Introduction

WELCOME to *The Official Ubuntu Book, Second Edition*!

In recent years, the Ubuntu operating system has taken the open source and IT world by storm. From out of nowhere, the Little Operating System That Could has blossomed into a full-featured desktop and server offering that has won over the hearts of users around the world. Aside from the strong technical platform and impressive commitment to quality, Ubuntu also enjoys success due to its sprawling community of enthusiastic users who have helped to support, document, and test every millimeter of the Ubuntu landscape.

In your hands you are holding the official authorized guide to this impressive operating system. Each of the authors selected to work on this book has demonstrated a high level of technical competence, an unbridled commitment to Ubuntu, and the ability to share this knowledge in a simple and clear manner. These authors gathered together to create a book that offers a solid grounding to Ubuntu and explains how the many facets and features of Ubuntu work.

About This Book

At the start of every book, on every bookshelf, in every shop, is a paragraph that sums up the intentions and aims for the book. In some cases, this paragraph turns into an introspective philosophical lesson with the author on the brink of claiming the book will help the reader cure disease and open up a donkey sanctuary. *The Official Ubuntu Book* is different. We have one very simple, down-to-earth aim: to make the Ubuntu experience even more pleasant for users. The Ubuntu developers and community have gone to great lengths to produce an easy-to-use, functional, and flexible operating system for doing, browsing, and creating all kinds of interesting things.

This book augments that effort. With such an integrated and flexible operating system, this guide acts as a tour de force for the many things you can do with Ubuntu.

The Scope of the Book

With so much to cover, we had our work cut out to write a book that could cover the system in sufficient detail. However, if we were to write in detail about every possible feature in Ubuntu, you would need to buy a new bookcase to store the sheer amount of content. The authors would also need to continue writing until they were skeletons. Unlikely, some may say.

Part of the challenge in creating *The Official Ubuntu Book* was selecting the topics and content that can be covered within a reasonably sized book. As such, we have identified the most essential content to be covered and written about it. These chosen topics not only include coverage of installation, use of the desktop, applications, multimedia, system administration, and software management but also include a discussion of the community, online resources, and the philosophy woven into Ubuntu and open source. In addition to this, we managed to squeeze in a chapter full of useful troubleshooting recipes that you can use when you need to troubleshoot problems. All in all, the book provides an ideal one-stop shop for getting started with Ubuntu.

The Menu

Let's take a look at the range of chapters included in the book and what each covers.

- Chapter 1—Introducing Ubuntu: This spirited introduction describes the Ubuntu project, its distribution, its development processes, and some of the history that made it all possible.

- Chapter 2—Installing Ubuntu: Run through the installation process one step at a time, and get Ubuntu ready to run on your computer.

- Chapter 3—Using Ubuntu on the Desktop: Take a whistle-stop tour of the Ubuntu desktop and the applications included, and explore ways to configure your desktop.

- Chapter 4—Advanced Usage and Managing Ubuntu: Explore some of the advanced ways to use Ubuntu, including managing the system. Learn how to install and manage software, use hardware devices and printers, interact with remote computers, use the terminal, and run some Windows programs under Ubuntu.

- Chapter 5—The Ubuntu Server: This introduction to Ubuntu Server installation and administration includes coverage of console-line package management, basic security topics, and advanced installer features such as logical volume management and RAID.

- Chapter 6—Support and Typical Problems: Packed to the seams with lots of small, independent recipes, this chapter teaches you how to solve common problems or meet requirements.

- Chapter 7—Using Kubuntu: The most popular spin-off project from Ubuntu is Kubuntu. This chapter provides a solid primer for getting started.

- Chapter 8—The Ubuntu Community: Understand the breadth of the Ubuntu community, including what folks do to build, promote, distribute, support, document, translate, and advocate Ubuntu—and find out what you can do to join in the fun.

- Chapter 9—Ubuntu-Related Projects: Explore the universe of other distributions that surround Ubuntu, including Xbuntu, nUbuntu, Launchpad, and Bazaar.

- Chapter 10—Using Edubuntu: Read in-depth coverage of the Edubuntu distribution and community for educators.

- Appendix A—Welcome to the Command Line: Take advantage of the power of the command line with clear, easy-to-use examples in this brief primer.

- Appendix B—Ubuntu Foundation Documents: Review some of the key documents that define Ubuntu, including the Code of Conduct, the Ubuntu Licensing Policy, the Ubuntu Philosophy, and the Description of Ubuntu Components.

- Appendix C—Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Open Publication License.

- Appendix D—Ubuntu Equivalents to Windows Programs.

The Ubuntu team offers flexible installation options for Ubuntu users with three CD images available: desktop, alternate install, and server install. These three CD images are conveniently combined onto one DVD included in the back of this book, allowing you to install Ubuntu for different configurations from just one disk. There is also an option to test the DVD for defects as well as a memory test option to check your computer.

The first boot option on the DVD, Start or Install Ubuntu, will cover most users' needs. For more comprehensive information, check the Help feature by selecting F1 on the boot menu. You can also refer to Chapter 2, which covers the Ubuntu installation process in detail.

You can find the DVD image, the individual CD images (for those who don't have a DVD drive), and Kubuntu and Edubuntu images on www.ubuntu.com/download.