



FEATURED THIS MONTH

A RED HAT LINUX CLONE, PANDA ANTI-VIRUS, A CD COPIER, SHAREWARE AND FREeware

Linux Mandrake

A clone that does the job well



Windows loyalists will probably not find anything unusual about using software that is Windows-compatible. But Linux users had better get used to it, because MandrakeSoft is distributing a product that is claimed to be 99.99 percent compatible with Red Hat. Called Linux Mandrake, the product won the LinuxWorld Editors' Choice Award for Best Product of the Year 99.

This has divided the Linux community into two factions. According to one faction, this will make Red Hat the Microsoft of the Linux world. It says that Mandrake's move will fractionalise Linux, in much the same way that the Unix operating system was fragmented into different versions like Solaris and SCO which, in spite of having Unix at the core, are incompatible with each other when it comes to running applications.

The group that supports the idea says that this software demonstrates the power of Open Source software. MandrakeSoft also posted a quote from Red Hat's Donnie Barnes: Mandrake had asked Red Hat if they had a problem with

this, and we do not have a problem. Red Hat is actually pleased, because under the GPL [licensing scheme], Red Hat can incorporate the improvements.

Cryptic CDs

We reviewed the five-CD Linux Mandrake Power Pack Edition. The test machine was a Windows 98-based Pentium 333 MHz Celeron with 64 MB RAM and a 6 GB hard disk drive.

The product documentation comprised two manuals: an installation guide and a user guide. However, what surprised us most was the cryptic numbering of the CDs. For instance, one of the documents (the one with the StarOffice registration key), had a description of what each CD contained, and these were numbered as CD1, CD2, CD3 and so on. But when we checked the CDs, they had incomprehensible labels such as Installation CD (x86), Sources CD etc rather intimidating, to say the least.

As with Red Hat, Mandrake allows you to choose between a Workstation install, Server install and Custom install. While both Workstation Install and Server Install create three partitions of native, swap, and boot, the difference between Server Install and Workstation Install is in the size of the swap partition and type of software installed. Though a new Linux user would find both these types of installations very friendly, the Workstation Install is recommended.

The Custom install gives you more control over the installation process

you can specify the size of individual partitions and also the software that has to be loaded on to the system. If your network card is NE2000-compatible, getting on the network is the easiest thing to do. Configuring the XServer is easy too.

Sorry documentation

Mandrake installs directly on to the latest version of the KDE desktop, while Red Hat 6.0 gives you a choice between Gnome and an older version of KDE. Mandrake also comes with Gnome and a few other desktops, but you have to specify during the installation process that you wish to have one of these.

You will find more applications bundled with Mandrake than with Red Hat. This is because Red Hat believes in complete Open Source Software while Mandrake offers software that may be free for individuals but not for corporate users or has licence restrictions attached.

When it comes to documentation, Mandrake disappoints you, especially when compared to Open Linux 2.2 and Red Hat 6.0.

Linux Mandrake has everything that Red Hat has and more. It is also more affordable. As for the debate if building a Red Hat-compatible distribution is good or bad only time will tell.

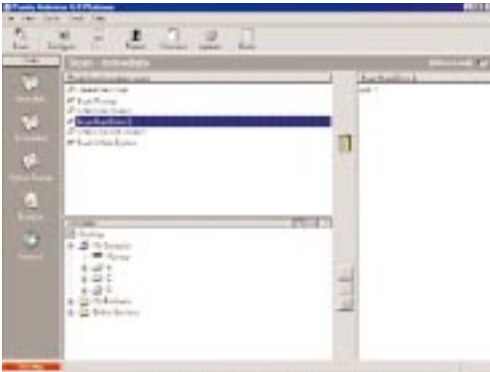


- ♦ More user-friendly than Red Hat
- ♦ Complex installation process

Contact: GT Enterprises
Price: Rs 2,995
Phone: 080-6606093
Fax: 080-6671407
E-mail: gtintblr@blr.vsnl.net.in
Web site: www.gtcdrom.com

Panda AntiVirus

Lacks the killer instinct



This program was slated to be part of the anti-virus comparison test we held in August, but it could not be included due to a defective CD that had to be replaced.

The test machine for the Panda AntiVirus was a Cyrix MII-300 with 32 MB RAM and a 4.3 GB hard disk. There were about 13,000 files and at least 1,743 viruses on the test computer when the virus scan was executed. The virus sample

included standard macros in addition to executable virus programs. During the hard disk scan, the virus detector found 1596 viruses, which translates to a good detection rate of 91.56 percent.

As with most Windows programs, the installation was quite straightforward. A complete install occupies 22 MB of hard disk space; and this includes Microsoft Outlook. During installation, the user is asked to create a secure disk, which installs a command line version of the anti-virus on a floppy. This disk can be a lifesaver in case a virus strikes your system and Windows fails to start up.

After installation, you will see two icons in the system tray the Real Time Monitor and the Internet Sentinel which watch out for malicious ActiveX components and Java applets while you surf the Net. Not surprisingly, the program features tight integration with the Internet and

allows you to scan (and also block) e-mail attachments and download Web sites.

When we first tried to use Panda AntiVirus to disinfect the virus sample, we ran into a serious problem. The software could identify nine viruses out of ten, but was unable to disinfect a single one. As we could not work around this problem; we contacted the Panda staff. They said they had no clue why this was happening, but sent us a new copy of the software. However, the problem refused to go away and we had to come to the conclusion that this anti-virus has a great

VERDICT B

- ♦ Intuitive interface
- Failed to disinfect a single virus

Contact: Sentinel Software Solutions
 Price: Rs
 Phone: 011-5169420
 Fax: 011-5451287
 E-mail: sentinel@ndf.vsnl.net.in
 Web site: www.pandasoftware.com

CD Copier Pro Edition

Pirates, stay away!



Quick! How fast is the fastest CD-ROM drive? Is it the 50x drive from NEC? Or Hitachi? However, even at this speed, the drive would be slower than your hard disk. Why not use your hard disk as your CD-ROM drive instead? You can do this with CD Copier Pro.

The program lets you create a virtual CD drive on your PC. Since a virtual CD drive would require a virtual CD, CD

Copier Pro helps you make that too. Neat.

To make a virtual CD, you will need the original CD in the drive, and .fcd files. The latest version of CD Copier Pro (2.0) supports the following file formats Standard ISO, Audio CD, Photo CD, Video CD and CD-Extra CD (which are enhanced music CDs with data tracks for optional use on PC) and Mixed Mode CD all of which can be used to create the .fcd files.

Creating the .fcd file is easy, thanks to the wizard-like interface that guides you through the process. CD Copier Pro ensures fast access, making your game-playing sessions much more exciting. Also, a notebook user now has a virtual drive and need not lug around a CD drive when travelling. Besides these advantages, the system requirements are really low.

The program requires about 16 MB of

hard disk space and 32 MB RAM, and any respectable gaming machine should be able to handle that.

The software is not without its drawbacks. For one, the program stays in memory after installation. This may slow down your system even when you are not using the virtual drive. This type of implementation has another problem when a driver gets corrupted it can take the whole system down. And, of course, CD Copier Pro is useless for games and programs under DOS. All said and done, if you are a game freak or a mobile user,

VERDICT A

- ♦ Low system requirements
- Stays in system memory

Contact: Microware Computer Services
 Price: Rs 2,725
 Phone: 022-8729725
 Fax: 022-8727446
 E-mail: sales@mwcddrom.com
 Web site: www.mwcddrom.com



software

Test

SHAREWARE

The Journal

Track your appointments

Allegedly called The Journal, this software claims to help you track and organise your appointments, business or personal. The main screen is divided into two parts: the left has a calendar, and a tree view for organising your notes, while



the right side functions as a notepad.

The program features word processing tools such as bold, italics, underline, font colour, alignment, indents and bullets, and also has a built-in thesaurus and spellchecker. These style/format changes will also show on the printout of the documents. You could even enhance your journal entries by embedding OLE objects such as sound and video files into them.

R A T -

The Journal
 Download size: 2.86 MB
 Web site: www.davidm.com/thejournal.html

diskSpace Explorer Pro

Manage your disk space

Do you believe your computer when it says Disk full! ? No? Then what you need to do is organise your hard disk. diskSpace Explorer Pro does just that it is designed to help you manage your disk space by examining directory contents, cluster sizes and more.

Interactive pie charts, for example, provide a graphical representation of how much of your hard disk space is used up and by which application or directory. Also, the program reports if a drive is affected by a large cluster size, enabling you to repartition your hard disk easily

and reduce wasted space.

diskSpace Explorer is available in two versions. The Pro version offers the ability to scan and explore network drives and locate large folders, in addition to regular features. This shareware version is operational for 30 days and can scan only one hard disk the C:

R A T -

diskSpace Explorer Pro
 Download Size: 1.16 MB
 Web site: www.east-tec.com/spexpro/

LVview Pro 2.6

Peek and tweak

At last, an image viewer that acts as a mini Photoshop program. LVview Pro



2.6 is an image viewer that claims to be different, thanks to its built-in image manipulator. Apart from the usual features like zoom and multiple windows, the program offers a variety of image editing, painting, filtering and retouching tools etc. The program supports many popular image formats, including BMP, GIF, JPG, JFIF, PCX, PPM, TGA and TIFF.

R A T -

LVview Pro 2.6
 Download Size: 1.73 MB
 Web site: www.lvview.com

FREWARE

Win32pad

One of the smallest programs you will ever download this one is just 12 KB and, on installation, occupies about 28 KB of space.



What makes this replacement for Windows Notepad unique is the fine tweaks that it offers. For example, a shortcut for the Select All command, which is not present in Windows Notepad. Additional tools such as Go Line Number and Highlight URL are also available.

R A T -

Download size: 12 KB

CKRename

CKRename comes in handy where Windows fails the ability to



rename multiple files. The slightly cluttered interface resembles Windows Explorer, and is intuitive. There is an option to add letters or numbers to the start and end of file names. The only downside is that it cannot rename files over a

R A T -

Download size: 2.38 KB
 Web site: www.musicsucks.com/CKSoft/index.htm

Process Viewer 2000

Process Viewer 2000 is a supercharged task viewer. It also shows the path and filename of the active task, whether or not the task is a service and also the priority. A simple right click on any task brings up a small dialog box that provides quick access to



R A T -

Download size: 376 KB
 Web site: <http://home.hocnet.nl/b.spaan/>