The rocky road to better Linux software installation

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Linux cross-platform packaging format Flatpak has come under the spotlight this week, with the "fundamental problems inherent in [its] design" criticised in a withering post by Canadian software dev Nicholas Fraser.

Fraser wrote in a blog published on 23 November that "these are not the future of desktop Linux apps," citing a litany of technical, security and usability problems. His assertions about disk usage and sharing of runtimes between apps were hotly disputed by Will Thompson, director of OS at Endless OS Foundation a day later in a post titled: "On Flatpak disk usage and deduplication," but there is no denying it is horribly inefficient.

Most people don't care about that any more, one could argue. But they should.

The Linux world has been trying to invent a cross-platform packaging format for years, but leading contenders ? the older, vendor-neutral older, AppImage format as well as Ubuntu's Snap and Fedora's Flatpak ? all have serious issues.

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GNU Linux

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