

1. Introduction

The topic of this MiniBook is “**Linux As A Small Business Server**”

On a number of occasions over many years we started to set up a Linux File Server, but each time we found issues with Linux which stopped us. The more recent versions of Linux and Windows XP now worked together to our satisfaction.

We kept an eye on Linux over the years. We use it for our websites, so we trust the product, but until recently it has not met our standards.

Our area of expertise is acting as a de facto computer manager and support person, for a range of small and medium sized businesses. We have experience in corporate and government environments, but we now specialise in supporting small and medium sized businesses.

Our small and medium sized business clients require a file server solution. They do not currently have a need for a client/server solution. This is a very common scenario in small and medium sized businesses.

Whilst it would be very easy to simply install the market leading product, sometimes doing things slightly differently can achieve the same or better results, but at a significantly lower cost.

For many years we have run Windows 95 and Windows 98 machines as file servers and these have worked very well for our clients. In fact we have found performance in one instance of a Windows 98 machine acting as a file server, out performed a machine with server software installed.

However the problem now is Windows 98SE is limited to ten simultaneous connections according to the licensing conditions. Some of our clients are now exceeded this limit and need to expand.

Most server vendors seem to think we need everything including a kitchen sink in a server. We do not believe this is necessary. What is necessary is what the client needs.

We keep our clients costs low by combining a range of standard products and services. The bottom line is all we and our clients currently need is a file server. For the future, the possibility of providing a client/server environment may be nice, but this is not currently necessary.

Our testing showed Linux combined with Samba can provide a suitable file server for Windows users.

MiniBooks – Linux As A Small Business Server

The rest of this MiniBook documents our knowledge and experience with Linux as a small business file server over the last couple of years.

We continue to update this MiniBook as we install Linux servers into clients. As we find issues we add them to the document. None so far have been show stoppers. The basic approach over the last few years continues to remain the same. We now have quite a few clients successfully running Linux as a file server in their business. The real benefit is that no client has had to purchase any hardware or software and that has provided considerable savings for them.

We share our experience and our thoughts. Some will disagree with how we think. Others will like the simplicity of our style. A style which has kept computing costs quite reasonable for quite a number of businesses over the last 10-15 years.

A very important issue to state up front is that we are interested in a low security (meaning none) file sharing server. For some people this may not be acceptable. To our clients, it meets their needs.

This MiniBook is not really for end users. It is more for people who work with computers. If you are the type of person that solves other people's computer problems, know for example what an IP address is, then this book is an easy entry into setting up a Linux server for use in the real world environment of small and medium sized businesses.

Many computer people for example only know how to set up computers running Microsoft operating systems. This MiniBook provides a fast track which enables people with little or no Linux knowledge to set up a Linux file server to use on a Windows network.

We would suggest setting up a Linux file server on your own network first and when you are comfortable that everything works as expected, then roll it out to your clients. This is basically the approach we took and our clients have been rewarded with no new hardware for the server (except for faster network cards) and no software licenses, both of which has saved our clients money.

We did all the research and experimentation, now anyone who wants to can follow in our footsteps.

Join us and have some fun.