Sometimes when reviewing an operating system it is difficult to separate the question "Is this a good distribution?" from "Is this a good distribution for me?" Bodhi is one of those projects where the answers to these questions are quite different, mostly over matters of style rather than functionality. On a personal level, I don't think I would ever be inclined to use Bodhi myself because I don't like the Moksha/Enlightenment style of desktop. It does a lot of little things differently (not badly, just differently) from other open source desktops and its style is not one I ever seem to find comfortable. This, combined with the streamlined, web-based AppCenter and unusual settings panel, makes Bodhi a distribution which always feels a bit alien to me.

Let's put aside my personal style preferences though and try to look at the distribution objectively. Bodhi is trying to provide a lightweight, visually attractive distribution with a wide range of hardware support. It manages to do all of these things and do them well. The distribution is paying special attention to lower-end hardware, including 32-bit systems, and maintains a remarkably small memory footprint given the amount of functionality and eye candy included. Most lightweight distributions sacrifice quite a bit visually in order to provide the lightest interface possible, but Bodhi does a nice job of balancing low resource requirements with an attractive desktop environment.

Bodhi is pleasantly easy to install, thanks to the Ubiquity installer, has a minimal collection of software (in the main edition) that allows us to craft our own experience and, for people who need more applications out of the box, there is the AppPack edition.

All of this is to say that, for me personally, I spent more time that I would have liked this week searching through settings, trying to get used to how Moksha's panel works, tracking down less popular applications and re-learning when to use right-click versus left-click on the desktop. But, objectively, I would be hard pressed to name another distribution
that more elegantly offers a lightweight desktop with visual effects, or that offers such easy access to both legacy and modern hardware support. In short, I think Bodhi Linux is a good distribution for those who want to get the most performance out of their operating system without sacrificing hardware support or the appearance of the interface. There are a few little glitches here and there, but nothing show-stopping and, overall, Bodhi is a well put together distribution.

[2]

Reviews

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