

Raumanga Valley Rd. Whangarei

bapiss@northtec.ac.nz

Editorial.

Welcome to the first edition of CIS News!

In Computing and Information Systems, the academic department responsible for IT at NorthTec, we have collected together a real depth of technical expertise. We teach programming in more than 10 languages, database design, web-building, network and system administration, and many more technical subjects. As a group of tutors we also have years of experience of IT in industry and business.

So we decided that it was time that we should start to share some of this knowledge and expertise with our local community, and the idea of this newsletter was born.

We plan to do a whole series of these newsletters with lots of different topics and interests. We know it will appeal to the geeks amongst you and maybe to perfectly normal people too!!

If you want to talk to us about any of these or other technical topics, or you want to know more about what we do and who we are, do get in touch either by email or by phone.

--== Mary Hobson, Programme Manager

Contact us!

For details on our Bachelor of Applied Information Systems, Diploma in Information Systems, Diploma in Software Development or the new Graduate Diploma in Information Technology, simply drop us an email to: bapiss@northtec.ac.nz or phone (09) 470 3703

CIS News is sponsored by Dick Smith Electronics, Whangarei

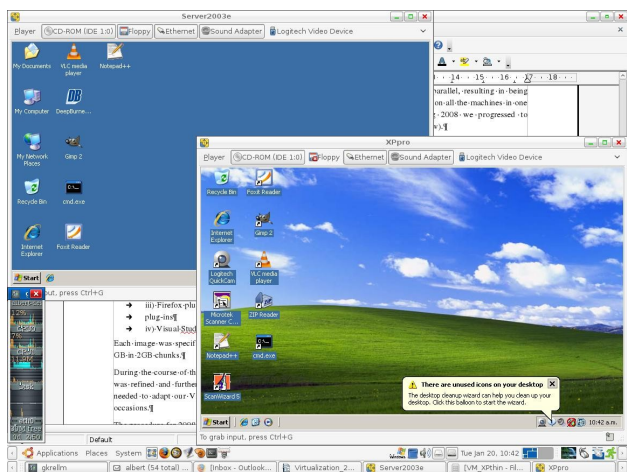


Virtualization a great success.

Virtualization is running a full Operating System (OS) plus all applications as a separate application on a host OS, inside its own window. We have been using this technology in our computer labs to enable students to use more than one computer at the same time.

"This year our third year students built a full website with back-end database on a virtual machine, and then had it replicate itself over the network onto another virtual machine," explains Dr. Albert van Aardt from NorthTec. "The beauty of all this was that the virtual machines were physically located on removable, external USB hard drives. This means that effectively the 'computer' could be unplugged and moved to another host in less than five minutes."

For businesses this means that their whole database environment can be easily and safely uncoupled from physical computers; so if the computer fails, the virtual machine can simply be transported to another, working computer.



Running virtual images of Windows XP® and Windows Server 2003® on an Ubuntu Linux host.

External USB SATA Drive Dock



With the prices of external hard disk drives (HDD) dropping to as low as 23 cents / GB, storage has become very cheap. But a new wrinkle on the idea of external storage is the

NexStar device. It allows the user to plug in one or two SATA hard drives, almost like the old cassettes of yore. And with the right software, one can make an exact clone of any HDD.

"We recently tested the NexStar by cloning a 250GB HDD," says Mike Mossom, Senior Tutor at NorthTec. "It took 14 hours, but at the end we had an exact duplicate, right down to the disk ID. For backup up master copies or computer forensics, this is a very useful device."

Upcoming events.

"Introduction to Linux" - 1 day course - Oct 2009.
Watch the Press for details.

Did you know?

That Google uses the MySQL database management system and the Python programming language.... and the Department of CIS at NorthTec teaches the MySQL database management system and the Python programming language!



Stress test: Acer Aspire AOA150



Intel Atom 1.6GHz Processor, 1GB RAM, 120GB Hard Drive, 8.9" Widescreen, Wireless Networking, Microsoft XP Home ®

The so-called "Netbooks" are filling a market niche somewhere between full-blown laptops and smartphones. We tested the Acer Aspire One and were very impressed with the results. Although the keyboard is not obviously full-sized, the keys are big enough to do touch typing (unlike the Asus EEE).

It comes with Windows XP Home ® pre-installed, which is fine for most users. Of course, we just had to see how much we could squeeze out of this device.... so we installed Windows 7 on it just for fun. We expected the little netbook to struggle, but it ran fast and smooth. Next we installed Ubuntu 9.04 Netbook Remix on it. To our delight the Acer worked like a charm.

For a mere \$798 this is a very good deal for students and professionals alike.

Research corner.

Dr. Mike Mullany, Research Co-ordinator of the CIS department, says that the programme is carrying out a lot of top class international research, quite on a par with university research. "In fact, we have an ongoing relationship with university staff, which guarantees that our high standards will be maintained. Thanks to this, as well as the high standards of tuition, most universities will accept our graduates into post-graduate degrees, such as masters and doctoral studies."

Brain teaser:

A man looks at a picture and says: "Brothers and sisters I have none, but that man's father is my father's son." What's the relationship between the man and the person in the picture?