

# Ultima Linux: Third Time's a Charm?

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Created 29/01/2006 - 5:54pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Sunday 29th of January 2006 05:54:34 PM Filed under [Linux](#) [1] [Reviews](#) [2] [-s](#) [3]



[4]New release Ultima Linux 8 [was announced](#) [5] this morning and we thought we'd try again. Given our past track record with Ultima, we were a bit leary. To quote [the Ultima site](#) [6], "Ultima Linux is a free distribution of the Linux operating system designed for stability, ease of use, and lots of penguin eye-candy. With Ultima Linux, you get a complete desktop system with everything you've come to expect from a computer: Web browsing, e-mail, word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, image manipulation, and multimedia, for starters - absolutely free." Well, we're hoping the "third time's a charm," or is it going to be "three strikes you're out?"

Ultima Linux is based on slackware and derivatives, and it's quite evident from the start. The installer is a familiar Slackware installer with several enhancements. One of the most noticeable is the added software groups available for install. These include kernel 2.6, OpenOffice.org and games. For my install I chose almost all the groups and then "Full." Ultima Linux is available in a 2 disc set, and one is prompted during the install for the 2nd cd. After the system/software installation phase, one is given the opportunity to set up some key system configurations like root password, hostname, net preferences and startup services. After reboot, one is greeted by a graphical user login.

From that login one can choose from a variety of desktop environments. Among the available are windowmaker, fluxbox, xfce4, E, and KDE. Most are in their default state, but some like KDE, xfce4 and E have graphical configurations from which to customize. In testing of all these offerings, we found each to be stable and high performing. I'm sure one can meet your needs. If one looks around in /usr/share they will find an ultima-artwork directory that contains a great looking original background. I would have liked to have seen this set as default in perhaps all the desktops.



Application are in the mid-range of abundance. Besides just about the full compliment of KDE applications, there are several browsers, a chat and im message client, some ftp apps, email clients, office tools, image/graphic programs, and many many games. There were just too many games to screenshoot. I was surprised to see the wide choice in web browsers. This is one of the few distros to ship with [Flock](#) [12]. Thunderbird and mutt are available as and alternative to kmail/contact, xsane and gaim is included as well as [the gimp](#) [13]. OpenOffice components are included as well as abiword and koffice. Multimedia was only neglected in the area of a tv application, and technically one can use mplayer for that from the commandline. All in all, it was quite an impressive array of applications.

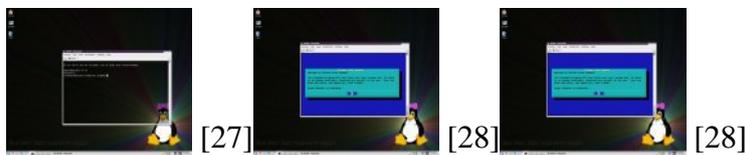


Mplayer functioned wonderfully, playing any file I asked. Browser plugins were 2 for 3, in that java and flash worked, but no movie plugin was functional.



Ultima Linux is a modern up-to-date system. Kernel 2.6.14.6 can be chosen at install and the system features X Window System Version 6.9.0 and gcc (GCC) 3.4.5.

One of the key features of Ultima Linux is the [ulupdate](#) [26] tool. Written by Martin Ultima, it is a system update utility. This tool enables the user to easily keep their system updated with the latest bug and security updates. It's easy to use, just type u-l-u-p-d-a-t-e on a commandline as root and off it goes, connecting to an ultima repository to check for updates. If some are available it will update them. If not, it will state as much and exit. This tool is just an updater. For initial package installation, installpkg has been retained. In keeping with the spirit of Slackware, simplicity rulez.



So, in conclusion, third time's a charm here. Ultima Linux has evolved into a wonderfully stable slack-based system featuring lots of applications, exceptional performance, and good hardware detection. The overall appearance could still use a bit of tweaking, but the default fonts are greatly improved and the system now includes more ttf choices. It was a pleasure testing Ultima Linux this go 'round and we wish Martin continued success with future releases. I would almost bet if you like Slack, you'll love Ultima.

For more information, see the [Features page](#). [29] Please consult the [Changelog](#) [30] for what's new this release. More screenshots are available in [the gallery](#) [31].



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[30] <http://ultimapcs.dyndns.org/ultimalinux/changelog.html?grep2=release>

[31] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/ultima8>

[32] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/gallery/ultima8/byebye>