PCLinuxOS 0.93a - The Full Monty

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[4]The PCLinuxOS 0.93a Full Edition was quietly released yesterday and is the equivalent of PCLinuxOS releases of the past several years. They have recently been releasing scaled down versions to accomodate other tastes and desires, but many folks were looking and waiting for the fully loaded edition. Weighing in at 685 MB, Texstar referred it as the "Full Monty." Its code name has been "Big Daddy." Whatever the name, I think you'll call it home.

Besides the full range of system tools and utilities, this full edition release of PCLOS contains a wide variety of open source applications to accomplish most any common computing task. From gaming to multimedia to networking to office, this is a complete system. If something you'd like is not in the menu, chances are very high it's in the software repository. It's quite amazing the list of applications Texstar has compiled and made available. Although the main ibiblio server is suffering some hardware failure at present, the PASS server seems more responsive than ever. In addition, software is always updated and added to PASS first. Please see this page [5] for information on gaining access to the Premium Access Software Server respository.

As Tex said [6], "The full edition comes with Kernel 2.6.16.27, KDE 3.5.3, Open Office, Firefox, Thunderbird and Nvu. Digikam, Gimp and Gqview for your digital photo needs. Amarok, Audacity and Audio Creator for your digital music needs. Frostwire, bittorrent and gftp for file transfers and p2p file sharing. Mplayer and Kaffeine for video viewing. (libdvdcss2 required for dvd encrypted playback). Kopete and Xchat for online chatting. Blogging and podcast software also included. PCLinuxOS Big Daddy is the full monty!"

In our earlier article [7] we looked at some of the newest features and improvements to this version of PCLOS, some in the lead developers own words. We covered the basics such as the installer [8], the PCLOS Control Center [9], Synaptic [10]

, new dkms nvidia drivers [11], and the new wonderful PCLinuxOS Info Tool [12].

Please refer to the MiniMe article [7] for full information, but some of the highlights include:

- [13]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. This reviewer was able to complete the install of the full version software components in seven 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.

- [14]One major component of PCLinuxOS is their beautiful PCLinuxOS Control Center. It too is included in MiniMe, Junior, and Big Daddy 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 pclinuxos."

- [15]Tex has split his GNOME packages into individual rpms for each component and made this available in the software repositories to further the user refinement of their system. So now, you can install just the parts of GNOME you actually want and use. If you prefer, there is a meta package called GNOME2 that installs the whole of GNOME. XFCE is also available. One just right clicks the application of choice, clicks on 'mark for installation,' and clicks the big Apply button at the top.

- Due to varying chipsets and possible legalities, PCLinuxOS no longer ships with the nvidia and ati drivers, but they are available. One other element of PCLOS 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 doesnt get much easier than that." This process worked flawlessly here, and I was able to play any 3D game I desired including premium games such as Doom3 and Quake4.

- [16]The 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 and more. What a wonderful tool.

It wouldn't be a full version without all the apps. This version not only includes all those application, but also various

plugins for further enjoyment. Located in our Networking menu is of course the most popular catagory of WWW. Under the WWW heading we find our web surfing tools [17]. PCLOS 0.93a ships with Opera, Firefox, and Konqueror. The fonts are gorgeous in each and every one of them. Not only that, they are complete with those pesky plugins we love to hate. A necessity on today's web, we can't live without 'em, but we hate to install 'em. PCLOS does the work for us. They worked wonderfully as well. Java, flash, and video support were the main components tested here, and what a nice little touch they are. Sorry the video didn't show up in the screenshots, but it was playing complete with stereo surround sound here.

 [18] [19] [20]

Speaking of video, there is another exciting development this release. To use Tex's own words, "The new mplayer now can play various MS media formats without the need for win32-codecs. This is a good step forward in being able to provide a good multimedia experience on Linux without having to resort to questionable codecs." And I found mplayer to work as good as it always did with the commonly downloaded video formats. From avis to bins to mpegs, I had no problems here.

 [21] [22] [23]

Back by popular demand is the full suite of OpenOffice.org. PCLOS Big Daddy ships with the complete version 2.0.3. Is it just me, or does this thing seem to open faster than ever? My first OpenOffice.org app of oowriter opened in 2 or 3 seconds here and then the others opened almost instantaneously. ...And gorgeous gorgeous fonts! How does Tex do it? There are plenty of other office applications and lighter editors included as well.

 [24] [25]

Some of the other networking tools include irc chat clients, file transfer applications, remote access tools, instant messaging and mail and newgroup apps. These include KSirc, XChat, Frostwire, BitTorrent, Kopete, Thunderbird, gPodder and many others.

 [26] [27] [28]

There are many applications for graphic and sound enjoyment, enhancement, manipulation as well. These include The Gimp, ShowFoto, Wink, GQview, xmms, Amarok, Audacity, soundKonverter, StreamTuner, and lots more. Don't forget, if what you desire is not in the menu, check the software repositories. I even saw Blender in the repo.

 [29] [30]

PCLOS ships with KDE 3.5.3 as its main desktop environment, but for those wishing a lighter desktop, Fluxbox is available as well. Tex adds the extra touch of including the same wallpaper in Fluxbox as we find in KDE, which is nice. Very few distros bother to dress up their secondary desktop at all. The menus are complete with entries for all the applications as well. This is a wonderful addition for us Fluxbox fans. Gnome and Xfce are available through synaptic from the software repositories.

 [31]   [32]   [33]

Hardware detection and support is always top form in PCLOS. Every piece of hardware I had [34] was detected and autoconfigured here (except that one tvcard that always needs a minor adjustment in any linux tested). My old webcam even worked to some extent here. The picture was a bit snowy, but this was the first life I'd seen out of it since before Mepis switched its code base. I don't have any exotic hardware or special needs (other than that tvcard), but if you need to do some configuring or adjusting, there are tools for that as well. There are plenty of tools for all manner of system configuration included in and out of the PCLinuxOS Control Center.

 [35]   [36]

As in releases past, PCLinuxOS is a complete and wonderful system. It is beautiful and functional at install, but it also provides a means for anyone to customize PCLOS into their own nirvana. Between the KDE and PCLOS Control Centers and Synaptic, there isn't much one can envision that they can't do. This might be said for many distros to varying lesser degrees, but none make it easier. None make it more fun and enjoyable.

What's next for Team PCLOS? Tex says, "We'll provide updates to the existing code base but start on the new code base with updated glibc, gcc and work our way up."

Related Links:

- Download or Purchase Professionally Crafted CDs [37].
- Donate for PASS Access [5].
- Community Help and Chat Forum [38].
- Main Screenshot Gallery [39].
- Big Daddy Subset [40].
- Full MiniMe RPMList [41].
- Full Junior RPMList [42].
- Full BigDaddy RPMList [43].

 [44]

PCLOS Reviews -s

Links:

[1] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/107

[2] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/101

[3] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/102

[4] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/desktop

[5] http://www.pclinuxos.com/page.php?1

[6] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/9093

[7] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8741

[8] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8741#installer

[9] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8741#pcc

[10] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8741#synaptic

[11] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8741#dkmsnvidia

[12] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8741#infotool

[13] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93amm/installer4

[14] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93amm/pcc2

[15] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93amm/synaptic1

[16] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93amm/pcinfotool

[17] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/browsers

[18] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/www

[19] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/java

[20] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/flash

[21] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/video

[22] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/video2

[23] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/video3

[24] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/OOo

[25] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/miscoffice

[26] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/filetrans

[27] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/remacc

[28] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/m&m

[29] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/graphics

[30] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/sound

[31] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/fluxbox

[32] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/fluxbox1

[33] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/fluxbox2

[34] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8776

[35] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/hwconfig

[36] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/miscconfig

[37] http://www.pclinuxos.com/page.php?7

[38] http://www.pclinuxos.com/forum/index.php

[39] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93amm

[40] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd

[41] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8740

[42] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/8811

[43] http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/9115

[44] http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/pclos93abd/ltr