

Fedora Linux

Fedora: the (somewhat) new Linux distribution on the block. To switch or not to switch? Moreover, why use it at all? And, what is its target? Desktop users? Servers?



Fedora to the max.

What is Fedora?

- Fedora was a project that has existed for the last few years, they made add-on packages for Red Hat, including newer versions of packages.
 - Now Red Hat has stopped making their distribution after Redhat 9, and the Fedora Core is now going to be the new, community supported Red Hat.
 - The Rawhide tree (development tree of Red Hat) has been merged into the new Fedora Core
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What does this mean for Redhat users?

- No more commercial releases, or commercial support, unless you get a support contract
 - Commercial software that used to support redhat officially may not anymore. (eg MATLAB, Maple, others)
 - Fedora will be providing updates via up2date, yum, and all the other methods, but security updates probably won't be done on older Redhat releases anymore.
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What has Changed?

- Newer Packages – Keeps more up to date than Redhat
 - Kernel 2.4.22
 - KDE 3.1.3
 - Gnome 2.4.0
 - Mozilla 1.4.1
 - Gaim 0.71
 - Openoffice 1.1.0

What has changed, continued

- Driver support for all sorts of devices, with very good autodetection
 - Will detect most recent video cards, and use appropriate (DRI enabled!) drivers.
 - Good laptop support, APM, correctly detects LCD screens, PCMCIA devices.
 - Autodetects USB printers! Automatically will set up all sorts of weird printers and things.
 - Anaconda and Kudzu handle plug and play hardware detection.
 - Automatic soundcard detection even picks up strange laptop soundcards.
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Features useful to sysadmins

- Kickstart files allow you to deploy a similar redhat installation remotely and en masse. Kickstart will automatically partition, install, and optionally run whatever post-install software you want
- up2date and yum allow you to have the distribution updated automatically and remotely.



Other neat things

- Neat graphical wireless and wired network config utility, easily lets you set up your wireless connections
 - Simple to set up graphics settings, huge database of monitor profiles and video cards, simple checkbox for Xinerama support.
 - Service manager clears you of the headache of managing sysvinit type runlevel symlinking
 - BIND is chrooted out of the box
 - Graphical bootup screen
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Disadvantages

- Installs take a long-ish time. ~50 minutes on Pentium 4
 - Installer does not like a disklabel which doesn't have an Extended partition. It will create one whether you like it or not
 - Emacs was installed though I told it not to.. strange dependency tracking
 - System is really geared to newer P3 or higher machines, performance will be poor on slower machines / machines with small hard drives, install uses 2GB+
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More totally weird things

- The system is built with NPTL (native posix threads library) which makes upgrading from previous redhats a pain. NPTL
 - Prelink is run in cron.daily, automatically re-prelinking everything.
 - XMMS with no MP3 support, due to licensing issues
 - GCC 3.3.2 is the default compiler, but they include gcc 3.2.3 as /usr/bin/gcc32 for kernel compile
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