MOSS

MALDIVES OPEN SOURCE SOCIETY

YOUR MONTHLY FLOSS MAGAZINE | AUGUST 2010

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Ramazan Mubarik

Let me start with a riddle, who are the beings that, in a sense, grant your wish instantly without asking for anything back in return? Appear when you need help, provide free favors and magical tricks? Angels. Worldover there is significant interest in angels, pictures of angels, stories of angels, and popular spirituality of angels which have put the images and imaginations of angels in our collective unconscious. In this Holy month of ramazan, we as Muslims, we have lot of room to believe in angels.

Though the word angels literally means messenger, today in the popular literature and movies angels have become more involved with tangible needs of this world. From glass slippers and ballroom dressess to feeding the hungry, rickety places are preserved from disasters and even coded for you by angels. All in all angels represent help from an unknown and unseeable origin to survive a difficult situation. Have you ever turned out into the unknown, expecting help from beyond your actual means, wish-projected? If you believe in angels or if you have wish-projected than it would not be hard to understand what Free Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) is all about.

FLOSS is about helping, sharing and growing together as one, without asking for anything in return. Does your worldview include the possibility of such angelic actions? If not, you probably have wish-projected expecting such help!

Today, information technology is a part of our everyday life, it is quickly becoming a basic need. Do you need to know how to do something or are you having difficulty getting what you want to do something, ask and FLOSS community is there to help. What are the areas of information technology where you are needing special solutions that exceeds your resources? Do you feel emotionally unsupported in one of your information technology quests? The solution for these questions, is a choice you have to make. The choice is FLOSS, the software freedom.

Last wish you Ramazan Mubarik, a month worthy to work for, make good use of the gift's and make your wishes and choices wisely!

Editor

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Maldives Open Source Society

Maldives Open Source Society Website
http://moss.org.mv

Sending Your Voice
magazine@moss.org.mv

Maldives Linux User Group/MOSS Mailing List
http://groups.google.com/group/mlugmv

Launch Pad Dhivehi Translators Mailing List
http://groups.google.com/group/divtranslators

MOSS Technical Support Forum
http://groups.google.com/group/moss-technical

MOSS:
Your Monthly FLOSS Magazine

COVER August 2010, ISSUE #08

Freedom is a choice
so make your choice

Readers' opinions regarding our magazine and/or articles.

MOSS is all about Software Freedom. If you think you could be part of MOSS or you know someone who could, please let us know, we want our magazine to be interactive. We want to progress with you. The common use of free software is not as far off as you think, so let's open our minds to the world and the future.

Let's make it happen!

If you have any good ideas or constructive opinions regarding MOSS magazine's contents, this is the place to express yourself.

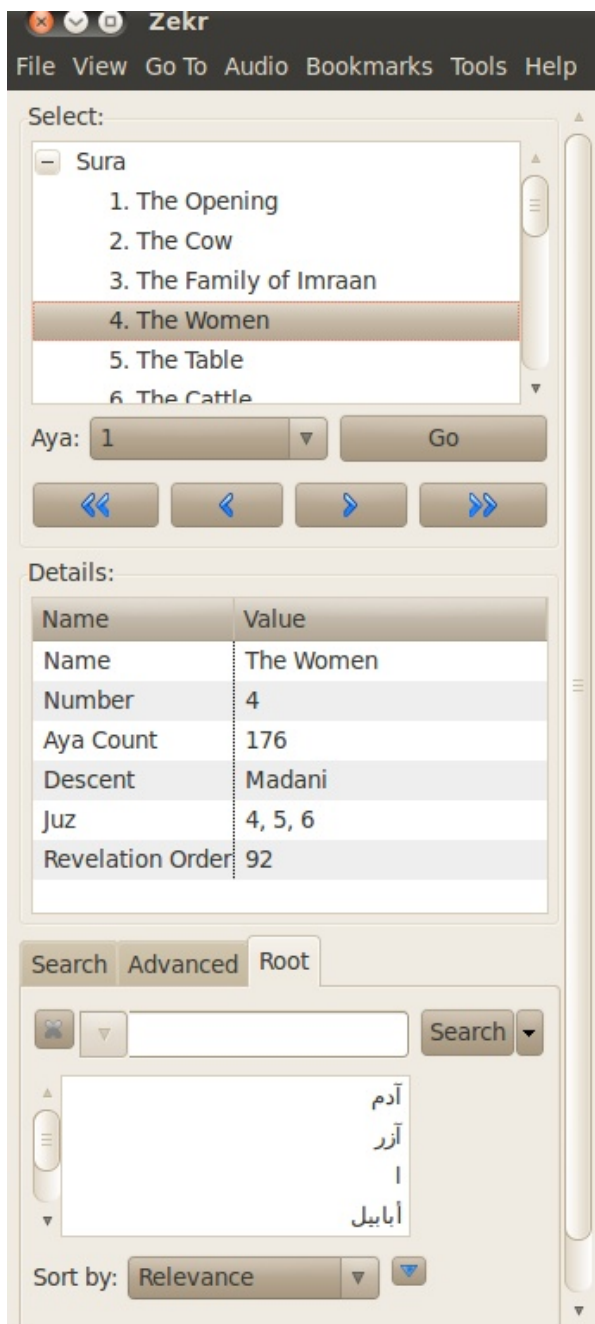Please email us at magazine@moss.org.mv

Ramazan Special

Zekr : The Quran Study Tool

Naail Abdul Rahman | kudanai@gmail.com & Mohamed Malik | mohamedmalik.com

The holy month of Ramazan is here, it is the month of Quran, one of the most historic months of the Islamic calender. It is my duty to to give all our readers an introduction of Zekr, the Quran study tool.

Zekr is an open source Quranic desktop application. It is an open platform Quran study tool for browsing and researching on the Quran. Zekr is a Quran-based project, planned to be a universal, open source, and cross-platform application to perform most of the usual refers to the Quran, according to the project website.

Zekr is capable of having multiple add-ons; that is, different translation packs, themes, recitations and revelation packs.

As of Zekr 0.7.0, it is possible to search through different Quran translations both with indexed (Lucene-based) search and basic search. Moreover this release introduces paging support for Quran text.

Zekr accepts different add-ons to make application as customizable as possible. Currently it accepts different Quran translation packs, language packs, revelation order pack and theme packs. Revelation order packs are used to sort search results based on different revelation order schemes.

Zekr comes with an NSIS installer for Windows and an Application bundle for Mac. There is always a base .tar.gz package for (all) Linux machines as well as Debian packages for Debian-compliant Linux distributions. Which means whether you use Windows, Mac or Linux there is no reason to worry. Zekr can be installed on all operating systems.

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The software has two panes, one is the Quran pane and the other is the selection pane. Select a Soorath of the selection pane and it will appear in the Quran pane. This makes Zekr of the most easy to use Quranic software available.

The screen shot below shows the selection pane. When a soorath is selected for example Al-Faatiha, the soorath will appear of the Quran pan with the translation of the soorath.

With the translation while we are reading we will be able to understand what we are reciting. Since for us Maldivians we are not competence is Arabic Language, therefore the translation is a must.

The screen shot above shows us the Quranic window with translation. As you can see from the screen-shot the aayath and the translation appear right next to each other. This can be configured under the view menu.

Pressing the play button on the software will provide users with the recitations of the Quran, provided the user has installed recitations. This make the software one of the most unique Quranic software available to us.

Since Zekr is open source, it means that it can be modified, hence users of different countries are able to translate Zekr into their language. When the translated file is sent to the project the translation will be available for use, given that it meets their quality requirements.

We at MOSS have been hard at work for the last few months to bring the Dhivehi translation to this program so that the public can enjoy the ease and power of this

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INSTALLATION

software. The public are welcome to install and review our translation pack and help us improve upon it and correct any mistakes.

If you are using Ubuntu to install zekr open ubuntu software center and searh for zekr and install the package or go to Accessories->Terminal. When the terminal is opened type in the following command

```
sudo apt-get install zekr
```

Most Debian based distributions have Zekr, in their repositories if your package manager does not show Zekr in its inventory then you can visit www.zekr.org and download the required package.

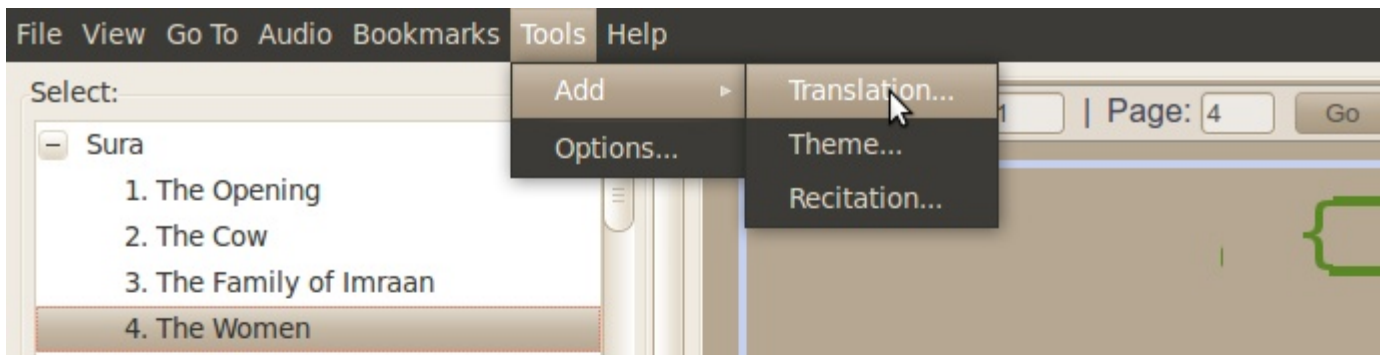Windows and Mac users can visit the following links and download the setup file and install it on their system.
http://zekr.org/quran/
http://zekr.org/quran/en/quran-for-mac

Installing the translation pack is a simple process.
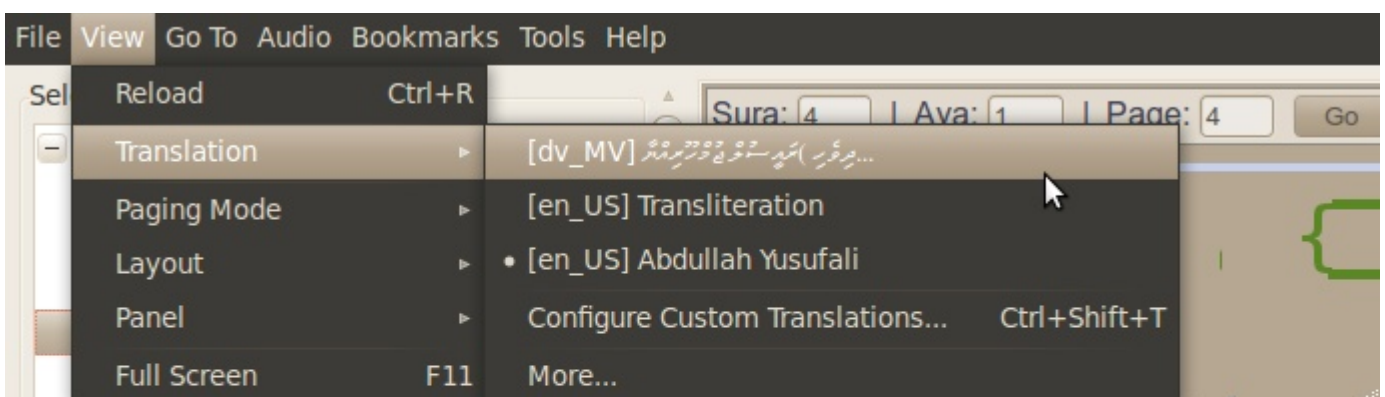http://dl.dropbox.com/u/5385653/zekr/dv.trans.zip

1. Download the translation pack from the above link.

2. Open Zekr. Then go to Tools->Add->Translation and select the file you downloaded.
3. The program may warn you about a signature. Don't worry, this is only because the translation file hasn't been signed by the Zekr developers yet.

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That's it. Now you can select the Dhivehi translation for display under the View>Translation menu.

Now you can take it one step further, and also add a localization pack for the user interface. This is also a simple three step process.

http://dl.dropbox.com/u/5385653/zekr/lang/dhivehi.xml
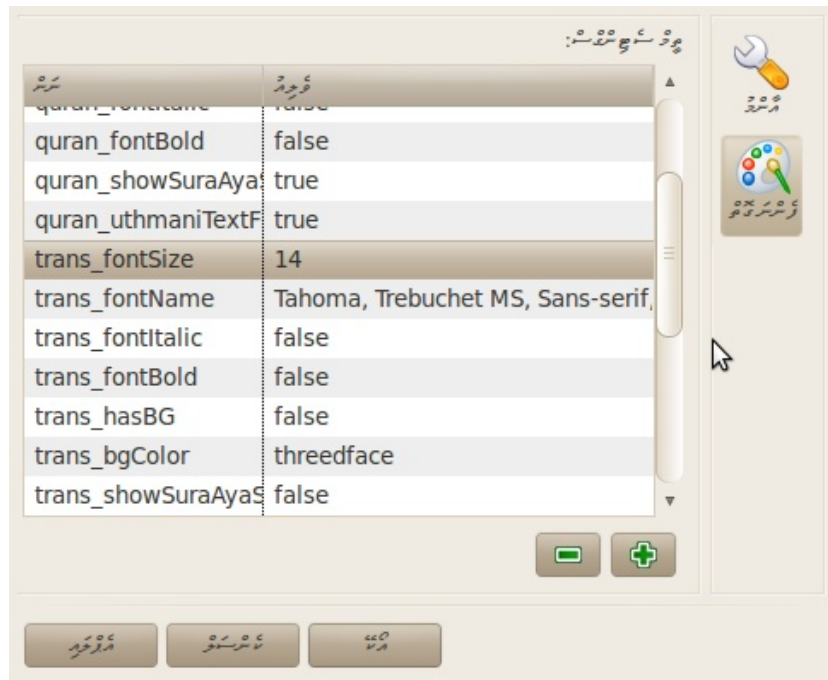
1.Download the localization pack from the above link.
2.Copy this file to Zekr's configuration folders. On windows, it should be in C:\Program Files\Zekr\res\lang. On linux this is /usr/share/zekr/res/lang/. To copy this file to that location you will need root privileges in your file manager, if you are using Ubuntu or Fedora use the following command.

sudo nautilus

zekr.org

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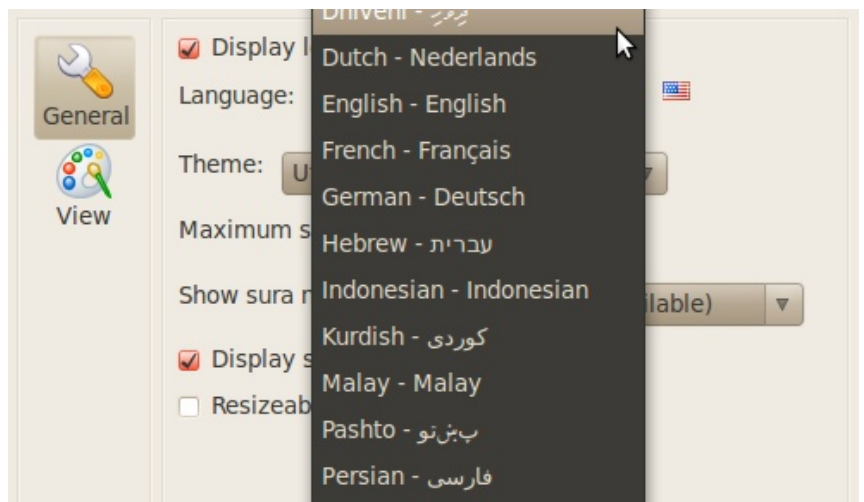
3.Restart Zekr

Now you should be able to select Dhivehi under language in Tools->Options menu.

Some users may find that the size of the rendered font is too small to view comfortably. With Zekr, you can easily set the font size for the display of both the translation and Quran texts. To do so,

1.Go to the tools menu and select options.

2.Select "view" from the left hand menu and you will be presented with various options to alter the programs behavior and appearance.

3.From here, change the value of "trans_fontSize" from to whatever you like. (default value is 14)

4.If you don't like the font that is being used to display the translation, you can change "trans_fontName" and add "Faruma" (or any other font you like) to the end of the list.

You are ready now to have the complete Dhivehi experience in Zekr.

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Read Quran Translations In Various Languages Online

Mohamed Malik | mohamedmalik.com

This is the Holy month of Ramazan and it is our duty to bring you various softwares and websites which will be very helpful in the month of Ramazan. One of the very best websites which offer Quran translations in various languages is Tanzil. The Tanzil project is "aimed at providing a highly verified accurate Quran text to be used in Quranic websites and applications." By using this amazing web platform you can browse the Quran translations in many languages. It is the standard source for Quranic text used by countless projects around the world. The open source Quranic Study Tool Zekr (among many other Quranic software) borrows the Quranic text produced by Tanzil, and shares their translation database. It even includes the current Dhivehi Translation!!!

At the moment the Tanzil database contains 80 different translations in 40 different languages. It also contains 20 different recitations from various scholars in the world. To read Quran on line visit www.tanzil.info

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To change the translation go to translations menu and select the translation that you prefer. If you need a specific recitation then you can also change it by going to the recitations menu. The browse option gives you the option of viewing an Aya or Sura that you may prefer. Below the Quran Option you can alter the display options meaning you can select the fonts etc.

It comes in two tabs, one is the Quran tab, this will show the Holy Quran in Arabic text, meanwhile the translation tab will show you the current translation that you are currently viewing.

That's all about Tanzil. Happy Ramazan Mubarik To Everyone

www.tanzil.info

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Sabily : Linux for Muslim

soul (shiya) | soul@souley.org

The holy month of Ramazan is here and I would like to introduce all our readers to Sabily, formerly Ubuntu Muslim Edition. Sabily is a distribution which is based on Ubuntu. Which means that it uses the same base and same software repositories as Ubuntu, however there are minor changes. Sabily comes with an Islamic perspective and contains a lot of software for Muslims. Some of the softwares which it contains include, Zekr, a Quran study tool. Monajat, a notification software which displays Hadeeths, by the prophet, blacklists which is a parent control software .

As an Ubuntu Based Distribution there is not much change in the default Sabily except for the addition of Islamic Software and certain restricted packages. It is important to know that all of the Islamic software which are available in Sabily can be installed in Ubuntu As Well.

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ISLAMIC SOFTWARE

This is the reason why Sabily becomes special, it contains various Islamic Software, among them is Zekr, the Quran Study tool. It is not the scope of this article to go into details about Zekr, since another article explains the entire project in a much broader perspective. It is contains various Quran Translations in various languages and from many scholars. It also contains recitations of the holy Quran, therefore a user can listen and read Quran at the same time.

Monajat is a notification system built into the system. What it does is simple. It displays various versus of the Quran and saying of the messenger Muhammad. Right clicking on the desktop icon will give you more options. Here you can configure the time interval between notifications, change the language, either Arabic or English.

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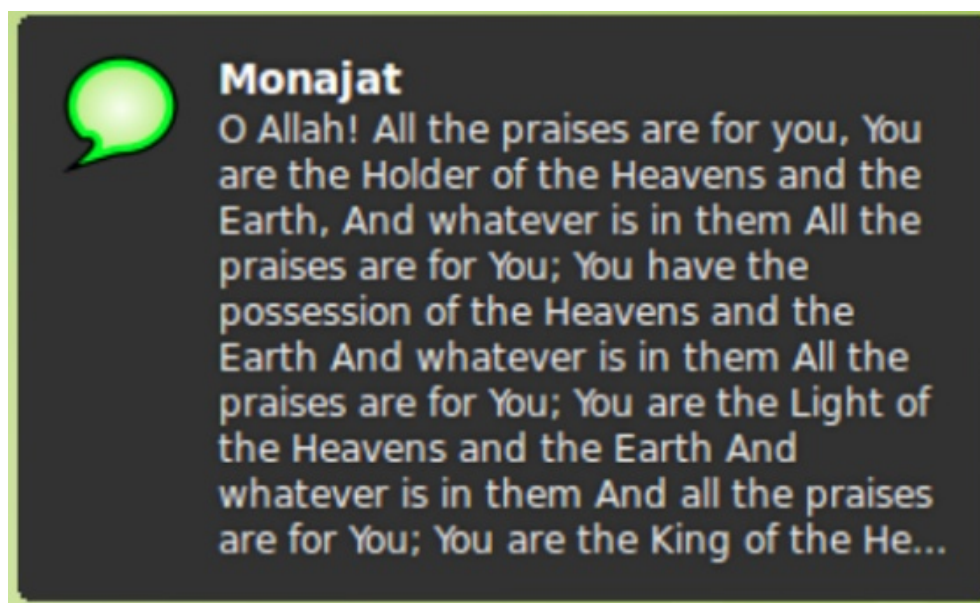
It also contains a software called "Blacklist" (Nanny) which is parental control system that can be used by parents. By using it, parents will never have to bother what there children are doing in front of the computer when they are away. It can block various websites and it could be set in a certain way that the computer shuts downs, after a certain period of time. This can be very useful for parents who demand that there children should not spend more than a certain amount of time with the computer everyday.

The Hijra Applet is a customized calendar application, and Minbar Prayer Times provides a prayer timer that lets the devout know when it is time to pray.

Noor is a Python Quran viewer, the Othman Quran Browser lets you browse the Quran in Arabic. This can be very useful for students who are studying Quran as a subject in schools or even more useful for religious scholars who are writing article and speeches. By using this program they will be able to copy the Quran text and paste it into any word processing software. This will save them a lot of time since the need of typing is eliminated.

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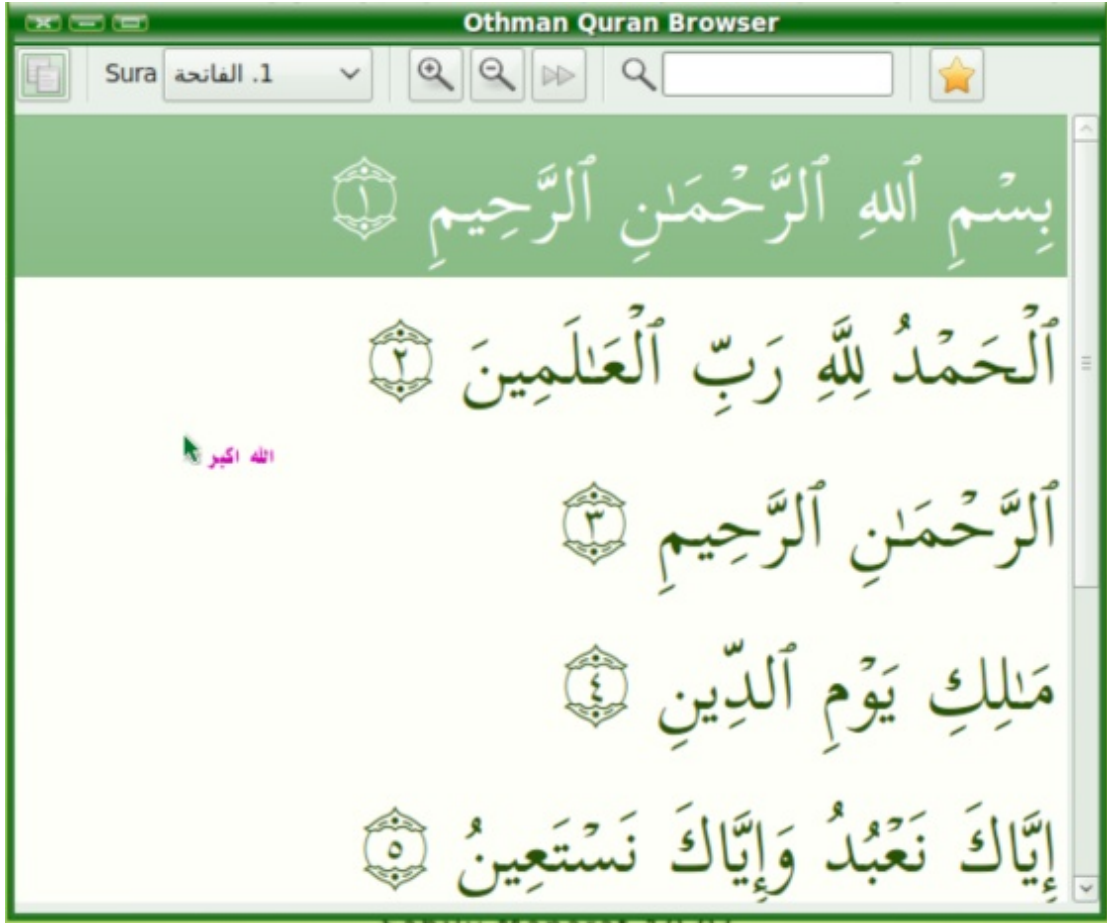
One of things that satisfies me most is the inclusion of all the restricted packages, which are required to play multimedia content. It saves a lot of time for a user to install all these packages. Apart from this it also comes with a lot of important software packages which are not included in the default Ubuntu installation. It contains the official KDE education packages as well as Gcompris Education software. Which is very useful for children. On the other hand many games are also included by default.

The Sabily developers have done another good job with this release. It's perfect for Muslims who speak and read Arabic (Here in the sense those who understand Arabic). It stumbles a bit though when it doesn't always provide native language translations of some of the Arabic content. If you speak and read Arabic why not lend a helping hand and translate those missing pieces into your native language.

The screen-saver is also quite nice in this version. Sabily comes with some gorgeous pictures in the default screen saver that scroll from one to the next and that feature various sayings from the Quran. I rather liked the Arabic writing that is displayed in the screen-saver as it adds a bit of flavor to this distribution. You'll also see it when you move the cursor around sometimes over stuff on the desktop. It's another indicator of how seriously the developers took the job of making what seems to me to be a very authentic Islamic operating system.

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Since it's based on Ubuntu, Sabily is fine for beginner, intermediate or advanced Linux users.

In an Islamic Society like us there is no need to hold it back. Just download it and give it a try you will not be disappointed. For more information and to download Sabily please visit www.sabily.org.

Sabily contains various versions. It is available for both 32bit and 64bit platforms.

* Small version (935 MB): contains the main Sabily packages, including artwork and Islamic applications and Arabic support .
* Full version (1.4 GB): contains the same as the Small version plus multimedia, educational and miscellaneous packages
* Full version with recitations (2.8 GB): same as Full version plus Quran recitations provided by http://www.versebyversequran.com: Muhammad Siddeeq al-Minshawi, Huzify, Sa'ad al-Ghamadi and Mishary Rashed Alafasy.
Note: this version is useful when not connected to the Internet (all Sabily versions provide online recitations)

References
http://desktoplinuxreviews.com/2010/07/22/ubuntu-muslim-edition-10-04-sabily/
http://www.linuxtoday.com/news_story.php3?ltsn=2009-05-18-018-35-RV-SW-RLs

sabily.org

Ubuntu Tweak : Tweak Ubuntu To What You Like

Hussain Sharah | hussain@maldicore.com

One of the most useful tools available for Ubuntu is Ubuntu Tweak. It is a very simple application that is designed to tweak Ubuntu and change various settings. Most of the settings that can be changed in Ubuntu has to be done by using the terminal, by using a command line interface. For a new user playing with the terminal is not an easy task. Ubuntu tweak is an application which is very user friendly and easy to use. Here are some of the basic features of Ubuntu tweak. It is divided into 4 categories they are

1.Applications

Under the applications menu we have an application center that can be used to install most of the popular software packages that are available. List of applications are also very much organized, in this manner applications have been divided into various subfields, that is, desktop,image, video and etc. By using this feature users will be able to find what they are looking for quickly and easily. Under each application it also describes the various features of that application.

As your system is running, and when updated packages are downloaded and installed, the downloaded packages are kept in the system. These packages take hard disk space. If hard disk space is an issue for the user, the user can clean the cache which will delete all these packages for you painlessly, see screen shot below.

To clean the packages first you need to "unlock" the feature, press unlock button then you will be asked for the password. Type in the password and then press clean "cache", when this is done click on the button "clean packages", this will erase all downloaded packages in your system. Remember that removing the packages only removes downloaded packages it doesn't uninstall any software that you have installed.
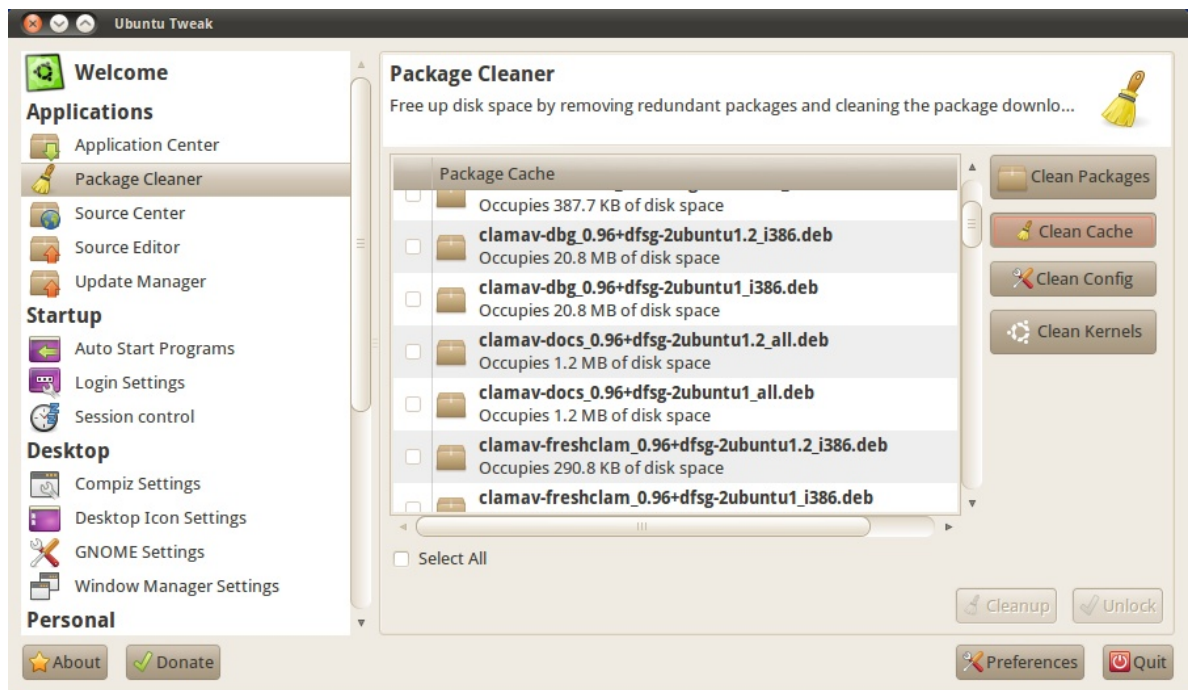
As time passes on the operating system kernel is updated with the latest security patches. When I new Kernel has been installed own your system it will show up at the boot menu, meaning that you will have plenty of options at the boot menu, this is a hassle for many since at the boot screen they see too many options. If 3 kernel updates have been performed, it will show 3 separate kernels. With Ubuntu tweak you can clean your old kernels. To do this press " clean Kernels" and then press "clean up", this option will remove older kernels that are installed on your system. Cleaning Kernels also saves disk space. By using the button "clean config" users can clean up the configuration files on the system as well.

By using the application center you can even update your system. To do this go to update manager in Ubuntu tweak and press update. That is it! You can even add third party PPA's (Personal Package Archive) to your system as well. PPA's contain many software packages that are not available in Ubuntu for various reasons. They may also contain updated packages of software that are already installed on your system.

2.Start up

When your system starts various services are started like, blue tooth, wifi, networking etc. By using the startup menu you can choose which of these services will start and and which ones will not start. Remember by de-selecting the services that will start it sometimes will boost your computers startup speed since these services take memory. Other settings that can be altered via start up is the login settings. You can change the existing logging screen to a new one or either change the wallpaper that you prefer as well. Under the start up menu there is another option available as session control. Users can use for various tasks. One of the things that session control can do is you can make it remember all the applications which are running when you are logging out or shutting down your computer this way when you restart your computer all the open programs will be automatically opened.
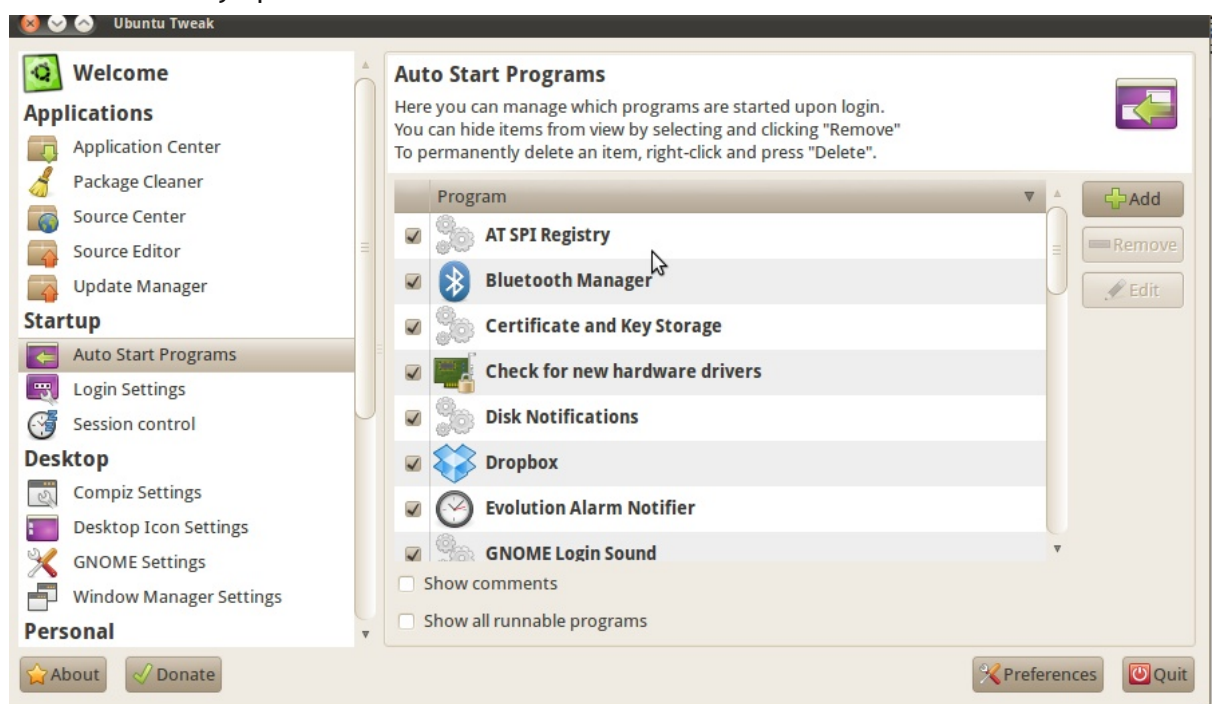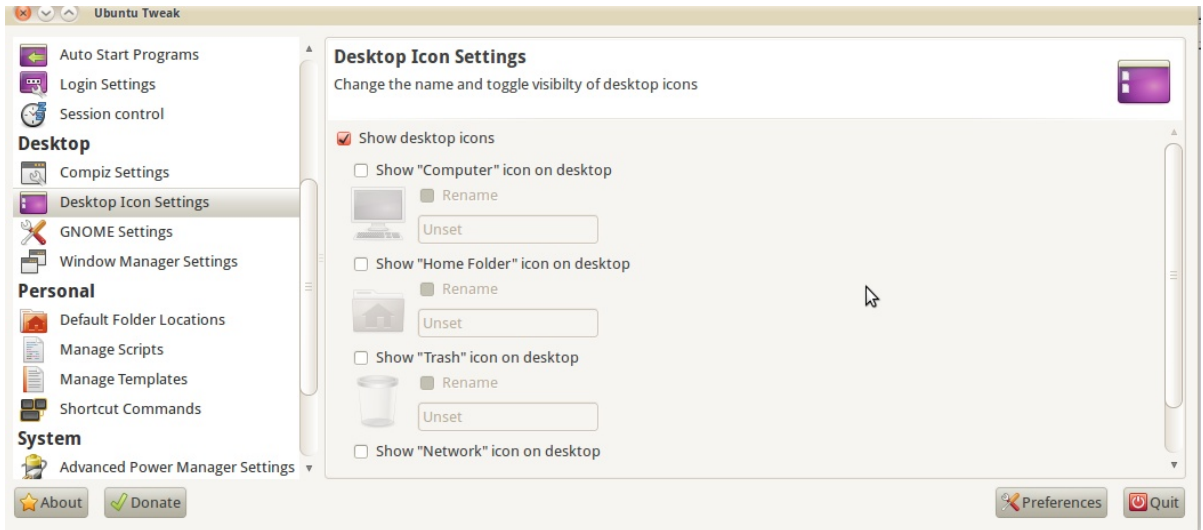
3.Desktop Setting

The other setting which can be altered via Ubuntu-tweak is desktop settings and effects. By default Ubuntu installs the basic compiz plugins for desktop eye candy, however with advanced compiz setting installed on your computer you can use desktop setting to set effects of your choice. Either turn them off or turn them on.

Many people prefer icons on their desktop, the setting menu called Desktop Icon Settings in Ubuntu tweak lets you control the icons which are on the desktop. By default, Ubuntu shows an icon for any hard drive or storage device which is mounted. If you don't want to see the mounted drives on your desktop you can configure that in Ubuntu tweak. Other options are show Computer icon, network icons, show all the folders in the home folder on the desktop. You can decide which icons you want to appear on the desktop and which ones should not. However I do not prefer any icons to be on my desktop, I like my desktop to be clean of any icons or files, however all this depends on personal choice, Ubuntu tweak allows you to tweak Ubuntu according to your preferences.

Then, we have the GNOME settings, here you can play with the GNOME panels, lock down all panels so that panel setting cannot be altered. As part of the human interface guide lines of Ubuntu, by default it does not show any icons in the menu, it only shows plain text, however if you prefer icons to appear in the menu you can enable them here.

Finally in the desktop setting we have the window manager settings. Since the release of Ubuntu 10.04 LTS, the window title bar button layout has been moved to the left hand side, but if you prefer them to be on the right hand side you can change it via this settings. The decision to move the buttons to the left have been an issue with controversial issue but the Ubuntu team decided to change it. Other settings that can be changed by this menu include transparency settings and several other window manager settings.

4.Personal Setting

In the personal setting menu users can set the locations for the default folders that appear in the home directly. The folders that appear in the home directly include, music, pictures, documents, users can set any folder in the hard disk that they want to store there respective files.

Personal settings also allows the user to add customs scripts to the system easily. There are a few useful scripts that are available by default, but these scripts are not enabled. To enable scripts in the system go the manage scripts dialog in Ubuntu tweak. There are two panes on the right we have the disable scripts and on the left we have the scripts which are enabled. To enable a script drag and drop the script to the enabled scripts window. To see whether the scripts are enable give a right click on the desktop and you will see a scripts menu and from the menu you will see the scripts which are enabled.

When you give a right click on the desktop you see a menu called create document but by default there are no templates enabled. Just like the scripts you need to enable them in-order to use them. To enable templates go to the templates dialog and follow the same procedure for scripts and enable them. For an example users can enable templates for creating ODF documents, HTML pages etc. After enabling them give a right click on the desktop and go to the menu create documents to see whether they are enabled.
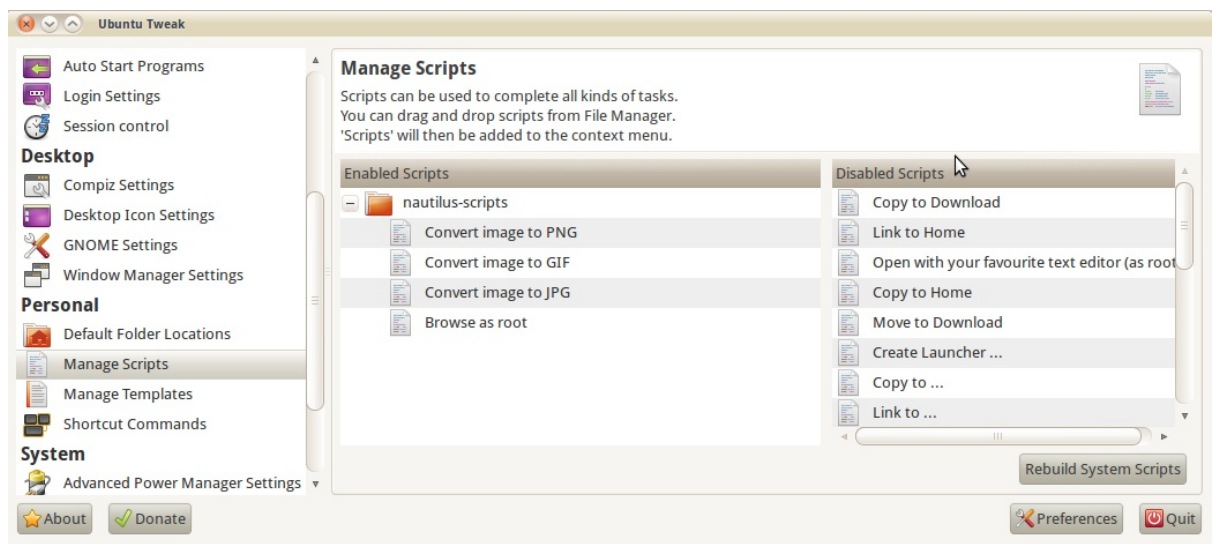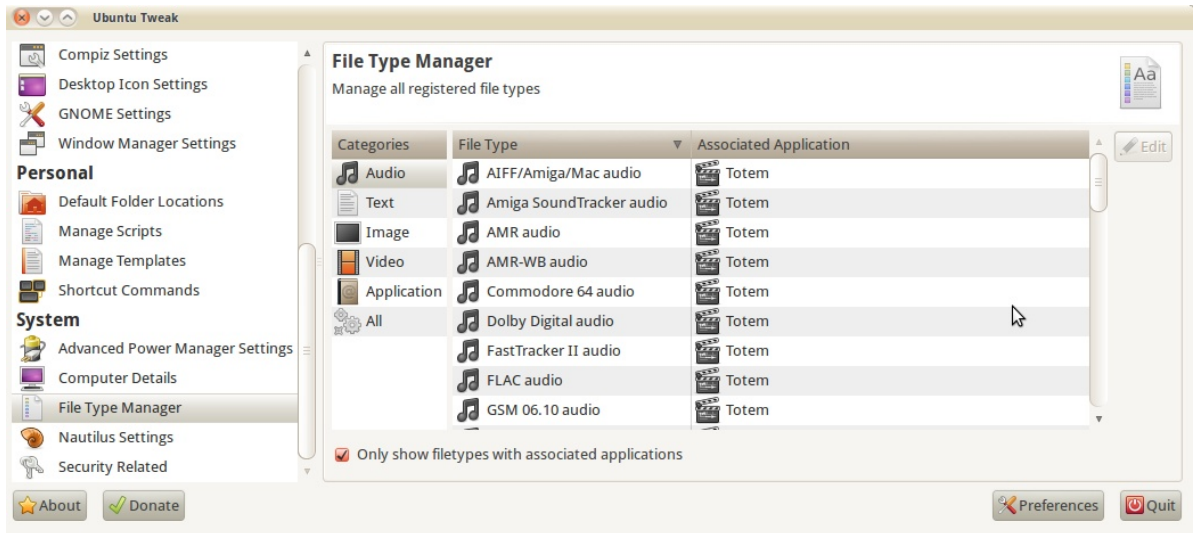
5.System Setting

Finally we have the system setting, in this field there are various setting that users can alter, if you are using a laptop you need to manage power. In the power management settings users can change the LCD brightness when AC adapter is on or the brightness to use when the system is running on battery power. Computer details menu shows the Ubuntu version, processor information, architecture information, whether your system is 32bit or 64bit and the amount of RAM available on your system.

Files type dialog box, allows users to set the default applications for various file types. You can use it to configure which application opens the various file types. Example you set VLC for all video files and so on.

Nautilus is the default file manager for GNOME, in Ubuntu tweak you can configure Nautilus as well. You can set the default icon sizes and thumbnail sizes and can even delete the thumbnails cache. When file likes picture are opened in Nautilus it makes a preview file of the image and this takes hard disk space, if hard disk space is an issue you can clear the thumbnail cache as well. It also gives the user to open folders via terminal or give root power to Nautilus, however giving root privileges to Nautilus is not recommended, since with root privileges you can delete any system file or settings without any warnings.

If your computer is being used by a guest, you can easily enable security settings which will permit the user to do basic tasks only. By using this option you can disable printing, disable saving to hard disks etc. If security is an issue this option definitely protects your system from unauthorized access.

It is important to remember that most of these settings can be managed by going to the system menu. However all these setting are in different dialog boxes. Ubuntu Tweak allows users to configure and tweak the entire system within one small piece of software. For anyone who is using Ubuntu, whether an experienced user or new user Ubuntu Tweak is a must to be installed on your system.

It is available for download@ www.ubuntu-tweak.com

How to reset forgotten Windows log-in password

by Vishah
vishah@moss.org.mv

Tested with Windows XP SP2 installed in VirtualBox OSE 3.2.6 and Ubuntu Lucid Lynx Live CD.

You notice that your Windows OS installation is infested with viruses. You open Internet Explorer and it has dozens of tool bars. There are lots of games and screen savers installed in your system, which are really Trojans hogging up system resources. Someone has been chatting with your special-only from Windows Live Messenger that you left open without sighing off. You suspect someone is using your password to access the system. You change your password to something unintelligible and complex so that there is no chance that the intruder can infiltrate your system.

The next day you can't log-in anymore since you have forgotten the new password yourself. There is no need to worry. Ubuntu comes to the rescue.

How?

First you need to have an Ubuntu Live CD at hand. If you do not have it, you can download it from http://www.ubuntu.com.

To reset your Windows password you will need to run a tool called "chntpw" from the Ubuntu Live CD. chntpw is a Utility to reset the passwords of local accounts on Windows NT/2k/XP,Vista and Win 7 systems. These Windows OS's stores all user passwords in a file called 'SAM' in a encrypted format. This file is part of the registry, stored in a binary format. chntpw modifies this binary file in the Windows registry to reset the passwords.

Steps to reset your password

1. Boot from an Ubuntu Live CD. Select the option to run Ubuntu from the CD without installation.

2. Configure your network connection from the network manager and enable the connection.

3. From the menu, run System>Administration>Software Sources. Check the "software restricted by copyright or legal issues" and "Community maintained open-source software" check-boxes in the Software Sources dialog box. Select close and then reload.

4. To Install chntpw: open a terminal and issue

```
sudo apt-get install chntpw
```

5. Mount the windows partition

First we need to know the device file of the windows partition. From the output of the following command look for "NTFS", and note down the value of its Device parameter. In this example the device is "/dev/sda1".

```
sudo fdisk -l
Device Boot      Start      End     Blocks     Id  System
/dev/sda1          1        651    5229126    7  HPFS/NTFS
```

Create a mount point, and mount the windows partition to that directory:

```
cd
mkdir windowsmnt
sudo mount -t ntfs /dev/sda1 windowsmnt
```

6. chntpw options:

Before we run the chntpw command to reset Windows user-passwords lets take a look at the options and arguments that can be passed to the chntpw command:

```
        -h
                Show summary of options.
        -u username
                Username to change. Default is Administrator
        -l
                List all users in the SAM database.
        -i
                Interactive: list all users (as per -l) and then ask for the user to change.
        -e
                Registry editor with limited capabilities.
        -d
                Use buffer debugger.
```

By default the Account that will be chosen for processing will be the Windows "Administrator" account. That is if we don't give a "-u" option, chntpw will use Windows "Administrator" account. If you need to blank or reset any other account you have to give the account user-name with the -u option as given below.

```
chntpw -u hussein SAM
```

7.Reset the User Password:
Lets continue with resetting the forgotten password for the account mentioned earlier.
Lets assume the user in this instance used the "Administrator" account to log-in.
Change directory to "WINDOWS/system32/config" within the windowsmnt directory and run chntpw command on the SAM file located there.

```
cd windowsmnt/WINDOWS/system32/config
chntpw SAM
```

After executing the command you are prompted a set of actions that can be performed on the account. Since we want to only reset the password of the user, select the first option by typing "1" and press enter.

```
- - - - User Edit Menu:
1 - Clear (blank) user password
2 - Edit (set new) user password (careful with this on XP or Vista)
3 - Promote user (make user an administrator)
(4 - Unlock and enable user account) [seems unlocked already]
q - Quit editing user, back to user select
Select: [q] >
```

That is pretty much all there is to it. The "Administrator" account is assigned a blank password and you can now lo-gin to the Windows system without typing a password. Take out the Ubuntu cd , and restart the system to load Windows.
Now that you have reset your Windows password, and you are able to login to the system again, you begin to compare the two OS'es. You find Linux to be not prone to the problems you have been facing with Windows and you decide to migrate to Linux.

Windows Administrators: A Disgrace to IT

By Yusuf Abullah Shunan

Saying that I am a fan-boy of Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) just like a MAC fan-boy would be wrong. When it comes to FLOSS I am actually an one sided fanatic. Why shouldn't I be, for those Windows administrators play the same game, blinded by their lust for social conformity. At least I know and love the freedom I have with FLOSS. So I love to talk and write endlessly on why one should take Linux rather than Windows. Of course there are many valid justifications and some irrational generalizations fueled by passion. Just like many in Maldives Open Source Society (MOSS), I am guilty of advocating FLOSS to bring in new fresh blood to replenish this movement.

Some say this is rather childish. If something is so good as we speak, why the need to persuade people with this much effort! Well, it is all because of the very basic characteristics that FLOSS is made up of and what we stand for, freedom. Linux is free in the sense that anyone can download, share and make modifications to it. In this stand for freedom, FLOSS is up against giants like Microsoft, who have huge marketing budgets and a profit oriented business nature aimed at reaching high, even at the expense of a ripoff of hard earned cash. Our e-government portal is a very good example of it, with 12 million dollars spend over a span of 5 years, still unable to come up with a serviceable outcome. These people motivated by money don't see the use of FLOSS as and in business and so we have made it our mandate to stand for freedom and advocate FLOSS. All in all we promise to stay ethical and loyal in our advocacy. So FLOSS do need people who want and understand this freedom, and to advocate actively on a daily basis, passionate and restless. That is the only tool that we have for now and I will say a worthy and powerful tool. I can see a future where this article will not make much sense, but for now referral with enlightened souls is the best way to spread.

At some level I agree that this fan-boy advocacy strategy makes businesses and governments afraid to trust in to bring in FLOSS technology in-house. It is more like some bunch of geeks meeting at a coffee table or some classroom talking about themselves on world domination. Laugh while you can, because this is not the picture I see.

You can clearly see that fan-boys do exist for MAC but for Windows all they have got are a bunch of lazy administrators proud of a piece of paper certified by Microsoft, satisfied by the twisted statistics of high number of users. This restore the confidence in them that with a piece of software like Windows their jobs are secured to waste time in cleaning viruses and worms. Do they really think that their jobs will be secured for eternity as procurement officers and fire fighters? Windows administrators are like puppets, a total disgrace to the Information Technology. Learn and hack, this is the age of information, embrace FLOSS and be proud of it.

Canonical, Stop Making KDE Look Bad?

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My (Vishah) experience with KDE goes back to the the flavor that came with Red Hat 6, which was the first time I used a Linux distribution. As a newbie to this alternative computer world, I was given a choice of two Desktop Environments to play around with. I chose gnome, since it looked more beautiful, and you can stretch the icons on the desktop and the wallpapers were so bright and colorful. This was back in the year 2000. But once I got enough confidence and experience with both gnome and KDE, KDE won me over. The reason maybe because I am a programmer and I am wired to crave the need for customization, to change the software I am working with to look, and work exactly as I want. I was not comfortable with the "keep it simple" attitude of gnome. I rather would use software that is easy to use while being fully featured as well.

As for me (Malik), my first experience with a Linux system came in the year 2006 with opensuse 10.0. While during the installation I was asked to chose between KDE & GNOME, without knowing what it really was I chose KDE and installed it on my computer. After several weeks of using KDE I thought of experiencing GNOME as well. I installed GNOME, however I found it be less appealing compared to KDE. What really won my heart was some of the applications that came along with KDE and how it was integrated into the system. Amarok, was one of the audio players that I have ever used, in the meantime Digikam provided me with an option to manage all my photos without much hassle. During those days Konqueror was the all in one file manager, document viewer and web-browser I could to three things at once without opening another program.

Over the years KDE became the leading innovator of new technologies, while gnome followed suit much later. While it retained its features and customization abilities, it has also highly prioritized usability. In this regard KDE 4.x series brought a whole array of new technologies that makes KDE much more user friendly and developing for it much easier and more powerful

With the release of KDE 4.x the whole underlying KDE platform was changed which includes

1) Native support for compilation and running of KDE applications on Windows, Mac OS X in addition to the UNIX variants it currently supports.
2) Redesigned Desktop and panels collectively known as plasma. Basically plasma allows unrestricted customization of the desktop, be it placing a weather widget in the system tray, or placing a rotating globe as a desktop wallpaper. Since the system tray, task-bar , desktop and everything else are widgets, they can be replaced with any other widget for the task.
3) Phonon: A multimedia framework making KDE independent of any multimedia back-ends.
4) Solid: API for network and portable devices
5) Decibel: a new communication framework to integrate all communication protocols into the desktop
6) Also featured is a meta-data and search framework, incorporating Strigi as a full-text file indexing service

KDE 4.x being a major release, was not just an update to the previous version. It recreated the whole desktop Environment. The technologies it provides are slowly being adopted by individual applications.

As you can expect from any new major release of any software, the first version wouldn't be suitable for production environments. Aron-Seigo, past President for KDE e.V, chose to release the first version of KDE 4: 4.0 with a disclaimer that it will contain bugs. The reasoning behind not releasing it as Beta, was to get KDE 3 applications to port to KDE 4 and to get more bug reports and testing. With KDE 4.2 release it was deemed as stable for production environment. In the meantime KDE4.5, the next major iteration of KDE is due for a release in August this year. The main focus of KDE4.5 according to the KDE team is further polishing the interface and stabilizing the desktop rather than implementing new features. With that said by the KDE team, I assure you that KDE4.5 is going to a huge release.

Kubuntu was released as a derivative of Ubuntu with KDE as the Desktop Environment instead of gnome which comes with Ubuntu, just like other Buntus like Xubuntu and Mythbuntu. It lacks manpower since although it is based on Ubuntu platform, the Ubuntu team doesn't submit to Kubuntu.
We can only conspire on the reason Canonical doesn't give regard to KDE and ultimately makes KDE look bad.

Mark Shuttleworth was originally a developer of Debian. Debian adheres to a strict interpretation on what is free software and what isn't. Firefox logo and name is trademarked, so Debian doesn't consider it to be free and will not include it in any part of the distribution. Instead you will get a re-branded Firefox called Ice-weasel in Debian. Likewise originally QT, the GUI framework used in KDE was not released under a GPL or GPL compatible license, which is the reason why gnome was created. Now since QT is also released under GPL license , Debian do consider it as free. Another point to note is that unlike gnome, KDE still doesn't fall under the GNU project and is independent. All these reasons might be why Canonical headed by a GNU/Free software enthusiast doesn't give any importance to the Kubuntu project.

I do not mean any ill-will to either the Ubuntu community or Canonical. Linux surely wouldn't be where it stands now if it weren't for the hard work of the Ubuntu community to make Linux a user friendly desktop. I have been testing KDE since the release of version 4.0.

For a comparison of the KDE implementation in Kubuntu and other distros, when KDE 4.2 was released it was stated on the KDE website that the desktop is ready for the end user. When I tried to use it under Kubuntu it was just too buggy and unstable. After going through various mailing lists and forums, in search for answers, it all pointed to the faulty implementation of KDE in Kubuntu. After giving it some thought I downloaded Mandriva 2009.1 which also shipped with KDE4.2 and installed it on my laptop. It was an entirely different experience. It was much more stable and usable. For me it was like having installed KDE3.5 back on my laptop.

It is not surprising that even the Kubuntu repositories are not complete with the official KDE software and libraries. Many times trying to install a KDE package will result in unresolved dependencies under Kubuntu, even though this particular library was part of the main KDE branch. This is pathetic. With every release Ubuntu gets all the love and Kubuntu gets all the hate. Anyone who has used both Ubuntu and Kubuntu over a few releases will know this. Most of the beta releases of Ubuntu are scheduled along side the stable releases of GNOME. GNOME 2.30 was release at the end of march which was the time Ubuntu 10.04 LTS beta 2 was also released. What this means is that when Ubuntu was at 2nd Beta, the GNOME desktop supplied to it was already the final version. If you have kept your update manager on you will have seen just how many times the entire tree of modules of GNOME was updated towards the final release. The GNOME has been tweaked and customized by the team. Therefore it is very stable, more stable than the final release of GNOME itself. However with Kubuntu, the only customization that they make are mostly to change the background wallpaper, ugly one that IMHO.. It is just the upstream KDE with no extra effort by the Kubuntu Team other than to package it improperly without much testing. This attitude of Canonical makes KDE look bad and spoil its reputation. Since many people get their first try of KDE on Kubuntu they get the impression that KDE is buggy and unstable which is unfounded. The truth is that it is Kubuntu makes KDE look bad.

With the amount of resources and man power that Canonical has, I find it hard to believe why they do not try to improve Kubuntu. If Canonical cant give enough support to KDE, the better choice would be to drop Kubuntu from the official derivatives. By doing that at least they will no longer spoil KDE's reputation and name.
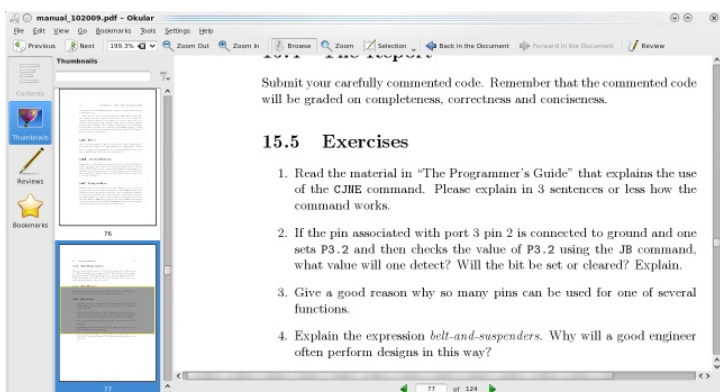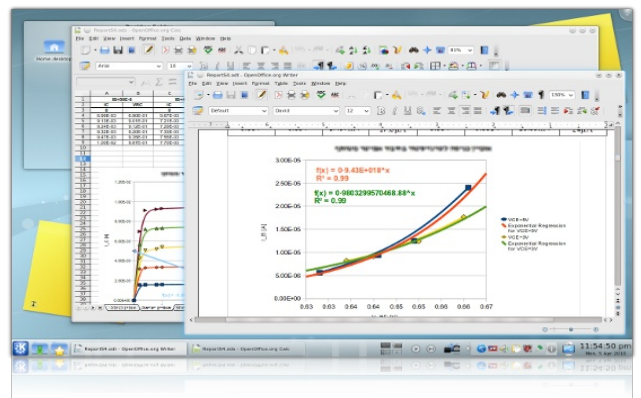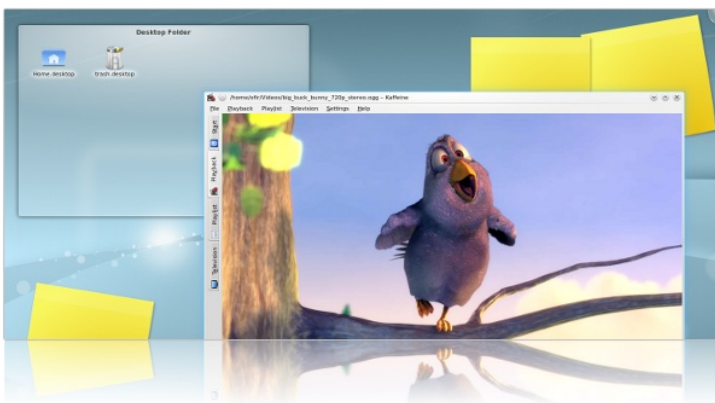
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