

PCLinuxOS MAGAZINE

Issue 7 • March, 2007

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From the Chief Editor's Desk

I know we promised that this issue would have an in-depth review of PCLinuxOS .94/2007 Final, but it just couldn't happen. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how one looks at it, enough bugs were discovered in .94/2007 TR1 that a second test release was deemed necessary. Right now, the forum is alive with posts about that Test Release. From this desk, it looks like there are far fewer issues than with TR1. That's a good thing. The Final can't be far away now.

So I'll promise again to provide our readers with that in-depth look at the Final Release in next month's issue. We'll have lots of stuff about the 3D desktop and all the other goodies we've all been waiting for. Look for it!

This time, though, we have lots of good stuff. There's an article on setting up Beryl in .94/2007 and a description of some of the application and menu changes as well. Merlin Whitewolf's great piece on how to contribute to open source, and PCLOS in particular, is a must read if you missed it when it was posted on the forum. There's a neat little tip on how to modify your Konsole, so it is obvious at a glance when you are working as Root. And finally, an excellent piece on ripping audio from tapes or other sources into your computer so you can transfer all those old cassette tapes to CD. There's more, but I'll leave them for you to discover.

So, until next month, enjoy what we've prepared for you and look for exciting new things from your favorite magazine in the near future. There are some nice changes coming soon.

Tim Robinson

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PCLinuxOS 2007 Test Release 2

Texstar, head developer of PCLinuxOS, posted on Wednesday 14 February 2007 - 22:24:04 that PCLinuxOS Test Release 2 is now available for download. This is mainly a bug fix update based on user feedback from Test Release 1. There are still a few pending issues to clear before final. More details are located below and our forum is open for bug reports.

Disclaimer -This is experimental software. Use at your own risk. PCLinuxOS cannot be held liable under any circumstances for damage to hardware or software, lost data, or other direct or indirect damage resulting from the use of this software. If you do not agree to these terms and conditions, you are not permitted to use or further distribute this software.

Please note this is not the final release. PCLinuxOS 2007 final will be released on or before the end of the month.

Features include:

- * Kernel 2.6.18.6-dev5
- * KDE 3.5.6 final
- * Mozilla Firefox 2.0.0.1
- * Flash 9
- * Mozilla Thunderbird 1.5.0.9
- * Open Office 2.1.0
- * Xorg 7.1
- * Beryl (1.99), Compiz, Aiglx and Xgl for 3D graphics support
- * Gcc 4.1.1 and updated glibc
- * Updated boot splash, icons, and more from the mypclinixos.com beautification project.
- * Xdg Menu system
- * Rebuild and update of our entire repository against new gcc and glibc
- * Simplified Livecd boot options.

Livecd boot options:

- * Livecd - Default boot options
- * Safevideomode - Boot using generic video drivers (Proprietary drivers available after install)
- * Safe - Turns off most hardware probing
- * Mediacheck - Test the media to determine a good burn to cdr

- * Memtest - Test your computer memory

Additional Cheat codes: (can be typed on the command line)

- * nousb - skip usb probing
- * noscsi - skip scsi detection
- * nosound - skip sound detection
- * nocpufreq - skip cpufreq module detection
- * nopcmcia - skip pcmcia detection

Known Issues:

- * Synaptic doesn't allow one to re-install already installed software
- * 3D support is still experimental and doesn't work with all video cards yet.
- * Missing a lot of applications in the repository. We will be adding more as time allows.
- * Menu editor gets wonky from time to time.
- * Ndiwrapper setup from pcc requires root login
- * Suspend/hibernate not working properly.

Changelog - All of this needs your testing

- * Updated kernel to 2.6.18.6dev5
- * Update to kde 3.5.6 final
- * Added madwifi kernel drivers
- * Switched to iso linux instead of Grub bootloader for livecd
- * Usb cdrom boot
- * Added missing pppoe files
- * Added ipw3945
- * Fixed installing from guest account
- * Fix pcmcia on hd install
- * Switched to aufs instead of unionfs for this test release
- * Added extra Ark functions to konqueror
- * Added Samba Server and Lisa to make it easier to setup after hd install.
- * Fixed rough scrolling in Konqueror
- * Removed netstats from autostart to fix desktop login when no system has no network
- * Fixed redo-lilo and renamed to redo-mbr
- * Fixed print preview in KPDF
- * Fixed standard KDE user login menu
- * Fixed XFCE from starting properly
- * Fixed image previews

- * Updated initscripts
- * Added red color to konsole root
- * Added resolv.conf update
- * Added mounting for /mnt/win_c for ndiswrapper inf install during livecd network setup.
- * Verbose mode boot back to full screen more for better visual output
- * Fixed /boot/kernel.h to point to correct kernel
- * Added eciadsl-usermode-0.11 to livecd.
- * much much more...

Download Mirrors:

<http://ftp.ch.debian.org/mirror/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://ftp.heanet.ie/pub/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://ftp2.be.freesbie.org/packages/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://ftp.ussg.iu.edu/linux/pclinuxos/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://ftp.surfnet.nl/ftp/pub/os/Linux/distr/texstar/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://ftp.belnet.be/linux/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://ftp.sh.cvut.cz/MIRRORS/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<http://pclinuxos.consult-right.com/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<ftp://ftp.pbone.net/pub/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/>
<ftp://rm.mirror.garr.it/mirrors/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview>

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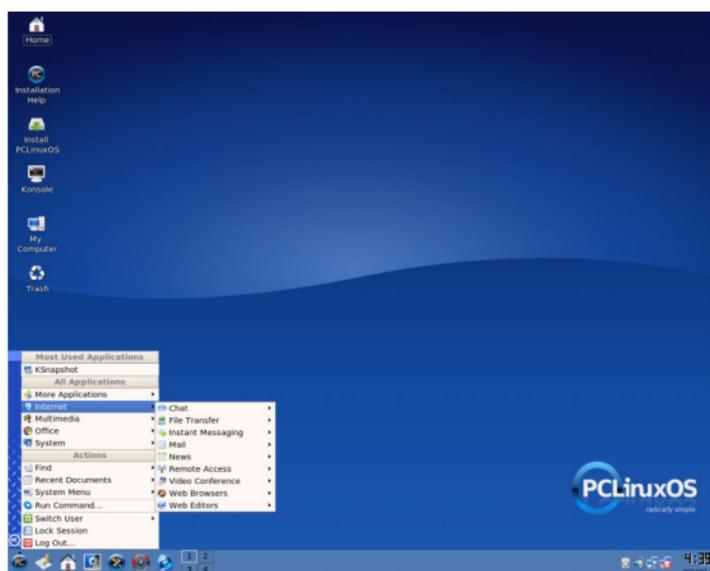
Help in the development of PCLinuxOS, and get exposure.

Contact us, and you can be a part in our efforts to improve the best Linux distribution in the whole universe.

Application Changes in 2007

by Papawoob We are on the verge of the release of the much anticipated PCLinuxOS 2007. With this in mind, I thought that I would bring you up to date on what is new, what is gone, and what is still in the default menu. The entire repository has been recompiled using the new gcc and glibc. Also included in 2007 are Beryl, Compiz, Aiglx, and Xgl for 3D graphics support. Now let's get back on track.

Let's start with Internet (It used to be Networking.)



Chat: Adds KSirc and keeps XChat.

File Transfer: Frostwire and Kget return while KFTPGrabber and KTorrent replace gFTP and Bittorrent. Smb4K moves here from Remote Access.

Instant Messaging: Kopete

Mail: Kmail, KSig, and Kshowmail are gone, but Thunderbird is back.

News: Logjam remains and Akregator, Knode, and gPodder are no shows.

Remote Access: KPPP, KPPPLogview, Krdc, Krfb, and Putty

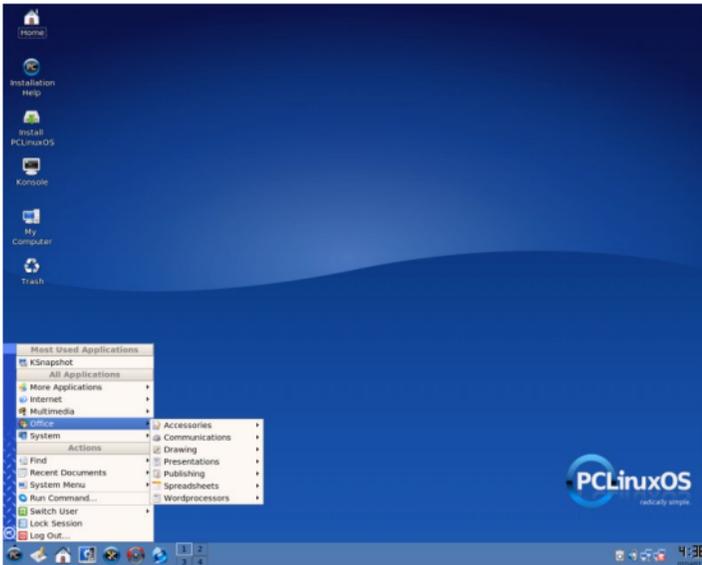
made the cut, but Nmap did not.

Video Conference: (another new sub-menu) has Ekiga Softphone.

Web Browsers: Konqueror and Firefox 2.0 are back, Opera is missing, and Nvu has been moved to the new sub-menu Web Editors.

Now we need to move on to Office.

Accessories: Kcalc, Kjots, and glabels Label Designer



are new while Dictionary is the lone holdover.

Communications (moved from Accessories) contains the new sub-menu, Fax, which returns KdePrintFax and adds Hp Send Fax, Kfax, and Kfaxview.

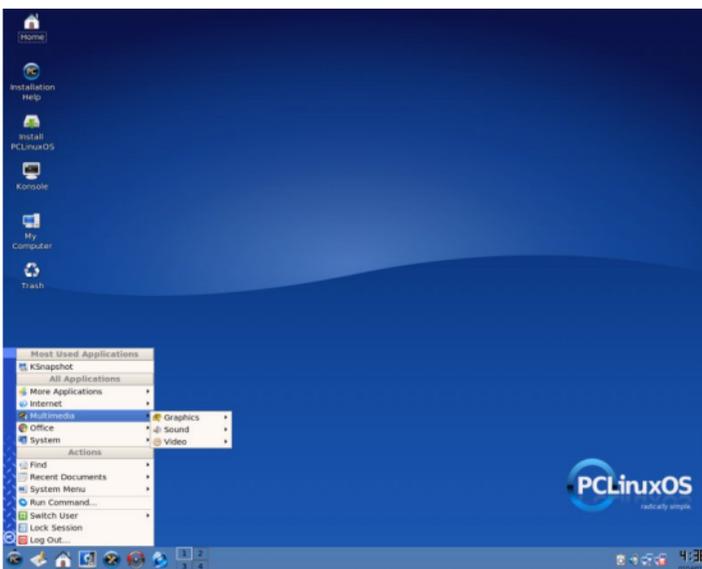
Drawing: Open Office Draw

Presentations: Open Office Impress

Publishing: Kpdf is back and Scribus is new.

Spreadsheets: Open Office Base and Calc

Word Processors: Open Office Writer returns and Math is gone.



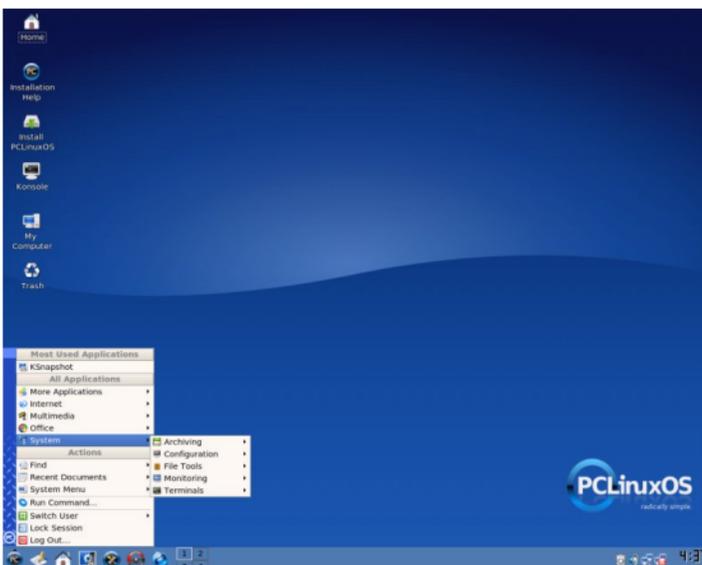
Most of us use Multimedia applications so let's see what we have.

Graphics: digikam, Gimp, Gqview, Ksnapshot, Kwikshow, Kview, shoFoto, and XSane have made it back in and Kalbum, Kover, kcdlabel, Xcam, Wink, and Xscanimage are the new kids on the block.

Sound: Kscd, Amarok, Aumix, and KMix have been rehired; MPlayer is new; Audacity, KAudioCreator, Krec, Streamtuner, Xmms, and SoundKonverter have been fired.

Video: Kaffeine, Mplayer, TVtime Television Viewer remain unchanged.

Now we can look at what is in the System menu.

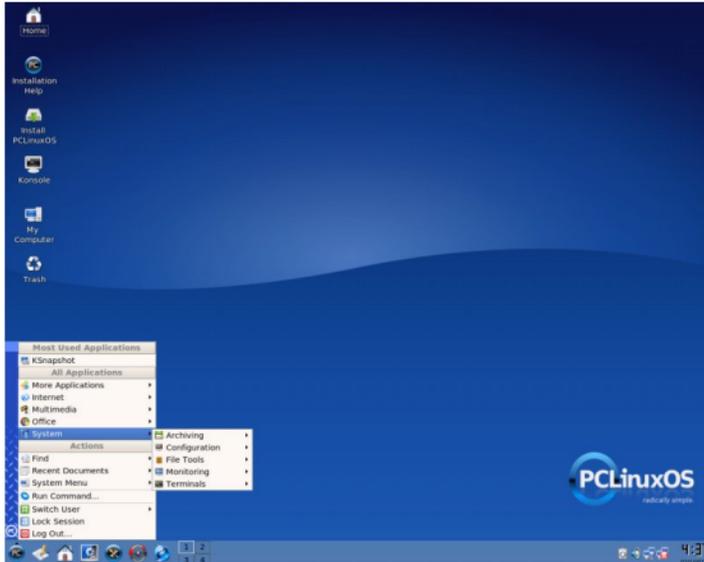


Archiving: CD Burning: k3b and Lightscribe

Compression: Ark and Konserve

Configuration: Configure Your Desktop, Configure Your Computer,

KDE has hardware, printing, and packaging sub-menus. Other: kinfocenter, kmenueditor and menu style.
File Tools: Find/Files Folders, File Manager Super UserMode, Krusader, Krusader Root Mode
Monitoring: Ksysguard, Gkrellum, HP Printer Toolbox, Kdiskfree, Kjobviewer, Knetstats, KwikDisk, NetApplet, NMap, and SuperKaramba.



We are almost done so let's move on to our last menu item, More Applications:

Databases: OO Base

Development: Kjscmd

Documentation: KDE Help Center

Editors: Kate, KRegExp Editor, and KWrite return with this sequel while VI Editor guest stars.

Well, that wraps this up. I think we can see that there are fewer sound

applications, but more graphics and monitoring applications. Since we have such a nice repository of applications and Linux gives us that wonderful thing called CHOICE, it is up to each of us to make our distro of choice whatever we would like it to be.

A friend and I were looking for a C compiler in a software store. We went in and searched the shelves but found nothing. We asked the salesperson. He went looking through the games section. I told him it was a programming language. So he took us to the foreign language software.

The other day I walked into this little place that sells old software, old computers, and some new software. I walked up to a sales clerk and said, "Do you guys carry Linux?" He took one look at me (I am 15 years old) and, not knowing what Linux was, he checked the rack with games. I said, "No, Linux is not a game -- it's an operating system."

He looked confused, then stuttered, "Uhhh...yeah...well check that rack, we've got stuff like Quicken there."

Playing with Beryl

by betamaxman

First, this is intended for nVidia cards, without XGL, and for KDE. Get your system 3D enabled by following this how to from ocilent1:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php?topic=15174.0>

Then run Synaptic and search for XGL and Compiz and uninstall them (as in remove them). Search for beryl

Core and Emerald Theme Manager and install them, if they are not already installed.



Open a terminal, become root and type `kwrite /etc/X11/xorg.conf`.

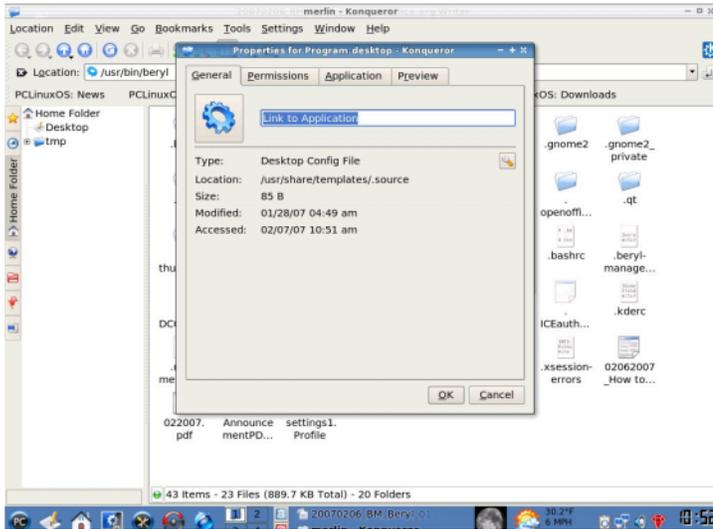
To the section titled Device add these lines just before the end section line.

```
Option "AllowGLXWithComposite" "true"  
Option "backingstore" "true"  
Option "TripleBuffer" "true"  
Option "AddARGBGLXVisuals" "True"
```

And if it is not already there, add this section to the bottom of the file.

```
Section "Extensions"  
Option "Composite" "on"  
EndSection
```

Open your `/home` directory and from the "view tab" enable, "show hidden files". Find the `.kde` folder and open it, in the `autostart` folder create two links to applications, make one `beryl` and the other `beryl-`



manager. On Konqueror's menu bar click edit, go to Create New and click link to application. In the field that opens up, type `/usr/bin/beryl` and click ok. Repeat the process and type `/usr/bin/beryl-manager`. Beryl and the beryl manager will start when KDE is started. There are other methods to accomplish this, however I have found this one to be preferable for me. Restart KDE and welcome to beryl.

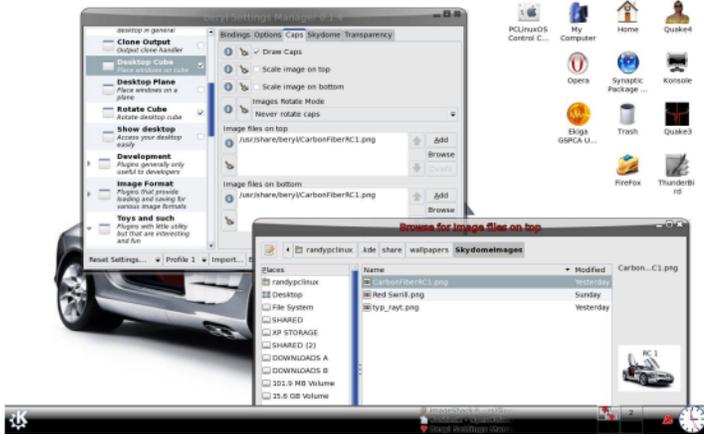
Beryl Settings

Click on the beryl icon in the system tray and select "Beryl Settings Manager", this will open the beryl settings GUI and show the list of general options.

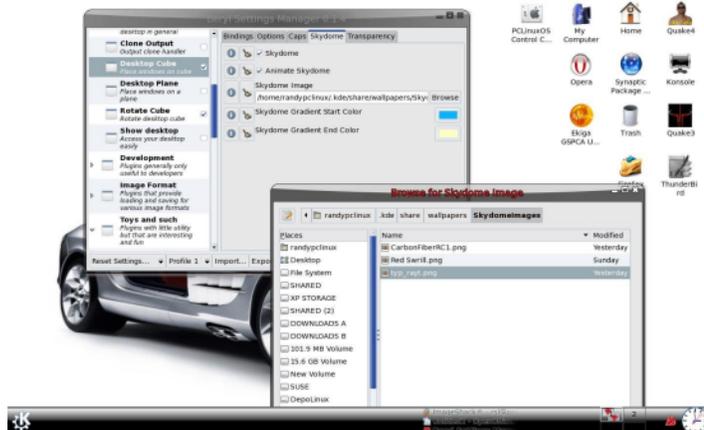


There are many more sections, however I am only going to focus on those the average user will want as they cover the look and effects they see posted on the net and deal mainly with the cube.

You evoke the cube by pressing the Alt + Ctrl keys and dragging the mouse to the right or left of the desktop.



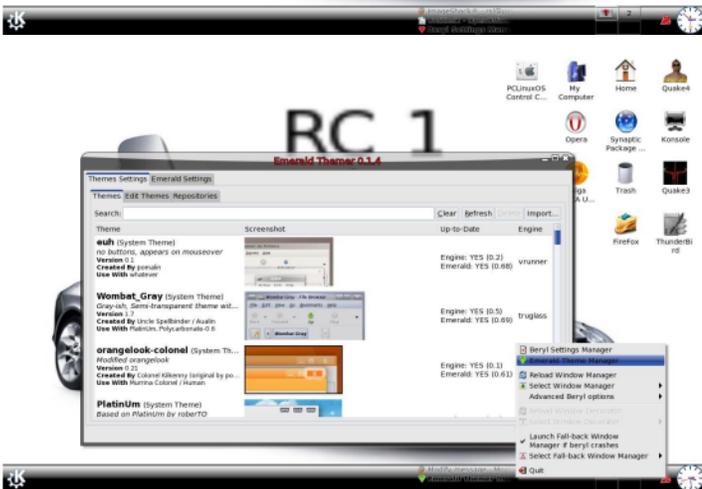
The section pertaining to the cube is "Desktop" click on the "Desktop Cube" entry. Now click on the "Caps" entry this will allow you to add a custom image on the cube, note they must be .png or .svg.



The "Skydome" entry will allow you to select an image for the skydome, note they also must be .png or .svg and must be resized to 2048x1024.



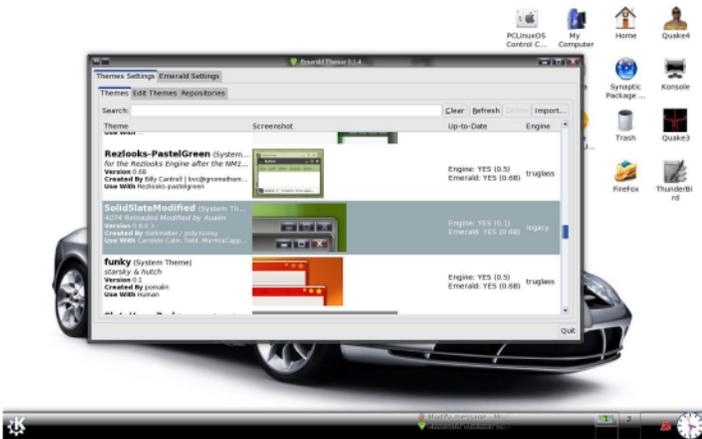
The next effect many seem to like is the 3D window effect displayed on the cube where windows seem to hang off the side of the cube, this is found in the "Visual Effects" section on the 3D Effects tab. Here a little does a lot, so move the slider a bit then check out how it looks on the cube.



That's all there is to it. There are lots more settings and tweaks, but these will do for most and are likely more than most will need.

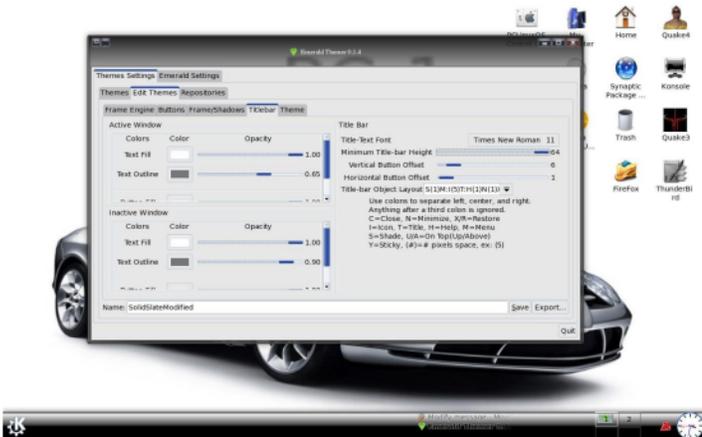
The Emerald Theme Manager

Click again on the beryl manager and select the "Emerald Theme manager"



This an excellent theme manager with new themes ported daily and can be found on such sites as kdelook.org.

Just select a theme by clicking on it and your desktop instantly is transformed.



Select the "edit theme" feature and you can make edits to the title bar height, drop shadows, transparency, text color, and so on.

With beryl and the Emerald Theme Manager, KDE will never be the same again.

You can revert to the KDE window manager by selecting it from the beryl menu.

I hope you enjoy your beryl experience.

Recording Audio with PCLinuxOS

by Paul Evans - Gemlog

Our primary mission is to learn how to 'rip' cassette tapes to a hard drive. That is, to copy audio cassette tapes into convenient files that we can play back with any of the popular music players distributed with PCLinuxOS. In fact, we'll be able to record any audio signal we can lay our hands on, including broadcast radio by the time we're done.

Being lazy Linux users, the first thing we do is a quick Google search to see what's out there to help us. Even before posting to the forums, or perhaps especially before posting to the forums, just have a quick Google for the answer. Google has a special way to find help for topics about Linux. Searching

<http://www.google.com/linux>

instead of the regular website, it will show results about Linux only.

Sure enough, searches on 'audio cassettes' and 'audio tape' quickly turn up several excellent articles, all mostly saying the same things and quite often using one of my favorite audio tools: Audacity. There are some links to the more interesting ones at the end of this article.

Will It Be Dangerous?

RELAX! There's nothing quite like having someone scream the word 'relax' in your face to invoke a sense of calm and serenity, is there? Our primary mission presents no danger at all; we'll be marching along well-trodden paths tramped smooth long ago by, well, old

Linux path trampers. Towards the very end of our mission, we may wander off the trail a little in search of a bit of excitement, but I promise there will be no Command Lines Of Unusual Size – or any more “Princess Bride” references. Probably.

What To Pack

We could do the basics straight from a PCLinuxOS Live CD and save the files to, say, a USB key, but it will be simplest to use a real hard drive install and avoid any hassle at all. That's the plan followed here.

The first thing we need is a cassette player with an output jack on it. Nearly anything will do, so long as it has something labeled as 'Line Out', 'Phones', 'Headphones' or similar. Anything to get the sound out of it on some wires with a plug on the end. We won't even think of putting a microphone near the speakers of the tape player and doing it that way. That would only sound nasty on playback. Nasty.

The final item we need to add to our kit is the actual piece of wire to connect the tape player to our sound card in the computer. This is the tricky bit. Both ends of the wire will likely need to have a male end. Or possibly, two different styles of ends. One end will almost certainly look like the jack shown on the left, which looks just like the end of the speaker wire that goes into your computer sound card. The other end may be the same, or it may need an end similar to some combination of those shown in the other illustration, depending on the tape player.



Notice the two little black stripes on the mini-phono plug? Those are actually important, as we won't get stereo sound if there is only one stripe, only mono sound. Worse, that mono audio may all be on one side during the playback. Any of these patch cords are easy to find in the shops and shouldn't cost more than a good cup of coffee downtown.

Sally Forth

Have you ever been in a club waiting for the band to start up? Of course you have. Did you ever notice the guy behind the sound board pretending to ignore the rest of the world whilst grandly pronouncing such memorable phrases as “Check! Check One! Two!” and “Test!”? Did you ever imagine what a genius he must be for keeping that incredible snake's nest of wires straight?

OK, well then, that's where you messed up in your appraisal of him. About the only knowledge needed to hook-up that entire mess of audio cables is 'Outs go to Ins' and vice versa. There are a few other considerations to be sure, but that is the single most important part of his wiring job. 'Pre-amp Out' goes to 'Pre-amp In', 'Line Out' goes to 'Line In' and so on. We only need the last one.

Simply locate the 'Line Out' on the tape deck and plug it into the 'Line In' on the computer. The computer side is always labeled as 'Line' or 'Line In'. The tape deck side may try to be tricky and label itself as 'Phones', etc, as mentioned above, but we won't be fooled. It's an 'Out' and we will connect it to an 'In'. This can be done with either or both devices powered up and it won't hurt anything. No fear.

The Good Part

Before we begin recording, these two points from the Audacity website are worth noting:

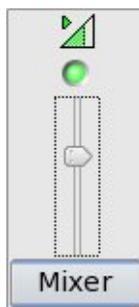
Do not plug stereo equipment into your computer's "Microphone" port, which is designed for low-powered ("mic-level") signals only. Use the "Line In" port instead. Do not connect a turntable directly to your computer. The signal from a turntable is distorted; it must be corrected by passing it through a phono pre-amp or a receiver with a "phono" input.

Now we're good to go!

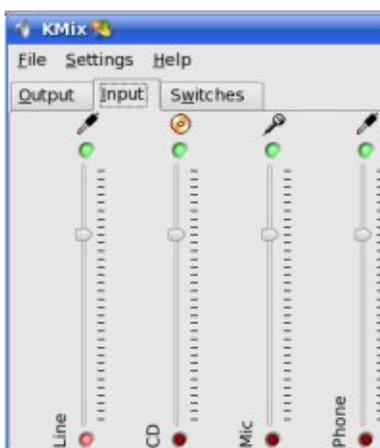
Audacity is our weapon of choice since it is, a) wonderful, and b) included in PCLinuxOS. You can easily find it in the K-Menu under Multimedia > Sound > Audacity. The Audacity program is part of the PCLinuxOS base install and we won't need to install anything extra at all for basic functionality. Audacity lets us record sound from the tape player (or anything else connected to 'Line In'), clean it up in various ways, and then save it to a file on our hard-drive. It's really easy to use and we can do some cool things with it too.

First, let's make sure we are getting good signal in to the computer from the tape deck. We can mess with levels a bit and get a feel for the game itself. With everything connected, set the volume on the tape deck fairly low, say about a third of the way up to maximum volume. Depending on the output, it's best to be safe and not blow the input to your sound card; a line level out won't be effected, but a headphone jack will. Is the sound coming out of the computer speakers? Yes? Great – we're home free!

What, no sound? Don't worry, it's likely just a mixer setting. Let's go play with that for a bit.



If you don't have a little speaker icon near the clock in the lower right-hand corner of the screen, visit the K-menu and choose Multimedia → Sound → Sound Mixer (Kmix). Now, click on the speaker icon near the clock. A small window will pop up showing a volume control and a button at the bottom labeled 'Mixer'.



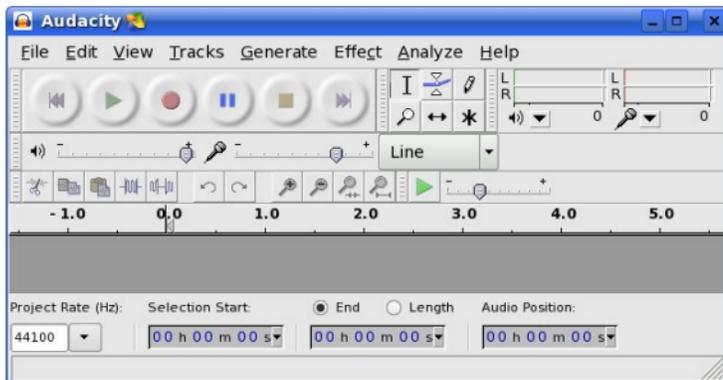
Make sure the LED at the top is bright green – that's the mute button. Click on the mixer button once and a different, more complicated window will open up.

This window has 3 tabs: Output, Input, and Switches. Click on the Input tab. The little green fake LEDs at the top mean that the thing is turned 'On' for sending to Output. The fake red LED's at the bottom select which Input is used for recording stuff. Try to set the levels between 50 and 75%, now choose the Output tab and

do the same thing.

At this point you really should have some sound. If not, things you can check for are a physical switch and/or volume on your speakers, loose or unplugged cable (duh) or an output switch on the tape deck, if it is that sophisticated. Beyond those causes, please visit our forums: you're off this mission for now.

Now we have that sorted, let's do the fun stuff! Go to

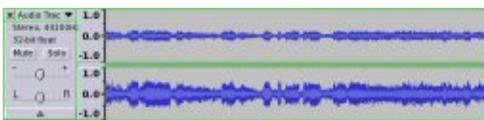


your K-menu and run Audacity from: Multimedia > Sound. You'll see a window like that shown above after you choose the language setting.

It looks a little intimidating, but the things we care about first are those we already know best: the VCR/DVD style buttons at the top left, the large,

colored, friendly looking ones. They work just as expected.

Just press 'Play' on the tape deck and click the round, red, 'Record' button in Audacity. Two rows of wave forms should appear in the Audacity window as the recording proceeds. If the two rows of wave forms do not appear as shown on the left then check back over the cables and settings.



Click on the square, brown, 'Stop' button in Audacity and stop the tape deck after either letting the tape play to the end or after just one or two songs. In fact, any amount of sound recorded this first time out is fine, even just a few seconds worth of it. At this point, the sound is recorded onto the hard-drive, but only as temporary files. There are two, somewhat confusing options under the 'File' menu for saving files permanently. 'Save Project' will save all the raw sound data as Audacity project files. These files are no good for burning to a CD or sending to an mp3 player, but it lets us keep all our options open for further editing or effects. It's a good idea to save the recording as a

project, especially if it's a long session.

The 'Export' option is the one we need for creating the more familiar '.ogg' or '.mp3' files that we probably want to end up with. Briefly, the 'Wave' option should be chosen for creating regular audio CDs for when we later use the K3B CD burner program included with PCLinuxOS. We can also use 'Ogg Vorbis' or 'MP3' for use with USB keys, MP3 players, or very recent car audio systems.

Wave and FLAC files contain all the original audio information from the recording. FLAC files are much smaller than wave files, but not too common yet. Ogg and MP3 files are the smallest in size, but that small size is achieved by actually throwing away some information. These are known as 'lossy' file formats and is the reason why we want to keep the original recording session around as Audacity project files until we are sure that we have the final version as Ogg or MP3. The Ogg format is both open-source and superior to the proprietary MP3 format and should be preferred where possible.

The first time a file is exported as an MP3 a dialog will pop up explaining the need for libLAME. Just let it go ahead and locate it on the hard-drive. This will only happen the very first time. If Audacity complains that it can't be found, just go to Synaptic and make sure the the Multimedia Meta Package is installed and try again and then it will work.

Now, just mess around and have some fun. There are a lot of toys in Audacity. Just use the 'I beam' cursor (the default) to select portions of audio and then tell Audacity to do Something Interesting to it. For example, if there's a bit too much silence at the beginning or end you can snip it off. Or perhaps it would be nice if it faded out at the end – or faded up at the start? Just explore the menus and experiment. There is no way to make the smoke come out of your computer, no matter what you do within Audacity:

Filter out hiss or rumble (High or Low filtering)
Fade in or out
Add some echo
Create fake stereo or remove vocals
Lots more, check out the tutorials listed below

One of the nice things about Ogg and MP3 files is that they contain the name of the artist, album, genre, year and much else instead of the boring Track 1, Track 2, etc. that the RIAA gifted us with. Under the Audacity 'File' menu is an entry named 'Open Metadata Editor.' Pick that and then just fill in the blanks pretty much. Choose 'ID3v1' when it asks – the other one doesn't work with all playback programs or devices yet, but it is selected by default.

This point in the trail is as far as you need to go to get the job done. Have fun!

Danger? What Dang...Umph

Really, the only danger around is how addictive it can be to play with audio on Linux. There are an awful lot of programs out there, both command line and those with graphical user interfaces. Have a look at the "Loads of Linux Links" site listed in the references and you'll find dozens of programs to play with. Many of these are available in PCLinuxOS with simple clicks in Synaptic, but some would require more effort to install.

The 'Baudline' program is not listed at LOLL, but it's an over-the-top-wonderful toy for zero cost. Actually, it is meant as a serious tool for experts in fields like vibrational analysis, but if you know how to undo a tarball and click to run a program, it's worth checking out. It is only distributed as a pre-compiled, ready to run, binary and is not open source. It won't appear in your menus unless you put it there manually afterwards.

Finally, for the really adventurous (or those with a serious amount of audio work ahead) check out the Sox program, which is installable from Synaptic and included

with PCLinuxOS. It's entirely command line, but extremely useful for batch conversions of files. Time shifting broadcast radio using cron jobs and converting modem voice mail files are other uses I've found for it. I'd talk more about Sox, but I'd have to break my promise about CLOUS given at the beginning.

Mission accomplished!

References

Audacity:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/manual-1.2/index.html>

Audacity Tutorials:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/tutorials>

Nostalgia project with Ogg Vorbis:

<http://www.linux.org/lessons/beginner/l18/lesson18e.html>

FLAC format:

<http://flac.sourceforge.net/>

Ogg Vorbis:

<http://www.vorbis.com/>

Loads of Linux Links:

<http://loll.sourceforge.net/linux/links/Audio-Video/index.html>

SoX - Sound eXchange:

<http://sox.sourceforge.net/>

I collect old computers as a hobby, mostly 20 year old microcomputers -- Apple II, Commodore, etc. Once, in an attempt to find one, I called a computer surplus store.

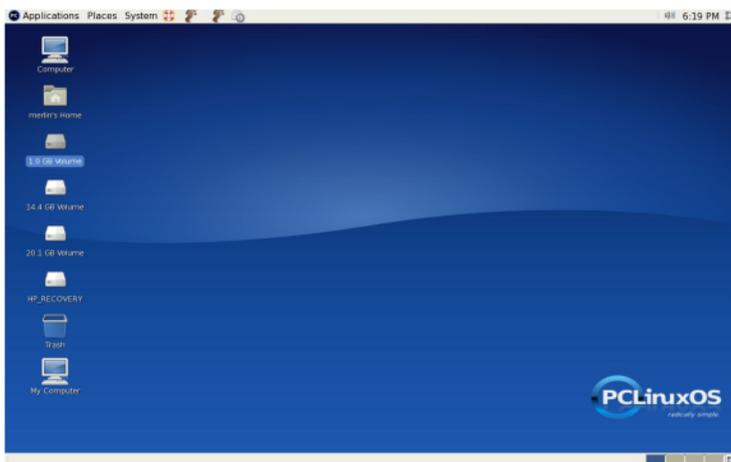
- * Me: "Hi. Do you have any old computers, maybe 10-20 years old?"
- * Salesperson: "Sir, there were no computers 20 years ago."
- * Me: "Umm, ok. Bye."

Then I cracked up.

Working in Gnome

by Merlin Whitewolf This is an exciting time for PCLinuxOS users. The new version .94/2007 introduces many new and interesting changes. The Beautification Project at MyPCLinuxOS.com gives us new and beautiful graphics; Beryl and Compiz deliver fully enabled 3D; the newest version of KDE is front and center, and there is a new kernel. For those who enjoy working in a Gnome environment, PCLinuxOS presents version 2.16.

If you are new to Gnome, you'll find it different than KDE, but very usable and enjoyable. Everything you are used to doing in KDE, you can do in Gnome. You'll only need a few minutes to see where the menu differs. The desktop is as configurable, and you may want to start out by changing it to suit your tastes.

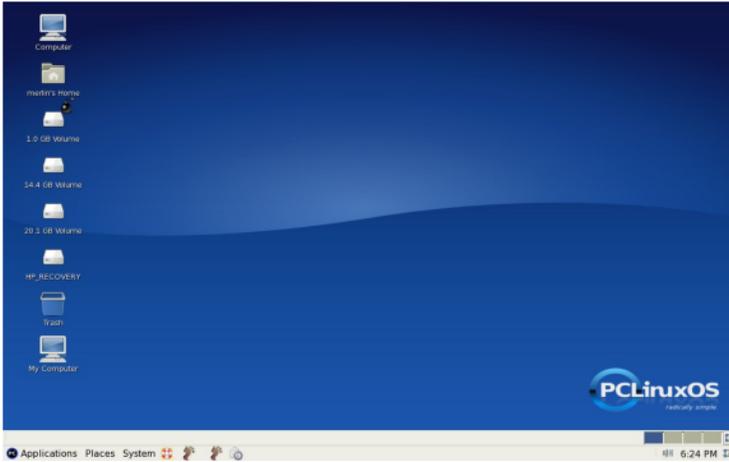


Here are a few tips to get you started:

First, you'll see that Gnome offers two kicker panels, one at the top and one at the bottom. You may choose to leave these in their default mode or rearrange them to your taste.



To set them to your preferences, choose the panel to be moved or changed and move your cursor to it. Right click, and choose Properties . A dialog box will open, and display the position of the panel. Pull down the

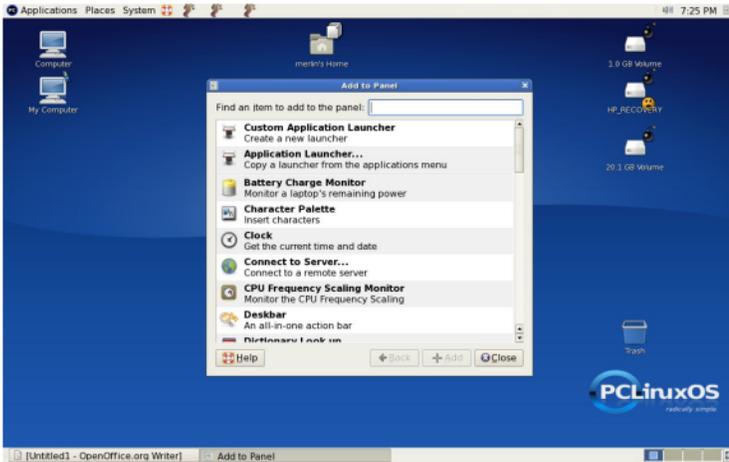


drop menu under Orientation and select the position you prefer: top, bottom, left, or right.

You may prefer to have one panel rather than the default two. To remove one of the panels, right click on it and choose Delete This Panel. Warning! This will permanently remove the panel. You will no longer have any of the functions attached to

it when you delete it, so review them carefully before throwing them away.

To move any application or applet that is attached to a panel, right click on its icon. If Lock to Panel is checked,

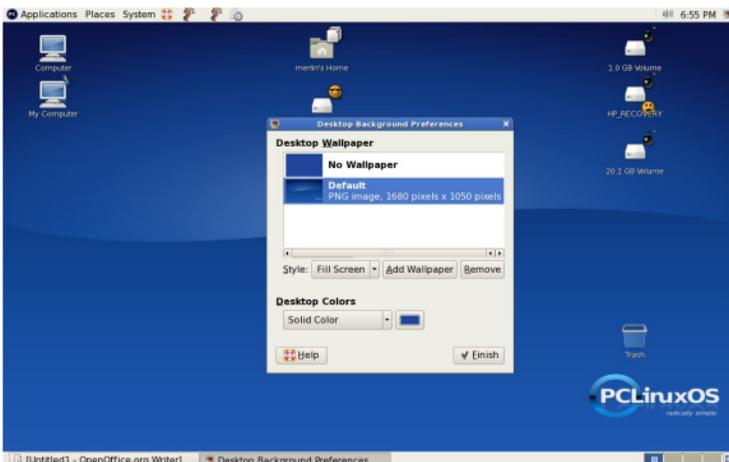


uncheck it. Then right click on the icon again, place the mouse on Move, then drag and drop the icon to another spot on the panel, or to the other pane. After you have moved it, lock it to the panel by the same method you used to unlock it.

You might wish to add to the panels. Right click on the panel of your choice and choose Add to Panel. Choose

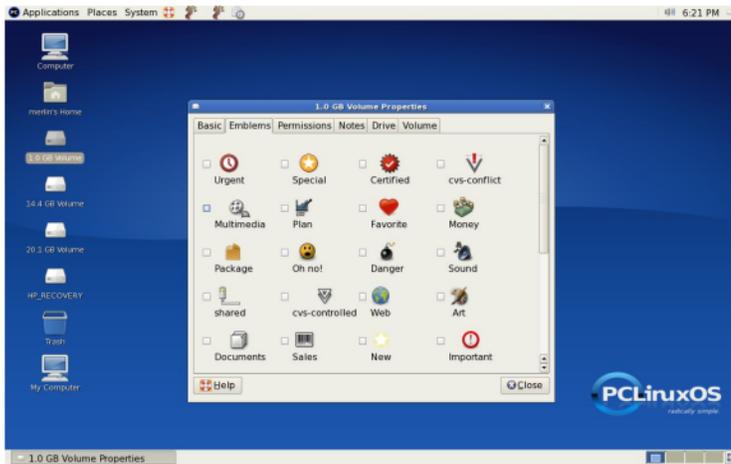
from among the menu options.

To change the desktop background, go to System, Preferences, Desktop Background or right click on the



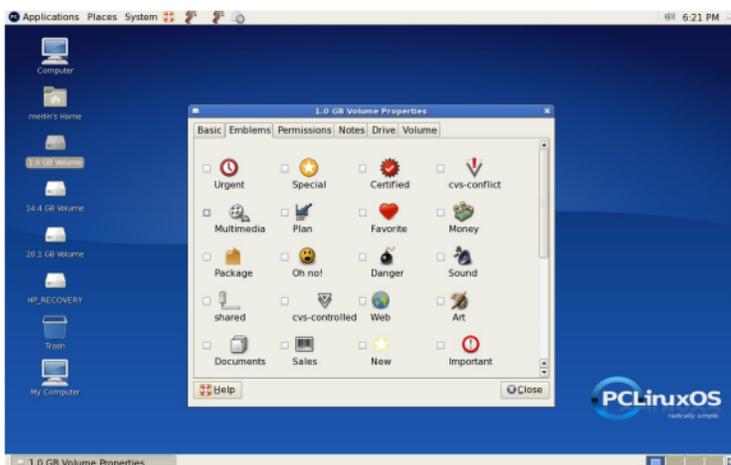
desktop and choose Change Desktop Background. Click on a new background from the presented list, then click Finish. If you want to use your own picture, just click Add Wallpaper and browse to the folder where your pictures are stored and choose the picture you want to use.

You may want to add a little symbolism to your desktop icons. To



do this, right click the icon, choose Properties and click on the Emblems tab. Choose the emblem or emblems that you want to add and click to put an X in the box beside it. The emblem will be added. Close the properties box.

To set up your screensaver, go to System, Preferences, Screensaver. A box will open up from which you can choose, test and apply a screensaver.



These are just a few of the things you can do to set up your Gnome desktop. It is a good starting place when working in Gnome, but there is much more to its functionality. The best way to learn about it all is to just start using it. Again, you may find Gnome's menu different from what you are used to, but when you get accustomed to the differences, you will begin to see the logic behind the menu layout.

Enjoy your new Gnome desktop.

A few years ago I visited a computer store and saw a computer equipped with this new Microid Research BIOS which was unfamiliar to me. I would like to know something about the performance of this BIOS, so I asked if it was a fast BIOS. "Well yes!" he answered, "Take a look at this!" He rebooted the computer and pointed at the "Press DEL to enter SETUP" message, which was on the screen for five seconds. Then he rebooted the system again, entered the BIOS, and decreased the "Display enter setup message time" from five seconds to one second, left the BIOS, and rebooted the system once more. While it was booting, he pointed again at the "Press DEL to enter SETUP" message which was now on the screen for just one second. "See how fast it is?" he said proudly. "I increased its speed by a factor of five! Is this a fast BIOS or what?"

Insert an Image in Your Gmail Signature

by gryphen Here's how to insert an image into your Gmail signature or into the text body of your email message:

- 1) Upload your image to an online photo storage site, ie. Imageshack, Flickr, Photobucket, etc.
- 2) Once the image is uploaded, find the direct link for the image.
- 3) Copy the link address to the clipboard, open a blank tab in your browser, and paste the address into the address bar.
- 4) Once the image is loaded in your browser, drag your mouse across the image so the whole image gets selected or highlighted (it will turn dark to indicate that it is successfully highlighted/selected).
- 5) Right-click the highlighted image with your mouse cursor over it, then from the menu which appears, choose COPY.
- 6) Open your Gmail account in a new tab and choose COMPOSE MAIL. Use RICH FORMATTING instead of PLAIN TEXT.
- 7) Type the text of your e-mail and at the place you wish to insert your image, press CTRL-V to paste the copied image into your message body. The image will then show and appear embedded.

Cool. Your recipients should be online to be able to view the image. In Gmail, they will need to choose DISPLAY IMAGES BELOW when they receive your e-mail with the embedded image.

PCLinuxOS

DualView and

TwinView Tutorial

*DualView by jaydot
TwinView by ScotchtapeLoser*

Dualview

Dualview provides two separately configurable screens. It is almost like being two users in one. You get double the number of desktops and many applications will open in both screens. Some will not and you need to decide which screen you want to use prior to opening the application.

1. Open a terminal and su to root
2. invoke init 3
3. navigate to /
4. install driver # sh NVIDIA-etc.run [shortcut N-tab]

Reject only the offer to download a kernel. This will be built for you and it may take some time. It is safe to accept everything else. When the installer is completed, reboot the machine to load the previous settings.

You may find yourself in verbose mode. At this point, your xorg.conf may be configured incorrectly. You will be required to perform a video card setup. If your are not in verbose mode, you can skip the following steps and enjoy your Dual View setup.

1. log in as root
2. Use the XFdrake command to configure your video card. Change the resolution and/or monitor type.
3. Log out as root and re-log in as a normal user account.

4. Use the startx command to start the GUI interface.

If everything is correct, you will now have twice the visual pleasure. One screen will have all of your previous settings while the other screen will have the default settings.

You can find more information at:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php?topic=12085>

TwinView

Installing Graphics Drivers for Dual Headed Systems:

After you complete this tutorial, your desktop image may be stretched across both monitors. This gives a “panoramic” style view. You can right click on the desktop and select the Configure Desktop to set each desktop independent of the other. You will also be able to “slide” applications from one monitor to the other. You will also be able to stretch your panels across both screens.

NVidia configuration:

The default nVidia driver installed is "nv" or "vesa" which is ok for basic graphics. If you want to take advantage of your graphics card, download and install the 3-D driver ("nvidia") from nVidia.com or use the nVidia package in Synaptic. If you choose to get the package from Synaptic, you can skip to the section that explains the xorg.conf section of this tutorial.

The following steps describe how to install the nVidia driver from the nVidia server. Make sure both monitors are connected and are turned on before following this tutorial.

1. Download the nVidia drivers from
<http://www.nvidia.com/object/unix.html>

2. Log out of X and switch to a Console session. Login as root.
3. Run the nVidia installer with the following command:
`sh NVIDIA-Linux-x86-1.0-8756-pkg1.run -q`
(Verify your file name). You can accept the default settings in the nVidia setup wizard.
4. Start X
5. Edit X11 config file `/etc/X11/xorg.conf` as described below.
6. Edit the "Monitor" section as described below.

X11 configuration (XORG.CONF)

If one monitor remains black or seems to be random colors and the other is working, this could be due to the definition of the "ConnectedMonitor". If you are using both the analog and digital ports of the monitor, the correct definition **MUST** be specified. If you connect using analog connectors but specify a digital flat panel display, the screen will be black.

Valid definitions for ConnectedMonitor are:

- * CRT: Analog Cathode Ray Tube
- * FPD: Digital Flat Panel Display
- * DPMS: Digital Power Management Savings for Energy Star compliant monitors.

Edit your xorg.conf

Look for Section "Device"

```
Section "Device"
    Identifier "Videocard0" <-- accept the
default name
    Driver "nvidia" <-- this should now be nvidia
not nv or vesa
    VendorName "Videocard vendor"
    BoardName "NVIDIA Quadro 4
(generic)" <-- this will change depending on what
your card type is.
    Option "TwinView" "true"
```

```

Option "TwinViewOrientation"
"RightOf" <-- You can change the orientation
Option "SecondMonitorHorizSync" "31-
81"
Option "SecondMonitorVertRefresh"
"55-85"
Option "MetaModes"
"1280x1024,1280x1024;
1024x768,1024x768" <-- your resolution
Option "ConnectedMonitor" "FPD,FPD"
<-- Change depending on what type of monitors you
have
EndSection

```

TwinViewOrientation options:

RightOf LeftOf Above Below Clone

You will need to look for the Section "Monitor" and duplicate that section. Make sure you change the Identifier on the second Monitor. i.e. Monitor1 will become Monitor2.

Both displays will share a single frame buffer.

To disable one of the displays for a mode, use mode name NULL, i.e.:

```

Option "MetaModes" "1600x1200, NULL;
NULL, 1024x768"

```

To create a panning area (bounding box) for the desktop (viewport), i.e.:

```

Option "MetaModes" "1024x768
@1600x1200, 800x600 @1024x768"

```

ATI configuration:

1. Download the ATI drivers from the ATI driver website.
2. Log out of X and switch to a Console session. Login as root.

3. Run installer: `sh ati-driver-installer-8.22.5-i386.run`

Choose "Install Driver X.Org 6.8"

"Custom Install"

4. Dual monitor configuration:

```
/usr/X11R6/bin/aticonfig --
dtop=horizontal --overlay-on=1
```

(Command placed here by
installer in above step.)

Command line help: `aticonfig -h`

5. Edit `/etc/X11/xorg.conf`

```
Section "Monitor"
    Identifier      "aticonfig Monitor 0"
    DisplaySize    1000 400
EndSection
```

The installer will add an application to the menu, "ATI Control". This will launch the "ATI Radeon 9800 Control Panel" for dual monitor control and adjustment. It will also control TV out settings.

Power Management Configuration:

DPMS can reduce the power consumption of Energy Star compliant monitors when the system is idle. XFree86 4.x+ or X.org 6.7+ is required.

Turn on DPMS:

```
Section "Monitor"
    Identifier      "Monitor0"
    ...
    Option "DPMS" "true"
    ...
EndSection
```

Configure DPMS:

```
Section "ServerLayout"
    ...
```

```
Option "StandbyTime" "360"  
Option "SuspendTime" "720"  
Option "OffTime"      "840"  
    . . .  
EndSection
```

Use the xset command to set X-Window display parameters:

- * View current settings: xset q
- * Setting DPMS:
 - o Disable DPMS: xset -dpms
 - o Enable DPMS: xset +dpms
 - o Set DPMS parameters: xset dpms 360 720 840
- * Set font path: xset fp= /home/user1/fonts
Re-read the fonts database: xset fp rehash
- * Set bell volume (medium), pitch (Hz) and duration (millisec): xset b 50 400 100
Turn off bell: xset b off
- * Set key autorepeat: xset r off
- * Turn off screen saver activation: xset s off

You can find more information at:

<http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php?topic=14421>

References:

<http://www.nvidia.com/object/unix.html>

http://gentoo-wiki.com/HOWTO_Dual_Monitors

<http://www.linux.com/article.pl?sid=03/10/05/025207>

<http://www.cs.b.yale.edu/people/core/ajp/linux-desk/2xmonitor.html>

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How to Multi-Boot Linux

A Simplified View

by Merlin Whitewolf The first consideration in creating a multi-boot set up is hard disk size. Your HDD must be of sufficient size to contain all of the distributions that you wish to install. Twenty GB is of sufficient size to comfortably boot two distros. More distros could be added, but updating them might become an issue. From thirty GB and up, you would have more options for adding more distros.

Note: Hard disks can have only four primary partitions on them. If you plan to have more partitions, you'll need an extended partition.

The first thing you'll need to do is set up your partitions. PCLinuxOS has a partitioning tool in the PCLinuxOS Control Center (PCC) > Mount Points tab, or you may want to use a partitioning tool like the GParted live CD. The tool you use should be the one you are most comfortable with. If you have not used one before, either of the two named above is a good one to start with. As I have used GParted more often, I will describe its use below. The partitioning tool in PCC is just as useful though.

Insert the live CD in your CD drive and start your computer. Be sure that your BIOS has been set to boot from the CD. Set up of GParted is intuitive, so follow through the set up menus until the partitioning interface is loaded.

Important: If you're starting with Windows installed, be sure you run the disk defragmenter in Windows before you partition the drive, if you want to keep Windows. Why? When Windows is writing a file to the disk, it looks

for a suitable piece of free space in which to store it. Lets say you modify an existing file, adding a whole bunch of data so the file now takes up more space on the disk. To accommodate the file, Windows writes the first part of the file in one section of the disk and then scouts around for other places to store the rest of the file. The end result is that a single file may be stored in several chunks scattered about the disk. Running the disk defragmenter allows Windows to gather all the scattered pieces and put them back together at the beginning of the partition. If you were to partition the drive without defragmenting, you would risk losing data that was spread all around the disk.

To resize your Windows partition, click to highlight it and choose "Resize/Move" on the toolbar. (Windows partitions are ntfs or fat32.) In the box that opens, you'll see a bar with a colored border and three sections of numbers; the first is "Free Space Preceding." This should have a "0" in it. Next is the size of your drive in MB. This is the number that you will be changing. Last is "Free Space Following." This will show the amount of space you will free up.

On the triangle to the right of the bar, left click and hold. Drag your cursor to the left to reduce the size given in the middle number dialog to your desired size. This size is up to you, but you'll want to have more space than Windows has in use for safety. The amount that Windows has used is shown in yellow on the bar. A good rule of thumb is to keep your Windows partition 10 GB or more. On my 160 GB drive, I gave it 29 GB, but, I have lots of space.

Click the "Resize" button. Click "Apply" on the toolbar. You will be asked to confirm your choice.

When resizing has been completed, you'll see an unassigned area of your drive in grey, listed just under your Windows partition. Click to highlight it and then click "New" on the toolbar. The size may be chosen by the method described above. The file system can be

chosen on the right. Click on the button with "ext2" on it and choose "ext3". Click "Create" and then "Apply". Your new partition will be created and then appear on the list. Use this method to create as many partitions as you need.

To create a swap partition (virtual memory), choose "Linux Swap" from the file system type menu. A Swap partition of 1 GB is a good compromise. If you plan to remaster your system, create a 2 GB swap partition.

If you plan to have more than four partitions, create one of the four primary partitions as an extended partition by changing "Primary Partition" to "Extended Partition" in the New box. This is located just above the file system type chooser. This will create the partition on all of the remaining space on your drive. You may create as many "Logical" partitions as you would like within it. Note that Logical partition numbers will begin at five.(hda5)

When creating your partitions, be sure to size them to hold what you will be putting on them plus extra space for updates, adding applications, and for your files and folders. For your main distro, you may want to have separate /home and root (/) partitions. You may do this for all installations, or you may choose to install each distro using one partition per distro. Be certain that other distros do not use your main /home partition. Also, you will need to write each of these partition numbers down because you will need them later.

When you install the bootloader of your main distro, choose the "install to MBR" option. Install the other bootloaders to the root partition of each distro. Be aware that some distros install to the MBR by default without asking you to choose. Find out how to change this before you proceed, if no options are easily available.

To add an entry to your bootloader, open PCC and click on "Set up How the System Boots". When the wizard opens, click next if you are not making changes to the way that PCLinuxOS is booted. On the following page, click "Add" to add another listing to your grub menu.

You'll need to know the partition number on which you installed root. (You should have this written down already.)

Important: You should find out the kernel version number of the distro and be prepared to enter it. Example: 2.6.18.6.dev3.lgc is the kernel version in PCLOS 94 RC1. An entry for it would be:

```
linux
/boot/vmlinuz- 2.6.18.6.dev3.lgc
/dev/hda5
splash=silent
```

Alternatively, you could open a terminal, type "su" and enter. Give your root password when asked and then type "kwrite /boot/grub/menu.lst". When the editor opens, scroll to the bottom and make an entry, maybe something like this:

```
title Mepis
rootnoverify (hd0,7)
chainloader +1
```

Important: Be sure to have an empty space between entries in your `/boot/grub/menu.lst`.

Grub numbering begins with 0, so your first hard drive will be `hd0`. Any additional hard drives will be numbered from 1 on up. Partitions are also numbered in this manner by grub. Thus your first partition on your first HDD will be `hd0,0`.

Note: SATA drives will be `sd` rather than `hd`.

For more information on grub, consult the manual at:

<http://www.gnu.org/software/grub/manual/grub.html>

GParted live CD is available for download at:

<http://gparted.sourceforge.net/livecd.php>

Enjoy your multi-booting experience.

Red Root Prompt

by Simfox Many people would like a painless visual reminder that they are working as root when in the terminal. Here's a simple way to accomplish that.

Start your file manager as Superuser (Start > Applications > File tools > File Manager - Super User Mode). Navigate to /etc. Add the following to the end of your /etc/bashrc file. Now your root prompt will be red and your user prompt will be normal, according to your selected or default color scheme.

```
# Set Root Prompt to Red
function setprompt
{
local RED="\[$(tput setaf 1)\]"
local RESET="\[$(tput sgr0)\]"
if [ `id -u` = 0 ] # check if user
is root
then
PS1="$RED [\u@\h:\W] $RESET "
else
PS1=" [\u@\h:\W] $RESET "
fi
}
setprompt
```

Enjoy.

New Kid in Town

by stephenty I've used Windows from 3.1 through to XP. I bought the new operating systems, and in order to run them, in some instances, a new computer. Things came to a head right around the holidays. I was reading the system requirements for Vista, and could not believe what it needs to run properly.

Microsoft has a real racket going and people are too afraid to dump Windows. What else would they use? They use it at work and home and they're afraid there is no other way! Combined with the bloated OS and all the bloated software, and the never ending security issues, I decided that enough was enough.

I told my wife that I was dumping Windows and she laughed for about 10 minutes. I've been saying this for the past few years, but assumed that any Linux OS would be too difficult for me to install.

This time I decided to put in a little work reading about Linux, and discovered the wonderful Live CD's.

After more reading, and CD burning, I decided to go with what I thought would be the easiest install. I went with Freespire. It was easy to install and auto detected everything, including my WiFi card.

The problem was that after seeing distros like Ubuntu, Mepis, and last but not least, PCLinuxOS, I felt like I was getting a bit of a watered down Linux experience.

Freespire is great, but I wanted something else. I'm not sure if that makes sense. I just felt that with all of the

positives in moving to the Linux OS, the fact was that in order to really appreciate it, I was going to have to do some work.

When I decided to go with PCLinuxOS (not an easy decision) I burned the Windows drivers for my Broadcom wireless card to a CD. After all of the horror stories I read on different web sites about getting a Linux OS up and running, I was shocked to find that it was much easier than I had read. The drivers loaded flawlessly and I had my Internet connection up and running in less than 5 minutes.

I had the same experience with the Synaptic Package Manager. This was a nightmare?

I understand that different flavors of Linux pose different challenges, but some of this stuff you read is like urban legend if you ask me. Anyway, I've been running with PCLinuxOS for weeks now and I'm having a blast! I feel like a kid on Christmas day. Windows is off both my desktop (I'm running Ubuntu) and my laptop (PCLinuxOS), and I have no want or need to go back.

I thought I would go through serious Windows withdrawal, but it has not happened. I don't need anyone to tell me that on every level this is what an OS is supposed to be. I know it in my gut. Just like I always knew there had to be a better way than Windows.

My wife has a Mac, but she was very interested when I showed her both operating systems. She loved both and is not laughing anymore.

I'm glad to be here!

How to Contribute

by Merlin Whitewolf

Contributing is a big part of the FOSS community. Developers contribute their time and efforts to the community to develop applications and/or an OS. The reasons they do so may vary, but the result of their efforts is a direct presentation to the community. Without them, we, as users, would not be here. We would not be using PCLinuxOS or any other FOSS system or software.

It is important that we contribute also. We should not allow ourselves to be just users, but rather we should become full members of the community by our contributions. There is no lower limit on contributing. Everyone can contribute something.

Here are a few suggestions:

Donate money - There are always financial needs connected with any software or system development. Contribute what you are financially able to give. Start with the OS you are using. If you have more financial resources available, contribute to the developers of your favorite or most used applications.

This is the method by which further development is made possible and newer hardware becomes usable with this and other GNU/Linux OSes.

Contribute your talents - If you have the knowledge to add to the efforts that go into developing PCLinuxOS, volunteer to work with the ripper gang. If you can contribute to the development of this OS or any open source project by adding to the code of a program or

writing an interface to a command line program, you will have given a contribution to the community.

Join a Project - Visit <http://www.mypclinuxos.com/> and see what projects are being developed. There are many projects that contribute to the community that are hosted there. The magazine project, the beautification project and others welcome contributors. If you have no major skills, volunteer to be a tester. If you lack enough knowledge to be an effective tester, give encouragement. Everyone has something to give.

Active Community Participation - A) If you know, or think you know the answer to a new user's problem, respond to their question. If the answer they need has been posted previously, respond with a link to that thread and a sentence or phrase like, "I believe this may help."

B) The forum has a search feature, but don't assume that everyone knows how to use a search engine to its fullest extent. Assisting someone with searching for an answer and in the process giving them the search terms you've used will contribute to their knowledge. In turn, they will have the knowledge needed to pass on these solutions at a later time to another new member of the community.

Encouraging others in their attempts at learning something new or giving them the knowledge to continue has its value. Many times the simple act of encouraging someone to continue in their search for knowledge is the greatest contribution that can be made.

C) Welcome new users. A simple "Hello, nice to meet you" can be very important. It lets new members know that they are noticed and are not lost in a crowd of strangers. No one should ever feel invisible. Whether they are knowledgeable and able to make an immediate contribution or an absolute beginner, every new member should know that they are welcome.

D) Be kind. Be patient. A little kindness goes a long way.

So, too, does impatience and cruelty. Being kind and patient contributes much more to the community, both now and in the future. It brings a much greater chance of continuing to have a community of users, rather than a list of users.

These are my ideas about contributing, in particular about contributing to the PCLinuxOS community. In my opinion, these may be applied anywhere, but as a wise man once told me, "You always start where you are."

The other day I walked into this little place that sells old software, old computers, and some new software. I walked up to a sales clerk and said, "Do you guys carry Linux?" He took one look at me (I am 15 years old) and, not knowing what Linux was, he checked the rack with games. I said, "No, Linux is not a game -- it's an operating system."

He looked confused, then stuttered, "Uhhh...yeah...well check that rack, we've got stuff like Quicken there."

Here's a story where some degree of fault lies on both sides. I was at my local large discount store, walking through the electronics section like I often do. A young couple was looking at a computer, assisted by a salesperson. I overheard the following conversation:

* Salesman: "You should really get the full package, with the new monitor and the other accessories."

* Husband: "But we already have a monitor and keyboard from our old computer."

* Salesman: "You should still get the package, because it comes with a faster keyboard."

The couple conversed for a moment.

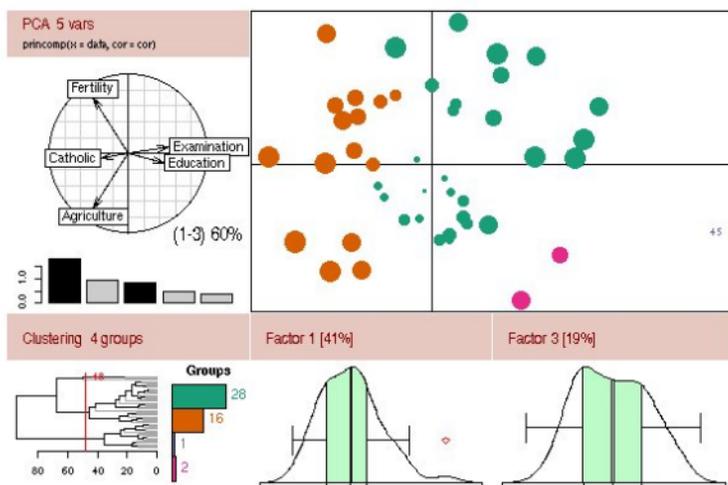
* Husband: "Can we put it on layaway and make payments on it?"

How to Make R-base Work

by acaza From the Website (<http://www.r-project.org/>): "R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. It is a GNU project (<http://www.gnu.org/>) which is similar to the S language and environment which was developed at Bell Laboratories (formerly AT&T, now Lucent Technologies) by John Chambers and colleagues. R can be considered as a different implementation of S. There are some important differences, but much code written for S runs unaltered under R." R is widely used for statistical software development and data analysis, and has become a de-facto standard among statisticians for the development of statistical software.

R is powerful software for interacting with data. With R you can create sophisticated graphs, you can carryout statistical analyses, and you can create and run

simulations. R is also a programming language with an extensive set of built-in functions, so you can, with some experience, extend the language and write your own code to build your own statistical tools. Advanced users can even incorporate functions written in other languages, such as C, C++, and Fortran.



I needed the statistics of R, but was unsuccessful using the R-base available from Synaptic. I could install it, but when I tried to use the "install.packages" function in R to get new packages I needed, it failed. The packages downloaded from the mirror as expected, but then they failed to

install on my computer. I was left with a bunch of useless ZIP files in a TMP folder. I'm a Linux newbie (seven days total experience, as I write this), so I might have been doing something wrong.

However, I still needed R, and I managed to install it directly from the source code. Step-by-step, I did this:

Download source file R-2.4.1.tar.gz from:

<http://lib.stat.cmu.edu/R/CRAN/>

Extract it by opening a terminal, navigating to the folder where you saved the download, and typing:

```
tar xvfz R-2.4.1.tar.gz
```

Note that you must get the name exact, including capitalization.

Once the tar has been extracted, open Konqueror in Super-User mode (Applications>File Tools>File Manager – Superuser Mode) and move the folder created when you extracted the tar (R-2.4.1) to /usr/lib/

The only dependency not met in my Big Daddy version of PLOS had something to do with Fortran77 compiling. I used Synaptic to update gcc-g77 and perl_ExtUtils_F77. That took care of it.

Then I followed the directions for installing from the CRAN site:

<http://lib.stat.cmu.edu/R/CRAN/doc/manuals/R-admin.html>

in section 2 (installing R under UNIX-alikes). Essentially there was only two steps performed in a terminal.

```
./configure  
make
```

The CRAN page gives some additional steps about making manuals and help pages and such, but the steps above gave me a working installation of R.

NOTE: "R" will not appear in the application launcher the way it does with a Synaptic install. I think this is a good thing, because the GUI that comes with the Synaptic version has no scroll function; you can't look at the early parts of long output. With the installation from source, I simply enter "R" (without the quotes) in a terminal and the program runs right there. Much better for me.

I hope this makes sense, and that it helps anyone having similar trouble.

In a small computer store...

* Me: "Hi. I need a 25 pin RS-232 cable."

* Sales Clerk 1: "What do you need it for?"

* Me: "I need to plug a VT100 into a modem. I have both the VT100 and the modem, I just need at 25 pin male/female cable with RS-232 connectors."

* Sales Clerk 1: "Let me get my manager."

Huh?

* Sales Clerk 1: in background: "I have a guy here who wants to plug his VCR into a modem."

The sales clerk returned with another.

* Sales Clerk 2: "Hello, sir. You can't attach a VCR to a modem."

* Me: "That is not what I am trying to do. I need a 25-pin RS-232 cable -- that's all. Do you have cables for plugging into modems?"

* Sales Clerk 2: "What do you want to plug into the modem?"

* Me: "A VT100. It is a terminal. You plug it into a computer over a serial line, frequently a modem. I just need a 25-pin cable to go from the unit to the modem."

* Sales Clerk 2: (to Sales Clerk 1) "He doesn't have a VCR. He wants to plug a VTR into his modem, so it is all right."

Sales Clerk 1 handed me a cable.

* Me: "This is a 9-pin cable. I need a 25 pin cable."

* Sales Clerk 2: "Most PC's have 9 pins on their serial cards."

* Me: "I am not attaching a PC. I am attaching a VT100. There are 25 pins on it -- it needs to plug into a 25 pin connector."

* Sales Clerk 2: "Then use the small end to plug into your modem."

* Me: "There are 25 pins on the modem as well. Do you have any 25 pin cables? All I need is a cable with 25 pins at each end."

* Sales Clerk 2: "This is a 25 pin cable."

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