Mageia 1 Alpha2 -- A Status Report

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Mageia Linux?A Little History

On September 18, 2010, in response to Mandriva's liquidation of its ?Edge-IT? subsidiary and the attendant layoff of a substantial share of its developers, a group consisting of former Mandriva developers and Mandriva community contributers announced their intention to form a non-profit organization and release a fork of Mandriva Linux called Mageia Linux.

The original announcement with background details and rationale can be found here [2].

Six months later, on February 14, 2011 the Alpha 1 version of Mageia 1 was released, two months later than originally planned. However, the Alpha 2 release was right on time, appearing a month later on March 15, 2011. For more information regarding Mageia's development timetable, look here [3]. Note that the beta 1 release target date is April 5, 2011.

How is the Mageia 1 release shaping up? This status report takes a look at Mageia Linux 1 Alpha 2 release (updated daily), from a KDE-user perspective.

The Install

Hardware

I chose to do a fresh install on my Acer Aspire 6930-6560 laptop. This particular model of laptop sports a built-in Nvidia video (GeForce 9600M GS) controller. Along with this, it came with 3GB RAM, Intel Core 2 Duo T5800 processor, Atheros wired ethernet controller, Intel wireless network controller, and a 1366 x 768 native resolution display. The only hardware change I've made to this laptop is to swap in a 7200 RPM Western Digita hard disk vs the original 5400 RPM hard disk.

I chose to install the 64-bit version of Mageia 1 Alpha 2. To make it short, the install was flawless. Mardriva's wonderful graphical partitioner was there, as I chose a custom install and installed both KDE and Gnome.

All hardware components on my laptop after the install are working great.

RPMDrake Issue Fixed

RPMDrake is Mandriva's GUI package installer inherited by Mageia. At first, when doing a search for packages, the search didn't work. The (clumsy but functional) workaround was to type in the search term, press Enter, then pull down the File menu, and select ?Reload the packages list?. Fortunately, this was fixed two days ago, and a search for

packages now works as expected.

Updates
The Mageia devs have been extremely active. I get anywhere from 60 to 200 packages being updated daily. Today, the most recent Libreoffice version packages (version 3.3.2) made theirselves at home on my computer.

New packages are arriving daily too, as Mageia replaces Mandriva built packages with their own package builds. For example, the Codeblocks (wxWidgets based integrated development environment) arrived yesterday.

What's There, What's Not
The alpha version of Calligra-office (formerly Koffice) is there, as well as Firefox 4.0. The devs are doing a very good job of keeping this distro up to date.

Although Mageia has a ?tainted? repository with non-free packages, I did not find Adobe's flashplayer there (some may consider this a good thing). I did however, download the 64-bit adobe flashplayer from Adobe's site, and install it by hand?which works fine.

The Delphi-like rapid GUI development package, Lazarus (and fpc, the free pascal compiler) are missing. Also missing was my favorite terminal program, mrxvt, and a the non-graphical text editor, Joe. (No, I'm not an Emacs or VIM guy?I'm a Joe, Nano, Kate, KWrite guy when it comes to text editing). I've downloaded, compiled and installed these programs, and all is well.

Stability
There have been two kernel updates in the last few days, which is now at kernel version 2.6.38.

After first installation, Alpha 2 was a little crashy. But updates over the last week appear to have stabilized it?no crashes for the last 2 days.

Comparison to Mandriva's Alphas
Bear in mind, I haven't looked at the latest Mandriva install updated from Cooker (their development repository). So, a week ago is the last snapshot I have of this emerging release. Mandriva is switching from RPM 4 to RPM 5. Last time I checked, rpmdrake, the GUI package manager was crash-prone. But the major difference I observe is desktop responsiveness under KDE.

I don't know whether the Mageia devs are stripping all debugging/delay code from their builds, but the desktop responsiveness from Mageia Linux is the best I've seen on this laptop, and has been noticable enough to make me prefer the emerging Mageia to the emerging Mandriva.

Conclusion
I go through a phase of intense distro-hopping about once a year. After trying out countless distros, I typically end up returning to Mandriva based releases. This last year, I've alternated between PCLinuxOS and Mandriva, using mostly PCLinusOS on my production machines.

I really like the way Mageia is shaping up. I plan to continue with Mageia on my laptop, which I'll be taking with me to the Northwest LinuxFest Conference in Bellingham, WA, at the end of April.

For an Alpha 2 release update to an imminent beta 1 release, it's becoming very stable. The repositories are getting deep, and the performance is remarkable.

Hats off to the Mageia folk. Keep up the good work.

[Linux](#)

Links:

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

[2] http://www.tuxmachines.org/www.mageia.org/en/#announce?

[3] http://www.tuxmachines.org/mageia.org/wiki/doku.php?id=iso_1_specifications#expected_milestones?