Red Hat updates
WORK REST & PLAY

The new Red Hat Linux 7.2 Update pack is released. Jack Owen takes a look to see if its worth the time and money

The update pack arrived on the doormat and after fighting with the wrapping we were greeted with a single A5 piece of paper, three CD-ROMs and a credit card-sized Survival CD-ROM. The paper explains that the two update CDs are bootable and will update your current Red Hat distribution, while the Utilities/Games CD can be browsed and installed if you wish.

Up to date updates

Having religiously followed the Red Hat Network Errata warning and updating packages when reminded, the autoboot disc ran smoothly without the need for intervention.

Hundreds of packages are included and the most noticeable updates included KDE 2.2.2 and XFree86 4.1. In the background though are the more important changes such as Openssh and rsync. The latter we had already updated but this did not hinder the process.

The second disc of the update pair contained the source rpm files and a copy of the rescue CD. Hopefully with Red Hat we will never need to find out if this works. The text file for this part of the CD is worth reading, not so you can remember it verbatim but so that when disaster happens you know what to expect on the CD. We particularly liked the cut down e3 editor and the graphical installer, Anaconda.

Fun with a capital F

The third CD-ROM is the Utilities/Games CD. This CD is more of a bribe to keep you from straying to other newer distributions rather than an essential addition to the Red Hat package.

To ease printing CUPs is provided along with the latest foomatic drivers. If security had still been an issue after updating then the new FireStarter firewall configurator will win you over. Gnomemeeting is also included, which we had been waiting to try out for some time. The video conferencing software makes use of your webcam but can work with just voice input.

Multimedia is also taken care of with Xine, vcdimager and GIMP plug-ins. Then we come onto games. Here Red Hat have realised that perhaps we all need a little time to unwind and have included the flight simulator FlightGear plus another twenty games to keep us happy. The Wine release included is from the very end of January.

Small and neat

The final disc in the box is the credit card-sized Sys Admin CD. I have to say that just the kudos of having this meant everyone else in the department was jealous. It was quite noisy in the drive at first but quickly quietened down. This provides the same data as was on the second update disc, containing a 30Mb Red Hat distribution. With this you have the tools to check and recover filesystems. The monitoring software lets you check and manage a network while the editors and mail utilities will handle any communications problems quickly. The purpose of this CD, apart from making others envious, is that by always being able to carry it with you, you always have tools to hand. Yes, full distribution discs and a laptop are the ideal weapons of choice, but the quick and dirty fixes that this disc provides mean it will soon become invaluable.

Conclusion

Rather than release yet another distribution and cause everyone to reinstall, this update pack is ideal. Security and peace of mind is taken care of and the update of packages is a nice bonus. The utilities and games add a little fun to make the updated Red Hat 7.2 system rival any of the newer distributions. Red Hat also gives the impression that it was aimed at the busy system administrator. By including the utilities CD it has shown that it's not all about work and some joy can also be had. There again the credit card CD is worth the pack alone. Well, that's enough of what is included. We're off to play Parsec and maybe try out more programs under Wine.

Red Hat 7.2 Update Pack	
Supplier	Red Hat
Web	www.europe.redhat.com
For	Great Sys Admin disc
Against	If you donwload updates it's inessential
rating	♘♘♘♘♘♘♘♘