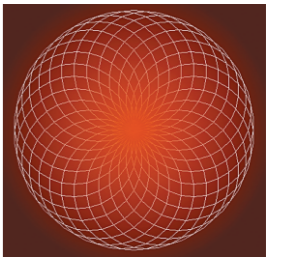


## Logo programming language

The Logo programming language is a functional programming language. It is an easier to read adaptation by Wally Feurzeig and Seymour Papert of the Lisp programming language; some have called it Lisp without the parentheses. Today, it is known mainly for its "turtle graphics", but it also has significant facilities for handling lists, files, and I/O. Logo can be used to teach most computer science concepts, as UC Berkeley Lecturer Brian Harvey does in his "Computer Science Logo Style" trilogy. There are also many object oriented dialects of Logo. Logo was created in 1967 at BBN, a Cambridge research firm, by Wally Feurzeig and Seymour Papert.



## TECHFOCUS

### Live CD Linux

# Linux without the hassle

AHMED ASHIFUL HAQUE

A few weeks back, we introduced you to many of the popular Linux distributions out there. Linux has come a long way in the recent years, being more and more user-friendly and powerful. But ask yourself, after reading the article, did you actually want to try Linux for the first time? Well, did you even consider trying it?

Trying out Linux has always been considered a challenging and dangerous proposition. Faced with repartitioning their hard drive or finding a "spare" PC to use, most users see Linux as a lot of work, with an uncertain payoff. But what if I told you there was a way to try Linux without installing, partitioning, or making changes to your hard drive? Thanks to the work of some dedicated Linux developers, all this and more are possible today. The solution? Live CD Linux.

"Live CD Linux" is a new breed of Linux distribution. It's a complete solution for using Linux on a computer without touching the hard drive. Unlike traditional Linux, live CD distributions run directly from a CD-ROM. You simply insert the live CD and boot your system. Everything then runs from the CDoperating system and applications. Although this isn't a perfect solution for everyone, it's a great way to try Linux without making potentially hazardous changes to your system.

Live Distros can also be stored on other bootable media a CD-ROM (Live CD), DVD (Live DVD), USB Flash Drive, Key drive, among others.

If you want to test drive Linux to see if it works with your hardware or simply if it suits your style, Live CDs are very handy.

You can almost do all the things you can do in a desktop Linux environment with a Linux Live CD. You can, for example, surf the web, email, chat, open or create an office document, print or read/write to a floppy or USB pen drive. Of course, this is just a small list of things a Live CD can do.

LiveCD distributions of Linux are several years old, but the number of such distributions has multiplied several times in the last year or two. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of LiveCD distributions available now; obviously, you'd be only interested in the most useful and popular ones. The most popular focus of LiveCDs is probably general-purpose office software bundles, particularly aimed at showing off Linux to new users. At the edges, however, other distributions aim at more special-



ised purposes, such as system clustering, rescue CDs, firewalls, or security tools. In many cases, the more specialised distributions are also smaller, since they leave off most general-audience tools. You can check out a detailed list of LiveCDs at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_LiveCDs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LiveCDs)

Here we take a look at a few of the popular Linux LiveCDs out there.

**Knoppix**  
Knoppix is a bootable CD with a collection of GNU/Linux software, automatic hardware detection, and support for many graphics cards, sound cards, and other peripherals. Knoppix can be used as a Linux demo, educational CD, rescue system, or adapted and used as a platform for commercial software product demos. Due to on-the-fly decompression, the CD can have up to 2 GB of executable software installed on it. Knoppix was developed by Klaus Knopper.

Several factors contribute to the popularity of Knoppix: for example, it has extensive hardware detection capabilities that allow most systems to boot straight into a graphical environment. It also connects automatically to many types of networks and has many utilities for data recovery and system repairs (even for other operating systems, which means Knoppix can

be used to fix up your primary Windows setup). It also includes popular software for desktop use (notably web browsers, OpenOffice.org, the GIMP).

Knoppix has a wide variety of free software but includes also proprietary software. More than 2600 software packages are included on the DVD edition and more than 1000 are included on the CD edition. Up to 9 gigabytes can be stored on the DVD in compressed form. When a program is used, it is decompressed into a RAM drive. The decompression is transparent and on-the-fly. At least 128MB of RAM is recommended in order to accommodate this RAM drive.

You can download Knoppix at <http://www.knoppix.net/>

#### Puppy Linux

Puppy Linux is a very small, reliable, easy to use and fully featured LiveCD Linux distribution started by Barry Kauler. The entire operating system and all the applications run from RAM, making Puppy a very fast system, and allowing the boot medium to be removed after the operating system starts. Included are applications such as Mozilla Application Suite, AbiWord, SodiPod, Gnumeric, OpenOffice.org (when using Chubby Puppy, an extended version of Puppy Linux) and Gxine/xine. The distribution is independently developed from

scratch and is regularly updated and is well supported and documented. Like other LiveCDs, Puppy is considered useful for working on old computers, as an emergency rescue system, as a Linux demonstration system, or as a complete general purpose operating system.

Puppy Linux is 40 MB and can be downloaded from <http://www.puppylinux.org/>

#### Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a complete desktop Linux operating system, freely available with both community and professional support. The Ubuntu community is built on the ideas enshrined in the Ubuntu Manifesto: that software should be available free of charge, that software tools should be usable by people in their local language and despite any disabilities, and that people should have the freedom to customise and alter their software in whatever way they see fit. "Ubuntu" is an ancient African word, meaning "humanity to others". The Ubuntu distribution brings the spirit of Ubuntu to the software world.

Ubuntu includes more than 16,000 pieces of software, but the core desktop installation fits on a single CD which doubles as a LiveCD. Ubuntu covers every standard desktop application from word processing and spreadsheet applications to web server software and program-

ming tools. It's also has what's probably the nicest and sleekest Linux interface out there.

Ubuntu is available for download at <http://www.ubuntu.com/>, but they will also send copies of Ubuntu to you if you request it at <https://shipit.ubuntu.com/>.

Of the Live CDs, Knoppix is definitely the easiest distribution to get up and running. With excellent hardware support and a wide array of included software, Knoppix is hard to beat, but Puppy Linux comes pretty close with the features it offers in a tiny package. Ubuntu is, however, the nicest Linux desktop environment to work with.

Although you can't buy a LiveCD at the local CD vendors, it's not too hard to get a LiveCD. The easiest method requires a CD burner and a broadband Internet connection. Just download an ISO image of the CD and burn it with programs such as Nero or Easy CD. If you're on dial-up, you can still try downloading the smallest LiveCDs over a period of a few years. Seriously though, Puppy Linux is only 40 MB, which means even on dial-up, you can download it within 5-6 hours.

Or, you can request an Ubuntu LiveCD at <https://shipit.ubuntu.com/>.

Ubuntu is this new very-user-friendly Linux distribution that's enjoying a lot of popularity recently. The Ubuntu community is trying to spread the use of the distribution a lot recently and is shipping copies of the Ubuntu to anyone who request them. It takes some time for the CDs to reach here, but it's worth it.

After you have the CD, make sure that your system is configured to boot from CD. This is the default behaviour for many newer systems, but you may have to go into BIOS and change your boot sequence. Check your PC or motherboard manual or the manufacturer's web site for instructions.

With ease of use, hardware compatibility, and an installation-free approach, LiveCD Linux has removed many of the obstacles facing users considering a switch to Linux. If you're getting tired of all the problems Windows has got to offer, it's never been easier to find out if Linux is really the answer.

**Acknowledgement:** Thanks to Ross Hunter, David Mertz, James LaRue, Harish Pillay and Wikipedia for their research on the topic. For Wikipedia's more detailed entry on Live Distros, head over to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LiveDistro>

## TECHNEWS

### Firefox 2.0 Beta released

**F**IREFOX is becoming more popular everyday. It has long outgrown its older brother Mozilla and already has a 10 percent market share on the web. There is much anticipation for the browser's new version 2.0, and the Mozilla organisation has released a candidate for Beta 1 on their FTP site. Versions are available for Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux.

Firefox 2 hasn't changed much, interface-wise, from the original. Existing users will be instantly familiar with the standard button bar, links bar, and the row of tabs. In fact, most of the new features in Firefox 2 can be emulated in its older 1.5 version using several add-ons and extensions. Under the hood, however, there have been numerous bug-fixes and improvements, in addition to some new features.

One of the new features is a built-in antiphishing filter, which automatically checks sites against a locally-stored blacklist of known phishers, although an option to "ask Google" to check is also available. The ability to use remote antiphishing sites other than Google is planned but not currently implemented (the dropdown selection list is greyed out).

Another very neat feature is an integrated spelling checker for web-based text input forms. This is a boon for anyone who posts on a lot of blogs or forums. There have been other add-ins that check spelling in



browser forms, such as IESpell for Internet Explorer and GNU ASpell (which works very smoothly with Opera) but these require user intervention to start the spell check for each field. Firefox 2's checker automatically highlights misspelled words with a dotted red line.

eWEEK.com tested the Beta 1 of the Firefox 2.0 and the test showed that the beta catches up a bit with capabilities found in other Web browsers and adds some nice security enhancements.

However, while Firefox 2.0 is shaping up to be a good upgrade to Version 1.5 of the popular Web browser, it doesn't look like it'll be technologically superior to Internet Explorer 7, the way its previous version 1.5 was superior than Internet Explorer 6. For that matter, unless Firefox 2.0 and IE 7

improve greatly before their respective releases later in 2006, neither will come close to topping the quality of the already shipping Opera 9.

Firefox still has a ways to go in its quest to convert the sprawling masses of IE users, but the latest market share figures show it making good headway. According to Web statistics firm OneStat.com, Firefox's global usage share has reached 12.93 percent — up 1.14 percentage points from May 2006. Meanwhile, Internet Explorer's total global usage share has fallen to 83.05 percent, down 2.12 points from May. But are these users enough to fend off the inevitable counterattack when the final version of Internet Explorer 7 and Windows Vista finally arrive at market?

Ahmed Ashiful Haque

## TECHNEWS

### HP unveils Business InkJet printers in Bangladesh

STARTECH DESK

**H**EWLETT-PACKARD (HP), one of the world's leading printer manufacturers has recently introduced HP Business InkJet (BIJ) printer line-ups for the Bangladesh market, says a press release.

The launching ceremony was held at Spectra Convention centre with over 100 participants from HP resellers and premium partners. At the event, HP's IPG Country Business Development Manager, Shabbir Shafiqullah highlighted the key strengths of the Business InkJet printers.

"HP BIJ printers can provide best black cost-per-page starting from as much as 21 per cent lower than mono laser printers," Shabbir said. "Consumers



HP's IPG Country Business Development Manager, Shabbir Shafiqullah speaks at the event.

can be more productive with economical 4 separate high capacity ink cartridges for high volume business printing and they only need to replace the cartridge that runs out of ink, which means it eliminates waste and minimize cost. Moreover HP BIJ printers offer upto 35 per cent less cost-per-page than its nearest competitor in the market," he added.

Currently HP is offering HP BIJ 1000 and HP BIJ 1200 models in the local market.

HP also awarded certificates of achievement along with cash rewards to its top resellers of Imaging and Printing Group (IPG).

## PHOTOTECH



### THE ROMANTIC GENIUS

A reproduction of an undated picture shows Albert Einstein and his first wife Mileva Mari, left, and a file picture taken on February 10, 1933 shows Albert Einstein and his second wife Elsa in El Mirador Hotel in a California desert resort, right. About 1,400 of letters written by Albert Einstein to his wives and children have been made public on July 10, 2006, suggesting that the genius was often more interested in women than his famous relativity theory.

PHOTO: AFP

## Tech snippets

### Self-Stirring Mug, for the spoonless

Surely there are people out there who don't just like spoons, right? Because besides being extremely lazy, spoonless ness is the only reason to own a gadget like this. This coffee mug features a miniature propeller at the bottom of the mug that will spin at 3000 RPM mixing whatever additives you like into a frothy morning beverage. The propeller is activated with a button on the handle and the entire unit is powered by a couple AA batteries.



### BMW car self parks in a garage

There is still some time before cars start doing all the driving all by itself becomes a reality, but for a start, German Auto giant BMW recently showcased a new parking technology in its Munich headquarters with which the company's new cars will be able to neatly park itself in a garage at the press of a button. Unlike most automated parking systems which require the driver to remain in the car, this system is triggered by a button on the car's keys. However this system won't just



work anywhere as you need to place a reflective lens against the wall of at the head of the parking space, which is used by a miniature video camera on the car's front windshield to park the car automatically. Most of the part the system uses is already contained in the latest 7-series; BMW says the technology will be available in the next 3 years.

### Panasonic's 103 inch Plasma TV goes on sale

What's about 7 and a half-feet long, 4-feet tall, has about 30 square feet of viewing space, a 3001:1



contrast ratio, pushes over 2 million pixels progressively? That'd be Panasonic's behemoth 103-inch plasma TV. And you thought 80 inches was huge! "Our 103-inch 1080p PDP promises high quality images with high brightness, dynamic contrast, high resolution and excellent colour reproduction that projection displays cannot match. We believe it will create strong demand as a multipurpose display for business, educational and medical applications as well as home theatre use", says the company's press release.