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SUSE 10.1 Beta 4 Report

By *srlinuxx*
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[4]Beta 4 finally made onto servers yesterday, and onto my machine today. It took some doing, I admit, but I have it installed. I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, and rather than make you wait til the end, I'll state up-front that there is no xgl included. Although rumor had it that was one of the reasons for the delay, the rpm packages needed are not included on the 5 cd set. They are still available from the factory tree repository, but don't expect any fancy screenshots for this "as installed" report.

In fact, don't expect a whole lot of screenshots at all. Very little has changed since beta 3 in the appearance of SUSE 10.1. Beta 3 [5] sported lots of new images and backgrounds, but beta 4 is just sporting breakage. (j/k/a)

Another reason for the delay in the release of Beta 4 was a new package management system. I'm not sure if the new display during install is a result, but this is where one begins to see some changes from last time. Now the package selection screen is somewhat simplified with the individual packages being hidden by default. One can press the "Details" button and get it back. Another change for at least this release was a warning that developers are aware of breakage and please only file bug reports on the resolver.

On two occasions during the install, I walked away from the computer to come back and find myself at a login screen. The first time occurred during cd 2! Needless to say that wasn't a pretty sight. The second time was during cd 4 and it appeared most of the system was pretty much installed at that point. In both cases, a restart with cd 1 in the drawer allowed me to continue the install. shewww!

One other little goodie during install is now the hostname for your machine is a step all its own right after package installation. Now rather than trying to remember to root around in the networking options to change it, it's offered up

right there for you to change. That's rather nice as I've forgotten a time or two to dig around and change that setting myself.

Another glitch that delayed my install was the "hanging" of searching for 'available kernel modules.' During the hardware summary screen where one can adjust configurations for their hardware, I foolishly decided to input the parameters for my tvcard, as I always do with SUSE and Mdv (as they are the only two with options for it). This time after I chose my card and tuner and clicked "expert settings," it began searching for all the kernel modules pertaining to this task, as it always does. Only this time, it hung for 15 or 20 minutes before I finally gave up and hit reset. Bear in mind this task is usually a 30 second operation. Now naturally this caused a bit of hardware trouble such as having to configure X and sound after first boot.

After install the package management breakage is very apparent from the yast software management suite. Any new media added is not kept and packages are not available to install. The only options in the install software portion is "installed." I suppose one could *remove packages* if they so desired.

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I was aware of issues with beta 4, and in fact, I encountered most of them. Here's an excerpt of a **post from one of the developers**:

"Beta4 is really for the adventurous experts and not for anybody without a good Linux experience:

* The CD 1 needs to remain in the cd drive after installing from it. Do not remove it during the reboot and wait for YaST to request CD 2.

Otherwise the installation of packages from CD 2-5 will fail afterwards.

* Due to the integration of the new package manager which is not complete, note the following non working pieces:

o Only a fresh installation is supported. Update from a previous installation is not working!

o ncurses installation is not supported right now

o Some statistics do not work, e.g. you see "Size of packages to install: 0" - or "Number of packages to install: 0", or "Software: Default system (0)".

o The graphical package manager frontend has only a limited list of "views", currently you get a list of all the packages and can only search in them.

o Only adding of selections works. If you want to remove a selection, remove all packages in that selection and run the resolver manually with the "Check" button.

o Language dependend packages are not handled correctly. This

results in the installation of one package-$lang package but not necessarily the one for the languages asked for.

o It is not possible to abort installation while installing packages.

o Network Installations: smb/cifs does not work, http, nfs and ftp should work.

o There are cases where during a ftp installation from the FACTORY tree packages for the wrong architecture get installed

* The partitioner is broken in some cases which might result in:
o mixed up filesystem types - for example one chooses ext2 and the partition is getting formatted with reiserfs
o creates double or totally obscure entries within the fstab of the system
o makes improper proposals for a standard partitioning

* There are no Release Notes shown - and the download of them fails.

Summing up: The installer is in a rather bad shape, only INSTALLATION is supported - and the partitioner has some regressions as well. The rest of the system should be stable. "

Here's are some highlights from the changelog this time:

++++ NetworkManager:

- Fix VPN GUI dialog when successively editing entries of two or more different VPN types (Novell bug #150854)
- Improve debugging output

++++ audacity:

- Build with portaudio19

++++ gnome-applets:

- Fixed battery -1 minute notice

++++ gnome-session:

- Added MOTD on login, as requested by customer.

++++ kernel-default:

- Disable CONFIG_EFI on x86 since it's broken
- patches.drivers/sata-acpi-check-sata: Fix SATA/PATA checks.
- Update to 2.6.16-rc3-git3:
- usb fixes
- i2c fixes
- cpufreq fixes
- network fixes

- bluetooth fixes
- reiserfs fix
- drm oops fix

++++ metacity:

- Fix dual-head bug

++++ MozillaFirefox:

- modified lockdown patches (#67281, #67282)
- applied set of security patches (#148876)

++++ MozillaThunderbird:

- applied set of security patches

++++ beagle:

- added upstream patch to quit beagled on unknown parameter

++++ bootsplash-theme-SuSE:

- Fix the SLES bootsplash paths

++++ gaim:

- added gnome-keyring-devel to BuildRequires

++++ Full Changelog [9].

Some package highlights include:

- xorg-x11-6.9.0-12.i586.rpm
- kdebase3-3.5.1-22.i586.rpm
- gnome-desktop-2.12.2-6.i586.rpm
- MozillaFirefox-1.5.0.1-9.i586.rpm
- MozillaThunderbird-1.5-12.i586.rpm
- MozillaSunbird-0.2.1-4.i586.rpm
- gaim-1.5.0-29.i586.rpm
- gcc-4.1.0_20060210-3.i586.rpm
- kernel-default-2.6.16_rc3_git3-2.i586.rpm
- Full RPMList [10]

In conclusion, don't bother with this release. There is a lot of breakage and not much new on the surface. I can state without reservation that it'd be best to wait til next beta even for the most adventurous folk who like to test betas. In fact, I'm not sure of the point of this release. The roadmap says that we can expect Beta 5 on the 23 and Beta 6 on March 2. We'll keep ya posted.

Previous coverage:

- 10.1 Beta 3 [11].

- 10.1 Beta 1 [12].
- 10.1 Alpha 4 [13].
- 10.1 Alpha 3 [14].
- 10.1 Alpha 1 [15].
- Few New Screenshots [16]. See Beta 3.
- Beta 3 Screenshots [5].

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