



My Computer



CD-ROM



Floppy



Printers



Network Share  
Manager



Trash



CNR

# Keyboard & Mouse

Newsletter of the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.

Using OpenOffice.org Writer

Ubuntu base for Linspire/Freespire

Get more from the State Library

Hot tips for Windows users

Learn Firefox and more

Firefox extensions

Random floppy drive seeking

The case against Vista

... and more!

Issue 9 – March 2007

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**Our cover:** Freespire (beta) desktop. See *Ubuntu base for Linspire/Freespire*.

# Using OpenOffice.org Writer



This article was originally published on Free Software Magazine (<http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com>) under the title “*The Lazy User’s Guide to OpenOffice.org Writer*” and is reproduced in conformity with the licence granted by the author, [Daniel Escasa](#), (Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 – <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/>)

## Create and manage large documents

All hail the lazy, for they will find the most efficient way to work a computer in general, and a word processor in particular. In this article, I’ll look at three lazy writer’s tricks that can relieve you of most of the drudgery involved in creating a fairly large document in OpenOffice.org Writer (henceforth, OOO Writer or simply Writer).

## Make the computer do most of the work

A word processor such as Writer is “bloated” for a reason—it has features that save you a whole lot of work. Of course, masochists or uber-workaholics might hate these features, but the lazy user can’t imagine life without them.

These are the three things I’ll show you how to do:

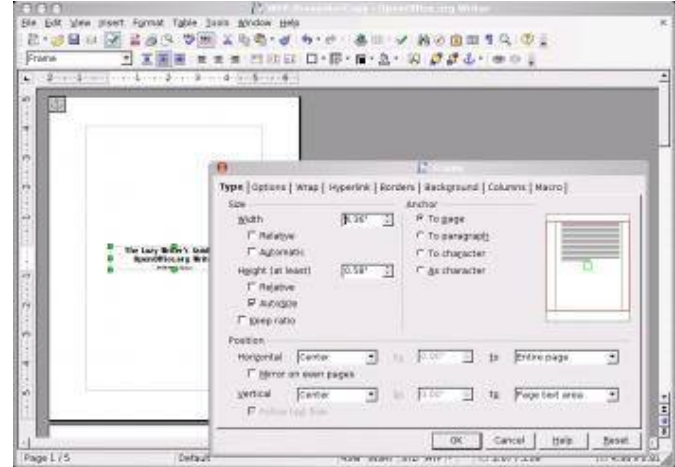


Figure 1: Centering the title

- create a title page,
- create a table of contents,
- and change the page numbering styles

...the lazy way, of course.

## Creating a title page

I’ll create a title page where the title lands in the middle of the page. This title page might also include author information—either just below the main title, or right at the

bottom of the page.

Start with a blank page. If you're adding a title page to an existing document, you'll have to insert a new page before the first one. If you were workaholic or masochist, you would then type in the title, set its character and paragraph attributes, then hit the Enter key until it "looks" centered.

Masochists or uber-workaholics might hate these features,

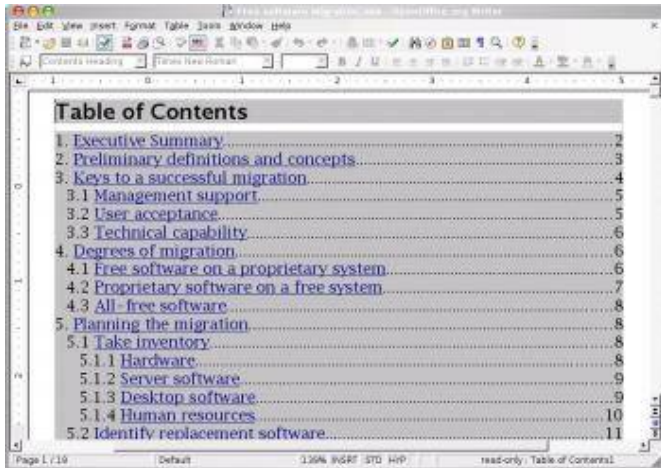
lazy and more sensible. So, you draw a text box anywhere on your blank page—its size doesn't matter, because you can always adjust it later to fit your title. Use Insert → Frame to do this, type your title into the text frame, then resize as necessary.

Once you're happy with your title, you're ready to center it on the page. Right click on the text frame, select Frame, then choose Center from the Horizontal drop-down list, then Entire page from the to drop-down list. Also choose Center from the Vertical drop-down list, and Entire page from its corresponding to drop-down list (as shown in figure 1).

This should give you some idea of how to place an author frame at the bottom right of the page, which I will leave as an exercise for the reader.

## Creating a table of contents

Once your document is long enough—say, upwards of 10 pages—it may be time for a table of contents to help your reader out. You can create a table of contents from an outline of your document, or from paragraph styles that you select—e.g., Heading or Heading 1. With Writer and, I suspect, MS Word and other modern word processors, you can create hyperlinks to your outline. So, when a reader clicks on a section heading in the table of contents, the program will



The screenshot shows a word processor window with a table of contents. The table lists sections and their corresponding page numbers. The sections are: 1. Executive Summary (2), 2. Preliminary definitions and concepts (3), 3. Keys to a successful migration (4), 3.1 Management support (5), 3.2 User acceptance (5), 3.3 Technical capability (6), 4. Degrees of migration (6), 4.1 Free software on a proprietary system (6), 4.2 Proprietary software on a free system (7), 4.3 All-free software (8), 5. Planning the migration (8), 5.1 Take inventory (8), 5.1.1 Hardware (8), 5.1.2 Server software (9), 5.1.3 Desktop software (9), 5.1.4 Human resources (10), and 5.2 Identify replacement software (11). The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Page 1 / 10', 'Default', '136% INRST STD HPP', and 'read-only: Table of Contents'.

Section	Page
1. Executive Summary	2
2. Preliminary definitions and concepts	3
3. Keys to a successful migration	4
3.1 Management support	5
3.2 User acceptance	5
3.3 Technical capability	6
4. Degrees of migration	6
4.1 Free software on a proprietary system	6
4.2 Proprietary software on a free system	7
4.3 All-free software	8
5. Planning the migration	8
5.1 Take inventory	8
5.1.1 Hardware	8
5.1.2 Server software	9
5.1.3 Desktop software	9
5.1.4 Human resources	10
5.2 Identify replacement software	11

Figure 2: A sample table of contents

but the lazy user can't imagine life without them But you're



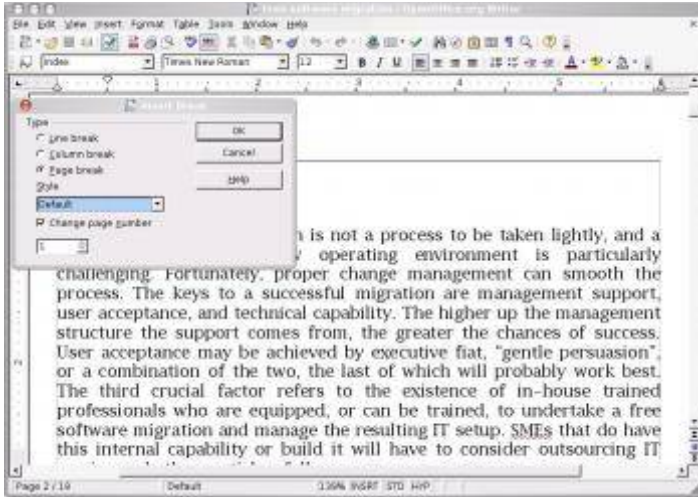


Figure 4: Inserting a page break

## Changing page numbering style

A long document's preface or foreword will come after the Table of Contents and its pages numbered with lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, ...). After that comes the main body of the document, numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, ...).

Here's how to do it.

First, insert a new page. Use Insert → Manual Break (as shown in figure 4), then Page Break, and be sure to change the Style to Default. You can't use the Ctrl-Enter keyboard shortcut because if you do, you're stuck with the No Style option. Also set the page number to 1.

We should learn more about what our software can do for us so we can apply our hard work to things that really matter.

Next, format the page so that page numbers are lower-case Roman numerals: select the Page tab and select i, ii, ... from the Format drop-down list (as shown in figure 5).

Also make sure that either your Header or Footer is on (depending on where your page numbers should be) by clicking on the appropriate tab and checking the relevant box. Type in your preface.

When you're done with the preface, it's time to go back to Arabic numeral page numbering: force another page break with Insert → Manual Break, then Page Break, and be sure to change the Style to Default, and the page number to 1. Also set the page number format to 1, 2, ...

## Conclusion

The computer can do so much for us if we only let it. I believe we work too hard at times, taking 20th or even 19th

century habits into the 21st. We should learn more about what our software can do for us so we can apply our hard work to things that really matter.

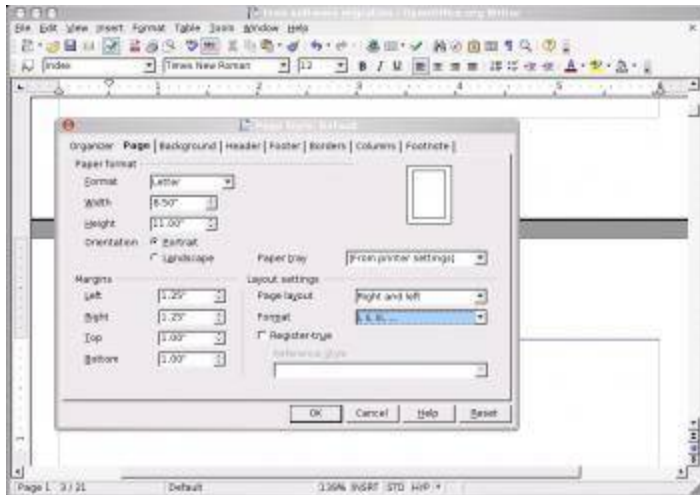


Figure 5: Setting the preface page numbers

### Source URL:

[http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com/articles/the\\_lazy\\_user\\_s\\_guide\\_to\\_openoffice\\_org\\_writer](http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com/articles/the_lazy_user_s_guide_to_openoffice_org_writer)

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## Learn Firefox and more

From the Shelly Cashman Series, the State Library has *Mozilla Firefox – Introductory Concepts and Techniques*. It is published by Thomson Course Technology and is a student manual and workbook. Co-authors are Gary B. Shelly, Thomas J. Cashman, Steven G. Forsythe and Steven M. Freund. It comes complete with a CD on which are Mozilla Firefox and Mozilla Thunderbird.

Despite the title, the book is about much more than just Firefox, dealing with email (using Mozilla Thunderbird), research using search engines and other aspects of Internet life.

It is divided into three projects. The first is *Introduction to Firefox*, the second is *Web Research Techniques and Search Engines*, and the third is *Communicating over the Internet using Mozilla Thunderbird*. There is also a special feature on open source concepts and customising Firefox, as well as three Appendices covering installation of Firefox and Thunderbird, and setting Firefox options. Finally there is a quick reference summary. The projects take the student through various activities in an easy to follow manner and I highly recommend the book to anyone interested in Firefox and, to a lesser extent, Thunderbird.

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## Ubuntu base for Linspire/Freespire

Of late there has been a trend for Linux distributors to cooperate. Several Debian-based distributions were given a standard core a while back and last month Linspire and Canonical (Ubuntu) made an announcement about future cooperation, with Linspire basing its distro on Ubuntu, rather than directly on Debian. In this it is not alone, with about two dozen distros now using Ubuntu as their source (not counting Ubuntu with different desktops, such as Kubuntu and Xubuntu). Ubuntu, for its part, will incorporate Linspire's CNR technology so that they can sell commercial Linux applications with the ease of click, buy and install online.

Here's the text of the joint announcement from Canonical and Linspire:

*LONDON & SAN DIEGO, February 8th, 2007 – Canonical Ltd, the lead sponsor of the popular Ubuntu operating system, and Linspire, Inc. the developer of the commercial desktop Linux operating system of the same name, announced plans for a technology partnership that integrates core competencies from each company into the other's open source Linux offerings.*

*Linspire will transition from Debian to Ubuntu as the base for their Linspire and Freespire desktop operating systems.*

*This will mean that Linspire users will benefit from Ubuntu's fast moving development cycles and focus on usability. The Freespire community will start seeing early releases of Freespire 2.0 based on Ubuntu in the first quarter of 2007, with the final release expected in the 2nd quarter of 2007, following the official release of Ubuntu 7.04 in April.*

*"Ubuntu is the most successful community-based Linux project to date," said Kevin Carmony, CEO of Linspire. "They have done a fantastic job with the development community and creating tools for utilizing their technology. It made a tremendous amount of sense to partner with Canonical and begin basing our desktop Linux offerings on Ubuntu."*

*Linspire will continue combining proprietary drivers, codecs and applications with open source software by default in their operating systems. This approach, unique among Linux distributions, offers out-of-the-box support for a broader range of software, hardware and multimedia file types than the Debian or Ubuntu baseline alone. Linspire will continue adding other unique features that are important to its users and that make the Linspire desktop Linux easy to use and a turn-key solution for OEMs.*

*"This technology partnership goes a long way in advancing and unifying the Linux desktop," said Carmony. "Linux faces many challenges as it competes in a world historically*

*dominated by Microsoft Windows, so there is plenty of work to go around and we're pleased to be able to offer differentiation and choice, while reducing fragmentation. We are very pleased to be working side by side with Canonical to integrate each of our technologies for the benefit of Linux users worldwide."*

*"The very nature of Free Software development is based on sharing and collaboration," commented Mark Shuttleworth, founder of Ubuntu, "The less time, energy and resources Canonical and Linspire spend duplicating efforts, the more time we'll all have for unique improvements and innovation. We're pleased to see [another key Linux distribution](#) incorporating our work with Ubuntu."*

*In addition, Ubuntu users will gain access to the Linspire CNR e-commerce and software delivery technology. Linspire recently announced plans to make their [CNR technology](#) available for other Linux distributions in addition to their own Linspire and Freespire offerings. Today's announcement confirms that Ubuntu will be the first distribution to be supported.*

*Beginning with Ubuntu's 7.04 release in April of this year, Ubuntu users will be able to use the CNR client to download and install commercial programs and proprietary media drivers with one click of the mouse. In the future, Canonical plans to integrate aspects of the CNR technology so the*

*purchase of commercial software is straightforward for desktop users.*

*"Over the past few years, Linspire has refined their e-commerce and software delivery technology with their CNR service," continued Shuttleworth. "For some time, we've been planning enhancements to Ubuntu's commercial software management, and it was only natural to take advantage of Linspire's new, open CNR technology rather than duplicating that work."*

*Ubuntu users will continue to have the same repository and installation options as before, but will enjoy expanded capabilities with the incorporation of the new CNR technology features such as access to a range of commercial consumer applications, multimedia support and games.*

*"This partnership will enable us to provide commercial software products and services such as legally licensed DVD and media players to users who want them." noted Steve George, Director of Support and Services for Canonical.*

*For additional information see the FAQ section at*

*<http://www.linspire.com/ubuntupartnership>*

### ***About Canonical and Ubuntu***

*Canonical Ltd, the commercial sponsor of Ubuntu, is a global organization headquartered in Europe committed to the development, distribution, and support of open source software products and communities. World class commercial support for Ubuntu is available through Canonical's Global Support Services team and partners.*

*Since its launch in October 2004 Ubuntu has become one of the most highly regarded Linux distributions, with millions of users around the world. Ubuntu will always be free to download, free to use and free to distribute to others. With these goals in mind, Ubuntu aims to be the most widely used Linux system, and is the centre of a global open source software ecosystem.*

### ***About Linspire & Freespire***

*Linspire, Inc. [www.linspire.com](http://www.linspire.com) was founded in 2001 to bring choice into the operating system market. The company's flagship product, the Linspire operating system, is an affordable, easy-to-use Linux-based operating system distributed primarily pre-installed on PCs for home, school, and business users.*

*Linspire pioneered CNR Technology, which allows Linspire users access to thousands of software programs, each of which can be downloaded and installed with just one mouse*

*click. The thousands of software titles available in the [CNR Warehouse](#) include full office and productivity suites, games, multimedia players, photo management software, accounting tools, and more.*

*Freespire ([www.freespire.org](http://www.freespire.org)) is a community-driven, Linux-based operating system that combines the best that free, open source software has to offer (community driven, freely distributed, open source code, etc.), but also provides users the choice of including proprietary codecs, drivers and applications as they see fit. With Freespire, the choice is yours as to what software is installed on your computer, with no limitations or restrictions placed on that choice. How you choose to maximize the performance of your computer is entirely up to you.*

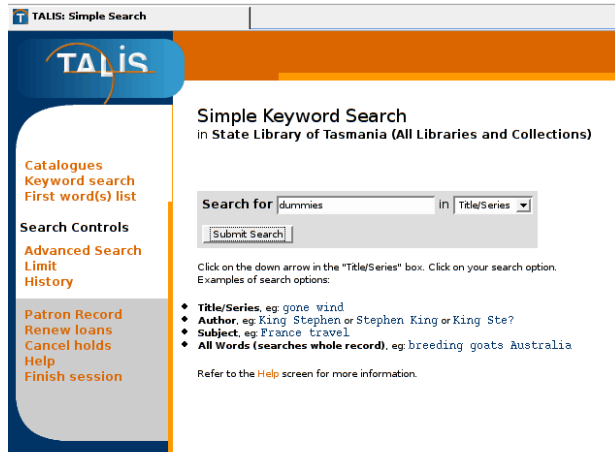
### ***About CNR***

*CNR, is a digital software distribution technology developed by Linspire, Inc., which allows desktop Linux users to find, install, uninstall, manage, and keep updated, thousands of software programs on their Linux computers, all with just one click. Users also get a powerful way to manage their entire software library, with advanced features, such as customizable "aisles" where you can install entire groups of software with a single click.*

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## Get more from the State Library

If you have an active State Library Librarycard and an Internet connection, you can borrow anything in their lending library, no matter where located, and pick it up at your local branch. The State Library will even email you to let you know the requested item has arrived. It is only then that you need to visit the library – all the rest can be arranged from your computer's keyboard.



The screenshot shows the 'TALIS: Simple Search' interface. At the top, it says 'Simple Keyword Search in State Library of Tasmania (All Libraries and Collections)'. There is a search input field containing 'dummies' and a dropdown menu set to 'Title/Series'. A 'Submit Search' button is below the input. To the left is a navigation menu with links: 'Catalogues', 'Keyword search', 'First word(s) list', 'Search Controls', 'Advanced Search', 'Limit', 'History', 'Patron Record', 'Renew loans', 'Cancel holds', 'Help', and 'Finish session'. Below the search box, there are instructions: 'Click on the down arrow in the "Title/Series" box. Click on your search option. Examples of search options:' followed by a bulleted list: '• Title/Series, eg gone wind', '• Author, eg King Stephen or Stephen King or King Ste?', '• Subject, eg France travel', and '• All Words (searches whole record), eg breeding goats Australia'. A note at the bottom says 'Refer to the Help screen for more information.'

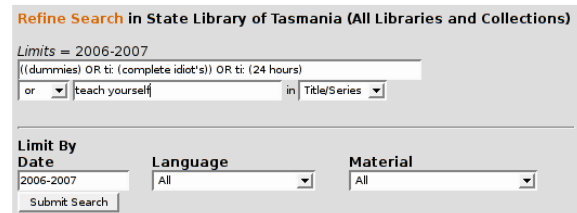
Figure 6: The Talis Simple Search window

To select a book, audio book, CD, DVD or other item, you log on to the *Talis* catalogue. If you are not familiar with how to use the catalogue, place requests (*holds*) on items you require, and send yourself details of items you might want to borrow in the future, then take the online tutorial (URL below) or consult your local branch about what training they offer. Most branches have regular sessions, whilst others offer training sessions when there is sufficient demand.

<http://www.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/talistutorial/default>

A few tips for those who know how to use Talis:

- To browse, say, all the DVDs they have, simple do a search for 'DVD' using the **All words** option. This



The screenshot shows the 'Refine Search in State Library of Tasmania (All Libraries and Collections)' interface. It features a search box with the query '((dummies) OR ti: (complete idiot's)) OR ti: (24 hours)'. Below the search box, there is a dropdown menu set to 'or' and another search input field containing 'teach yourself'. There are three sections for refining the search: 'Limit By' with a 'Date' dropdown set to '2006-2007', a 'Language' dropdown set to 'All', and a 'Material' dropdown set to 'All'. A 'Submit Search' button is at the bottom.

Figure 7: Refining the search by adding criteria

works because *DVD* is given as a **Format** in the

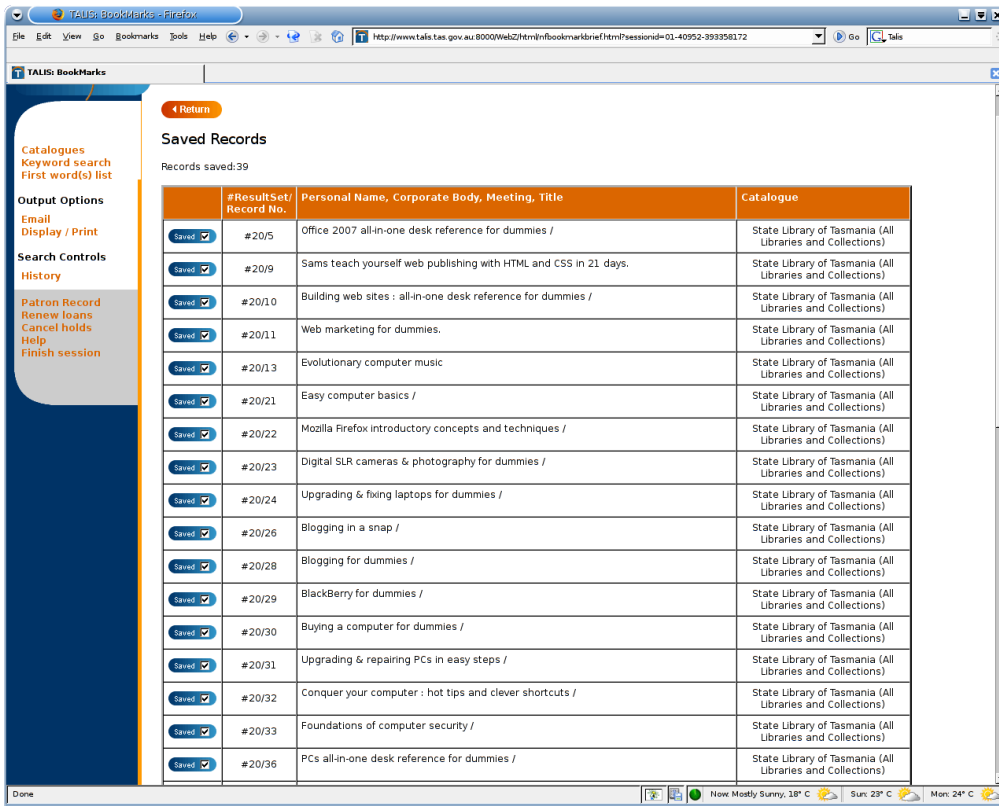


Figure 8: The Saved Records list includes items on order but not yet in the Library.

details of the titles they have and you can search for any word in the full details.

- To check only newer items (e.g. recently published computer books) set the **Date** criteria to '2006-2007'.

Whilst I couldn't work out search criteria to limit the search only to computer books, I found this procedure produced good results:

- Using **Title/Series** as the option, enter, say, '*dummies*' and click **Submit Search**. See Figure 6.
- When the results are displayed, click **Refine Search**, choose **OR** and enter, say, '*complete idiot's*' and again click **Submit Search**. See Figure 7.

- Repeat for other series – up to about 8 criteria can be added in this way. You might also use words

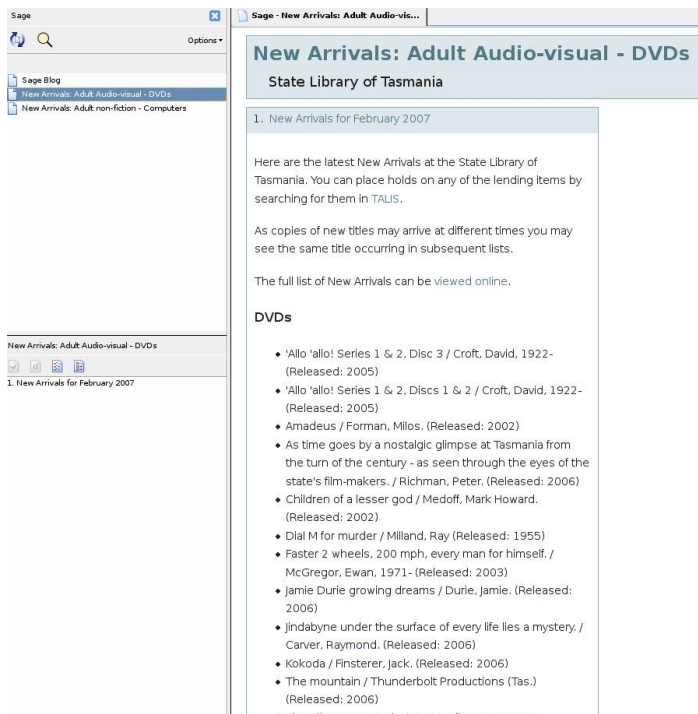


Figure 9: Sage extension of Firefox reads RSS feeds

- like “computer” or “Firefox” to add to the search.
- Although non-computer books from these series will be included in the results, you should end up with a list of no more than about 90 books.
- Go through the list and tick the titles you think you may be interested in.
- Click on **Show Saved** to display your selected titles. You'll see a summarised list of the titles you have chosen. See Figure 8.
- Email** this list to yourself. Instead of the summary, you will receive is an expanded list giving the full details of each title. You can also print it out.

- Some items on the list may only be on order and not yet available from the State Library. You cannot place a Hold on these. Use Talis to check back from time to time and see if they have arrived.
- To place a Hold on a particular item you need to go back to the Search Results and then go to the Full Record. You'll need to have your librarycard and password handy.
- Should you change your mind about an item, you can use Talis to cancel the Hold.

## New arrival RSS feeds

Another service the State Library offers is news feeds giving

the latest arrivals. With these you can keep up with the latest books, magazines, graphic novels (comics), CDs, DVDs, videos and many more items that the library has to offer.

RSS feeds are an easy way to see updates of new contents from your favourite websites. If you subscribe to the State Library of Tasmania's New Arrivals RSS feed, you can learn about their New Arrivals the instant they update their webpage. The new information is collected by newsreader software and called an RSS feed.

There are two ways to receive the State Library RSS feed, either via a newsreader (or your web browser) or via email. I found the simplest way was to add the Sage extension to Firefox. With this you can open the RSS feed list in the left hand column and read it in the right. See Figure 9.

If you prefer to be notified by email, you need to sign up to a service which will take the library's RSS feeds and convert them in to emails for you. Some free examples of such services are Squeet and Feedblitz. (<http://www.squeet.com>; <http://www.feedblitz.com>) The State Library link you need is <http://www.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/newarrivals>.

For more information on the State Library's New Arrival RSS feeds, ask at your local branch for their brochure which will give you details of how to use the service.

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## Linux Peugeot?

It used to be Linux Penguin, but, perhaps, the Peugeot should become the new logo. Or maybe the Citroen. Certainly Linux desktop advocates have reason to thank PSA Peugeot Citroen, which recently announced that it would roll out 2000 Novell SUSE Linux desktops and 2500 SUSE servers over the next several years.

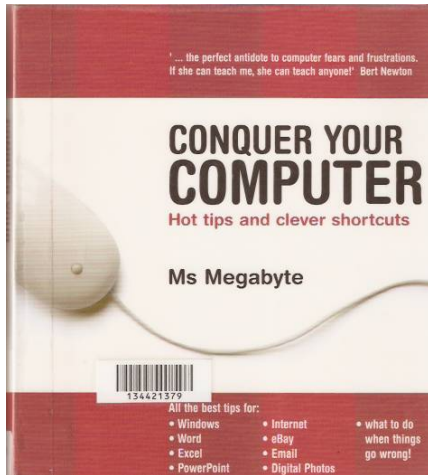
At this stage, there is little information available about just how the company plans to use Linux, but observers are calling the planned rollout one of the largest Linux desktop projects ever by a private enterprise. Peugeot Citroen says the ease of use, interoperability with Windows operating systems and applications, and Novell's support offerings were the reasons it went with the open source desktop and server technology.

Also from France comes the news that the French Parliament's offices are to do a desktop swapout, replacing Windows with Linux. 1154 desktops are involved.

Novell's website lists organisations in China, Brazil, Europe and the US that have adopted Linux solutions and the company is pushing hard to get Linux considered instead of Windows Vista.

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## Hot tips for Windows users



Here's ten useful tips for Windows XP and Microsoft programs, courtesy of *Conquer Your Computer* by Ms Megabyte, which is one of the many useful titles available from the State Library. (See our article elsewhere for more inform-

ation on reserving books and having them transferred to your local branch.)

1. To rename files when working with *My Computer* or *Windows Explorer*, press **F2**, type the new name and press **ENTER**.
2. If you need to put a screen dump into a document, click on the window that you want to dump, press **ALT** and **Print Screen** together, switch to your

3. document and use **Paste (CTRL + V)** to paste it in.
3. In *Microsoft Office XP* and *2003*, there is a task pane which is a handy way to access the *ClipArt Gallery*, *Styles* and *Formatting*. Just press **CTRL + F1** to open it.
4. When working with graphics in *MS Office*, if you 'lose' an object in a stack, click on a visible object and press **Tab** or **Shift Tab** to cycle through the objects in the stack. When the object you want is selected, use the **Arrow Keys** to nudge it out from behind the other object.
5. The right mouse button brings up what we call a '*context sensitive menu*' – that's a menu relevant to what you are doing. For example, if you right click on a table, you'll get the table options; right click on a piece of text to get the text formatting options; and so on. This right click for a context sensitive menu applies right throughout your *Windows* system, with only an occasional exception. Learn to use it; it makes life a lot easier.
6. In an *Excel* spreadsheet, if you have columns headed by dates (e.g. *2000*, *2001*, *2002* etc.) leave a blank row below them. This aids readability and prevents *Excel* from including them in automatic calculations.
7. In *Powerpoint* you can start a slide show from slide 1 no matter what slide you are currently viewing, by pressing **F5**.
8. In *Internet Explorer*, if you want <http://www.mmaca.com>, for example, just type

- mmaca* and press **CTRL + ENTER**. (This works for .com websites only.)
9. To select a large block of text, left click at the beginning of the text and use the scroll bar to scroll down to the end of the text you wish to select. Hold the **Shift** key and click at the end of the text to select the whole block.
  10. If you want to send an email to a large group of people, do not use *CC:*, instead use *BCC:* for the list of people it is to go to and address the message in the *TO:* line to yourself (or leave that line blank). That way, there is no long list of addresses at the start of your message and your friends won't get upset about their addresses being put at risk of spamming. In *Outlook Express* you may need to click on *View* and select *All Headers* to make *BCC:* visible.

*Conquer Your Computer* is a spiral-bound book that lies flat beside your computer making it easy to follow the step-by-step instructions that 'Ms Megabyte' gives.

Topics covered include *Windows, Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Internet, eBay, Email (Outlook), Digital Photos*, and what to do when things go wrong. The book is well-written and highly recommended for anyone using *Windows* and *Microsoft* applications.

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## The case against Vista

Our esteemed President forwarded me a well reasoned and researched document that outlines some problem areas with the new Windows Vista. The document is far too long to reproduce here, but here's the author's summary:

*Windows Vista includes an extensive reworking of core OS elements in order to provide content protection for so-called "premium content", typically HD data from Blu-Ray and HD-DVD sources. Providing this protection incurs considerable costs in terms of system performance, system stability, technical support overhead, and hardware and software cost. These issues affect not only users of Vista but the entire PC industry, since the effects of the protection measures extend to cover all hardware and software that will ever come into contact with Vista, even if it's not used directly with Vista (for example hardware in a Macintosh computer or on a Linux server). This document analyses the cost involved in Vista's content protection, and the collateral damage that this incurs throughout the computer industry.*

You'll find the full, freely distributable document at:

[http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~pgut001/pubs/vista\\_cost.html](http://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~pgut001/pubs/vista_cost.html)

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## Other Vista opponents

The Free Software Foundation (FSF) has launched a website called *BadVista.org*, which is a campaign with a twofold mission of exposing the harms inflicted on computer users by the new Microsoft *Windows Vista* and promoting free software alternatives that respect users' security and privacy rights.

“Vista is an upsell masquerading as an upgrade. It is an overall regression when you look at the most important aspect of owning and using a computer: your control over what it does. Obviously MS Windows is already proprietary and very restrictive, and well worth rejecting. But the new 'features' in Vista are a Trojan Horse to smuggle in even more restrictions. We'll be focusing attention on detailing how they work, how to resist them, and why people should care”, said FSF program administrator John Sullivan.

The campaign will organise supporters into effective and unusual actions drawing attention to this daylight theft of computer users' rights, aggregate news stories cutting through the Vista marketing propaganda, and provide a user-friendly gateway to the adoption of free software operating systems like gNewSense (<http://www.gnewsense.org>).

Peter Brown, executive director of the FSF said, “Whilst

Microsoft embarks upon its largest ever product launch, its marketing dollars will be spent in an effort to fool the media and user community about the goals of Vista. Our campaign will ask the important questions. Can you set yourself or your company free? Can you ever be free from Microsoft? As with our campaign against Digital Restrictions Management, we aim to demonstrate that technologists can be social activists, because we know the harm that Vista will cause”.

Among other harms, BadVista.org will focus on the danger posed by *Treacherous Computing* in Vista. Commonly called *Trusted Computing* in the industry, it is an attempt to turn computers from machines controlled by their user into machines that monitor their user and refuse to operate in ways that manufacturers don't authorize.

Supporters can sign up to receive more information and participate in the campaign at <http://badvista.org>.

Further criticism of Vista's Digital Rights Management was published in Australia's APC magazine, alleging that Vista is defective by design.

[http://apcmag.com/5348/vista\\_defective\\_by\\_design](http://apcmag.com/5348/vista_defective_by_design)

Whatever you feel about these arguments, you owe it to yourself at least to examine them before committing to Vista.

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## Ten reasons to get Vista

And just to show we do occasionally present both sides of an argument, here's ten (edited) reasons why you might consider getting Vista (*Dan Warne, APC magazine*):

*Here are the real benefits: things that will actually make a difference to you day-to-day.*

1. ***UI built for the era of video and digital photography***

*... [P]hotos, videos and music are not treated the same as Word documents any more. When you open a folder of photos, they come up as they'd appear in Google Picasa or Apple iPhoto. There's inbuilt basic photo editing. Music folders come up in columns of ID3 tags, a bit like iTunes. Finally, you don't have to rely so much on third party apps to work with your files.*

2. ***Image-based install***

*... The Vista DVD is actually a pre-installed version of the OS in a compressed form, making it substantially quicker to install. It's also much easier to customise for unprompted installation with the correct defaults, and you can even install your own software automatically at the*

*time Vista is installed. ...*

3. ***Up-to-date driver base and better driver handling on installation***

*Enjoy the just-baked driverbase while it lasts (19,500 drivers large). If you do need to use a special disk driver during installation in the future it won't have to be on floppy disk. Now you can use a USB memory key or CD. Also, Microsoft is now making much greater use of Windows Update for provision of drivers that aren't present in the Windows RTM driver base.*

*...*

4. ***Desktop search and search folders built in***

*... [D]esktop search folders are handy for finding stuff you haven't necessarily got stored in one folder but that is useful to gather together from time to time (e.g. documents with "tax, invoice or receipt" in them).*

5. ***Sleep mode that actually works***

*... Vista has finally caught up to operating systems that can sleep near instantly and wake up reliably, in a couple of seconds.*

6. ***Rock-solid laptop encryption***

*The data on your laptop is worth a hell of a lot*

to an identity thief. Vista's "Bitlocker" encryption (only in Enterprise and Ultimate versions) does heavy-duty, full-drive encryption, so you can be certain that unless a thief has your password there's simply no way they're going to get in.

7. **Better file navigation**

Vista now has some time-saving features like favourite folders displayed in the left column of every Explorer window, as well as "breadcrumb" folder lists allowing you to quickly jump backward and forward through a path. ...

8. **Inbuilt undelete**

Or, depending on how you look at it, inbuilt rolling backup. Every time you make a change to a file or delete it, Windows keeps the previous version. ...

9. **DirectX10**

OK, this isn't so much a benefit as your hand being forced: DirectX 10 will never be made for XP, and a raft of games have already been announced 'exclusively' for 10. ...

10. **Face it, you have no choice**

When Microsoft brings out a major renovation to

Windows, you can choose to ignore it for a year or two, but then the device drivers start drying up for older versions of Windows, your friends start asking questions about their new PC that you can't answer, and even if you use Linux, you'll inevitably need familiarity with Microsoft's latest interoperability blockers. Face it: your arse belongs to Redmond.

**Source:** [http://apcmag.com/5082/10\\_reasons\\_you\\_should\\_get\\_vista](http://apcmag.com/5082/10_reasons_you_should_get_vista)

This is just part of an on-going discussion. For an unedited version of the above, reasons not to get Vista, and rebuttals of the above reasons to get it, follow these links:

[http://apcmag.com/5049/10\\_reasons\\_not\\_to\\_get\\_vista](http://apcmag.com/5049/10_reasons_not_to_get_vista)

<http://cogscanthink.blogspot.com/2007/01/21/538/>

[http://apcmag.com/5097/in\\_response\\_to\\_10\\_reasons\\_not\\_to\\_get\\_vista](http://apcmag.com/5097/in_response_to_10_reasons_not_to_get_vista)

In the final analysis, there is much that is new in Vista, including the controversial DRM, but only you can judge whether you need the new features, or whether it is better to wait until the inevitable upgrades and patches are issued – SP1 or even SP2.

Eventually, though, if you use Windows, you will probably end up with Vista.

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## Extend Vista activation deadline

Ever since *Windows XP* was introduced, products from Microsoft and other vendors have required "activation". In Microsoft's case the trial period is 30 days after which the product loses some, or all, of its functionality. After installing *Windows XP* or *Vista*, you have the usual 30-day "trial period" before you need to activate the product. You can do so by allowing the software to contact Microsoft's servers via your Internet connection. If you don't have Internet access, or prefer not to use an automated process, you can call Microsoft to receive a code to enter on your keyboard.

An activated copy of *Windows* is "locked" to the specific configuration that was present at activation time – the particular motherboard, hard drive, and so forth. Changing several components, such as during a hardware upgrade, can require reactivation. If the automated process fails you need to ring the Microsoft number. If you follow the direction carefully, you will end up with an activation number consisting of blocks of six digits. Enter them and reactivation should occur.

If, however, the automatic telephone process fails – and, when there has been a major upgrade, it often will – you will be put through to an operator. Microsoft seems to be liberal

about providing new activation codes to anyone who provides a plausible explanation, provided that the particular product has not been activated several times. Activating by phone usually does not take very long.

All versions of Vista allow a 30-day period without activation (except the corporate-oriented Vista Enterprise, which supports only a 3-day trial). If you know the secret, however, you can extend the activation deadline of editions such as *Vista Home Premium* and *Vista Business* up to four months past the original install date.

If you have a good reason for needing a longer trial period, read the following *Windows Secrets* (incorporating *Langalist*) explanation of how you can alter the trial period.

<http://windowssecrets.com/comp/070215>

*Windows Secrets* incorporated the former *Langalist* last year and is dedicated to providing “Everything that Microsoft forgot to mention”. To subscribe, simply go to their website and enter your email address. *Windows Secrets* undertakes never to sell, rent or give away you address to an outside party, never send you unrequested email and to honour all unsubscribe requests immediately. You've nothing to lose. Subscribe now and regularly receive well research tips to get more out of *Windows*.

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## Personalising Firefox

Firefox, as first installed, does not try to be all things to all people. That keeps it lean, mean and fast. It also means that there are additions that individual users would like to add. Rather than bulk Firefox out, the designers provided a mechanism so that you can "brew your own". Thousands of extensions have been written to take advantage of this mechanism and I intend to describe just a small selection of them here to give you an idea of their scope. To begin most reviews I have quoted the developers' claims.

In choosing what to add to your copy of Firefox, try the Recommended Add-ons, or the following suggested extensions, most of which I use myself on a regular basis.

### Extensions

#### *Answers*

*Alt-Click on any word or term for quick information (definitions, up-to-the-minute reference and more). No selection is necessary.*

Depending on your operating system and preferences, you may need to use another key combination. Mine is CTRL+right click.

When you click a "balloon" opens (or, if you prefer, the whole screen can be used) and a definition of your chosen word appears.

This extension works well with broadband, the faster the better, but would be less useful on a dialup system as the definitions would take longer to fetch.

#### *Bookmark synchronisation*

By uploading your bookmarks to a website, you can then pass them to another computer, operating system or browser. There are a number of extensions for Firefox that can handle synchronisation for you, including Del.icio.us and Foxmark. I use the latter, which offers the opportunity to merge or overwrite bookmarks, working in either direction.

#### *Cooliris Previews*

*Cooliris Previews is a free browser add-on that lets you preview links without clicking or leaving your current page. Now you can browse faster than ever.*

*You can preview*

*Search results*

*Bookmarks on Del.icio.us*

*Videos on YouTube*

### *Photos on Flickr*

When you point to a link to preview it, Cooliris opens a window for the preview. You can keep this window open, send the link to someone else, or open the link in a new tab in Firefox.

Again this is an extension that is only really suitable for broadband use.

### ***Dai.sy***

#### ***In 3 Easy Steps:***

- 1. You and some friend (s) add the Dai.sy extension to your Firefox Browser*
- 2. Choose a webpage or website for everyone to meet at*
- 3. Click on the Dai.sy icon located on your main browser bar.*

*Now that you are together, here is how to:*

#### ***MEET***

- 1. Enter any Nickname you wish to use for this session*
- 2. Choose one of our pre-made avatars or use any image off your pc*
- 3. Create a topic you wish to discuss (this is optional)*

- 4. Click on the "Enter Chat" button and that is all*

#### ***SHARE***

- 1. Click the "Choose" button to browse your PC for any folder you wish to share with your fellow site visitors*
- 2. Click on the "Open Shared Space" button to view to all the files the other site visitors are sharing. For easier browsing, you may Search and Sort the files*
- 3. Double Click on the file you wish to download*
- 4. Choose a Destination folder by clicking the blue folder Icon on the right.*
- 5. Click the "Start" button. The progress of your downloads and uploads can be seen in the status windows.*

#### ***BLOG***

- 1. Click on the "add new" button*
- 2. Enter a Title, Author Name, Author e-mail and A Password so that only you may edit it in the future.*
- 3. Blog Message: Choose a font type, color and size. Add any MEDIA (Image or Video) you wish by simply pasting the web address of your chosen media file.*

Dai.sy's developers originally announced that Dai.sy would be available for Opera and Internet Explorer 7 by now.

Checking with their website, I was unable to find any mention of browsers other than Flock and Firefox. It looks as if plans for other browsers have been put on hold.

### ***Download Statusbar***

***Download Statusbar*** is a browser extension that allows you to keep track of ongoing and completed downloads in a hidden-away statusbar.

Instead of a download window opening, Download Statusbar adds information to the status bar at the bottom of the Firefox window. This enables you to track downloads while browsing, without having to switch back and forth between what you are browsing and the download window.

A neat extension that will suit many people.

### ***DownThemAll (dTa)***

*The first and only download manager/accelerator built inside Firefox!*

*DownThemAll is all you can desire from a download manager: it features an advanced accelerator that increases speed up to 400% and it allows you to pause and resume downloads at any time!*

*DownThemAll is fast, reliable and easy-to-use! It lets you download all the links or images contained in a webpage and much more: you can refine your downloads by fully customizable criteria to get only what you really want!*

*DownThemAll is absolutely freeware and open-source. No Adware, no Spyware.*

When you install the extension, dTa is added to the Tools menu, appearing as an option whenever you right click on a link, or click on a file to download.

### ***FireFTP***

*FireFTP is a free, secure, cross-platform FTP client for Mozilla Firefox which provides easy and intuitive access to FTP servers.*

*Along with transferring your files quickly and efficiently, FireFTP also includes more advanced features such as: directory comparison, syncing directories while navigating, SSL encryption, file hashing, and much more!*

You don't need a separate application to handle FTP transfers. This small add-on turns Firefox into an FTP program comparable with WS\_FTP and CuteFTP.

## ***Forecastfox***

*Forecastfox* is an extension that brings **international** weather from [AccuWeather.com®](http://AccuWeather.com) to your Firefox web browser. ... you can easily find your town or city by using the built in **search tool**. It is **unobtrusive** and **lightweight**, yet can be customized to display nearly as much data as the leading desktop weather programs! If you can't find what you are looking for, **click** the weather icons displayed to open the [AccuWeather.com®](http://AccuWeather.com) forecast for your location. A slider, similar to when popup notification for when all downloads complete, pops up from the bottom right corner of your screen when the current conditions are updated. You can even set what appears in it or disable it!

There's not much I can add to that. Forecastfox works well and can be customised to your locality and information requirements.

## ***Gspace***

The Gspace extension allows you to use your surplus Gmail space to store files. It is strictly an unofficial extension of Gmail and is not guaranteed to work with future versions of Gmail.

## ***GUtil!***

GUtil! adds a drop-down menu to the main toolbar of

Firefox. The menu lists all of the many Google Utilities and allows quick access to your Gmail account, your Google website and to Google online applications, such as Docs & Spreadsheets and Notebook.

It is probably worth adding just so that you are aware of all that Google offers. Clicking any item in the list will take you straight to a page providing you with information about that item. After you have examined the full list of around 41 items, you can use Options to tailor it to show only those that interest you.

## ***IE Tab and User Agent Switcher***

There are still a few poorly designed websites that insist you must have Internet Explorer. These can be fooled by having Firefox identify itself as Internet Explorer. This can be done using User Agent Switcher, which works with all versions of Firefox, including Linux versions.

However, there are also a few websites that actually won't work without ActiveX controls or other features that only come with Internet Explorer. By adding IE Tab to Firefox, you need never look at Internet Explorer again. Simply add the website to the list held by IE Tab and whenever you visit that site, it will use Windows' inbuilt Internet Explorer engine to open the site in a Firefox tab. Because it uses Windows to accomplish the trick, Linux users will have to start Internet

Explorer to visit these sites. As Internet Explorer 6 runs happily under WINE, you don't have to reboot into Windows to do this.

### ***Jajah Web-Activated Telephony***

*JAJAH lets you make free or very low cost global telephone calls directly from Firefox using your regular mobile or landline phone. No headsets, microphones, special equipment, or fees are required.*

With the Jajah extension, you type the number you want to call in a panel in the main toolbar (or wherever you choose to relocate the panel to), your phone and the call number ring and you talk to the called party over your normal phone system, while enjoying free and low cost calls over the Internet.

### ***ReminderFox***

*ReminderFox is an extension for Firefox and Thunderbird that displays and manages lists of date-based reminders and ToDo's. ReminderFox does not seek to be a full-fledged calendar system. In fact, the target audience is anybody that simply wants to remember important dates (birthdays, anniversaries, etc) without having to run a fat calendar application.*

Here's Ian Smith's review:

*I'm somewhat of a productivity zealot and I love any application that helps me stay on task. Reminder Fox is designed to do just that. One of the better Firefox extensions I've found, Reminder Fox sits quietly in the bottom left corner of the browser and lets you manage a to do list and schedule reminders.*

*There are two tabs on Reminder Fox: Reminders and ToDos. When you schedule a reminder you can give it a description, a date, a time (reminders can also be all day events), and a priority. You can also schedule a reoccurring reminder and have the application alert you daily until you complete a task. It even provides a calendar so adding items is as simple as double clicking the day in question. All within Firefox! This is a very simple and slick way to remind myself to feed the office fish Mondays, meet my wife for lunch Wednesdays, get that report done by Friday, etc.*

*The ToDo tab is much the same. You can still set a date for a ToDo item if you wish, but there is no reoccurring feature. You can view all your to do items together and move them around as needed. Once you complete an item it is crossed off the list.*

*Scrolling over the knot in the bottom corner of the browser will pop up a tool tip showing you what you have scheduled*

for the day. You can even view your entries as HTML which can be useful for exporting, etc.

For the power user *ReminderFox* has a ton of options to help you customize the application. Almost every default value or behavior of the tool is changeable. You can also add more tabs (so you aren't limited to *Reminder* and *ToDos* but you could also have a *Home To Do List*, for example). You can even save all the data to an FTP Server for backup purposes or to sync your Reminders across computers.

*ReminderFox* is an excellent replacement for Outlook and online reminder systems and is so light weight you'll hardly notice it is there. Go get it!

## **Sage**

*Sage* is a lightweight RSS and Atom feed reader extension for Mozilla Firefox. It's got a lot of what you need and not much of what you don't.

### **What does Sage do?**

- Reads RSS (2.0, 1.0, 0.9x) and Atom feeds
- Newspaper feed rendering customizable via style sheets
- Feed Discovery
- Integrates with Firefox's bookmark storage and

### **Live Bookmarks**

- Imports and exports OPML feed lists
- Technorati and RSS search engine integration
- Support for a number of locales ...
- Simple, one step install / uninstall

RSS (**R**eally **S**imple **S**yndication) is a syndication format that was developed by Netscape in 1999 and became very popular for aggregating updates to blogs and the news sites. RSS has also stood for "Rich Site Summary" and "RDF Site Summary." With an RSS feed you can keep up-to-date with such information as the latest releases at the State Library and with Sage as your RSS readers, you can do so from within Firefox.

There are other RSS readers for Firefox and also for Thunderbird. It is just a matter of choosing what suits you best.

## **Web Search Pro**

Firefox comes with Web Search built in. You can add many search engines from the MyCroft database to the search bar. Web Search Pro is an improved version that can be used with, or instead of, the standard web search.

Search engines are divided into categories, or you can browse the full list, which shows how many times a particular engine

has been selected and when the entry was last updated. Currently there are 2300 search engines to choose from ( ... *and counting.*)

## Themes

You can also personalise Firefox by adding different themes to change its appearance. Just go to Tools/Add-ons and click the Themes tab. In the bottom corner of the Themes window click on Get Themes and make your selection from the dozens available.

## A personalised Firefox

Firefox can be much more than just another web-browser. It can double as an FTP application, an RSS news reader, a reminder program, a VoIP phone access point, a dictionary/encyclopedia, a download manager, an Internet drive, a chat program, a P2P file swapping program and a blogging program. You can search with thousands of specialised search engines, even rolling you own combination (Rollyo), synchronise bookmarks with other computers and browsers and preview pages without leaving the one your on.

And all of that is in addition to the great standard features it offers, such as tabbed browsing, anti-phishing and scam warnings, full printing control, and text size adjustment using your mouse's scroll wheel.

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## Random floppy drive seeking

Julia sent us an email about a friend's computer which searched for its floppy drive when booting and again at random intervals whilst he was working on the computer.

The initial search could be the result of a CMOS setting. Some people find that a floppy seek whilst booting is reassuring. It certainly is if you have had the computer in pieces and want to be sure you have the floppy cable in right. The random searches are more difficult to resolve. Here's some suggestions, thanks to the various people who responded to Julia's query and to some further research using our old friend Google (which led to Annoyances.org).

- Try putting a blank floppy disc in the drive. It may give you an error message that will provide a clue to what is going on.
- With Windows ME and later, try a System Restore if the problem has only started recently. Choose a time when it was not a problem and restore the computer to that time.
- If you have MSOffice, disable Find Fast by running the Microsoft Office Setup program in maintenance mode, and removing the Find Fast component.
- Double-click on the **System** icon in **Control** panel,

choose the **Device Manager** tab, and delete the **GENERIC FLOPPY DISK** entry from disk drives. Reboot and when Windows restarts, it'll re-detect the drive. Deleting drives and ports using Device Manager followed by a reboot is quite a useful technique when there are problems as it forces Windows to re-detect the deleted items and reinstall their drivers. You may need to have the Windows CD handy, in case it's asked for.

- Run a virus scan. Some reports suggest the NEUVILLE virus may be a part of the problem.
- Run a **spyware** scan with, say, Ad-aware.
- Clear the **documents** menu. It may contain a reference to a file that you have saved to a floppy disk that a program you are currently using tries to access.
- Clear unwanted entries from the **Start Menu's Run** command. I'm not sure why this would work, but <http://www.annoyances.org> recommends it.
- Search your hard disk for all .PIF files that point to programs on a floppy drive. Another tip from Annoyance.org.
- Take out LocalLoadHigh=1 from your MSDOS.SYS file. These sort of memory management tricks are usually not needed with Windows 9x which does its own memory

management. Where individual DOS programs have special requirements, these can usually be set up by configuring that program only.

- Check HKEY\_CLASSES\_ROOT/CLSID in the Registry for any references to OCX's or DLL's referenced on the floppy. Back up the Registry (see Registry Help) before making changes.

Other programs known to cause this problem (according to Annoyances.org:

- Norton Navigator – Clear Norton Navigator's Run history (or disable the Run history all together), and download the bug fix from Symantec.
- McAfee Antivirus '95 – try disabling the Access & Shutdown options in the Scan Disks On area in the Detection tab of the Configuration Manager.
- FirstAid '95 – try removing this program or disabling certain features.
- Long Filenames for Windows 98 – View Software has a patch that supposedly fixes this problem.
- HiJack for Windows 98 – turning off "Enable HiJack shell extensions" in the HiJack Control Panel.
- Remove Konica Picture Show entirely.
- Norton Antivirus 2000 – turn off the options that scan the floppy drive during startup and shutdown.

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