PCLOS

digital magazine

TEX'S OWN

minime

gnome

original

sam

PCLOS ON A STICK

What's your flavour?

EDITORIAL

Welcome once again to a new and wonder filled issue of PCLinuxOS Magazine. You have looked at the cover and you say "PCLOS on a Stick?" The feature article this month will walk you through installing any version of PCLinuxOS onto a USB stick. So you have a 1Gb, 2Gb, or 4Gb stick you say! You will also find that you can add literally as many different versions as your stick can hold!

The rest of the this issue has another chapter of the KDE User guide, how to prepare for the Linux Professional Institute (LPI) Exam, a formatting howto for your Open Office apps, and an in depth article on the SMART package manager.
An updated list of PCLOS based distros (let me know if I missed any) and where you can obtain the awesome "Powered by PCLinuxOS" case stickers so that you can show your pride and contribute a little back to Tex and the Gang will also be found in these pages.

Now that I have piqued your interest in what is to be found on the following pages, it is time for my little rambling to end. Drop by our website and let us know what you liked, didn't like, and what you would like to see in upcoming issues. See you next month!

Papawoob

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PCLOS

DISCLAIMER

TESTIMONIALS

I am a technical writer and editor by profession with over 30 years in the electronics, RF, software, and semiconductor industries. I am both impressed and amazed at the spectrum of available software in Linux and its usability. There is nothing that I have yet found that can be done in Windows that can not be done in Linux and done so with more security, less hassle, and certainly less cost.

As the years have passed, and I have moved from CPM to OS2 to DOS, to Windows 3.1, and on and on, I was always looking for an avenue to get away from Windows as soon as they started to charge too much, their software became bloated and unwieldy, and they stopped listening to their customers. (adware, viruses, security, style, updates, etc.) I was an HP UX user for a while and was very impressed with the stability and relative ease of use of UNIX. The versatility and robustness of UNIX stuck with me for years and I always wondered why Windows could never figure that out. After some initial distro hopping, I have now been "Windows Free" on all of my personal machines for a couple years now. I use PCLOS on all my Dell Optiplex G1 desktops and Mepis on my 390E Thinkpad laptops. I have become somewhat of a Linux evangelist and I am always trying to get others to "convert".

My wife and daughter, who are not power users of any OS, have had no trouble moving from Windows to Linux and indeed, they too like the high level of customization and security that Linux affords. From university school work for my daughter including numerous on-line classes, to budgeting programs like KBudget and multimedia support for my wife, they too have discovered the versatility and usability of Linux.

My thanks and appreciation to those who drive projects like PCLOS that provide an elegant, efficient, safe, and usable alternative to Windows. My thanks to the countless individuals who have taken the time to post resolutions to numerous issues on the forums. As I have discovered, if I have an issue, there is likely to be someone else who has had the same issue and a resolution is merely one forum search away.

Try that with M$oft Tech Support and you will quickly be disappointed and end up with less money in your pocket.

My thanks to the PCLOS core team and to those regular users who routinely provide support on the forum.

Keep up the great work.

Wyolincoln

TESTIMONIALS

I know you have all probably heard how everyone has left M$ and moved over to PCLinuxOS ....

WELL I'M THE SAME WOOOOOOOOOOHOOOOOOOOOO

sorry i will control myself ..... but my testimonial goes like so ...

been using M$ since M$Dos ... so i have pretty much been a M$ supporter .... until M$ lost sight of the needs of it's users and decided to go it alone and leave everyone behind ..... so from 95 to 98 then speedily through ME to XP where i have stayed happy for a number of years then on Vista ... where alas my romance with M$ has now ended ....

i have dabbled with Unix/Linux on a number of occasions but have always seemed to return to M$ simply because the Linux Distro's have failed to provide needed applications or hardware support which are quite simply click and use out of the box .... i have tried many distro's from Suse (fairly user friendly) to Mandriva through to Kubuntu/Ubuntu and many many flavours in between .... then i found PCLinuxOS simply by browsing Google under Linux ....

WOW ... and again WOW ... quite simply the most refreshing and user friendly version of Linux i have used .... it has everything i need from video editing/ DVD creation ... to Music and Games .... Office and the system utilities galore ... i have broken it a few times in trying to set it up to how i want it ... but instead of giving up and returning to M$ .... PCLinuxOS has kept my attention and i am winning through ... i have Compiz working and i am tweaking and changing everyday ...

Quite simply ... this Distro stands out against the giants .... Suse/ RedHat/ Mandriva and is a pleasure to be sat in front playing with .... i am now finding myself looking for new things to learn in order to see if PCLinuxOS will simply do or install through Synaptic ....

i have a new toy and it's a shame it has taken me so long to find the right shop to buy from ....

so just a thankyou to the whole of the PCLinuxOS team in creating something which has made my computing fun again

Kori

TESTIMONIALS

First off let me say that I am a Linux neophyte. As most, I have been a user of 'that other OS'. I am NOT a trained professional computer person. All I know, I have garnered from experience, forums, books and correcting my own mistakes when possible. Also I am a 'senior citizen' and have been for several years.

I just want to say that I have downloaded ISOs, burned CDs and tried probably at least a dozen live distros of Linux. By far, PCLinuxOS is the most friendly I have found. IT WORKS!!! It installed without a hitch. It recognized my ethernet card, configured and connected to the WAN through my router all by itself with a few questions answered by me.

Having the apps most users want and need, already installed and ready to go, is a big PLUS. Firefox, Thunderbird, Flash and the one that most DON'T include, Java JRE. All the links are made and IT WORKS!!! The myriad of other software is to be acknowledged as well. Gimp, the KDE bundle, Open Office and the list goes on.

One other amazing thing I found is this. I have 2 ethernet desktop machines, 1 wireless desktop and a wireless laptop. While PCLinuxOS was setting itself up (well almost by itself) it recognized all my machines, my LAN, my router and set up all the SAMBA links as well for me. I had been reading how to do that and it seemed like a nightmare to me. Then I found out it was already done and accessible through the 'System Menu/Remote Places'. THANKS to all who helped engineer this great Linux package and made a very usable, easy to install, newbie friendly version of Linux. My hat's off to the whole gang. Keep up the good work.

My advice to any Linux beginner is to try PCLinuxOS.
IT WORKS!!!

Logan
Evansville, IN

Manual Set up of PCLOS Live on USB drive

by ClareOdie

View the forum thread here

Warning:

Following these instructions could result in loss of valuable data. You try this entirely at your own risk.

While I like LiveCds I think they suck in operation. They are noisy and slow. Enter the USB drive – flash drive, USB stick, pendrive or whatever name you might have. Even external USB HDD. All much faster and less noisy than a CD.

So I decided that I wanted to have my Live PCLOS on a USB stick, but I wanted it to be easy for me to change from PCLOS KDE to PCLOS Gnome to BEL Server to Tiny to Flux etc, etc, as the mood and requirements dictated. This is what I have done. It works for me. No guarantees for anyone else.

I see lots of stuff written about putting PCLOS onto a pen drive/ USB stick/flash drive or whatever. Lots of people seem to have difficulty with this, or maybe it is the concept that escapes them. I don't know what it is, but what follows is a very useful way to have a USB drive set up for your favourite PCLOS distro or derivative. I use Grub as the bootloader.

What is required is a 1 GB USB drive. Smaller is manageable but does limit the distros that will fit on it. With a 1 GB drive anything that fits on a CD will fit on it. You can use a larger drive if you wish of course. To do so would make it possible to put your own remaster on the stick.

The concept:

Create partitions on the drive to hold the OS files and also the boot files. For the sake of security we will keep the OS files separate from the boot files. There is no attempt in this document to extend the capabilities over those of the liveCD. In other words if you want to save changes or have persistence then you will have a little more work to do.

To get started .... while running in PCLOS insert your USB drive and go to PCC - Mount Points and in there delete all partitions on the drive. Press "Done" at the bottom of the screen when completed.
Go back into Mount Points. Ensure you select Expert Mode at the bottom, and select each partition to be Primary Type. Create partitions on the drive as follows:

1. 5 MB in size VFAT (Fat16 or Fat32) type
2. The rest of the USB drive or 1 GB also as VFAT (Fat32) type

Format both partitions. Press "Done" again. Unplug the drive and reinsert it after waiting a few seconds. You should now have two partitions available for your use.

HOW TO

Can a single partition be used instead? Yes it can, but here are some reasons I prefer to use two partitions:

I like to keep Grub separate from the OS on its own partition.

It makes it less likely that someone inexperienced will delete the grub stuff.

It also ensures that if a user is copying files to the second partition they will not inadvertently overwrite the grub files and leave the device unbootable.

Bear in mind also that a user can do as they like with the second partition - change filesystem type or delete or enlarge the partition, etc, etc, and it should not affect the drive's ability to boot.

If the Grub files were on the second partition then the install procedure would need to be done again.

** We are one third the way there. **

Copying the Operating System Files

You can copy the needed files from a LiveCD

 ******** OR ********

Extract the files from an ISO

Next, if you do not have Kiso installed do so now using Synaptic. Once Kiso is installed you can click on an ISO image of your favourite PCLOS and choose:

Actions -> Kiso -> Mount as Virtual Drive

That should bring a CD icon to the Desktop from where you can open it. Copy the isolinux directory and the livecd.sqfs file from the CD to the second (larger) partition of the USB drive. Once the copy is completed go back and right click on the ISO image

again and choose:

Actions -> Kiso -> Unmount Virtual Drive

(the ISO can also be mounted at the terminal, but if you know how to do so there is no need to mention it here)

NB Please note that although the files may have been copied FROM the ISO it will take a while for them to be copied TO the USB device. They are first copied to memory and from there to the drive. The copy dialog disappears when the copy FROM is completed which can be a considerable time before the copy TO completes. Please make sure you do not prevent the copy process from completing.

** We are well on the way ... **

Using your file manager, create, on the smaller partition of the USB drive, a directory called /**boot**. Also while there, create another directory and call it **gfxmenu**. Please note that this location may be something like **system:/media/sdc1** when viewed in the location bar of your file manager.

Next, in file manager, navigate to the root directory of the running operating system(/), and there open /**boot**/ which should display the grub directory and a lot of other files. Copy the grub directory, from the running OS, to within the boot directory on the small partition of the USB drive. That is the directory created above. Next navigate to /**usr**/**share**/**gfxboot**/**themes**/**pclinuxos**/**boot**/ and copy from there to the new gfxmenu directory on the USB drive, the file called **message**.

** Nearly there! **

On the smaller partition of the **USB drive** (make sure of what you are doing here), navigate to /boot/grub (maybe like **system:/media/sdc1/boot/grub/**) and open (with Kwrite) the file menu.lst.

Delete all of it's contents and replace them with the following (you can copy & paste):

```
timeout 10
color black/cyan yellow/cyan
gfxmenu (hd0,0)/gfxmenu/message
default 0

title Live PCLOS
kernel (hd0,1)/isolinux/vmlinuz
fromusb vga=788
initrd
(hd0,1)/isolinux/initrd.gz
```

Save the file.

To recap on what should have been done:

1. Create 2 partitions and format them

2. Copy the OS files to the second partition

3. Copy the boot files to the first partition

4. Copy the boot splash to the first partition (message)

5. Edit the menu.lst file on the first partition.

** Last leg ..... **

We now install the Grub bootloader to the MBR of the USB drive.

Open a terminal and su to root. At the root prompt (#) type:

grub <enter>

this should return the grub prompt like this:

grub>

At this prompt type:

grub> find /**boot**/**grub**/**menu.lst**

On my PC this returns

(hd0,0)

(hd2,0)

The first is my full install and the second is my USB stick.

Note: This is where it is prudent to be careful that you do not wipe valuable data. To ensure that you have identified the correct device from those returned by the find command, 'safely remove' the USB device and run the command again. Whichever device number is missing is your USB device. Plug it back in and run the command again to be sure you have correctly identified it.

*** Below I use the numbers returned in the find command. If you have different numbers then use those instead ***

Next, type:

grub> **root (hd2,0)**   [be sure to change the numbers to suit your install]

and this returns

Filesystem type is fat, partition type 0x6

Next, type the setup command:

grub> **setup (hd2)**   [this writes Grub to the MBR of (hd2)]

and this returns the following:

Checking if "/boot/grub/stage1" exists... yes

Checking if "/boot/grub/stage2" exists... yes

Checking if "/boot/grub/fat_stage1_5" exists... yes

Running "embed /boot/grub/fat_stage1_5 (hd2)"... 15 sectors are embedded.

succeeded

Running "install /boot/grub/stage1 (hd2) (hd2)1+15 p (hd2,0)/boot/grub/stage2 /boot/grub/menu.lst"

... succeeded

Done.

grub> **halt** <enter>   [closes the Grub command line.]

We are finished!

Reboot your PC.

Edit your BIOS to make the USB drive the first boot device.

It is a good idea to have them in this order if they exist:

1. Floppy

2. USB

3. CD ROM

4. HDD

Once the BIOS boot order has been set you should be able to boot your USB drive.

There is of course no guarantee that this will boot on your hardware, so I will deal with a couple of possible problems.

If you fail to see the boot page then your installation of Grub is faulty. Go back and check that you did every step.

If Grub cannot find files then you need to check that you have entered all the details correctly. Where possible, I suggest that you copy/paste from this document to your own.

Some hardware setups will need specific boot codes. As these are specific to your hardware I have made no attempt to include them. You should be able to get an idea of which ones are needed from the boot codes in your present menu.lst file.

For those who like not to see the boot lines and who may also have special boot codes to get going, I recommend that the boot stanza be copied, the extra boot codes be added to the copy, and the Default=0 be changed to Default=1. That will select the second boot entry as the default.

The fun part about this is, this is the only time you will need to do this installation. Any time you wish to change the OS on the stick to a different PCLOS OS all that is required is that you delete the OS files from the larger partition and replace them with those from your new favourite PCLOS .... be it Tiny, Flux, BEL, Gnome, or whichever. There is no need to change the contents on the first partition or to reinstall Grub. If you have a larger USB stick then you could put a remaster of your own install on the stick in the very same manner.

I tried the stick on a box that would not boot directly from the USB device, so I used a Smart Boot Manager floppy to call the stick.

Because the drive number of the stick was now not correct I had to make another entry ..... well, actually I temporarily edited the existing entry at the boot page.

First I went to the Grub command line from the boot page, and used the find command to find the menu.lst file again. This time I got results which indicated that the disc was being seen as (hd1) and not as (hd0) or (hd2), so I rebooted and edited the boot entry changing each instance of (hd0,0) with (hd1,0).

The USB stick then booted. I added a second entry to my grub menu.lst and called it Floppy, so now it will be available if required. As you use the drive you can make different boot stanzas to suit differing circumstances.

Please note that when using the floppy to boot the stick, the drive number the stick gets can vary from PC to PC dependent on hardware.

Here is something else for you to consider .... the quickest method of using the stick to boot different releases.

I just set this up on my 1 GB USB stick.

What I did was to go into PCC - Mount Points and resized the second partition to about 300MBs or a little less. In the remaining space I created two more partitions; another of nearly 300 MBs and a third of about 370MBs. I formatted all three as Linux Native, making them primary partitions. Next I copied the MiniMe OS files to the last partition - the larger one - and the TinyMe and the TinyFlux OS files to the other two partitions. Lastly I edited the menu.lst file ----- below are the entries.

Code:

```
Timeout 10
color black/cyan yellow/cyan
gfxmenu (hd0,0)/gfxboot/message
default 0
title Tiny Live
kernel
(hd0,1)/isolinux/vmlinuz
fromusb bootfrom=/dev/sda2 vga=788

initrd
```

```
(hd0,1)/isolinux/initrd.gz
title Flux Live
kernel (hd0,2)/isolinux/vmlinuz
fromusb bootfrom=/dev/sda3
vga=788
initrd
(hd0,2)/isolinux/initrd.gz
titleiniMe Live
kernel (hd0,3)/isolinux/vmlinuz
fromusb bootfrom=/dev/sda4
vga=788
initrd
(hd0,3)/isolinux/initrd.gz
```

The bootfrom boot codes are important to prevent the os versions from getting mixed up and failing to work. So now I have three OS versions on the one stick! Hehe, not much left is there?

Note:

I should mention that the grub entries are for the device when plugged into a PC that allows USB booting.

I hope it works for you.

Have Fun.

Formatting HowTo for OpenOffice Writer

by eager2no

for the nice folks at the PCLinuxOS Forum

This document describes how to format text properly in OpenOffice Writer. The formating principles mostly also apply to Microsoft Word. Similarities/differences will be highlighted.

I am a long-time Microsoft Word user, and am relatively new to OpenOffice, but since it tries to emulate most of the MS Office features, the formatting principles are practically the same, apart from a few implementation differences.

Important stuff is shown in red.

Why format?

When you type in your text in a text editor, it seems a lot easier to just format stuff bold, colored, etc. as you go. Why take the trouble to create separate styles for your headings, highlighted text, etc.?

Let's say your Default style is Bitstream Vera Serif 12 points (like this text), and you want headings to be **Arial 14 point bold**, and want to use three types of highlighted text: Arial 12 points light green, **Times 13 points bold light blue**, and Arial 13 points light magenta.

If you don't use styles, you will need to repeatedly format your text at each and every occurrence of your headings and colored text. This is a drag in itself, but now imagine you change your mind and want that Arial 13 points magenta to be Tahoma 12 points green. Your only option is to manually find all occurrences of the highlighted text, and reformat them one by one. If your text is a single page, this doesn't seem like an awful lot of work, but it will if you need to wade through 30 pages.

If you use styles, you just need to modify the style of a piece of text once, and bingo, all text that has the same style name will miraculously assume your modified formatting. So no matter how long your text is, you will only need to make a formatting change once.

Types of text styles

When you open Writer, you will see, from top to bottom, a menu bar, a toolbar, a formatting bar, and the ruler.

The formatting bar contains the basic controls for changing formats. Existing formats can be viewed by clicking on the little down arrow of the style name drop-down that shows Default in the image.

OO_Formatting_HowTo - OpenOffice.org Writer

Edit View Insert Format Table Tools Window Help

Default   Nimbus Sans L   12

Click the Format menu, and select Styles and Formatting (or hit F11) to display the Styles and Formatting pane.

Move your cursor along the five icons at the top , pausing above each to see what they are. In this how-to, we will be concerned mostly with the leftmost two:

paragraphstyles and **character styles**.

Paragraph styles

A paragraph starts just after the previous Enter you have hit (or at the start of the page), and ends with the Enter you have hit to start the next paragraph.

A paragraph style applies to text starting just after the previous Enter (or at the start of the page), and ending with its closing paragraph mark. The closing paragraph mark is part of the paragraph.

Visually, paragraph marks look like the striker arm on a bell. If you don't see them in your text, click on the toolbar icon near the right end (to the left of the percent dropdown) or go to the View menu and activate "Non-Printing Characters."

The mother of all paragraph styles is the Default style (called Normal in MS Office). All other styles are described internally in Writer as 'Default + <differences from Default>'. (This is more apparent in Word, where the menu command Format - Style - Modify actually shows ' Normal + <differences>').

Character styles

Character styles apply to part of a paragraph. They have nothing to do with line spacing, breaks and many other attributes: those are part of paragraph formatting. (However, this is where you'll find Language – MS Word has it under Tools - Language.) You can have a Default paragraph with a character style applied to part of it. When you click in a string with character formatting, the character style will not show in the style name box, only in Styles and Formatting (in contrast with Word, where the character style does appear in the style name box).

Exercise 1 – Modifying a style, method 1

HOW TO

1. Click anywhere in the text.

2. Click on the little down arrow of the style name drop-down, and click on a style.

3. Look at the text under the cursor: you have just changed the formatting of a paragraph.

Exercise 2 – Modifying a style, method 2

1. Mark a paragraph: left-click at the beginning of the first line of the paragraph and, keeping the left mouse button depressed, drag the mouse behind the last character of the paragraph. Alternatively, you can also fast-click 3 (or 4) times anywhere within the paragraph. (Note: 2 clicks select a word, 3 a sentence, 4 a paragraph.)

2. Note the contents of the the style name field top left (it probably says Default).

3. Hit F11 to bring up Styles and Formatting.

4. Double-click on a style name

you fancy. Your marked paragraph will assume the properties of the selected style. Also, note that the style name field has changed, reflecting your action.

Exercise 3 – Creating a paragraph style

1. Mark a paragraph.

2. Click Format - Character... (or just use the controls in the formatting bar) and modify its character properties (font size,. color, language, etc.)

3. Click Format - Paragraph... and modify the paragraph properties of the selected text (line spacing, alignment, etc.)

4. When you are done, click into the style name box top left, and overwrite its contents with the name of your new style (can be anything).

5. Click into any other paragraph, then open the style name box and select your new style. The paragraph assumes the properties you have defined above.

Exercise 4 – Creating a character style

1. Mark a part of a paragraph.

2. Reformat the text as you want it to look. (Don't click any other part of the text in the process to maintain your selection. If you lose it, just select it again.)

3. Hit F11, click the top right icon, and select New Style from Selection.

4. Select another word, then hit F11, select the character style icon (second from left), find your new character style, and double-click on it. The new word has assumed the properties of your new character style.

Tips 'n Tricks

Inheritance: When you hit the Enter key to start a new paragraph, that paragraph will inherit the properties of the paragraph you hit Enter to leave. Also, if you delete the

paragraph mark preceding a manually formatted paragraph, the manually formatted paragraph will lose its properties and assume those of the previous paragraph.

Modifying inheritance: If you have created e.g. a custom heading style called Head (let's say it is bold, character size is 14 points), you probably wouldn't want the subsequent paragraph to also be Head: it should be normal text, i.e. Default. To achieve this, click F11 to display Styles and Formatting. Right-click on the paragraph style Head, and click Modify... . Select the Organizer tab, and in the Next Style drop-down select the paragraph style you want it followed by, in this case Default. Now when you next enter a Head style text and hit Enter, the new paragraph will be Default.

Inheritance of derived styles: An easy way for creating a new paragraph style is to select an existing style, format it manually, then click into the styles drop-down and overwrite the name

with your own style name. Keep in mind, however, that if you later modify the parent style (the one you derived your new style from), the changes will also apply to the child style you created from it previously. This is not a problem: just select the derived style, change anything you want, then hit F11, left-click on the style name (it will probably be selected anyway), left-click the top right icon in Styles and Formatting, and select Update Style.

Repeat last action: Applying a style repeatedly throughout your text can be tedious. Here is how to make it dead easy:

On the menu click View - Toolbars - Customize... .

Select the Toolbars tab, and select Standard in the Toolbar drop-down.

In the Toolbar Content area, tick the command **Repeat** and click OK.

Notice that you have a new icon at the left end of your toolbar.

Now apply your style to the first occurrence in the text. Then find the next text part you want to format identically, select it (if you are doing a paragraph style, just click in the paragraph), and click on the new icon. The Repeat icon will automatically repeat your last action, in this case the formatting of your text.

See your page as it will print:

On the menu click View - Toolbars - Customize... .

Select the Toolbars tab, and select Standard in the Toolbar drop-down.

In the Toolbar Content area, tick the command **Page Preview** and click OK.

Notice that you have a new icon at the left end of your toolbar. Click it to see your text as it will print, click again to get back to the normal edit view.

TIPS 'N' TRICKS

Attention

Have you ever gotten tired of looking at those "Designed for Microsoft Windows" stickers on your PC or laptop when you know it is "Powered by PCLinuxOS?" If you are like many other PCLinuxOS users and myself, you can now do something about it. Thanks to the efforts of lgross1949, and Gryphen (graphics), you can now order yourself as many as you need to

replace them, and every cent of profit goes to Tex & the Ripper Gang to help fund the continuing development of our beloved OS. Below you can see what they look like.

You can order these by e-mailing

lgross1949 at: lgross1949@yahoo.com (the first letter is an l (el)) or lgross1949@powerc.net. After you have placed your order he will send you a billing statement through PayPal and you can pay with Credit or Debit Card, or Checking Account. You don't have to have a PayPal account to use it. I would prefer PayPal for payment, but can accept a money order.

The price for them at this time will be for quantities of 1-49 = $2.60 ea.

50-99 = $2.00 ea. and 100+ = $1.50 ea. in US dollars. Please add $1.00 to each order (not each sticker) from outside the U.S., Canada & Mexico.

I will have the first 500 of these available on January 4, 2008 (Friday) I should be able to start invoicing and shipping immediately after that. So let's get with it and order yours today!

Video Guide To Installing PCLinuxOS

Jaqui has produced video guide to installing PCLinuxOS. It's a complete walk through

Giving everyting you need to getting PCLinuxOS on your sytem.

http://showmedo.com/videos/video?name=1950000&fromSeriesID=195

LPI Exam: Taking Your Linux Seriously

by Gary Ratliff Sr.
<eronstuc@gmail.com>

In a previous article I mentioned that Distrowatch would often feature a specialized distribution of a Linux CD. I mentioned that one was designed to use to prepare for the Linux Professional Institute Exams. A review of the features offered by this distribution is the topic of this article.

To make a usable Live DVD use techniques similar to those we have covered in the past. However, because the size of the file downloaded is 1.8 gigs, it is necessary that you have a DVD burner as just a plain CD burner will not do. The k3b program, discussed in previous articles will be used to burn the DVD. Start by downloading the iso image

from:

http://www.elearnit.de/live_cds/elpicx/

The site will allow you to download the image either in English or German. It has been several years since I dealt with listening to Living Language records of German from the Nashville, Tennessee Public Library so I opted to download the English version. Once the image is downloaded simply burn it using k3b to an R+ blank DVD. The k3b program will detect that a blank DVD has been loaded. Click on tools and choose "burn live DVD Image." Soon you will have a live DVD ready to use.

Unlike other live iso images, this one may be used in several ways. As a standard image you may boot it by placing it into the computer and starting up the machine. Of course your BIOS must be set to use the method of booting from the DVD reader as the first device for booting.. The default boot will be into Knoppix; however, at the boot prompt enter "centos" for the desired operating system.

Centos is the system that is best used for preparing for the Red Hat and the LPI exams. CentOS is based on a version of the Red Hat Enterprise system. Centos offers a compatible system one may use to prepare for the RHCT (Red Hat Certified Technician) and RHCE (Red Hat Certified Engineer) exams. The text

regarding exam preparation in the DVD points out that the LPI exams are a series of text based questions and the exam for Red Hat Certification uses a live system executing the Red Hat Enterprise operating system.

Here is the display of the Live DVD with the Centos Operating System loaded. While the Knoppix system is based on KDE this one is based on Gnome. You will have to explore the entries in order to locate the study material.

The key to entering CentOS is to use the password centos_user while logging into the system. I did not get the CentOS system to recognize my cordless mouse. I attached a usb mouse to the system to explore the Gnome menu system. The user session does not automatically open to the study materials so you need to find the study materials by exploring the

menu entries. Once the study material is opened with the web browser, you will note that it is the same material accessed via the Knoppix distro. The load time for the CentOS system is longer than for the Knoppix system.

If nothing is selected when the live DVD is loaded, the default Knoppix system will be loaded. Enter centos after the boot: prompt and the longer process of loading CentOS will begin. Don't miss noting the password hint.

If your system is already running Linux or windows, you may insert the DVD and launch it with your web browser. This will present a page which will again allow you to select the language you prefer to use. The choices are either: Deutsch (German) or English.

In the background you can see that all the various partitions on my HP system. My hard drive used in the Multibooting experiment really does have 30 partitions.
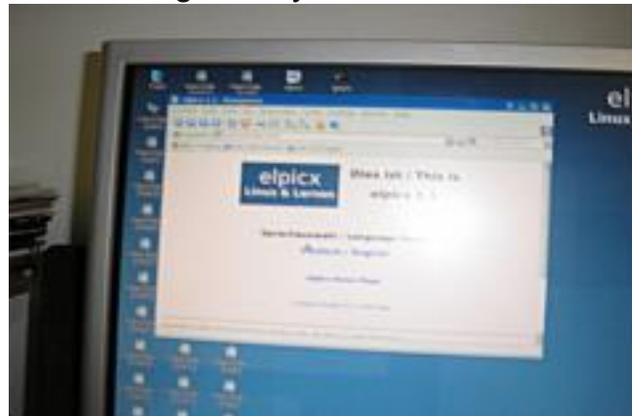
After selecting English,a list of the materials offered for study will be presented. This will include: Knoppix Tutorial by Karl Schock, Knowing

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Knoppix by Phil Jones, and Linux Fundamentals by Matthew West. These book sized features will be followed by a list of study guides and reference materials for the exams. The materials offered are quite thorough and contains links to various detailed discussions through out the material.

To get an idea of just how demanding the task of preparing for the LPI exams is, you may read the material covered for the exam in Appendix A of the pdf style book "Linux Fundamentals."

If you wish to study the material but wish to run this course in Windows, there is a prepared Linux Emulator available. The emulator sets up a virtual Linux machine in Windows, You can download this emulator from:

http://learnlinux.tsf.org.za/moodle/resources/bochs-2.1.debian.exe

Once installed, you will have an icon

on your desktop. Use it to launch a Linux "bash shell." This will present the same files which are given as examples to use for learning the Linux commands in the book "Linux Fundamentals."

Not all study

True, the major feature of this distro is the included material which will help you prepare for the exams. However, this is a full featured Linux distribution. It includes a full set of software. The "OpenOffice suite, GIMP, editors, and games. including the very addictive "Frozen Bubble" game. Presented here is a snapshot of a game of Frozen Bubble in progress.
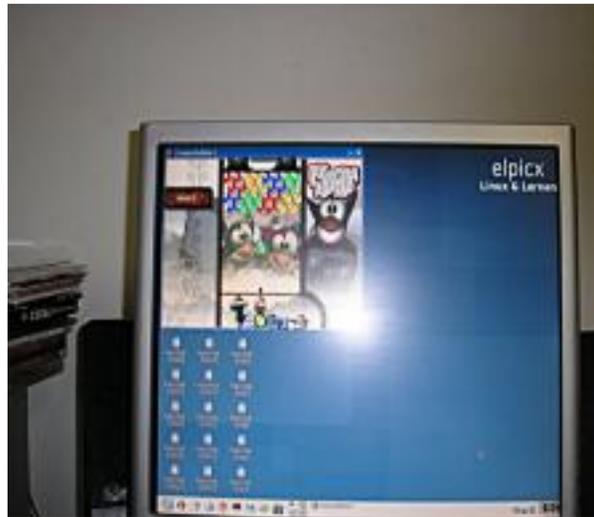
If you have tried the PCLINUXOS and enjoy it but, you wish to take your learning to a higher level, begin learning how to become a certified system administrator

by downloading and studying the material contained in this DVD. I am emphatic that it would be of great benefit to you.

SMART: An Alternative Package Manager

by pinoc

Introduction: Smart?

Using Linux for more than 10 years, I tested a lot of distributions, for sure more than 40. As a die-hard KDE fan, I mostly worked with Red Hat and a very long time with SuSE. Though a bit sluggish, I quite liked SuSE but I was never happy with their package management system. In my opinion, things got worse when Novell took over and after the deal with Microsoft, it was only logical and time to leave SuSE for good. Looking for alternatives, I used Slackware, then fell in love with Vector Linux, played with the excellent modular Slax system, and even installed and ran Knoppix for some time, which brought me from the rpm to the deb package

system. Seeing the big Ubuntu hype, I used Kubuntu for a couple of months but always felt their KDE implementation was not a high priority and needed a serious overhaul. Every distro had its pros and cons and the only application I used continuously throughout all distros was, if available, the Smart package manager. Then, in May 2007, I finally tested, immediately switched to, and fell in love with PCLinuxOS. Indeed, this distro was and still is for me, what it claims: a distro-hopper-stopper, everything "just works" the Macintosh of the Linux distros, the best KDE implementation ever, and as soon as I found Smart in the repos I felt right at home in PCLinuxOS.

This article is an informal collection of information related to the Smart package manager. Please note that the default package manager in PCLinuxOS is Synaptic and the current Smart Version 0.52 is still considered to be in development (beta), so use it at your own risk! Then again, I have used Smart for years without any issues. So what is this Smart application anyway? Here is an excerpt from the official home-page http://labix.org/smart providing a concise description:

 The Smart Package Manager project has the ambitious objective of creating smart and portable algorithms for solving adequately the problem of managing software upgrading and installation. This tool works in all major distributions, and will bring notable advantages over native tools currently in use (APT, APT-RPM, YUM, URPMI, etc).

Notice that this project is not a magical bridge between every distribution on the planet. Instead, this is a software offering better package management for these distributions, even when working with their own packages. Using multiple package managers at the same time (like rpm and dpkg) is possible, even though not the software goal at this moment.

The name Smart describes the core of the program. When doing a lot of updates there may be several solutions for the installation. In contrast to other package managers Smart will not take the first possible solution but, instead, compares all options and then opts for the best one. For example, The current PCLinuxOS is from May 2007. If you do a new install and a subsequent update then there will be many new program versions available and it may be possible to install each and every one. However, in order to maintain the highest possible efficiency and stability of the system it is thinkable that some updates should not be installed, or with different dependencies than, for example, Synaptic would do.

Smart offers some interesting features (see also point 3 below):

Support of RPM, DPKG, and Slackware packages

Thorough dependency check (even of packages not installed but available in the repository)

Choice of suitable packages of different sources (if available)

High speed parallel download of packages

Locking of selected applications

System repair function

GUI and command line

Installation and configuration

You can use Synaptic or apt-get to install Smart and the required dependencies. If you opt for the graphical way, start Synaptic, refresh the channels, and simply search for and install smart-suite. Alternatively, you may use the following set of commands in a root-shell:

apt-get update && apt-get install smart-suite

An optional but recommended application is called PCLinuxOS-SMART-Servicemenu. This is only one of many great programs provided by the German PCLOS user Maik3531 in his PCLinuxOS repository. It provides a very useful interaction with Smart via the service menu, and further information is provided below. You can add his repository to Synaptic by appending the following line to your /etc/apt/sources.list:

rpm http://maik3531.de pclos2007/RPM testing
now, with the Maik3531 repo enabled, you install this service menu with the following

set of commands in a root-shell:

apt-get update && apt-get install PCLinuxOS-SMART-Servicemenu

both set of commands will automatically select and install all necessary dependencies.

Configuration of the sources:

After the installation, Smart will use the official PCLinuxOS channels including the "testing" component. Less adventurous users may wish to disable this component (see below). Please note that Smart will not automatically take over customized repo-settings of Synaptic, e.g., your P.A.S.S. (Premium Access System Server) access, so you need to do that manually. You may consult the currently available repositories in Smart with the command:

smart channel –show

Note:

I have found two scripts for the conversion of repo-settings from Synaptic to Smart:

http://www30.websamba.com/texpert/aptosmart.sh.gz and
http://linux01.gwdg.de/~pbleser/files/smart/yast2-sources-to-smart.sh

Both are relatively old and I could not make them work with the current Smart Version (0.52). Hence, you must use the command line or the GUI.

Graphical User Interface (GUI) configuration:

Start Smart either from the command line in a root shell using: smart --gui

& or via the menu:

Start -> System –> Configuration –> Packaging –> Software Installer

and insert your root password. Once started, go to the menu Edit –> Channels.

The image below shows the Smart Interface, on top of the channel window listing all channels where the active ones have a tick mark, and on top of this one the Edit Channel window showing the settings of an active channel. Please note that this contains the "testing" component and you may choose to delete this entry as it provides packages which are being tested by developers and as such, not suitable in a stable production system.

sufficient to have only one of them (the geographically closest to you) enabled, otherwise you would only download duplicate information. To add an additional channel, you select "New" in the channel window and you will get this window:
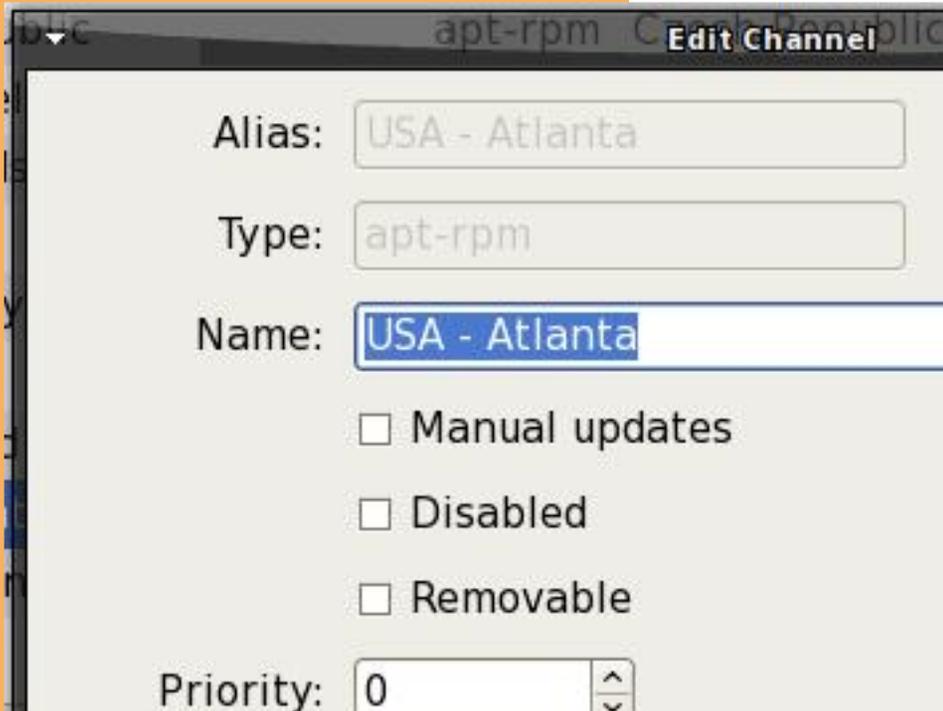
Another important remark is at the bottom of the list of channels where you will find an active entry named "rpm-sys". This entry provides information on the currently installed rpms on your system, it must always stay enabled, otherwise Smart has no info about your system! In analogy with Synaptic, all other channels are PCLinuxOS mirror servers and it is
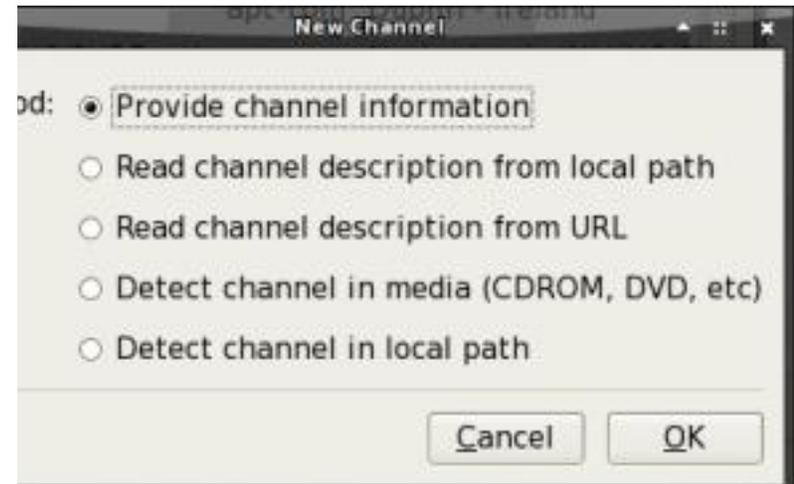
Here, you can select a path to a local directory, a CD drive, or keep the first option selected to add for example your access to P.A.S.S., or the repository of Maik3531, etc. Then you click on OK, which will open this next window, from which you need to choose the repository type. From the amount of options to choose from you get an idea of the versatility of Smart, but in the normal case and our example you would select: apt-rpm

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Another click on "OK" and the entry for the repository of Maik3531 should look like this:
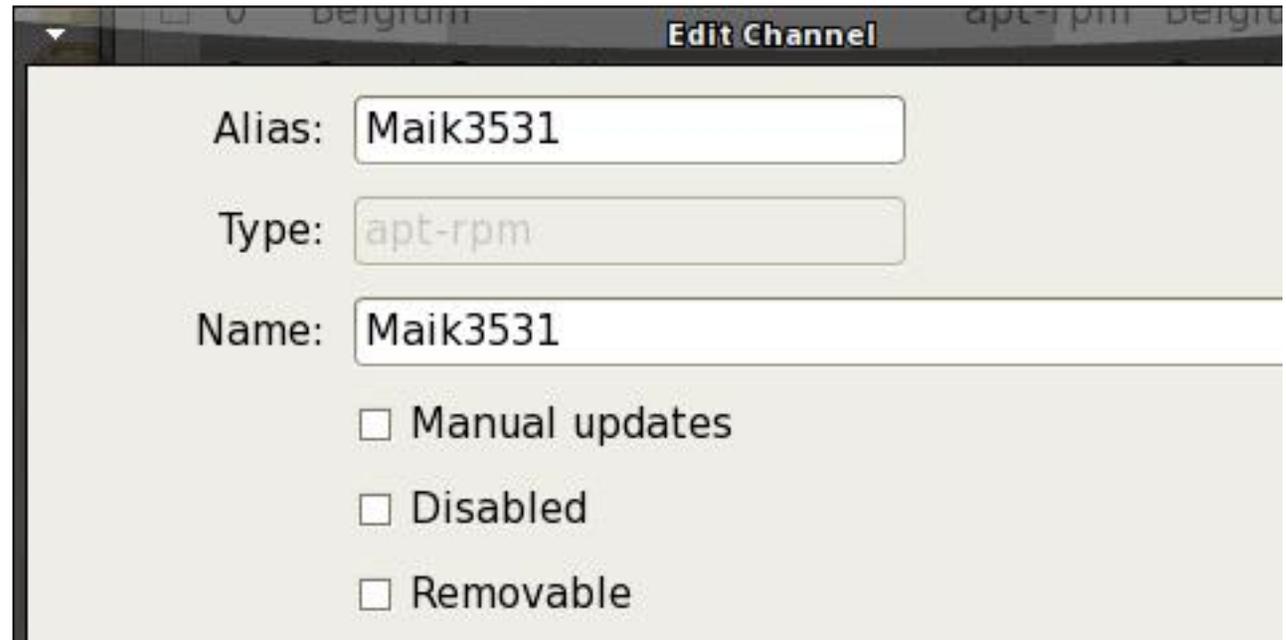
Here, you can choose any meaningful entry in the fields "Alias" and "Name" and the other entries are similar to the Synaptic ones in /etc/apt/sources.list. for example: rpm http://maik3531.de pclos2007/RPM testing.

Note that they are not identical, the Synaptic entry has a space between the URL and the distribution while in Smart these two settings are connected with a „/". This example illustrates the small differences in the syntax of Synaptic and Smart and you should now have no problems to add any other RPM-Repository.

Manual configuration:

Any information on the syntax and use of Smart can be found with the command: smart --help or, for a specific option, for example smart channel --help. To add the repository of Maik3531 or the PASS server enter the following as a one line command in a root-shell:

smart channel --add Maik3531 type=apt-rpm name=Maik3531 baseurl=http://maik3531.de/pclos2007/ RPM components=testing -y;

smart channel --add TexPass type=apt-rpm name=TexPass baseurl=http://XXXX:XXXX@pclinuxfiles.com/pclinuxos/apt/pclinuxos/2007 components="main extra nonfree kde" -y;

The "-y;" at the end of the line makes this source active. If you select more than one component, TexPass

example, we use the 4 basic components main, extra, nonfree, kde – then these must be enclosed in quotes (" "), and obviously you will have to replace the XXXX:XXXX with your credentials to access Tex' P.A.S.S. Here, you could also add the component "sam", and eventually "testing". While "sam" is for access to a PCLinuxOS version using the Xfce desktop, the component "testing" means exactly what it says, so nothing for the chicken-hearted and not to be used on production systems!

Using the default configuration, Smart will download the RPMS to the folder /var/lib/smart/packages and they will be deleted after the installation. In case you want to keep these RPMS you can use the following command in a root shell:

smart config --set remove-packages=false

Adding a local folder/repository

Some people have several computers running PCLinuxOS. If you intend to install the same RPMS on the other machines it makes sense to avoid the duplicate downloading by maintaining a local folder which is synchronized with the folder /var/lib/smart/packages of the machine where you initially performed the install/update. Another reason for this approach is that in this way you can even update a machine without Internet access. If you want to have the entire content of the PCLOS repository locally available, please have a look at the excellent article by Loyed in the December 2007 issue of this magazine.

Graphic mode:

Using Konqueror, it is very easy to add a local folder with RPMS to Smart, just right-

click on that folder and select: Actions –> Add directory as Smart channel and you are done.

Manual mode:

The corresponding one line command in a root shell is:

smart channel --add localPCLOSrpms type=rpm-dir name=LocalRPMs manual=true priority=1 path=<path to rpm folder> -y;

(replace the <path to rpm folder> with the full path including the end slash to your local folder containing the RPMS). The option priority, default value = 0, sets the preference for downloading/installing RPMS if they are available in several sources. Here, we use a value of 1 to assign the local directory a higher preference and to ensure that Smart will not download the RPMS from the online source. You may also assign a negative priority to a non PCLinuxOS source. If the same RPM name is also available in an

official PCLinuxOS source, Smart will then prefer to install the official PCLinuxOS RPM.

Adding a remote repository

You can add/use/test other repositories in the same fashion. If you want to challenge the system stability and you absolutely need to find out just how well Redhat rpms work with PCLinuxOS you could add the DAG repository of Redhat Enterprise 5 with this one line command in a root shell:

smart channel --add DAG type=rpm-md priority=-2 name=DAG baseurl=http://apt.sw.be/redhat/el5/en/i386/dag/ -y;

(as you can see, I chose a negative priority because DAG is not a PCLinuxOS repository and using RPMS of other distributions should always be your last resort)

KsmartTray

KSmartTray is a very handy panel applet. Every 2 hours, it automatically checks the sources and blinks if there are updates available. You can start it as normal user from the shell with the command:

ksmarttray

or graphically via:

Start –> System –> Configuration –>
Packaging –> KsmartTray

This is one of the many useful programs from Maik3531. A simple right click on the icon of a locally stored RPM in Konqueror or Dolphin and the PCLinuxOS service menu will pop up, allowing you to retrieve program information and/or to install or uninstall the selected RPM. In contrast to Kpackage, and thanks to the use of Smart, installing a RPM via this service menu will automatically resolve and install any dependencies, if they are available in the repositories.

Of course you can use the check option at any time to look for updates and the StartSmart... option will require the root password before you can use Smart.

PCLinuxOS-SMART-Servicemenu
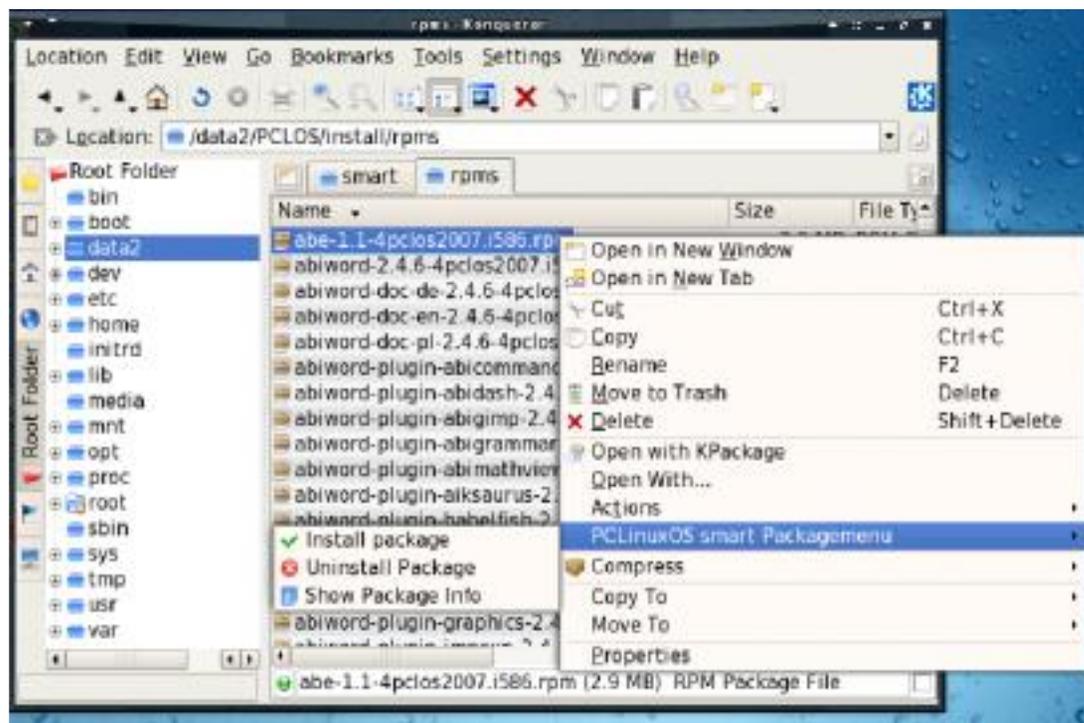
Using Smart

Graphical use:

The menu "View – TreeStyle" in the Smart window offers several options to view the packages of the sources:

Groups – packages are grouped according to their application type (in Synaptic: Sections),

Channels - packages are grouped depending on their origin,

Channels & Groups – packages are grouped depending on their origin and application type,

None – all packages are listed alphabetically.

New packages are marked with a yellow star and they can be separated via the option "View - Hide Old". These packages are only considered "new" until you, or KsmartTray, refresh the channels.
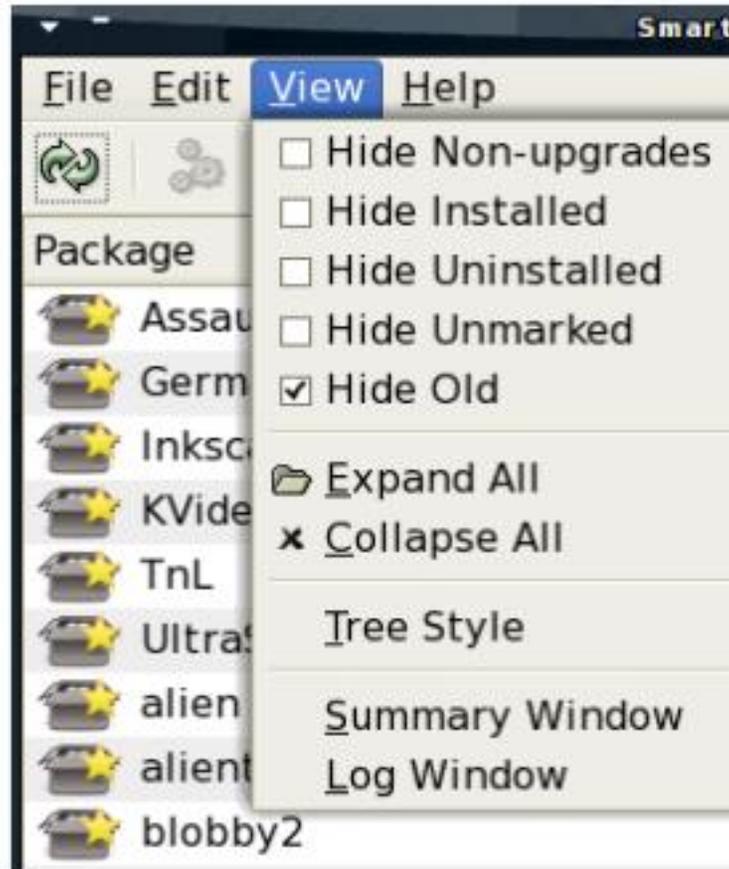
The tabs in the lower part of the Smart GUI are similar to the ones in Synaptic and are self-explanatory. The URL tab is interesting as it shows you the full path to the RPM package. The magnifying glass in the top right of the menu (or "Edit -Find") opens the search interface, which allows you to search the RPM database by name or description. You may also search for a specific program which you want to block for further updates or installation at all. This can be a very useful feature because you may not like the newer version, or the newer version is not yet stable enough, or you simply want to prevent that particular program will ever be installed on your system. I have found a similar option in Synaptic under Kubuntu but not in the PCLinuxOS version of Synaptic, but maybe I am just too focused on Smart.

The following image shows an example of klipoquery, another goody from the

Maik3531 repository, a panel applet which will pass any string to a user selected translation service. Here, I have an older version installed which I prefer. So I locked that one which now prevents the newer version for installation and automatic selection when selecting Update all:

More really cool features can be found in the menu "Edit": besides system settings like (Channels, Mirrors, Flags, Priorities) you can select the option "Fix all problems" which actually does exactly that and has helped me a lot of times after I was too curious installing the very latest, hottest, you know how it goes...

You can use one of the three "Check" options to analyze the state of all currently installed RPMS of your own system, all packages whether installed or not, and even the dependencies of the not installed packages, which must be a big help for developers and RPM packagers.
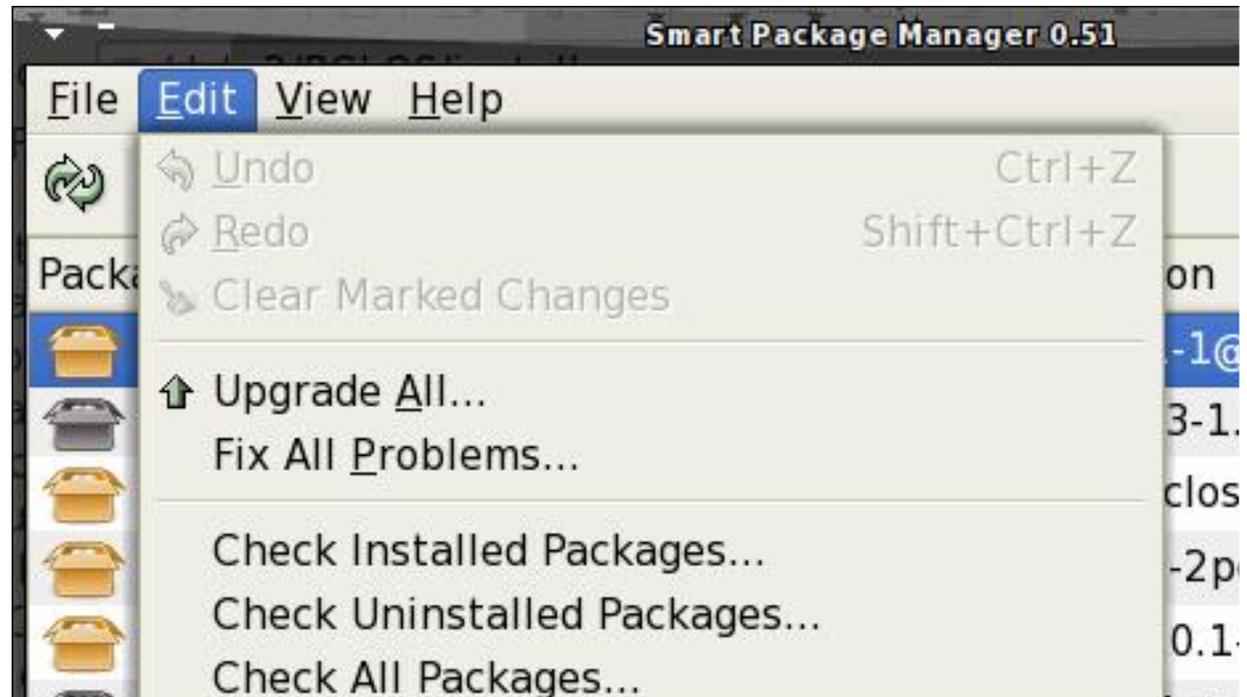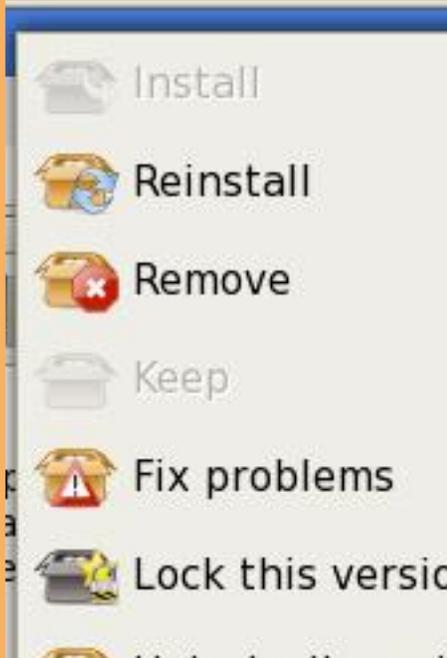
Manual use:

Below are some examples from the command line (obviously these are only A very few, Smart is extremely powerful and further information is available with the command:

man smart

Example 1: find all packages having to do with "pdf"

smart search pdf

INSERT FIG10

Note: The result shows all packages (installed and not installed) where the name or the description contains "pdf" or "PDF."

Example 2: what is and what is the content of the package: ding?4) Additional information

Note: This is completely case insensitive, for example ding, DiNg, etc. provides the same result and that can be useful if parts

official home page: http://labix.org/smart
Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smart_Package_Manager

Linux Magazine: http://w3.linux-magazine.com/issue/73/Smart_Package_Manager.pdf

smart info ding

of the application name are written in capital letters. You will get a nice overview about the version, description, and the home page of the project.

Example 3: do I have the package 'ding' installed?

smart query --installed Ding
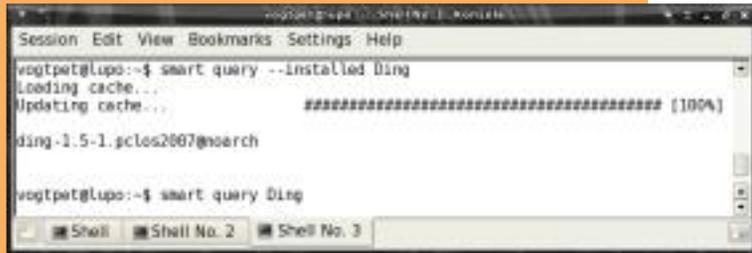
Note: I know that this is equivalent to: "rpm -q ding" and using the latter is much faster. However, as said before, the Smart query is case insensitive, and you will get the same result using "smart query --installed DinG" but with this string the rpm command will give no result at all. Again, this can be very useful as sometimes the RPM

package name is written in a different way than the actual program name of the application.

Example 4: removal and installation of a program

For example, we could remove the package ding with this command in a root shell:

smart remove ding

We could install a local RPM like this in a root shell:

smart install /data3/linux/PCLOS/install/rpms/d4x-2.5.7.1-2pclos2007.i586.rpm

and a remote RPM package with a command similar to this:

smart install ftp://someurl.com/somefile.rpm

In this way, you can install local or remote RPMS (providing the full http or ftp address) and potential dependencies will be automatically resolved using the information of the configured source channels in Smart.

Example 5: block a program version

It is sometimes useful or even necessary to block a certain program version. Once a program is blocked it will also no longer be automatically selected when performing an "Update All". The command:

smart flag –help

describes all possible details in this respect. Below is an example which will list

blocked programs and adds the program HDF to that list.

smart flag --show

smart flag --set lock HDF

Example 6: fix the system

Curiosity killed the cat, and if you are somehow like me then Xorg is one of your special friends. Luckily now there is a tool called vit, and it is good to know the command video which you can execute also in runlevel 3 once your X-server has said goodbye. While that helped a couple of times to get something other than a

command line on screen there is one command which I won't miss anymore: smart fix. This is just marvelous and perfectly fits the PCLinuxOS slogan "Radically Simple." By now I have installed more than 50 machines with PCLinuxOS, at friends, work, my parents, and even the local nursery where the kids are now fighting to be next to play Tuxracer or Gcompris. With some of these machines I had problems which I could not fix with apt-get but I always found information on the culprit using the set of commands:

smart update

&&

smart check

and eventually the simple command smart fix miraculously solved any issues in an intuitive interactive process. For this and many other reasons smart-suite is the very first application which I install after the base installation.

Smart crashed and how to fix it

In the past I used Smart and it worked like a charm. Obviously, you should never use Synaptic and Smart at the same time so make sure there is always only one instance of any of the two running. Up until recently, I sometimes had a nasty Smart start up problem, rendering the Smart GUI useless. Eventually, I finally found the source of this problem which was the installation of the dpkg package. Either remove that package or, if

you absolutely need it, you should ensure that this file: /var/lib/dpkg/status is present, else just create it as an empty file and Smart is back alive.

If you have another problem, you can always try to properly close Smart/KsmartTray, as root go to the directory /var/lib/smart/, backup your current config file with another name, and then delete the two files cache and config. This will bring you back to the original install situation. If that works, you can try to use your old config file again, or configure Smart from scratch, setting all channels and settings anew as you did before. But I hope this will never be necessary, and

now, be smart and have fun with Smart!

4) Additional information

official home page: http://labix.org/smart
Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smart_Package_Manager
Linux Magazine:http://w3.linux-magazine.com/issue/73/Smart_Package_Manager.pdf

PCLinuxOS Based Distros

by Papawoob

Just thought I would try and bring everyone a list of currently active PCLinuxOS based distros. If I have missed any, I apologize. If anyone knows of any others that are being actively developed please drop me a note at the Magazine website or at Papawoob@pclosmag.com.

AmaroK Live

amaroK Live is a stripped-down live CD of the GNU/Linux operating system, based on PCLinuxOS, with a fully functional amaroK music player. It is meant to display the features and power of amaroK. The goals of this project are: create something cool to promote amaroK, offer an easy way to introduce people to amaroK, provide a way to demonstrate the new features of amaroK when a suitable Linux

installation is not available, and make it easy to remaster the live CD.

ArcheOS

ArcheOS is an acronym for Archaeological Operating System. It is a GNU/Linux live DVD distribution, based on PCLinuxOS, with specialist software for archaeological purposes.

CAElinux

CAElinux is based on PCLinuxOS and is designed for computer aided engineering. Based on the open-source CAE softwares Salomé & Code_Aster, you can load STEP / IGES geometry in Salomé and start partitionning and meshing your problem in just 5 minutes.

Granular Linux

Granular Linux is an easy-to-use, desktop Linux distribution based on PCLinuxOS. Its main features are a carefully selected set of applications for common tasks, the ability to customize the distribution, and the inclusion of two popular desktop environments - the flexible KDE and the lightweight Xfce.

Karoshi

Karoshi is a free and open source school server operating system based on PCLinuxOS. Karoshi provides a simple graphical interface that allows for quick installation, setup and maintenance of a network.

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Ruby on Rails

Rails Live CD is a specialist distribution providing a pre-configured and fully operating Ruby on Rails development environment on a bootable CD. The distribution is derived from PCLinuxOS.

SAM Linux Desktop

SAM Linux Desktop, a live and installation CD based on PCLinuxOS, is an easy-to-use, fast and clean XFce Linux desktop for home users. The distribution is enhanced by several popular non-free applications, such as Macromedia Flash plugin, Java and RealPlayer.

VideoLinux

VideoLinux is a PCLinuxOS-based distribution with focus on DVD backups, video encoding and transcoding, DVD authoring, format conversion and pretty much anything else you want to do with video.

TinyMe

TinyMe is a scaled down version of PCLinuxOS 2007. The latest version is delivered as a 177 MB liveCD and features the Lightweight X11 Desktop Environment, Synaptic, and the PCLinuxOS Control Center. It comes with a few applications, so it could be a really light version of PCLOS for older computers or a foundation on which to build your own system as you choose.

PCFluxboxOS

PCFluxboxOS is a series of remasters of PCLinuxOS catering for different end-user needs. All the following remasters are installable live-CDs and all come with the i586 'Legacy' Kernel 2.6.18.8 for increased compatibility with older hardware. Newer kernels can be installed via Synaptic.

TinyFlux - Version 0.5b out now for testing (released 15 August 2007)

A minimal desktop experience within a tiny ISO of 225MB.

Main applications: Opera (inc Flash 9); Sylpheed (e-mail); Thunar (file manager); Audacious (XMMS/WinAmp clone); mtPaint (image manipulation); Grafburn for CD/DVD burning; Synaptic (package manager); PCLOS Control Centre; guided installer.

See TinyFlux downloads page for full details

FEATURE

MidiFlux - release expected September 2007

A large selection of applications in a relatively small ISO expected to be about 350MB in size

FullFlux - release expected September 2007

A huge selection of apps in a whopping 700MB full live CD

NanoFlux - release expected October 2007

A miniscule distribution stripped down to Fluxbox and Synaptic. Add your own apps to build your perfect system!

RescueFlux - release expected November 2007

A small ISO containing all the apps you might need to prepare for, or rescue an installation.

Keldix Linux

Keldix is a Linux distribution primarily for the Small business Office and Home Office (SOHO) market. Keldix is a live-dvd built on PCLinuxOS.

PCLOS Gnome

All new bootsplash, backgrounds, and really nice features, upgraded to a great looking operating system and the best out-of-the-box look, and user experience possible!

Business Edition Linux (BEL)

BEL or Business Edition Linux is a business implementation of PCLinuxOS 2007. Our goal is to provide solutions for small business needs using one of the easiest to use Linux Distributions available.

MythTVOS

MythTVOS 2008 is based on MiniMe 2008 and has MythTV and all plugins installed and (pre)configured.

Just boot from the livecd, select your TV / SAT / CABLE card and scan for channels…

EeePCLinuxOS

EeePCLinuxOS is a PCLinuxOS remaster specifically for the EeePC.

FEATURE

PCLinux Educator

We are working on an educational meta-package, for PCLinuxOS2007.

According to our development team educational software, or even an educational distro, goes further than kde-edu, childsplay and gcompris.

Minime

This is a minimal LiveCD that is bootable, plus it can be installed. Add in your own background, window decoration, localizations, preferred applications and supporting libraries to fully trick out your desktop. In addition you can remaster your own custom version of PCLinuxOS. Have fun! You can find the .iso image under the Downloads button at: http://www.pclinuxos.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

Chapter 2: Using the Desktop

Basic Desktop Customization

The desktop can be customized to your preferences and tastes in a variety of ways. Here we will explore some basic customizations. More details can be obtained by clicking on the Main Menu and then on More Applications, Documentation, and then KDE Help Center. After the KDE Help Center opens, choose KDE User Manual and scroll down to "III. Kde Components."

Desktop Background

The background image displayed on the desktop can be changed by running the Background application. Just right-click on the desktop and select ¨Configure Desktop.¨

After clicking on ¨Configure Desktop¨ you will see a dialog box appear that looks like this:

If you want to choose an image from another directory, click the Browse button. The Browse button is located to the right of the ¨Picture¨ image selector dialog and looks like a file folder. After you have chosen an image, click on ¨Apply¨ and then click ¨OK.¨

Desktop Behavior

Our next option in the Configure-KDesktop window is ¨Behavior.¨ The ¨General¨ tab allows you to select between file icons or device icons and if you chose to have them on your desktop, which ones you want to be seen. Refer to the figures below. It also allows you to setup what each of your mouse buttons do when they are clicked. You can also choose whether you would like your Menu bar at the top of your screen and if so, what style. You can also setup what each of your mouse buttons does when clicked.

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Multiple Desktops

The ¨Multiple Desktop¨ tab allows you to increase or decrease the number of virtual desktops that are available in your Taskbar. To change the number of desktops, you can use either the ¨slider¨ or the up and down arrows located to the right of the slider. Each time the number increases (or decreases) you will add (or subtract) 4 virtual desktops.

The first thing you will notice will be a long list of different types of screen savers. If you click on the little ¨+¨ sign next to any of these, it will open to show another list of that particular group of screen savers. Here is an example:

There are far too many groups to cover in this howto so you will have to experiment and try them until you find one that you like. This window works just like the background window did. Click on a screen saver and a thumbnail (small picture) will be displayed in the monitor to the right of your selection.

You will also notice a ¨Setup...¨ button and a ¨Test¨ button below the list of screen savers. Some screen savers require extra information to make them

work exactly as you wish, which is why you would use the ¨Setup...¨ button. The ¨Test¨ button will bring up (open) the screen saver in full screen mode so that you can see what it will look like when it starts.

There are two other options in this window. The first, is whether or not you want to have the screen saver start automatically,and if so, how long after there is no keyboard activity. Simply use the up and down arrows to select and set the number of minutes.

The second, allows the screen saver to effectively ¨lock¨ your desktop. To unlock the screen saver you will have to enter your login password into the box that will pop up when you try to return to your desktop.

 There also is an ¨Advanced Options¨ button under the monitor where your thumbnails are displayed. Selecting one of these enables you to start your

screen saver by moving your mouse into a particular corner and leaving it there. Your choices can be seen below:

Display

The last tab in the ¨Configure Kdesktop¨ window is the ¨Display¨ tab. There are three tabs within this window: 'Size & Orientation', 'Monitor Gamma', and 'Power Control'. We will only explore the ¨Size & Orientation¨ and ¨Power Control¨ tabs.

The only thing on this sub-window that is of interest to this howto is the ¨Screen size¨ (resolution) tab. This adjusts the size of everything displayed on your desktop, including the icons, text with icons, Taskbar text, etc....

The Kde desktop will default this setting to the largest resolution that your monitor can handle. In the screenshot below you will see that mine is set to 1280x1024. If you click on the arrow next to this setting a list of resolutions that are available for your monitor will be displayed. The smaller the first number, the larger everything will appear. Choose one and then click ¨Apply.¨ The desktop will go blank for a moment

and on return you will see your desktop in the new resolution with a dialog box asking whether or not you want to accept this new resolution. If you want to accept it use your mouse to click on the accept button. (Note: Do not try this if you are running any 3D effects.)

If you would like to have this setting as your default resolution when you start Kde, click on the box next to ¨Apply settings on Kde startup.¨
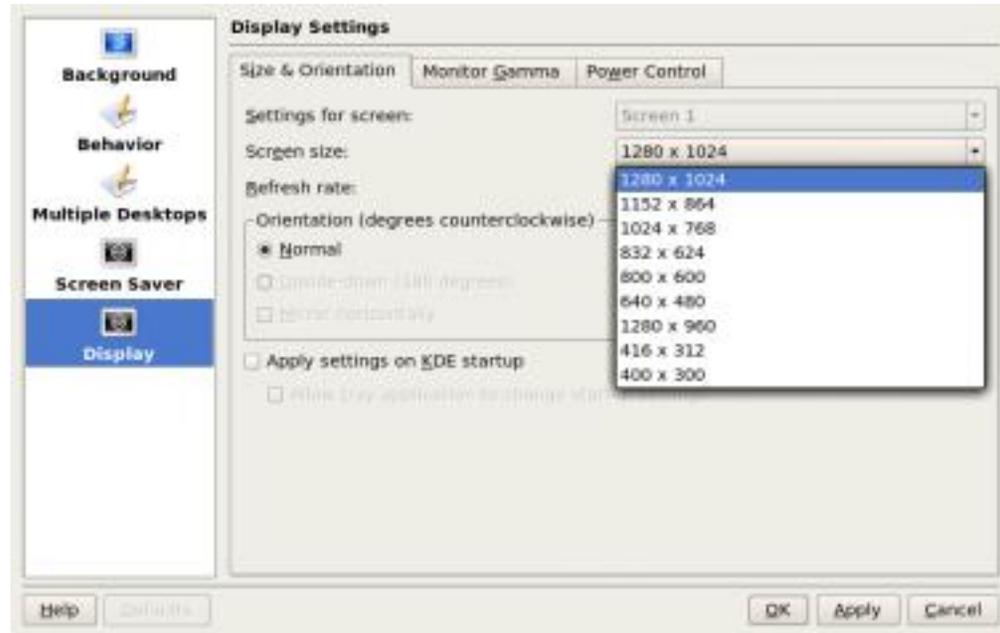
Next month we will bring you Part 2 of Chapter 2. See you then!