

D.A.D.

Desktop Adapted for Dad.

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PGP Key: 0x166C4BF0

Once upon
a time...

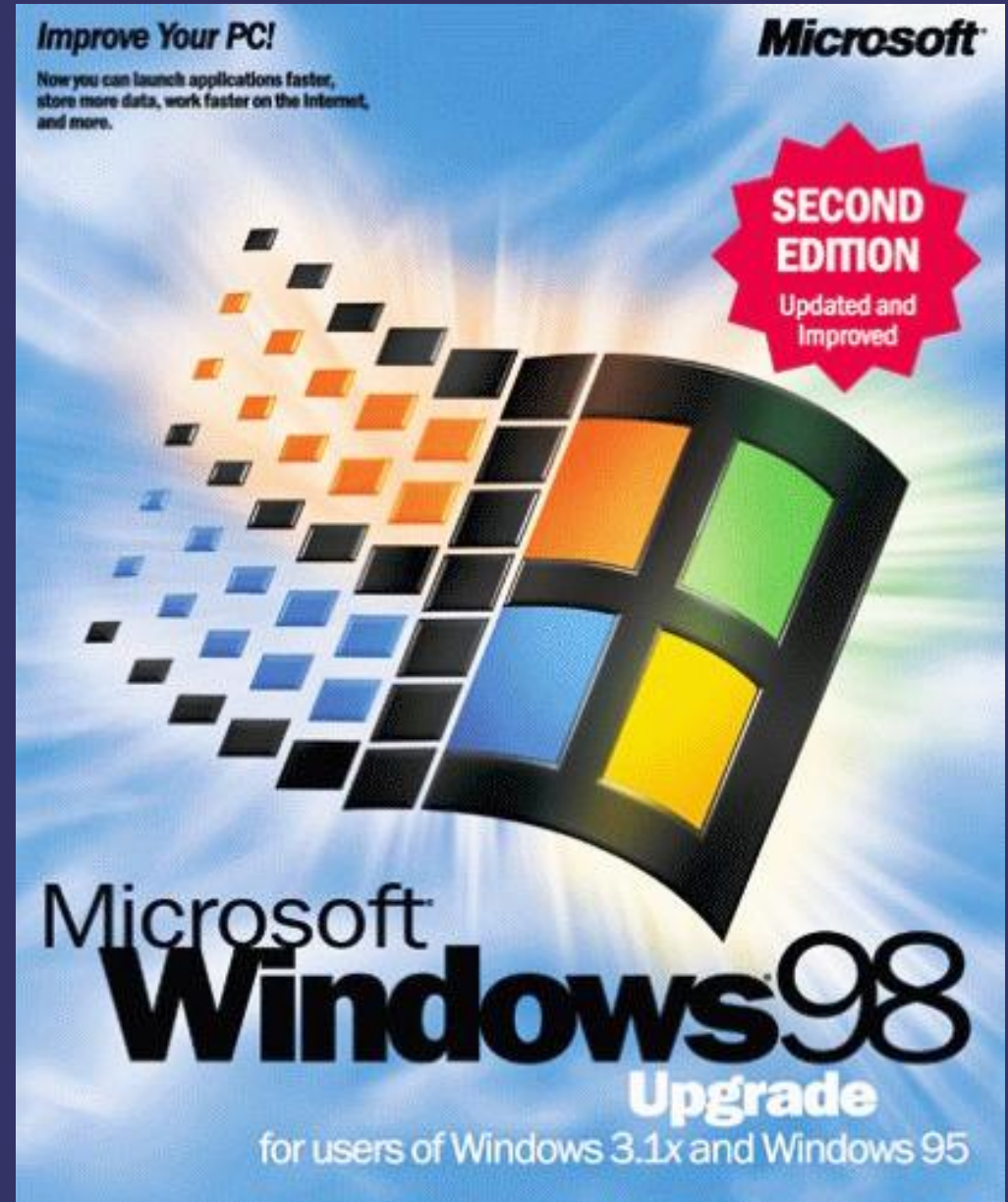
A
“dot com”
son







Microsoft Windows 98





Time
passes...

Not Quite As Old





debian
GNU / Linux

Press F1 for help, or ENTER to boot: linux26_

Lived happily
ever after...

Mum v Dad

- Windows 98
- Dial-up
- Vanilla installation and configuration
- No remote administration
- Some computer & office experience
- Not used much
- Debian 3.1 “Sarge”
- Dial-up, later ADSL
- Bespoke installation and configuration
- Remote administration
- Little or no computer experience
- Used quite often

Adapting the Desktop for Dad

- Research:
 - Google
 - Local LUG mailing list
 - RNIB/GNOME/KDE etc.
- Bespoke installation and configuration
- Installation and training
- Continuing Support

Why GNU/Linux?

Remote Administration

- Dad lives in Lancashire
- I live in Hampshire
- SSH & VNC are built-in and “just work”
- With ADSL the phone line is available when on-line

Security and Reliability

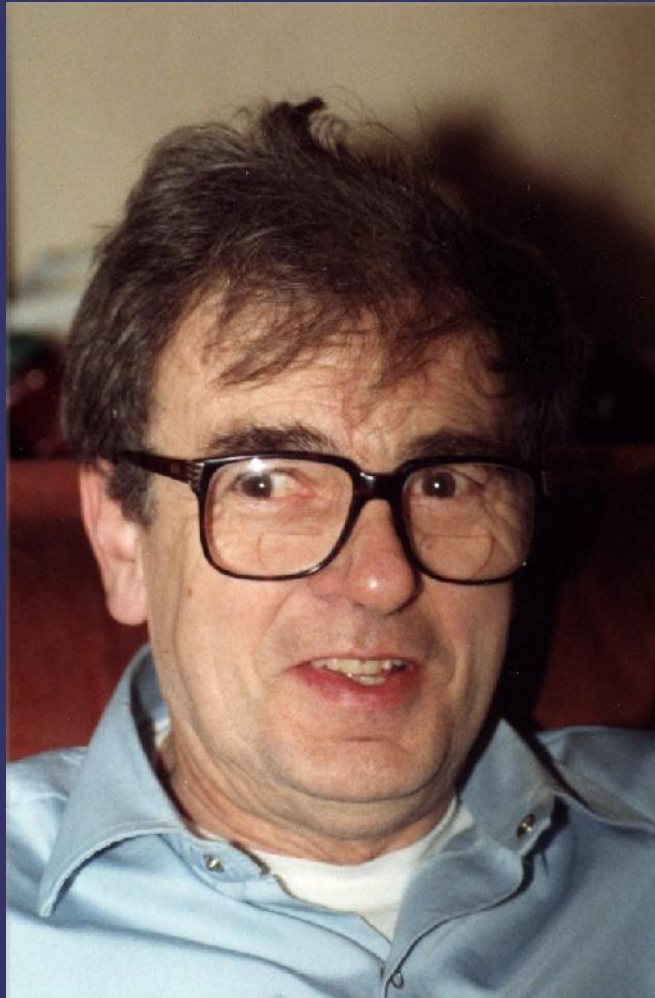
- Linux has virtually no malware
 - No third party AV software required
- Linux has a built-in reliable firewall
- Automated whole system updates
- I know Linux better than Windows
 - My dad doesn't care about security because I do!

It's an old “naked” PC

- Linux is lighter than Windows XP
 - Intel P2 233 MHz, 256 MiB RAM & 5 GB HD
- Linux didn't cost me anything
 - £0 for Debian vs £50 for Windows XP Home
- With Linux no 3rd party applications required
 - No AV, no firewall, no remote admin

Dad versus the PC GUI

Dad



- 69 years old
- Never used a computer in his life
- Did not work in an office
- Has never used a keyboard or typewriter
- Wears bi-focal glasses

Graphic User Interface

- Invented late 1970s
- Lots of 70s/80s office metaphors
- Requires good eye-hand coordination



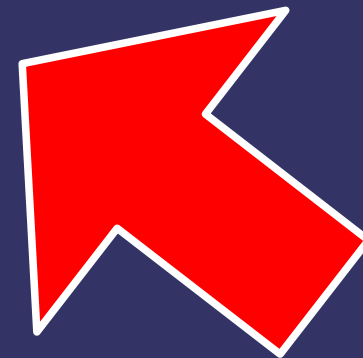
The Plan

Less is More

- Remove any application that wasn't required
 - All “server” functionality
 - Compilers and language outside the core
- Stripped the GUI menu down to only the essential items
- Removed all desktop icons
- Clean and simple menu bar

Colour and Contrast

- Many “cool” desktop themes don’t have enough contrast
- Select a higher contrast colour theme
- Make the mouse pointer a contrasting colour from the main theme colours
 - White or pale backgrounds
 - Black text
 - Large red pointer



Screen Fonts

- Sans-serif typeface
- Large x-height
- Screen optimised font e.g. Verdana
- Large size: do not reduce the resolution

Ii x-height

Desktop Icons & Images

- Select a clear icon set rather than a cool one
- Select the larger size for Icons
- Tool-tips are useful to new users
- Don't skimp on the monitor, 17" units are dirt cheap



Application Buttons and Icons

- Large icons and buttons
- “Text and Icon” mode if supported
 - Most people have no idea what most icons are and what they represent...!
- Menus are hard to navigate for new users, buttons if clear, are easier



Avoid Double Click

- If the user has never used a computer with a mouse before, then avoid it where possible
- It's very hard to learn and requires a lot of physical dexterity
- It actually takes a lot of effort to learn how to drive a mouse



Written Instructions

- Write things down on paper
 - Help files aren't that helpful
 - I find some man pages unhelpful
- Try out and follow your own instructions: it's too easy to miss a step

Make Things Easy

- Auto-login is okay on a single user system
- Set the right defaults
- Do use a user account – a user can't wreck the system
- A mouse and GUI isn't that easy...!

After the Deployment

- Dial-up was too slow, upgraded to the ADSL
- Fonts set **larger and larger**
- Icons set to largest size possible
- Replaced CRT with TFT
- Upgraded from Sarge to Etch, Lenny due this autumn...

ADSL Upgrade

- Dial-up is too slow
- Dial-up ties up the phone line
- Upgrading is painful over dial-up
- Scheduling email is not obvious or easy
- Upgrading to ADSL:
 - Faster browsing, email and upgrade
 - VNC and simultaneous phone support works much better than silent dial-up support

Observations

- My idea of a large font was very not the same as my father's
- Menus and icons are not as obvious as you first think
- Menus are hard to use for a new users
- Bifocals make reading things a lot harder than you would otherwise think
- Not being a the root user was a relief for my father

User vs Superuser

- Anyone can use a computer:
 - Little or no skill required
 - No responsibility required
- Not everyone wants to be a superuser:
 - Requires skill
 - Involves responsibilities
 - Takes time and effort

Screen Shot Examples



Home



System



Wastebin

Useful Tips - KTip [?] [-] [□] [X]

You can use Konqueror to access your files on any server that you have ssh access to. Just enter `fish://username@hostname` in Konqueror's location bar.

In fact, all KDE applications support fish:// URLs - try entering one in the Open dialogue of Kate, for instance



Show tips on startup

Previous Next Close



1 2
3 4

Useful Tips - KTip



17:36



Home



System



All Applications

- Debian
- Development
- Edutainment
- Games
- Graphics
- Internet
- Multimedia
- Office
- Settings
- System
- Utilities
- Control Centre
- Find Files/Folders
- Help
- Home - Personal Files

- Akregator - RSS Feed Reader
- Iceweasel Web Browser
- Kandy - Mobile Phone Tool
- KDE Groupware Wizard
- KGet - Download Manager
- KMail - Mail Client
- KNetAttach - Network Folder Wizard
- KNode - News Reader
- Konqueror - Web Browser
- Kontakt - Personal Information Manager
- Kopete - Instant Messenger
- KPPP - Internet Dial-Up Tool
- Krdc - Remote Desktop Connection
- Krfb - Desktop Sharing
- KSirc - IRC Client
- KTnef - TNEF File Viewer
- Liferea Feed Reader
- Sun Java 6 Web Start
- Terminal Server Client
- More Applications

Actions

- Settings
- System Menu
- Run Command...
- Switch User
- Lock Session
- Log Out...

KDE 3.5



1

3



0:37

Most Used Applications

Control Centre

All Applications

Debian

Development

Edutainment

Games

Graphics

Internet

Multimedia

Office

Settings

System

Utilities

Control Centre

Find Files/Folders

Help

Home - Personal Files

Actions

Settings

System Menu

Run Command...

Switch User

Lock Session

Log Out...

GNU Image Manipulation Program - Image Editor

KDVI - DVI Viewer

KFaxView - Fax Viewer

KGhostView - PS/PDF Viewer

KolourPaint - Paint Program

Kooka - Scan & OCR Program

KPDF - PDF Viewer

KPovModeler - Povray Modeller

KSnapshot - Screen Capture Program

Kuickshow - Image Viewer

KView - Image Viewer

OpenOffice.org Draw - Drawing Program

More Applications

KDE 3.5



1 2
3 4



All Applications

Debian

Games

Control Centre

Help

Actions

Run Command...

Switch User

Lock Session

Log Out...

Arcade

Board Games

Card Games

Games for Kids

Tactics & Strategy

Toys

KPoker - Poker Card Game

Lieutenant Skat

Patience Card Game

KDE 3.5



Klondike - 1436357

Inbox - Icedove

iredale dot net :: V

Compose: Test Mes

18:47

17/10/2008

Klondike - 1436357738 - Patience [_] [□] [×]

Game Edit Settings Help

 New
  Restart Game
  Undo
  Hint
  Demo
  Help
  Quit
















1 move



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Compose: Test Message

File Edit View Options Tools Help

Send Contacts Spell Attach Security Save

From: <[redacted]@iredale.net> - [redacted]@iredale.net

To: adam.trickett@iredale.net

Subject: Test Message

To Me,

This is a test message. Notice the typeface is quite big.

It may look ugly but at least my dad can read it. It's more important for him to be able to read it than it to look pretty...

This is an intresting point.

--
Adam



Klondike - 1436357 **Compose: Test M**

Inbox - Icedove iredale dot net :: V

19:00

17/10/2008



Patience

Patience Card Game



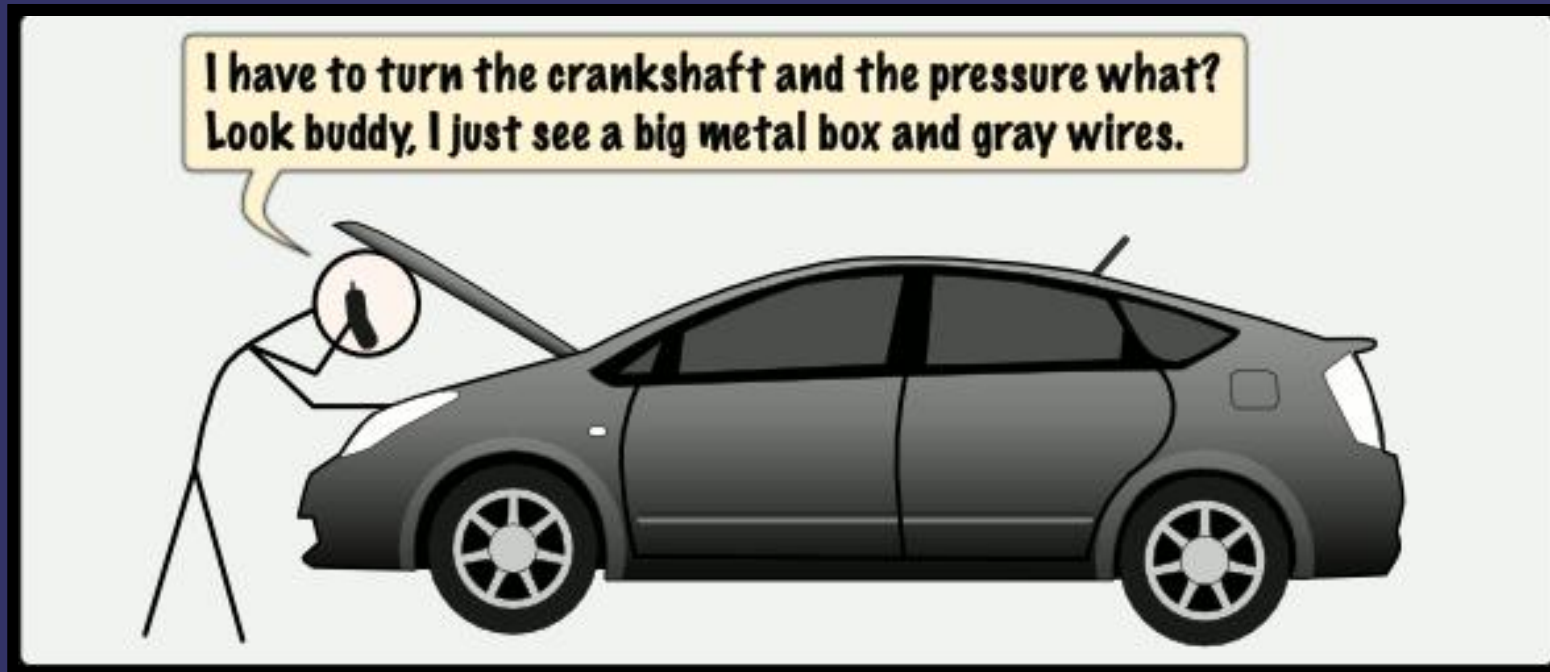
19:01

17/10/2008

Lessons Learned

- Anyone can use a computer if it's correctly set-up for them
- My preferences are not your preferences
- Listen to your users
- One size does not fit all

The problem with tech support...



Actually no, it isn't going well. I cut off the black salami-looking bit like you said and tried to sew the parts together, but stuff just keeps falling out.



WellingtonGrey.net

Links

- <http://www.iredale.net/p/>
- <http://accessibility.kde.org/>
- <http://developer.gnome.org/projects/gap/>
- <http://www.debian.org/devel/debian-accessibility/>

Thank You

Any
Questions?