Mandriva Linux 2011TP (Tech Preview) - Quick Look

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After laying-off a significant portion of its employees, is Mandriva going to remain a viable distribution? While many distros, including Mandriva, are furiously working on their Spring 2011 releases, Mandriva announced a two-week slip from their previously announced release dates. As a compensation, Mandriva gathered up its packages from its 2011 development repositories (called "Cooker"), and released a pre-alpha 2011 TP (Technology Preview) iso. The coming Alpha version is due to be released February 14 with Alpha2 slated to be released February 28. So, here's a quick report on the Technology Preview release, and how things are shaping up.

Many of Mandriva's recently laid off employees went on to form a fork of Mandriva called "Mageia". According to Susan Linton (Owner, operator and exalted grand pubah of Tuxmachines.org), Mageia Alpha1 is also due to be released [2] mid February. It will be interesting to compare the two Alpha1 releases.

But, back to the Mandriva TP release. I downloaded the x86-64 bit TP ISO version yesterday (Feb 7), burned it, and proceeded to install it on "newton", my Acer Aspire 6930 Laptop (3 GB Ram, Nvidia 9600M GS video card, 7200 RPM hard disk (an upgrade after initial purchase), Intel wireless, and 1366x768 display).

The install went smoothly, except when rebooting--Mandriva TP did not pick-up my Windows 7 Partition in the boot window. The Win7 partition is still there--in fact, I can access the Win 7 files from Linux, so no worries (I rarely need to use Win 7).

Mandriva has updated its RPM system from RPM 4.6 to RPM 5. Because of the differing RPM versions, those wanting to update their older 2010 Mandriva installs to Cooker should be forwarned, there are extra steps to be taken. If you're one of these people, check-out the procedure here [3].

My first step, after installation was to update the TP release to the current state of Cooker (as of Feb 7). Then I installed the newest and latest KDE 6.0 stuff.

Like many distros lately, the open source Nouveau driver for nvidia video is installed by default. In fact, there is no proprietary Nvidia driver in Mandriva's cooker repositories. So, I went to Nvidia's web site, downloaded their proprietary driver, and compiled it for the TP kernel (Linux 2.6.37). Much to my surprise, this worked well. When the Nouveau driver performance becomes congruent to Nvidia's proprietary driver, I will switch to the Nouveau driver. Actually, the Nouveau driver performed fairly well, and is getting closer in quality to Nvidia's driver. I was surprised at how well the KDE desktop effects worked under the Nouveau driver.

Again, to my surprise, as Mandriva's 2011 Alpha 1 release approaches, I find it to be remarkably stable, fluid, and

capable from the KDE side. The only issues I've encountered are from the flaky Firefox beta (4.0 beta10) browser, which is why I'm blogging this to Tuxmachines from the Rekonq browser.

In fact, I'm going to keep this (very) early version of Mandriva 2011 installed on my laptop, and update the packages daily.

UPDATE: An update of D-Bus BORKED this system yesterday. Lost my sound. Other issues. Looks like I'll wait for the 2011 Alpha1 release.

Reviews

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