

Easy Peasy Eeebuntu Netbooks

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In the beginning there was Xandros, and it was basic.

Recently I purchased an eeepc 1000H and was quite impressed with the new and different operating system. I hail from a windows only background and anything apart from the Microsoft offerings I have left well alone, until NOW. The eee came with something called xandros installed and although fairly basic it did give me a taste of linux and I wanted more.

I hit the web and googled for the different operating systems available. Of course, ubuntu yielded the highest results but, judging by the responses in the helpful ubuntu forums it seemed quite awkward to get going so I googled on.

Google turned up a number of possibilities and the two I tested were Ubuntu-eee and eeebuntu. Both claimed to solve the messing about and work, how do they say? "out of the box". I tested both of these and I stuck with eeebuntu standard as I didn't quite like the tabbed netbook launcher thing.

Easy Peasy the Fisher Price OS

Recently both of these have let loose new versions. Ubuntu-eee is now called Easy Peasy, an odd choice of name in my opinion and one that would have put me off if I was looking for an operating system now without having seen and tested ubuntu-eee. Anyway, name aside, it wasn't too bad though it looks a little rushed and rough around the edges. They are still using the Netbook Launcher thing which takes some getting used to but I am starting to form a basic relationship with it. EP eventually installed ok though, as I have mentioned, there are a few "features".

First thing I noticed was the boot menu (where it asks if you want to test or install) is still showing Ubuntu followed by a rather rough easypeasy logo. Compared to eeebuntu 2.0 it did seem to take longer to boot and certainly did not look as professionally glued together which seems a little odd as the EP project looks to have more developer than the 5 or 6 that work on eeebuntu. When it eventually loaded my wifi worked out of the box, webcam didn't without a size tweak, the SD card wasn't recognised and the hotkeys didn't function properly, the silver ones just under the screen did nothing at all.

I wasn't particularly impressed with the selection of applications and I think application selection should be best left to the end user as I do prefer lighter office applications than OpenOffice such as Abiword that I found not long ago. I don't use skype, I prefer conferencing through MSN so I find eeebuntu's AMSN much more to my liking. I won't rant on any further about the default applications, everyone has personal tastes but I did prefer the selection provided with Eeebuntu.

When logging off from EP the boot splash thingy appeared and had morphed into the default ubuntu screen. Again, signs that EP may have been released too soon.

Also, when I installed EP it seemed to get stuck in a loop and prompted me for installing over and again. On the whole EP was ok but not really for me, it seems to need some work to make it feel professional and it felt a step backward from ubuntu-eee.

EEEbye Gum 2.0!

On the other side, I have had eeebuntu 2.0 on my eeepc since it was released in December. When you first load up eeebuntu the boot menu (run live or install selection) displays the eeebuntu logo which looks very professional indeed and the logo carries through into the splash. It looks very polished. When I ran live and the desktop appeared I really liked the default choice for background and Window controls, they are a sort of Gnome/Vista crossover and really appeal.

Again, there were problems with the webcam that were solved with a visit to the excellent eeebuntu forums. I just wondered why, if there was a fix, EP hadn't added it in as they had 3 weeks to monitor the competition's mistakes and solutions?

Eeebuntu wifi worked out of the box, no issues at all with my Asus router and showed good signal strength. With both EP and eeebuntu I had to fiddle with the sound mixer to set the correct volume channel which, bizarely, is controlled by the line-out channel.

One feature I did like was the Eeeconfigure application. Wrapping up tweaks and scripts in an application that a user runs for their specific model seems like a godsend to the termiphobics. I ran them all and was informed they had been installed. One point here though, the selection screen isn't too clear as the item selection is basically a set of square brackets, I would have preferred a tick or cross or something similar. Saying that, for a first version it is a good concept and I believe the Eeebuntu team will supply updates.

The Eeebuntu theme runs from start to finish and looks a little more professional than EP, though I know it's not the bodywork but the engine that counts and by all accounts both use the same kernel. As I mentioned earlier, Eeebuntu feels like it loads quicker.

Again with eeebuntu I like some of the bundled applications and not others but I guess you can't please everyone. Eeebuntu, like EP, has bundled OpenOffice on two of it's versions.

Eeebuntu seem to have taken a slightly different tack on their release, unleashing 3 versions. "Base" offers eeebuntu minus everything but the desktop and firefox, "NBR" uses the netbook launcher thing and "Standard" uses a Mac OSX type docker which, as I am led to believe, is called AWN.

Summaryuntu

There are differences between these two offerings and not just in name. Though a lot can be said about each one and each one has it's merits, I think that I will stick with Eeebuntu. Why? Simply because neither can outdo the other in terms of functionality or working hardware, what works on one works on the other, what doesn't just doesn't. I choose to stick with Eeebuntu for a couple of reasons:

- It looks better, more polished and feels smoother (in my opinion) than EP.
- The Eeebuntu forums are wonderful and I would dare to say are friendlier and more helpful than even the ubuntu forums.
- Eeeconfigure has potential to be a decent configuration issue solver without a degree in terminal and kernel programming, especially as it is aimed to be a constant update source.

- I don't like the name Easy Peasy.

Of course there are lots more I could write but for a first post here, that'll do for now.

Mark.

[Linux](#)

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[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/123>