

OpenLab: The other African distribution

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Living in Ubuntu's shadow



Ubuntu is the Linux media darling of the moment. Mark Shuttleworth, dot-com millionaire, space tourist, philanthropist and Open Source evangelist seems to have hit the right keys in terms of promoting Ubuntu. At Distrowatch.com, Ubuntu has been the most popular distribution for 12 months, an eternity in this business. It gets 1000 hits more daily than any other. On the other hand, OpenLab, South Africa's other representative in the Linux distribution list, ranks in at 64 in this past month's polling. Is the difference in rank just a result of Ubuntu's professional PR? Not entirely. Ubuntu is professional in all ways. With a big budget provided by Shuttleworth, it is an attempt to bring Debian, the most carefully crafted Linux distribution, to the masses. And it has been extremely successful. And what about bringing the second most carefully crafted and venerable Linux distribution, Slackware, to the masses? You have a whole-hearted attempt to do this with OpenLab, sans the astronaut's deep pockets.

OpenLab has the potential to do for Slackware what Ubuntu did for Debian. I see a lot of potential in this other distribution from Africa.

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