

Alternative GUIs: GoblinX

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☒ [2][GoblinX](#) [3] is a live Linux distribution based on [Slackware](#) [4] 11, written by a Brazilian developer who goes by the pseudonym Grobsch. (You can contact Grobsch on the [GoblinX forum](#) [5].) GoblinX differs from other live distributions in two main ways. First, it manages to pack five different window managers/GUIs into a 305 MB ISO image, and uses custom artwork for each of them that's quite unlike anything you've seen before.

Second, it takes the concept of a modular live CD about as far as it can. You can always [buy GoblinX 2007 Premium](#) [6] from [On-Disk.com](#) [7], which is always a good idea, as it gives money back to the developer. But, if you like, you can also [download the GoblinX Standard CD](#) [8], mount it as a loopback file, extract its contents to your hard disk, [download any extra modules](#) [9] you want, put them in the correct directories, and use a script (provided for you) to build a customized version of the CD. There's also a way to accomplish the same thing while running from the live CD itself.

The GoblinX Experience

When you start up the live CD, the initial splash screen indicates how different things will look and feel. After the boot screen (that, like most live CDs, takes [cheatcodes](#) [10]), you view a screen with a progress bar, and finally end up at a console-based prompt.

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After logging in as root, you now have a choice between window managers. The miniature screenshots to the left of the console window give you an idea of what to expect. You can use the following commands:

- **go** starts XFCE 4
- **gok** starts KDE 3.5.4
- **goe** starts Enlightenment 16
- **gof** starts Fluxbox
- **gow** starts WindowMaker 0.92

You may have used KDE before, but you've probably never seen it looking like this. There's a custom splash screen; a custom icon set; a custom color scheme, and a custom style.

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Here's what XFCE 4 looks like in GoblinX:

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Here are screenshots of Fluxbox and WindowMaker. WindowMaker is particularly striking.

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And finally, Enlightenment 16. These screenshots include many of the custom utilities included on the CD. (Note the box in the upper right-hand corner; when windows are minimized, there's an animated "flip" into that space. The same animation occurs when they're clicked to restore them.)

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Under The Hood

There are many custom utilities (written by the developer) on the CD. They include:

- **Magic Center**, a control panel-like utility for general system configuration
- **Software Control**, which allows you to customize software while running the live CD
- The **GoblinX Installer**, which allows you to install GoblinX to your hard disk
- There are many other utilities (some of which are accessed through the Magic Center and Software Control), too numerous to list here, which fall into two general categories:
 - Those that allow you to manipulate packages and modules in the live CD environment. For example, one lets you convert Slackware packages into modules that can be used with the live CD, and another allows you to create an ISO image of the live CD you're running, after you've made modifications.
 - Those that are general "helper" utilities. For example, there's one that allows you to split files so they'll fit on floppy diskettes; there's another that allows you to enable and disable system daemons.

(Note that all of these utilities also have customized artwork.)

When installed to hard disk, all of the included GUIs, except for Enlightenment, are available through kdm, and appear just as the developer set them up. (In order to get to Enlightenment the way it was set up by the developer, it seems easiest just to use the "goe" script from runlevel 3.)

Installing this distro to my hard disk was the easy part. After that, things got difficult. I admittedly have next to no experience with Slackware (which brought back that old feeling, so familiar from the time I first began playing with Linux, of banging my head against a wall). Doing such things as learning how to add the correct repositories to [GSlapt](#) [31]; installing the proprietary NVIDIA driver; getting kdm to work correctly in runlevel 4, and getting the "su" command to work properly were challenging. (IMHO, Linux isn't just an operating system; it's a learning experience.)

Also, this distro's scripts, and the default permissions it has set on various directories and files, make it fairly clear that it was meant to be run from a CD, as the root user, rather than from your hard disk, with a normal user account. So I'm

not sure I'd recommend this distro for day-to-day use, except to someone already very familiar with Slackware's "plumbing." (Fortunately, Slackware is [very well-documented](#) [32]. There are also some [useful tutorials](#) [33] on the GoblinX site.)

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In the end, GoblinX is not just an operating system, it's an artistic statement ? and *that's* something you don't see very often. Check it out.

[Order a CD from On-disk.com](#) [36]

[Linux](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/17297>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/123>
- [2] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/v/GoblinX_2/kde-5.png.html
- [3] <http://www.goblinx.com.br/en/index.htm>
- [4] <http://http://www.slackware.org/>
- [5] <http://forum.goblinx.com.br/>
- [6] http://on-disk.com/index.php?manufacturers_id=17
- [7] <http://on-disk.com/index.php>
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- [30] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/v/GoblinX_2/e16-5.png.html
- [31] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gslapt>

[32] <http://www.slackbook.org/>

[33] http://www.goblinx.com.br/en/index_minitutors01.htm

[34] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/v/GoblinX_2/kde-6.png.html

[35] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/v/GoblinX_2/kde-7-goodbye.png.html

[36] http://on-disk.com/product_info.php/products_id/257