# TECH TOOLS

Professional users are always searching for an edge. Whether you work with Linux as a webmaster, programmer, system administrator, or security consultant, you know the best solution depends on finding the right tool for the job. We thought you might be interested in the following new products and updates.

## New Chip Design for Netbooks

Freescale Semiconductor has launched the new, low-cost i.MX515 processor, which is designed to power a line of Linux-based netbooks, available to customers for less than US$ 200. This product would be built for lightweight use by a large consumer base, to be used for basic email tasks and web browsing.

Freescale integrated an ARM Cortex-A8 core and used 65nm process technology to develop the i.MX515. The chip produces up to 2,100 Dhrystone MIPS (million instructions per second), and performance can be scaled anywhere from 600MHz to 1GHz.

Additional features of this chip are advanced power management and dedicated hardware-based video acceleration. The i.MX515 power management lets netbooks run for up to eight hours on 8.9-inch displays.

To discover more about this Linux netbook design "on a shoestring," go to *http://www.freescale.com/*.

## Lenovo Produces a Dual-Screen Laptop

Anybody who needs to work with a dual-screen PC knows the advantages of working with two displays on one computer. What if that were possible on a laptop? Lenovo has just made it possible. The Lenovo ThinkPad W700ds offers two screens side-by-side: a 17-inch screen and a 10.6-inch screen. This apparently takes the worry out of deciding which size display to select for your next laptop purchase.

After weeks of unofficial pictures and videos of the W700ds being leaked to the web, Lenovo officially released the ThinkPad in early January.

The main display is the 17-inch screen, whereas the 10.6-inch secondary screen slides out to the side and is able to be tilted up to 30 degrees. The second screen can be recessed into the lid, which adds just a few millimeters of thickness to the overall physical profile of the device. Screen resolution for the larger display is available at 1920x1200, whereas the smaller screen is capable of 1280x768.

The w700ds is available with either Intel Core 2 Duo or Core 2 quad processor options and carries 8GB of DDR3 RAM. Also, you can elect dual hard drives with RAID and nVidia Quadro FX mobile graphics.

None of this comes cheap, though; Lenovo is asking a purchase price of US$ 3663 per unit.

Discover more information about the Lenovo ThinkPad W700ds at *http://www.lenovo.com/us/en/*.

## Zine: Python-Based Blogging Software

WordPress has a new competitor in town. Zine is a new personal publishing platform – a weblog engine written in Python. Version 0.1.2 was released in mid-January, is capable of migrating WordPress blogs, and has usability similar to WordPress and other existing blogging systems. Written for ease of use and security, Zine is a free, open source alternative to more traditional blogging frameworks.

The project is on the young side, but it is worthy of being followed. Find out for yourself at *http://zine.pocoo.org/*.

## GParted Disk Formatter Available

GParted is a Gnome program for editing hard drive partitions, which includes creating, moving, copying, resizing, and deleting hard disk partitions. GParted provides this service for both internal and attached disks such as USB drives. Available via the Gnome desktop, this utility makes it simple to manage partitions, and with the use of LUKS-encrypted partitions, allows you to secure any sensitive information.

Although GParted is easy to use, new Linux users might want to shy away from editing their partitions if disk partitioning is an unfamiliar process. Once the user gains some understanding of partition editing though, GParted makes the task a breeze.

Project information is located at *http://gparted.sourceforge.net/*.

## Serverless Computing Courtesy of Pivot3

Palo Alto, California, company Pivot3 is introducing a clustered storage solution that runs server applications on IP SAN (storage area network) hardware, which they call Serverless Computing. The advantage of this technology is that it allows server administrators to manage large-scale storage arrays with the use of well-known technologies.

Whereas traditional SANs use proprietary hardware, Pivot3's RAIGE software lets server admins create high-performance SANs with the use of off-the-shelf x86 server hardware, linking the appliances in parallel. Server virtualization applications are run across all appliance hardware. Server hardware is reduced, and, at the same time, the entire clustered array is managed with a single application.

The downside of this innovation is that it isn't suited for environments in which multiple applications need to run, but the upside it that the solution is well suited for storage-intensive realms, assuming you use few applications.

If you're interested in finding out more, visit *http://www.pivot3.com/*.

## Open Source Client for VMware View

Virtualization specialist VMware has released a free Linux client for its VMware View desktop solution. VMware View, formerly known as Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), serves desktop virtualization whereby instances of desktop OSs run on a server and clients (typically with thin client hardware) essentially do the input and output. Among other things, the benefit is that virtualized desktops can be managed centrally. VMware View Open Client, the open source adjunct to the proprietary desktop solution, is a client for Linux machines wanting to connect with traditional Windows desktops.

VMware View Open Client is under an LGPL 2.1 license. With these industry-friendly conditions, the company hopes to port the product to further operating systems and hardware platforms. Sources and binaries are available from the Google Code website. For more information, visit: *http://www.vmware.com/products/view/overview.html.*

## Sony Camera Uses Linux and WiFi

Imagine transferring the images from your digital camera to your PC without having to first attach the camera to the computer via a cable. Sony's DSC-G3 camera does just that with the use of 802.11b/g wireless connectivity. Introduced at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show in January, this camera's software is based on Busybox and the 2.6.11 kernel version for Access Linux Platform (ALP), the up and coming replacement for the Palm OS. Camera hardware includes a Zeiss lens with 4x zoom, a 3.5-inch touch display, and 4GB of onboard memory. For more information, visit: *http://www.sonystyle.com*.

## Asus Rolls Out Wireless Keyboard

Having a PC in a keyboard isn't exactly a bleeding edge technology, but Asus takes an old concept and gives it new life as a home theater appliance. The Asus Eee PC Keyboard features wireless HDMI and a fully integrated secondary mini--touch screen, and it is a completely functional PC, complete with USB, video, and audio ports. Wireless HDMI turns your television into a computer monitor in no time and is ideal for home theater solutions, including the streaming of high-quality video to different areas of your house. Learn more about this product, including when Asus plans to take it to market, at *http://usa.asus.com/index.aspx*.

## Broadcom Adapter Firmware

Often companies are slow to develop support for Linux, including Broadcom, which has been hesitant to provide Linux-compatible drivers for its WiFi adapters. The open source community has responded with the creation of the components necessary for a working open source wireless stack on Broadcom's WiFi hardware.

Although all of the features in this project are not yet complete, you can follow its progress on the open source firmware mailing list: *https://lists.berlios.de/pipermail/bcm43xx-dev/2009-January/008466.html*.