Installing openSUSE 10.2 on a Compaq laptop (Part 2)

By *eco2geek*
Created *21/12/2006 - 7:51am*
Submitted by eco2geek on Thursday 21st of December 2006 07:51:38 AM Filed under Reviews [1]

In part 1, openSUSE got installed and configured on a Compaq Presario V2000 with an ATI Radeon Xpress 200M PCIE graphics chipset and a 32-bit CPU. Now it's time to go for the bling.

How easy is it to get the graphic goodness of Beryl going? Pretty dang easy.

Installing the ATI driver

The first step is getting ATI's proprietary "fglrx" driver installed. (Why do they call it "fglrx"? Maybe it's an acronym for "Free/GPL/Libre Releases X-rays." Who knows?) The openSUSE wiki has a how-to for that, too [2]. The basic steps are as follows:

- As a prerequisite, install the "gcc" and "kernel-source" packages.
- Download the latest ATI Radeon driver from their web site [3] (the filename's currently "ati-driver-installer-8.32.5-x86.x86_64.run").

- As root, make it executable (with "chmod +x") and run it. Installation instructions are here [4]; you may want to print them out. You're looking to make an rpm, or, as ATI calls it, "Generate A Distribution Specific Driver Package."
  The installer can run in GUI mode under KDE, or run in text mode from a console. I'd recommend running it outside of X Windows, in a console, for only one reason: its dialog box was too tall to fit on my screen. Besides, you need to be in a console at runlevel 3 in order to enable it using Sax2, anyway.

  After accepting the license agreement, choose the "Generate Distribution Specific Driver Package" option, and the installer will create an rpm for you (named something like "fglrx_7_1_0_SUSE102-8.32.5-1.i386.rpm"). Install the rpm (with "rpm -ivh").

- The last step: if you're not already in a console without X Windows running, log out of X, choose "Console login" from the kdm login screen, and log in as root. Switch to runlevel 3 with "init 3". Then type
  sax2 -r -m 0=fglrx

  and Suse will configure xorg.conf to use the driver. Type "init 5" to get back into KDE, and it should now be using ATI's driver. You can verify that you are by running the command "fglrxinfo" at a bash prompt. (Accelleration should be enabled by default.)

(Whew. That was harder to write than it was to do!)

Installing Xgl and Beryl

Unless you specifically deselected them during installation, you probably already have Xgl and Compiz installed. Check with "rpm -q xgl" and "rpm -q compiz" at a bash prompt. If they're not installed, simply install them using your favorite package manager.

There's one change to make to /etc/X11/xorg.conf in order to use Xgl. You'll have to add a section that looks like this to the end. (Please ignore those tags; they're just a figment of your imagination.)

```
Section "Extensions"
    Option "Composite" "0"EndSection
```

You enable Xgl by going to a bash prompt as root and running the command "gnome-xgl-switch --enable-xgl" and then restarting KDE.

Finally, there's one more configuration change to make. There's a "Translucency" option in KDE that's set by default to "on," which has to be turned off in order for compiz (and Beryl) to run correctly. It's in the KDE Control Center under Desktop > Window Behavior > Translucency. Uncheck the "Use translucency/shadows" box and restart KDE again. You should finally see compiz going, and have a desktop cube, which you can roll around by holding down Ctrl+Alt with one hand, and clicking on the desktop and moving the mouse, with the other.

Installing Beryl

Why not just stick with compiz? You can, of course, but beryl offers a whole lot more options.

By now you know the drill: the openSUSE wiki has a how-to for Beryl [5]. If you're still using YaST to configure repos and install packages, the steps are as follows:

- Add the following repo: http://software.opensuse.org/download/X11:/XGL/openSUSE_10.2/ [6]
- Install these packages: beryl-core
  beryl-plugins
  emerald : window decorator
  emerald-themes
  aquamarine
  beryl-settings
  beryl-manager
  (You'll probably get updated Xgl and compiz packages along the way, through the Zen updater.)

- Once again, restart KDE. Then pull up a console window, and, as your normal user, type
  > **beryl-manager &**

  You should at least see a red gemstone icon show up in your system tray -- that's Beryl-Manager. You may need to click on it, then click "Select Window Manager," and choose "Beryl." After that, you may need to click on "Reload Window Manager." If all goes well, you should see the screen flicker, the Beryl splash screen come up, and you're finally done.

  Well, almost. There's a ton of configuration options available in the "Beryl Settings Manager," and a bunch of window decorations/themes to choose from in the "Emerald Theme Manager." After all that work, you get to play around with it.

Finally, putting symlinks to /usr/bin/beryl-manager and /usr/bin/beryl-xgl in ~/.kde/Autostart will make beryl start automagically every time you start KDE.

Conclusion

openSUSE is laptop-friendly, has an eye-pleasing KDE configuration, is well-documented and easy to install, and has most of the packages you'd expect from a modern Linux distro. Not everything is perfect, though.

The bad:

- YaST's software management tools are both slow and clunky. No wonder a lot of people use the SMART package manager [7]. (openSUSE also has hooks for YUM, and you can install APT.) It'd be nice for SMART to become the default package manager at some point in the future. (The Zen software updater works well, though.)
- Speaking of software updates, it'd also be nice if openSUSE did what Fedora does, namely, move updated packages into their main repos as soon as they're stable. Six months is not a long time to wait, of course, but Fedora seems to be issuing updated packages almost daily.
- That "kerry beagle" indexer sure seems to slow things down, especially right after you log into KDE. Fortunately, it can be permanently disabled.
- So can the so-called "SUSE menu style" (aka "Kickoff") -- just right-click on the button and choose "Switch to KDE Menu Style". (OK, it's really not *that* bad, but simpler is better, IMO.)

The ugly:

- The Novell/Microsoft patent agreement [8] follows openSUSE around like the cloud of dirt and dust that follows the Peanuts character, Pig-Pen [9]. What a horrendous lapse in judgment on Novell's part. There's really nothing else to say.

How-To's/FAQs:

- For an excellent guide in getting audio and video software installed and going on openSUSE 10.2, read Jem Matzan's article, "Hacking openSUSE 10.2 [10]". (Note: In it, he mentions installing the Win32 codecs, and then getting an update from the Zen updater. However, if it's the very first time you've logged into KDE, you won't see the Zen updater in your system tray until you log out and log in again.)
- The ndiswrapper how-to [11] (openSUSE wiki)
- The ATI driver installation how-to [12] (openSUSE wiki)
- The Beryl installation how-to [5] (openSUSE wiki)
- The Beryl wiki's openSUSE FAQ [13]
- A how-to on installing SMART [7]

The end!

Reviews

Source URL: http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/12014

Links:
[1] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/57
[2] http://en.opensuse.org/ATI_Driver#openSUSE_Linux_10.2_-_fglrx
[3] http://ati.amd.com/support/drivers/linux/linux-radeon.html
[4] https://a248.e.akamai.net/f/674/9206/0/www2.ati.com/drivers/linux/linux_8.32.5-inst.html

[5] http://en.opensuse.org/Beryl
[6] http://software.opensuse.org/download/X11:/XGL/openSUSE_10.2/
[7] http://susewiki.org/index.php?title=Smart
[8] http://gizbuzz.co.uk/2006/microsoft-and-novell-entering-linux-based-partnership/
[9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig-Pen_%28Peanuts%29
[10] http://www.softwareinreview.com/cms/content/view/60
[11] http://en.opensuse.org/Ndiswrapper_howto
[12] url=http://en.opensuse.org/ATI_Driver#openSUSE_Linux_10.2_-_fglrx
[13] http://wiki.beryl-project.org/wiki/FAQ/SuSE