openSUSE is a project which almost always impresses me with its technology, its integration, and its flexibility. However, it's never a distribution I've run as my main operating system for various reasons. One of the main reasons I haven't fully embraced openSUSE, despite its many technological capabilities, is its inconsistent polish. Some aspect of the operating system are polished and developed to near perfection. The installer is both fairly easy to navigate and surprisingly flexible. The default Btrfs filesystem is powerful and its snapshots easy to use. The YaST control panel is remarkably good at adjusting low level aspects of the operating system and integrates nicely with Btrfs.

However, on the other side of things, we have issues like the KDE Wallet utility nagging the user and displaying vague prompts about which cryptography functions to use. The live media offers a different and quite less appealing experience than the installed operating system, and (despite the progress in this arena) the documented steps to install media codecs are still some of the most complex in the Linux ecosystem.

openSUSE 15.4 feels like a distribution by system administrators for administrators. We can set up a printer and rollback filesystem snapshots with a few clicks of the mouse, but installing video codecs is a two-commands-and-four-prompts command line process. Managing services and setting up network shares takes just a few clicks, but getting sound working on the live disc was an exercise in frustration. openSUSE is a distribution which makes a lot of usually hard tasks easy and the normally easy tasks hard.

In short, some parts of openSUSE feel like the Iron Man nanotech suit and some parts feel like they were built in a cave. The former parts definitely outweigh the latter, but the little issues are what separate a good, solid distribution from a great experience.

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