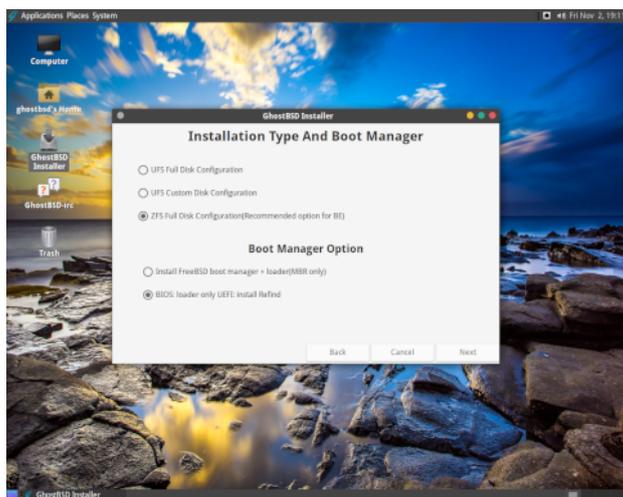


Review: GhostBSD 18.10 - Changing the base

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I was tentatively optimistic going into my experiment with GhostBSD. The shift from a stable FreeBSD base to a rolling TrueOS base was one which I had hoped would bring new features and hardware support, but I was also concerned the result might be rough around the edges. For the most part I was pleased with what GhostBSD 18.10 provided. In my opinion the MATE desktop performs well and looks good. One minor glitch aside, I had no complaints with the desktop experience.

I was very happy to find that GhostBSD would work with my desktop computer, a rare event for me when using FreeBSD or TrueOS. I'm hopeful this means future versions of FreeBSD will also work with this hardware. The only issue I ran into concerning hardware was GhostBSD was unable to work with a wireless network card I plugged into the machine during my trial.

I liked the default applications GhostBSD shipped with. The software included is mostly similar to what we would find in a mainstream Linux distribution and most of the extra applications I wanted could be found through the package manager. Speaking of package management, I think OctoPkg is capable, but not particularly user friendly. Even as a

low level package manager, it takes some getting used to, compared to Muon or Synaptic. OctoPkg works, but I'm hoping future versions of GhostBSD are able to adopt a more beginner friendly software manager.

Unlike past versions of GhostBSD (and FreeBSD), this release unites managing the core operating system and third-party packages under one package manager. This is likely to be convenient for users as they no longer need to switch between pkg and freebsd-update to get all their security fixes. However, I think it is too soon to tell if this change brings any problems with it. I am curious to see how well upgrading end user applications mixes with core system security fixes. I am also curious to see how GhostBSD will handle future versions based on TrueOS's rolling release platform.

On the whole, I think GhostBSD is about as easy as it gets when setting up a BSD-based desktop system. Its installer is easy to use, the desktop is pre-configured, there are a small amount of useful applications available out of the box. It's a very positive experience, in my opinion. One of the few problems I think Linux users may face when trying GhostBSD is the lack of certain closed-source applications such as Steam and the Chrome web browser. These are not available on GhostBSD. For people who stick with open source applications, GhostBSD will probably provide everything they need, but people who want to watch Netflix or play big name games, this system may not be able to deliver those experiences. These restrictions aside, I'm very pleased with GhostBSD's latest offering and think it is a pleasant way to get the FreeBSD experience with a quick and easy set up process.

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