Cernio Tech Co-op

How Cernio members use Linux to shape the world: A tale of sex, software, and community building.

LUGOD, Mon 15 Jun 09
Cernio at a glance

- 70 members and growing - from Canada, England, Spain, Argentina, several US states, etc. Each person rocks.
- Co-operative since 2005
- Services: colocation, VPSes, VOIP, Jabber/XMPP, email, infrastructure for consultants, community networks...
Colocation

Colocation: 24/7 servers with fast internet connections

Started with a quarter-cab, then half-cab at Sonic.net in Santa Rosa

Moved to full-cab, then two cabs, now three cabs at 200 Paul in San Francisco

Expanded to Minneapolis in May
Virtual Private Servers: your own server, without the hardware

Seven Xen dom0s, all running Linux

~30 domUs (VPSes), most running Linux

Member-driven service. No paid staff. Occasional hiccups, but generally works very well. Users are happy.
Voice Over IP: open-source, open-standard telephony

One Asterisk PBX (on Linux!) in San Francisco, and another in Santa Clara

Wholesale account since 2006 with Voxbone - provision phone numbers local to almost anywhere in seconds

Fancy phone system at 1% of the cost
Jabber/XMPP: open-source, open-standard, federated instant messaging

One server in San Francisco, and another in Minneapolis

Ties in nicely with PBX

firstname.lastname@cernio.com for email, VOIP, and IM
Email

- IMAP (server-centric), POP3 (desktop-centric), SMTP (sending), webmail - all servers run Linux
- MS Exchange via wholesale account (please don’t hurt me)
- No ads
- No data mining
Some of us are consultants. We like to collaborate.

Members may use Cernio infrastructure for their consulting (brand, logo, business cards, PBX, etc.)

Helping to run Cernio provides fantastic experience and really stands out when looking for work.
Community Wireless Networks: Communications network run by and for a geographic community

Collection of resources for CWNs at www.cernio.com/cwn

Nascent effort in Berkeley and nearby: 510pen (five-one-open)

Mesh infrastructure runs Linux on the back-end
Cernio members rock

EPA.net: East Palo Alto’s online community resource center

Carnal Nation: comprehensive sex-positive coverage

Wiki Spot: Davis Wiki, Santa Cruz Wiki, etc.

TuxPaint!

Injury prevention software for big employers

Tor nodes
Cernio members rock hard

- DNS servers for two recognizable Linux-using dot-coms
- Noisebridge: cool hacker space in San Francisco
- OpenCourse.org: Teachers collaborating on course materials
- Internet radio streaming
- Online Policy Group: LGBT-friendly, anti-censorship (they beat Diebold re abuse of the DMCA)
Strengths

- Helpful, good-natured, skillful, well-connected membership
- Pooled purchasing power
- Institutional knowledge on how to do tricky stuff
- Member-benefit structure means no evil overlord investors to worry about
Weaknesses

- Paperwork - we’re still not incorporated. No good reason - it’s just that nobody has done it yet.

- It’s easier to offend and be offended online than in person. Occasional misunderstandings/arguments.

- Volunteer management hasn’t been as successful as it needs to be. Many projects left half-done.
Upcoming

- Colo expansion to Atlanta, Santa Clara, and Toronto
- VPS expansion to New York and Frankfurt
- CWN build-out in Berkeley
- Peer-reviewed/edited HOW-TO articles
- ...want to spearhead something?
fin!

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