

D.A.D.

Desktop **A**dapted for **D**ad.

A short talk to introduce desktop tweaks to enable normal people to more easily use a computer.

Why Linux?

- Dad lives in Lancashire
 - Remote administration is easy
- Linux is secure
 - Linux has virtually no viruses
 - Linux has a built in reliable firewall
 - I know Linux better than Windows
- Second hand PC from work
 - Linux is lighter than Windows XP
 - Linux didn't cost me anything

Graphic User Interface

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

Dad

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

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 backgrounds
 - Black text
 - Large Red Pointer

Font and Icons

- Choose a sans-serif, screen optimised font e.g. Verdana
- Make the font larger DO NOT REDUCE THE RESOLUTION
- 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

Buttons and Icons

- Within applications make icons and buttons larger if you can
- Switch on 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 really
 - I find some man pages unhelpful
- Try 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...!

Links

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