

Re: Microsoft tries to polish a turd

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- *From:* Dirk Bruere at NeoPax <dirk.bruere@xxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 08 Aug 2008 19:59:17 +0100
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JosephKK wrote:

On Thu, 07 Aug 2008 23:08:50 +0100, Dirk Bruere at NeoPax
<dirk.bruere@xxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Joel Koltner wrote:

"Dirk Bruere at NeoPax" <dirk.bruere@xxxxxxxxx> wrote
in message
news:6g164pFdreq2U1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

My main dislike was that if anything went
wrong and KDE or GNOME failed to come
up all I got was a text prompt on screen.

I've had the same complaint -- I remember very early on
with, e.g., Windows NT 3.51 if something went wrong with
the video driver the machine might just crash, but for many
years now if Windows can't load the "proper" video driver, it
just uses "generic VGA" mode and at least still gives you a
desktop.

Happily, the most recent versions of some distributions (like
Ubuntu :-)) now take the same approach. Why it took them
nearly a decade to implement this is beyond me, although of
course when it's 99+% volunteers writing the software,
prioritization of work perhaps has a larger disconnect with
"what the public wants" than with payware such as
Windows.

I was just not willing to plough through 500
pages of manual learning Unix command
line i/f from scratch.

You can get reasonably familiar with *NIX command lines
in probably no more than 25 pages. However, the trick is
then knowing which configuration files to mess around with

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(a common Windows problem as well) -- and their formats: Unlike Windows, where 95+% of configuration information is either in the registry, .inf, or .xml files, in *NIX there are many, many dozens of different configuration file formats, and while you can often just "figure out" the format by looking at them, it's still more work than just firing up, e.g., regedit. Additionally, not all programs use standard parsers (as Windows provides for the registry and .inf files), having just hacked some little parser together on their own, so programs are still somewhat fragile if their configuration files aren't exactly what's expected. X11's configuration file, Xorg.conf, will still crash the X server (GUI) and dump you back to text mode if you do something as seemingly benign as forgetting double quotes around an argument. :-(

Realistically, if you're buying a machine that already has all the hardware setup from the likes of Apple, Dell, *NIX and Windows both work just fine. If you're setting up a machine yourself, from scratch, the average *NIX machine still takes a lot more effort than the average Windoze machine.

But try out, e.g., Ubuntu Hardy Heron, released back in April... it's pretty good.

I'll probably go for a dual boot system when I get a new machine later this year. Ubuntu and XP64

Notice: There is still a driver paucity in XP64. And there is an even greater paucity of 64 bit software.

But I can actually use 4G of DRAM.
Still, I'll look into it a bit more when the day comes.

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Dirk

<http://www.transcendence.me.uk/> - Transcendence UK

<http://www.theconsensus.org/> - A UK political party

<http://www.onetribeme.uk/wordpress/?cat=5> - Our podcasts on weird stuff

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