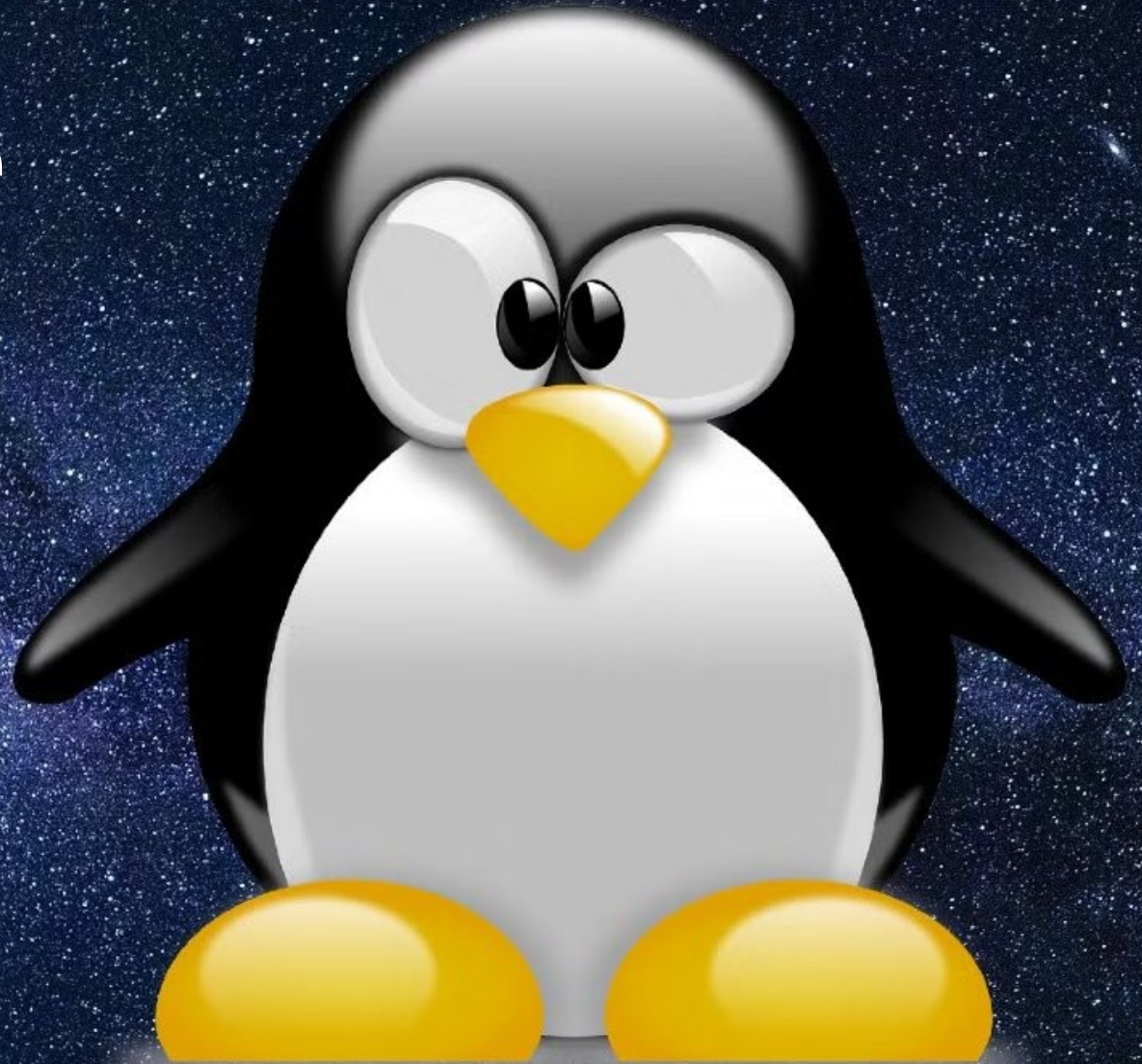


Free Software

And the communities behind IT

Phil Bass, January 2025



Phil's Tips:

1. Never Buy a Cheap Computer

Because in 3 or 4 years it will be slow, and you'll be tempted to buy a new one.

2. Never Buy Software

Because there is always a free app that does (more or less) what you want.
I will show you some of them in this presentation.

Operating Systems

- Two PC ecosystems:
 - Microsoft Windows
 - The Unix Family
- Apple's MacOS & iOS, Google's ChromeOS & Android, and Linux are all varieties of Unix.
- The Unix family runs on two thirds of the PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones in use today.
- Three quarters of Internet servers run Linux.
- Overall, Windows is in a minority!

GNU/Linux



GNU/Linux

- Linux is the free version of the Unix OS.
- It was written by Linus Torvalds in 1991.
- It runs on phones, tablets, laptops, desktops ...
- All the supercomputers in the world run Linux.
- It can revitalise an old Windows machine.

GNU/Linux

- Strictly speaking, Linux is just the OS kernel
- Linux distributions come with the GNU utilities
- There are many distributions:
 - e.g. Ubuntu, Debian, Mint ...
- They come with a different selection of utilities
- A Linux app runs on all distributions

GNU/Linux

- The basic utilities are included in your installation:
 - File Manager
 - Email app
 - Web Browser
 - Office Suite (word processor, spreadsheet ...)
 - Contacts, Calendar, Notes, Package Manager, etc.
- And you can add many more.

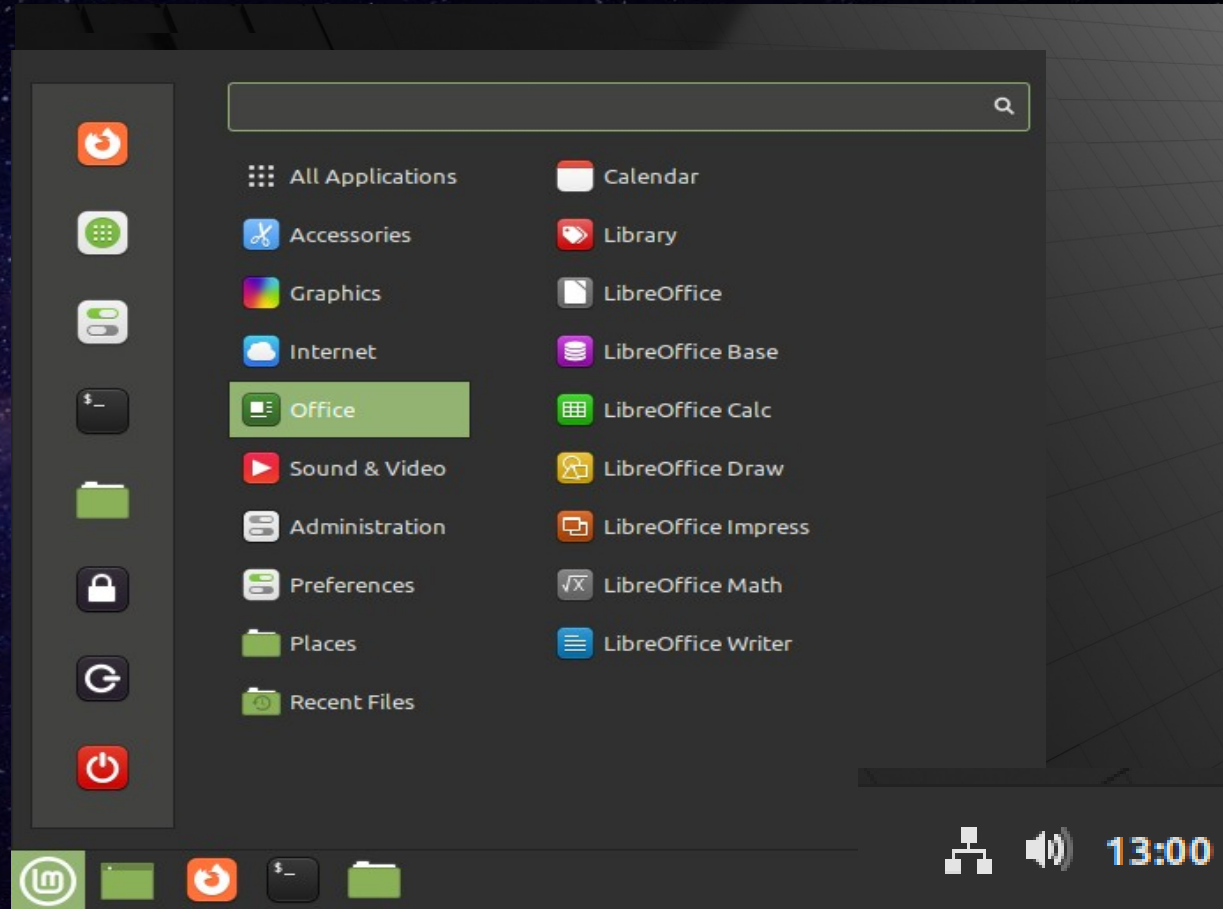
GNU/Linux

“Quality was maintained not by rigid standards or autocracy but by the naively simple strategy of releasing every week and getting feedback from hundreds of users within days, creating a sort of rapid Darwinian selection on the mutations introduced by developers.”

Linux Mint

The desktop and apps window, running from a USB stick.

Clicking the CD icon installs Mint on the PC's hard disk/SSD.



Firefox



Firefox

- Firefox is a child of the Netscape web browser
- It was started in 2002 and first released in 2004
- It became significantly faster in 2017
- It is owned by the non-profit Mozilla Foundation
- It prides itself on privacy, security and speed

Firefox

“Ads are distracting and make web pages load slower while their trackers watch every move you make online. The Firefox Browser blocks most trackers automatically, so there’s no need to dig into your security settings.”

- *The Firefox website*



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Environment

How a plan to make the world's largest snowflake was humbled by nature

We assembled a crack team to create a record-breaking snowflake. Along the way, we learned just how impressive the natural kind really are

Features

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Space

Dazzling auroras lit up the skies in 2024 and we may see more in 2025

News

Subscriber-only



Technology

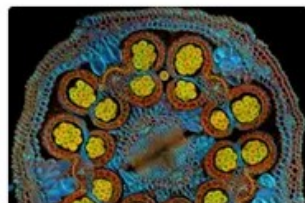
What are the mystery drones flying over the US?

News

Free



Technology



Life



Technology



Technology



Space



Humans

Thunderbird



mozilla
Thunderbird

Thunderbird

- Thunderbird is a fully-featured email client.
- It was first released in 2003.
- It is owned by the non-profit Mozilla Foundation.
- It prides itself on privacy and security.
- It is implemented as a mail interface to Firefox.

Thunderbird

“Thunderbird is funded by user donations. We don’t collect personal data, sell ads in your inbox, or secretly train AI with your private conversations. Thunderbird is open source. As part of the Mozilla family you can be confident we always put your privacy and security first.”

- *The Thunderbird website*



×

...

3

 PayPal

 Outbox

[New reply: Containers and virtual](#)

06:31

Revealed: The secret formula to Christmas ads



Preferences ▾

[View in browser](#)

UK Edition | 13 December 2024

The Conversation

Christmas TV ads have become a festive feature as familiar as mistletoe and mince pies. Big stores and brands spend huge sums appealing to our need for more stuff to consume. But if you think it's tough coming up with new gift ideas for your loved ones year after year, just imagine the pressure of spending a big pile of a company's budget finding a new way to persuade people to buy things.

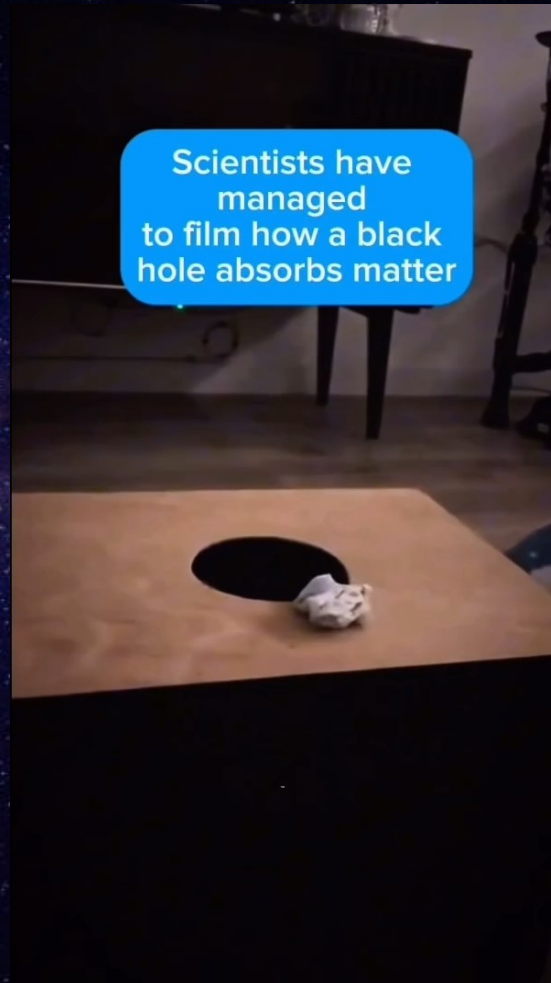


LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

LibreOffice

- LibreOffice is a suite of office apps:
 - **Writer** word processor
 - **Calc** spreadsheet app
 - **Impress** presentation editor
 - **Draw, Base, Math**
- It was forked from OpenOffice in 2010.
- It is owned by the non-profit The Document Foundation.

A Sample Video



More Shining Examples



- **Apache**
Web Server
- **Nginx**
Web Server
- **MariaDB**
Database
- **MuseScore**
Music Score Editor
- **DaVinci Resolve**
Video Editing App

The Fediverse

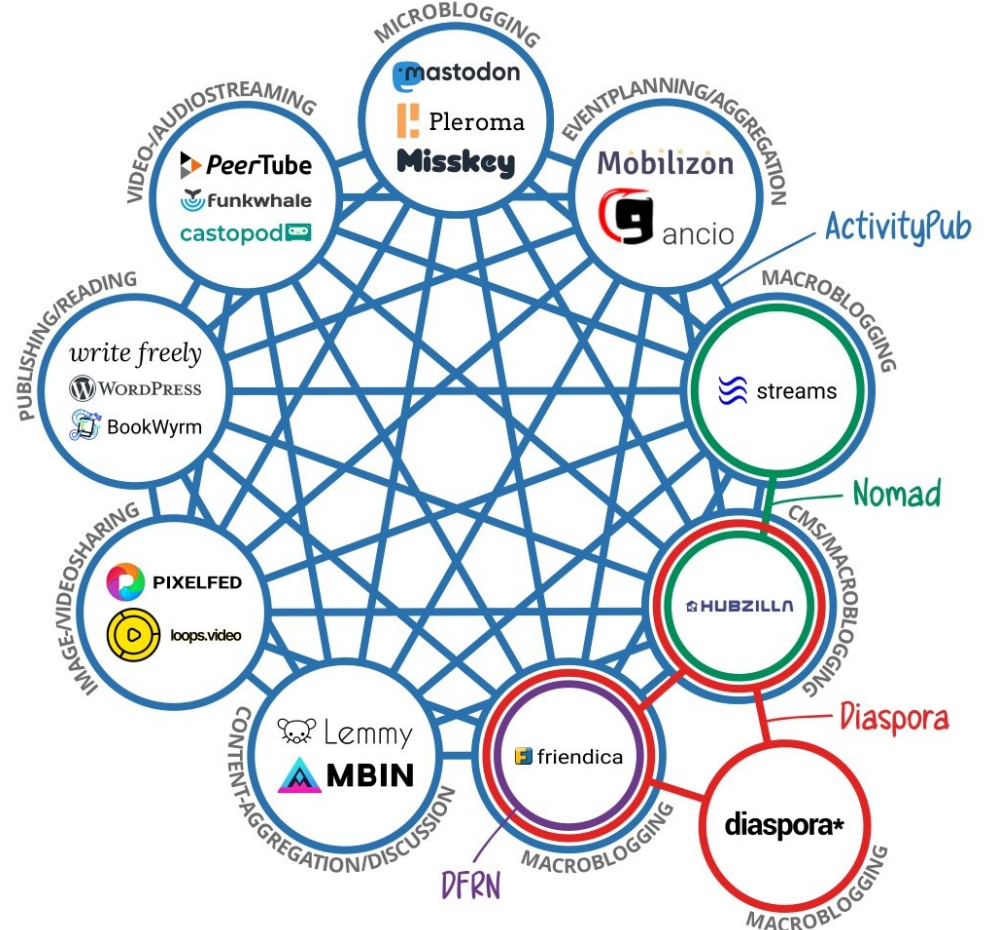
In a Nutshell

- Social Networking
- Blogs
- Photos
- Music
- And more ...



The ActivityPub Protocol

- Social Media
- Micro Blogging
- Macro Blogging
- Photo Sharing
- Video Sharing
- Content Management
- Content Aggregation



A Few Fediverse Sites

Mastodon



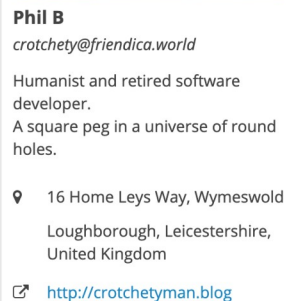
- Decentralised Microblogging
 - Social networking service
- An alternative to X/Twitter
 - ‘Toots’ instead of ‘Tweets’
- 500 character posts
- Server-specific moderation

A Few Fediverse Sites

Friendica



- Decentralised Microblogging
 - Social networking service
- An alternative to Facebook
 - Friends & Newsfeeds
- Multiple profiles/uses
- Extensible via plugins
- 🎓 crotchety@friendica.world



#fantasy_humour #literature



1 day ago · ⌵ · ↕ · Ⓢ



↕ 2

22



555



1 day ago • ⌵ • 🌐

#literature ⚡

#fantasy_humour ⚡



...



2 days ago • ⌵ • ⑤



000

9

↩ in reply to Phil B • 2 days ago • 🌐



555



↩ in reply to Phil B • 2 days ago • 🌐

A Few Fediverse Sites

Pixelfed



- Decentralised Photo Sharing
- An alternative to Instagram
 - But with no tracking or adverts
- Albums
- Likes and Comments
- Direct Messaging

A Few Fediverse Sites

Peertube



- Decentralised Video Sharing
- An alternative to YouTube
 - But with no tracking or adverts
- A network of servers
- Per-server moderation

A Few Fediverse Sites

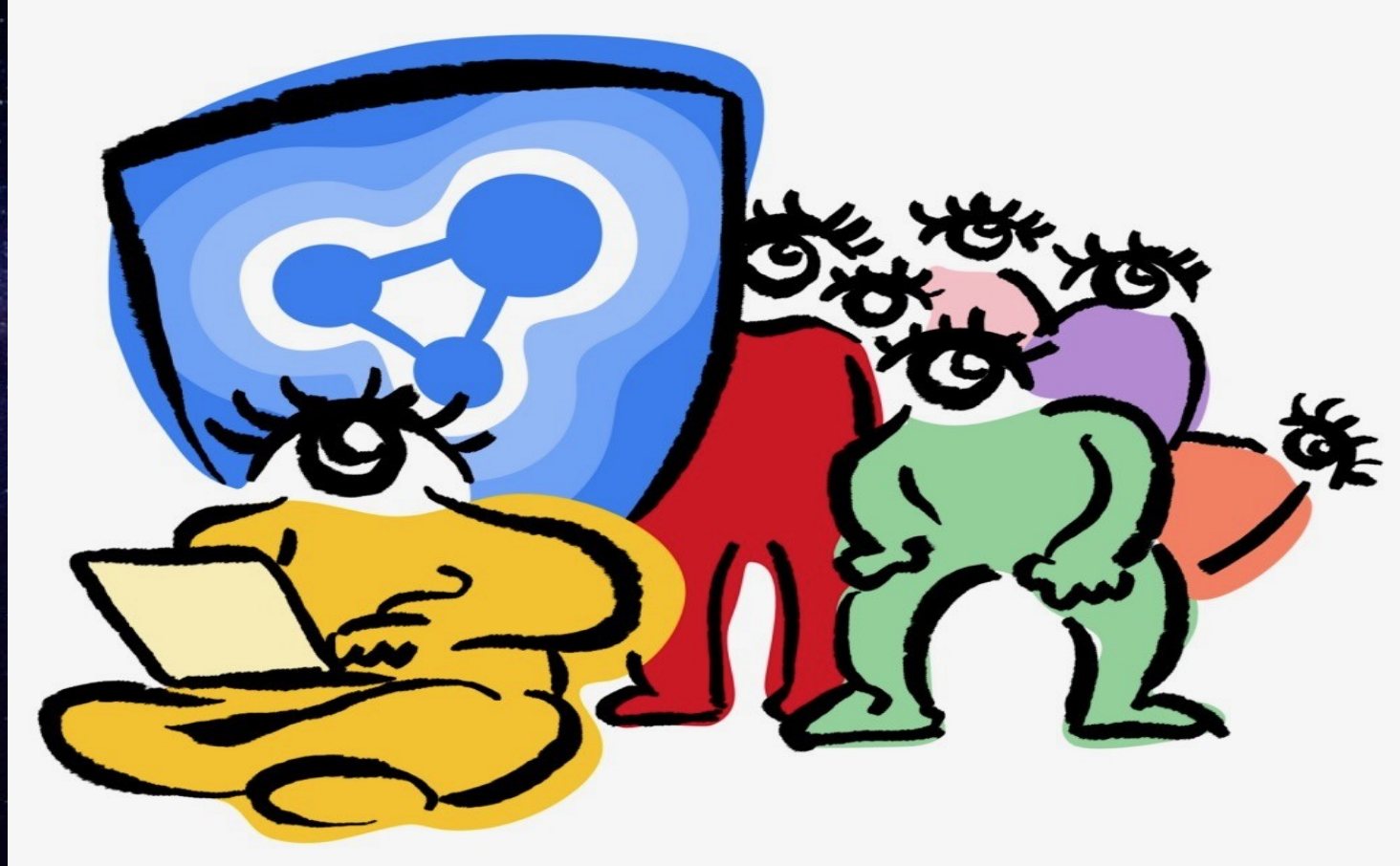
WordPress



- #1 Blogging Service
- Also a website builder
- Supports ActivityPub
 - For connection to the Fediverse
 - But only on \$40/m Business Plan
- Extensible via many plugins

Hubzilla Does It All

- Social
- Blogs
- Photos
- Music
- Websites
- Forums
- Calendar
- Files
- ...



Comparison Table - 1

	♥ Hubzilla	@ Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Features and Content Types	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Social Media	✓	✓	✓	✓
Microblogging (Short Posts - typically 500 characters or less)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Macroblogging (Long Posts)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Direct Messages (DMs)	✓	✓	✗	✓
Rich Text (bold, italics, quotes, code blocks, embedded content, etc.)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Threaded Conversations (Forum-style / Facebook-style)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Repeats / Boosts / Reposts (send someone's post to your followers)	✓ repeat	✓ boost	✗	✓ repost
Shares / Quote Posts (create a new post quoting another post)	✓ share	✗	✓ quote post	✓ quote post
Scheduled Posts	✓	✗	✓	✗
Bookmark Posts	✓	✓	✗	✗
Addons / Applications (Apps) (additional features that users can activate)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Blog (Articles)	✓ app	✗	✗	✗
Wiki (Personal or Shared Wikis)	✓ app	✗	✗	✗
Web Pages (HTML, BBCode, Markdown)	✓ app	✗	✗	✗
Image Gallery	✓	✗	✗	✗
Files (Cloud Storage)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Events / Calendar	✓	✗	✗	✗
Polls	✓	✓	✓	✗
Lists (create lists of channels to follow)	🔒 privacy groups	✓ lists	✗	✓ lists
Import RSS/Atom Feeds and Publish as a Channel	✓	✗	✗	✗

Channel Types	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Public Channels	✓ public	✓	✓	✓
Private Channels (friends & connections only)	✓ personal	✗	✗	✗
Community Forums / Discussion Groups	✓ forum	✗	✗	✗
Custom Channels with Unique Permissions	✓ custom	✗	✗	✗
Access Control / Post Permissions	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Public Posts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Posts Visible Only to Friends / Connections	✓	✓	✗	✗
Posts Visible Only to Specific People	✓	✓	✗	✗
Posts Visible Only to Specific Privacy Groups	✓	✗	✗	✗
Control Membership in Forums / Discussion Groups	✓	✗	✗	✗
Control Access to Content (Articles, Wiki, Web Pages, etc.)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Disable Comments / Prevent Replies to Your Posts	✓	✗	✓	✓
Block Channels / Actors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Identity	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Cross-Platform Social Identity (recognized on multiple servers)	✓ channel	✓ account	✓ profile	✓ account
Multiple Identities under the Same Login Account	✓ channels	✗	✓ profiles	✗
Clone Identity on Multiple Servers (at same time)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Sync Identity between Cloned Channels	✓	✗	✗	✗
Migrate Identity to Another Server	✓	✓	✗	🔒
Download Backup of Identity (Export / Import)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Federated Single Sign On (log into other servers with your identity)	✓	✗	✗	✗

Comparison Table - 2

Content Backups, Cloning, and Migration	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Sync Posts between Cloned Channels	✓	✗	✗	✗
Migrate Content to Another Server	✓	✗	✗	✓
Download Backup of Content (Export / Import)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Export Content	✓	✓	✓	✓
Networks and Protocols	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Nomad Network / Zot Protocol	✓	✗	✗	✗
Magic Sign On / OpenWebAuth (OWA)	✓	✗	✗	✗
ActivityPub	✓ optional	✓	✓ optional	✗
AT Protocol	✗	✗	✗	✓
Diaspora	✓ optional	✗	✗	✗
Bridgy Fed (Multi-Protocol Bridge)	✓ optional	✓ optional	✓ optional	✓ optional
OpenID	✓ optional	✗	✗	✗
OAuth2	✓ optional	✗	✗	✗
Post Feeds / Syndication (RSS / Atom)	✓ Atom	✓ RSS	✗	✗
Mobile and Desktop Apps	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Mobile App (including third party apps)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Progressive Web App (PWA)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Google Play	✗	✓	✓	✓
Apple iOS	✗	✓	✓	✓
Microsoft Store	✗	+	✓	+
Amazon Appstore	✗	+	✗	✗
F-Droid	✗	✓	✗	✗

Customization and Mods	Hubzilla	Mastodon	Threads	Bluesky
Dark Mode / Light Mode	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customize Layout of Your Channel	✓	✗	✗	✗
Select Theme for Your Channel	✓	✗	✗	✗
Change Color Scheme of Theme (if supported by the theme)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Addons / Plugins / Apps	✓	✗	✗	✗
Key				
✓ = Supported feature.				
✓ = Optional feature that usually has to be activated. Some servers may have this feature disabled or limit your options.				
⚡ = Supported, but not necessarily in a way that you expect. May require advanced configuration or extra steps.				
⚡ = Supported via a Third Party.				
✗ = Not supported.				
Note: Administrators have the option to change the configuration of their own server, which may effect the features that are available to users.				

Hubzilla's Stream

- Post List
- Selected Post
- Content
- Notices

The screenshot displays the Hubzilla.de web interface. At the top, the site name "Hubzilla.de" is visible. The main content area shows a stream of posts. The first post is titled "Hubzilla Upgrade Info" and mentions a channel upgrade to version 9.4.4. Below it is a post by "Hubzilla Support F..." with the text "Federation with Pixelfed fails". The selected post, highlighted with a blue header, is by "Manuel JF" and titled "No 10 Peironcelly street, Madrid in 1936". It features a black and white photograph of a bomb-damaged building facade. The post text reads: "Robert Capa's image of children playing in front of the bomb-damaged facade of No 10 Peironcelly street, Madrid in 1936. Photograph: Robert Capa/© International Center of Photography/Magnum Photos". Below the photo is a "COLLAPSE" link. The right sidebar contains navigation links: "Network" (3), "New Connections" (4), and "Forums" (3). A large, dark oval with a red border is overlaid on the selected post, containing the email address "phil@hub.hubzilla.de".

Hubzilla Upgrade Info

Your channel has been upgraded to Hubzilla version 9.4.4

Please have a look at the [change log](#) for further info.

✓ Do not show this again

Hubzilla Support F... 8 days ago
adminsforum@hubzilla.org

Federation with Pixelfed fails

Manuel JF 8 days ago
manuel-jf@hub.volsse.no

Foto de Christina Chechomova

Manuel JF 8 days ago
manuel-jf@hub.volsse.no

No 10 Peironcelly street, Madrid in 1936

Der Pepe (Hubzilla... 8 days ago
pepecyb@hub.hubzilla.hu

Pfrunzlers Weekly – KW 49/24

Assaf 9 days ago
assaf@mas.to

"The default state of a project is to not ship: to be delayed indefinitely, cancelled, or to go out half-baked and burst into..."

via Scott M. Stolz

Kat Marchán 9 days ago

No 10 Peironcelly street, Madrid in 1936

Manuel JF 8 days ago
manuel-jf@hub.volsse.no

Robert Capa's image of children playing in front of the bomb-damaged facade of No 10 Peironcelly street, Madrid in 1936. Photograph: Robert Capa/© International Center of Photography/Magnum Photos

COLLAPSE

2

Comment

Network 3

New Connections 4

Forums 3

phil@hub.hubzilla.de

Hubzilla as an App

On a mobile device, you can use Hubzilla like an ordinary app. To make this work, visit the Hubzilla website, sign in, and tell your web browser to 'Add to home screen'.

Group Discussion

The background image is a soft-focus photograph of a collaborative workspace. In the foreground, a person's hand in a dark blue sleeve is writing on a tablet. To the right, another person's hand in a light blue sleeve is writing on a document. The table is cluttered with various items: a laptop, several sheets of paper with colorful sticky notes, a small potted plant, and some printed materials. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting a bright window in the background.

The Pros and Cons

1. **Cost** (Photoshop, Adobe's PDF Editor, Sibelius & Finale)
2. **Quality** (Functionality, Aesthetics, Intuitiveness)
3. **Support** (Apple , Linux ?, Google ?, Microsoft )
4. **Platforms** (Windows, MacOS, Android, Linux)
5. **Familiarity** (MS Word, Facebook, etc.)
6. **Control** (mega-corporation or individual user)

Greed vs Altruism

“It is better to give than to receive.”

Which I interpret as:

“It is better to give your time, money, skills and wisdom to others than to encourage others to give their time, money, skills and wisdom to you.”

Thank you!

