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SuSE 10.1 Alpha1 Report

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[4]SuSE 10.1 Alpha 1 was recently announced [5] even before 10.0 was even released. Those SuSE folks don't waste any time. No vacation for those boys! Poor fellars. And indeed they already have their plate full. They have begun to implement a few new features as well as using some beta software and they even broke a few things. I love alphas - seriously.

The few broken things I noticed turned out to be known to developers. Some of these that I ran into include:

- Update to openldap 2.3.7 -

  Not that I really noticed this in use, but the (installer and) software manager keeps complaining about it.

- kdepim3 cannot get installed -

  This one shoots errors during install and afterwards when you download the updated rpms, they install and seem to work, but the software manager still complains about a missing libsock file.

- Internet test will not work since downloading to patches is not
  setup -

  Yeah, this one got me too. I've grown used to having the "online update" check for and install the nvidia drivers and ms fonts during the last phases of install. Since the internet test didn't work, the updater didn't as well. In fact even after boot, the SuSE Watcher still doesn't work.

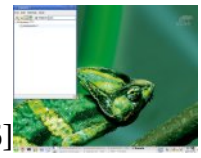
Some others that didn't effect me include:

- YaST does not install the bootloader in the MBR
- Update of pilot-link packages - currently these are broken
- The distribution identifies itself as "10.0.42 Alpha1"

Some of the good things:

- Update to Linux 2.6.13.2 kernel
- We use ifplugd by default for network interfaces
- a number of package updates and package fixes to reduce compile warnings
- Update to KDE 3.5 Beta1

This is my first look at KDE 3.5 alpha/beta. After all my talk of how easy KDE 3.4 was to compile, I never had any luck with 3.5. So I was particularly anxious to install SuSE 10.1 alpha1 so I could finally see it. It's not all that dramatic of a change. In fact if you aren't looking for the improvements, you might miss 'em. Some of the obvious ones are the blending in of the task place holders in the taskbar, new konqueror throbber, and the rss icon & tool tip. In addition the taskbar and clock now have the cute bubble action going on.

[6]  [7] [8]

On a more serious level, they have added a new separate interface to adding applets to the kicker. It now includes a more "graphical" list with a preview of sorts. In fact it even has a search box. Search technology seems to be a big trend these day, and KDE is loading up on it. They have added a search box to many applications and even enhanced the konqueror search tool, now giving the user a choice of search engines instead of it just being the one and only set up in the configuration as previously. Also new in the konqueror configuration is an adblocking tool.

[9] [10] [11]

Some other KDE 3.5 enhancements include:

- Konqueror
  - Display blocked JavaScript popups
  - Middle click on "Clear Location" will clear and paste
  - Click on shown security icon in URL combo bar opens SSL dialog
  - Added "Go/Web History" which shows history sidebar
- KControl
  - Slight interface lifting: remove tabs, add module handbook button
- Window Decorations
  - NEW IN KDE: Move Smooth Blend into kdeartwork module from playground.
- Kmail
  - KMailCVT: new importfilter to import from Sylpheed
  - KMailCVT: new importfilter to import from The Bat!
  - KMailCVT: update importfilter (Outlook Express, Pegasus Mail, Thunderbird, Evolution) for recreating folder structure.

Some things yet to come:

- Akregator
  - Semi-automatic article classification (for tagging)
- KAddressBook
  - Input mask for phone numbers
  - Creation of 'Contact' menu with the ability to create new contacts from the same company, create a todo or event with the selected contact as an attendee, and a 'Write a letter' entry to launch KWord with the contacts details.
  - Show entries sorted by categories
- KMail
  - Namespace support for IMAP
  - KMailCVT: add possibility to merge kmaildir import with existing local mailfolder.
- KDesktop
  - Sex up the user switching ui. [12]

    (I'm really looking forward to that! I can really use *that* new feature. Yippie!)

Gnome in 10.1 alpha1 has a new look as well. Whether intended or not, the menu(s) are now at the bottom of the screen and there is no separate taskbar.

[13] [14] [15]

Some package highlights in alpha1 include:

- kernel-2.6.13.2-2
- gcc-4.0.2_20050901-5
- qt3-3.3.5-5
- glibc-2.3.5-41
- gtk2-2.8.3-7
- xorg-x11-6.8.2-102
- gnome-desktop-2.12.0-4
- kdebase3-3.4.91-5
- MozillaFirefox-1.0.6-17
- OpenOffice_org-1.9.125-6
- Full list [16] as tested

So, all in all, not bad at all especially for an alpha. No real stability issues were found and not really too much was broken. It still looks great although I'm hoping for a new wallpaper by and by. There's plenty of time for lots of new features, so stay tuned.

Screenshots here [17].

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