[The real reason for the Japanese seclusion policy: Fear of colonization by Rome](#)

The Japanese government was afraid of the Jesuits and the foreign overthrow of Japan which is why they didn't allow any visitors to their country for 200 yearss.

[Using mencoder to convert a .VOB file to a .flv file](#)

I've been working for a Japanese NPO, Leap High 28. Today I was asked by the NPO Chairperson, Yoko Ishikawa to upload a DVD file to Help Japan 2011, a website we made together to raise support for the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsumami victims. This is the code I used to convert the file to .flv on a laptop with the Ubuntu 11.10 Linux. Note the you need to have mencoder installed.

```
mencoder VTS_03_1.VOB -of lavf -ovc lavc -lavcopts
vcodec=flv:vbitrate=150 -ofps 25 -oac mp3lame -lameopts abr:br=32 -
srate 22050 -vf scale=720 -o unitedearth.flv
```

After creating the flv file, I uploaded it to the server using FTP. I also created a starting .jpg image of the same name as the .flv from one of the frames of the video, and uploaded it in the same folder.

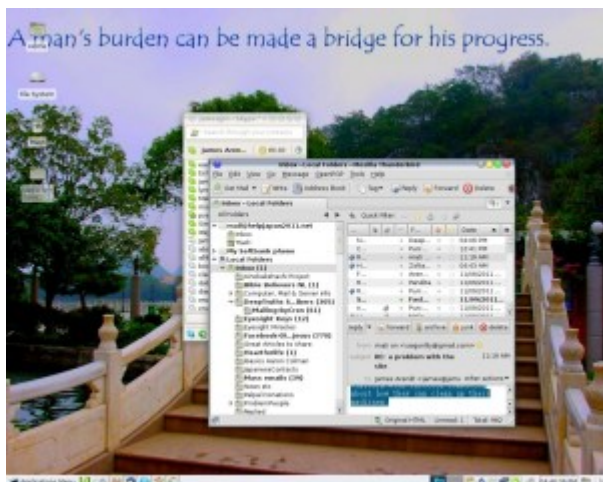I also installed a handy WordPress plugin, FLV Embed to display the video.

On the page to post the video, in the HTML editor I added the following:

[flv:/wp-content/uploads/unitedearth.flv 480 368]

Click this link to see the result! Audio in Japanese only.

Fedora 16 review

November 9: After getting sick of Gnome 3 on Fedora 15, I tried Linux Mint
Debian for a while because it has the Gnome 2 desktop environment, my
favourite to date. Linux Mint Debian ran very well but because there were
certain tweaks to the system I wanted to implement but could not (but can in
Fedora), I decided to go back to Fedora 14, the last Fedora with Gnome 2. The
creator of Linux, Linus Torvalds, preferred Gnome 2 over 3 as well. He also
uses Fedora as his Linux distribution of choice. Since the advent of Gnome 3
in Fedora 15, Linus ditched it for the Xfce environment instead. I figure if
Xfce is good enough for Linus, it's good enough for me. So when Fedora 16
went gold yesterday, I immediately downloaded it, installed it, and installed
the Xfce desktop environment.

James Japan's Xfce desktop with Fedora 16

Fedora 16 with the Xfce desktop environment is like driving a new car with a
more powerful engine but with different dashboard. I'm getting used to it.
Xfce does seem to be more tweak-able than Gnome 2 was. I can see certain
features that Gnome 2 didn't have. But I still miss the cool Gnome 2 applets.
Won't somebody please bring them back?

March 14, 2012 update: I tried to install Compiz in LXDE but couldn't make it
work. All icons on panels would disappear every time I ran fusion-icon. I
wondered how it would work on KDE Plasma Desktop Environment. Compiz works
great! Here's what my desktop looks like now:

Kde Plasma James Japan Desktop

KDE Plasma has 4 different appearances

1. Desktop Icons (Plain desktop with icons on it)
2. Photos Activity (Shows random photos in the Picture folder)
3. Desktop (Makes the Desktop folder a window with the option of wallpaper)
4. Search and Launch (Shows all the installed applications)

Besides this it has a pop-up application menu that is overall better than either LXDE or XFCE, and way better than Gnome 3! All in all KDE Plasma seems to be for me the most user friendly, intuitive, easy to use and tweak-able Linux desktop environment.