PCLOS .92 - It just works

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Created *24/11/2005 - 12:39am*
Submitted by srlinuxx on Thursday 24th of November 2005 12:39:05 AM Filed under [PCLOS](#) [1] [Reviews](#) [2] [-s](#) [3]

[4]Once upon a time there was a packager from Texas whose rpms became so popular he had to make a distro to contain them. He searched high and low for most beautiful eye candy. He patched and pre-linked applications until they screamed with speed. He tweaked and compiled until they were stable. He added gui tools, drivers, and plugins until every user could work like a pro. He kept working on that distro, release after release, until this very day. That distro is known as PCLinuxOS, and the day version .92 was released, cries of joy were heard throughout the land as many microsoft slaves and linux grunts were set free. Free, free, free at last. Texstar has set us free.

Indeed this radically simple to use Linux distribution did start out as a result of Texstar's desire for a more beautiful and faster performing system. From the late 1990's thru the early 2000's, Texstar was rebuilding rpms to enhance his own desktop. But the story really began when he first offered up his rebuilt kde packages. The more people installed these rpms, the more they wanted.

After a while livecd technology became available for mandrake systems, and Texstar was intrigued. Could he replace a lot of the buggy software from France, add many wonderful enhancements and extras, and make a livecd? Yes he could. Only a few of got to test that initial release, but those of us who did knew Texstar was onto something big. He addressed a market thusfar overlooked by the big boys and his distro's popularity keep growing, staying in the top 4% (and climbing) of all distros in DistroWatch's database.

As PCLOS evolved, it's appearance has too. This release has a significantly different look than previously. This time we have a minimal background on the two major desktops, a pretty but understated windec and a new quad-colored logo. The cute penguins and cuddly polar bears are gone. We are now presented with a more mature, grown-up PCLOS. The new logo/theme creates an esoteric atmosphere of faint familiarity easing the transition to Linux from

Windows. This new logo, borrowed from a gnome icon project, consists of similar colored features as the (in)famous windows' logo. The hope was for the experience of using Linux to be less alien for them. PCLOS accomplishes this without becoming a windows clone. And if you miss the penguins, all the components from the last release are still there; the wallpaper, the splash screen, etc.

[5]

The look has changed dramatically. However, lest we forget, this is Linux. It's all about customization and free-choice. If you don't like the theme, there are many included with PCLOS and many more available on the web. My favorite "goodie" site is kde-look.org [6].

[7]

Not all the changes are in appearance. Texstar et. al. work really hard to bring the users the stable end of the cutting edge spectrum. This is a very fine line and it takes a talented crew to walk it. It's very difficult to find that sweet spot, but I think PCLOS has done just that. In the robust but not over-crowded menus, one can find the right tool for the right job.

For example, this release brings us

- kernel-pclos-i586-up-1GB-2.6.12.oci6.mdk-1-1tex
- xorg-x11-6.9-0.cvs20051101.2tex
- kdebase-3.4.3-6tex
- fluxbox-0.9.12-1tex
- gcc-3.3.1-2mdk
- koffice-1.4.2-1tex
- gaim-1.5.0-1tex
- xsane-0.97-2tex
- gimp-2.2.9-1tex
- audacity-1.2.3-2tex
- glibc-2.3.2-14mdk
- gtk+2.0-2.6.8-1tex
- k9copy-1.0.0-2tex
- kaffeine-0.7.1-3tex
- kompose-0.5.3-1tex
- limewire-4.9.30-1tex
- mozilla-firefox-1.0.7-1tex
- thunderbird2firefox-1.0.7-2tex
- mplayer-1.0-0.pre7.2tex
- vlc-0.8.2-1tex
- wlassistant-0.5.4-1tex
- tvtime-1.0.2-1tex
- Full RPMlist [8]

Here we have some configuration tools and file transfer applications.

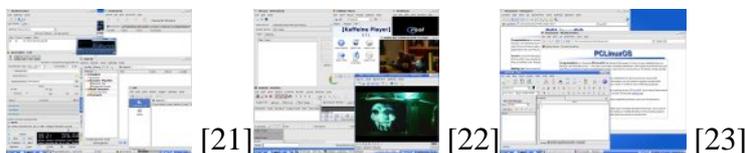[9] [10] [11]

Here are some games and graphics apps.

[12] [13] [14]

And here we have communications tools for instant messenging, internet relay chating, and emailing.

[15] [16] [17]

Here we show the newsgroup tools as well as some of the office applications and remote file/networking solutions.

[18] [19] [20]

And of course here is a nice selection of apps for music and video enjoyment as well as some internet browsers.
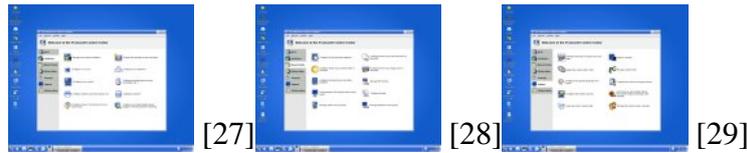
[21] [22] [23]

If this is your first time considering PCLOS, you may not know of it's package manager. PCLOS features synaptic on top of apt-get to install the binary packages from Texstar's repository of applications. It's worked flawlessly here for as long as I've been using PCLOS. It efficiently downloads each package desired and its dependencies, then quickly installs them. The menus are updated to reflect the new application(s) as well. It's a wonderful system Tex & crew have going there.

[24] [25] [26]

Again, if you're new to PCLOS you need to know about the PCLinuxOS Control Center. This is the configuration hub
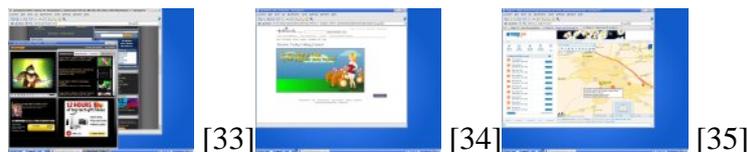
of your new (or perspective) system. From there you can configure anything you need, from boot options and loader, hardware setup and tweaks, to networking and a firewall. ...and so much more. It is really the crowning jewel of PCLOS, I think.

 [27] [28] [29]

If you prefer (or need) a lighter desktop, PCLOS includes the very popular Fluxbox. One of the nicest of the lighter environments, it's a welcome addition. This release brings a spiffed up appearance for Fluxbox as well, almost matching the KDE desktop. It features idesk for the desktop icons and a customized theme and menu. The menu is complete with all the entries you'd find in the KDE menu making it every bit as useful and handy as KDE.

 [30] [31] [32]

And don't forget the convenience. PCLOS was one of the first distros to include the extras like java, flash, and nvidia drivers. This release has these and more. As you can see in the screenshots as portrayed in the thumbnails below, the plugins work wonderfully. I can watch trailers and select ecards from my browser with no work at all from myself.

 [33] [34] [35]

Foregone in the last release but returned in this one are the 3D graphic drivers for nvidia and ati video cards. This release currently comes in 4 versions:

- pclinuxos-0.92 - General Release - Standard xorg. drivers
- pclinuxos-p92-nvidia7174 - 3D Graphic drivers for older Nvidia TNT cards.
- pclinuxos-p92-nvidia7676 - 3D Graphic drivers for newer Nvidia cards.
- pclinuxos-p92-ati8500up - 3D Graphic drivers for ATI video cards 8500 and up.

Texstar is quoted as writing,

> "Also in the works is a mini-me iso with a minimal install and you can add your own applications from the PCLOS repository and a PCLOS DVD with more applications that aren't available on the cd versions."

The reports that came in from early testing [36] and especially the ones now are very complimentary. Most folks are stating how nice this release is. Some have went so far as to say it's the best operating system they've tried. Just look at this thread [37] and this comment [38] on PCLO.

Texstar and posse have been working overtime to bring support for the latest technology to their distro. They have begun to include support for the latest wifi/wireless adapters and connectivity, but Texstar states,

> "wifi connectivity and configuration is an area we need to improve upon. Mainly we worked on new hardware detection routines, faster boot times, usbkey support, usb hard drive installation, sata hd support, and added some code to the livecd-install to slow down the cdrom drive speed to not more than 24x to help keep the cdrom drive on some systems from overheating and killing the install."

So what's in the future for PCLinuxOS? Texstar writes,

> "0.93 will sport kernel 2.6.14 and KDE 3.5. We are going to move many of the 3rd party drivers out of the kernel build and make dkms packages out of them so when you install a new kernel, at boot up the system will automatically rebuild the drivers for the new kernel. This will also give us the ability to update various drivers without requiring the user to install a new kernel.
> 1.0 will probably be a complete rebuild of the entire distro using a new glibc, gcc 4.x, KDE 4.0, Xorg 7.0, and all the latest opensource applications."

I've spent a lot of time in PCLinuxOS .92, since the first test release [39] and following the continuing development. I've experience very few glitches with the test releases and could not put my finger on any bugs in the final. It just works.

Download your copy today [40]!

And if you find it useful, please consider making a donation to help support future development HERE [41].

I've posted a few more screenshots HERE [42].

...And they all lived happily ever after.

 [43]

PCLOS Reviews -s

Source URL: http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/3677

Links:
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[2] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/101
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[23] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/www

[24] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/synaptic1

[25] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/synaptic2

[26] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/synaptic3

[27] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/pcontrol1

[28] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/pcontrol7

[29] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/pcontrol12

[30] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/fluxbox0

[31] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/fmenu1

[32] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/help2

[33] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/plugins

[34] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/plugins1

[35] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/plugins3

[36] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/3608

[37] http://www.pclinuxonline.com/allcomments.php?thold=-1&mode=nested&order=0&sid=10208

[38]
http://www.pclinuxonline.com/modules.php?mop=modload&name=Splatt_Forums&file=viewtopic&topic=8600&forum=

[39] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/3265

[40] http://distro.ibiblio.org/pub/linux/distributions/texstar/pclinuxos/live-cd/english/preview/

[41] http://www.pclinuxonline.com/pclos/html/donations.html

[42] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f

[43] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos92f/bye