

Updating My Toolbox - Knoppix 5.0.1

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[4]Knoppix is best known as the first really great livecd. At a time when traditional, mostly text, installers ruled the Linux world, they innovated a technology that has more or less taken over the way distributions are delivered today. Not content to rest on their laurels, they have continued to innovate and improve over the years. Today brought the announcement of the public release of Knoppix 5.0.1, the latest and greatest Knoppix to roll off the assembly line as an update to version 5. This release brings lots of bug fixes and updates - most notably: kernel 2.6.17, KDE 3.5.2 and Gnome 2.14.1.

Knoppix is accepted as the first to bring the livecd format to the average computer user. Being able to try Linux before committing your harddrive to permanent change has proliferated the use and raised public awareness of Linux itself. Knoppix is chocked full of great linux software for your everyday computing needs. The livedvd is so complete, the menus can hardly contain the virtual horn o' plenty. Never has one single distribution spawned so many off-shoots. There are at least 16 main stream and well known distros based on or derived from Knoppix. There are 8 books on the use of Knoppix at Amazon.com alone. Dating back to at least January 2003, Knoppix has always had a tradition of providing a modern graphical desktop with good performance and very conservative hardware requirements.

Minimum Requirements for the Knoppix system:

- Intel-compatible CPU (i486 or later),
- 32 MB of RAM for text mode, at least 96 MB for graphics mode with KDE (at least 128 MB of RAM is recommended to use the various office products),
- bootable CD-ROM drive, or a boot floppy and standard CD-ROM (IDE/ATAPI or SCSI),
- standard SVGA-compatible graphics card,

- serial or PS/2 standard mouse or IMPS/2-compatible USB-mouse.

What's new this release?

- Linux Kernel 2.6.17 (rc)
- Debian (testing/unstable)
- Xorg Version 7.0
- Detection of onboard IDE-Raid Controllers and raid disk components
- udev+hwsetup for automatic hardware detection
- KDE 3.5.2, GNOME 2.12 from Debian/unstable
- OpenOffice 2.0.2 (german+english)
- transparent write access for NTFS partitions (libntfs+fuse)
- new knoppix-installer now also with the possibility to update existing installations of Knoppix
- Many, MANY Updates...

To the naked eye the boot process has changed very little visually over the years. Beyond updated bootloader splashscreens, they are still utilizing an unique verbose colorful text boot that has become signature. As this process progress, one can see the hardware detection spinner and progress bar, another unique feature. Hardware detection has always been one of Knoppix's strong points and, in fact, in a time when most distros' were still hit and miss, Knoppix's hardware detection, support, and auto-configuration became legendary. This is no doubt why so many developers began their pursuits with Knoppix.



Again as part of a tradition, the first glimpse of the desktop includes an open browser window containing a webpage with handy links to Knoppix information and help. As far as I can remember, Knoppix has always had support for the world's differing languages and that is obvious from the very start. Not only is there a locale keyboard settings applet in the SysTray, but that same html introduction has handy links right there so it can be read in your preferred language. In fact, one of the boot options is for language/locale.

In the launcher are shortcuts to some of the most popular applications today. In this release we have launchers for Konqueror, Firefox, and OpenOffice.org besides a handy KNOPPIX menu containing many of Knoppix's own system tools and utilities.

The menus are overflowing with software choices. I don't recall when I've ever seen a more abundant list of applications. Everything from Development to Utilities, the Knoppix livedvd has it all - over 10 gigs of software. I have never seen such a collection of software in any distro before.



Developmental Tools and Applications



Editors Galore



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Tons of Math, Science, and other Educational Apps

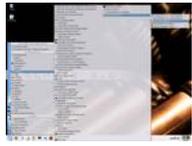


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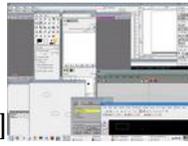


[15]

Games, Games, Games and oh! - More Games



[16]



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More Graphics Apps than You Can Shake a Stick at



[18]



[19]



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Networking and Communications



[21]

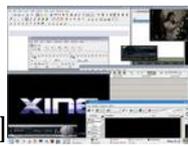


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Knoppix's own Configuration Apps



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Multimedia: Sound, Video, Viewers



[25]



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All Play and No Work Makes Jack a Broke Boy



[28]



[29]

System Applications



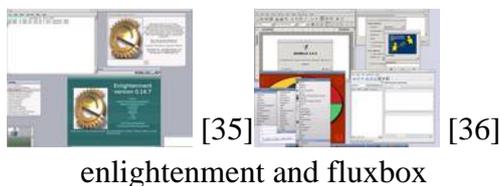
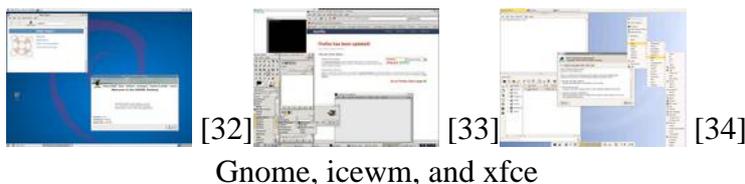
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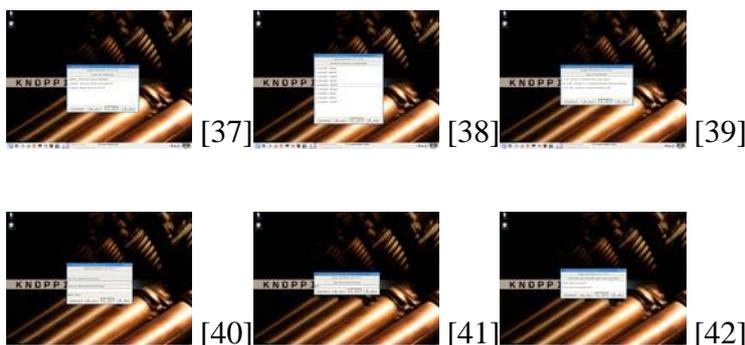
[31]

Utilities

And of course that's not all. Not only is there about every application in existence included, but also about every window manager/desktop environment. Knoppix comes with KDE, Fluxbox, Openbox, Enlightenment, Gnome, ratpoison, icewm, WindowMaker, xfce, e-gnome, e-kde, and several others.



Knoppix features tools to save your customized session to a removable device or harddrive. But if you prefer something more permanent, Knoppix comes with their much copied hard drive installer. Although I must have overlooked the menu item for it, I was able to start it with the command: `knoppix-installer`. It is a simplified installer only asking a minimum number of configuration questions. It performed well with no negative issues, taking about a half hour to complete. It offers to make a boot floppy at the end as well as installing grub either on the mbr or partition. That seems to be an option that's disappearing from distros these days.



Once installed you can add or remove programs as needed. Knoppix comes with a few methods for installing software, but the most popular is probably Synaptic. If you've never seen Synaptic before, one usually initially needs to set up some repositories of software from which to download, although Knoppix comes with more than a dozen already defined. All that's required is a Reload, Mark for Installation, and Apply. There is also a nice search function if needed. Synaptic is great and always performs well.



I found Knoppix 5.0.1 to be the same familiar Knoppix environment to which I've grown accustomed, yet it's updated with a modern kernel and recent versions of software. It features some nice customized graphics that dress up the desktop somewhat. The wallpaper didn't seem to transfer to the harddrive, and I had to use an included debian background (until I reboot the livedvd and copy the wallpaper manually). I found the menus a bit cluttered with all the entries. In fact, the large size of the menus makes them nearly unusable in enlightenment. In this area, I would like to see a little more eye candy or customizations and better menu organization. Perhaps some sub-subcategories would neatn things up some.

Hardware detection was excellent on the livedvd with most set up automagically including the net connection, but I

found I had to (re)configure my net card and printer after the hard drive install. However, this did not require the use of the commandline, as Knoppix has many nice configuration tools.

The performance of Knoppix was rated as average here, as it's optimized for 486 processors (kernel 386). All developers have to make that choice between the number of architectures supported and speed, and Knoppix's choice is to support more hardware. Stability is a key feature with Knoppix. The only problem encountered was Rosegarden locked the system up so tightly that I had to hit reset. I did encounter one or two other apps that would not open. Otherwise, all other applications functioned as designed. Xine played avis and mpegs out of the box.

All in all, Knoppix is always a winner. It always performs well and is very stable as well as stands above the competition in hardware configuration. The livedvd comes with so many applications, I doubt one would have to bother with a package manager. I think the Knoppix livedvd is a wonderful (rescue and repair) tool to take on the road with you as you never know what you'll need, and with Knoppix you can bet you'll have it. In addition, it'd make a great system for newcomers with which to start so they can sample all the fantastic software found in the world of linux and open source without having to decipher the sometimes confusing names and purposes to install separately. It could also be a wise choice for old-timers who might be getting bored (or annoyed) with their same ole favorites as a means to sample others and find replacements. Or, last but not least, Knoppix is perfect for that person who just has to have everything (you know who you are). Whatever the need, Knoppix can fill it. Everybody needs a copy of Knoppix.

Handy Links:

- [Knoppix Homepage](#) [46] for info or downloads.
- [Professionally Crafted DVD for only \\$5.99](#) [47].
- [Screenshot Gallery](#) [48]



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Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/7357>

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/knop501/desktop1>
- [5] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/knop501/boot>
- [6] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/knop501/boot3>
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- [12] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/knop501/menu4>
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- [46] <http://www.knoppix.org/>
- [47] http://on-disk.com/product_info.php/products_id/112
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