The Linux Distribution HOWTO

Eric S. Raymond <esr@thyrsus.com> v5.3, 6 August 1997

This document is intended to help new users choose a Linux distribution, and to help experienced users track the state of the Linux market.

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1 Introduction

There is no single distribution of the Linux software. Instead, there are many such distributions, available both via anonymous FTP and by mail order on CD-ROM.

The purpose of this document is to provide short summaries of the English-language Linux distributions, and to provide pointers for the reader to find more information. A German Distributions HOWTO is maintained by Marco Budde at
<http://www.tu-harburg.de/ semb2204/dlhp/DE-Distribution-HOWTO.html>. We are not aware of any distributions in languages other than English and German.

The information presented here is not complete; there are other Linux distributions than are listed here. If you are associated with a distribution we don't list, please see 4 near the end of this document for information on making a submission. It's easy and should take less then five minutes.

Disclaimer: We make absolutely *no* guarantee as to the correctness of the information, prices, and ordering details given in this document. Check the last-modified field of each to get an idea of its currency, then go to the vendor's web page for up-to-date information. Furthermore, unless otherwise stated the Linux software comes with *ABSOLUTELY NO WARRANTY*.

Your editor tries to stick to facts in most of this HOWTO, but he has some opinions on the state of the Linux market. If you care what they are, you can read them under 1.4.

Disclosure: I (esr) have no financial connection to any Linux vendor, nor have I accepted any renumeration or perquisites from any vendor other than free product for review (and one T-shirt from Red Hat).

1.1 New versions of this document

This document will be posted monthly to the newsgroups `comp.os.linux.answers` . The document is archived on a number of Linux FTP sites, including `sunsite.unc.edu` in `pub/Linux/docs/HOWTO`.

You can also view the latest version of this HOWTO on the World Wide Web via the URL
<http://sunsite.unc.edu/mdw/HOWTO/Distribution-HOWTO.html>.

Feel free to mail any questions or comments about this HOWTO to Eric S. Raymond,
`esr@snark.thyrsus.com`. Please do *not* send me general Linux questions or requests for help in choosing a distribution unless you're willing to hire me at normal consulting rates; I don't have time to deal with them, and I try to put everything I know about choosing a distribution in this document.

1.2 Recent Changes

This HOWTO is much shorter than it used to be. In 1995-96 the Linux market underwent a serious shakeout, for reasons we discuss below.

Network distributions like the original Slackware no longer seem to be Linux's most important vector. Accordingly the General Information section and this HOWTO as a whole now focuses more on commercial CD distributions.

The old sections on re-packagers and miscellaneous related products have been trimmed and dropped. The information in them was old and hard to verify, and of rapidly decreasing value given recent changes in the Linux market.

1.3 Overview of the Linux Market

In the beginning (say, 1993), a Linux distribution was something you downloaded off the Internet onto floppies. Installation was a laborious process and repeated frustrations due to bad media were common.

Then came cheap CD-ROM drives and the CD-ROM, a medium ideally suited for shipping large volumes of operating-system software cheaply. There's a whole mini-industry now built around commercial CD-ROM Linuxes, and (because the vendors have actual cash flow to fund support and marketing) they increasingly dominate the Linux world. Debian is now the only significant non-commercial release, and even it seems to be propagated largely by shovelware CD-ROMs.

Most of the CD-ROM distributions (including Slackware, Yggdrasil and Red Hat) are still available for FTP from the home sites of their developers. But if you have a CD-ROM drive and a few dollars, you will have many more distributions and more support options to choose from (and you'll usually get some useful paper documentation). For more on the details of installation, see the Linux Installation HOWTO, `<http://sunsite.unc.edu/mdw/HOWTO/Installation-HOWTO.html>`.

Prices for CD-ROM distributions of Intel Linuxes start at $20 and top out at a whole $50 (and the extra few dollars can buy real value). Many vendors sell subscription deals that will lower your cost-per-CD for regular updates over the subscription period.

Price correlates with features and quality pretty well (as one would expect in a very competitive market). Your editor recommends paying the few extra dollars for a top-drawer original CD-ROM distribution; this will pay off in fewer installation and administration hassles down the road.

Making good choices is much simpler than it used to be. In 1995-96 the Linux market underwent a serious shakeout, with a very few commercial distributions emerging as leaders while weaker ones disappeared or stagnated. The toll among general-purpose non-commercial distributions has been even fiercer; essentially, only Debian survives in this role.

As a result, the three-tier structure of primary distribution builders, value-added repackagers, and bottom-feeding CD shovellers that used to define the market has nearly collapsed. To be competitive in 1997, a Linux outfit (whether commercial or noncommercial) has to offer reasonable support and behave like a primary distribution builder, whether it's really one or not. So as long as you look for a recent freeze date, it is pretty hard to get stuck with a dud distribution these days.

1.4 Editorial Recommendations

Last section, the facts. In this section, my opinions (for whatever they're worth – and remember the caveat about free advice). There is no substitute for doing your own evaluation based on experience and the data

in this guide, and these are intended more to illuminate my possible biases than as a guide to what you should do.

From the beginnings of the Linux CD-ROM industry in 1993 to Fall 1995, Yggdrasil was the king of the hill – it essentially founded the CD-ROM market and then set the standard for everybody else. I used Yggdrasil, and I recommended it over commercial System V versions for its superior documentation, large collection of applications, and enlightened policy of sending free releases to freeware authors and dedicating part of the price of each CD-ROM to financially supporting free software. But Yggdrasil hasn't issued a new release in all 1996 (it's March '97 as I write) and they've perhaps been left behind by the market.

I now run Red Hat Linux and am quite satisfied with it. Red Hat's RPM technology currently gives it, IMO, a technical edge over any other vendor. They've made most of the right moves at the right times and I consider them the current market leader.

If you're ideologically wedded to using a non-commercial distribution, Debian seems to me to be the clear choice, the only one left with a serious support team behind it.

These opinions should certainly not be interpreted as an unconditional endorsement; different Linux distributions are optimized for different needs, and yours may well be best served by some other distribution (especially if, unlike me, you're mainly a DOS user and are looking for a distribution tuned for dual-boot systems and being launched from DOS).

Furthermore, industry standing is volatile. By the time you read this, Red Hat or Debian may well have fallen off their games and been displaced by hungrier newcomers.

2 American Linux Distributions

All these distributions are available on CD-ROM (some of the non-commercial ones only show up on network-archive snapshots). Most of these are available for free over the network (but the commercial ones won't support you if you buy this way). They are custom-assembled, rather than just being re-packagings of a pre-existing network release.

They are listed in alphabetical order.

2.1 Caldera OpenLinux

Distributor:

Caldera, Inc.
633 South 550 East
Provo, Utah 84606
Net: info@caldera.com
WWW: `<http://www.caldera.com>`
Vox: (801)-377-7678
Fax: (801)-377-8752

Provider's Description:

Caldera is actually shipping 3 products under the OpenLinux product line: OpenLinux Lite, OpenLinux Base, and OpenLinux Standard. OpenLinux Lite includes only completely free items, and can be obtained for the cost of shipping, for free at trade shows and in the back of books, or can be downloaded from Caldera's ftp site. OpenLinux Base has several commercial components, but is still a low-end offering (priced at $59). OpenLinux Standard includes some higher-end, name brand commercial components (such as Netscapes FastTrack Web Server and Navigator Gold Web browsing and Authoring Tool) The 1.1 release for all of these tiers became available in mid-May 1997.

Caldera OpenLinux is a complete, easy-to-install Linux operating system, with integrated desktop, Internet client and server components, and Intranet connectivity.

With Caldera OpenLinux, you can see a whole world of powerful new computing, even the power of a UNIX workstation on your PC! By using a Linux kernel, OpenLinux gives you speed and stability that compare to systems costing thousands of dollars. Open Linux also gives you:

- Real multi-tasking runs many text or graphical applications at once; no application can cause another to crash, unlike less robust systems.
- The Linux 2.0 kernel gives super-fast TCP/IP access to the Internet, plus loadable device drivers, for the most efficient use of your system resources.
- Easy-to-follow, quick installation with menu-based choices and auto-detection of your hardware make installation a snap on most systems. The Getting Started Guide (included) provides a step-by-step illustrated procedure, with troubleshooting tips.

No other Linux system includes a complete, integrated desktop interface with configuration tools and graphical editor (shown at right). Its powerful drag-and-drop capabilities come pre-configured with thousands of icons and application settings. The Desktop provides a convenient place where you can store your favorite programs and data files for instant access. The Desktop gives you:

- Drag-and-drop launching of programs with data files.
- An integrated graphical text editor.
- Easy access to an array of powerful system configuration tools.
- A configurable icon bar, custom layouts, and preference settings.
- Powerful file management using drag-and-drop or graphical dialogs.

Ordering:

By email with PGP key, by phone, by fax, or by conventional mail. Full ordering details are at `<http://www.caldera.com/mpro/orinfo/orderinfo.html>`.

Support:

By email only.

Last Freeze Date:

24 November 1997

Entry last modified:

27 June 1997

Editor's Notes:

I've heard Caldera people at show booths chuckling over the fact that the X desktop in Lite turns into a pumpkin 90 days after you install it.

2.2 Craftworks Linux

Distributor:

Craftwork Solutions, Inc.
4320 Stevens Creek Blvd. #170
San Jose, CA 95129
Net: info@craftwork.com
WWW: `<http://www.craftwork.com>`
Vox: (408)-985-1878
Fax: (408)-985-1880

Provider's Description:

Craftworks Linux v2.2 is a commercial distribution of Linux for Intel and AXP (BeBox support is in the works). It is completely ELF, built one program at the time from the latest "stable" sources and organized using a methodology we call: CRAFT (Component Replacement And Fabrication Technology).

CRAFT accounts for each file in the system, groups them logically as true components which are filed into catalogs. For example from the 'System Install' catalog, the 'Main Operating System Component' which accounts for 3788 files (approx. 19MB), when combined with the 'Linux Standard Devices' component constitute an operational, network ready, GNU/Linux system.

CRAFT can now install RPM packages.

Security measures including shadow password are enforced throughout the distribution. Network information services (NYS) and domain name services (DNS) as provided, coexist to complement each other. Screen savers and a desktop environment are there for X Windows. Extensive use of kernel loadable modules including streaming tape (ftape) support have been utilized to minimize the need to provide various kernel configurations or requiring the end user to build one. These are some of the highlights, and the overall thought that went into this distribution, which provides a powerful modern UN*X environment for workstations and servers.

The Craftworks Linux v2.2 package includes:

- A boot/install floppy for installing on one or across multiple hard-disks from the CD-ROM media or via NFS (ethernet or PPP). Craftworks Genesis guides the user with panels and menus through a new install or upgrade.
- One CD-ROM with a live system (i.e. run directly from the CD-ROM) and all the sources as GNU zipped tar files. Supporting files such as a comprehensive list of CREDITS, the GNU Public License, etc. are also found on the CD-ROM media and copied as part of an install onto the hard-disk. Craftworks Sysadm (Main Operating System Component) provides for:
  - Security and User Account Management

  - System Maintenance (access to catalogs)
  - BRU Personal Edition backup utilities
  - X Window System Setup including Metro X enhanced server.
  - UPS Configuration
  - System Setup
- Reference and Installation Guide with chapters covering the installation and maintenance thereafter. Appendices on FAQs and hardware compatibility.

Internet Access:

Updates between releases are found in <ftp://ftp.craftwork.com/pub/v2.2>. FAQs and up-to-date product information <http://www.craftwork.com>.

Current upgrades bring the kernel to level 2.0.28.

Ordering:

Directly from Craftwork Solutions, Inc. or from distributors and stores. Suggested retail price 59.95(*Intel*),89.95 (AXP). Intel (80386/486/Pentium) version. Discounts available to dealers and educational institutions.

Support:

Craftwork Solutions, Inc. provides 30 days support with each copy. Longer term support as well as special projects support available on a contract or fee basis.

Miscellaneous:

The CRAFT-1.0 specification is available from <http://www.craftwork.com>. It includes a complete component listing for the distribution.

Last Freeze Date:

23 August 1996.

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997.

2.3 Debian Linux Distribution

Distributor:

The Debian Linux Association
Software in the Public Interest
P.O. Box 70152
Pt. Richmond CA 94807-0152

Net: info@debian.org
WWW: <http://www.debian.org>
FTP: <ftp://ftp.debian.org/debian>

Provider's Description:

Debian Linux is the result of a volunteer effort to create a high-quality non-commercial Linux distribution. Debian Linux 1.2 is a complete and fully-functional Unix-compatible operating system for the personal computer. The system uses ELF executables, but also includes optional packages you can install to fully support development and maintenance of a.out programs. At present, Debian Linux is available for the IBM PC architecture (386/486/Pentium) with versions for Sparc, m68k and Alpha architectures well under way.

Debian Linux is an easy-to-upgrade distribution that mostly consists of freely redistributable software from a number of different sources and systems. Support for shadow passwords is available, although it should be considered experimental in the 1.1 release. Non-free packages may also obtained, making Debian a well-rounded system.

The benefits of Debian Linux are its upgradability, well-defined dependencies between packages, and its open development. It is the only distribution of Linux that is being developed co-operatively by many individuals through the Internet, in the same spirit as Linux and other Free Software. More than 100 package maintainers are working on about 500 packages and improving Debian Linux. A sophisticated bug tracking system allows users to easily report bugs and security concerns which are quickly dealt with by the Debian community. A new release of the package will soon occur on well-known ftp archives.

Debian Linux is a very dynamic distribution. Snap-shot releases are made about every three months, the ftp archives are updated daily.

For more information about Debian Linux, please refer to the files at `<ftp://ftp.debian.org/debian/doc/>` or visit our World Wide Web page at `<http://www.debian.org/>`.

If you're interested in joining this project you are invited to subscribe to either debian-user@lists.debian.org or debian-devel@lists.debian.org by sending a mail to debian-user-request@lists.debian.org (or debian-devel-request respectively) with the word "help" in the subject line.

Internet Access:

Debian Linux is available via anonymous FTP from `<ftp://ftp.debian.org/debian/>` and on a mirror near to you.

Last Freeze Date:

16 December 1996 (1.2)

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997

2.4 DOSLINUX

Distributor:

Kent Robotti
FTP: `<ftp://ftp.sunsite.unc.edu/pub/Linux/distributions/doslinux>`

Provider's Description:

A linux-elf slip/ppp networking system for use with DOS (formerly called 'DILINUX'). It can be dropped into a subdirectory of any DOS system and booted from DOS without messing with disk partitions. About 22 mbytes unzipped, 8.5 mbytes zipped. Noncommercial.

Internet Access:

By anonymous ftp from Sunsite archives (see URL above).

Last Freeze Date:

12 March 1997

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997

Editor's comments:

As the author says, not a general-purpose release. Probably best suited to sites that primarily run DOS but want better networking tools for hooking up to an Internet service provider.

2.5 Linux Pro

Distributor:

WorkGroup Solutions, Inc.
P.O. Box 460190
Aurora, CO 80046-0190
Vox: (303)-699-7470
Fax: (303)-699-2793
Net: info@wgs.com (orders)
FTP: `<ftp://ftp.wgs.com/pub2/wgs>`

Provider's Description:

The charter of the WGS Linux Pro CD is different from all other distributions currently on the market. We are actively pursuing penetration into the commercial marketplace for Linux. Everything we do is aimed at increasing the size of the Linux community, and helping Linux to become THE one true operating system, not just an operating system.

WGS Linux Pro consists of our Main "Stable" Linux CD, for which we select what we consider to be the best Linux distribution available. Then we make bug fixes & minor enhancements. This CD often contains software older than the latest, under the theory that "the latest is not always the greatest". Together with this approach we provide technical support as well as support agreements. For this reason WGS Linux Pro is considered a primary Linux distribution. Optionally, and in addition to our primary CD, we supply supplemental CDs containing all the latest Linux software (including current archives of the tsx-11, sunsite, and Red Hat sites). Virtually anything you will get with anyone's Linux product can be found on these supplemental CDs. We continually add more to these supplemental CDs as software becomes available. Even with all this, pricing on our product line is very favorable when correctly compared to other Linux distributions. Also optional (included with

Linux Pro+) is a professionally produced and printed manual containing the Linux documentation project and more!

Current version is 4.0a; kernel is 1.2.13 with installable 2.0.x on the CD.

Internet Access:

Look in <http://www.wgs.com> for a list of WGS products, and latest information on the CD-ROM.

Ordering:

WGS Linux Pro is available on CD from dealers and distributors worldwide, and soon from our FTP site.

You may call, fax, email, or mail us, to purchase, or request additional information. We will be happy to respond to any question you have. We accept American Express, Visa, Discover, and MasterCard, or purchase orders with approval of credit.

Miscellaneous:

Complete information is available on our FTP site.

WGS publishes a free E-Mail newsletter on Linux and FlagShip to which you may subscribe by just emailing us your request.

In addition we carry Motif, FlagShip, A line of books, and other products to make your experience with Linux more complete and fulfilling. Check us out!

Last Freeze Date:

1 October 1996.

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997

Editor's comment:

They describe their current distribution as "Red Hat 3.03 plus".

2.6 Red Hat Linux

Distributor:

Red Hat Software
3201 Yorktown Rd, Suite 123 DeKalb Center
Durham, NC 27713
Vox: (800) 546-7274 or (919) 572-6500
Fax: (919) 572-6726
Net: redhat@redhat.com
WWW: <http://www.redhat.com>
FTP: <ftp://ftp.redhat.com>

Provider's Description:

Red Hat 4.2 is based on the 2.0.30 kernel and is available for Intel, Sparc and Alpha platforms.

Four installation innovations make Red Hat the easiest Linux to install ever. Our graphical installation mode brings you straight up into X for most of the installation. Our boot disk creation script eases selection of the proper boot disk, and it saves your existing network configuration information and XF86Config so you don't have to configure TCP/IP or X! Our FTP install allows you to install simply by downloading 3 floppy disk images – the rest is done automatically! And finally, the installation includes seamless support for PCMCIA devices – install Red Hat on your laptop as easily as on your desktop machine!

After installing Red Hat Linux once, you will never need to reinstall Linux again! The new RPM packaging system is sophisticated enough to allow upgrading to new Red Hat releases without reinstalling your system - no partitioning, no backing up all your files, no headaches.

Ordering:

Available directly from Red Hat Software and most distributors of Linux related products. Please contact Red Hat Software for ordering details (on-line ordering is available through Red Hat's Web). Suggested retail price is for the Intel version is $49.95, for the Sparc and Alpha versions $99.95.

Last Freeze Date:

Early May 1997.

Entry last modified:

27 June 1997.

Editor's Comments:

The big selling point of this distribution is RPM, the Red Hat Package Manager. This piece of software is a remarkable advance; it allows you to cleanly install and de-install applications and operating-system components, including the kernel and OS base itself. Red Hat has issued this under GPL, which is a good thing for other distributors; it is the considered opinion of this editor that those who do not adopt it will shortly have their lunches eaten by those who do.

2.7 Trans-Ameritech Linuxware

Distributor:

Trans-Ameritech
2342A Walsh Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95051
Net: info@trans-am.com
WWW: http://www.zoom.com/tae
Vox: (408)-727-3883
Fax: (408)-727-3882
BBS: (408)-980-9840

Provider's Description:

Trans-Ameritech has published 10 releases of Linux by early 1997. Traditionally, Trans-Ameritech has set new standards for combining ease of use and straightforward installation, even for a first-time user, with its line of LinuxWare CD-ROMs. This is a flexible, easy-to-install operating system geared toward those interested in learning Unix as well as technical people, students and home PC users.

- New Linux users will appreciate a Windows-based set up program from the CD.
- To minimize the possibility of hardware conflicts many extra kernels are provided for different configurations. They are usable for installation and normal operation.
- Many on-line documents are provided for quick reference, including the Linux Documentation Project files in source, dvi and ps formats.

Many applications are included:

- MS-Windows based X configuration program
- C/C++,Pascal and Ada compilers as well as converters fron Fortran
- TCP/IP networking, UUCP,SLIP,CSLIP,PPP
- Internet access with binaries and sources for FTP,Telnet,News and E-mail
- Multiple terminals and X-Windows environment
- Gnu and international versions of the ispell spell-cheker
- The communications apps:term,minicom,Seyon (X-Windows based)
- Editors:elvis(vi clone),joe,jove,Emacs
- PostScript clone ghostscript
- Object oriented GNU Smalltalk and the Smalltalk interface to X
- TCL/Tk (Powerful scripting language with Motif-like X interface)
- Programs for electrical engineers and ham enthusiasts
- Interviews libraries,include files and doc Word-processor and idraw drawing program
- Typesetting:TeX,LaTeX,xdvi,dvips,Metafont,groff
- Andrew multimedia word prodessor with hyperlinks
- FAX send and receive on either class 1 or class 2 fax modems
- DOOM for game enthusiasts

All the sources are available on the CD-ROM. The often needed sources are uncompressed and can be used directly from the CD-ROM.

An uncompressed Linux filesystem is available for references and disk space conversaion. You can run programs directly from the CD-ROM! There is a large info directory for on-line reference and many manpages.

For hacker's reference, uncompressed FreeBSD and netBSD sources are provided.

The latest upgrades and patches are always available through Trans-Ameritech Linux BBS:(408) 980 9840. It's free for all Trans-Ameritech customers.

Our distribution is targeted for Windows and DOS users who want an easy migration path upwards, rather than for UNIX experts.

Ordering:

Email orders are taken at order@trans-am.com
The price for our current release of LinuxWare 2.5 is $19.95

The price for a package order: LinuxWare 2.5,Supplement 5 and Supplement 4 (Ultimate LinuxWare Bundle) in one shipment is $30

If you order with a credit card (VISA, MC, AmEx, Discovery), please, indicate the card number, expiration date and your mailing address.

Shipping and handling in US: single CD-ROM or Ultimate LinuxWare Bundle is $5(first class US mail).

Overseas shipping is $8 for single CD-ROM , $12 for the bundle.

COD is available in the US only for $4.50. California residents, please add 7.75% sales tax.

Annual subscription (4 releases) is available for $80 plus S&H (note: there are 4 shipments in a subscription). Example: subscription in US is:$80+$5x4=$100. Subscription in Europe/Japan etc. $80 + $8x4 = $112.

Miscellaneous:

If you have any further questions,please contact us through E-mail: info@trans-am.com or order@trans-am.com.

Last Freeze Date:

January 1997 (Supplement 5)

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997

2.8 Walnut Creek Slackware

Distributor:

Walnut Creek CDROM
4041 Pike Lane, Suite D
Concord, CA 94520
Net: info@cdrom.com (information), order@cdrom.com (orders), support@cdrom.com (support).

Provider's Description:

Ftp.cdrom.com is the home of Slackware Linux. We are the publishers of the Official Slackware Linux CDROM. Our distribution is a 2-disc set with the current version being Slackware 96. The current disc is based on the 2.0.0 kernel.

Slackware Linux is a full featured distribution of the Linux operating system designed for 386/486 computers with a 3.5" floppy and CD-ROM drive.

Internet Access:

WWW: `<http://www.cdrom.com/titles/os/slack96.htm>`
FTP: `<ftp:ftp.cdrom.com/pub/linux/slackware>`

Ordering:

The cost of the CD-ROM set from Walnut Creek is $39.95.

Last Freeze Date:

August 1996.

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997.

2.9 Yggdrasil Plug-and-Play Linux CD-ROM and the Linux Bible

Distributor:

Yggdrasil Computing, Incorporated
4880 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 205
San Jose, CA 95129-1034
Net: info@yggdrasil.com
WWW: `<http://www.yggdrasil.com>`
FTP: `<http://ftp.yggdrasil.com>`
Vox: (800) 261-6630, (408) 261-6630
Fax: (408) 261-6631

Provider's Description:

Yggdrasil Plug-and-Play Linux is a complete CD-ROM distribution of the Linux operating system. It includes a great deal of software—nearly every package that you would expect to find on a complete UNIX system is available. A complete file list is available via FTP from `yggdrasil.com`.

The Linux Bible is a compendium of Linux documentation, including 5 books from the Linux Documentation Project, The Yggdrasil installation manual, and the complete set of Linux HOWTO guides. We publish this and offer this separately from the CD-ROM distribution.

At the top of the sophistication hierarchy, programmers who want to explore or add the occasional feature know that Yggdrasil is the Linux distribution with a fully buildable source tree and with the ability to automatically trace installed files back to their sources.

Everybody, especially new users, will appreciate the Plug-and-Play operation for which Yggdrasil's product is named. Put the media in a computer with supported hardware, turn the computer on, and it's running everything, straight from the CDROM. (This is no longer unique to Yggdrasil, but Yggdrasil did it first.)

The login screen lists a number of preconfigured user names, including "install", which installs the system, giving paragraphs of explanation about every question that it asks the user. X windows configuration is automated too, prompting the user for configuration information the first time `xinit` is run.

From X windows, a graphical control panel allows simple "fill in the blanks" configuration of networking, SLIP, outgoing UUCP, the printer, NNTP, and many other features that previously required the knowledge of a system administrator to configure.

For more information, send mail to `info@yggdrasil.com`, surf to `www.yggdrasil.com`, FTP to `yggdrasil.com`, or contact us by any convenient method.

Ordering:

Plug-and-Play Linux costs $34.95 is and available directly from Yggdrasil or from your local computer, software or technical book store. If Plug-and-Play Linux is not available from your favorite reseller, help promote Linux by making it your mission to change that. Give your reseller our phone number and demand that they carry Plug-and-Play Linux.

Yggdrasil offers a $7 discount for upgrades or crossgrades. Send us your old Yggdrasil release and a check for $27.95 + $5 shipping and handling to upgrade. Or do the same, but send us a competing distribution such any version of SCO, Esix, minix, or one of the CD's with the slackware floppy images, and tell us where you got it, so that we can make sure that your favorite reseller carries our products too.

Miscellaneous:

Yggdrasil also sells OSF/Motif and The Linux Bible, a compilation of works from the Linux Documentation project. In addition to a copy of the Plug-and-Play Linux manual, The Linux Bible includes *Linux Installation and Getting Started*, *Network Administrator's Guide*, *System Administrator's Guide*, *Linux User's Guide*, and HOWTO guides on hardware compatibility, distributions, dos emulation, ethernet, floppy tape, installation, mail, networking version 2, MGR (an alternative to X windows), X windows, usenet news, printing, SCSI, serial communications, sound, and UUCP. The Linux Bible costs $39.95 and is printed on recycled paper. $1 from every copy sold is donated to the Linux Documentation Project. OSF/Motif costs $149.95, $5 of which is donated to the development of a free Motif clone.

Last Freeze Date:

Mid-August 1995. (Yes, 1995. They have a next release in pre-production but don't want to commit to a ship date yet.)

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997

Editor's Comments:

Yggdrasil includes lots of well-chosen stuff with their distribution; the CD-ROM-only demo mode is impressive; installation and administration are easy enough to live up to their "Plug And Play" name. The 167-page manual is very nice. Their previous problems in the installation scripts seem to have been fixed. Their only drawback is that they haven't yet adopted Red Hat's RPM technology or created an equivalent. They claim they're going to by RPM-compatible in their upcoming release.

3 Re-Packagers

This section lists re-packagers of the Linux distributions listed above. In other words, the people selling the software below probably do *not* maintain or support the software itself.

3.1 InfoMagic Developer's Resource CD-ROM kit

Distributor:

InfoMagic, Inc.
PO Box 30370. Flagstaff, AZ 86003-0370
Net: info@infomagic.com
WWW: <http://www.infomagic.com>
Vox: (800)-800-6613 (orders), (520)-526-9852 (tech support)
Fax: (520)-526-9573

Provider's Description:

The InfoMagic Linux Developer's Resource is a snapshot of the sunsite.unc.edu and tsx-11.mit.edu archives. It also includes the complete GNU software collection (in source form). The following Linux distributions are included on the discs: Red Hat, Slackware, Debian and JE (Japanese Extensions).

The Slackware distribution has been completely unpacked allowing many packages to be run directly from the disk. Sources for all the packages in Slackware are also included.

The Linux HOWTO documents have been formatted for use with the Microsoft Multimedia Viewer (which is included) to allow browsing and full-text search under Microsoft Windows. InfoMagic also includes complete archives of the linux mailing lists.

InfoMagic also distributes the "Installation and Getting Started Guide", by Matt Welsh as well as Linux T-Shirts (featuring the platypus logo).

Ordering:

The 5-CD set is $27.50/copy. Shipping within the US is $5 (USPS Priority Mail), outside the US $10 (International Airmail), FedEx and UPS on request. Orders may be placed via phone, fax, or email (a PGP key is available: finger info@InfoMagic.com). We accept Visa, Mastercard, and AMEX. 1-year subscriptions are available for $150 (within the US) and $175 (outside the US) including shipping. A 1 year subscription consists of 6 releases, one every two months or so.

Internet Access:

The contents of the CDs may be found at either <http://www.infomagic.com>, <ftp://ftp.infomagic.com>.

Support:

We provide unlimited email and FAX support. Telephone support is available via a 900 number at $2.00/minute. We also offer support contracts tailored to individual needs.

The CD-set includes a 30-page quick-start.

Last Freeze Date:

1st week of December 1996. Updates about every two months. The Slackware release is 3.1, Red Hat is 4.0

Entry last modified:

13 March 1997

4 Submissions To This Document

I encourage anyone and everyone who maintains a Linux distribution or mail order service, to submit information on their service to this HOWTO. It's easy and fun, and it's free advertising. This document is posted to many places and is archived (see the next section).

4.1 Types of Submissions

We are interested in submissions for:

- Complete distributions of Linux software, available either via anonymous FTP, UUCP, or mail order. By 'complete distribution' we mean any set of software which can be used to build a complete Linux system from scratch.
- Layered products or individual software packages available only via mail order. If your software package is available via anonymous FTP, chances are people can find it. Software products only available via mail-order include commercial things such as Motif, and any other commercial software ported to Linux.
- Any other *Linux-specific* goods available via mail order, such as Linux-specific books and documentation, T-shirts, and assorted paraphrenalia. Note: our interest in the latter categories is marginal – this is a Linux Distributions HOWTO, not a catalogue of cutesy Linux junk. Whatever you're selling will have to be (a) very useful, (b) very original, or (c) very funny, to get listed here.

If the number of submissions for services and layered products is large, I'll create a separate HOWTO for these items.

4.2 How to submit

To submit an entry to this HOWTO, please send mail to `esr@snark.thyrsus.com` with the following information. This format is not machine-parsable; any of the fields may be any length that you wish, but I'd like to keep each entry down to, say, 50 lines.

Name:

Name of service or distribution

Distributor:

Name of company, person, etc. who distributes/maintains the service or distribution. Should include mail, email, phone contact information, and (if possible) a WWW reference.

Provider's Description:

Description of the distribution or service that you provide. If this is a software distribution, please include information such as what software is included, versions, general overview of installation, requirements, and so on.

Internet Access:

Where your service or distribution is available over the Internet; typically a WWW or FTP address.

Ordering:

How to order your distribution or service, if applicable. Include prices, shipping information, methods of payment, etc.

Support:

Information on support terms and support contracts.

Miscellaneous:

Anything else that you find relevant.

Last Freeze Date:

Last freeze date of the current version(s). Also, your estimated update frequency.

4.3 Submission Guidelines

Please keep your entry as short as possible. If you need to include extensive information, please make a reference to where one can FTP or mail to get more information on your distribution; these entries are only meant to be *pointers* to where one can find information on your service or distribution.

If you provide more than one service or distribution, please use *separate entries* for each.

I may edit your entries for conciseness and brevity, if I find any irrelevant information, or if the entry is overly verbose. Otherwise the content should remain the same.

When making submissions to the Distribution-HOWTO, you grant implicit permission for me to use the entries in other materials, such as books from the LDP, and other online documents. For example, information from the Distribution-HOWTO may be included in a published Linux book. If you do not want me to include your entry in materials other than the Distribution-HOWTO, please say so.

5 Administrivia

5.1 Terms of Use

This document is copyright 1997 by Eric S. Raymond. You may use, disseminate, and reproduce it freely, provided you:

- Do not omit or alter this copyright notice.
- Do not omit or alter or omit the version number and date.
- Do not omit or alter the document's pointer to the current WWW version.
- Clearly mark any consdensed, altered or versions as such.

These restrictions are intended to protect potential readers from stale or mangled versions. If you think you have a good case for an exception, ask me.

5.2 Acknowledgements

This document was originated by Bill Riemers. Matt Welsh maintained the second version. Erik Troan then maintained the document to release 3.0.

In January 1995, Eric Raymond, while unaware of the existence of this document, began to develop a similar FAQ in the format of his now-discontinued "PC-clone UNIX Software Buyer's Guide", which had covered mainly System V UNIXes and BSD/OS.

In March 1995, Eric approached Erik about cooperating on a merged version. In early April 1995, Erik went to work for Red Hat Software, and (wishing to avoid a conflict of interest) handed the document to Eric. Eric merged in a lot of new information and added several new fields to the distribution entries.

Accordingly, this document has been a sort of serial collaboration. The editorial 'we' generally tags observations by all the maintainers; 'I' is Eric (the current one) speaking.

We are delighted to acknowledge the contributions of all the Linux users and Internet hackers who have contributed information and feedback.