

WHIT for January 27th, 2004

Statement

In response to questions and concerns regarding Red Hat's recent announcement of it's discontinuation of the "Red Hat Linux" line. Support for those products previous to RH9, ended in December 2003 and there is a projected end of support for the RH9 release in April 2004.

The purpose of today's whit session is to assist the user community in making informed decisions. CIS will be presenting their findings as a result of weeks long testing of various Linux OS'. These notes are presented to the user community solely as a source of information and is not in anyway meant to persuade or set, a standard. We will be presenting facts as we found them, answering the users questions based on our findings.

CIS will be prepared to offer suggestions based on these findings that we feel best represents the results and the user community needs. Ultimately, the final decision will be up to the individual user.

Debian:

Install recommendations:

1. Text based install.
2. Selecting language and configuring peripherals.
3. Keep the partitions from RHx install if it exists, including swap.
4. Select "NO" to the 'bad block scan'
5. Select "YES" to 'secure swap' and initialize the swap partition.
6. NOTE: there are no default partition sizes. You the installer will have to select the partition sizes.
7. Select ext3 for the journal (recommended).
8. This will overwrite the existing linux OS, or install to a different partition as a new install keeping the previous OS intact.

Issues:

1. Doesn't auto detect eth0 cards
2. Has difficulty with non standard hardware, i.e; raid cards.
3. Still need to install most packages after base install.
4. The packages not installed with base install are on the cd's distributed. (see notes below)
5. The packages can be installed simutaneously from http with one or more ftp sites.
6. Select xdriver after the package installs complete.

As for applications such as Matlab, Latex, Emacs, GMT, Netcdf and others, we found no problems installing and configuring them to work.

Notes:

It isn't that Debian "has difficulty" with RAID cards, you just need to have a special installer. For instance, I have an installer for the Dell PowerEdge server systems (like outbox) which boots and installs RAID as cleanly as you could wish.

See: <http://linux.dell.com/distributions.shtml>

Also in Debian, iNetCDF and GMT are both available as Debian packages in apt -- so you do not need to install them from source.

Gentoo v 1.4 for Pentium IV

Initial install test results:

1. Asks for the installer to type in the selection for install i.e; http. (http was our selection)
2. Follow install instructions.
3. The install auto detects packages from previous Linux OS install, (RH9 in our case) and updates the packages as needed.
4. Install was slow.
5. Asked us to partition a disk manually and un-tar files onto it. (Very manual! It isn't really an installer, it's sort of an installation _shell_ that lets you install by copying files)

We aborted the install and moved on to the next OS test.

Fedora Core 1

Install Notes and Recommendations:

1. A “very” Red Hat like install menu.
2. Install probes monitor type and video card.
3. Fedore then moves into “X” for a GUI install.
4. In our case we selected “upgrade” (from RH9)
5. Fedora Core requires the selection for updating the boot loader.
6. Updates after install completes is very RH like.

Issues:

1. Still dependent on Apt for updates to packages.
2. Ran apt and apt get for updates.
3. There were warnings issued, please follow instructions.
4. Some minor tweakings requirred: “cp” the old OS version name (i.e.; rpm-pkg.sources.list to something like rpm-pkg.sources.list.RH9) then move the new sources list to rpm-pkg.sources.list
5. run apt-get again then apt-get -f install.

You should be all set with the install.

As for applications such as Matlab. Latex, Emacs, GMT, Netcdf and others, we found no problems installing and configuring them to work.

Suse Professional 9.0

(Comes with BIG fat manuals and a cute sticker!)

Install recommendations:

1. There are 5 install CD's and 1 install DVD. We chose the DVD install.
2. Was a very quick install process.
3. We selected "new install" (reasons for this documented below in "issues")
4. Auto loads the GRUB boot loader.
5. Install the basic install with all defaults.
6. The Suse install, installs a greater number of packages as it's default install than RH, i.e.; installs Open Office, acroread, etc. (see notes below)
7. The install will configure any packages selected for basic install such as ssh, compilers, GMT, etc. (the only packages we needed to install outside the OS install were, Matlab and Labview).

Issues:

1. must run sux in order to run "X" as root: '# sux - '
2. CD install works just as well as the DVD install but a little slower.
3. Requires licensing and \$ for support.

Notes:

The SuSE package installer by default wants to install additional packages off the CDs rather than off the network, which means people have to keep the CDs on hand. Also, the package upgrade process depends on selecting a mirror site to get upgrades; a lot of these are in Germany and a lot of them seemed slow.

Red Hat Enterprise v 3.0

Install recommendations:

Upgrade Notes:

1. Select Upgrade if you are running a previous version of RH. (I was running RH8 when I upgraded)
2. Very familiar install and instructions.
3. Took less than an hour.
4. Works like a charm, It's a beautiful thing.

Initial install notes:

1. Uses all 4 CD's (asks for the 1st CD as post install at the end of the install process)
2. Follow instructions, it's very much like the RhvX installs in this.
3. Select full install, (i.e.; everything, to get the most packages such as compilers, ssh, editors.)
4. Install is rapid and took about 40 minutes for us on a Dimension 8300 with all the bells and whistles.

Issues:

1. Was not able to register the system until licensing issue is ironed out.
2. I was not able to test up2date or apt. (see notes below)
3. All packages not installed as base install were easily installed. i.e.; Matlab, labview, GMT, acroread, Netcdf, gs,gv.
4. Requires licensing and \$ for support.

Notes:

The reason we couldn't use apt is that FreshRPMs does not make apt available for RHEL, nothing to do with registration.

Mandrake

No test notes or install instructions available at this time due to limited test time. These notes will be made available within the next 10 days and will be posted in the WHIT archives as well as in the 'Footnote' knowledge database.

Apparently they heard us grumbling about the high price of Enterprise Linux ...

http://news.com.com/2100-7344_3-5107941.html

Linux leaders offer education discounts Red Hat and SuSE Linux, the top two sellers of the open-source operating system, are launching new discounts to attract students and educational institutions, a strategically important customer set for technology companies. Raleigh, N.C.-based Red Hat, the top seller of the open-source operating system, will sell students its Red Hat Academic Desktop product for \$25 and sell schools its Red Hat Academic Server product for \$50, including online software updates but no telephone support. The products will be offered first in the United States, but will be available internationally by the end of the year, said John Young, vice president of marketing. [...] Red Hat's trouble in the education market began when it split its Red Hat Linux product, which was intended for corporate use but could be downloaded for free, into two lines: Fedora Core, a free and fast-moving system for enthusiasts designed to mature raw technology as fast as possible, and Red Hat Enterprise Linux, a slow-changing product for commercial users who want a stable product and years of support.

"Red Hat Linux doesn't meet the needs of everybody, and it is compromised by trying to meet the needs of everybody," Young said. Red Hat's aggressive RHEL push has pushed the company into profitability. But some in the education market have balked at the choice of inadequate support with Fedora versus the high price of RHEL, which can't be obtained for free or installed on multiple computers once purchased. It costs \$2,499 per year for a server with four Intel Xeon processors with round-the-clock technical support; a dual-processor server with more limited phone support costs \$799 per year.

NetCDF and GMT are both available as Debian packages in apt -- so you do not need to install them from source. The relevant Debian packages are:

gmt - Generic Mapping Tools

gmt-coast-low - Low resolution coastlines for the Generic Mapping Tools

gmt-doc - HTML documentation for the Generic Mapping Tools

gmt-doc-pdf - PDF docs for the Generic Mapping Tools

gmt-doc-ps - PostScript docs for the Generic Mapping Tools

gmt-examples - Example scripts illustrating the use of GMT

gmt-manpages - Manpages for the Generic Mapping Tools

gmt-tutorial - Data files needed to reproduce the tutorial examples of GMT

gmt-tutorial-pdf - Tutorial for the Generic Mapping Tools (PDF)

gmt-tutorial-ps - Tutorial for the Generic Mapping Tools (

Articles and other relevant docs can be found at the following URL's:

(Article #2)

<http://slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=03/11/03/1749259>

(Article #1)

<http://www.newsforge.com/print.pl>

(End Of Life information)

<http://www.redhat.com/apps/support/errata>

(Release notes for Fedora Build)

<http://fedora.redhat.com/docs/release-notes>