



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

Computer Science

# Not UNIX@Work?!? *Surviving with a Windows Desktop*

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# Outline

- Motivation
  - Why switch from a Linux desktop?
- Installation
  - What I needed to add to Windows to stay sane
- Demonstration
  - (Time permitting) of some of the handy tools
- Irritation
  - Rants about why I still hate Windows



# Motivation: My Environment

- Essentially heterogeneous
  - UNIX (Solaris, Linux, Mac OS X), Windows
- Most work not done on the desktop itself, but on remote servers (mostly UNIX)
- Need to run some Windows programs
  - MS Office, Palm Desktop, WaveLAN AP Manager
- Want desktop environment to be stable, and go for years without major upgrades
- Want to avoid hassles with drivers, plug-ins, etc.



# Motivation: New Hardware

- AMD 64 based system
  - Some x86\_64 maturity “issues”
- New motherboard w/ new chipsets
  - Linux driver issues (esp. nVidia graphics)
- How long to wait for Linux support?
- Want to avoid 3<sup>rd</sup> party binary drivers



# Motivation: Windows at Home

- Need to share home computer with new (Windows aware) partner
- Again with the driver issues!...
  - Printer not well supported under Linux
- Learning to “cope” with Windows, rather than constantly rebooting



# Motivation: Emulation Issues

- Need for Windows → VMware under Linux
- Old licensed versions don't work with newest kernels
- New vmplayer OK, but...
  - Still have some problems due to emulation (hanging, crashing, poor performance)
  - Kernel upgrades break vmware drivers
  - Still need to customise sessions



# Installation: Essential Tools

- Support for remote sessions
  - Cygwin/X for both SSH and X-Window
  - VNC and Remote Desktop
- Virtual desktop support
  - Virtual Dimension (Sourceforge, GPL)
- Mouse cursor, cut & paste
  - True X-Mouse Gizmo for Windows



# Installation: Essential Tools

- Web browser

- Mozilla Firefox
- A few handy extensions (Zombie Keys)

- E-mail

- Mozilla Thunderbird
- A few handy extensions (Zombie Keys, Nostalgia, Mail Redirect, Signature Switch,...)
- A fast, secure IMAP server





# Demonstration

- Cygwin/X for both SSH and X-Window
- Virtual Dimension (Sourceforge, GPL)
- True X-Mouse Gizmo for Windows
- Mozilla Thunderbird Extensions



# Irritation: Windows “Issues”

- Cygwin/X != UNIX
  - Compatibility issues (e.g. file permissions)
  - Integration issues (e.g. with virtual desktops)
- Potential virus/worm vulnerability
- Non-Administrator user limitations
  - Flawed security model
  - Software installation/configuration problems
- Automatic updates = uncontrolled reboots!



# Irritation: Mozilla “Issues”

- Occasional crashes or quirks (regardless of platform)
- Extensions may be the cause
- Thunderbird good, but still not always as fast/convenient as a good text-based mailer!



# Conclusion

- Windows XP itself is stable enough for extended use.
- Cygwin/X provides reasonable UNIX compatibility and connectivity.
- Thunderbird acceptable as replacement for text-based e-mail client.
- Windows and UNIX can coexist!



Questions?