

Solaris-user arrested by British Police for using Lynx

LinuxReviews.org

Lynx is a popular text-based browser user by Unix and Linux users. British Telecom, who are the web site administrator for a Tsunami aid site mistook a Lynx web browser user who donated money for a hacker because of the strange user agent the browser leaves in the logs and reported the user to the police.

The police, apparently equally incompetent, raided the private citizen who made the donation swat-style while he was having a quiet lunch.

BBC reported this as Officers from the Metropolitan Police's Computer Crime Unit have begun an inquiry after BT blocked the attempt on New Year's Eve. A 28-year-old man from east London was arrested and released on bail in connection with alleged offences. and this is a good example of how state media reports violent crimes against private citizens when done by the same stats police force.

The persons only crime was to use the non-standard Internet browser Lynx.

From a mailing list:

For donating to a Tsunami appeal using Lynx on Solaris 10. BT (British Telecom) who run the donation management system misread an access log and saw hmm thats a non standard browser not identifying it's type and it's doing strange things. Trace that IP. Arrest that hacker.

Armed police, a van, a police cell and national news later the police have gone in SWAT style and arrested someone having their lunch.

Out on bail till next week and preparing to make a lot of very bad PR for BT and the Police....

So just goes to show if you use anything other than Firefox or IE and you rely on someone else to interrogate access logs or IDS logs you too could be sitting in a paper suit in a cell :(

What is Lynx?

Lynx, Links, Dillo and other rare browsers are used by thousands of Linux and Unix users world wide, but they only make up a very small percentage of visits to mainstream entertainment sites. This may be because many such sites frequently use javascript, flash and other garbage non-standard elements that make these sites impossible to render in standard-compliant browsers.

Average Entertainment Website, Browser market share Desember 2004

202932 visits	Browser
53.54%	Internet Explorer 6.0 (Windows)
27.10%	Gecko 1.7.x (Mozilla/Firefox/Galeon/Epiphany/etc)
4.21%	Internet Explorer 5.0
4.14%	Safari (OSX)
2.54%	Opera

The picture is very different for Linux related sites.

Linux Reviews, Browser market share Desember 2004

56360 visits	Browser
36.63%	Gecko 1.7.x (Mozilla/Firefox/Galeon/Epiphany/etc)
17.58%	Internet Explorer 6.0 (Windows)
10.43%	Internet Explorer 5.0
3.37%	Opera
2.83%	Konqueror

Lynx was not in the entertainment site numbers and had 0.53% share at Linux Reviews.

SourceForge, Slashdot, Freshmeat, Lxer and other sites like these have regular visitors who use rare browsers, but if you are using Lynx then you may want to stay clear of official UK government web sites and perhaps also other government web sites in general.

- [Tsunami fund hacking is probed](#) (bbc)

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