My Kinda Gal: KateOS 2.1

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[4][KateOS](#) [5] 2.1 was [released](#) [6] on June 21 and you knew tuxmachines was gonna take a look. Originally based on Slackware, KateOS has evolved into it's own wonderful distribution. Full featured, ready to go out of the box, and with *updateos*, KateOS could very well replace your current distro of choice. By way of introduction, I quote [the site](#) [7]: "Kate OS is a Polish lightweight distribution. It is a multitasking operating system, which brings all that is necessary for: programmers, webmasters, administrators and home users. The most important Kate OS features are high efficiency, safety, reliability and low system requirements." It didn't take long to realize that Kate was my kinda gal. I was in love.

Lead developer Damian Rakowski states, "The first version of our system was based on Slackware only because i wanted it to be compatible with a standard i like. Some commercial companies are thinking about Slackware so Kate can also use those programs." But not being completely satisified with the package selection in Slackware, the developers set out to "to give to the community a lightweight distribution on which user can watch films, listen to favourite music, play games and surf the Internet. In Kate OS we want to create an efficient and 'lightweight' work environment. This enviroment can replace KDE and Gnome environments. We choose the software that will allow the same possibilities but require less system power."

Most important features of the system:

- low hardware requirements means Kate OS can be still used on i486 machines
- integration with PAM system, providing a homogeneous authorization environment
- packages are in TGZex format, easy to build, don't have any dependencies between the packages, ready to

update
- BSD type, every user can understand and adapt them to meet his own needs
- easy construction helps to take care of security
- preferred and constructive graphical environment XFCE, which gives comfortable work in graphical mode, and conserves computer resources
- preferred library GTK+, used by almost all applications in graphical mode
- limited amount of applications in CORE Kate OS, programs are integrated with themselves and
- libraries package of applications/tools, programming libraries
- multimedia applications gives the possibility to enjoy goods of modern audio/video file formats
- noncommercial distribution, doesn't depend from any institution, always FREE

Sounds good, let's take a look. I downloaded [8] the KateOS-2.1 isos from their main mirror and it came in as fast as my dsl could handle. There are two isos available and the second is highly recommended as it contains many popular and useful optional packages. I burnt them onto cd and booted. The Slackware-style installation walks one thru the install (I chose all groups and full without prompting) and initial configuration. I had it install lilo with the boot kernel, initrd image and associated files on a floppy and booted my new os.

As per usual, the first thing I did was mount my archive partition and attempt the nvidia graphic driver installation. They built with no problems, then I edited the xorg.conf and loaded the nvidia module. I made a user account and home directory, then copied my .bashrc from gentoo. Root logged out, user logged in, and su'd to root. Then I wanted to test KateOS' remote package management system, called updateos, by installing kde.

Updateos is KateOS' original package management system. It downloads packages, groups or updates from a remote mirror and installs them with a single command. In fact one can execute a dist-upgrade much like found in apt-get. Damian explains, "Another huge drawback of [Slackware] was the lack of software used for remote updating. For the administrator its a huge disadvantage. Of course there are slapt-get and swaret but their funcionality can't be compared with our updateos or apt. For updateos everyone can make his own repository placing every package in one directory and executing a simple script." Well, I didn't test that advanced feature, however I did execute "updateos --install-group kde". Within no time I was xinit /opt/kde/bin/startkde!

 [9] [10]

The install cds come with xfce and fluxbox, but like kde, gnome is available to updateos as a group as well. To stay within their goals of providing a desktop solution requiring little resources, xfce and fluxbox are installed if one chooses the xap and xfce group during install.

 [11] [12]

Minimum Requirements are:

- i486
- 24 MB RAM
- 300 MB HD (For ROOT and SWAP)
- VGA card

- soundcard (optional)
- CDROM (bootable), floppy

[13]Although system and packages are built for the i486 architecture, I detected no noticeable slowdowns at all on my i686. Startup and operation are practically flawless and I found the system and applications stable as a block wall. I tested KateOS longer than most test systems I review. Over the course of several days, I went about my usual computing routine, so I feel very confident with that statement. Multimedia applications [14] worked out of the box and again were very stable. Please note that I used the -vo x11 in order to get the playback to appear in the screenshot rather than a blue screen. Using xv, one can enjoy fullscreen features.

For the small development team, this project is a labor of love. They enjoy all "operating systems especially Linux. Everyday we invent something new and debate on new ideas," states Damian. Being Unix administrators by day, and KateOS developers by night, their success could be attributed "to that fact we are working instead of just sitting and talking about nothing." Wonderfully talented, yet humble and accessible, Damian says of his team, "Of course sometimes it's hard work but we have our priorities. We are always planning our movements. Everyday we invent something new and debate on new ideas. Chudy (Peter) always thinks how to speed up the system. As the leader of the team i'm the one who sets the tasks and deadlines for everybody. Thanks to that we can control our work and make it more efficient. We can't forget about Neitt and Rakhi because the users owe them those beautiful wallpapers [15] and splashes. Those two are brilliant graphic [artists] and without them Kateos wouldn't be the thing that it is now."

In the area of support, the site has documentation [16], forums [17], and information [18] on their irc channel. Users can contribute by way of paypal [19].

Now to the most important issue: why KateOS? Why was this chosen as the name? Damian answers, "The name of our system has its origins in our friend's name, who was always complaining about it. She thought it was too common as many people in our country has that name. That was the main reason we named our system like that ... it's simple, nice and everybody knows it."

As usual, Screenshots [20] in the gallery [21].

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