

WRITE ACCESS

Laptop Wireless

I'm so frustrated I had to write this letter. Or I'll just stay with Windows and give up on wireless Linux completely.

Intel's Centrino-equipped laptops seem to be completely without any workable Linux wireless support. Centrino hardware config (Dell Inspiron 9200) = Pentium M + IPW2200 wireless PCI-mini card + Intel Express Chipset. None of the Linux magazines have addressed this problem for years. You can't blame everything on Intel. They seemed to have given the hardware info to the community programmers.

I have tried Ubuntu, Fedora, DSL, Knoppix, SUSE, MEPIS, Debian, Gentoo, and Mandriva. All have failed to find the card, or they can't load firmware or software module(s) ending in *.ko* or *.so*, with either a -2 or -5 error return code. Running *DMESG grep ieee* or *DMESG grep ipw* will simply uncover errors without providing a fix.

The XP wireless tools, Intel XP Pro-SET/Wireless software, is so sophisticated it shames me as a programmer to see how little a laptop rates in the Linux programming community. And Microsoft provides its own wireless tools too.

WPA2 support doesn't seem to exist without exotic additional tools such as

wpa-supPLICANT and ndiswrapper. What order do these pieces of software have to be loaded?

This has been a non-issue of all the magazines. The magazines are probably using XP wireless to write about Linux.

Jack Tyler

LM We love to find that one article that everyone needs – and we can safely say that is true for all computer magazines. The problem, in this case, is that all laptops are different, so a solution for one laptop with one Linux distro might not apply to the rest.

We are very much interested in laptop configuration issues. Our article on NDIS Wrapper, which appeared in Issue 47, is now available in PDF format at: <http://www.linuxpromagazine.com/issue/47>. Also, Klaus has addressed laptop matters on several occasions.

You are right, however, that it is probably time to revisit this topic. The Centrino is important enough to warrant a special look. Watch for an upcoming article on WLAN with the Centrino.

In the meantime, check out the ipw2200 project on the SourceForge site: <http://ipw2200.sourceforge.net/>. Also, see the discussion of Linux on the Centrino at the Tux Mobile site: <http://tuxmobil.org/centrino.html>.

Debian DVD

I wanted to inquire if you have plans to put Debian version 4 (Etch) on the magazine DVD in both 32- and 64-bit in the near future.

It appears the magazines are supporting distros with a more frequent release cycle of 6 months, Fedora and Ubuntu being good examples. It seems a person like me, who is interested in Debian, is disadvantaged, as by the time it is released, experienced users move quickly to the new Debian version in the testing branch – Lenny. This makes it appear that the new to intermediate learner is probably better off with a distribution that has a 6-month release cycle.

I know I can download the Debian netinstall, but I prefer to have a copy of the operating system on DVD; it makes it easier when you try the faster releases like Fedora, etc.

Steven Woods

LM We hope to do a Debian 4.0 r0 multi-architecture version on one of our upcoming DVDs, covering the i386, AMD64, and PowerPC architectures.

We had planned to do this earlier, but the delays in the Debian release forced us to reschedule. We're great admirers of the Debian distro; however, as publishers with strict deadlines, our DVD releases must conform to the distro release date, and in the case of Debian, the calendar is quite often a moving target.



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