

Mandriva 2009 Beta 1 & KDE 4.1 - A Brief Report

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Mandriva is slated to release Beta 2 on August 19. As I have been updating Beta 1 frequently from the Cooker repository, I have kept up to date on Mandriva's development progress.

I have installed over 900 updates to the Beta 1 release over the last two weeks. It's shaping up well, and with the updates, it's getting pretty stable.

Most of the issues for me have been related to learning to use and deal with KDE 4.1. I'm one of those cluttered users who places lots of handy icons on both the desktop and the panel. Yes, you can place icons on the desktop (easy now), and on the panel(not so easy), but that's not as easy as it is in KDE 3.5.x.

I've got konqueror icon on my desktop for running konqueror in filemanager mode with root privileges for when I want to do some graphical file management that requires temporary privileges beyond that of an ordinary user.

I tried to do this with KDE's new file manager, dolphin, but couldn't get it to run properly with root privileges.

Here's how to do it with konqueror: fire up dolphin, go to `/usr/share/applications/kde4` folder, and drag the `konquerorsu.desktop` icon onto the desktop.

I downloaded the flash-player-plugin rpm from the plf (Penguin Liberation Front) mirror repository, <http://ftp.free.fr/mirrors/plf.zarb.org/mandriva/cooker/non-free/binary/i586/> and installed it, as well as other multimedia codecs and support libraries and files. The flash player plugin works in both Konqueror and Mozilla 3.

Mandriva's sound system with pulseaudio seems to work well, except, oddly enough, I can't get the KDE 4.1 Kolf game to play sound.

A lot of KDE 3.5.9 features/functionality aren't in KDE 4.1 yet, so the 4.1 GUI environment isn't fully mature yet. So, yes, KDE 4.1 in Mandriva 2009 is usable, but I would not recommend it to those who aren't KDE3 savvy--inexperienced users should probably wait until KDE4.2. The KDE folks recognize this, and will even be issuing a bug-fix update to KDE 3.5.9 in September (to be called, KDE 3.5.10, of course).

One particular issue. If you set the KDE digital clock on the panel to display seconds, Running any Openoffice.org app causes the panel to flicker and changes colors wildly. Setting the panel clock to display the time without seconds is a (hopefully temporary) workaround for this issue.