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A Month With Fluxbox - Part 2

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[2]My month with Fluxbox can almost be officially over and it's time to report on my experiences as promised. I wish I had a long list of complaints to file or problems for which I had to find answers or even less than compelling reasons to run back to KDE (i.e. something interesting or controversial to write about). But the truth is, it sat back there serving up my windows and never once gave me reason to even notice it was there. And that's a good thing.

I sat it up in the beginning about the way I wanted it and tweaked it some a week or so later, and have since just been running my applications and doing my thing without any problems. I don't know what I thought I'd have to write about a month later, but what can I say? It managed my windows, displayed a pretty wallpaper and let me layer idesk, fbpager or torsmo ontop. It did what it was supposed to do! It did it efficiently, stably and quickly. I didn't experience the first crash of any sort. Everything was always fast and responsive. It's just been an uneventful month.

I continued to run my kde applications because I like them mainly, have all my mail saved in kde maildirs as well as all my bookmarks are in a konqueror xml file and I like the font rendering in kde applications. So perhaps I had the best of both worlds here this month - my favorite applications sitting on a fast stable window manager.

I guess the question is, do I go back KDE or just stay in Fluxbox? I've pondered this last few days with the added option of trying a different window manager for May. But back to the original question, which is leading up to a comparison of sorts... Now to the outside world this would seem an unfair competition as kde is a full-featured desktop environment. But what you probably don't know about me is that I don't use a lot of those fancy dancy features and extras kde includes. I use the window manager portion to run kontact and konqueror mostly. I like my mplayer that requires X - any X implementation will do, as is the same deal with my games such as Doom3, gimp, and an occasional instant messenger. In addition, I like a monitoring application whether it be gkrellm or torsmo. So point being - Fluxbox does all this as well, and just as well as KDE. I do everything else from the commandline. I don't even use desktop icons in kde, I usually delete them. I just set up idesk for something to show Fluxbox capabilities and "purty up" my screenshots. So, I guess all this to say, I used Fluxbox for a month after using KDE for 5 years, and well, I mean no offense, but I just plain didn't know the difference.

As far as performance, again that would almost seem on the surface as an unfair comparison considering the size and features of each. But as stated I don't use a lot of kde background and extra features, and since kde has performed it's

latest voodoo on 3.4 I'm afraid the only performance difference I could detect was when I first log in and start a kde application under Fluxbox. Those applications did take a few seconds longer to load than they do in KDE the first time - but that's because of having to set up the dcop stuff and load the libraries that would be ready to go under KDE. I suppose this equals out as Flux only takes about 3 or 4 seconds to go from start command to ready desktop and KDE takes about 30. After that first start, they open as fast and function as well as they do in KDE. So, again, I just didn't notice any difference.

Setting up the wallpaper was a little more trouble in Fluxbox because I have to load kuickshow or something to look around in my wallpaper archive to pick one out first, then edit my init file. Too many times a wallpaper looks good on a site or even as you look at it during a kuickshow slideshow, but it doesn't look as great on the desktop as a wallpaper. So, having to change wallpapers a few times could almost be a drag except that Fluxbox has a restart in their menu. One might expect a window manager to crash after doing this a half dozen times or so, but Flux never did.

 [3]So, at the end of the month I have to report that I have nothing to report. There was no clear cut winner or loser here. I love them both. I believe my experience is very personalized and do not dare to say to anyone else they'd notice little or no differences to speak of as well. It's because I'm a commandline junkie that this happened to work out this way for me. I feel like I'm short changing all parties concerned here: KDE, Fluxbox, and my readers. I do feel some attachment to Fluxbox as it started out just a practically empty window and I had to set it all up from scratch. It can almost be described as that same ownership and freedom kinda feeling one gets from running Gentoo or LFS.

So am I going back to KDE?

Eventually I bet I will, especially when a lot of 4.0 stuff starts showing up in cvs. But for now... I think I'm gonna try enlightenment. I've seen some really cool features in screenshots and when I ask about them, I've been told its an enlightenment thing. So, perhaps I'll do a month with enlightenment next. ...if I can tear myself away from Fluxbox.

Reviews

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