

On OpenSuse 11

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Created *01/07/2008 - 2:06pm*

Submitted by bigbearomaha on Tuesday 1st of July 2008 02:06:47 PM Filed under [Reviews](#) [1]

I selected the Gnome version of OpenSuse 11 to try out. Just not a KDE guy really.

I first ran it in livedcd mode for a few days. After I felt I had 'the feel' for it, I went ahead and installed it to a test machine.

Overall, it's a good looking desktop (it's green, but that changes easily enough) they have included some documentation for folks to get an idea how to get started using it.

The only thing that stands out cosmetically to me is the slab menu. It doesn't make much sense to force users to open a second window to view a full list of apps. At one time and place, that was considered a high level no no, anathema, the idea was to use less space, require less 'real estate' being used for a menu. It appears this slab goes in the entire opposite direction of that thinking.

This menu is not something I personally found useful or attractive, so I changed it to the 'standard' Gnome menu. At least for me, it's 'live-able'.

The tools for configuration are good, and they look good too, not cobbled together "ncurses" looking things, seeming misplaced on a GUI. No, these are all well thought out and well designed.

Installation went very well on an AMD Athlon 1.4 ghz machine, 1gb of ram.

YAST, well, yast is yast. wrapped in the new look for 11, but for those that don't like yast, you won't like it. for those that do like yast, you will like it still. Me, I can work with it. It's not a deal breaker for me, I find to to be a usable tool and pretty easy to navigate. Lots of choices and tools to modify your OpenSuse system in reasonable ways.

OpenSuse has its typical quirks and 'uniqueness' in path and file locations. But, it's not altogether that far from other distros. Keep an eye on the docs and browse through the filesystem for a little while to get acquainted first if you haven't used a Suse system before.

I work with Linux networks and sometimes mixed networks. I prefer a Linux only network where I can manage it though. Because of that, I look for a Linux distro to kind of show favor to Linux things. One of my biggest disappointments in many distros is the lack of easy configuration and usability of NFS tools. NFS is a very solid and fast network file system for use on Linux networks. so far, I have only found a couple of distros that provide tools that will help users easily locate and configure access to NFS shares. OpenSuse is not one of them. I wish they would. One could argue that NFS is simple enough to work with via command line or add a share to fstab. This is true. However,

many of the 'regular' users' have no idea how to do that yet. If they call the boss and say they need access to certain files and are told they are on "X" NFS share, then what? (We can talk about what kind of yutz boss and IT admin doesn't have those setup to begin with later, suffice it to say, it happens more than I care to see it happen.)

I digress.

All in all, I would have to say that OpenSuse 11 is an improvement over 10.3, which is as it should be.

There are a few cosmetics that I personally am not a fan of, but the beauty of Linux is that I can change these without much fuss.

Beyond that, I think it's definitely worth investigating for folks who want to implement a solid Linux distro.

Big Bear

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