



MUUGlines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

Next Meeting: January 11, 2005: RAID on a budget

We've all heard people talk about disaster recovery and business continuity plans. One of the steps to building a strong IT environment is using redundancy to reduce the downtime a business could face at the worst possible time.

John Schulz will be presenting an overview of various RAID (redundant array of independent disks or redundant array of inexpensive disks) solutions he has worked with. The focus will be on low to mid end OEM or "build your own" solutions where cost per GB is an important factor.

Where to find the Meeting

Meetings are held at the IBM offices at 400 Ellice Ave. (between Edmonton and Kennedy). When you arrive, you will have to sign in at the reception desk, and then wait for someone to take you up (in groups) to the meeting room. Please try to arrive by about 7:15pm, so the meeting can start promptly at 7:30pm. Don't be late or you may not get in.

Limited parking is available for free on the street, or in a lot across Ellice from IBM, for \$1.00 for the evening. Indoor parking is also available nearby, at Portage Place, for \$2.00 for the evening.

Etherdrive storage blades – Just Disks on Ethernet

A Network Storage Solution for Linux

AoE (ATA-Over-Ethernet) is a simple "Open" Standards-based protocol designed to transport disk

commands over Ethernet. Unlike iSCSI, the AoE protocol does not require processing of TCP/IP, therefore eliminating the need for expensive adapters on each Server.

EtherDriveR Storage Blades are Ethernet connected hard disk drives. With EtherDrive Storage Blades, Storage Area Networks (SANs) can be assembled for less than \$1.61 per Gigabyte and that includes the cost of disk drives and Ethernet switches.

Using the AoE protocol, multiple Servers can access disks as block storage devices, network connected using standard Ethernet. A shared pool of EtherDrive Storage Blades can be expanded to multi-Petabytes.

To learn more about AoE protocol, follow the link: <http://coraid.com/documents/AoEDescription.pdf>

OpenCVS from the OpenBSD Team

After shipping a new ntp daemon (OpenNTP, <http://www.openntpd.org/>) with OpenBSD 3.6 due to licensing and security concerns, the OpenBSD team is now working on OpenCVS (<http://www.opencvs.org>). The website states that the goals are...

“OpenCVS is a FREE implementation of the Concurrent Versions System, the most popular open source revision control software. It can be used as both client and server for repositories and provides granular access control over data stored in the repository. It aims to be as compatible as possible with other CVS implementations, except when particular features reduce the overall security of the system.

The OpenCVS project was started after discussions regarding the latest GNU CVS vulnerabilities that came out. Although CVS is widely used, its development has been mostly stagnant in the last years and many security issues have popped up, both in the implementation and in the mechanisms.

OpenCVS is primarily developed by Jean-François Brousseau as part of the OpenBSD Project. The software is freely usable and re-usable by everyone under a BSD license.”

It will be interesting how this project develops. I would expect it to ship with OpenBSD 3.7 around May 2005.

Need to read BSD disks on Windows?

Version .5 of the FFS File System Driver for Windows has been released. From the release notes...

“FFS File System Driver for Windows enables you to read BSD(FreeBSD, NetBSD, OpenBSD) FFS(UFS) partitions from Windows 2000/XP/2003. “

I haven't personally tried it, but it looks like it could be handy.

SCO v. DaimlerChrysler dismissed

SCOfacts.org has the final order (<http://scofacts.org/DC-2004-12-21-B.html>) in the SCO Group's ill-fated lawsuit against DaimlerChrysler. It's a dismissal of the final charge (timeliness of response). The dismissal is without prejudice, but, if SCO chooses to refile the charge, it has to pay DaimlerChrysler's legal fees. Thus ends one small chapter in the SCO saga

IBM developerWorks has posted a history of the microprocessor

“Great moments in microprocessor history - The history of the micro from the vacuum tube to today's dual-core multithreaded madness”
<http://shorterlink.org/91>

The 2.6.10 kernel is out

Linus announced (<http://lwn.net/Articles/117188/>) the availability of 2.6.10 just before taking off for the holidays. There are CIFS and DVB updates since -rc3, along with the usual pile of fixes. For those of you just tuning in, 2.6.10 as a whole includes a new kernel events notification mechanism, switchable I/O schedulers (and a new CFQ scheduler as well), in-kernel cryptographic key management, DVD+RW and CDRW packet writing support, ext3 block reservation and online resizing support, big updates for many kernel subsystems, and a handful of security fixes. The long-format changelog (1.5MB) has all the details

<http://kernel.org/pub/linux/kernel/v2.6/ChangeLog-2.6.10>

Metawire.org is back up

Metawire.org provides a free shell server running on OpenBSD to over 5700 users. After a severe DDOS in November, they had to shut down because their provider couldn't handle the multi-terabyte DDOS that someone had started.

Secure Dog Hosting, a secure web hosting company has graciously provided server space and bandwidth for the project.

Introducing Power.org

Major electronics companies have come together to form a new standards body focused on Power Architecture technology. This organization will create and promote a family of standards, reference designs, and more.

The Power Architecture™ specification is something of a standard already. After all, you can run PowerPC® code on Motorola® and IBM® chips, and the instruction set has always been governed by the Power Architecture "Books. However, there is more to an architecture than its instruction set, and many fields related to Power Architecture development haven't received as much public scrutiny or standardization.

IBM and other leaders from the electronics industry are launching a new organization, called Power.org, which will serve to greatly increase support for developers working with Power Architecture technologies. The creation and promotion of standards is a key element in making this happen.

Their Mission and Objectives are...

“Proposed Mission

Power.org's mission is to develop, enable and promote Power Architecture technology as the preferred open standard hardware development platform for the electronics industry and to administer qualification programs that optimize interoperability and accelerate innovation for a positive user experience.

Objectives

Power.org's output may include:

- Open standards and specifications
- Business guidelines documents
- Best practices and education
- Certifications to validate implementations and drive adoption

Specifications will enable:

- Interoperability between community members
- Sustainability built on driving open standards and convergence

Power.org output reflects substantial business and technology leadership. Company members and developers will represent a variety of industries from all corners of the globe and parts of the Electronics value chain.”

SGI Introduces First Linux-Based High-Performance Visual Computing System

Silicon Graphics Prism Designed to Solve New Classes of Visualization Problems Facing Scientists and Engineers

Leveraging its position as the world's leading innovator in high-performance visual computing, SGI announced the Silicon Graphics Prism™, the world's most powerful and flexible Linux® OS-based visual computer product line. For the first time, SGI has taken its most advanced computer graphics capability, previously affordable to only a select few, and made it available on a truly open and accessible platform. By combining standards-based Intel® Itanium® 2 processors, the Linux operating environment, and its world renowned advanced graphics technology, SGI has created a system that is uniquely suited to addressing the world's most demanding visual computing problems - all at price points that make it accessible to a wider group of users.

Sun releases new thin client hardware and software

Sun released version 3 of the Sun Ray Server Software and the new Sun Ray 170 ultra-thin client. These machines have no processors and are similar in concept to the LTSP project.

The new version of the Sun Ray software provides Sun Java Desktop compatibility and the ability for users to connect remotely over their broadband connection. It also now available for runs on Linux servers. It starts at \$99USD for a single seat with volume discounts.

The Sun Ray 170 has a 17” LCD, four USB ports, multihead support, a video out connector and a smart card reader. Its list price is \$1049USD.

HP ending Itanium Development

HP is ceasing its development on the Itanium processor. HP and Intel had been working on the Itanium since it's inception 12 years ago. Intel has hired all remaining members of the HP Itanium team and will continue development on their own.

OpenOffice 2.0 preview released

The Sun-sponsored OpenOffice.org project based on open sourced StarOffice code has released a preview of the upcoming OpenOffice 2.0 product. This version touts better MS-Office loading and parsing, strict XML compliant output, a new database program that mimics Microsoft's Access, and much more. It's available for 32-bit Windows, Linux (x86), Sun Solaris x86, and the traditional Solaris for Sparc.

SANS Institute Top 20 Vulnerabilities in 2004

The SANS Institute has released its list of the top 20 vulnerabilities in 2004. The top windows vulnerability was Web services in general. They mention IIS, Apache and iPlanet and the various attacks this year, including Core Red and Code Red 2.

The top Unix vulnerability was BIND. They stated that while the BIND team does respond to vulnerabilities in a timely manner, people still run outdated and mis-configured DNS servers in production.

The list is available at <http://www.sans.org/top20/>

Critical phpBB vulnerability

The phpBB bulletin board package contains an input validation problem, which can allow the hosting site to be compromised. This vulnerability is being actively exploited, and there is a worm in circulation as well. Version 2.0.11 fixes the problem. CERT has released an advisory regarding this problem <http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/techalerts/TA04-356A.html>

Cheap Linux laptops from Walmart

Wal-Mart has announced the availability of a \$498USD laptop running the Linspire distribution. "Wal-Mart and Linspire worked together to offer a laptop that would give customers the best user experience at the lowest price possible. The Balance notebook is the lowest-priced laptop currently on the

market to include a complete operating system and office suite."

Practical mod_perl released under the Creative Commons license

O'Reilly and the authors of "Practical mod_perl" have released the book under the Creative Commons license (as mentioned in last months newsletter). The book is available from <http://modperlbook.org/>

Rare, Collectible MUUG Shirts for Sale!

Don't miss out on the rare (only 35 made) and highly collectible MUUG Golf Shirts. We only have two XL beige shirts left. They are \$40 and are available at the monthly MUUG meeting. Get them while they last!

Sending Us E-Mail?

Due to the amount of e-mail MUUG receives, we've set up an auto-reply to give you immediate feedback, and redirect some of the e-mail to the appropriate places. Why not look at <http://www.muug.mb.ca/about.html#contacts> first?

Share Your Thoughts

E-mail us with your comments on the newsletter, whether it's criticisms or commendations, and continue to send in articles or ideas for the same. Specifically, what sort of material you would rather see: Announcements, technical articles, new products, or...?

If you have a How-To or other idea, and aren't ready to give a presentation at MUUG, an article is a great alternative! If you can write better than the editor, that's terrific; if you can't, submit it anyway and we'll get it into shape for publication. We know that many of you have some great ideas and lots of knowledge. Why not share? Send Mail to: editor@muug.mb.ca.