



## Choosing an XFCE-based distro

Beranger.org, February 21, 2008

**Not an easy task. Suppose you want to run a distro that is specifically focussed on XFCE. What choice do you have, and what are the caveats? (But other choices are available too.)**

Choosing an XFCE-based distro is not an easy task, because not all the users are the same. Some of them are having older hardware, but don't want to run Fluxbox or the like. Some other people want a great out-of-the-box multimedia experience. Another category of users would prefer a distro whose repositories include most of the applications they need, including GTK+ and non-GTK+ development libraries and tools, or some preferred applications (e.g. Meld, GnoCHM/xchm, gxine, etc.). Finally, there are specific requirements for LiveCDs or pendrive capable distros. And I haven't even mentioned the delicate aspect of the wireless firmware...

As you can rarely stick the "one size fits all" label to a Linux distro, I don't even try to recommend one XFCE-enabled distro or another. I will just write down a few notes on a selective list of distributions.



**Zenwalk Linux** — One of the most famous Slackware derivatives (formerly Minislack), Zenwalk has a good deal of aficionados. In addition to the default XFCE, it also offers KDE and GNOME in the extra repositories.

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#### PROS

- ★ Zenwalk is looking nice, it runs fine and it's build with the "only one application per task" concept in mind.
- ★ It has a separate LiveCD edition, good for evaluation purposes or to be used as is.
- ★ Restricted multimedia ability out of the box (including DVD playback and acroread, but Flash is not on the CD).
- ★ Good or excellent own GUI tools: Zenpanel, Xnetconf, Xnetpkg — the GUI version of the specific package management GUI tool used by Zenwalk (netpkg).
- ★ Rather good wireless support. Includes the Wicd network manager.
- ★ Hibernation works, and they have two small system tools, Hibernate and Standby, to invoke these machine states.

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#### CONS

- ★ The Zenwalk team is not always receptive to suggestions, complaints and bug reports, and they have simply refused to examine or fix some bugs.
- ★ Security-wise, the way the Zenwalk developers have simply ignored the latest kernel local privilege escalation vulnerability can be alone a reason to drop this distro from your shortlist. The official site is listing in the security section of the main page... a news from 2006/12/29!
- ★ Being mostly a French development team, the French forums tend to be more active than the English language ones.
- ★ Regardless of the fact that Zenwalk's packages include building scripts who attempt to download the source packages from the upstream providers, you can safely say that Zenwalk is a binary-only distro: there is no source repository. They used to offer the sources in the past, then they stopped offering them, and now they started to build a source repo (not complete as of yet; and I am banned from their forums). The GPL requires you make available the FULL sources needed to build the binary packages, either in direct download, or through a written offer (valid for at least 3 years) providing the user with a way of getting the sources, being it for the price of preparing and sending them on CDs/DVDs (like MEPIS is doing). Zenwalk is not completely GPL-compliant by the law.
- ★ Some people might prefer to see Firefox and Thunderbird (and the well-known icons) instead of Iceweasel and Icedove.

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#### BOTTOM LINE



While Zenwalk is quite a fine distro, appropriate for both multimedia and development, it can't monopolize the concept of Zen, as it's not always this way. Given the lack of packaged sources, the careless attitude when comes to some bugs or to security issues, you might want to ponder before settling for it. The LiveCD is however useful to have, but it doesn't particularly shine: it just works, and it's looking good (it's more agreeable than the developers though). The latest Zenwalk 5.0 comes with the latest XFCE 4.4.2.



[www.zenwalk.org](http://www.zenwalk.org)



**Vector Linux** — Maybe the second best-known XFCE-based distro, the Canadian Vector Linux is pleasant to use, stable (being based on Slackware 12.0), and having a strong identity. KDE extra packages are available to download, and a 2-CD Deluxe edition with extra software, a printed manual can be purchased for \$26.97 + S&H. A KDE-based SOHO Edition (currently, one version behind) can also be purchased for the same price.

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#### PROS

- ★ KDE (and Windows) lovers will appreciate the unique XFCE layout offered by Vector Linux.
- ★ It has a separate LiveCD edition, good for evaluation purposes or to be used as is.
- ★ Restricted multimedia ability out of the box (including DVD playback, Flash and acroread).
- ★ It's fast!
- ★ Good or excellent own GUI tools: VASM/VASMCC, vpackager (Cruports4Slack).
- ★ It uses slapt-get and Gslapt, preconfigured with the Vector and Slackware repositories.
- ★ It has a good response to security issues.
- ★ It can hibernate (but it doesn't include any GUI way to reach that status).
- ★ NTFS-3g driver for read/write access to the NTFS partitions.


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#### CONS

- ★ XFCE (and GNOME) lovers will hate the single-panel XFCE layout offered by Vector Linux.
- ★ The single-panel layout gets crowded easily as you add more applets (plugins) and you open more applications.
- ★ VL tends to have a few small bugs (the LiveCD might have a few more), but nothing serious.
- ★ The choice of packages is generally good, but far from perfect (I am not thrilled by the choice of games and I am missing gxine).
- ★ Surprisingly, it uses kdesu instead of gksu (you'll notice some Qt/KDE "contamination").

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#### BOTTOM LINE

 If you like the way it looks, you'll love it. XFCE purists might otherwise consider it kinky. For a stable and an interesting system, quite a good choice. Opera 9.50 Beta is stable on VL5.9 on sites where it would crash on other distros because of Flash! It comes with XFCE 4.4.2.



[www.vectorlinux.com](http://www.vectorlinux.com)



## Wolvix Linux (Hunter and Cub editions) — This excellent

Slackware derivative from Norway was the greatest pleasant surprise I've had in years. Packed with an unbelievable number of select applications, carefully designed, it's hard not to love it. It comes with both XFCE and Fluxbox.

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### PROS

- ★ It looks very polished. Really. And it works fine.
- ★ The LiveCD is an installable one. You can even install it on an USB stick, not only on the HDD!
- ★ Restricted multimedia ability out of the box (everything works).
- ★ It's fast!
- ★ The choice of applications is simply tremendous! You won't find anything similar on a single CD anywhere else! Name it, and it might be there, on the CD: Claws Mail, Transmission, Dillo, XChat, Pidgin, pyNeighborhood, OpenOffice, Abiword, Planner, GNUMCash, Firestarter, VLC, MPlayer, Xine, Audacious, Exaile, gtkpod, Inkscape, Blender, GIMP, GQView, Gtkam, mtPaint, Comix, Meld, Bluefish, SciTE... but the kitchen sink is missing.
- ★ Wolvix Control Panel is just great. For package management: slapt-get and Gslapt (preconfigured with the Vector and Slackware 11.0 repositories).
- ★ It comes with a simple helper to let you switch easily between a few common keyboard layouts.
- ★ The repository contains unexpected gifts: Anjuta 2.2.0, GIMP 2.4.1 as an update to 2.2.15, tons of GNOME and KDE applications, GOCR, FLTK, FOX Toolkit, gxine, RealPlayer, Mono, you name it.
- ★ Based on Slackware 11.0, it comes however with a newer kernel, 2.6.21.5.
- ★ It's responsive to security issues.

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### CONS

- ★ It can't hibernate.
- ★ Being based on Slackware 11.0, you will find less applications in the 3rd party extra repositories to use with Slackware. Currently, there are no known plans to issue a version based on Slackware 12.0.
- ★ It has a few bugs. Nothing severe though, but I still have to sort out a few annoyances.
- ★ The only available Acrobat Reader is 7.0.9, which is vulnerable to some exploits.
- ★ The GUI installer is great, but in the end it fails to propose you to create a regular user in addition to root! (Go to Wolvix Control Panel -> User Admin -> Add User). It also fails to ask you about the time zone. (Go to Wolvix Control Panel -> Time/Date -> Change Time zone.) You should also go to Wolvix Control Panel -> Network -> Configure Firewall to start Firestarter and configure it.
- ★ Inasmuch as it seems exhaustive, it's not "complete" in terms of XFCE. There is no Clipman plugin (not even in the repos), and it uses File Roller by default instead of Xarchiver.

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### BOTTOM LINE



Despite a few limitations I noticed after quite an extended usage, it's the best assortment of applications you can find in a Slackware derivative! The combined Live and installable CD is a winner here, and you should definitely love it, unless you have some very particular needs. Remember though: it's Slackware 11 under the hood, not Slackware 12! (Still, Slackware 11 is supported by Pat, except for the 2.6 kernel, and



## What grumbles do you want to read today?™

you can find extra packages on **Slacky.eu**<sup>[1]</sup>, on **LinuxPackages**<sup>[2]</sup>, on **Robby Workman's**<sup>[3]</sup> site, and on **SlackBuilds.ORG**<sup>[4]</sup>. You can also build yourself packages by using **SlackBots**<sup>[5]</sup>.)



**wolvix.org**

<sup>[1]</sup> [www.slacky.eu](http://www.slacky.eu)

<sup>[2]</sup> [linuxpackages.net](http://linuxpackages.net)

<sup>[3]</sup> [rlworkman.net/pkggs](http://rlworkman.net/pkggs)

<sup>[4]</sup> [www.slackbuilds.org/repository/11.0/](http://www.slackbuilds.org/repository/11.0/)

<sup>[5]</sup> [www.mkanet.de](http://www.mkanet.de)



## GoblinX (Standard and Mini editions) — Except for the "Micro"

edition (Fluxbox-only), the other two feature XFCE (the full Standard CD comes also with KDE, Fluxbox, Enlightenment and WindowMaker). With a strong and unique personality, this Brazilian gem is definitely standing out.

### PROS

- ★ It has a very particular look, extremely polished, both in X and at the CLI, as the developer wanted to leave his artistic marks all over the place. It's not trivial to completely theme a whole distro, not even for a whole team.
- ★ The LiveCD is an installable one.
- ★ Flexibility. Choice. (Even too much at times.)
- ★ Good choice of applications, impressive for such a small-sized CD (Standard: 310MB; Mini: 153MB). XFCE-wise, almost all of the plugins are present.
- ★ Excellent specific GTK+ applications: gtkMagic Center, gtkDaemons, Gtk2 Theme Selector... For the package management, Gslapt.
- ★ Restricted multimedia ability partially available out of the box (may not support everything, but supports MP3 for instance; and the Flash plugin is not on the CD either).
- ★ Firewalls. Even two.

### CONS

- ★ The main server and the mirrors can be slow.
- ★ Small bugs only (including the mix of the two different firewalls), but they tend to be resolved rather slowly.
- ★ On the Standard (full) CD, you will be overwhelmed by the number of the KDE applications in the menu. Why using kdesu instead of gksu? How about xfce4-screenshooter-plugin being replaced by Ksnapshot?
- ★ The single-panel layout gets crowded easily as you add more applets (plugins) and you open more applications.
- ★ Or maybe the whole theming is not sober enough for you.

### BOTTOM LINE



With such a strong and succulent identity, you'll either love it or hate it. (This is not about me, but about you.) Giving its flexibility, you'll probably want to have a CD around. The just released 2.6 "Standard" corrects some previous bugs and comes with XFCE 4.4.2.



**www.goblinx.com.br**



**KateOS** — The Polish Linux comes in many flavors: CORE (on 3 CDs or a DVD); LIVE; MiniISO; and it also has a GNOME extension CD and a KDE extension CD. Initially based on some Slackware concept, now KateOS is not compatible with Slackware anymore, and it has its own enhanced TGZex package format.

#### PROS

- ★ Polished (not Polish) look and feel, with a rich set of applications.
- ★ The LiveCD is installable, and it even has a GUI installer. CORE has a text installer, more flexible though.
- ★ Extensive set of own tools, based on libsmarttools, libpkg and libupdateos: KatePKG, updateos and update-notifier (an XFCE plugin!), KateLan, neoconfig, adslconfig, update-notifier, installos and Agent.
- ★ I'll mention it one more time: the update-notifier that sits in the XFCE system tray.
- ★ Rich set of online repositories (1,300+ official packages, plus community packages).
- ★ Good response to security issues.

#### CONS

- ★ XFCE-wise, the choice of plugins is poor. No Clipman, etc.
- ★ The LiveCD fails to honor wide screen resolutions on a variety of video adapters.
- ★ A few minor bugs, but also some stability issues with the LiveCD.
- ★ The English forums are far from being as active as the Polish forums.
- ★ Yet another "binary distro". I couldn't find any source packages, not scripts that would download the upstream packages and build them! There is a SVN repo available ("*svn checkout svn://pragma.pl:1310/kateos*"), but it only includes the sources for the KateOS-specific stuff: Builder, Doughnut, frozen-stuff, installagent, installagent2, katefreq, kate-installer, katelan, katepkg, katepkg2, libpkg, libsmarttools, libupdateos, makerepo, neokate, pkg, pkg2v2, realm, updatelist-gen, update\_notifier, update\_notifier2, updateos2. In short, KateOS is not fully GPL-compliant! And I couldn't see any written offer to get the sources in any other way (say, by buying a DVD).

#### BOTTOM LINE



Interesting, independent, however focusing too much on completeness in other areas (KDE, GNOME, base system) instead of XFCE. You might still like it, but I won't use a distro where I can't get the sources. KateOS 3.6 was issued with XFCE 4.4.1, but you can find 4.4.2 in the online repos.



**kateos.org**



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**SAM Linux** — Based on PCLinuxOS, SAM Linux is practically "the XFCE edition of PCLinuxOS", with a (big) touch a personality and the ability to run on more modest hardware.

#### PROS

- ★ It features a tremendous set of all kind of applications, including Exaile, Audacious, gxine, GTKam, Xsane, GIMP, Inkscape, Streamtuner, Grip, Claws Mail, PDFedit<sup>[5]</sup>, WINE (already configured), Compiz-Fusion, etc. etc.
- ★ The LiveCD is installable, and the installer is nice.
- ★ Restricted multimedia ability out of the box (everything works).
- ★ It can use PCLinuxOS' repositories, and it maintains its own one, basically a slimmed down copy, plus some new and SAM-patched packages.
- ★ Being PCLinuxOS under the hood, it features its fabulous Control Center, inherited from Mandriva (but Synaptic/apt-get for the package management).

#### CONS

- ★ While it's very nice looking, the default layout is confusing, with its bottom panel and the top wbar<sup>[6]</sup>.
- ★ It is not without bugs (but you should be able to overcome them).
- ★ Its XFCE look is quite unusual.

#### BOTTOM LINE



Although it looks like a niche distro, and it's dependent on PCLinuxOS (with goods and bads), there are some happy users of SAM. Could you be next? SAM 2008 "Claw" comes with XFCE 4.4.2.



[sam.hipsurfer.com](http://sam.hipsurfer.com)

<sup>[5]</sup> [sourceforge.net/projects/pdfedit](http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfedit)

<sup>[6]</sup> [freshmeat.net/projects/wbar](http://freshmeat.net/projects/wbar)



**Xubuntu 7.10** — It's not Ubuntu, it's not Kubuntu, it's not Edubuntu, it's Xubuntu! Although an official project, Canonical's Shiplt program won't send you free CD with this fine XFCE flavor of the hugely popular Ubuntu.

#### PROS

- ★ Its default layout is mimicking the GNOME 2-panel layout with very good results. (Xubuntu 8.04 will have the Places menu added by default, for even better results.)
- ★ As with anything \*buntu, the standard LiveCD is installable, and there is also an install-only alternate CD (text install).
- ★ It offers you a very pleasant working experience, especially if you're coming from GNOME.
- ★ Being a large-repo distro, you're having quick access to tons of extra packages.
- ★ Restricted multimedia capabilities not available out of the box, but the packages are however available in the restricted repositories.
- ★ It hibernates well, and it even hacks the XFCE logout dialog to include Hibernate and Suspend buttons! (But you might be left without sound on wake-ups.)
- ★ Being Ubuntu, if something in the non-XFCE part of the system is not working, you'll find plenty of opinions on how to fix it in the very active forums of the gregarious user community.
- ★ Being Ubuntu, you can have the update-notifier in the XFCE system tray.
- ★ Very good response to security issues.

#### CONS

- ★ Being Ubuntu, it's not always 100% waterproof, nor bug-free: updates might occasionally break something, and bug reports are not necessarily treated with the proper care.
- ★ Being a 6-month release cycle distro with a rapid pace of the changes, you'll always notice significant changes with the next release, but also a non-negligible risk that the support for the existing hardware breaks.
- ★ XFCE purists will notice the use of File Roller instead of Xarchive (but GNOME aficionados won't care and might rather want to install xfce4-xfapplet-plugin to load GNOME applets).
- ★ The boot process seems to be rather slow on the LiveCD.

#### BOTTOM LINE



Overall, a very good choice, with a very ergonomic default layout, and an easy access to plenty of extra software. If you're not elitist enough to avoid the "Ubuntero" tag, there is no reason for not liking it. Xubuntu 7.10 comes with XFCE 4.4.1.



[www.xubuntu.org](http://www.xubuntu.org)



**Fedora 8, the XFCE spin** — Fedora is "for when it absolutely, positively has to be not Debian, nor Ubuntu". Recently, the Fedora XFCE spin was born "for when it absolutely, positively has to be not GNOME". The XFCE CD is still a young concept, but a very good reason to use the fast-moving branch of Red Hat, even when you don't want to use GNOME.

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**PROS**

- ★ Quite fast in use, a rather reasonable working experience.
- ★ The LiveCD is installable.
- ★ It's Fedora.
- ★ You have access to all the Fedora packages: not as many as with Ubuntu or Debian, they're still some 7,000.
- ★ An excellent choice of XFCE applications and XFCE plugins on the CD (xfce4-notes-plugin, xfce4-clipman-plugin, xfce4-mailwatch-plugin; xarchiver, not File Roller).
- ★ Tracker is present and installed by default, for those who like desktop search.
- ★ Very good response to security issues.
- ★ It can hibernate (but it doesn't include any GUI way to reach that status).


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**CONS**

- ★ The default theming is less than great: uninspired icon theme, no Fedora-branded wallpaper, etc.
- ★ Restricted multimedia capabilities not available out of the box, nor is Fedora providing them: you'll have to rely on 3rd party repositories (Livna, freshrpms.net). Fluendo's MP3 decoder is the only official recommendation.
- ★ Tracker is started by default even on the LiveCD!
- ★ GIMP is missing from the CD.

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**BOTTOM LINE**

 Should you be forgiving of Fedora's XFCE imperfections, and not afraid of fixing the restricted multimedia issues, this spin is the best choice of using a Red Hat distro with XFCE, without the fuss of installing with the fully-fledged and demanding Anaconda.



[fedoraproject.org](http://fedoraproject.org)



## Debian, the XFCE CD — Since Debian also has an XFCE "CD1"

edition, it also qualifies for a good way of using XFCE. And you can have more choices: Debian stable, Debian testing, and Debian unstable. Separate "XFCE CD1" ISOs are available for Etch and for "testing" (issued periodically).

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### PROS

- ★ It's Debian.
- ★ Debian "stable" (Etch) is... very stable, and supported for much longer than most of the other distros, except for RHEL clones, the LTS editions of Ubuntu, Slackware, and a few others.
- ★ You have access to all the Debian packages.
- ★ Excellent good response to security issues in "stable"; reasonably good response to security issues in "testing" (some might argue that you should use "unstable" instead, but I personally prefer "testing").
- ★ Using testing/unstable makes it practically a rolling-release distro, allowing you to keep the pace with the latest features and developments.
- ★ Even if the restricted multimedia is not available out of the box, everything can be downloaded from a single extra repository, [debian-multimedia.org](http://debian-multimedia.org).
- ★ It can hibernate (but it doesn't include any GUI way to reach that status).

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### CONS

- ★ Using Etch limits you to XFCE 4.3.99.2 for a long time. Only security fixes are backported, no improvements at all. (You could however get unofficial backports from [backports.org](http://backports.org), currently including XFCE 4.4.2.)
- ★ Using testing/unstable is carrying a risk you should be assuming. (Heck, I wasn't even able to install the latest [debian-testing-i386-xfce-CD-1.iso](http://debian-testing-i386-xfce-CD-1.iso)!)
- ★ There is no LiveCD you can use for previewing the final experience.
- ★ Some people might prefer to see Firefox and Thunderbird (and the well-known icons) instead of Iceweasel and Icedove.

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### BOTTOM LINE



Should you have a preference for Debian — either for the stability of the "stable" branch, or simply for Debian, being it testing/unstable —, and willing to use XFCE as a desktop environment, there is more than the traditional GNOME CD1: the XFCE CD1. "Good luck!" (for testing/unstable) — or simply "Enjoy it!" (for Etch).



[debian.org](http://debian.org)



**Slackware (itself)** — You can't think of Linux and not mentioning Slackware! While it's not particularly focused on XFCE, you can easily install XFCE as the main or only desktop environment, and you only need the first CD for that. An old classic...

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#### PROS

- ★ It's Slackware: rock solid, fast, uncluttered, vanilla packages, not hacks. In a word: Slackware.
- ★ A "more genuine" XFCE build.
- ★ Conforming to the K.I.S.S. principle.
- ★ You can always be sure you will find all the source tarballs for all the packages on absolutely all the Slackware mirrors, just like "the big distros" do (Debian, Fedora, Ubuntu, Mandriva, etc.). This is true freedom (the FTP style :-)).
- ★ MP3 playback ability through libmad.
- ★ Very good response to security issues (for the official packages).


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#### CONS

- ★ It can't hibernate.
- ★ Being Slackware, you would typically need some time for the post-install customizations.
- ★ Not only the official packages are limited in number, but you won't get anything GNOME, and only a very few GTK+ apps (GIMP, gxine). You should use 3rd party repos to get what you miss (**Slacky.eu**<sup>[7]</sup>, **LinuxPackages**<sup>[8]</sup>, **Robby Workman's**<sup>[9]</sup>, **SlackBuilds.ORG**<sup>[10]</sup>, or you can also build yourself packages by using **SlackBots**<sup>[11]</sup> or **Slackbuilds.NET**<sup>[12]</sup>).
- ★ Slackware 12.0 is limited to XFCE 4.4.1. Slackware-current has 4.4.2, but there are far less 3rd-party packages for -current than for 12.0.
- ★ Slackware lacks the Goodies. You can get all the XFCE Goodies, along with the latest XFCE 4.4.2, from from **Robby Workman's**<sup>[13]</sup> site (you could also build them with the help of **Slackbuilds.NET**<sup>[14]</sup>). An alternate option, not tested and potentially risky, is to install Slackware without XFCE and grab the "**Xfware - Xfce for Slackware**"<sup>[15]</sup> ISO by Paolo Loberto (still 1.0 beta2).
- ★ Of course you don't have a LiveCD to see what you'll get.

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#### BOTTOM LINE

 Slackware is for people who know what they're doing, and it can be a good choice for using XFCE too. However, this is not what you would want if you fear the CLI or you don't have enough time to tickle it.



[slackware.com](http://slackware.com)

<sup>[7]</sup> [www.slacky.eu](http://www.slacky.eu)

<sup>[8]</sup> [linuxpackages.net](http://linuxpackages.net)

<sup>[9][13]</sup> [rlworkman.net/pkgsg](http://rlworkman.net/pkgsg)

<sup>[10]</sup> [www.slackbuilds.org](http://www.slackbuilds.org)

<sup>[11]</sup> [www.mkanet.de](http://www.mkanet.de)

<sup>[12][14]</sup> [www.slackbuilds.net](http://www.slackbuilds.net)

<sup>[15]</sup> [xfware.tuxfamily.org](http://xfware.tuxfamily.org)



**Mandriva 2008.1 "One" XFCE (Beta)** — Although it used to only have LiveCDs ("One") for KDE and GNOME and a mini-CD with IceWM, Mandriva is preparing an XFCE "One" flavor, which already looks promising.

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**PROS**

- ★ It looks great , with a 2-panel GNOME-like layout, "la Ora Gray" theme and Tango icons.
- ★ The "One" LiveCD is installable, and the installer is very intuitive.
- ★ MP3 support out of the box.
- ★ 99.9% of everything XFCE is on the CD, with plugins and goodies, including: Orage, Appfinder, Clipman, Xfapplet (to run GNOME applets), WMdock (for WindowMaker dockapps), RSS Aggregator plugin, Smart Package Manager plugin, Xfburn, Xfmedia, Taskmanager, Squeeze 0.2.0.
- ★ It squeezes OpenOffice.org 2.2.1 on the CD!
- ★ It's Mandriva, which means it has the great Mandriva Control Center (drakconf) and RPMdrake.
- ★ It's Mandriva, so you have access to thousands of other packages.
- ★ Very good response to security issues.

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**CONS**

- ★ It's Mandriva, which means it is supposed to always contain a few annoying bugs.
- ★ It's Mandriva, which means you'll never understand how the French management works, nor how can they have released Corporate Desktop 4.0 a long time ago, yet not having it in the online store.
- ★ WONTFIX is not unusual with Mandriva's bug reports. You have to love their choices, that is.
- ★ It's not "XFCE-pure", for instance you have GNOME's gThumb as the default image viewer (I won't complain on the presence of GIMP 2.4.4 though).

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**BOTTOM LINE**



Some people still love Mandriva despite its specific bugs, should it only be for the reliable and fast package management system, for MCC, or for the enthusiastic community. The XFCE "One" has all the chances to enchant you even more than the traditional KDE and GNOME flavors. Comes with XFCE 4.4.2.



[www.mandriva.com](http://www.mandriva.com)



**Other choices** — Who said you can only use XFCE with the best-known distros? And who said you can only use XFCE from the single-CD distros or from distros that have a version, spin or CD1 that is focussed on XFCE? There are much more possibilities of using XFCE...

- **Linux Mint XFCE Community Edition:** Elegant and (over-) sophisticated, the Ubuntu-based Mint also includes an XFCE edition (single-panel layout, black-green theme, out of the box multimedia support, great configuration tools, impressive choice of packages). Unfortunately, no one could predict the future of a "community edition"...
- **Dreamlinux:** XFCE- and GNOME-aware, this spectacularly OS X-like is mostly for those who really cherish the eye-candiness and can tolerate some non-negligible bugginess. Otherwise, it's based on Debian testing.
- **Frugalware, Arch Linux:** By no means related (except for the name of the package manager), these two distros who tend to become mainstream feature large collections of packages, thus XFCE is easily available. Opt for Frugalware if you want ease of use, or for Arch if you like the rolling-release concept and if "K.I.S.S." translates in your language as "more difficult than Slackware, but with much more packages and an increasingly active user community".
- XFCE 4.4.2 is also available for **NetBSD** and **DragonFly BSD** (pkgsrsrc), and 4.4.1 is available both as binary packages and ports in **FreeBSD** and **OpenBSD**.
- If you believe in Santa Claus, Tom Thumb, the Phoenix bird and if you liked BeOS, you can hope and pray for **Zebuntu**<sup>[16]</sup>: this XFCE-based Ubuntu distro with Zeta influences is supposed to be able to run XFCE, GNOME and KDE Linux applications, and "in the future, Zeta, BeOS, as well as any future Haiku applications". GIMP, Evolution, Exaile, Brasero, Audacious, Sun Java 6 Runtime Engine are all coming with Beta3.

**BOTTOM LINE**

There are countless ways to get XFCE on your desktop, not only the most obvious ones.

<sup>[16]</sup> [zebuntu.com](http://zebuntu.com)

Béranger



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