout** tab. Check the status of the **Use system defaults** slider (mine was set to "On" by default). If the slider is in the "On" position, you will be unable to add another keyboard layout. If necessary, slide it to the "Off" position (as shown below):

Click on the **Add** button. A **Keyboard layout selection** pop-up window will appear. Expand the **English (US)** menu and select the **English (international AltGr dead keys)** layout:
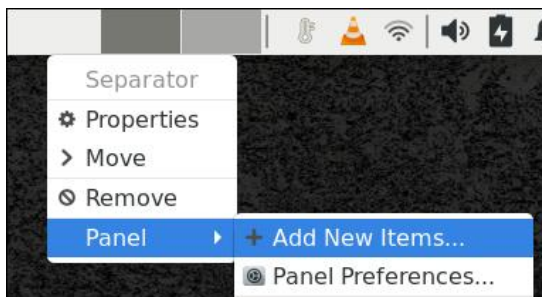
Click the **OK** button to install it.

To configure the keyboard layout, you need to select which key will act as the "**Compose key**" (**AltGr**). Clicking on the drop-down menu, you will see a whole list of available keys and key combinations you can choose from. Select the option that works best for you and your use of the keyboard.

On my old Dell keyboard (wired USB with chiclet-style keys), I discovered that the most comfortable "Compose key" was either the **Left Win** key or the **Right Ctrl** key:
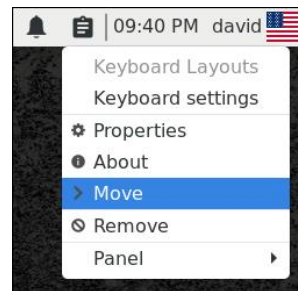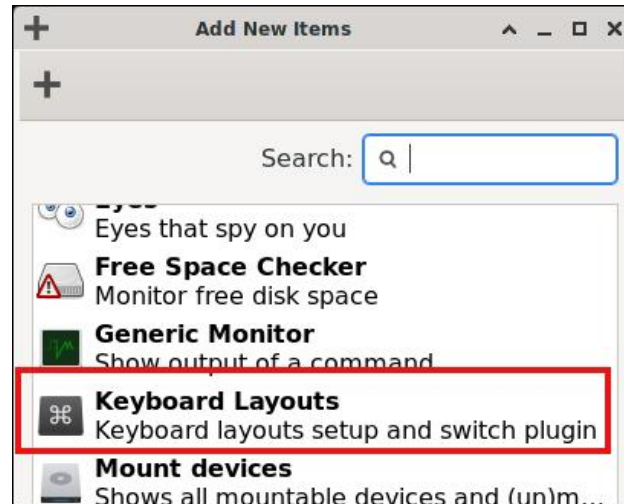

Xfce provides another feature to make your typing life more convenient: a panel plugin. This plugin allows quick access to switching between installed keyboard layouts. Although the required plugin is likely installed on your system by default, it would be a good idea to check in Synaptic for it: **xfce4-xkb-plugin** (0.8.2-1).

To add the plugin to your top panel, right-click on an empty area and choose **Panel > Add New Items**:
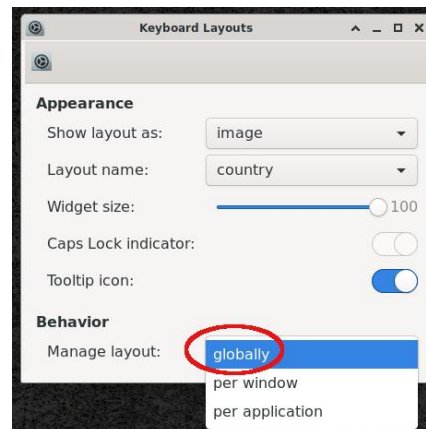

Next, choose **Keyboard Layouts** (center, top):

The layout's icon will be placed at the far right end of the panel. If you wish to move it elsewhere, right-click on the flag icon and select **Move** (center):
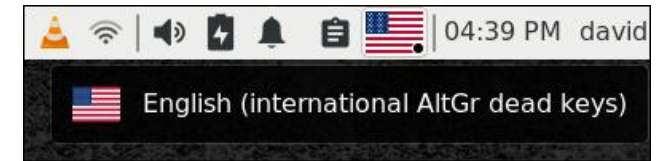

Another plugin configuration setting that should be checked is **Behavior : Manage layout**. To access this, right-click on the Keyboard Layout icon > then choose **Properties**:

For this option, I recommend choosing "**globally**"; this way, you do not have to remember which application (word processor, E-mail program, etc.) is using which keyboard layout.

You are almost ready to use the keyboard layout. To activate it, just click on the panel icon and select the "enhanced" keyboard. It should look like this (with a black dot in the lower right-hand corner of the US flag):

To type Esperanto's special supersigns, do the following.

The letters with circumflexes require three separate keystrokes:

1. Press the "Compose key" (e.g., **Left Win**) and release it.

2. Press **Shift + 6** (i.e., ^) and release the keys.

3. Press the c key to produce ĉ.

(Pressing **g** will type ĝ ; **h** will create ĥ ; **j** yields ĵ ; and **s** produces ŝ).

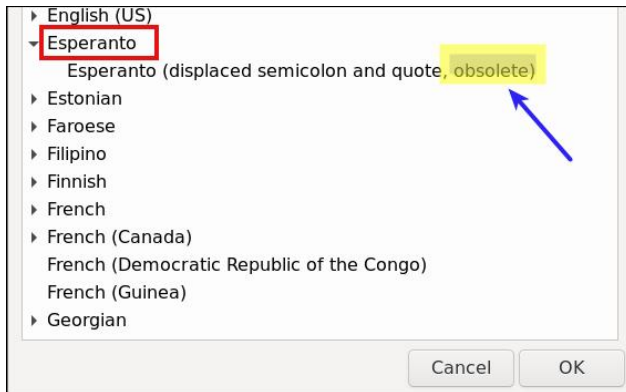The u with breve (ŭ) requires some "finger Olympics" to achieve the successive key presses. Press **AltGr (Right Alt) + Shift + 9**. Then, release the keys. Press the **u** key to produce ŭ.

If you would like additional information on this enhanced keyboard layout, as well as where to download a PDF cheat sheet of other Compose Key combinations, see Paul Arnote's article on "Accessing the Extended Character Set."
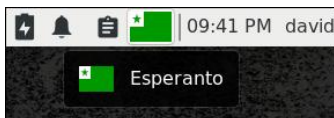
With Esperanto Keyboard Layout

Instead of using the multiple-key-combination approach, I am more comfortable with a dedicated Esperanto keyboard layout.

The procedure for installing and configuring this keyboard is almost identical to the steps described above. The only difference is that when you see the **Keyboard layout selection** pop-up window, choose the **Esperanto** layout. (Click carefully to avoid selecting the obsolete [**displaced semicolon**] layout):

When you have installed the keyboard layout and configured the plugin, the icon will look like this in your panel:

Typing Esperanto's diacritical letters with this layout is straightforward:

Key	Result		Key	Result
q	ŝ		Q	Ŝ
w	ĝ		W	Ĝ
y	ŭ		Y	Ŭ
[	ĵ	Shift + [({)	Ĵ
]	ĥ	Shift +] (})	Ĥ
x	ĉ		X	Ĉ

Openbox

I run the PCLinuxOS Openbox community release on my old 2011 HP Mini netbook. (Thanks, Alie!). Openbox -- as a lightweight window manager -- does not incorporate a button or widget in the taskbar which allows you to switch between keyboard layouts with a single mouse click. So it involved some work with Sakura (Terminal) to manually edit system configuration files.

I am a novice with Openbox but online searching suggested which files likely needed modification. I poked around in different directories, experimented a bit and found the relevant file:

/etc/X11/xorg.conf.d/00-keyboard.conf

(As a precaution, I made a Timeshift backup before editing this file). The contents of my modified file are pasted below for reference:

```
Section "InputClass"
Identifier "system-keyboard"
MatchIsKeyboard "on"
Option "XkbLayout" "us,epo"
Option "XkbModel" "pc105"
Option "XkbOptions" "grp:win_space_toggle"
EndSection
```

The language abbreviation for Esperanto is **epo**, and I chose the combination **Win Key + Space** for switching between my two keyboard layouts.
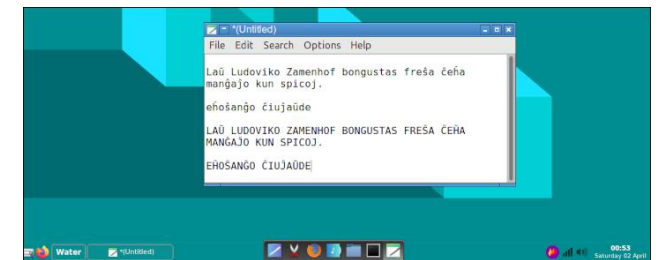
Note: This change will only take effect after you reboot your computer.

Be observant of which layout you are using, because there is no visual indicator of which keyboard layout is active. When I finish composing Esperanto text, I immediately change back to the English (US) layout so that I do not forget.

If you would like to see the full list of available options for keyboard models, language maps and keys for switching between layouts, open this system file:

/usr/share/X11/xkb/rules/evdev.lst

The file is divided into several sections which are separated by the headers: **! model** [of keyboard], **! layout** [language maps], **! variant** [keyboard variants], **! option** [switching to another keyboard layout].

Conclusion

I hope that you have found this tutorial useful, if you were needing to type more than just an isolated Esperanto word or phrase. As is typical under Linux, there are multiple ways to accomplish a given task. With KDE and MATE, you may choose to type the supersigns without using a separate keyboard layout, or via a native Esperanto layout. Within Xfce, you may use an alternative English keyboard layout or an Esperanto layout. Select whichever method works best for you and your use of the keyboard.

If you have family members or friends who are still stuck with Windows, I will mention two free utility programs that allow the typing of Esperanto's diacritical letters without modifying the OS in any way: EK! and Tajpi.

EK! is an open-source (GPL) program created by Jurij Finkel, a computer programmer and translator. Its most recent version (3.9) dates from 2010 and is

available at: *http://www.esperanto.mv.ru/Ek/* **Tajpi** *('to type') is also published under the GPL and was created by Thomas James. The program runs in the background and uses minimal system resources. It is a slightly better option than EK!, in my opinion, because its most recent release (2.98) is from 2016. Tajpi can be downloaded from: http://www.zz9pza.net/tajpi/en/*

I wish you happy typing ... *ĝis la fina venko*! This means 'until the final victory.' This "final success" is the imagined future moment when Esperanto will be recognized as the neutral second language for international communication. Without intending to be snarky, it is analogous to "The Year of the Linux Desktop."

Defending Your Rights

In The Digital World

Screenshot Showcase

Posted by Meemaw, on April 5, 2022, running Xfce.

PCLinuxOS Recipe Corner Bonus

from the kitchen of youcantoo

Mashed Potato Mac and Cheese

40 minutes to prepare serves 8-10

Ingredients

2-3 cups leftover mashed potatoes
2 cups grated cheddar cheese
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
8 oz elbow or shell noodles
1 cup cooked and crumbled bacon
¼ cup chopped chives or green onion, garnish
*Milk or half-and-half, as needed

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350°F and bring a pot of salted water to boil. Cook noodles until just al dente, then drain and stir in 1 tablespoon of butter to prevent noodles from sticking together.

Cook bacon, drain on a paper towel and chop into smaller pieces.

Reheat mashed potatoes in a microwave safe dish. Transfer to a large bowl for mixing. Note: If potatoes are dry, add a little milk or half and half for a smoother texture.

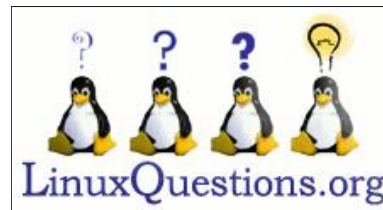Fold in Parmesan cheese, bacon, and 1 cup cheddar cheese and stir to combine.

Gently fold in noodles until just incorporated then pour mixture into a greased 9 x 9 baking dish and top with remaining cheddar cheese.

Bake for 10-15 minutes or until the cheesy topping is bubbling and golden brown. Remove from the oven and garnish with chopped chives or green onions sprinkled over the top.

Tip:

Add 1 cup chopped of your favorite seafood or meat.

For that smokey flavor add 1/2-1 teaspoon liquid smoke to mixture

LinuxQuestions.org

PCLinuxOS Puzzled Partitions

SUDOKU RULES: There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. The only way the puzzle can be considered solved correctly is when all 81 boxes contain numbers and the other Sudoku rules have been followed.

When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be prefilled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the game.
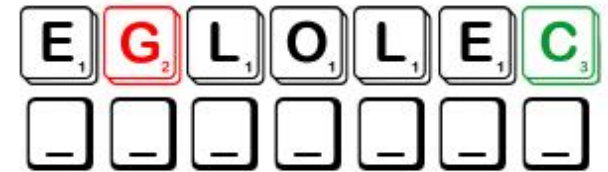
Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same.

Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9 and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same.

SCRAPPLER RULES:
1. Follow the rules of Scrabble®. You can view them here. You have seven (7) letter tiles with which to make as long of a word as you possibly can. Words are based on the English language. Non-English language words are NOT allowed.
2. Red letters are scored double points. Green letters are scored triple points.
3. Add up the score of all the letters that you used. Unused letters are not scored. For red or green letters, apply the multiplier when tallying up your score. Next, apply any additional scoring multipliers, such as double or triple word score.
4. An additional 50 points is added for using all seven (7) of your tiles in a set to make your word. You will not necessarily be able to use all seven (7) of the letters in your set to form a "legal" word.
5. In case you are having difficulty seeing the point value on the letter tiles, here is a list of how they are scored:
  0 points: 2 blank tiles
  1 point: E, A, I, O, N, R, T, L, S, U
  2 points: D, G
  3 points: B, C, M, P
  4 points: F, H, V, W, Y
  5 points: K
  8 points: J, X
  10 points: Q, Z
6. Optionally, a time limit of 60 minutes should apply to the game, averaging to 12 minutes per letter tile set.
7. Have fun! It's only a game!

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

Possible score 253, average score 177.
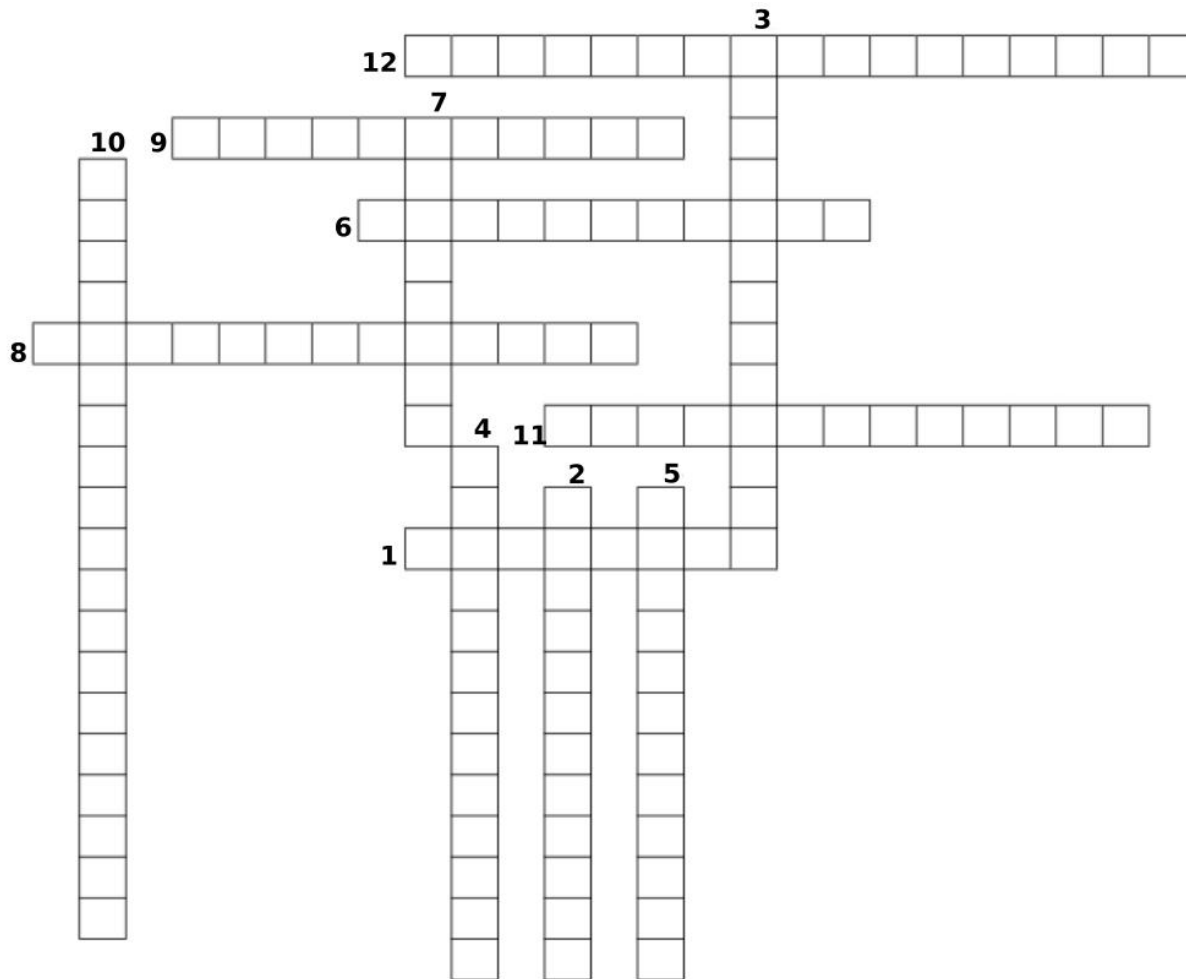
Word Find: May, 2022
Graduation

```
T O C O R E H P A R G O T O H P L A B U E M I Z G K W Y N F
F A K O J D O C T O R A L P R O G R A M S A F U L A D Z A B
G P F R I E N D S H I P S A Y Y T M Q O O G S P N B A O C G
S N O I T A L U T A R G N O C B F W L T K N C B E F H J O E
R L A M S K G M Z J K A H E N K L G C J X A I V Z D N A L U
I O A I U Z L Y R B L P Q T Y P C H A C S C M P S M K G L G
F E H I I F E O S Z G P X A A I W R P P N U E A Z E P R E A
A A O Y T T D X S U N L R E R E E R A C Z M D U L T U E G E
I L M N J N Y S J C W A S R V D J A N O U L A N U A D W I L
W J T O E N E P J Q Z U O U W N L J D J S A C Y S U V Y A Y
C T Z M L B X D I B O S A A G D H R G N A U A R C D A W T V
I E O E V P J J E B F E Q L P P P R O Y U D H A V A V J E I
N M L R Z T I O Y R Q C E A Q Q Y O W A O E T T J R A C E S
T D I E F G Q D X H C R G C Z W L H N O Y I J L C G D R G V
E N W C B T S Y M X L O N C I L R G T F O F G D T E C V A A
R M A F R R J L L S F L A A A R J N C N L J O M O O O C R L
D M P I F J A S J L J Z L B Q O V U E D A L O C C A N O E E
I O D V R V Z T J R Q V U P Y H S S B S N A S U C E S M V D
S K Q C H O H F I U R R M E Y P S Z B D T E T D U T C M A I
C S U Y D K T U T O N F N O T D M F X H Z F M T P A I E T C
I C H Z T V E A H J N I I W N A R C H Z G U I K A U E N N T
P A T X V Y C Y T M B W O P L C L O I P Y F W G T D N C I O
L W L K Z J G V A U V J L R U Q A U K B H F W H I A T E O R
I O J M X T G D O Z L E Q M C R Q N C P Y L R X O R I M P I
N A E K A S P E E K J A L C X O D S S I O N X E N G O E E A
A Y X T S M P T G I L A S F D A L E V S R E F T L R U N D N
R Y J B Y P A J T N U E E D J S I L N O N T I I Q E S T A O
Y S U H Q Q M T O D P Y X M G Y F O E F D T A O J D O R R N
C X W A K A X P E D Z K E Y L J X R E G K A M M I N O L G D
W G G Z Y J F N W R M D Q E Q R A U N L E N W R D U F U K C
```

ACADEMICS	ACCOLADE
ALMA MATER	ALUMNI
APPLAUSE	BACCALAUREATE
BALLOONS	CAP AND GOWN
CAREER	CELEBRATION
CEREMONY	COLLEGIATE
COMMENCEMENT	CONGRATULATIONS
CONSCIENTIOUS	COUNSELOR
CREDENTIALS	CUM LAUDE
DIPLOMA	DOCTORAL PROGRAM
EDUCATION	FRIENDSHIPS
GIFTS	GRADE POINT AVERAGE
GRADUATE	INTERDISCIPLINARY
IVY LEAGUE	JUNIOR COLLEGE
KEEPSAKE	MAGNA CUM LAUDE
MATRICULATE	OCCUPATION
PHOTOGRAPHER	QUIZZES
SALUTATORIAN	UNDERGRADUATE
VALEDICTORIAN	

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

Graduation Crossword

1. An expression of praise.
2. The ceremony for graduating seniors where they receive their degrees.
3. With the greatest honor. Used to express the highest academic distinction.
4. A bachelor's degree or a farewell ceremony for graduating seniors from high school or college.
5. The student with the second highest academic rank in a class who may also deliver a speech at graduation exercises.
6. Certified documents showing that a person has a right to exercise official power.
7. A formal act or ritual, often set by custom or tradition, performed in observation of an event, like a graduation.
8. The student with the highest academic rank in a class who delivers the valedictory speech at graduation.
9. To enroll as a member of a body and especially of a college or university.
10. The ceremonial formality surrounding a public event. Also the name of the march played at many graduations.
11. With high honors. Used to express high academic distinction.
12. Involving two or more unrelated academic, scientific, or artistic areas.

Download Puzzle Solutions Here

Mixed-Up-Meme Scrambler

MeMe's Task Bar

Open 24/7

Shelter
TEASYF

About
TOAMLS

Messy
TUNIYD

Store
RTAMKE
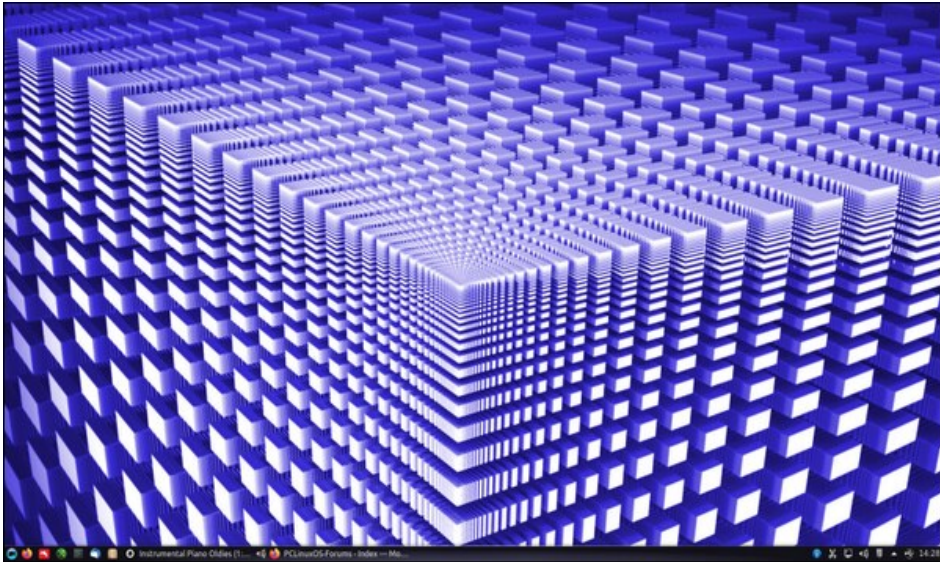
" Which one of you ordered the

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

___ ___ ___ ___ ?"

Use the clues to unmix the letters to make a new word. Remix the letters in the red boxes to solve the puzzle.

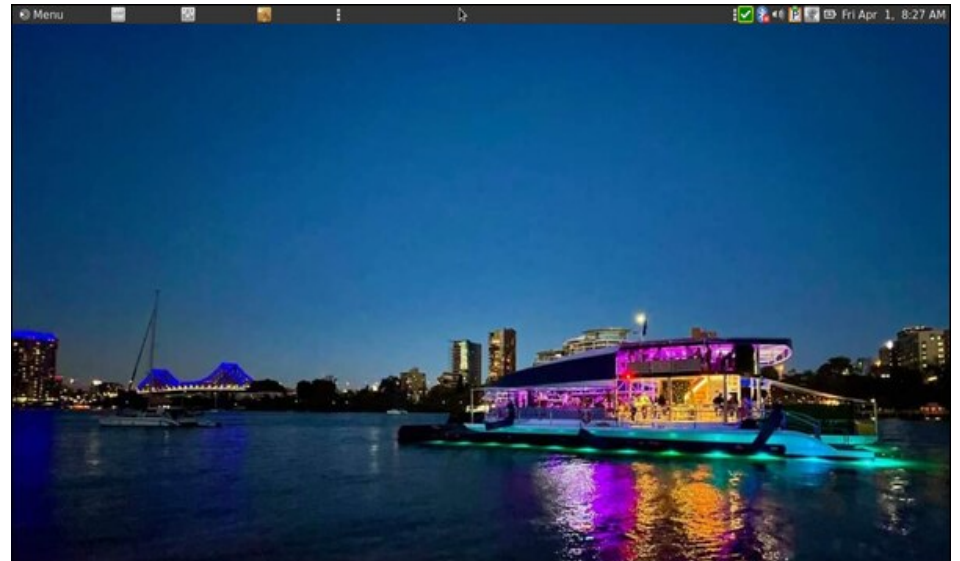**Download Puzzle Solutions Here**

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Posted by luikki, on April 1, 2022, running KDE.

Posted by jogurtmen, on April 2, 2022, running MATE.

Posted by francesco_bat, on April 13, 2022, running Trinity.

Posted by brisvegas, on April 1, 2022, running Mate.