

LINUX WORLD NEWS

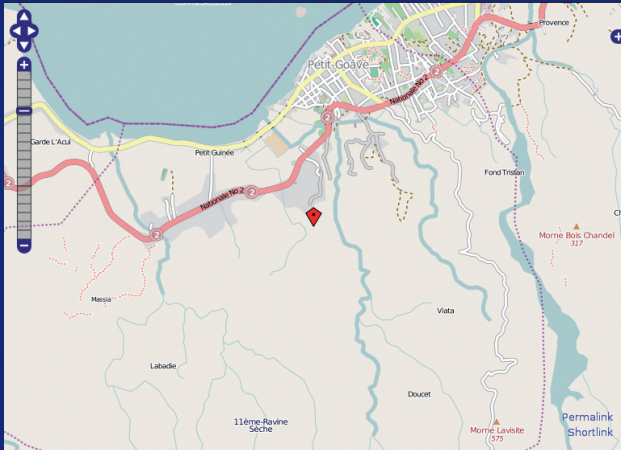
UPDATED MAP OF EARTHQUAKE REGION

Within a month after an earthquake devastated Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, on January 12, the OpenStreetMap (OSM)

community successfully created an updated and detailed map of the country in which at least 150,000 citizens lost their lives. To create the new map, OSMers and crisis mappers downloaded satellite images (some free and some from commercial image providers) and traced the outlines of streets on top so a map emerged. The locals used Garmin GPS locators to collect fresh data about hospitals, refugee camps, collapsed buildings,

landslides, and the road network. The OSM data cover not only roads and boundaries, but also transportation resources, water and sanitation infrastructure, health and medical facilities, and ad hoc settlements like refugee camps. Improvement of the OSM data continues as recovery and re-construction in the disaster zone progresses. Among the users who relied on OSM's updated geo-data were the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which embeds OSM data in its interactive Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS).

http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/WikiProject_Haiti



OPEN WIFI SERIOUSLY THREATENED IN BRITAIN

After Italy convicted three Google executives of violating the privacy of a disabled boy after footage of him being bullied in the city of Turin was put on YouTube, the UK Digital Economy Bill, which imposes obligations on Internet service providers (ISPs) to reduce online copyright infringement, evokes a similar controversy on responsibilities of ISPs. The bill has just undergone line-by-line examination and reached the report stage in the House of Lords. If the bill is to become law, ISPs will have to screen every file downloaded and uploaded, and with current traffic on the Internet, monitoring this content is going to be enormously expensive for ISPs. In government notes, the Digital Economy

Bill team admits that cafes, hotels, conference centers, and similar businesses that offer users access to email and web browsing will face disconnection but say that a combination of blocking P2P applications (e.g., BitTorrent, eMule, Gnutella, Kazaa, Morpheus, Limewire) and the right to appeal means they will be okay.

Once the bill completes the third reading in the House of Lords, it will continue to be discussed in the House of Commons. After the bill has completed all parliamentary stages in both houses, it must have royal assent before it can become an Act of Parliament (law).

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/digitaleconomy/stages.html>

RUSSIAN LINUX FOR THE BLIND

Russian-speaking Linux users with limited sight will happily notice that Russia's leading Linux distributor is finally taking care of their needs. At the start of the community project Homeros, headed by Mikhail Pozhidaev, Moscow-based company AltLinux promises a working environment for blind and visually impaired people to be integrated into AltLinux and – finally – the development of a separate distribution adapted for use without visual controls.

The project's main component is VoiceMan, an open source speech server supporting English and Russian. One of the main tasks will be the development of sound recording software for use during installation. Another important goal is the inclusion and adaptation of helper software for playing music and audio books. The project makes use of Gnome's accessibility support.

<http://homeros.altlinux.org/> (Russian)
<http://www.marigostra.ru/voiceman/> (Russian)
<http://www.marigostra.ru/voiceman/voiceman-1.1.2.tar.gz>

DUTCH MUNICIPALITY DROPS OPENOFFICE.ORG

In 2006, the Dutch municipality of Heerenveen was one of the first cities to migrate to OpenOffice. Four years later, the approximately 43,000 inhabitants will be served again by civil servants using Microsoft Office. In a rather short press release, the municipality explains that OpenOffice proved to be incompati-

ble with other mission-critical applications.

<http://www.heerenveen.nl/index.jsp?objectid=59096> (Dutch)

