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EasyLinux 2.2 on test

TITLE DEFENDER

ANDREAS HUCHLER

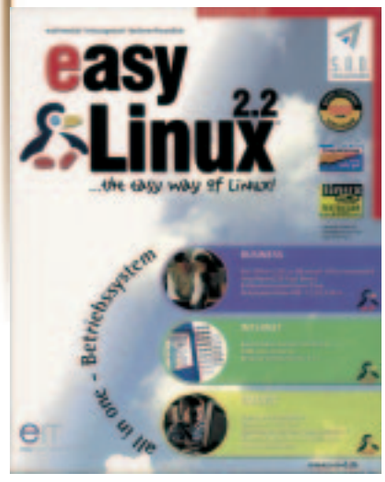


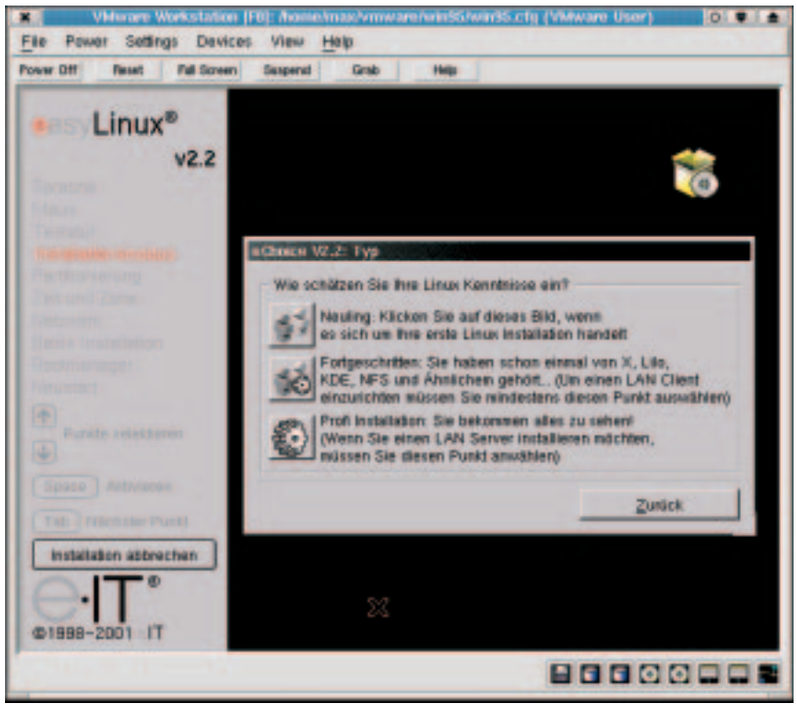
Figure 1: EasyLinux stands out for its easy-to-understand graphical installer

The forerunner version of this Linux distribution from German-speaking countries was praised a year ago by a whole range of reputable journals as surprisingly beginner and user friendly. We were naturally eager to find out if the latest version, 2.2, could follow up this success.

EasyLinux 2.2 has been available for several months now. According to information provided by the manufacturer, eIT, though, it may still take some time before a new packet version is available on the German market, although there is an English-language version, 2.4.

Installation

Although in principle EasyLinux can also be installed via a SCSI-CD-ROM drive, it is still advisable to use an IDE drive. After installation, the packet manager *eProfile* could not get anywhere with our SCSI-CD-ROM drive in any case. The now relatively old kernel 2.2.16 of EasyLinux, despite diverse kernel patches, cannot persuade all the current USB mice to co-operate. Our test mouse would only work with the aid of a USB-PS/2 adapter, naturally without a functioning mousewheel. But having once overcome these initial installation hurdles, the rest of the installation process is easy. Thanks to the orderly hardware recognition, it is usually enough to confirm the pre-set values with a mouse click. If you are puzzled by anything, there is also an adequate online help (eHelpAgent) available. But in retrospect, we discovered, purely by chance, that the partitioning tool *ePartition* signals both the Windows partition and the Linux data partition as 'active' by default. Although Windows did continue to run up in an orderly fashion, in some circumstances this kind of partition entry could be very annoying.



Initial configuration

As in the forerunner version, one is still greeted in EasyLinux 2.2 immediately after first log-in by a configuration dialog, the *eHelpAgent*, with the aid of which the impending configuration steps can be

EasyLinux 2.2

+ *In many cases, simple installation / initial configuration*
+ *For Windows migrants: eSystem with diverse eTools*
- *Basic system is now outdated*
- *Limited expandability of the system*

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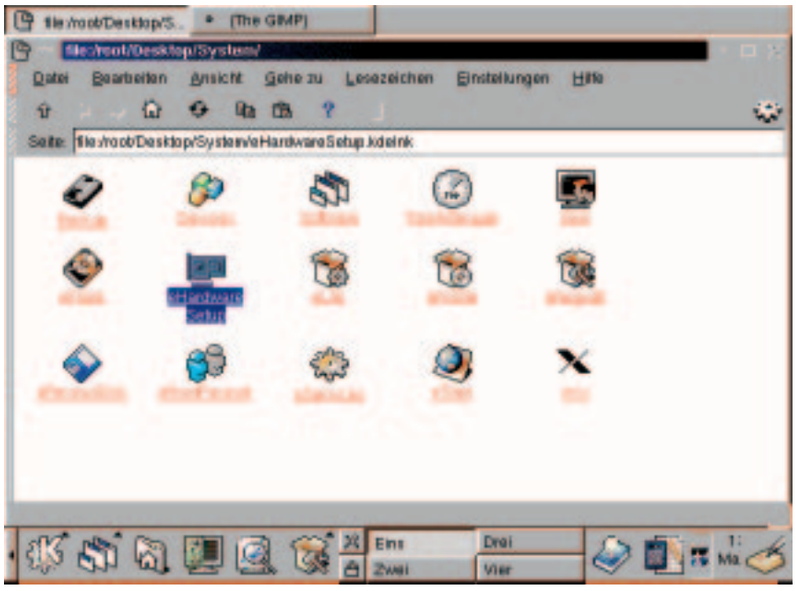

Figure 2: The now outdated KDE-1.2 desktop of EasyLinux 2.2 with 'System control' eSystem

dealt with step by step. What's special about EasyLinux is that the developers have really succeeded in lending the KDE desktop what is in many respects an amazing similarity to the customary Windows interface. This starts with the system control *eSystem* and extends to a registry imitator. Using the e-tools, too, an astonishing amount of exotic hardware, such as certain TV cards, can also be integrated; but don't expect any miracles from them. Otherwise, the only really negative thing that struck us is the fact that the keyboard layout is almost unusable in a standard X-terminal.

Expandability

If this important aspect is included in the evaluation of EasyLinux it takes a lot of the shine off EasyLinux. The packet manager for distribution-specific packets *eProfile* (interestingly, this bears a marked similarity to SuSE's YaST2) requires the first EasyLinux CD at every installation/ uninstallation of packets. So frequent changes of CD are also pre-programmed. We also missed an explicit function, with which online updates such as the one on KDE 2.0.1 (EasyLinux homepage) could be dealt with in one go.

For packets from other distributions, there is an RPM database (and it's already filled). But RPM packets can only be installed later or else only by means of an older version of the console tool *rpm* or the KDE front-end *kpackage*. Since EasyLinux rests completely on KDE, the basic system still lacks the necessary libraries for the successful integration of gtk+ based (GNOME) applications.

Original, but outmoded

In principle, the concept of EasyLinux does have something to be said for it: What could be wrong with putting together a Linux system which does not differ too widely in its external appearance from the Windows interface which is familiar to many PC users, but which finally offers crash-plagued Windows users a more stable system environment? In the case of EasyLinux 2.2, in fact, only the fact that the packet has now become very outdated. If the developers of EasyLinux react more quickly in future than in the past to major innovations in the Linux scene (Kernel 2.4, USB, XFree 4.x with 3D-acceleration, KDE 2.1, etc.), then EasyLinux could become the system of choice for many migrants from Windows to Linux. In the meantime, though, the manufacturer eIT is trying its luck with an EasyLinux 2.4 English version. It is available from *http://www.easylinux.com/* for $49. ■

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Anzeige
84 x 185 mm