

MUUGLines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

October 2011

Volume 24 No. 2

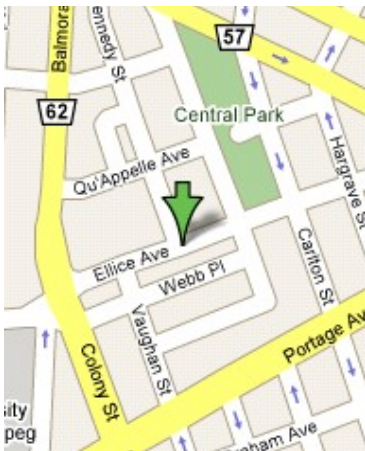
Next Meeting: October 11th, 2011

Mini-HowTo Topics: MBR Rescue & Dropbox

What happens when you trash your MBR? Rob Keizer will discuss ways to get your system up and running again quickly.

Dropbox is a free file sharing service with client support for Windows, MacOS X, Linux, and even some mobile platforms. It lets you automatically replicate files to any of your configured clients, share them with other users, or access them from the web. Gilbert Detillieux will show Dropbox in use, and show the installation of client software under Linux.

Where to find the Meeting



Meetings are held at the IBM offices at 400 Ellice Ave. (between Edmonton and Kennedy Streets). When you arrive, you will have to sign in at the reception desk. Please try to arrive by about 7:15pm, so the meeting can start promptly at 7:30pm.

Limited parking is available for free on the street, either on Ellice Ave. or on some of the intersecting streets. Indoor parking is also available nearby, at Portage Place, for \$5.00 for the evening. Bicycle parking is available in a bike rack under video surveillance located behind the building on Webb Place.

Upcoming Meetings

November 8th, 2011

Running a "Pure" IPv6 Environment (TBA), and MUUG's Annual General Meeting.

MUUG Board Elections Call for Nominations

Gilbert Detillieux
Election Committee Chair

Hear ye, hear ye! This is a preliminary call for nominees to participate in the election for the MUUG board. Those elected will serve from November 2011 until October 2012. The deadline to nominate yourself, or someone else, is October 25, 2011. Instructions follow.

The MUUG board is charged with coordinating the meetings and other events by the group. It's fun, and you get a role in guiding the group. All are encouraged to apply.

Every October (November for 2011) the Manitoba Unix User Group holds its Annual Meeting, the main goals of which are to elect a new Board of Directors and to pass any special resolutions (aside from that, it is a regular meeting). Any MUUG member in good standing can be nominated to run for a position on the Board.

As of this writing, the following members have let their names stand for election or re-election:

Sean Cody
Consultant – TinFoilHat
Trevor Cordes

Owner – TecnoPolis Enterprises
Gilbert Detillieux
Systems Analyst – University of Manitoba
Michael Doob
Professor - University of Manitoba
Robert Keizer
System Administrator - Thinkbox Software
Katherine Scrupa
Info Systems Desk Tech – St. John's Ravenscourt
Doug Shewfelt
Systems Specialist - City of Winnipeg
Adam Thompson
Consultant – athompso.net
Brad Vokey
Owner – Fortress Software Inc.

Of course, this list is just a starting point. Any member in good standing of the group can be nominated simply by getting the support of one other member. If you feel you would like to contribute to the group by running for a board position, please don't hesitate to do so. (In fact, we'd like to see the number of board members increase. To 10.)

If you want to be nominated, or to nominate someone else, send a letter to the group's postal box or deliver it in person to a current board member. The letter must contain the name, title, and employer of the nominee, along with a short (100 word or so) biography, and must contain the signatures of the nominee and one other member. The letter must be received no later than October 25, 2011, which is 14 days prior to the November 8 meeting.

Although the by-laws require that the nominations be done in writing, with signatures, you can speed up the process by sending e-mail to election@muug.mb.ca with the above information, and sending the signed paper copy later. In this case, please include the e-mail address of both the nominee and the supporter on the CC: list of the message, so that all parties concerned have a record of the communication.

Nominees should familiarize themselves with the MUUG bylaws, found here:

<http://www.muug.mb.ca/pub/bylaws/>

If you have any questions about the election or the nomination process, please contact Gilbert Detillieux,

either by phone (474-8161) during business hours, or by e-mail to election@muug.mb.ca anytime.

Take That Tiny URL!

Fight back against shortened URL's! As a backlash against small URLs from places like tinyurl.com and bit.ly, you can now turn any URL into a really massive URL.

Why would you want to do this? Who knows! But it looks cool and is wacky enough to make this newsletter.

Check out hugeurl.geeks.com to turn muug.mb.ca into: hugeurl.geeks.org/?NjU5MGIwZWl4YmZlZjNkMmE2MmU0M2E0ZjcwYTA3M2YmM... ad nauseam for about 2 columns worth of similar ASCII.

Or, try reallyhugeurl.com to turn your short URL into a long one with GET vars which incorporate English words: <http://www.reallyhugeurl.com/index.php/wtf=y4unjlp6&69=rwj9j7jk&ego.x=knxhebz2&&666=2jsa97z8&waffles=olbbg5cg&id.y=vr7y...>

Labelling FS's for Fun and Profit

Did you know you can assign labels to your linux filesystems? Then you can refer to filesystems in `fstab` by label, not by device name, which may change based on internal drive cabling changes. Many systems already do this by default.

Use `e2label /dev/sdX` to view the label or relabel an `ext2/3/4` filesystem. Use `mlabel` to label a `FAT/VFAT` filesystem, like is often used on thumbdrives. You may need to install the `mttools` package first.

`mlabel` is bit cumbersome to use. First you must edit `/etc/mttools.conf` and add:
`mttools_skip_check=1`
`drive u: file="/dev/sdX1"`
where X is the USB drive letter

View the current label with: `mlabel -s U:`
Set a new label with: `mlabel U:NEWLABEL`
Then remove the "drive u:" line in `mttools.conf` (or a monster will eat you). I found that strange things

happened if the label wasn't precisely 9 characters long. I blame Bill Gates.

Once you setup labels, you can refer to your partitions in fstab using syntax like LABEL=bigdisk instead of /dev/sdc1, for example.

Serial Port Access Using Screen

By Trevor Cordes

Phone modems? Never heard of them. Well, if you're old enough to have heard of them, here's a little trick when you need to dial out into a remote system. This is also useful if you need to access a serial port on a hardware device like a smart switch, or serial console port on a computer.

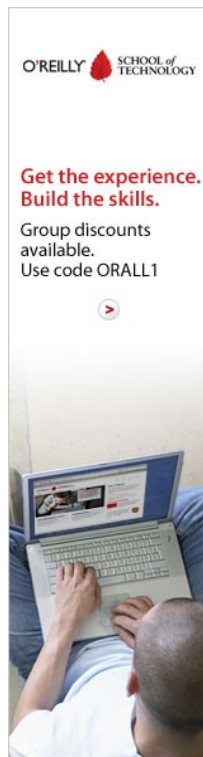
Yes, I personally still use modems to dial into computers for shell access on a semi-regular basis! It is extremely useful when the internet has gone down on a computer 200km away. If you are using a linux box to receive faxes from POTS already, then you can tack on this feature for free with a little bit of extra hylafax/mgetty config.

Instead of using an overkill tool like minicom, which in my experience often entails a lot of fighting and man page lookups, use screen. Screen is readily available on most UN*X systems. Screen quite happily doubles as a terminal emulator. Try:

```
screen /dev/ttyS0 9600
```

Simply use AT commands as you normally would:

```
ATDT204-555-1234
```



MySQL.com Root Hack Sold For \$3k

MySQL.com, the hub for the eponymous database software, had stolen credentials for administrative access sold for \$3000 by Russian hackers.

The site was then infected with a script that redirected hits to an exploit page. Browsers with vulnerable versions of flash, Java, etc, would have had malware installed on their computers without any user intervention.

The hack was promptly cleaned up by site administrators, but not until potentially tens of thousands of visitors were p0wned.

<http://tinyurl.com/6ckwwgh>

coLinux: Linux on Windows Natively

There's a new tool in town to run Linux on Windows, and it doesn't involve VM's!

Cooperative Linux is "a port of the Linux kernel that allows it to run cooperatively alongside another operating system on a single machine."

The authors claim this is faster and more efficient than using something like VMWare.

Special driver software on the host (Windows) OS allows the coLinux kernel to run in ring 0 (supervisor mode). It constantly switches the computer's state between the host OS state and the coLinux state. coLinux gets full control over the MMU in its own address space.

Unlike Cygwin, which requires specially compiled Linux program executables, coLinux can run unmodified linux binaries and a stock Linux distro.

Other projects are using coLinux to make their own easily installable versions. andLinux offers a ready-to-go Ubuntu-based install of coLinux which should be easy enough for anyone to install on Windows.



<http://www.colinux.org>
<http://www.andlinux.org>

SSH Blacklist

Sick of sickos trying to brute-force hack into your SSH server? Block those listless blockheads with a blacklist! sshbl.org, “updated every few minutes, contains the IP addresses of hosts which tried to bruteforce into [their] 19 hosts.” The honeypots are located around the world.

You could use this list to add block rules for those IPs to your firewall (iptables, etc) and (partially) save yourself from attack. Scripts to do so are left as an exercise for the reader.

<http://www.sshbl.org>

Firefox May Block Java

Mozilla developers may block the Java plug-in in Firefox to close a hole in Java that enables a same origin policy bypass hack. The hack is quite advanced but if pulled off would allow hackers to steal SSL protected session cookies.

The developers could “blocklist” the Java plugin in a Firefox update, disabling Java completely. This could be problematic for sites that use Java.

Oracle (the current owners of Java) has not released a fix or an ETA on a fix which would close this hole without requiring a Firefox blacklist.

It is not clear to this reporter whether this story is referring solely to Windows-based Firefox, and/or Oracle-provided Java JRE (ie. excluding open source IcedTea JRE).

Can't Boot Your USB Flash Drive?

You may come across certain combinations of motherboards and USB flash drives that refuse to boot from the flash drive. Larger (>15GB) flash drives, newer boards, and genuine Intel-brand boards appear to have this problem.

The solution is easy, go into the motherboard BIOS setup and find the USB boot options and change the USB emulation type to Hard Drive (or sometimes ZIP drive). The “auto-detect” option appears to be failing, causing the drive to try to boot in floppy, or other, mode. You may need to try each of the emulation options until you find one that works for your setup.

For completely buggy boards (should not apply to most recent boards), there are tools you can download that let you boot to a CD which then can boot from the USB. However, this kind of defeats the purpose of booting off USB, which is usually to avoid having to use a CD in the first place!

Adobe Flash Update

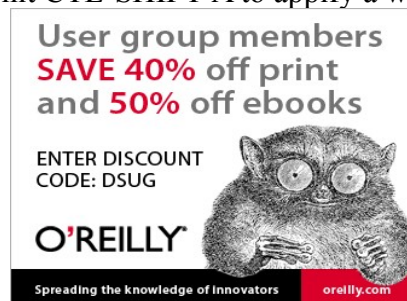
Time to update your flash plugging (again). Most major distros have announced a new version of the flash-plugin package which fixes security holes. Flaws were found in the way it handled certain SWF content that could cause a crash or arbitrary code execution. Also fixed are XSS bugs.

Adobe products, the new attack vector of choice for hackers!

GNOME 3.2 Released


The default desktop on most Linux distros just keeps getting better. Among the changes:

- Titlebars, buttons and controls are less tall, making better use of screen real estate.
- Integration with online accounts (such as gmail) as your storage for mail, calendar, contacts, etc.
- Turn web sites into applications. In the Epiphany browser hit CTL-SHIFT-A to appify a web page.



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Then you can launch it independently from the browser from the overview.

- “Recently Used” option added to the file selection dialog box.