

# WRITE ACCESS

## Linux versus Vista

I agree with some of the comments in the letter from Patrick Op de Beeck (*Linux Magazine*, issue #82 / September 2007, p20), but I must take up his point regarding problems with upgrading from XP to Vista. When I upgraded to Vista from XP, only one software and two hardware items did not run. AVG Free virus protection had to be upgraded, as did software drivers for my Epson DX6000 and Lexmark E310 Laser printer. Microsoft Office 2003 ran OK.

Still, I have Ubuntu/Kubuntu on one PC and Vista on another, and when running the two at the same time, Linux is faster, the graphics are sharper, and most programs open quicker.

The fact that Linux and most of its applications are free, and the fact that a growing number of users are installing Linux – not just at home but also in the office – is now giving Microsoft the judders. I like – no, I love – Linux and will be changing my Vista PC over to Linux in the very near future.

Now that PC manufacturers are installing Linux for free (as compared to paying a US\$ 50 markup for Vista), the choice is a no brainer.

Linux for me from now on.  
Dave Thornton

**LM** Thank you for your comments. For those who just joined this thread, the salient point is that Vista may not be quite as bad as everyone thinks, but Linux is still better.

## Dear Perlmeister

First of all, thank you for your work, *it's great!* I'm trying to follow your article on using the X10 project to make a system to water plants with a Linux computer and Perl (*Linux Magazine*, issue #77 / April 2007, p68). I'd like to start my own domotic (home automation) system with this example, but I can't find the necessary X10 modules.

I'm starting to doubt that there is just one module named (HD11A); I think there may be two tools – one transmitter and one receiver.

Is this true? If it's true...what are the names of these modules?

My biggest problem is that I don't know what I'm looking for, and I can't find anything called HD11A. I live in Spain. Where can I find these modules, or are there any other modules I can use with your example?

Luis Eugenio Ortega Donoso

**LM** Thanks – I'm glad to hear you like my Perl column!

Regarding the X10 modules, they are different in the US and in Europe. Every country has its own main power specifi-



Figure 1: The X-10 Two-Way Lamp and Appliance Module.

cation; for example, in the US it's 110V; in Germany, it's 220V.

I've heard that it is quite a challenge to purchase them in Europe, so let me explain what type of device you need in US terms, and hopefully you'll find the European counterpart.

There's two parts: The first part is the sender (CM11), which has a serial plug that goes into the PC's serial port: <http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=110181052781>.

This device takes the signals from the computer and sends them over the power line to the receiver, which can be either a *lamp module* or an *appliance module*:

[http://www.x10.com/products/x10\\_am466.htm](http://www.x10.com/products/x10_am466.htm).

Spain has 230V main power voltage, so you can't use these modules, but I'm hoping that I've provided some hints on which modules you need to get the watering system to work – please let me know what you find out. Good luck!  
(Michael Schilli)

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