SDF – Super Dimensional Fortress

A networked community of free software authors, teachers, students, researchers, hobbyists, enthusiasts and the blind. It is operated as a federally recognized non-profit 501(c)(7) and is supported by its members.

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SDF members have UNIX shell access to games, email, Usenet, chat, bboard,Webspace, Gopherspace, programming utilities, archivers, browsers, and more. The SDF community is made up of caring, highly skilled people who operate behind the scenes to maintain a non-commercial INTERNET.

Some Features of SDF

- Non-Commercial
- User-supported (about 15,000+)
- Web hosting
- Gopher hosting
- Corporate Contributor to Computer History Museum
- Corporate Contributor to NetBSD Foundation

- Publishes Music Compilations
- SIG groups meet via COMMODE
- Retro Bulletin Board
- Runs NetBSD
- Non-Web-based server-side email
- Ruby/Rails
- PhP-based CMS and Web 2.0 features

Ad-Free

- Nothing on sdf.lonestar.org (or its synonyms) is ad supported.

- SDF is a registered non-profit

- Different and mixed membership-levels provide income for organization.

- Store makes available CD compilations, tee-shirts, stickers, and puzzles.

Fast!

- Main server-side email app is Pine.

  - Possible to specify server-side filtering and "client-side".

  - Pine is very fast at handling mail in bulk fashion

- Interface is ssh or telnet – no graphics makes working with email and other apps wicked fast – even over limited-bandwidth.

- Other email apps include mutt, and if needed, Webmail access using SquirrelMail.

Retro

- Members can use COMMODE for chat rooms

- Ascii-Games.Org

- Bulletin Board ala old BBS systems

- Gopherspace – plain-text version of the WWW

Web2.0 Applications

- Blogging: Wordpress

- Photo Gallery: Coppermine

- Forums: phpBB2

- Content Management: Drupal

SDF Who's Who

- Stephen Jones – Caretaker of SDF and leader of the rock band Red Martian, and also interviewed in the the documentary "BBS: The Documentary"

- Members – As far away as Antartica.
  (SDF user map gives location sampling)

Why?

Q. Why not just host own UNIX/Linux server?

Q. Why use a system with reduced graphics?

Q. Do I have to type?

Because...

A. Owning and maintaining a UNIX server (or Windows server) is an activity requiring some specific expertise, and SDF takes care of this so that members can focus on using the features of SDF.

A. Speed and security are two main reasons for using a graphics-free interface. Flexibility is another.

A. Until the Vulcan-mind-link is establish between humans and machines, yes typing is the most efficient and straight-forward way to give input to a computer.

Tips and Tricks

- Reading MS Word files in Pine or at the command-line (CLI) is done via a program called 'antiword'.

- Reading MS Excel files in Pine or at the CLI is done using 'xlhtml' and the text-browser 'lynx'.

SDF Hardware as of 2006

- Top 1U is a remote management power strip.

- Next 4Us are two Livingston (Lucent) PortMasters which are used to manage all the machine's serial consoles.

- Next 7U are DEC (Compaq) DS10Ls:

  ◇ ol, sdf, otaku, ukato, norge, droog and bjork.

- Next 3U are API CS20s which are:

  ◇ sverige, iceland and vinland.

- Then two CISCO 2940 back to back. The visible one handles the front end public network and the

SDF Time Line – Part 1

Year		Event
1985	PRODOS	: Ted Uhlemann purchases an apple IIe
1987	PRODOS	: Ted starts SDF-1 as a Japanime SIG under Magic City Micro BBS
1988		: Ted writes 'meca', an online game for SDF
1989	CITADEL ON CO-HERENT	: Ted, Daniel Finster and Stephen Jones begin to consider running UNIX
1990		: Killer (attctc. dallas.tx.us) is shutdown during Operation Sundevil raids in February. Ted, Daniel and Stephen vow to bring killer back.
1991		: SDF gets 4 dialup lines 300-2400 bps + UUCP feed through SMU.EDU via a TELEBIT 19.2KBPS PEP modem
1992	SYSTEM V UNIX	: Texas Metronet is formed (metronet.com) by Ted, Daniel and a few other SDF users.
1993		: SDF gets 9 dialup lines 300-19200 + a dedicated UUCP line with ADAPTEC Corp. One dialup line is used for a SLIP NET connection
1994		: Charlie Boykin & Rich Andrews donate 3B2 manuals & cards to SDF The University of North Carolina donates four 3B2/400s. Local machines are networked using STARLAN 10 with Remote File Sharing (RFS)

SDF Time Line – Part 2

Year		Event
1995	**AT&T S**	: LUCENT donates a 3B2/500 + XM
1996		: SDF gets an ISDN NET connection Ted and Stephen start ANONBBS
1997		: The ARPA membership is formed . SDF exceeds 100 concurrent users.
1998		: SDF is co-located with MALR, inc with a DSL connection
1999	LINUX ON X86 (THE DARK AGE)	: The last dialup is decommissioned SDF exceeds 150 users
2000		: SDF is moved to Seattle, WA on to DEC Alpha AS1200 TWENEX.ORG , a Public Access TOP–20 system, is started
2001	NETBSD ON DEC ALPHA	: SDF is granted non-profit 501(c)(7) tax exempt status by the IRS. SDF–EU.ORG is formed SDF exceeds 200 concurrent users.
2002		: SDF is co-located several times before returning to Texas
2003		: SDF gets national dialup and exceeds 385 concurrent users
2004		: The first SDFCON??

Sean's Uses for SDF

- Email, in particular 'pine'
- Personal Website Hosting
- Work space for shell-scripting development
- Blog Hosting

While occasionally I may toy with some of the AI tools or ascii-games, I could explore more of what SDF has to offer in terms of domain hosting. Also, it seems like there's a new membership option that includes a PHP content-management type environment.

Free Membership Levels

- USERS (before validation)
  - 80MB total (home, web, mail & gopher), mutt, pop3, imaps, icq, bsflite(aim), bboard, games, TOPS-20, mud, gopher & more
- USERS (after validation)
  - Inbound FTP, scp and sftp connections, elm, pine, mailx, rmail, lynx, shell based cgi, bash, ksh, tcsh, rc and zsh, http://yourlogin.freeshell.org, 'freeirc' on Sundays, Hundreds of shell & network utilities
- INSTRUCTOR (syllabus required for validation)
- STUDENT (validated by INSTRUCTOR)

Paid Membership Levels (sampling)

- ARPA ($36 Lifetime access)
  - 600mb total / 15000 files, One time $36 initiation fee
  - All features of the 'users' account, Voting rights on system features and policies, Private 'arpa' member server, telnet, ssh, ftp, ytalk, irc, snarf, UUCP, blogging, gcc, elisp, perl, php, python, ruby, et cetera
  - Access to additional memberships
- dialup ($7 to $10 monthly)
- MetaARPA ($36 annually) Trusted ARPA 800MB
- dba ($30 annually) MySQL + 100MB
- mlist ($30 annually) majordomo lists <= 500
- Others...

Culture

- TBD…

Conclusion

- SDF is a savvy system that provides a well-maintained and expanding environment for those seeking a remote UNIX environment.

- Shell interface to server-side email clients is both fast and flexible.

- Availability of Web2.0 applications such as Wordpress and Coppermine keep SDF current.