Celebrating Free Software

September 18, 2010

Kitchener, ON

Fast Software

Good Software

Secure Software

Safe Software

Collaborative Software

Community Software

FREE SOFTWARE!

LINUX

Linux is the fastest-growing operating system in the world. It runs on everything, from phones to super-computers. It's a great free alternative to running Microsoft Windows or Mac OS X.

To get Linux, you need a "distribution" like Ubuntu or Red Hat. Most distributions come on CDs which allow you to install along side your existing OS so you don't lose anything.

Linux is fast, even on old hardware. It's secure and virus-free. And many modern distributions are just as easy to use as Windows or the Mac.

FREE ALTERNATIVES

If you use Microsoft Windows, you can still use free software! Many free software alternatives exist for proprietary, non-free software applications. Some of these have more functionality or are easier to use than the tools they replace. Give them a try!

Proprietary App	Free Software App
Internet Explorer	Firefox or Google Chrome
Windows Live Messenger	Pidgin
Windows Media Player	VLC
Microsoft Office	OpenOffice.org
Microsoft Outlook	Thunderbird
Adobe Photoshop	Gimp
Adobe Illustrator	Inkscape
Apple iTunes	Songbird

WHAT IS FREE SOFTWARE?

The "free" in Free Software is for freedom, like the freedom of speech. While most free software doesn't cost anything, Free Software isn't about price. It's about giving you, the user, control the computer and software that you rightly own.

Free software is a matter of the users' freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software. More precisely, it means that the program's users have the four essential freedoms:

THE FOUR FREEDOMS

0. The freedom to run the program for any purpose.
1. The freedom to study how the program works, and change it to make it do what you wish.
2. The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbour.
3. The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements (and modified versions in general) to the public, so that the whole community benefits.

Free (and "open source") software is built by communities of developers around the world who each have their own individual goals, but work together to create tools, games and systems that benefit everyone.

WHERE TO GET HELP

There's a community of Free Software enthusiasts who can help you get started with Linux.

Here in Waterloo Region, there's the Kitchener-Waterloo Linux Users Group (KWLUG). They meet the first non-holiday Monday of every month at St John's Kitchen at 97 Victoria Street North. The KWLUG mailing list is also a great way to get in touch with local Linux users who can help.

Online, there are plenty of resources depending on which distribution you choose. For Ubuntu, there's the Ubuntu Forums and the Ubuntu Canada mailing list, where you'll find knowledgeable people who can help you find answers to your questions.

FREE SOFTWARE EVENTS IN WATERLOO REGION

A few other upcoming events related to free software:

Oct 4: KWLUG Meeting. Discuss the XBMC media centre. 7pm, 97 Victoria St N.

Oct 6: Ubuntu Hour. Meetup for Ubuntu enthusiasts. 8pm at Whole Lota Gelata in Uptown Waterloo.

Oct 16: Ubuntu 10.10 release party. 7pm right here in Kwartzlab. There will be cake!

ABOUT KWLUG

KWLUG is the Kitchener-Waterloo Linux User Group. We meet monthly and discuss Linux and related technologies.

ABOUT UBUNTU CANADA

Ubuntu Canada is a group of people who use and contribute to the Ubuntu Linux operating system. We provide online resources to help Canadian Ubuntu users. We also have chapters in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver where we hold events where we work to make Ubuntu better or simply socialize.

ABOUT KWARTZLAB

Kwartzlab is a hackerspace—a group and a place where local people from different disciplines come together to work on cool projects, collaborate with each other and make all sorts of things, from electronic gadgets to robots to art installations to interesting software.

Kwartzlab hosts a number of free software events, including bug jams, release parties and today's Software Freedom Day.

We believe if you can't hack it, you don't own it.

LINKS

KWLUG: http://kwlug.org/

Ubuntu Canada: http://ubuntu-ca.org/

Waterloo Libre Software Group: http://wlsg.uwaterloo.ca/

Kwartzlab: http://kwartzlab.ca/

Free Software Foundation: http://fsf.org/

Software Freedom Day: http://softwarefreedomday.org/