NimbleX 2007 - As the Name Implies...

By *srlinuxx*
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[4]NimbleX is a small slackware-based distribution that made its way onto [DistroWatch's Waiting List](#) [5] last September. While many on the list seem to stop development and disappear off the net, it appears NimbleX is progressing onward. Their site has undergone a recent update as well as their distro. NimbleX 2007 was released on Christmas Day and I decided it sounded like an interesting project to test. In NimbleX I found a wonderful candidate for your small linux needs.

To quote the site:

"NimbleX is a small but versatile operating system which is able to boot from a small 8 cm CD, from flash memory like USB pens or Mp3 players and even from the network. Because it runs entirely from a CD, USB or network it doesn't require installation or even much hardware.

Most of the advantages are related to the small size, the combination of software packages and a pretty good hardware support. You can easily carry it with you and with the right combination of parameters you can make it do some interesting stuff. NimbleX is very customizable and can be easily made to satisfy your needs."

Continuing in quoting:

Some of the most obvious things are:

- Access data on other computers without knowing the pass.
- Surf the Internet, download files using various protocols
- Chat with friends using a very nice IM application

- Play movies because most of the codecs are supported
- Play music either in the graphical interface and the CLI
- Make NimbleX always save you data very easily
- Use the built-in BlueTooth support to transfer files
- Use a pretty good office suite - KOffice 1.6.1
- Get organized with a very powerful app. - Kontact !
- Debug other operating systems with NimbleX
- Back-up data easily using various methods.
- Make NimbleX boot on other computers over the LAN
- Play some of the various KDE Games
- Install software over the Internet using GSlapt
- Control remotely Windows machines with rdesktop
- Browse Windows networks with no complications
- Read PDF documents with the built-in software
- NimbleX can be made to boot form anything bootable
- NimbleX can be very fast if you boot it from HDD / USB
- You can use several graphical interfaces (KDE, IceWM, Fluxbox)
- The command line has the most common commands so...
- Extend NimbleX easily by adding new modules to it:
    - Firefox 2
    - Opera 9.1
    - GIMP
    - Gaim
    - NVidia 3D Drivers
    - EMU
    - Xara LX
    - KTorrent
    - KMobileTools
    - KOffice - full
    - KDE Web Dev
    - Bluefish
    - ISO Master

Recommended Requirements are:

- CLI
    - Pentium II or better
    - 128 MB

- GUI
    - Pentium III or better
    - 512 MB

Minimum:

- CLI
    - Pentium or better
    - 64 MB

- GUI
    - Pentium II or better
    - 128 MB

I didn't have a low spec machine on which to test NimbleX, so I tested it on my usual desktop and my newly acquired laptop. The grub splash screen kinda reminds me of one openSUSE used to use, but it's updated and customized. It has several boot option such as Boot into KDE, Boot to Commandline, or KDE in limba romana. The rest of the boot is in text mode and the next graphic seen is the customized KDE splash screen. The boot process itself isn't particularly speedy, but it's acceptable.

 [6] [7] [8]

At the desktop one finds an original background of off-white with a large glossy gray X. I thought it was fairly nice in that it's not gaudy and does reflect the current system somewhat. If that background doesn't suit you, there are about 7 or 8 other original nimbleX wallpapers [9] included in several tasteful colors. Although, it seems the developers or their graphic artists are partial to black and white (or off-white and gray).
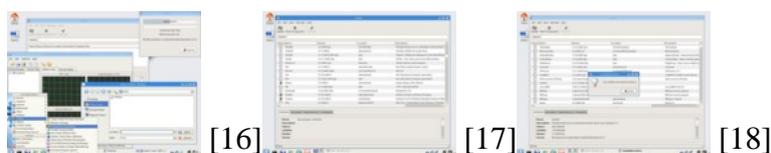
The menus aren't exactly chocked full of applications, but it's sufficient to do most of your daily tasks. However, considering the download size of 200 mb (on the nose), one wonders how they managed to include KDE, not to mention the other apps. KDE may be slimmed down to meet this size requirement, but I didn't find a whole lot missing. There are even a few screensavers present. Large applications like OpenOffice.org and Firefox are not included, but it does of course have Konqueror and it does include Koffice.

 [10] [11] [12]

Some of the other included applications are Kopete, MPlayer, Juk, K3b, tvtime, Transmission (a bittorrent client), Kasablanca (ftp client), Nmap, Kontact, and several games. I found all applications tested to function very well. I had no problems with any of them. Most opened very quickly as well. One extra of note is the multimedia support included. NimbleX had no trouble playing any of the media files asked of it.

 [13] [14] [15]

If one is in need of other software, one can "extend" NimbleX with modules as similarly found in Slax. They have modules for many of the most popular applications today like OpenOffice.org, Firefox, and Gimp. They even have a module for the Nvidia 3D drivers. See above for the full list. In addition, Gslapt is included. There are several software repositories already set up and I had no problems installing a few test packages.

 [16] [17] [18]

As I ran through the KDE Control Center and tested the included applications I became more and more impressed. If nothing else sets NimbleX apart from the crowd, the shear performance of their system should. This has got to be the fastest implementation of KDE I've ever experienced. I don't know how they did it, but they did it. That thing is just blazing fast. I've never seen anything like it. It made me wish I had an old machine laying around on which to test it.

NimbleX runs on a 2.6.16 kernel and uses Xorg 6.9.0. The KDE version included is 3.5.4, but that's not too bad considering 3.5.6 was just tagged yesterday.

Hardware detection was acceptable. Most of my hardware was detected and a start up sound greeted me on both the desktop and laptop. The desktop boots to a 1024x768 screen using vesa. My tv card is incorrectly configured (as all Linux distributions do) and my printer is detected. My scanner was completely ignored. My network card was detected and internet connectivity was available upon boot.

On my laptop the graphics were also set up to be 1024x768, while 1200x800 is desired. As stated, sound worked. The battery monitor and power saver seemed to work fine. The touchpad responded immediately and accurately. However, despite having Kwifimanager and Wireless Assistant in the menu, I wasn't able to get my wireless card working. Ndiswrapper seemed to install the driver, but using the ndiswrapper module left an error in the logs and no wlan (or other) device appeared. Of course this is a Broadcom 4311 card, and it only works in about 1/2 the distros I've tried. Those with natively supported cards should be much happier, given the included gui apps.

NimbleX mounts all detected partitions during boot. I also didn't find a hard drive installer. However, there are instructions for manual installation [19] on the NimbleX site. Those instructions are sparce and not very newbie friendly.

In the end I still really liked NimbleX on my desktop machine from the livecd. It was cool looking, performed well above average, with acceptable software and hardware support. The harddrive install seems like too much trouble for me in these fast paced times, but the system fits on one of those small 8cm cdroms and would be wonderful to carry along for any livecd purpose. It might be similar to Slax in some ways, but I think it distinguishes itself by coming in such a small package and delivering awesome performance. NimbleX is accurately named.
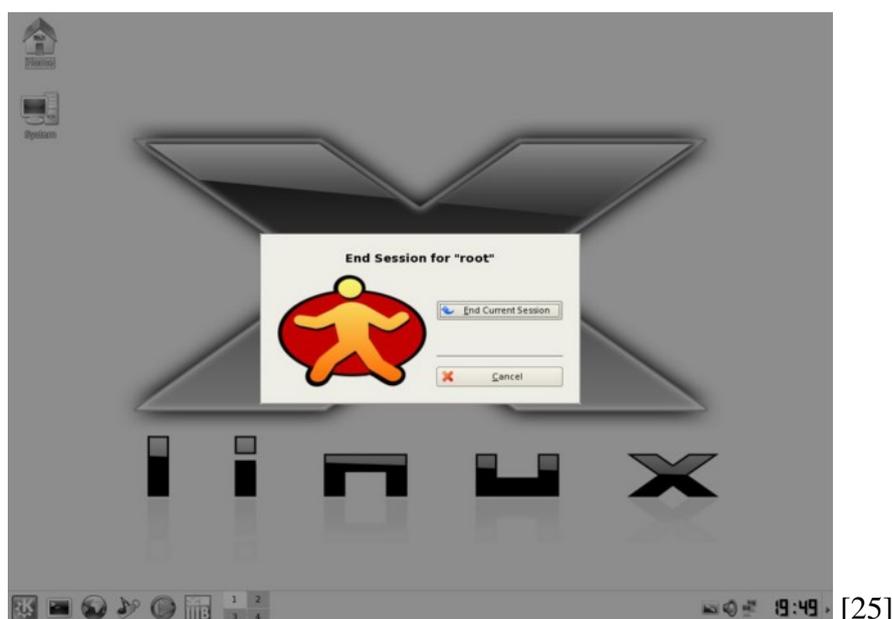
NimbleX Homepage [20]
Download NimbleX [21]
NimbleX Manual [22]

Their Screenshots [23]

My Screenshots [24]

[25]

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Source URL: http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/12630

Links:

[1] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/63

[2] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/101

[3] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/102

[4] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/desktop

[5] http://distrowatch.com/dwres.php?resource=links#new

[6] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/nimblexboot

[7] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/nimblexboot1

[8] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/splash

[9] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/backgrounds

[10] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/menu

[11] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/office

[12] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/mm

[13] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/internet

[14] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/gamesmenu

[15] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/graphicsmenu

[16] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/system

[17] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/gslapt1

[18] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/gslapt3

[19]
http://www.nimblex.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=28#o_installing

[20] http://www.nimblex.net/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

[21] http://ftp.iasi.roedu.net/sponsored-projects/nimblex/NimbleX-2007.iso

[22] http://www.nimblex.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=28

[23] http://www.nimblex.net/index.php?option=com_expose&Itemid=34

[24] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex

[25] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/nimblex/byebye