

Kickin the Tires: Taking PC-BSD for a Spin

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[4]PC-BSD [0.6 was released](#) [5] yesterday, May 01, and I decided to take it for a test drive. With no prior bsd or unix experience, I had PC-BSD booted and taking screenshots in less than an hour¹. I wish I could say it was because "I'm just *that* good!", but no, PC-BSD made it *that* easy.

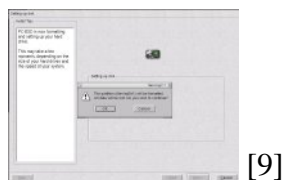
Based on FreeBSD, according to their [site](#) [6], "PC-BSD has as its goals to be an easy to install and use desktop OS, which is built on the FreeBSD operating system. To accomplish this, it currently has a graphical installation, which will enable even UNIX novices to easily install and get it running. It will also come with KDE pre-built, so that the desktop can be used immediately. Currently in development is a graphical software installation program, which will make installing pre-built software as easy as other popular operating systems."

I believe they are well on their way. The install was easy and went smoothly. I believe it consisted of seven whole steps. The install cdrom reminds me almost of a livedcd in that it boots first to a functional fluxbox desktop.



[7]

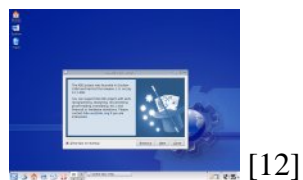
Then it starts the actual installer by giving you first a choice of installation location and boot loader preference then precedes to format and install the PC-BSD operating system.



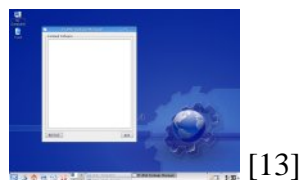
After it completes the installation phase it prompts you to make a root password and regular user with password.



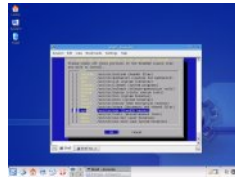
That was easy enough. You are finished. Once you click "Finish," it reboots into a kdm graphical login. After login, you are greeted by KDE 3.4.0. It appears to be a complete and fully functioning KDE desktop. It seems fast and fairly stable. I say fairly since konqueror crashed a couple of times, but that was the only issue encountered.



This new version includes a package and program installer. I tried to use it, but all I saw in the menu was a package remover and it didn't seem to function. It sat there for 20 minutes before I decided it wasn't doing anything.



Have no fear, sysinstall was included. I was able to install the kernel source with little difficulty using sysinstall and was soon on my way to the [nvidia website](#) [14] to see if they had FreeBSD drivers.



[15]

Yes, nvidia does have FreeBSD drivers for their graphics cards and the install wasn't much different than the Linux drivers used to be before they started including an installer. Tar, make install, and vi was all that was needed. Nvidia took care of listing the module to be loaded upon boot.



[16]



[17]

What was new in 0.6? According to the [changelog](#) [18]:

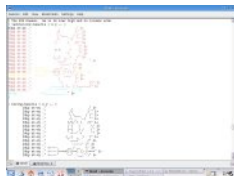
- * Create beta version of PC-BSD Program Manager.
- * Address issues related to systems with dual-drives, and setting up MBR.
- * Fix how installer sees free space for partitioning.
- * Added confirmation dialog to the "cancel" button in installation program.
- * Gave users permission to mount CD's as non-root.
- * Created CD device icon within KDE.
- * Integrate PC-BSD package manager into desktop.
- * Created PC-BSD Program installer.
- * Created PC-BSD Package Creator.
- * .pbi extension integrated into KDE desktop.
- * Created "My Computer" icon.
- * Populated "My Computer" with hard disk devices and CD's.
- * Auto-Hide Fluxbox taskbar during install

As previously stated I could not seem to do much with the package manager at this stage in development and I noticed the version number didn't change on the boot/login screens or kcontrol. For beta software though, they have done a great job.

I looked around PC-BSD for quite a while. Some familiar tools were included and some were not. Some were ported and available to install, and some were not. But if you are the type who can do everything from a graphical environment, then chances are you will never notice the difference between this BSD clone and Linux. Being graphically challenged, I had to consult the FreeBSD [online documentation](#) [19] they linked to for even some of the simple tasks such as updatedb and where to even look for the kernel. It's in /usr/src/sys. PC-BSD provides some support [faqs](#) [20] and a [forum](#) [21] as well. My point being, there are plenty of resources as the docs seem very

complete and easy to understand, and then there are other venues. So, there's really no reason not to try this operating system.

PC-BSD must be commended for all their hard work in providing the community such an easy way to get FreeBSD installed on our computers. Considering this is only the 3rd beta installment, I am highly impressed. I will be following the development of this os as it continues to mature. I can't congratulate them enough.



[22]

There are plenty more screenshots in the [Tuxgallery](#) [23] as well.

1. Given that I did [mention](#) [24] some difficulties yesterday, I think it's only fair to state that I take full responsibility for those. Upon install and needing to install kernel sources, I loaded up on ports and packages from a FreeBSD mirror. The system encountered some booting issues as a result. <shrugs>

[Reviews BSD -s](#)

Source URL: <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/804>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/101>
- [2] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/115>
- [3] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/102>
- [4] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/desktop>
- [5] <http://www.pcbsd.org/>
- [6] <http://www.pcbsd.org/about.html#overview>
- [7] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/install01>
- [8] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/install03>
- [9] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/install04>
- [10] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/install05>
- [11] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/install06>
- [12] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/start>
- [13] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/pcbsdpackmgr>
- [14] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/www.nvidia.com>
- [15] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/kernelsource2>
- [16] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/nvidia>
- [17] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/nvidia4>
- [18] <http://www.pcbsd.org/changelog.html>
- [19] http://www.freebsd.org/doc/en_US.ISO8859-1/books/handbook/index.html
- [20] <http://www.pcbsd.org/suppfaq.html>
- [21] http://sourceforge.net/forum/?group_id=136076
- [22] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD/bootbeastie>
- [23] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/PC-BSD>
- [24] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/789>