Preface

AS WE WRITE THIS, it is one year since we penned the first edition of *The Official Ubuntu Book*. The last year has seen Ubuntu continue its explosive growth, and we feel blessed by the fact that *The Official Ubuntu Book* has been able to benefit from, and perhaps in a small way even *contribute* to, that success. Ultimately, that success paved the way for the second edition of the book that you're reading now.

Being *Official* has carried with it a set of rights and responsibilities. Our book's title means that we must attempt to reflect and represent the whole Ubuntu community. While we, as authors, are expected to put ourselves into the book, it is understood that it can never be to the detriment of the values, principles, technologies, or structures of the Ubuntu community.

Often the effects of this added responsibility are wonderful. While most book publishers and authors struggle with the decision to release a book under a free license that allows uninhibited redistribution, reuse, and revision, our situation was clear: Any official book needed to live up to the Ubuntu community's stated philosophical standards of freedom for sharing and reuse. Prentice Hall was willing to take the risk, and the community has responded in typical fashion by making the book a great commercial success.

Other times, the pressure to live up to our title has been a little more difficult. Since certain groups within the Ubuntu community expanded in the last year, we have an obligation to update our text to reflect this. While the authors of other books might have the luxury to pass on an Edubuntu chapter because Edubuntu is not geared toward the market they'd envisioned for their book, we can't use this excuse. The scope of an official book is the entirety of the Ubuntu project, and as that project grows in size and in scope, our goal of building an accurate, honest, and representative

summary of and introduction to that community and its product—in several hundred pages, no less—becomes increasingly challenging.

Meanwhile, as for the first edition, we needed to write this book about a new release of Ubuntu while that version was under active development and was being redesigned, rethought, and rebuilt. Every day, Ubuntu grows in different, unpredictable ways. Our book's development process had to both match and track this process as our content was crafted, rewritten, adjusted, and allowed to mature itself.

As in the previous edition, the contributors to this book go well beyond those listed on the book's cover. As last time, the recipes included in Chapter 6 have been elicited from and designed in consultation with the community. But while the community contributions are sometimes less visible in other chapters, they are no less present. Invisible to most readers, dozens of members of the community left their mark on different parts of the text of this book. Although this process led to a writing process that was as hectic, and frustrating at times, as the one that builds Ubuntu, we hope we can remind readers of the level of quality that this process inspires in our book's subject. In the places where we achieve this, we have earned our book's title. With that goal in mind, we look forward to future versions of Ubuntu and editions of this book wrought through the same community-driven process.