

About SUSE Linux 10.0

By *srlinuxx*

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Submitted by srlinuxx on Friday 7th of October 2005 01:53:43 PM Filed under [Reviews](#) [1] [SUSE](#) [2] [-s](#) [3]



[4]The long awaited SUSE Linux 10.0 was finally released Thursday, October 6 as planned and listed in the roadmap. I don't know how many downloads they've clocked as of yet, but within minutes of the story breaking the [OpenSUSE site](#) [5] and it's download mirrors had slowed to a crawl. There is a lot of interest in this release as evidenced by the large number of reads of my articles during the development cycle. The whole world was excited as I by Novell's decision to provide a free very close sibling to their enterprise product under the gpl and organizing a team to develop it. Up until that point SUSE interested me about as much as going to the dentist. They have my attention now!

SUSE Linux has developed, grown, and matured into one of the premier desktop operating systems available. It installs flawlessly and is one of the most stable systems in which I've worked. It looks great and performs very well. Tuxmachine's opinion of SUSE Linux has changed considerably in the last 1/2 year. OpenSUSE and Novell now have the respect of our team - and it's well deserved. I only know of a few rivals for SUSE in the top spot for exemplifying professionalism and dedication in the pursuit of operating system utopia. If I could be tempted away from my source-based workhorse, it'd be SUSE Linux that could do it. It is one of, do I dare say *the* most complete and stable OSes I've tested. I can't say enough to try and describe the wonder and satisfaction that awaits you and your computer if you decided to try SUSE Linux. I now understand.

The install is a beautiful wonderful dream. A tasteful and pretty graphical environment walks one through an easy or expert install to set up the customized desktop of your liking. Unlike some other installers, one doesn't have to decide at the beginning if it's going to be a newbie or expert install, instead depending upon how deep in the configuration options one want to venture. The user decides if maybe the easy route in one area and perhaps more extensive in another. It's a logical and wondrous set up. I'm just amazed.

- **Installation**

The beautiful installer begins with a lovely "Welcome" screen and begins to probe for your mouse. Once the mouse is enabled one is asked their preferred language from quite an extensive list of supported locales. Choose yours and move on to the license agreement page. If you choose to accept, the installer then probes for hardware and may ask if you need support for certain devices during the install. I don't have an usb hard drive to test, but it even looks as tho it would install upon one. This is just the beginning of the advanced technology available.

Next the user inputs their choose of install. Is this going to be an upgrade, fresh install, or even a repair or boot of an existing system? I usually pick fresh install. Choose your timezone and hardware clock setting, then choose your default desktop. Do you prefer KDE, GNOME, minimal or text?

Now comes the default Installation Settings one must confirm or edit. You are presented with a 'Overview' with just 'Partitioning', 'Software', and 'Language' or clicking the Expert tab to review/edit 'System', 'Keyboard', 'Booting', 'Time Zone', and 'Default Runlevel.' Review these defaults very closely especially in the area of partitioning. Click on the Partitioning heading, which is actually a hyperlink much like a link in an internet browser, to progress in customizing your install location. I usually pick "Create Custom Setup" and then "Customize Partitions." At this screen one can resize current partition, create new partition, and/or designate your install partition. As my disk is already partitioned I chose the partition I wanted to use by highlighting it with a mouse-click and then clicking on the "Edit" button. A smaller dialogue pops up with textareas for inputting your choices. I clicked the radio button beside "format" and choose reiserfs (3). Then in the partition name drop down box I choose "/" for the root (or main) installation directory. I click apply and return to the partition list and click 'Finish'.

At this point we return to our Confirm Installation Settings screen for further customizations. The second area that I usually edit is the Software section. This link takes one to a yast software installer very much (or exactly) like the one you will encounter throughout your tenure with SUSE. I choose the main areas, but one can even peruse the individual packages for inclusion or exclusion. I usually (but not always) pick about everything except mobile/laptop, servers, virtualization, and some development. Choose kernel development if you'd like the kernel sources installed. 'Finish' and confirm dependencies to return to your Installation Settings Screen.

Next I have to edit the Booting options. You may nor may not need to edit this step, but personally I prefer to use my system already in place. Clicking the Booting link takes one to a tabbed screen with the choices 'Selection Management', where one can list other system to be included in their bootloader, or 'Bootloader Installation'. Here one can choose grub, lilo, or none as well as some other advanced options for each. I choose none, confirm this is my choice and 'Finish.'

These are the only areas I need to edit at this point so I click 'Finish.' Confirm again and the installation begins. A nice progress screen is shown subdivided by cd number. You can watch as the stdout scrolls indiviudal packages by and the progress bar descends indicating percentage of installation completed. The first cd is installed and your system reboots to finish the job in the installed environment. There the installer continues it's task.

After all the packages are installed, user input is once again needed for setting up the root password. After some more probing and questions concerning devices (such as should it probe for a dsl, bluetooth or dial-up modem), the user is asked for confirmation of the Network Configuration. Most of the time the defaults are just fine, but review to be sure. In my case I like to set my hostname. This is another example of just how deep one can go in the configuration. For a newcomer the defaults will probably work, for a more experienced user there are many options available. Here I click on the "Firewall enabled" link that changes it to "disabled" and turns it off, and then my ethernet interface. By choosing edit at the next screen one can change, for example, whether dhcp or static, nameservers, hostname, routing and proxy. I use the default dhcp but like to edit the 'Host Name and Name Server.' I input the name of my machine and domain and click 'Finish,' 'Finish,' and 'Finish' again at the Network Configuration screen. From here it will test the connection by attempting to download the release notes and check for updates. A report of Success or Failure alerts users as to the results. A pop up asks if you'd like to review the updates and a "yes" takes one back to that yast/you package manager. There were several updates available such as a Mozilla security update as well as a last-minute Evolution and fontconfig bug fix. But where was the nvidia driver and ms-font patch to which I've grown accustomed?

The installation of the patches works flawlessly and then the installer spends a little time writing configuration files.

In the homestretch now, one is asked to set up their users and their users' passwords. More configuration file writing and Release Note review come to pass. Read these Release Notes as they tend to offer some really helpful information such as a workaround for the nvidia 6X00 graphic card xorg nv driver bug, pcmcia handling, and suggestions for su'ing to root. At which point the installer might perform some more hardware probing and ask for user input to confirm the hardware configuration.

At the Hardware Configuration screen we see the now familiar hyperlinks to configuration screens for such areas such as video, sound, and tv cards. I usually adjust the video settings, as my latest monitor isn't in the database and my tv card configuration, which is never set up properly by any linux distribution. This tv card configuration is another example of just how expert one can go. Deeper and deeper into the configuration screens, I can set up as precisely as desired. When satisfied, click 'Finish' and watch as more configuration files are written. Installation is complete at this point although one is given the option of running yast.

The SUSE Linux installer is one of it's main attractions. It is a polished well-planned example of professional software. My only complaint is that although there is a back button, one can't choose to click way back or forward to an earlier or later step. Perhaps the step list that remains throughout on the left could be hyperlinks taking one to that particular step.

- **System**



[6]First boot of your new system is the slowest. It will take the time to setup several application preload files, such as Mozilla, OpenOffice, kdm and KDE. Afterwhich your system can boot in times of less than 25 seconds. Upon boot, if you chose to stay with the default runlevel of 5, you are taken directly to the login splash of your chosen desktop. In my case that was KDE and wow, what a beautiful splash screen it is. It's a full screen with a blue backdrop and simplified highlighting progress device icons. A complete and stable KDE 3.4.2 awaits the kde user. With customized wallpapers and windec's from SUSE, it is also unique. A big green lizard [9] greets the user as if to say "Welcome to SUSE Linux!"

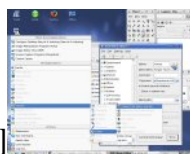
The developers customize the menu to add functionality and beauty. I rarely see systems that have icons for every entry. Not being the case here, SUSE Linux has icons for every menu item listed. More than that is the added entries for other system applications and tools. Lumped in with the KDE defaults, they are logically and well placed. The only thing I found to complain about was my missing KWrite entry. I use kwrite to write my articles. The reasons are subjective and personal, but it'd be nice if there was an entry for it. So, what's a gal to do? Run it from commandline? Start it from the "Run" box? No, edit the menu! The KDE menu editing tool works wonderfully. And Suse has found a way to retain their customizations while integrating the users. It was simply a matter of filling in the blanks to add my desired application to the menu. Start in the KDE Control Center and click on Desktop then Panels. Navigate to Menus tab and click on edit menus. Navigate to the subheading where you'd think it should be and click the "new item" icon. Then fill in the item name, click ok, and then fill in the rest of the blanks and choose an icon if you wish. When finished, click the "save" icon. Easy peasy. Simple search of the menu reveals your addition. Granted this is a KDE function, however the point is, the changes aren't lost nor are the other SUSE menu customizations.



[7]



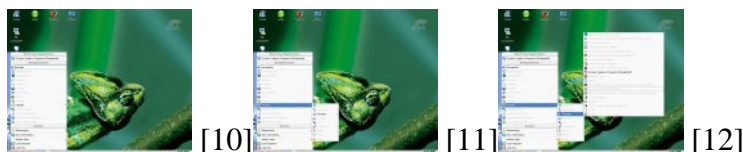
[8]



[9]

Which lead to a wonderful, new, and exclusive feature of SUSE Linux 10.0: The new menu search found at the top of the KDE menu. When one is dealing with an extensive menu such as KDE's and add to that many other items added by developers, some entries can be hard to find. But no more. Now we can simply search for an item or even a word in the

description of an item to find that for which we seek. For example, search for "edit" leads us to several items containing the term edit such as Edutainment > Teaching > Test & Exams Editor (KEduca-Editor) or Utilities > Editor > Simple Text Editor (KWrite), that I just added. I love this new feature and it has already made me lazy. I no longer click thru the menu looking for anything - I enter it in the search first. As one types in their search, extraneous menu items gray-out and become disabled while the desired item's paths/subheadings remain visible and and the item clickable. This feature is an ingenious idea and a much welcomed addition.



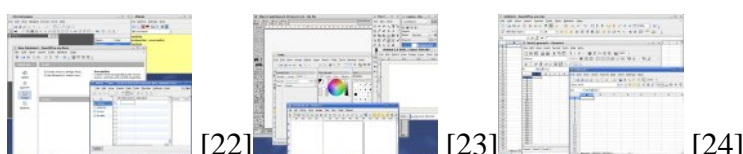
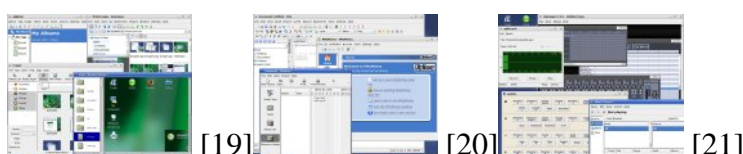
The system contains just about any application you could ask for. I can't recall seeing a more complete menu. Although the system is complete and weighs in at 5.1 gigs, there are no performance hits or that bloaty feeling one can get from other big systems. Applications open almost on the fly and some of the historically slow apps open in mere seconds. For example, OpenOffice.org opens ready for use in about 6 seconds and Firefox opens in less than 4. But the system as a whole just has a snappy responsive feel to it.



One wonderful new addition to the SUSE Linux lineup is the Beagle desktop search tool. One needs to let it index the directories of interest, then one can comprehensively search their system for any given application, file, or term. It displays its finds in a nice window as links with short description that when clicked opens them in another appropriate window. It has a nice polished feel about it.

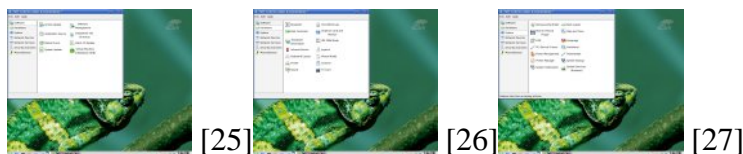


The most defining trait running throughout the system is polish. Beautiful themes, gorgeous fonts, and cute icons are just a taste of the eyecandy. Relative to polish is stability. SUSE Linux is rock solid. I've been playing with applications, opening and closing several at a time, using them, saving files, having several files open in any given app, moving windows, clicking the X instead of using menu > quit, running a full screen gl game or screensaver while having a dozen other intensive applications open and no problems. I experienced no freezes, lock ups, or crashes. Not one.

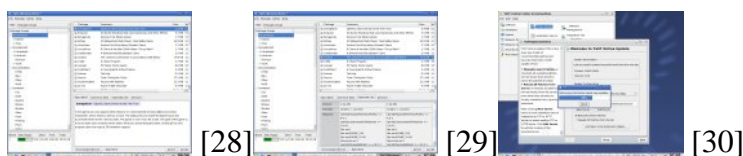


SUSE is almost synonymous with YAST. Say one and think of the other. It's their own system control application. From there one can configure about anything. For example, from the one basic container, one can install or upgrade

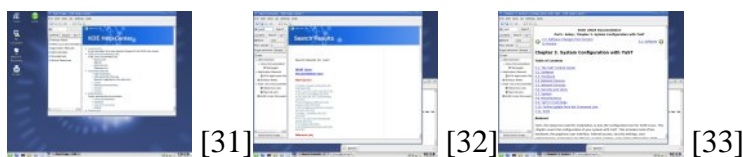
software, set up their networking or booting options, backup or restore their system or configure hardware. In Yast one can even set up a virtual filesystem or machine. There is just too much in the Yast Control Center to describe. I think that would take an entire article in itself. Yast is divided into major subheadings with several to many modules under each taking one to the associated configuration tool. It is an amazingly complex tool and major accomplishment for the SUSE team.



Closely related and arguably the most important tools accessible through the Yast Control Center are the YAST2 package manager and online update tools. The user-friendly package manager presents the packages in several methods such as Package Groups, Selections, or even Search. From here one can install, upgrade, or uninstall software packages. One can even go here to just get information on a package as Technical Data, Dependencies, and available Version info is listed. Yast Online Update tool is a slimmer application subset used exclusively for going online to check SUSE mirrors for updates. This can be run from Yast Control Center, Yast2 package manager, or even the desktop. It seems to check each boot for updates. An applet sits in the system tray for YOU and one can click it to check at will or set it up to automatically check at given intervals as desired. In fact, one can even set it up to automatically apply those updates without intervention as well. One of the loudest complaints coming in the M\$ camp is about package management and security updates being so difficult. I'm guessing they've never been introduced to YAST2.

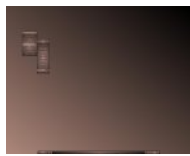


A great feature sometimes overlooked in SUSE is the wonderful Help Center. It takes the KDE help center to a whole 'nuther level. It can index all docs on your system to include not only KDE and kde applications, but SUSE specific applications and tools as well as Gnome and other general areas. It features an updated appearance and pretty fonts as well as a useful search function.



And of course, SUSE Linux comes with plenty of other desktop environments for the user. Gnome is another popular choice amongst users and SUSE doesn't leave them out. Using a 2.12 version, they are ahead of the curve and it has become quite polished. They had a few niggles during development, but it appears they are all worked out. Everything functioned without incident under the Gnome Desktop Environment. IceWM, Windowmaker, and the 'boxes are included as well. All seemed pretty, stable, and fully functional in my short testing time of them.





[37]



[38]



[39]

In conclusion, SUSE Linux 10.0 has made it's milestone debut release with style and perfection. This offering is polished, profession, complete, stable, and reliable. It comes with just about any application a regular user could think of as well as their favorite desktop environment. User-friendly system tools and in-depth help can guide the newcomer or experienced user alike to a customized useful everyday desktop system. This review has just barely touched on the features included. If you are looking for one of the larger, world-class distributions, SUSE Linux 10.0 can fit the bill. SUSE Linux 10.0 is beautiful, logical and highly customizable. And best of all, it's gp'l'd.

Full rpmlist as tested [HERE](#) [40].

More Screenshots [HERE](#) [41].

Changelog [HERE](#) [42].

Download yours [HERE](#) [43].

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Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/2945>

Links:

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[4] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/suse100/desktop>

[5] <http://www.opensuse.org>

[6] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/suse100/splash>

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