Migration to Debian Squeeze

Pfaffhausen, 15 February 2012: *We are pleased to announce the new release 2012/II. The 2012/II version includes a new "basic framework" (Debian Squeeze). Most users will barely notice the change. This is intentional, however, as ArchivistaBox strives to provide long-term continuity. Why this makes sense will be addressed in this blog entry.*

Short update cycles have become inevitable.

Whoever buys a computer solution today, must live with the fact that it has a short life expectancy. While Windows XP has now been around for more than 10 years, it can hardly be considered to be cutting edge. The difference between Windows 2008 and Windows 2008R2 is much more significant than just the added R2. While certain manufacturers announce long-term support for Linux, if we are honest, the Linux development takes place in cycles of months rather than years (a new kernel comes out approximately every three months). **A long term release (LT) with 5 years of support is of very little use when the packages used become obsolete much faster.**

In the case of the ArchivistaBox 32 bit, we had largely the same base distribution for almost 5 years. With the ArchivistaBox 64 bit, we introduced Debian as the base distribution. In addition, as Debian releases "only" have a shelf life of around 3 years, it was clear from the outset that the same version of Debian will not last for the targeted 5 years. When we released the ArchivistaBox 64 bit last year, we were faced with the choice to use Debian Squeeze, which was not ready at the time, or to go with the older Debian Lenny. In the end, we went with Debian Lenny (for stability reasons), in full knowledge that it would not be "officially" supported after February 2012.

We also knew that it would be necessary to migrate to the updated version of Debian Squeeze 2012. With the 2012/II release, we have now taken this step. The migration was neither especially easy nor particularly difficult, overall **it took us about 100 hours to complete the necessary work.** As mentioned above, the "normal" ArchivistaBox user will not notice the change. The most positive change is that the updated version can be used properly with the commonly used large screens, which was rather difficult with the old release.

ArchivistaBox offers continuity

Other differences are not noticeable at first (or even second) glance. The **ArchivistaBox 64 bit is and will remain the ArchivistaBox 64 bit. We do not quite understand the purpose of completely revised designs.** What are the benefits to the customer of running a new Ubuntu version or using Windows 7 instead of XP? The most important thing is that the software runs on the newly acquired device. But who really cares whether this is Ubuntu 10, 11 or Windows XP, 7 or 8? It is highly unlikely that anyone will want to upgrade a PC from Windows XP to 7. A stand alone Windows licence costs considerably more today than a completely new PC with Windows 7 included. Even in the case of smartphones, a new part is added almost every year; as a result, the manufacturers support the devices at best for another two years.

The ArchivistaBox as a business solution goes a completely different way. The release 2012/II still runs on hardware that we supplied more than four years ago; 512 MB and a 32 GB hard disk are still sufficient to run ArchivistaBox. **Once introduced, a feature remains available for at least 10 years. A 30-year data structure guarantee is unprecedented in the market.** We have been in existence for almost 15 years now, and with the box concept (since 2005) we can offer continuity on the hardware side that is unmatched by the competition. However, the maintenance of the distribution base takes time. As a result, you do not have to invest several hundred hours every year to keep ArchivistaBox up-to-date.

However, the effort in this regard is not negligible. In fact the effort contributes more to the total cost of a box than does the cost of the hardware itself. Consequently, in terms of costs it is irrelevant whether the ArchivistaBox is used in a virtualised environment or not. However, we believe that this is a good investment, as it allows us to promote the fact that the ArchivistaBox offers a very high degree of continuity for many years or even decades. In this sense, **there is basically no expiration date for the ArchivistaBox and the backbone of the new 2012/II version will not change anything in this regard.** We hope you will enjoy this release.

*As of now, customers with maintenance contracts can "demand" the new release, as the **Community version** has been shipping with the new 2012/II version for about a week.*