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openSUSE 10.2 Final Report

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[4]Although I had planned to write a full length review of openSUSE 10.2 at the time of the RC release, I later decided against it. ...until I received a shiny new HP Pavilion notebook [5] computer for Christmas and needed to install a Linux distribution. I obviously chose openSUSE 10.2 and I'm not sorry I did. This will describe some of my experiences with this fine distro on my new equipment.

When this adventure began, I still had not planned to write about it as eco2geek [6] had already generously shared his experiences [7] on a similar Compaq laptop. As such some items were already configured without my having taken screenshots. Also it's important to note that although I'm not exactly a laptop virgin, I'd say I only reached 2nd or 3rd base using my old vintage 1999 Dell as a training device. So please forgive my ignorance.

This machine arrived with an 80 gig sata harddrive with Windows XP Media Edition on an NTFS partition. This partition spanned approximately 69 gigs of this drive with an 11 gig vfat restore partition at the end. It was my desire to not only retain this Windows install, but also the restore partition. I was a bit apprehensive with it residing on said NT filesystem. But as I was testing livecds I had handy, one disk I popped in was the RC1 of openSUSE 10.2. I ran it through the partitioning step just to see what it'd say, and it acted like it could resize that NTFS partition and install. I was encouraged and burnt the final release of openSUSE 10.2 onto dvdr.

I popped in the dvd and restarted the machine. I was presented with the new very polished openSUSE installer. The new theme was complete throughout now and a new install option was present in the options menus at the bottom of the boot screen. Harddrive install is now an easy option. It's not relevant this time, but it's nice to know that method is now much easier to perform. From that point on I don't recall any new elements that have not been previously described by me in the coverage of the development cycle [8].

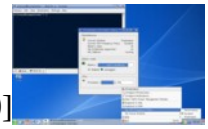
I reached the first summary screen and saw where the installer proposed to resize my ntfs and make several partitions for my new install. I was leery, but I had made some dvd backups of the XP system, so I preceded. I didn't really want

to go with its exact proposal as it was planning on giving windows 30 gigs. As all the data was still within the first 6 gigs, I changed that to 12 and set up some additional partitions I thought I might need, such as a 500 mb /boot, and two extra partitions (one for the upcoming PCLOS .94 and another for testing other various distros). In addition, I decided to let it use ext3 filesystem as is openSUSE's new default this release. I almost held my breath as I depressed enter, but off it went. Next thing I recall was it installing all the software I had chosen.

This install also brought another first or two for me. This time I was gonna need a bootloader installed and I even chose to go with grub. It included Windows in its proposal as well as a windows 2 for that restore partition. I deleted that entry in the config.

Upon first reboot I just hit enter as OpenSUSE 10.2 is the default system. After some other configuration steps, I rebooted to see if Windows was still operative. It was. It did go through its dskchk that first boot after the Linux install, but it booted fine. I've booted over there another time since and all seems well. It's still amazes me how far Linux has come. But that's not all that amazed me about openSUSE on this machine.

One of the first things I noticed was how openSUSE detected my display and gave a correct resolution of 1280x800. As mentioned earlier, I'd tested a few livecds previously, and none of them did as well. Another yippee was its detection and auto-config of the pointer thingy. I recall reading horror stories in the past by folks trying to get those to work. Linux has come a long way, Baby. Some more good news: the sound card and volume control worked out of the box, some of the media/shortcut keys work, and power management was setup out of the box and worked properly.

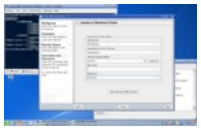
[9] [10]  [11]

I did have configure some things myself. The first order of business after graphics is always the net connection. As my graphics were fine, I started out to set up the wireless connection. Unfortunately, my wireless chipset isn't supported natively by Linux, so I had to resort to ndiswrapper. I ended up using the advice [7] given by eco2geek about installing the windows driver off that partition and using ndiswrapper for the module as described by the howto he linked to in that article. It worked wonderfully. As he stated, it will connect to the neighbor's lan if you're not careful. But once you connect to your own, it will be set as default.

My printer is connected to my main workhorse machine [12], so I needed to set it up as a smb printer on this new machine. I had previously set it up on the desktop and only needed to configure it on the laptop through Yast. There was no pain with this process. Easy peasy, just fill in a few blanks and click Finish.

I tested the new Software Manager quite a bit installing additional software and even uninstalling some. I quickly became weary of popping in the install dvd and opted to set up a http mirror. In addition I ran the Online Updates configuration to set up an update repository. That applet has offered updates and installed them without issue twice already. Their appearances haven't changed since previous coverage, but it seems all is working wonderfully to me.

In fact, everything I have wanted to do in Yast has worked fantasticly. From looking at hardware information, adding new users, adjusting startup services, to turning off the firewall, ...everything, has worked great.

 [13] [14] [15]

My only complaint is the fonts. The fonts aren't quite as nice on this system as I've observed on my desktop openSUSE installs. I'm sure it's to do with the type of display, but I've not been able to adjust them to my exact liking. Although I'm growing accustomed to the new appearance, the fonts on my desktop just knock my socks off when I get back on that machine.

At this point I strayed from openSUSE's stock system and I installed the NVIDIA graphic drivers. This didn't seem to help with the font issue, but games are much more cooperative. I did install a few more font packages and found one that looks better than the default.

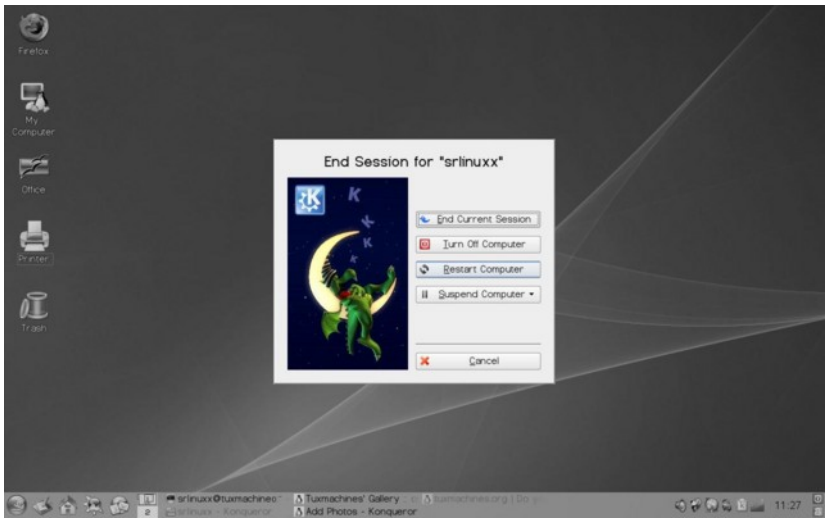
After that I ended up "Hacking openSUSE 10.2 [16]." I then copied over my kmailrc, bookmarks.xml, and akregator directory from my desktop and I am ready to take my new computer on the road.

The only issue I've had is one lock-up when issuing a "sensors-detect" under X. This process completes at the terminal without further issue.

In conclusion, openSUSE 10.2 performs marvelously on my new mobile computer. This whole experience has been a pleasure from start to finish. Most hardware is detected and auto-configured right out of the box. Most of what requires further configuration are user-friendly to set up. Important components like power management work great as well. openSUSE runs fast and stable, even after "Hacking." And it's just plain pretty while retaining a nice professional appearance. As always, slick and polished are the two words that come to mind when trying to describe openSUSE. But now another comes to me as well. *Amazing*.

My thanks goes out to eco2geek for his previous article, which probably saved me hours of googling and trial & error, and to all those wonderful developers at openSUSE who work so hard to bring us such a pretty and functional system.

openSUSE Homepage [17].
Changelog & Version information [18].
RC 1 Coverage [19].



[20]

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wolvix

[9] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/suse102/mycomputer

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[12] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8776

[13] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/suse102/prntconf2

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[15] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/suse102/lan

[16] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/11740

[17] http://www.opensuse.org

[18] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/11902

[19] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/11312

[20] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/suse102/bye