

GoblinX Premium 2006.1 Tested

By *srlinuxx*

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[4][GoblinX 2006.1](#) [5] was released a few days ago and [On-disk.com](#) [6] treated Tuxmachines to a copy.

We've been working on and off for a several days trying to get everything in place to write this review. It's been an uphill battle, to say the least, but finally we are ready to share our experiences.

GoblinX Premium 2006.1 is an installable livecd of one of the most uniquely themed Linux distros available today. The boot sequence is a thing of beauty and falsely puts the user in expectation of the same after boot. Some of their themes are almost nice, some are unique, others are quite strange, while one is downright offensive. Themes and wallpapers can be changed, so while eyecandy can make a distro, it can rarely break one.

To quote the [the site](#) [7],

"The GoblinX Premium 2006.1 is the special edition created to be the main operating system of the goblin fan, our O.S. Replacement.

This edition is indicated to the goblin around the world who wishes to use the distro as his installed system because it contains a very large source of applications and features, like a devel center where you can find all programs needed to compile applications and drivers.

The Premium Edition contains languages, libraries, files and applications used to compile other programs from source code, contains several more applications to everyday use and more games for your entertainment, also contains more drivers and packages needed to improve hardware support, like sane, gimp-print, hpjis, ndiswrapper, slmodem and more."

LiveCD

The boot process in silent mode is nicely decorated with a strange scifi-ish background in shades of green. Being quite abstract, I can't tell what it's really supposed to be. It almost looks like a couple of weird spaceships colliding or perhaps a coupla aliens butting heads. In any case, it's an attractive and intriguing beginning. The verbose background is customized as well featuring screenshots of Goblinx on the left and your text scrolling a bit off-center in Matrix green. A pleasant experience is had in either case.



One is given many options to customize their booting process to match their system. One such option is "toram." By loading the system into ram, the performance increases quite noticeably, although one doesn't seem to be able to install to harddrive under this type of boot. Some of the other many options include usmap, also, nofirewall, usedhcp, nopcmcia, and many many others.



If one has an nvidia card, the livedcd includes nvidia's own drivers and if the system is run from the livedcd they are used. If one boots toram, then they are not, and are not available. Although conversely, if booted toram, the system detected both my monitors. Compared to livedcd which used nvidia drivers and only detected one. Weird.

The System

Goblinx comes with several desktop managers and each is uniquely different from the next. From the menus one can choose from a plethora of [available applications](#) [14]. They include many favorite apps to accomplish about any task. This is true through the whole of Goblinx. All the desktop environments tested seemed extremely stable as well as the applications. Multimedia is hit and miss, as are their plugins. The biggest draw is probably their games. Goblinx comes with a long list of 2D and 3D games and many are contained within one application they call their Games Center. Some of the games would not open for me and some would open from the menu but not the Game Center.



KDE is probably the most unique desktop environment included with Goblinx. Using a superkaramba theme to skin a customized toolbar/launcher, this desktop is anything but boring. In shades of pumpkin, yellow, black and off-red, it's the strangest toolbar I've ever seen. Strange in a cool though. Double clicking the big red K icon will slide the customized KDE menu onto your desktop. The windec is also uniquely Goblinx, utilizing what appears to be a customized keramik in shades of yellow-orange and dark gray/black.



E16 is another desktop available in Goblinx. Again featuring Halloween colors, it fits in with the Goblinx look and feel

while offering a bit of continuity. The menu was approximately the same in all the window managers except in this case featuring familiar e16 entries as well. Also available are two other themes, winter and one of almost solid black. It appears no wallpaper was utilized, instead opting for a solid black background. This is still preferable to the wallpaper found in Fluxbox.



Fluxbox would be a nicely customized job if not for the shock received from its wallpaper. This desktop is again using the same Goblinx colors and icons, and has a nice row of customized icons for some popular application running along the bottom of screen just above the black and orange panel. These icons launch gimp, firefox, xedit, aterm, xmms, and gaim. The windec is primarily an understated dark gray or black with gray buttons. This could all work if not for the default wallpaper. One is shocked by the appearance of a nude woman in an blending of a skyscape and some transparent abstract shapes. Although the most of her is a bit out-of-focus, one breast is highlighted and thrust right in your face. It effectively becomes the uncomfortable focal point quite inappropriate for a desktop to be used in a professional or even a family situation. I found this to be a quite immature move on the part of Goblinx developers. Fortunately, in the menu is a link to a background changing script.



The default desktop environment for Goblinx is the impeccable Xfce4. Again, using the background as a foundation, xfce4 is another unique, but satisfying experience in Goblinx. The default background is another strange image of what could be some type of space ship or machinery with a control panel or monitor as the focal point. It main color usage is in the hue of blue, yet features contrasting reds. I like this artwork even if it don't match the pumpkin colors of the window frames, icons, and other features. The launcher has shortcuts using the icons as described above in fluxbox as well as launching the same applications. The menu is highly customized to contain all the available applications, Goblinx's own module scripts, and a link to the harddrive installer.



Harddrive Install

I must have tried to install Goblinx 4 times before I finally got it to install. On at least two occasions, the installer would take me through the routine and I'd end up with empty directories. The third time I thought to check them before rebooting and it appeared as though everything had been copied, yet upon reboot it was gone. I finally got an install after umounting and remounting the target directory a few times. I suspect the installer was installing to ramdisk. But how or why was it doing that? I could copy jpeg images to another mounted partition, so why couldn't the installer copy to one? It obviously hit the right one to make the directories. But in-between, it loads all the needed modules, (supposedly) copies configuration files and asks about lilo. The installer itself was a very simple process in that it only asks two questions, on which partition to install and if it should install lilo. If they ever perfect the process, it could be considered very newbie-friendly.



Even after I got a hard drive install, things didn't proceed as expected. The main problems are that / is still mounted as tmpfs, many configurations are overwritten each boot, and the root directory is deleted each boot. It didn't seem to copy the root directory from the cd or for some reason it was deleted. As such all their nice little themes and artwork configurations was virtually gone. Firefox was default as were all the window managers. Some desktops couldn't even start because there wasn't a root directory. So even if one makes a root directory, gets into the window managers, and sets up all their preferences again; it's lost next boot. I had to setup X again each boot as well as my network. The dhcpd that worked for the livecd didn't work so well on the hard drive install. Even with the edit of the inet1a.conf file for dhcpd, it just didn't work. Setting up a regular user account isn't much use either as first they aren't asked for their password upon login, they aren't allow to su to root, and can't start X. In addition, Goblinx ejects both my cd drives at each and every shutdown. We'll forego the discussion on the package management as it's moot at this point.



Conclusion

So, all in all, I'd say this one needs to simmer a bit more. I liked the Goblin mini-cd when [tested a while back](#) [36], but the hard drive installer was broken then and it's still broke now. In fact, I think it's more frustrating to get a broken system than none at all. Despite X and application stability, many of the games were inoperative.

The mini-cd or even the premium cd would be useful if you wanted a livecd to use or carry around to show the differing possibilities of Linux. It's definitely not your run-of-the-mill Linux. But if you are wanting to install a system in which to make yourself at home, Goblinx isn't quite ready yet.

[More Screenshots](#) [37].

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