

# One man writes Linux drivers for 352 USB webcams

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A LONE HOBBYIST programmer sitting at his home in France is responsible for adding 352 USB webcams to the list of those supported by Linux. He tells the INQUIRER about this often unknown and unrecognised achievement.

Near three years ago, I purchased the cheapest USB webcams -actually, one pair- I could find at the time, without taking into consideration whether those webcams worked with Linux or not. I ran one desktop PC with Win2K and one of the webcams was plugged to that box. I quickly found out several things: first, "Made in China" webcams surely are cheap, but that comes at a price of often having no support web site, no physical address of the manufacturer, and no updates to its drivers. The Win2K drivers for the "DigiGR8" 301P had apparently a memory leak under Win2k, forcing me to reboot the win2k box on a daily basis. Basically it just stopped working after a dozen hours of continuous use, and rebooting was the only solution.

I then concluded I had enough with Win2K and decided to install my Linux distro of choice -back then Sun Microsystem's ill-fated Java Desktop System for Linux R2. It soon became evident that the device was a power-sucking brick as far as Linux compatibility was concerned.

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