

Ubuntu: Needs more QA

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I have been using Ubuntu extensively since 5.10. There are a lot of things I like about it, however here I will spend a few words about one thing that can definitively be improved: Quality Assurance. There are plenty of example of applications that are generally working but shows some bugs that are long since waiting to be fixed. Some are present in all releases, other in only the latests. I am not talking about minor bugs either. Here some:

- ACPI (resume, suspend) is half-broken in many Centrino based laptops, which resume/suspend only at rare times. Very well documented bug, present in Edgy. People trying out Ubuntu on their new laptop are upsettly turned off by this.
- System freeze when using ATI radeon 7000. It affects both Dapper and Edgy. A fix for Edgy is available, no sign for one in Dapper. Considering that Dapper offers Long Time Support, I would expect this bug to be fixed by now (it's been around since early 2005). Instead if you need a long time supported release and you use this graphic card (like my Poweredge server), Dapper just doesn't work. Nice.
- VNC server 4 does not work in edgy. It is waiting for a trivial patch to be made upstream. While it works in Dapper, because of the change in fonts location in Edgy, it is badly broken in Edgy. For people using this tool to control remote machines we have to rely on older and slower versions of VNC.

You may say that those are really minor bugs, and I may agree. However they show not a great deal of care in quality assurance. Lots of resources are spent in improving the user interface, which is a good thing. However I often have the feeling that Canonical is going after new features, without spending too much time producing a really solid release. I am not talking about exotic hardware, but pretty straightforward mainstream machines. Am I wrong?

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