/dev/random/

Final thoughts, musings and reflections

Nick Veitch
was the original editor of Linux Format, a role he played until he got bored and went to work at Canonical instead. Splitter!
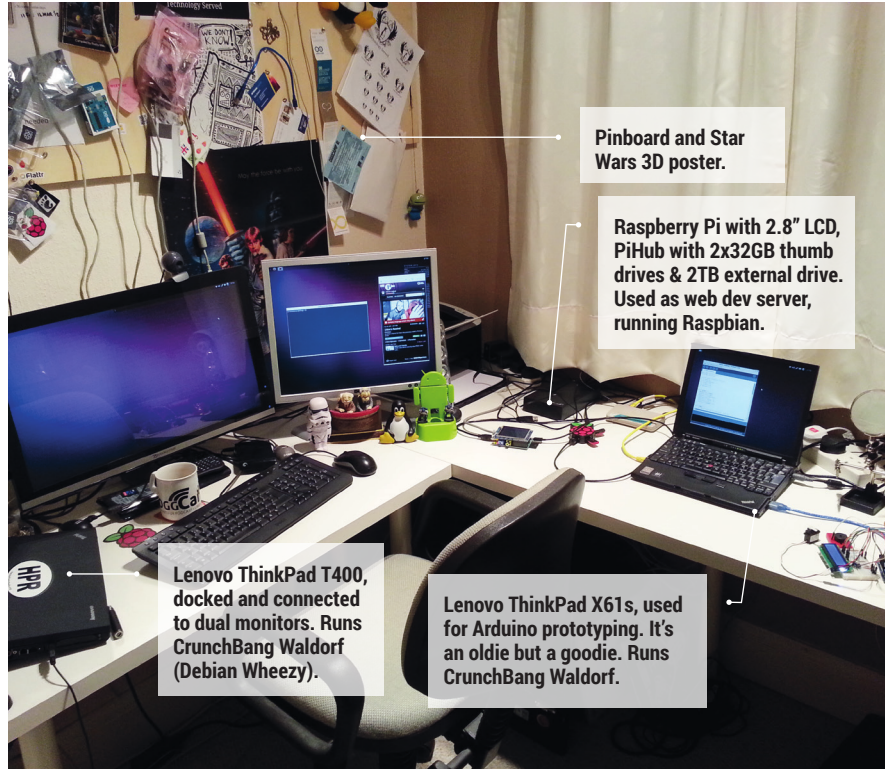
I had intended to write a sort of profit/loss account of open source for recent history – some small way of seeing where the big wins were for free software and where things could be better. But before I put fingers to keyboard, something happened to change that.

I came across something called Kafka, which is a cunning message filtering server – services publish messages to it, and listeners can filter on various tags or topics to receive a stream of relevant messages (**https://kafka.apache.org**). It is the sort of glue service that drives social media newsfeeds, or possibly anti-social media too if you wanted it to.

Kafka is cunning, but that isn't why it stopped me writing my profit and loss story. The startling thing about Kafka isn't that it's good software, but where it came from. Any guesses? Google? Some group of ambitious hackers? No, the Kafka project was founded and is maintained by that bastion of free software, LinkedIn.

Why is this useful piece of technology open sourced under the Apache 2.0 licence? Because people at LinkedIn recognised that it's a great way to get better code. That by allowing liberal usage and community review, they end up with better software to do the things they do. If other people also end up with better software, that's all to the good, and in fact helps test, refine and make the service the best available.

So, it sort of makes the whole profit and loss idea a bit redundant. I don't think anyone would claim that LinkedIn's dev team is comprised of starry-eyed idealists who sing the GNU song every morning before settling in to code under wall-sized portraits of RMS (but, you know, if you are reading, LinkedIn people, do tell. Send pics), which only makes it even more obvious that open source just simply makes sense. **LV**

Pinboard and Star Wars 3D poster.

Raspberry Pi with 2.8" LCD, PiHub with 2x32GB thumb drives & 2TB external drive. Used as web dev server, running Raspbian.

Lenovo ThinkPad T400, docked and connected to dual monitors. Runs CrunchBang Waldorf (Debian Wheezy).

Lenovo ThinkPad X61s, used for Arduino prototyping. It's an oldie but a goodie. Runs CrunchBang Waldorf.

My Linux setup Philip Newborough

The creator of Crunchbang Linux show us his den.

Q What version of Linux are you using at the moment?

A Debian Wheezy, in the form of CrunchBang Waldorf – I love the stability that Debian affords me.

Q What desktop do you use? We're guessing OpenBox, as that's what desktop Crunchbang uses by default.

A It depends – are we talking virtual or physical? Virtually, I use OpenBox, yes. Physically, I use a Lenovo ThinkPad X220 as my daily driver, but switch to my Lenovo ThinkPad T400 when I'm in my cave.

Q What was the first Linux setup you ever used?

A SUSE 6.3 in 1999, it was a PITA to set up, but also a lot of fun.

Q What Free Software/open source can't you live without?

A Tough question, I rely on so much. I automate/script a lot of tasks, so Bash, GNU Coreutils and OpenSSH would have to figure in the equation.

Q What do other people love but you can't get on with?

A I have no idea!

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