

Chapter 13: Getting More Info (and Help!)

The previous chapters have provided a guide on how to use the graphical desktop of a typical Linux system. However, they have just scratched the surface of the features and functions of the Desktop environment and the applications therein. In this section we shall look at the resources available to a user to get more information and help.

ONLINE DOCUMENTATION

Much of the details on how to use and exploit further the software available is available as online documentation on the system itself. The online documentation is available in two types, the *Help* from the Main Menu and/or applications and the text-based Unix-style *man* and *info* commands.

Desktop Help

The Desktop Help can be invoked from the Main Menu,

Main Menu --> Help

Invoking this will display the screen below.



Fig. GNOME Help Screen

The Help content is divided into several main categories. So you will need to select the appropriate category to view the help content of interest. Most of the information on how to use the Desktop can be found from the Help here. For example, to view the help information on the File Manager, select,

Desktop --> Nautilus File Manager



Fig. File Manager Help Screen

Help Selection in Applications

Most of the Desktop applications have a Help button in their main menubar at the top. Selecting this will give you more information on how to use the application. The Help screen for the OpenOffice.org Writer application is displayed below.



Fig. OpenOffice.org Writer Help Screen

Man and Info Pages

As discussed in Chapter 11, from the command line interface using a Shell, it is possible to access a comprehensive help system on the commands available via the *man* and *info* commands. For example, to find out more on how to use the directory listing command, *ls*, open up a shell (see Chapter 11) and at the command prompt enter,

```
$ man ls
```

More detailed information on certain commands may be found using the *info* command, e.g.

```
$ info ls
```

To learn how to use the *man* and *info* commands, make use of these commands themselves e.g.

```
$ man info
$ man man
$ info info
$ info man
```

THE INTERNET (WWW)

There is a lot of information available on the WWW on all the software available on the system. These may be classified broadly as follows:

- Websites of specific software projects
- Websites of specific Linux distributions and/or vendors
- General Linux websites
- General Open Source websites

Websites of Specific Software

Below are links to the websites of the software applications discussed in this guide.

- GNOME – www.gnome.org
- KDE – www.kde.org
- The Freedesktop Project – www.freedesktop.org
- OpenOffice.org – www.openoffice.org
- Mozilla – www.mozilla.org
- Ximian Evolution – www.novell.com/products/evolution/
- gToaster – gnometoaster.rulez.org
- Sane – www.sane-project.org
- XSane – www.xsane.org
- MPlayer – www.mplayerhq.hu
- Xine – xinehq.de

XMMS - www.xmms.org
gThumb - gthumb.sourceforge.net

Linux Distributions and/or Vendors

Links to specific Linux distributions and vendors are listed below. In particular the website Distrowatch should be consulted for information and links to the hundreds of Linux distributions available today.

Fedora Linux - fedora.redhat.com
Debian Linux - www.debian.org
Slackware Linux - www.slackware.org
Redhat Linux - www.redhat.com
SuSE Linux - www.suse.com
Mandrake Linux - www.linux-mandrake.com

...

...

... many. many, many more
... (for links and information on many Linux and other OSS operating system distributions see the Distrowatch website below)

Distrowatch - www.distrowatch.org

General Linux Websites

Resources catering to new Linux users can be found in many of the website links below.

Linux Online - www.linux.org
Linux.com - www.linux.com
Linux.net - www.linux.net
Linux Headquarters - www.linuxhq.com
LinuxHQ.org - www.linuxhq.org
Linu Today - www.linuxtoday.com
The Linux Documentation project - www.tldp.org
Linuxquestions.org - www.linuxquestions.org
The Linux Standard Base Project - www.linuxbase.org
Linux Journal - www.linuxjournal.com
Linux Gazette - www.linuxgazette.com
Linux Compatible - www.linuxcompatible.org

Free and Open Source Software Websites

In this section, general information on Open Source and Free Software may be obtained as well as news and updates.

The Open Source Initiative - www.opensource.org
The Free Software Foundation - www.fsf.org
Sourceforge - sourceforge.net
Freshmeat - freshmeat.net
Newsforge - www.newsforge.com
Open Source Development Network - www.osdn.com
Slashdot - slashdot.org
International Open Source Network - www.iosn.net
The Asian Open Source Centre - www.asiaosc.org
OSNews - www.osnews.com