

MUUGLines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

Volume 26 No. 3, November 2013

Editor: Gilbert Detillieux

Next Meeting: November 12, 2013

Topic: Visualization, and RTFM: dstat(1)

This month is the MUUG annual general meeting, where we'll be electing our new board for the year, most likely by acclamation. After the break, Robert Keizer will be presenting a generic visualization framework, and some applications thereof.

For this month's RTFM, Adam Thompson will talk about the dstat(1) command, a versatile tool for generating system resource statistics, and a replacement for vmstat, iostat and ifstat.

Where to Find the Meeting

University of Winnipeg Lockhart Hall (marked "L" on the map), on the south-east corner of Spence and Ellice. Parking is available on the surrounding streets. We are usually in room 1L08, but are occasionally shuffled into nearby rooms such as 1L06 or 1L07. Look for a sign on the door of 1L08 indicating the change, or peek in the door windows.

Elections for Board of Directors

The Current Nominees are as follows:

Nominee: Trevor Cordes

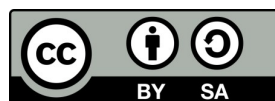
Trevor Cordes has owned and operated TecnoPolis Enterprises – a computer VAR, programming and consultancy company – since 1999. Linux and open source have been the keystone of TecnoPolis since 2000 with the introduction of Linux-based appliances which today are critical to the operation of over 20 local small businesses. Trevor was President of the Atari ST User's Group in 1995 and 1997-1999, and also holds a B.Sc. (CompSci) from the University of Manitoba. His main workstation runs Fedora.

Nominee: Gilbert Detillieux

Gilbert Detillieux has been working with UNIX as a programmer, system administrator, and trainer since 1980. He worked as a computer consultant specializing in UNIX, from 1983 to 1989, and is currently working as a Systems Analyst for the University of Manitoba's Department of Computer Science, where's he's worked since 1989, installing, supporting and upgrading the department's network and UNIX server infrastructure. He was co-founder and past president of the Technical UNIX User Group (now MUUG), and has been an active member of the MUUG board ever since.



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Nominee: Michael Doob

Michael Doob is a member of the Mathematics Department at the University of Manitoba. He has been using UNIX since 1990, primarily as a working environment for mathematical publishing. He has been a member of MUUG for over a decade and has given a number of presentations to that group.

Nominee: Robert Keizer

Robert Keizer is a Systems Administrator and Developer. Apart from his full time position as a Systems Administrator, Robert is interested in visualization, statistical analysis, and music.

Nominee: Kevin McGregor

Kevin McGregor provides server, platform and infrastructure support in the City of Winnipeg's Information Systems Department. After having briefly used UTS on an Amdahl mainframe in university in the mid-80s, he dabbled in Coherent and then converted to Linux and OpenBSD. He has been a member of MUUG since the early 90s, edited the group's newsletter for a number of years, presented various topics at MUUG meetings and has served on the board for the majority of his membership.

Nominee: Adam Thompson

Adam has over 20 years experience in the IT field, ranging from Programmer to Network Administrator to Chief Technology Officer & VP. He first used UNIX (although he didn't know it) in 1988 while playing NetHack on the QNX BBS in Ottawa. He first ran into UNIX professionally in 1990, and started using Linux in 1991. Adam is the author of several termcap(5) and terminfo(5) entries, deployed the first cross-platform, public, networked instant-messaging system in Manitoba, and installed the first UnixWare system in Manitoba. He has developed several UNIX/Linux courses, and has also taught RDBMS administration. Adam has been a member of MUUG since 1995, and a board member for a decade.

Nominee: Brad Vokey

Brad Vokey is the owner of Fortress Software Inc. and the creator of the Matchmaker Fundraiser (a fundraiser that "matches up" over 1 million high school students across Canada and the U.S. during Valentine's). Brad started the company in 1985 using Apple II computers writing the original program entirely in 6502 machine language. The program mi-

grated to 68000 machine language (on Atari ST computers) in 1986 and then eventually to C (and Atari TT computers) soon after. The original C program is still very much alive to this day and is constantly being tweaked and added to every year. Brad has served on the board of the Atari ST Users Group (STUG) until its dissolution in 2000 and has been a member of MUUG since 2006. He was first exposed to Linux in 1999 with Mandrake 6.0, uses Linux on a daily basis on his company's firewalls, and is looking forward to converting his entire office to Linux "sometime" in the future.

Nominee: Wyatt Zacharias

Wyatt Zacharias is currently a student at Red River College studying computer networking. His interests include micro controllers and robotics.

Print Newsletter Now Optional

You asked for it, now you've got it! If you desire, you can now opt out of the dead-tree (paper) newsletter that MUUG mails to members every month. You will instead receive an e-mail copy of the newsletter each month. Alternatively, you can opt to receive **both** the print copy and the e-mail one. (At present we cannot opt you out of both simultaneously.)

MUUG is more than happy to continue mailing paper copies to those who prefer, but it is worth noting that a significant portion of MUUG's yearly operating budget goes towards postage.

To change your preferences, send us an e-mail to board@muug.mb.ca, stating your choice (and preferred e-mail address if relevant), or come & see Trevor Cordes during the break or afterwards at any general meeting.

Current limitations in our systems mean you will receive a paper copy of the newsletter plus your renewal form (regardless of your preferences) on your membership renewal anniversary. We are working on e-mail renewal forms as a feature in the future.

PHP.NET Website Hacked

On October 24th, it was announced that the php.net site was attacked and used to serve JavaScript malware "to a small percentage of php.net users from the 22nd to the 24th." PHP source code was not affected in any way.

As a precaution, php.net users (i.e. only those committing code to projects) will have their passwords reset.

<http://php.net/archive/2013.php#id2013-10-24-2>

HTML5 Flash Player (Shumway)

In early October, Shumway was added to the Firefox codebase. Shumway is “a way to support playing Flash (SWF files) without the Adobe Flash Player.” Those who’ve been annoyed with Flash, due to its bugs and security issues, or simply Adobe’s dropped support for Linux-based systems, will see this as a cause for celebration. Shumway is still a technology experiment, though, and must be enabled manually; if successful, it may be fully integrated into future releases of Firefox.

<http://lwn.net/Articles/569496/>

Raspberry Pi NOOBS 1.3

This may not be news anymore, but in late September, version 1.3 of NOOBS (New Out Of Box Software) was officially released for the Raspberry Pi. This version allows you to simultaneously install several different OS’es on one SD card, and switch to a different OS at boot time. It also supports keyboard shortcuts at boot time to select video output modes.

<http://www.raspberrypi.org/downloads>

Get a Weekly Pi Fix

If the raspberrypi.org site isn’t enough of a Pi news fix for you, there’s now also a weekly e-mail newsletter you can subscribe to, called (wait for it) [piweekly](http://piweekly.net). You can browse the archive of back-issues (and find out, for example, in issue #17 that the Pencoed, Wales, factory shipped its millionth unit recently), and also subscribe to the newsletter via the web site.

<http://piweekly.net/>

Ubuntu 13.10 Release

During the 10th month of 2013, the various flavours of the Ubuntu 13.10 distribution were released. Flavours of 13.10 include Kubuntu, Lubuntu, UbuntuKylin, Edubuntu, and Xubuntu.

Not to be outdone, CentOS 5.10 was released around the same time, which will only be exciting news to those who were anticipating this very minor update to the venerable, old, but still quite stable RHEL 5 clone.

<http://distrowatch.com/weekly.php?issue=20131021#released>

Fedora Switching to Python 3



Fedora 22 (which is still a long way from being released, given that Fedora 20 is now due for release on December 10th) will be using Python 3 as the default version for supported Python-based scripts and utilities. One of the implications of the change is switching from yum to DNF as the official Fedora package manager.

https://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Changes/Python_3_as_Default

<https://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Features/DNF>

SteamOS Could Help Desktop Linux Adoption?



Last month, we reported on SteamOS, Valve’s new Linux-based gaming platform. We also reported on something Linus Torvalds had said at the New Orleans LinuxCon. Now comes a quote from Torvalds at the Edinburgh LinuxCon: “I think [the SteamOS announcements are] an opportunity to maybe really help the desktop.”

A bit tentative, perhaps, but we’ve all heard wild hopes in the past about Linux desktops reaching significant market share, if not outright dominance. Torvalds also referred to the current Linux desktop landscape as a “morass of infighting,” so perhaps having a strong (albeit more application-specific) desktop platform out there to push standards forward might be a good thing.

According to PC World, Valve’s involvement seems to already have had a positive influence, with both AMD and Nvidia improving their driver support.

<http://www.peworld.com/article/2056894/steamos-could-really-help-desktop-linux-adoption-says-torvalds.html>

Torvalds: Free OS X Mavericks Won’t Impact Linux

At the same Edinburgh LinuxCon, during a Q&A session, Torvalds pointed out that Linux has been giving its OS away for 22 years, and “the fact that Apple gives the OS away is completely irrelevant... I don’t think that it impacts Linux at all.” Torvalds prefers the term “open source” to “free software” because he feels there’s a difference between open and free.

<http://www.itworld.com/open-source/379749/apples-free-os-no-threat-linux-all-torvalds-says>

Bipartisan Patent Trolling Bill?

Ars Technica reported in late October that the “chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), has introduced a bill [PDF] that directly attacks the business model of ‘patent trolls.’ The bill has a real chance at passing, with wide backing from leadership in both parties.”. Good news, one would think. In fact, the Computer and Communications Industry Association, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and Public Knowledge have praised it.

But not everyone is as optimistic. Thom Holwerda, posting on **OSnews.com**, thinks “the bill is a disaster.” As a side effect of making it harder for small patent trolls to operate, the bill could end up “shifting the balance of power even more in favour of the larger companies... which employ the same patent trolling tactics.”

http://www.osnews.com/story/27392/A_bill_to_end_patent_trolling_Dream_on

New York Times Drops Hyphen in “E-mail”

OSnews.com also reports that, in a recent update to its style guide, The New York Times now accepts “email” as a spelling instead of “e-mail.” Quite understandable to many, since this has become fairly common practice, at least in informal communication.



Thom Holwerda isn’t happy about this change either, indicating that this may be confusing in some languages, such as in Dutch, where the word “email” means “enamel.” (The same problem exists in French as well.)

http://www.osnews.com/story/27393/The_New_York_Times_removes_hyphen_from_e-mail_

Open-Source H.264 Codec?

Cisco has announced that it will be releasing its H.264 video codec under a BSD license. **Mozilla** was quick to follow with its own announcement that it will include this codec in Firefox. But is this really open source? The plan is for Cisco to make pre-compiled binary modules, supporting the most commonly-used platforms, available free for download, with Cisco pick-



ing up the tab for the MPEG LA licensing costs. Mozilla will include these binary modules in Firefox.

A very brief article on **lwn.net** led to some lively discussion in the comment section, as you can imagine!

<http://lwn.net/Articles/572205/>



Project Ara: Motorola’s Open Hardware Smartphone

Motorola recently blogged about a new project of theirs: “Led by Motorola’s Advanced Technology and Projects group, Project Ara is developing a free, open hardware platform for creating highly modular smartphones. We want to do for hardware what the Android platform has done for software: create a vibrant third-party developer ecosystem, lower the barriers to entry, increase the pace of innovation, and substantially compress development timelines.”

The blog later continues: “The design for Project Ara consists of what we call an endoskeleton (*endo*) and modules. The *endo* is the structural frame that holds all the modules in place. A module can be anything, from a new application processor to a new display or keyboard, an extra battery, a pulse oximeter—or something not yet thought of!”

<http://motorola-blog.blogspot.nl/2013/10/good-bye-sticky-hello-ara.html>

The Fortune File

“It must be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage, than the creation of a new system. For the initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old institutions and merely lukewarm defenders in those who would gain by the new ones.” — Machiavelli