

## Rich's Ramblings for May 2007

I finally found the time to install Feisty Fawn, a new version of Linux Ubuntu, claimed by some to be the Microsoft killer operating system. Fat chance of that if my experience is any gage of usability. I probably will receive hate mail from the Unix/Linux types but I have been sworn to tell the truth or at least give my opinion.

After downloaded the source file which is an .ISO, that's an image (700+ megabytes) of the installation cd-rom from the Ubuntu free web site <http://ubuntu.com>. Creating a bootable cd-rom from an .ISO is a piece of cake for my favorite Nero dvd/cd creation software.

It is nice to have spare computers laying around leftover from upgrades for my clients. I installed a new hard disk in one of these spare Pentium 4's with 1 gigabyte of Ram. The CD booted the computer and let me select all of the defaults for installation of Feisty Fawn.

Everything went pretty smooth and I was eventually presented with a familiar desktop. It also installed the Open Office suite of software, which is pretty good and easy to use.

You have to run the system update service for the 160 megabytes of updates that are required. Thanks to my High Speed FIOS broadband connection, it did not take a long time. After installation, I thought it would be nice to browse around to some web sites but I found that I did not have java installed in the default browser Firefox. Firefox is a pretty good browser and a good replacement for Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

This is where I had problems. In the MS windows world, you can install almost anything pretty easy. Not so with Linux, you have to know a lot more about your operating system than in the Windows world. There was a long set of directions to install Sun's Java on my Ubuntu.

First you have to know whether to download the RPM package or the Binary file. Now I ask you, which would you choose? No fair if you're already a Linux guru.

I figured what the hay, I picked the binary file and it downloaded to a directory that I had created for downloads. The default download directory is your desktop and I have had enough of that. Many times peoples desktop look like a junk pile with all the downloaded files ending up on the desktop.

Now, on to the instructions. To install the Linux self extracting file you need to go to terminal mode and type su.? Ok, I figured that was super user or administrator. Fine but I kept asking me for the root password. I evidently had not set this someplace along the line in the installation routine. I thought it might be the same as my regular userid but no luck. I finally found a place under users and groups where I could set the root password. And then back to the install of Java. This time it changed the prompt as I was successful in entering the SU password. I had printed out the directions for installing the Java

package but I ran into problems with accessing the file that I had downloaded. This is not for the faint of heart as you have to change file permissions in order to do most anything to the file. I finally switched back to the graphics interface and was able to change the permissions on the downloaded file easily. Frustrating at the least.

Maybe I am being hard on the Linux world but if they ever want to erode the Microsoft share of the PC market, they better learn that KISS. Keep It Simple Stupid or whatever the acronym stands for. Trying to create sub directories and copy files into them for execution is a real test of the KISS principle.

I finally gave up as I tried and tried to install the Java for Firefox and was never successful.

As I said many years ago, Linux is not ready for the general public by a long shot.

1. The desktop does not have any icons installed in the default install.
2. It is nearly impossible to install other programs unless you are a Linux guru. or have a friend who is one who will put up with your simpleness.
3. I was able to install my network connected printer but I knew the TCP/IP address for it which made it easier.
4. I think I have too much time on my hands.
5. Linux gurus will of course say that I have not given Ubuntu a fair shake.
6. What do I have to do? Read a bunch of books on Linux? Or attend a class on Unix?
7. Until these different flavors of Linux make it so simple that the other 95% of the people who use computers can easily install and use Linux, they will still opt for the simple method of buying their systems at BestBuy, Staples or Office Depot, Take it home, Plug it in and get on the internet in less than a 1/2 hour.
8. I will say that the latest versions of Ubuntu are getting closer but as they say, "close but no cigar".

Rich Schinnell is getting older and crankier but still manages to enjoy computers and networking. He has a new Vista Ultimate Toshiba laptop which seems to be working fine and has not had a single BSD (Blue Screen of Death) since he received it a couple of months ago. He can be reached at [schinnel@cpcug.org](mailto:schinnel@cpcug.org) or by phone at (301) 949-9292. He has been involved with Capital PC User Group for well over 20 years. His web page, although a bit convoluted is located at <http://schinnell.org>

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