

Sunday, November 23, 2003

Looking for an 802.11g bridge

I've given up on the idea of a PCI 802.11g card for the Linux server. Driver issues are too annoying and an 802.11g bridge isn't much more expensive anyway. So now the problem becomes finding a good bridge. The Netgear WGE 101 seems like it might do the trick. At around \$95 it is also one of the cheaper ones.

The WET54G is the Linksys bridge. Reviews are not very flattering and it is more expensive.

The WGA54G is the Linksys game adapter which doesn't have anything to do with games, of course. It just means it is a single-port bridge and it is a bit cheaper than the WET54G. But unless it was much cheaper than the Netgear I think I'd still prefer the Netgear.

Another option would be to pick up another WRT54G since it can be hacked into acting as a bridge if you turn on WDS support.

And finally there is the D-Link DWL-G810. I have not had good luck with D-Link gear in the past and it also looks rather ugly. Anybody out there have one of these?

Posted by Rasmus in WIFI Toys at 10:15

Tuesday, November 11, 2003

802.11g Netgear WG511 and Linux

I picked up a cheap Netgear WG511 the other day. Got it for \$35, probably because they have recently released the WG511T which uses the Atheros super-G chipset. The older WG511 uses the Prism Duetto chipset which isn't officially supported on Linux by anybody. I say officially, because some code has snuck out and there is a new site out there devoted to it. Have a look at <http://prism54.org/>. I haven't tried that driver yet, but I will update this when I do. [Update - Feb.18/2004] I am now using the driver from prism54.org compiled into my 2.6.3 kernel on my Thinkpad and it works nicely.

For now I wanted to give the Linuxant Driverloader a whirl to see if I could use the native Windows XP drivers directly on my Thinkpad with a very recent 2.4.22 kernel. It worked amazingly well. See the extended entry for the step-by-step screenshots.

Of course, the whole point of going with 802.11g over 802.11b is to go faster. I haven't done any real performance tests yet with this Windows driver running on Linux. Hopefully I will get some time to test it against the native driver soon. Step 1 was to plug my Thinkpad into a wired port. How old-fashioned! And then plug the new Netgear PCMCIA card in. My kernel obviously didn't know what to do with it at this point.

I then grabbed the driverloader-1.38.tar.gz tarball, ran "make install" and then the dldrconfig command as shown:

From then on it was a web-based install. Cool!

So the first hurdle was to find the Windows XP drivers for the WG511 and actually get the .inf, .sys and .arm files out of the annoying executable Netgear provides. I cheated and used an XP box to install them and just copied them over from the drivers directory. They are probably also on the CD that came with the card, but I wanted the latest. You then feed the web interface the .inf file.

It figures out that I need the .sys and .arm files as well.

It has ingested the Windows driver and reads the MAC off of my card.

Ah, an Advanced button. I like those. You always find all the essential settings that the vendors think you are too dumb to understand there.

Here we find that we can enable the power saving features of the driver.

Next I need a free trial license to activate it. Clicking through (remember I have a wired interface up still) is easy enough. Just enter the email address and license string you get from the Linuxant site:

And you are done!

Now just use your standard iwconfig tool like with any other wireless driver and it just works!

Posted by Rasmus in WIFI Toys at 23:10

Canon Digital Cameras

Finally a digital SLR we can afford. Called the Digital Rebel in the US and EOS 300D elsewhere. They left out a few things, but still a very impressive camera.

DPReview The S400 is still the coolest small 4MP digital camera around and a perfect sidekick to the Digital Rebel. We use it as our travel camera to go with the G3. The G3 with the external flash attached and with its better lens still takes noticeably better pictures though.

DPReview

Although the newer SD-memory SD100 is cool as well.

DPReview

And an even newer SD-based camera. The SD10 loses the optical viewfinder and the optical zoom, but it is really really small and comes in 4 colours.

DCResource Review

This is our current digital camera. Aside from being a bit bulky, it is a great camera.

DPReview

Posted by Rasmus in Digital Cameras at 06:11

Blog Export: Rasmus' Toys Page, <http://toys.lerdorf.com/>

Monday, November 10, 2003

Tivo!

Sophie asked me about getting a Tivo. Basically if you don't do DirecTV, a series 1 Tivo is all you really need. I have had an original Phillips 14-hour series 1 Tivo for years. Stuck a 120G drive in it and a network card and it is a happy little box. Should be in some sort of hall of fame for the best geek gadgets of all time.

ComputerGeeks has the original Tivo already upgraded with an 80G drive for \$219 which isn't a bad price. And if you add the promotional code "GEEKTIVO" during checkout, you get \$20 off. \$199 for a series 1 80G Tivo is not bad.

The original 14-hour Phillips Tivo can sometimes be had for \$89 from ServiceDVR. But right now they don't seem to have any of the 14-hour ones. The cheapest is a 30-hour for \$129. So, for the geeks out there, find yourself a 14-hour series 1 Tivo in good working order and upgrade it. Plenty of people are upgrading to series 2 or DirecTivo boxes so you can also check Ebay and look for an HDR-112 (original 14-hour Tivo) or better.

For the non-geeks, that \$199 Tivo from ComputerGeeks is probably your best option right now. Also have a look at Seth's TiVo Evangelism Page for more Tivomania.

Posted by Rasmus in Storage at 19:27

Sunday, November 9, 2003

802.11g PCI card options

Buffalo WLI-PCI-G54 uses the Broadcom chipset and has a cool-looking external antenna. At this point I think the only hope of getting this to work with Linux would be through Linuxant's driverloader.

D-Link DWL-G520 uses the Atheros 5002 chipset. Should work with the madwifi driver, or with the Linuxant driverloader. It also claims to support 108 Mbps Extreme-G.

Netgear WG311 uses the Intersil Prism GT chipset which has no native Linux driver that I know of. But the Linuxant driverloader says it supports it.

Linksys WMP54G uses the Broadcom chipset and should work with the Linuxant driverloader.

The Linksys WMP55AG is an a/b/g card whereas all the previous were just b/g. This one uses the Atheros 5212a chipset and should work with both the madwifi driver and the Linuxant driverloader. This one is actually just a PCI card with a mini-PCI adapter on it with a mini-PCI card plugged into it.

D-Link DWL-AG520 uses an Atheros chipset and should be supported by both the madwifi and the Linuxant driverloader. Like the Buffalo, it has a nice beefy external antenna.

Netgear WAG311 like the other a/b/g cards is Atheros-based so it should work with both the madwifi and the Linuxant driverloader. It probably would be a good idea to get an Atheros Super A-G based board so I can go 108Mbps when the drivers support it and when I get a gateway that can go that fast. I don't think my Broadcom-based WRT54G is going to be able to support Super-G. I think the Linksys, D-Link and Netgear a/b/g cards are all based on the same Atheros chipset, so the only deciding factor is likely to be price between these. If anybody has one of these and can inject a bit more data it would be appreciated. I will update and bump this up as I learn more.

Posted by Rasmus in WIFI Toys at 22:02

Wireless Video Camera

Another Linksys gadget. A motion-sensitive wireless video camera that can alert you via email when it sees motion and it streams out 320x240 video. Could use it to bring CarlCam back, although my outbound bandwidth on this Comcast cable connection isn't really sufficient for it.

I have been eyeing the networked cameras like the Axis 2100 (on the right) for quite a while, but they always seemed too pricy. This Linksys is \$100 cheaper than the Axis and it is wireless.

Posted by Rasmus in WIFI Toys at 08:37

USB Geek Watch

There is something cool about being able to store 256M of stuff in your watch. I don't have one, and I doubt I would use it much if I did. I am not that keen on watches. Being somewhat useless just makes it more cool though.

Posted by Rasmus in Storage at 08:11

Blog Export: Rasmus' Toys Page, <http://toys.lerdorf.com/>

Saturday, November 8, 2003

Linksys WRT54G Router

This is my current wireless router. Not because I love all things Linksys, because really I don't, but because this is a neat little 125 MHz MIPS box running Linux. And because of an oversight by Linksys in the Ping tool on their Admin page it is easily hacked.

You can do things like running Snort directly on it and have your gateway email you or notify you via irc/IM/pager if someone is trying to sniff your network. You can of course also run fancy netfilter/iptables rules or anything else you can typically do on a Linux box when you have it acting as your gateway.

See the SeattleWireless page on the wrt54g for all the details.

Posted by Rasmus in WIFI Toys at 02:06

Cheap 802.11b gateway

If you look around a bit, you can find this Netgear MR814 wireless gateway for next to nothing. \$35 on Amazon right now, for example, but often even cheaper. I bought one a while ago but didn't use it because it was very buggy. However with the latest firmware it is actually pretty good now. But, also consider that 802.11g gateways are getting cheaper quickly, so I am not sure there is much point buying an 11b one anymore.

To upgrade it, make sure you clear your previous config completely by holding the little reset button on the back for 10-15 seconds, then install this firmware: MR814v1414RC3.zip

Posted by Rasmus in WIFI Toys at 02:04

Our current mp3 players

I like this little iRiver 256M flash player. Small and light and great for running. Not very hackable though. The latest firmware does let you manage it like normal removable flash storage so you can use it easily from Linux or on Windows without any special software.

TechTV Review

Firmware upgrade info

The Archos harddrive players are getting a bit dated, but that also means they are cheap. I picked up a 10G Studio player for \$85 a while back. It only has USB1.1 and a tiny 2-line display which makes it nearly impossible to navigate your songs, but I just stick it on random and let it do its thing. The best part about it is that it is very hackable. Check out the open source RockBox firmware for it:

[Update March 10, 2004] The Archos hard drive won't spin up anymore. Guess it took a few too many beatings coming with me on all my runs. Waiting to see if anything interesting comes out soon to replace it.

Posted by Rasmus in Audio/Video at 02:03

Cool PHP Apps

People are always asking me which PHP applications I prefer. It is obviously a very subjective thing, but here is a list of ones I have worked with and liked:

FUDForum is a very nice forum package writtern by Ilia.

Gallery is the ultimate photo album application. You can see it in action at phpics.com

Serendipity is a cool blog package. I really don't like blogs, but as you can see from this toy page which is using

Serendipity it doesn't have to be just for your standard boring and useless blog. It can be used for a useless toy page too.

Posted by Rasmus in Software at 02:01

Dell 2000FP 1600x1200 LCD Monitor

I have this Dell LCD and I highly recommend it. It's rather bulky and not nearly as slick looking as many others, but the image quality is great. Wait for a Dell Small Business sale and you can pick it up for \$750-\$850.

Make sure you get a DVI-capable graphics card to go with it. I found DVI quality quite a bit better than analog.

Review: Cadalyst Labs

Posted by Rasmus in Displays at 02:00

New Zaurus C760

I was in Japan recently and this little guy had everyone excited. With its swivel screen and full qwerty keyboard it is an interesting little Linux box. Although at \$800 currently I am not rushing out to buy one at this point.

InfoSyncWorld Review

Posted by Rasmus in Phones and PDA's at 01:43

Treo600

I am not a huge fan of PDA's and cellphones. But this new Treo is pretty cool. When it comes down in price a little bit I will probably pick one up. Being able to ssh and irc anywhere from a little device with a full keyboard is cool.

Posted by Rasmus in Phones and PDA's at 01:41

Canon Flash

A nice E-TTL compatible flash which works perfectly with our G3 and it will work nicely with the Digital Rebel when/if we pick that up. It can also act as a slave flash for the much more expensive 550EX.

I find my pictures are sharper and more alive when I am taking any sort of indoor or otherwise low-light shots with this flash.

Posted by Rasmus in Digital Cameras at 01:39