

PCLinuxOS 0.93a MiniMe

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[5]Texstar and the Ripper Gang [released](#) [6] their PCLinuxOS 0.93a MiniMe yesterday and [early reports](#) [7] are quite positive. This installable livecd weighs in at a 300 MB download and resulting system of 1.3 GB. It's a slimmed trimmed down version of PCLinuxOS which gives the user the opportunity to install the packages they want and make the system their very own.

New graphics, a great new kernel, and lots and lots of updates equal a wonderful offering. The first new aspect noticed is the boot screen. PCLinuxOS now uses grub to feature many new boot options. One of these is the copy2ram feature where it copies the cd to memory and runs from there. You can pull the cd out of the drive and continue to use the computer. It runs very fast from memory because it doesn't have to access the cd anymore.

Once booted, PCLOS features a tranquil wallpaper of rolling hills in what appears to be mid-west farmland on a wonderful summer day. Other features include a transparent panel, logically structured menus, and beautiful fonts. I'd almost dare say that PCLinuxOS has the most beautiful fonts in the biz. This release we are treated to Tango icons and the very lovely Chameleon-Pearl cursor theme.

The menus are sparsely populated in the MiniMe system just as one might expect. It has a few applications and several tools. Of course one finds the harddrive installer, Synaptic software manager, and the PCLinuxOS Control Center. With

these tools, one builds the system they want.

Also included is this really great system information tool. Appropriately named PCLinuxOS Info Tool, it probes your system and renders the output in html opened in the default browser. I was surprised by all the information gathered. It lists everything from hardware info and specs, OS specifics like packages installed, services, kernel configuration & module info, X information, to running processes. That's really just an abbreviated list of all it includes. What a wonderful tool. Remembering all of the individual commands to glean this information can be daunting even for the geekiest amongst us, and now we don't have to try. It lists some output that I don't even know the command for. This tool was contributed by Ivan Ikerekes and is a modification of the [cfg2html package](#) [8]. Ivan says, "It works with almost any unix variant. We are using it extensively at my workplace, to gather info every day on about 120 Solaris, AIX, HP-UX, and True64 servers, and putting all the gathered info in a webpage. I made slight modification for PCLinuxOS, but basically only the icon and the calling sequence is slightly different." I love this tool! What a wonderful addition.



The new harddrive installer is a modified version of Mandriva's livecd-install. It was modified primarily to work with mklivecd, but also includes code contributed by Ivan Ikerekes and Texstar. One of the main reasons for the switch was for a faster install. Now an install can be completed in matter of a very few minutes. Another reason is, "The old installer was finicky and would sometimes bail out before the user was able to copy the files over to the hard drive," says Tex.

Like the previous installer, it's all straight forward, user-friendly, and easy. It walks the user through configuration by asking a few simple questions aided by graphics, hints, and instructions. Texstar adds, "Another improvement is you can set up your partitions any way you want, it can resize windows partition or even take over the entire drive. The old installer had very limited features and didn't give you very many options. The new installer gives you a choice of grub or lilo. The old installer only had lilo."

Texstar tell us about their work on the installer,

We added the screens to give the user a chance to cancel out both the format and the install in case they might have made a mistake.

We added additional code to set up the partitions for you in /etc/fstab for your other partitions if you don't enter them when setting up your install parititons.

We added additional code to install to either normal hard drive or usb hard drive and depending on what you select a custom initrd is made.

We fixed the border size of the window because the Mandriva version left the window too small and the user couldn't see the drop down arrow for selecting either lilo or grub from the bootloader menu.

We added starting of standard services on the harddrive install that isnt required on the livecd such as cron, anacron, syslog and dkms.

We added alsactl store to store the users sound settings so they dont come up mute when booting from the hd install.

We added set root account and user account in the installer instead of it coming up after first boot.

We fixed the icon the user selects from the install to show up properly on the kdm menu.



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After rebooting into your new system, it's time to fire-up Synaptic and install the rest of your software. As it is, one had a really light KDE. It does include konqueror, kate, kwrite, and kcontrol and this may be all the KDE some folks desire. But if you want all or other parts of KDE, it can easily be installed effortlessly through Synaptic. Tex has split his KDE rpms into individual rpms for each component to further the user refinement of their system. So now, you can install just the parts of KDE you actually want and use. If you prefer, there is a meta package called KDE2 that installs the whole of KDE. That was my choice. It entailed 177 packages, but they downloaded and installed in an impressively short period of time. The resulting KDE desktop was complete, functional, and stable.

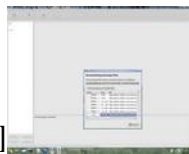
For those that prefer another desktop environment, Texstar has done the same for Gnome. Available are the individual packages or a meta-package called gnome2. Also available are xfce4 and fluxbox.

Don't forget your other packages. For me, the first things installed after kde2 was Firefox, OpenOffice.org, and xawtv.

One other element of PCLinuxOS that screams to be highlighted is the "dkms nvidia driver setup from synaptic. It will install, tell you to close out programs then it will update xorg.conf and restart the desktop. It doesn't get much easier than that."



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The other major component of PCLinuxOS is their beautiful PCLinuxOS Control Center. It too is included in MiniMe to aid the user in refining the configuration of their system. It still includes modules for installing a bootloader, defining mount points, configuring hardware, setting up a firewall or file shares, setting up network connections or groupware and ldap services, and much more. Tex states, "We updated the video monitor setup code for better detection but most of the other code was based on the latest stable release of it from [mandriva] and modified to work with pclinixos."



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Texstar posted, "Whats New: Everything! MiniMe comes with the 2.6.16.27 kernel, a basic KDE 3.5.3 desktop (kdebase and kdelibs), CD Installer, USB Key Disk Setup, Synaptic Software Manager and Control Center."

Some RPM highlights include:

- gcc-3.3.1-2mdk
- kernel-livecd-2.6.16.27.tex1.lve-1-1tex
- xorg-x11-6.9.0-57.pclo2005.mde
- kdebase-3.5.3-2tex

- gimp-2.2.11-2tex
- Full [RPMList Here](#) [21].
- Full Junior RPMList [HERE](#) [22].
- Full BigDaddy RPMList [HERE](#) [23].

Texstar and his team of developers are currently working on a full-sized traditional release featuring all the great applications and beauty PCLOS is famous for. Release dates are unset, but we can probably expect it in the coming weeks.

I'm quite pleased with this latest release from Tex and the gang. It was faster and more efficient. Hardware detection was well above average. All my hardware worked with no effort from me except that one tv card that no Linux distribution configures exactly right. It detected my new printer and configured it automatically upon first boot. The system was very stable with no crashes or apps that wouldn't open. PCLinuxOS continues its tradition of being one of the most beautiful offerings available and its new font rendering is unparalleled.

For those with PASS access, your password is still good for this release. For those without PASS access, you can get yours [HERE](#) [24]. PASS = Premium Access System Server - provides almost unlimited bandwidth and storage! All new software packages appear on this server first.

[More Screenshots](#) [25].

[PCLOS Homepage](#) [26].

[Downloads](#) [27].

[0.93a Full Edition Coverage](#) [28].

This just in:

Errata: Xorg Composite enabled by default.

Please go into the PCLinuxOS Control Center -> Hardware -> Configure Basic Video Settings and click the box Options.

Uncheck the box that says: Enable Translucency (Composite Extension)

Click Ok, Click Quit

Log out and back in again for new setting to take effect.

Solves:

ATI 3D fglrx slow GLX, Nvidia 3D slow GLX.

Solves Firefox crashing on websites with Flash content with some video cards.



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[PCLOS Interviews Reviews -s](#)

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- [8] <http://www.cfg2html.com>
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