

A \$16 File Server

Dealing with an old computer can be difficult. Before it leaves your possession you should securely wipe the hard disk of **all** data, something Windows cannot do. Although there is free software for this, tracking it down can be time consuming. Then, do you throw out the machine and feel guilty about disposing of something with toxic waste or do spend the time, effort and money to try and recycle it or donate it?

You can avoid this and turn an old computer into something useful with NASLite, a \$16 program that makes a file server out of pretty much any computer. Think your computer is too old to be a file server? NASLite works on a 486 with as little as 16 MB of ram.

A Good Backup Repository

Everyone knows to backup—backup—backup. After all, there is so much that can go wrong with personal computer. A network-accessible file server is an excellent repository for your backup files. The fact that you can now do this for \$16 is remarkable.

The prerequisites for this are a Local Area Network (LAN) and, of course, a network card for the old computer. [If you don't have a LAN, the hardware to set one up is fairly cheap (less than \$100 to network a handful of computers).]

NASLite runs off a bootable floppy disk; it does not get installed on the hard disk. When you buy NASLite, they send you the floppy disk. The boot floppy contains Linux, networking software, and a web server. Quite a feat.

Old computers have relatively small hard disks, but NASLite supports up to four internal disks. For very little money you can add a new internal hard disk to the computer.

Old computers also have problems (due to BIOS limitations) accessing newer large capacity hard disks. No problem: NASLite does not depend on the BIOS but accesses the hard disks directly.

Being Linux, NASLite requires a Linux file system, specifically ext2. When faced with a brand new hard disk, NASLite will format it for its own use. When faced with a hard disk with nothing but Windows on it, NASLite will reformat the disk, and all your previous files will be lost. If you have partitioning software, such as Partition Magic from Symantec, you can create an ext2 partition for use by NASLite and keep Windows in another partition. In this case, NASLite sees the ext2 partition, uses it, and ignores Windows.

The first time NASLite runs, you need to run the text-mode Administration utility to configure a workgroup name. You might also want to change the IP address and subnet mask (default is 192.168.1.1), the password for logging into the Administration utility itself, and the name used by the file server on your network (it defaults to Naslite-smb).

Once NASLite is up and running, you remotely access the hard disks under its control using normal Windows shared files and directories. You can also access files and reports on the NASLite server via HTTP. Being Linux, it also supports telnet access to the NASLite administration utility.

NASLite is limited to: TCP/IP networking, hard disks (no CDs or DVDs), IDE (no SCSI or Serial ATA), internal disks (no external USB hard drives), and peer-to-peer workgroup networks (no Windows domains). It also does not support user-level security or file compression.

NASLite can be downloaded free, but to create the boot floppy disk from the downloaded file you need Linux. The floppy is 1.72 MB, not the normal 1.44 MB, so Windows can't deal with it at all.

NASLite is available at www.serverelements.com

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Upcoming Expos and Other Meetings

- Columbus Avenue Festival, Sun., Sept 19
Columbus Avenue from 66th - 86th Streets
- Digital Lifestyle Expo, Sat.-Sun., Sept. 25-26, Apple Store and Marriott Marquis
<http://www.dlexpo.com/>
- TechXNY, Tues.-Thurs., Oct. 5-7, Javits Center
<http://www.techXNY.com>
Code for free expo admission: **ietgy5**
- DigitalLife Expo, Thurs.-Sun., Oct. 14-17, Javits Center
<http://www.digitallife.com/>
A new consumer technology and entertainment event
- PhotoPlus Expo, Thurs.-Sat., Oct. 21-23, Javits Center
<http://www.photoplusexpo.com>

Plan to attend some of these for fun and learning.

NYPC may have an outreach table at some of these events. If you can help, contact Kathy Petruzzi, kathypetruzzi@hotmail.com.

Thanks for Your Generosity!

Thanks to your generous outpouring of donations, NYPC has exceeded the goal of \$800, which was matched by Stanley Zabar, for upgrading our classroom computers.

NYPC greatly appreciates your caring support.

And All Had a Good Time

Many NYPC members enjoyed cool air, good food, and interesting conversation at the Pier 63 gatherings in July and August.

We're grateful to the coordinators of Pier 63 and the [Frying Pan](#) for making these get-togethers possible.