

Bye-Bye Blu-Ray

Beyond DRM restrictions with the new Lib-Ray project.

By Rikki Kite



PaoloDeSantis, 123RF

In February 2011, Terry Hancock explored distribution options for a web video series project [1] scheduled to be released within the next year or two. “Like everyone else, I was annoyed by the restrictions Blu-Ray video puts on users, but I was genuinely shocked by the way that the Blu-Ray Disc Association has used legal tools to force content producers to release with DRM. There needs to be an option for those of us who want to opt-out,” Hancock says. “Lib-Ray is meant to be that: HD video for fixed media, but without DRM,” Hancock explains. “I want to make it as transparent as possible.”

Hancock says he had concerns about user freedoms and DRM with the HD industry-standard Blu-ray format, so he did more research. “I considered a number of possible ‘half-measures’ for getting around the DRM-only limitation with Blu-ray, but nothing seemed to be workable,” he says. Hancock decided that a new format was in order and documented this idea in an article called *Five Ideas for Escaping the Blu-Ray Blues* [2].

In April, Hancock presented “version 0.1” of his idea at the Texas Linux Fest in Austin. “For this version, I had rejected using the HTML5 video player for playing the feature video because of missing features in the standard, namely, control of subtitles and audio tracks. This would have meant developing some fairly complicated plugin code to bridge between the browser and the video player, which was the weakest point of the design; however, after getting the suggestion of moving the whole thing into the browser with HTML5 more than once at the conference, I reconsidered,” he says. “That’s when it came home to me just how fresh and active the HTML5 standards development is,” he adds.

Hancocks says that the features he needed had been added to the WHAT Working Group’s [3] “Live HTML Standard” while he was working on the version 0.1 prototype. “So I realized that, even though the browser didn’t support those features yet, it was probably worth taking a chance on the in-browser design, with the hope that I could encourage these new features to get implemented soon,” he says. Hancock also moved from Firefox to Chromium, which was more up-to-date with HTML5 features. “I developed a 0.2 version of *Sintel* using this concept, which is what you see on the Lib-Ray.org website [4] now,” he says. Hancock says that development work on bringing the WHATWG HTML5 features to WebKit and the Chromium browser will be what makes the Lib-Ray standard fully viable. Visit the Lib-Ray.org website to find out more or to contribute to the project.

Cool Project Roundup

- Armstrong – Open source publishing system designed for news organizations: <http://armstrongcms.org/>
- Apache Shiro – Apache Software Foundation application security framework project: <http://shiro.apache.org/>
- Novacut – Video editor with built-in collaboration tools: <http://novacut.com/>
- Seccubus – Automated vulnerability scanning and reporting: <http://www.seccubus.com/>

Send community news or updates to me at rkite@linuxpromagazine.com. ■■■

LIKEABLE LINKS

- [1] Lunatics: <http://lunatics.tv>
- [2] Five ideas for escaping the Blu-Ray blues: http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com/columns/five_ideas_escaping_blu_ray_blues
- [3] WHATWG: <http://www.whatwg.org/>
- [4] Lib-Ray: <http://lib-ray.org/>

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