ArchivistaBox goes mobile and offers virtualisation out of the box
Pfaffhausen, 17 February, 2009: if you had asked me five years ago whether I could recommend a laptop, I'd have said that there are quite a few on the market, but all of them are basically too heavy and too big for my taste. If you had asked me at the same time whether it was possible to run both Linux and Windows concurrently on one computer, I'd have answered: it's possible, but dual boot and/or VMware workstations require considerable knowledge and expertise (particularly when setting them up).
On the move with the Libretto U100 for the past three years



A little over three years ago, the time had come again to replace the existing laptops. Costing approx. 2,100 Francs, I finally decided on a Toshiba Libretto U100; the technical data can be seen **here (Wikipedia).**
I have worked for a solid three years with this machine, long before the real mini netbooks had become a must have. Many of our customers were astonished that it was possible to work reasonably with such a computer at all.
In fact, all RichClient versions were created on the Libretto during the last few years, and the ArchivistaBox was also used on the move. Some customers wanted to order the computer from us right away.
This was not possible in the end because Toshiba withdrew the Libretto (which had been barely brought on to the market) from the European market. Whether the ultimate reason was the somewhat too-small keyboard I don't know. In any case, I almost always attached a USB keyboard (in order to be able to work comfortably). But otherwise I had much fun working with the Libretto.
The Asus Eee family ? three month practical test
One to two years ago, the first mini netbook computers appeared and were widely marketed with a catchy name. However, there are apparently **copyright problems** because one company asserts copyright to the name. We therefore forego that term here, even if it would certainly be (more) applicable. Let's therefore talk about portable mini computers.



As we said, for the past few months, we have worked (even more) intensively with the Asus machines. The 1000H, in particular, would be an ideal machine: a 10-inch screen, a normal-sized keyboard, long battery time and a 160 GB hard drive permit problem-free professional work. But when used on a permanent basis, we noticed a problem I want to note here: the keyboard.
If you type using the touch-type system, you won't always land happily in the right place on the Asus computers (there are, unfortunately, also other manufacturers who haven't yet recognized this problem). The problem is that the PgUp key is located where the right-hand shift key (shift to upper case) should be, which causes (me, at least) to page upwards repeatedly by mistake. That's not a huge problem if, from time to time, a few fields have to be recorded in Archivista, but it becomes a bigger problem if a longer text must be written on the computer. In short, the Eee computer generation's keyboard will probably be criticised – for a good reason. As mentioned, when acting as a mobile surfing station or ArchivistaBox the problem is negligent, but it does become an issue if the machine is to be used for writing.

The portable mini computer parade with the ArchivistaBox



The various ArchivistaBoxes serve primarily as DMS servers. Because of that, the use of portable mini computers is not exactly a necessity in most cases. On the other hand, mini computers offer a lot of freedom in terms of handling, because the need to connect cables, keyboard and screen is entirely dispensed with. Decisive factors for continued development in this direction were also price and availability considerations.
These days, a lot more laptops (including mini computers) are sold than desktops or servers. In addition, today's machines only cost a fraction of what would have had to be paid previously for a laptop. An example is the Libretto: while the U100 still cost approx. 2,100 Francs 3 years ago, today less than a fifth of that must be shelled out for an HP2133 machine. We think at these prices that these machines certainly make sense.

The new models: Acer Aspire One and HP 2133

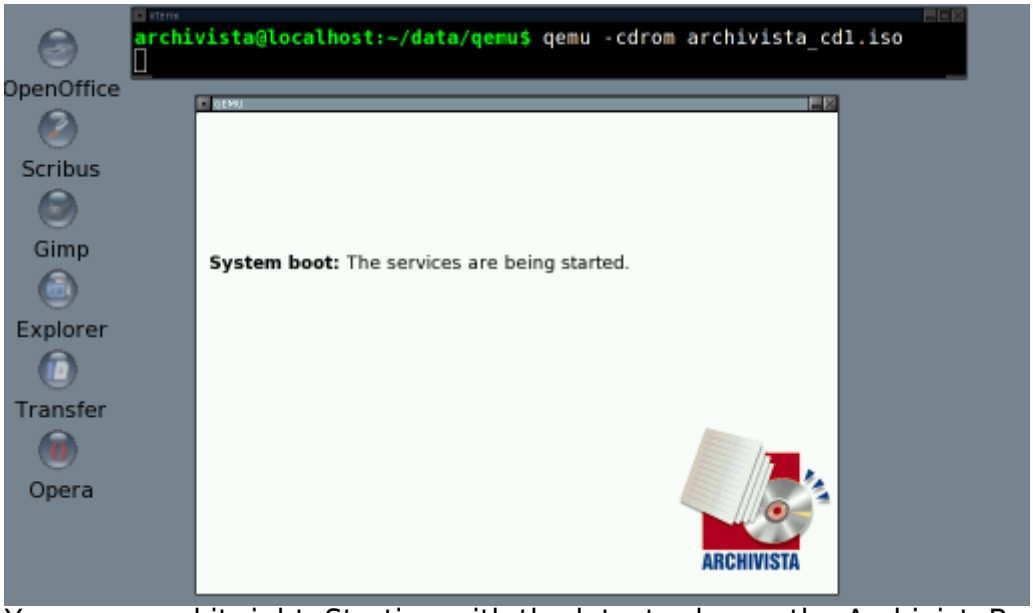
We have reviewed many machines and have noticed two classes of machines in particular. These are the Acer machines (Aspire One models) and the HP 2133 notebooks, in the more upmarket sector. **With the Acer, we like the price and availability, with the HP 2133 we particularly like the very nice keyboard,** which allows comfortable typing. And another thing: even though almost all the devices feature the same screen resolution of 1024×600, this unfortunately doesn't mean that ArchivistaBox will run on them without carrying out a bit of preparatory work.
Numerous kernel adjustments were necessary before the ArchivistaBox finally ran the way we wanted it to run. Both types of machines, by the way, continue to be shipped only on request. And please understand that we cannot offer you a discounted price. However, we do offer continued maintenance and support for these machines in the future.

Performance that you can expect from these devices

Mobile mini computers have the reputation of not being the fastest devices around. They also don't offer a multiprocessor core, and the majority of machines run Windows XP in the best-case scenario. Don't worry though, for the ArchivistaBox that's quite sufficient, because it requires a lot less resources than you would normally imagine.
And let me explain here just to make this clear: the devices are speedy enough to start even a virtual ArchivistaBox (even if it's a little slower) or any other operating system on them. And all this for just a few hundred — if that wasn?t reason enough to snap one up.

Virtual ArchivistaBoxes for all sectors

For quite some time, it has been possible to operate the ArchivistaBoxes virtually as well. Up until now, we could offer support for VMWare (player and ESX). We can now also offer you support for quemu and/or kvm. And the best is still to come: both virtualised products are — unlike other technologies — OpenSource, and (this should be less surprising) can be found directly on the ArchivistaBox.



Yes, you read it right. Starting with the latest release, the ArchivistaBoxes can now not only be used virtually, but **you can also conduct virtualisation yourself on the ArchivistaBox.** Why do we offer this option? ArchivistaBoxes have been able to create self-supporting archives almost since they were launched. To enable this, a database is packed into an ISO file, along with the current ArchivistaBox, so that a new Archivista CD is generated. The CD, in turn, can also be used in live mode as an installation disc. Similarly, a bootable USB stick can be created from it.
Until now, after creating an ISO file, a DVD had to be burned. Now you can start this process directly on the ArchivistaBox by specifying the name of the ISO file (e.g., with qemu -cdrom av_20090216.iso). Right now, you still have to set the ISO file up manually, but in the near future there will also be a button of some sort for this feature. If you already want to start virtualisation on the ArchivistaBox today, please refer to the **qemu handbook.** As an alternative, we and our sales partners also ship the ArchivistaBoxes with virtual solutions on request.

Archivista sales partners: the original is always better

And while we are talking about sales partners anyway, we unfortunately heard an unpleasant story during the last few months. There are already hangers-on who market the ArchivistaBox without the appropriate sales contract. Although we do not oppose the solution being used under the OpenSource license, we do own the copyright to the name “Archivista” — a copyright we view as correct and necessary.
Development, marketing and sales, after all, require resources without which an OpenSource project could hardly be brought to business maturity. You as an end user can, and should, be able to obtain the ArchivistaBox free of charge at any time; the same is also true for the documentation. But you can also be sure that, if you **obtain an ArchivistaBox with associated support and maintenance, you will receive professional support for many years and the solution will be developed further in an appropriate manner. And such a service can only be offered by a sales partner authorised by us.** Because: who ensures the ArchivistaBox’s continual smooth functioning over the years, who checks the related hardware and who knows the ArchivistaBox inside-out? Correct: only our trained sales partners and we ourselves.
The **“hanger-on”, on the other hand, does not receive any support from us** and can **only offer you the ArchivistaBox under the OpenSource license.** Swiss Francs or **Euros paid for this are therefore worthless,** because you can always obtain the OpenSource edition yourself free of charge

in any case. And please understand that we (as manufacturers) cannot offer any support and maintenance later on for such products. If you are not sure whether a Box comes from an official sales partner or not, you can find the list in the **reference sources.**