Review: Mageia 8

By *Roy Schestowitz*
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Mageia 8 is the latest version of this community distribution which can trace its roots back to Mandrake Linux. Like its ancestor, Mageia mostly focuses on offering a polished desktop experience with user friendly configuration tools. The latest release has a fairly conservative list of new features. Apart from the usual collection of package upgrades, Mageia provides faster processing of package data due to a change in compression technologies and migrates almost all packages from Python 2 to Python 3. Some additional work has been done to support the ARM architectures, though install media isn't available yet for ARM platforms.

We can download install media for 32-bit (x86) and 64-bit (x86_64) computers. Mageia offers several download options, including a large install ISO (4.2GB), live desktop flavours for KDE Plasma (3.4GB), GNOME (3.0GB), and Xfce (2.8GB). There are also network install options available in free and non-free firmware flavours. Most of the download options are available in 32-bit and 64-bit builds, though the live media for GNOME and Plasma are both 64-bit only while Xfce builds are provided for both architectures.

I was originally heading out for a vacation when Mageia 8 was released and so another DistroWatch contributor offered to review the distribution. However, they ran into issues installing Mageia, then getting the distribution to boot. After a few days they reported the operating system would start, but there were several remaining issues, including trouble connection to USB devices and the touchpad on their laptop wouldn't function while booted into Mageia. Given they did not have any success with the distribution, they passed it back to me and I resolved to review it once I finished playing with Void, a project I had just installed.

I decided to download the live Plasma edition for 64-bit machines. Booting from the live media brings up a menu offering to boot the live distribution or install Mageia. Taking the default live option brings up a series of graphical configuration screens. These screens walk us through selecting our preferred language from a list, accepting the project's license, picking our time zone, and confirming the keyboard's layout.

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