

SimplyMEPIS 6.0 - What Happened?

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Created 28/07/2006 - 8:40am

Submitted by srlinuxx on Friday 28th of July 2006 08:40:39 AM Filed under [Linux](#) [1] [Reviews](#) [2] [-s](#) [3]



[4]The highly anticipated SimplyMEPIS 6.0 was released on July 22. I'd been following the developmental cycle loosely by testing [Alpha 1](#) [5] and [RC1](#) [6] and being rather impressed with them, I had been quite anxious to test the final release.

This is the first Mepis release to incorporate Ubuntu packages. Where it might not be readily visible on the surface, it is more than obvious when perusing the package manager. There are a few other telltail signs here and there, but basically SimplyMEPIS 6.0 looks like a natural evolution of earlier releases.

In the press release, Warren Woodford stated, "Converting MEPIS to the Ubuntu pool while incorporating the latest Open Source software advances has taken several months, but it's been worth the effort. This appears to be the best version of SimplyMEPIS to date."

Tuxmachines will agree with that - for the most part. SimplyMEPIS has always been a good distribution. It was always stable, fast, and chocked full of applications. Many times SimplyMEPIS was one of the distros I recommended when asked. However, seems that I experienced quite a few more glitches with this release than ever in the past - even including developmental releases.

The boot process has remained consistant over this development cycle and one can log into the KDE 3.5.3 desktop as 'demo' with the password 'demo'. This release the desktop is bit less cluttered than in previous versions. The once overcrowded menus are now slimmed and trimmed, while still leaving some of the older structure and many additional applications accessible through the All Applications heading. Under the other logical headings one can find some of the most popular applications for those more common tasks. The Mepis Old OS Center is now gone from the menu and

now we are giving simply a choice of System Configuration (Settings). Clicking on System Configuration brings up a new settings dialog containing all the same headings found in the KDE Control Center. Clicking on those heading brings up the corresponding KDE module in its own window. I'm not sure I see the advantage of this, but the old kcontrol is in the "All Applications" menu.



In the panel we still find the distinctive kaquarium applet. To me this has become a 'trademark' of sorts distinguishing SimplyMEPIS from the rest. I know of no other distro so enamored with kaquarium that it retains its place of honor in the panel from release to release. Most don't even include it at all.

Elsewhere in the panel one finds kweather and several other utilities and applets in the systray. Changing the kweather configuration through the graphical front-end for my area did not result in displaying the weather for my area. It continued to display the weather for Morgantown, WV.

On the other end of the panel beside the quick launcher is a software update reminder applet ...thingy. Upon clicking on it, Synaptic package manager opens. If updates are available, a numerical indicator signals how many. Seemed here that in order for the applet to show the updates, I needed to reload the sources and close Synaptic. At that point the indicator changed appearance and the number of updates replaced the zero. Then after installing the updates, the indicator didn't change back to zero until opening and closing Synaptic again. I think this update applet indicator thingy is a wonderful addition, but if my install is typical, it still needs a bit of refining.



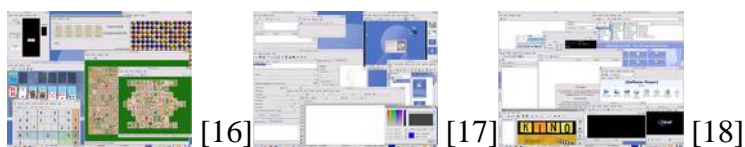
Another quirk found on the desktop was the appearance of a second floppy icon named "Floppy Drive" when mounting another partition, instead of a hard drive indicator. When clicking on it, it stated that /dev/fd0 could not be read. Inserting a removable USB thumb drive resulted in the correct icon with correct path to the device.

Yet another little issue occurred during the install of the system from the live cd. I chose 'custom install on existing partitions' as usual, but the formatting tool kept erroring out and sending me back to step 1. I had chosen to install 6.0 on my /dev/hda15 where 6.0rc1 was installed at the time and designated /dev/hda11 as swap. The next step confirms that you would like those partitions formatted and after agreeing, this is where mine shot the error that it could not complete the format. I changed filesystem type from ext3 to reiser and back with no better results, then finally I left swap at 'no swap or already partitioned' (whatever the exact wording was), and then the install proceeded. I'm not sure what the problem was, perhaps the swap was being used by the live cd. However, when I tried clicking 'no' on the confirmation screen when asked about formatting swap it should have bypassed the error. Again I was sent back to step 1. However, leaving as 'no swap' didn't stop the swap partition configuration from showing up in the /etc/fstab of the install system. All in all, it wasn't a big deal, but it did give the impression that something was amiss. Under the same circumstances, a new prospective user might have given up.



The last three little small problems encountered concerned individual applications. Those were Kwave Sound Editor wouldn't open at all, the media players wouldn't play media, and the webcam application didn't see my old usb

webcam. Not many systems recognize or will work with that old webcam, but previously I could count on SimplyMEPIS to be the one that would. As far as the media players, kmplayer wouldn't open anything and kaffine played the first file attempted, which was an avi. But subsequent tries (first mpgs then avis again) resulted in segfaults.



Otherwise the system performed very well. 🍷

For less negative sounding coverage, see the **Related Links:**

- [Screenshots](#) [25]
- [6.0 Alpha 1](#) [5]
- [6.0 RC1](#) [6]

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