

WRITE ACCESS

Best of Small Distros?

I've been using Linux for 11 months now. I have tried at least 40 distros from Mandriva to Damn Small.

As I have only been subscribing to Linux Magazine for a short time, I don't know if you have done a DVD or review on the smaller Linux distros. At the



Figure 1: Puppy is a little Linux with a big bite.

moment, I am running Mepis, Elive, and Puppy Linux on my computer. I was once a Mepis user, but I hated that it wouldn't play encrypted DVDs or open some attachments that were sent to me

in email (mainly Windows Media Player files). I also use dial-up Internet, and at the time, Mepis 3.4 was the only distro that supported my Win modem. About a month ago, I discovered that Puppy 2.10 Linux came with LT Modem support, so I installed it, although I wasn't expecting much from a distro of only 70 MB.

Was I wrong! How could a small Windows 98ish-looking Linux do so much? It played Encrypted DVDs and even opened WMA files. I found that its forum is alive with users who want to make Puppy better, and new packages appear for download on the forum all the time. If you have a problem or need advice, you will get it faster on Puppy than from any other forum I've tried. I found adding new packages (or Dotpups, as they are called) was as easy as pressing a couple buttons.

I now use Puppy 99% of the time, having added Open Office, Java, Thunderbird, Opera, DrawSWF, The Gimp, and Firefox. As an experiment, I brought out an old Pentium 1 166 Mhz 32 MB RAM 1 GB HD computer to see whether I could get puppy running on it, and with help from the Puppy forum, I did.

This has got me thinking that it would be nice to see all the smaller Linux distros – for example Alixe, Feather, Damn Small, Slax, Austrium, Puppy, MiniCD – reviewed together, maybe even with a

DVD containing the best of them.

John Van Gaans, Australia

LM It is always nice to hear that someone has found a personal favorite Linux distribution. We agree with you that a compilation of small distros is definitely an interesting idea.

We've had small distro compilations in the past. The last one was in 2004. It's definitely time to do something like that again. Watch for a "Best of Small Distros" DVD in a future issue.

DVD Suggestions

I'm a regular reader of your magazine, which I enjoy for its content rather than for the enclosed DVD. Like most Linux users, I have become tribal in my choice of distros, and I am not likely to be tempted to try your monthly offering. (In my case I prefer Arch Linux and Ubuntu.) So why don't you occasionally choose a Live DVD that is unique and also useful in its own right, such as Sabayon, Quantian, Scientific, or Agnula? One of these from time to time would still allow you to follow the major releases of the big five.

Des Sale

LM Thanks for your letter. Our previous studies have shown that the majority of our readers are most interested in big distros like Suse and Ubuntu, but we still have space in our schedule for additional entries, so keep watching. We'll certainly keep your suggestions in mind.



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