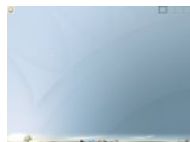


Going Live with Elive

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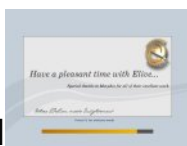
[4]Elive is a new linux distribution presented as an installable livecd. Its developers state that Elive is built from scratch based on Debian. They released version 0.3 on August 30 and claim it's "The first good release..." At the request of a friend, tuxmachines decided to take a look at Elive and see what we see. What we found was a different, stable, and complete operating system with a great look and original tools. It uses Enlightenment for the desktop environment in your choice of e16 or e17. This was my first look at e17 in person, so much of the coverage will undoubtedly focus on that. However with tools like their harddrive installer, Elive won't be slighted.

LiveCD

Your experience starts when you boot the livecd. An unique boot awaits to take you to the bleeding edge desktop environment. The initial boot screen has many options from which to choose including a toram option, options for a system with graphical problems (which means xmodule=vesa) and even a choice of many many different languages. I thought I'd seen a screen similar to that before, but I just can't get the ole synapses firing and place my finger on the memory. The silent boot features the Elive logo on a neutral background with tips and info to fill the void. The verbose output scrolls in front of a fullscreen Tux to keep you company. Although Elive is said to be written from scratch, the boot process reminded me of Knoppix in many ways. All this culminating in your choice between the e16 or the e17 desktop environment. This lovely boot can be yours for the mere cost of a 646mb download.



[5]



[6]



[7]

I chose the "Graphical Problems" option at boot time so as to use the vesa drivers, however as the X server started I got a surprise. The unmistakable NVIDIA splash screen greeted on the way to the desktop. Although this was a pleasant surprise in one way, on the other hand it does indicate that the chosen boot option was ignored in favor of hardware detection. As Elive mounts all partitions it detects, without the included nvidia drivers, I could have been hitting reset possibly corrupting data.

That aside, I chose e17 as the graphical interface and again was met with more pleasantness. Since this is my first look at e17 and have really only seen customized screenshots, I'm not sure what's default and what Elive customized. However, one finds a pretty theme with nice options enabled and enhanced with some rather cute animations. The most charming of these animations was the twinkling of a little star on the background, as if the wallpaper was animated. There were some extraordinary special effects that happen with mouseovers and even throughout the whole experience, such as this little highlighting slider shooting out of the right of the screen as one moused over icons in the launcher/panel. In addition those icons did what can only be described as "throbbled" upon mouseover. When one brings their mouse over to a window to bring it in focus, this whip of a dark cloud swipes across the top window decoration. A similar effect happens as one navigates the menu or options in some other drop downs. Also in the file manager, the properties function shades the entire window and draws a connection to the properties of the file highlighted. These effects are hard to capture in screenshots and even harder to describe in words. E17 is quite the impressive desktop.



Elive itself was quite amazing as well. Even though I did not try to load Elive into ram and instead ran it off the cd, these effects seemed responsive and didn't cause unusually high overhead. Elive is sitting on a 2.6.11 kernel with XFree86 Version 4.3.0.1, and gcc 3.3.6.

Some packages include firefox, gimp, xmms, OpenOffice.org, blender, grip, gmpayer, and on and on and on. Actually the Elive website has a complete list of packages [HERE](#) [11]. It's quite the complete desktop. I did encounter some troubles with xmms and grip due to requiring root permissions to access the cdrom device(s). Multimedia video playback was out-of-the-box.



Elive also includes its own hard drive installer. laid out as a seven step process, the installer is a user-friendly graphical application that requires very little input from the user. The step are as follows:

- [Choose the harddrive](#) [17]
- [Morph the partition if necessary](#) [18] & [pick the swap](#) [19]
- [Pick the partition & filesystem](#) [20]
- [Enter a hostname](#) [21]
- [Enter a root password](#) [22]
- [Name a user and password](#) [23]

- [Install grub \(or not\)](#) [24]

The install seems to take a little longer than one would think, as I believe I saw something on the site about dma being turned off by default on all drives. However it does work and a dancing penguin let's you know it's still working and a progress bar keeps one informed of the progress.

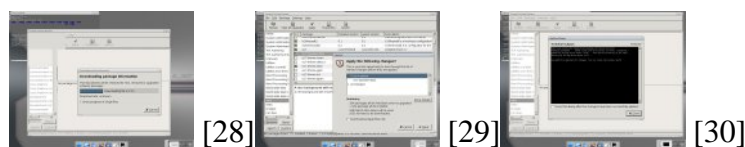
The Harddrive Install

Once installed the init stdout does in fact look different than any other I can recall seeing. The system boots with good speed detecting hardware and setting up devices as it goes. The only niggle I've identified as of yet is it doesn't detect my hda21 partition, which hinders my inclusion of multimedia functionality. Also, the first coupla boots the system kinda locked up on me and one time the keyboard went dead (although the mouse continued to operate normally). After a coupla reboots the system settled down and remained stable. I can't speculate as to the cause, perhaps it was writing or adjusting configuration files, I don't know. In addition it's worth mentioning that although all partitions detected are mounted during the boot the livecd, this is not the case with the harddrive install. So, my hitting hard reset wasn't as tragic as it could have been.

Another notable thing is that although the login screen is a gorgeous and unique experience, the system defaults to e16. e17 can be started manually, but even putting a link to the startup script for e17 in my .xsessions didn't fix that little problem. However the e16 desktop on the harddrive install is gorgeous. A pretty theme and nice looking wallpaper greet the user. The xterms are transparent and engage is deployed adding to the overall feel of the desktop. As stated, one can start e17 from the commandline and it too is different than the e17 on the livecd. A great animated theme and very tasteful wallpaper is presented. I loved the animated wallpaper on the livecd, and fortunately for me, it's available through synaptic.



Elive uses deb packages and apt-get with synaptic front-end to handle software installs and upgrades. The developers have already set up mirrors in the source.list so, it is ready for use. The use of synaptic has been covered quite extensively on this site and moreso elsewhere, but one basically clicks the icon to update the source database, then marks any packages for upgrade or install, and clicks apply. It's a wonderfully easy procedure. Synaptic is so reliable and easy to use, even some rpm distributions are now using it.

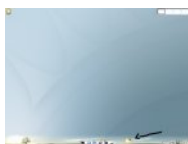


Final thought

In conclusion, I've found Elive to be a new exciting project producing an unique and thoughtful Linux distribution. It's designed to demand less system resources making it available to users with an older machine as well as including advanced features like animations for users with newer equipment. For a first release, this system performs admirably. I found it more stable than anticipated considering its young age. I was quite charmed by the animations and eye candy and am really really impressed with the enlightenment project. More and more, KDE is being challenged. I think it was a wonderful choice for the Elive project. I wouldn't hesitate recommending this system to anyone, new or experienced alike. I really liked Elive.

Oh, it took some doing, but I finally captured that little launcher highlighter thingy zooming across the desktop to do it's thing. He looks different in this harddrive install screenshot than on the livecd. On the livecd it was a gel-like

blue bar reminiscent of macOSX or aqua themes, while on the harddrive install he's this little golden orb. Too cute!



[31]

More [Screenshots](#) [32] in the TuxGallery.

[Linux Reviews -s](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/3072>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/63>
- [2] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/101>
- [3] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/102>
- [4] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/desktop17>
- [5] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/cdboot>
- [6] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/cdboot4>
- [7] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/cdboot2>
- [8] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/effects>
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- [10] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/twinkle>
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- [30] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/synaptic6>
- [31] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive/hde17ani>
- [32] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/elive>