

Kubuntu 6.06

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[4]With all the Ubuntu excitement passed few days it occurred to me that being a KDE fan moreso than gnome, perhaps Kubuntu might be more my cup of tea. When perusing the downloads it also occurred to me that 'hey I have a 64bit machine now!' So, I downloaded the Kubutu 6.06 desktop amd64 iso. Was it more appealing to a diehard KDE fan? Does 64bit programming make much difference?

The boot is similar to [Ubuntu's](#) [5], in fact it's almost identical except for the more attractive blue coloring and instead of the Ubuntu goldish logo we have the blue kubuntu. Otherwise there didn't seem to be much difference until we reached the splash screen. As attractive as Ubuntu's gui splash might be, kubuntu's is much more so. It's clean and crisp, and I just personally prefer blue.



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Once you reach the desktop, one finds a blue background that looks like large faint bubbles as a foundation for KDE 3.5.2. It is your basic KDE desktop consisting of kapps for most popular tasks. What's not included on in the iso is installable. Included graphics are Kooka, krita, kpdf, and gwenview. For Internet we find akregator, bluetooth chat, Konqueror, Konversation, kopete, Kppp, krdc, drfb, ktorrent and a wireless lan manager. Multimedia includes amaroK, K3b, Kaffeine, KAudioCreator, kmix, and KsCD.



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OpenOffice.org 2.02 rounds up the office category as well as KDE deciding kontakt is an office application. There are plenty of system tools and utilities as well. There are utils for software packaging, setting alarms, configuring groupware connections, managing your printing jobs, and calculating. System tools consists of Kcron, Keep, KInfocenter, KSysGuard, KSystemLog, Konsole and QTParted.



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On the desktop as well as in the System menu is an icon for Install. Installing to the harddrive is simplified over comparable Linux system, and in this case it is very similar if not identical to the process found in Ubuntu. It starts with answering a few configuration questions such as language, timezone, keyboard, and user and machine name.



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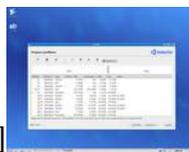


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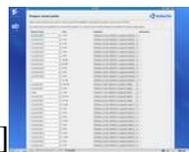
Next comes partitioning if necessary and setting the target partition and swap. Confirm settings and press Install. All one does now is wait. It takes about 10 minutes for the installer to complete it's work before asking if you'd like to reboot. That's it.



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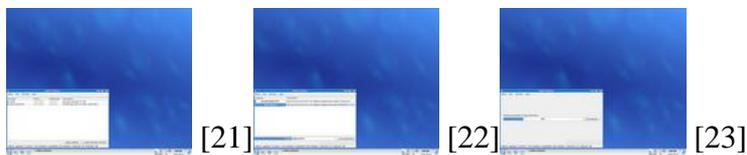
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Like Ubuntu, the installer presumes you would like grub installed so doesn't bother to ask and my first install attempt wasn't successful. The newly installed system would not boot. It just sat at the 'loading grub' screen blinking at me, in much the same manner as I encountered with the Ubuntu release candidate. After replacing grub with lilo, kubuntu tried to boot, but lots of things failed including the loading of needed modules and the start of the gui. I booted the livecd and tried again, this time doing nothing else in the background and achieved a bootable install. The first time I was taking a bunch of screenshots. I think I'm beginning to see a pattern emerge here in all my installs of the Ubuntu family and can sum it up in a few words of advice. Do not do anything else while your new Ubuntu system installs. This of course detracts from the main advantage of using a livecd as an install medium, but on the other hand, it takes such a short span of time to install that it's not a major sacrifice.

The installed system affords one the opportunity to install whatever applications one might need as well any 3rd party or proprietary drivers. (k)ubuntu software is installed thru an app called adept. Not only is it an software manager, but it also takes care of system or security updates. In fact one of the first thing I saw when I booted Kubuntu the first time was an icon in the System tray for adept and clicking on it brought up an updater. Click to fetch list of updates and in a few seconds it will inform you if anything needs updating. In this case there were updates to the adept software manager and gnome install data. One can Apply Updates or Forget Changes and Quit. I clicked Apply Changes and the updates were downloaded and installed in seconds without issue.



In the menu is an entry for Adept which opens a window similar to Synaptic. You can search for specific packages by keyword with tickable options, and right click package name to "Request Install." Then click on the Apply Changes button and your package as well as dependencies are downloaded and installed.



Clicking on "Add and Remove Programs" also brings up adept, but in a different layout. In this layout one finds the applications available or installed listed by category. Ticking the little checkbox and clicking Apply Changes will install or remove chosen programs.



The hardware detection was good and pretty much everything worked out of the box. Kaffeine was able to play mpgs and the example files but not avis. OpenOffice crashed and disappeared my first attempt at using it, but functioned properly in all subsequent tests. The KDE that was included was a bit stripped down and included no games at all, but lots of choices are available through the software manager. The desktop itself was pretty even if customized very little. Under the hood is a 2.6.15 kernel, Xorg 7.0 and gcc 4.0.3 is installable.

The performance of the system was well above average. In fact, I'll just say it, that thing flies. Applications opened up before I could move my mouse. There was no artifacting or delay in redrawing windows, no delay at all in switching between windows, or "jerkiness" when moving windows around. The menu popped right open without delay as well. The whole system felt light and nimble. I was quite impressed. Comparing the performance of kde kubuntu to gnome ubuntu is almost like comparing peaches to nectarines and since I didn't test the x86 version of kubuntu, I can't say with any authority or expertise that kubuntu 64 out-performs the others. But I can say this is one of the, if not *the*, fastest full-sized systems I've tested. Yes sir, kubuntu was quite impressive.

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