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Quick Look-See at Freespire

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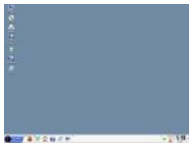
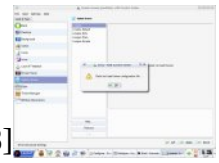
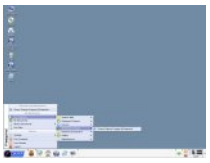

[4]To quote DistroWatch [5], "Freespire is a new Linux distribution, a free edition of Linspire with all proprietary components and trademarks removed. The distribution comes with a free repository of over 1,500 packages available via apt-get and Synaptic. This initial release functions as a live CD only and serves as a proof of concept." Here is a quick rundown of the Freespire linux livecd.

I had a little bit of a hard time getting into X, but that is due in part to my nvidia card still not being supported by xorg yet. It seems none of the "cheat codes" I normally use would allow X to use vesa. It was bound and determined to use nv. I was able to get to a terminal and login as root without a password and kill ldm and xinit before lockup. Fortunately vi was included and I was allowed to write the edit to ram so I could start X.

However, once I finally coaxed it into booting into X, we find a fairly blank desktop. No default wallpaper was set and all the Linspire wallpapers had been removed [6], but I did find one with a nice sea/landscape. There were the usual icons on the desktop and most worked [7]. They did leave the linspire clear theme and icons in their release, as those are gpl'd as far as I know. I always did like that theme for KDE. They also left one pretty Linspire login splash screen.

[8] 
[9]

The menus were quite sparce and dumbed down. I found kcontrol through the commandline, but there wasn't an entry for it. There were two configuration entries, but they were just for the panel and fonts.

 [10] [11]

The only other apps I found other than xmms, a few kde apps and mozilla disguised as their "Internet Suite" was lassist, which seems to be an address book and calendar planning application. At 361mb, it includes most of KDE 3.4.2 on top of a 2.6.10 kernel. See the menu screenshots for more of an idea what kde apps included.

[12] [13]

Also included is synaptic and apt-get, which I gather is what they refer to as an interface to the free repository of Debian packages. It did function well and even installed some packages to ramdisk.

They included supermount which did indeed mount all my partitions, and even after manually umounting them all in case of problems, it remounted them all again on its own. grrrrr [14]! This is a feature I wish distros wouldn't use even for the sake of newcomers who might prefer it.

But that's about all that's there for now. In all fairness, they did state in their announcement for Distrowatch this is merely a proof of concept release. I found it really slow to boot and start X even for a livecd, but it was stable. I didn't experience any crashes. It wasn't anything special at this point, but perhaps time and their next release will tell.

There are more Screenshots [15] in the gallery.

[16]

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