

Kanotix 2005-04-RC17

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[4]Kanotix 2005-04-RC17 [was released](#) [5] a few days ago and tuxmachines is running really behind in their reviews. However, this was one I wanted to make sure I completed. I've reviewed several distros that are based on Kanotix and the time was right to finally review the source. However, if I really want to get down to where the rubber meets the road, I'm going to have to review Knoppix. Saving that for another time, today we look at Kanotix 2005-04-RC17.

- **Introduction**

[Distrowatch](#) [5] has described Kanotix as "a Linux live CD based on Knoppix technology using Debian/sid. The included XFree86 is from Debian/experimental. The main specs are: GRUB based startup from CD, ACPI support, DMA default on, additional support for DSL modems (Fritz!Card DSL and Eagle USB), optimal for HD install (you get a working Debian/sid install in about 10 minutes!), kernel forcedeth (for nForce NIC), device mapper and some other patches."

- **Features**

- [Kernel](#) [6] 2.6.14.2 with many patches
- ACPI and DMA enabled by default (can be disabled with `acpi=off` and `nodma` respectively)
- i586 optimization - not for use with older CPUs!
- [Unionfs](#) [7] support (with `unionfs cheat`)
- [AVM](#) [8] [Fritz!Card](#) [DSL](#) [9] support

- [Eagle USB DSL](#) [10] support
- [KDE](#) [11] 3.4.3
- [Captive](#) [12] 1.1.5
- [ALSA](#) [13] 1.0.10rc3
- [GRUB](#) [14] boot loader for CD start - ideal for rescue in command line mode
- [GCC](#) [15] 4.0.5
- [Xorg](#) [16] 6.8.2
- [Memtest86+](#) [17] - Advanced Memory Diagnostic Tool in the extra menu of the boot loader

- **Boot**

I had a feeling this was going to be a really nice system from the first boot of the livecd. The initial boot screen features red fonts and graphics, but they did a really tasteful job. It's quite attractive. Not only that, but it has so many boot options that you'll need to stop the 30 second count down timer to read them all. I ended up just hitting the default and adding xmodule=vesa (just in case). Once the boot started it was obvious that Kanotix is heavily based Knoppix. The silent splash soon kicks in and was found to be really tidy and professional looking. It features the same image that is used for the kde activation splash, and adds a progress bar as well as an animated tux walking back and forth. I like the continuity using that same image gives the distro. It adds to the professional feel.



- **LiveCD**

The livecd boots automagically into KDE 3.4.3 and one is greeted by the familiar feminine "Initiating Start Sequence." Then one spots the attractive wallpaper. Usually I don't care for backgrounds with words, but this one does it tastefully and is presented in the most attractive shades of bluish-purple. The default plastic window is still using the ugly default kde blue, so one might want to change that.

In addition, the 'show devices on the desktop' in the KDE desktop configuration is on by default, making for an ugly mess since Kanotix mounts all partitions automagically. I unchecked that and unmounted my partitions.



The fonts on the default desktop weren't really too attractive. They weren't what I'd call ugly, they just didn't seem to render as well as some others I've seen. They were antialiased, yet they just seemed a little thin and jagged. There wasn't a lot of choice in the font menu either, nothing better than the default was available.

The menus were chocked full of applications and tools. The debian menu is separated from the almost traditional KDE

menu by the heading Debian divided up into several other categories such as graphics, net, and system. They also had some transparency going on which made for an attractive "extra touch" that didn't seem to hit performance any.



In those menus are many tools for configuring your hardware and system. Some are obviously Knoppix derivatives, and some others appear original. Most seemed to function without issue like the firewall config, although some did not seem to work correctly. For example the tv card configuration script seems to just die off.



Also in those menus were plenty of applications for just about anything you could think of to do. Most work really well except [xine](#) [28] seemed to drop a few frames from time to time.



One of the nicest applications found was the hard drive installer. It's apparently a gui front-end for the knoppix-installer, but it gives a really nice feel to the process. It makes choosing your configurations so much easier to visualize and I imagine enhances the experience tenfold for the new user. It walks the user thru a simple setup and functions really well. I obtained a hard drive install in about 15 minutes without so much as a hiccup.

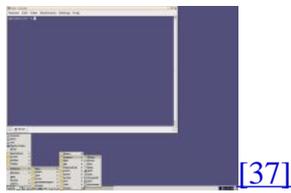


It even managed to copy the added files from the default knoppix user to the newly created "s" user. So, if I had forgotten to copy my screenshots to a real partition before rebooting the livecd, they were safe and sound on the new hard drive install. I've only seen one or two other systems do that.



- **Hard Drive System**

The install boots fast and almost without issue. Upon boot, one gets a graphical login screen. From there one can choose their user and window manager/environment. KDE is default, but icewm is also offered for those wishing a lighter desktop.



[37]

Despite saving some of my files as mentioned above, I still had to turn off that "show all devices on desktop" again. This time I edited `/etc/fstab` as well to avoid any teary scenes that might occur in the future.



[38]

One of the first things I noticed was that the fonts rendered much better on the hard drive install. I was still using vesa at that point, yet the fonts seem to be much prettier. After installing nvidia drivers (which gave no trouble at all), they looked even better.



[39]

[40]

One of the things I had difficulty finding on the livecd and continued to the hard drive install was a graphical package tool (other than the kde kpackage). I figured a debian system would have synaptic installed, but Kanotix didn't. Fortunately it did include `apt-get` and came with more than a few repositories already set up. I only needed to run `apt-get update` and `apt-get install synaptic` to get that wonderful interface to which I've grown accustomed. After the install, a menu item even appeared for it.

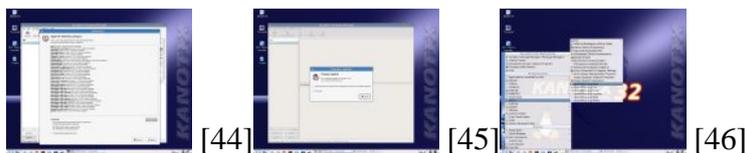


[41]

[42]

[43]

At that point I could also install OpenOffice.org as Kanotix features KOffice as their office suite by default. That install was painless through my freshly installed synaptic front-end to `apt-get`. After which entries appeared in the menus for all of OpenOffice as hoped. It worked great.



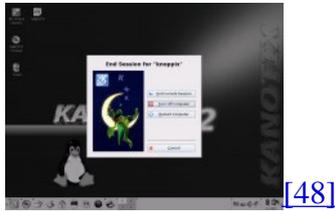
[44]

[45]

[46]

• Conclusion

Even with the few little negative issues described, I still found Kanotix to be polished and professional looking with simple yet handy tools for many tasks associated with setting up and maintaining a complete operating system. It functioned wonderfully and performed well above average. Applications opened and operated quite swiftly even during use of the livecd. I liked kanotix quite a bit and was impressed with the overall look and feel. I like to have a livecd or three around for emergencies, and this is one that I will keep. With some of the newest versions of applications available, this is one nice way to get a modern updated Debian system onto your machine. If I had to rate it, I'd probably give it at least an 8 out of 10. There are several more [screenshots here](#) [47].



[Linux Reviews -s](#)

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Links:

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- [4] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/kanotix17/desktop>
- [5] <http://distrowatch.com/table.php?distribution=kanotix>
- [6] <http://www.kernel.org/>
- [7] <http://www.fsl.cs.sunysb.edu/project-unionfs.html>
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- [47] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/kanotix17>
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