Subject: Linux Help Needed
Posted by David Fanning on Tue, 24 Jan 2006 04:17:08 GMT
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Folks,

Partly so I could feel the pain in the Linux user, and
partly because I'm a masochist at heart, I decided to
download IDL on a Linux machine.

I spent the better part of an evening downloading the
latest Fedora Core 4 Linux OS and put it on an old Dell
laptop. I still don't have a mouse working, but the touch
pad is OK, and everything else seems to be in order, so
I downloaded the latest IDL from the RSI web page and
followed the installation instructions to the letter.
No problems there.

But when I go to run IDL I get a message about "error
loading shared library: libXp.so.6. No such file or directory".
It is looking for it in the /usr/local/rsi/idl_6.2/bin/bin.linux.86
directory, and, sure enough, it is not there.

Any ideas what I am doing wrong here?

Any idea how I might get a mouse working?

Thanks,

David

--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Sid[1] on Thu, 26 Jan 2006 19:12:30 GMT
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David:

I am no expert by a long shot, but have you tried Mandriva? I use 10.1
and haven't had problems with it in the last year, on desktops or
laptops.....

Siddharth

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by David Fanning on Thu, 26 Jan 2006 19:22:01 GMT
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Sid writes:

> I am no expert by a long shot, but have you tried Mandriva? I use 10.1
> and haven't had problems with it in the last year, on desktops or
> laptops.....

Uh, no. I only have 24 hours in a day. I can't afford to
download more than 5 or 6 flavors of LINUX. :-)

By the way, I am *really* getting into this. If I wanted
to buy a new laptop with LINUX installed and ready to go,
what would you LIXUX users recommend? I need a pretty
powerful machine for a new proposed project.

Cheers,

David

--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by K. Bowman on Thu, 26 Jan 2006 20:57:25 GMT
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In article <MPG.1e42cf41300b6219989b40@news.frii.com>,
 David Fanning <davidf@dfanning.com> wrote:

> By the way, I am *really* getting into this. If I wanted
> to buy a new laptop with LINUX installed and ready to go,
> what would you LIXUX users recommend? I need a pretty
> powerful machine for a new proposed project.
>
> Cheers,
>
> David

Apple Powerbook ;-)

I know, I know, IDL won't be native for a while. Has anyone gotten an Intel Mac
who can test IDL under emulation?

Ken

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Nigel Wade on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 09:45:17 GMT

Kenneth Bowman wrote:

> In article <MPG.1e42cf41300b6219989b40@news.frii.com>,
> David Fanning <davidf@dfanning.com> wrote:
>
>> By the way, I am *really* getting into this. If I wanted
>> to buy a new laptop with LINUX installed and ready to go,
>> what would you LIXUX users recommend? I need a pretty
>> powerful machine for a new proposed project.
>>
>> Cheers,
>>
>> David
>
> Apple Powerbook ;-)
>
> I know, I know, IDL won't be native for a while. Has anyone gotten an Intel
Mac
> who can test IDL under emulation?
>
> Ken

It seems that the Intel Macs are not all that Apple would like you to believe:

 http://www.macworld.com/2006/01/features/imaclabtest1/index. php

--
Nigel Wade, System Administrator, Space Plasma Physics Group,
        University of Leicester, Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK
E-mail :   nmw@ion.le.ac.uk
Phone :   +44 (0)116 2523548, Fax : +44 (0)116 2523555

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by K. Bowman on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 15:27:37 GMT

In article <drcq3b$5rn$1@south.jnrs.ja.net>, Nigel Wade <nmw@ion.le.ac.uk>
wrote:

> http://www.macworld.com/2006/01/features/imaclabtest1/index.php

There are arguments about this going on in several places.

  http://apple.slashdot.org/apple/06/01/26/2038249.shtml

> madgunde writes "Looks like MacWorld magazine was a little premature in
> reporting that the new Apple iMac Core Duo doesn't live up to Apple's speed
> claims. The folks over at MacSpeedZone have done some performance testing of
> their own that debunks MacWorld's results and shows that the new iMac Core
> Duo DOES live up to the hype.

The benchmarks Apple showed are SPECmarks, which may or may not be what you care
about. For scientific computing they are probably a reasonable starting point.

I'll withhold judgement until I get to run *my* codes.   ;-)

Ken Bowman

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Ken Mankoff on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 15:50:51 GMT
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On Thu, 26 Jan 2006, Kenneth Bowman wrote:
> I know, I know, IDL won't be native for a while. Has anyone
> gotten an Intel Mac who can test IDL under emulation?

My code runs fine on the developer machine. I haven't checked into
the speed of it with benchmarks, but it feels about the same speed.

  -k.

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Karl Schultz on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 17:19:49 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

On Thu, 26 Jan 2006 12:22:01 -0700, David Fanning wrote:

> Sid writes:
>
>> I am no expert by a long shot, but have you tried Mandriva? I use 10.1
>> and haven't had problems with it in the last year, on desktops or
>> laptops.....
>

> Uh, no. I only have 24 hours in a day. I can't afford to
> download more than 5 or 6 flavors of LINUX. :-)
>
> By the way, I am *really* getting into this. If I wanted
> to buy a new laptop with LINUX installed and ready to go,
> what would you LIXUX users recommend? I need a pretty
> powerful machine for a new proposed project.

I really don't know how much luck you'll have finding a laptop with just
LINUX on it. I'm sure that there are some out there, but I also think
that it is safe to say that your choices in the hardware would be limited.

I ended up getting a Toshiba Satellite with Win XP on it. The first thing
I did when I got it was to boot it with Knoppix, live off the CD.
Knoppix, and other recent distros, have a tool that will let you shrink an
NTFS partition in place without reformatting the drive. This tool let me
split the internal hard disk in half. I think I also made a small (2GB)
FAT partition so I have some disk space shared between LINUX and
Windows. LINUX doesn't *write* to NTFS very well these days.

I then installed Debian on the second half and went ahead and put the GRUB
boot loader on. That lets me select Win or LINUX at power on time. I
almost always just close the lid to hiberate Windows, so I don't see the
GRUB menu very much. It works well.

I think it is probably pretty important to get the features you need/want
in a laptop purchase and then worry about adding LINUX later. There are
websites out there that describe how various LINUX distros work on many
laptops. They might be worth checking as you narrow down your choices.

Good luck,

Karl

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by David Fanning on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 17:58:15 GMT
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Karl Schultz writes:

> I really don't know how much luck you'll have finding a laptop with just
> LINUX on it. I'm sure that there are some out there, but I also think
> that it is safe to say that your choices in the hardware would be limited.

I have been taken aback to receive a number of
private e-mails cautioning against expecting too
much from LINUX on a laptop. This has surprised

me. I guess because I got caught up in the excitement
of the LINUX evangelists. I just *assumed* LINUX
would work well everywhere. I am beginning to
appreciate why the new Mac machines are such a big
deal. It brings Windows reliability to the LINUX
world. :-)

> I ended up getting a Toshiba Satellite with Win XP on it. The first thing
> I did when I got it was to boot it with Knoppix, live off the CD.
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> I then installed Debian on the second half and went ahead and put the GRUB
> boot loader on. That lets me select Win or LINUX at power on time. I
> almost always just close the lid to hiberate Windows, so I don't see the
> GRUB menu very much. It works well.

Well, this sounds like a project I can sink my teeth into,
and I have just the machine to try it out on. I guess I better
go get BitTorrent first, though, or it will be another slow
day in Colorado.

> I think it is probably pretty important to get the features you need/want
> in a laptop purchase and then worry about adding LINUX later. There are
> websites out there that describe how various LINUX distros work on many
> laptops. They might be worth checking as you narrow down your choices.

The thing I am MOST surprised about, is that LINUX users
will pay that extra premium to have Windows installed on
their laptops. I guess they just think of it as an insurance
premium. :-)

Cheers,

David

--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed

> I have been taken aback to receive a number of
> private e-mails cautioning against expecting too
> much from LINUX on a laptop. This has surprised
> me. I guess because I got caught up in the excitement
> of the LINUX evangelists. I just *assumed* LINUX
> would work well everywhere. I am beginning to
> appreciate why the new Mac machines are such a big
> deal. It brings Windows reliability to the LINUX
> world. :-)

I have been taken aback by how many private emails you got cautioning
you against Linux on a laptop. Of course, I don't know how many emails
you got, but I'm assuming it was a pretty good number given your statement.

Linux DOES work well on most systems. I have Linux installed on my
laptop. My co-workers have many Linux installed on their laptops as
well. None of us have any problems.

I hear people say that Linux doesn't work well on laptops. I hear that
it's unreliable on laptops. But it every time someone says something
like this 9 times out of 10 they have a very unique non-typical hardware
configuration or have a misconception about what Linux can do. I had
Linux put on my laptop when I first got it and haven't had any issues
with it. Around here we have a lovely mixture of Dell and Micron and
IBM, and you might even see a Sony Vaio here or there and I haven't seen
anyone who has problems.

The problems I do see are people who think they can go buy the latest
bleeding edge hardware and expect everything to work. Because it's
still mainly a Windows world, the Windows drivers get written first.
That's especially true for graphics cards. I don't know if it's still
the case today, but I know that people would have problems with nVidia
cards because Linux was not allowed to include the driver that the
nVidia people wrote. There was some legal issue on the nVidia side, not
the Linux side, that caused this. Anyway, you had to download the
driver from nVidia and install it manually, but some people just didn't
know to do that. And then they complained about Linux not including the
driver even though the Linux folks wanted to include it.

>> I think it is probably pretty important to get the features you need/want
>> in a laptop purchase and then worry about adding LINUX later. There are
>> websites out there that describe how various LINUX distros work on many
>> laptops. They might be worth checking as you narrow down your choices.

This reads like it's really hard to get the features you want and have

Linux. It's not hard at all. Of course, my feature list only includes
a ton of RAM, big beefy processor, a nice graphics card, and a burner.
I guess some people just want more. ;-)

> The thing I am MOST surprised about, is that LINUX users
> will pay that extra premium to have Windows installed on
> their laptops. I guess they just think of it as an insurance
> premium. :-)

For a long time, some companies wouldn't let you buy a laptop if it
didn't have Windows on it. There were deals done between M$ and the
OEMs so that Windows would be on every laptop and there wasn't an option
to get a laptop with no OS.

I don't mean to sound like a Linux zealot or anything. Sure, I use it
and it satisfies my particular needs better than any other OS whether
that's Windows, OS X, Solaris or something else. If Windows suits your
needs, use it. If Solaris suits your needs, use it. If you have a need
for using Linux, that's one thing. If you don't have a particular need
for it, you'll probably wind up disappointed by something.

-Mike

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Benjamin Hornberger on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 19:35:15 GMT
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Michael Wallace wrote:
>
> Linux DOES work well on most systems. I have Linux installed on my
> laptop. My co-workers have many Linux installed on their laptops as
> well. None of us have any problems.
>

I think Linux does run well on most laptops, but you will most likely
have problems gettings all of the little features like sound volume,
screen brightness, external VGA output etc. to work, which are all very
vendor-specific. The touchpad will probably work, but its scroll feature
might not... Things which are important to some people, but less
important to others. If you're lucky, somebody wrote a driver, but it
might not be included in your Linux distro. You'll have to get your
hands dirty yourself.

Benjamin

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Greg Hennessy on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 19:47:53 GMT
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On 2006-01-27, Nigel Wade <nmw@ion.le.ac.uk> wrote:
> It seems that the Intel Macs are not all that Apple would like you to believe:
>
> http://www.macworld.com/2006/01/features/imaclabtest1/index. php

Not that I have a dog in this fight, since I use Linux on opterons,
but a different viewpoint can be found at:

http://www.macspeedzone.com/html/hardware/machine/performanc e_in_the_raw/06/1_23.shtml

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Michael Wallace on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 20:05:53 GMT
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>> Linux DOES work well on most systems. I have Linux installed on my
>> laptop. My co-workers have many Linux installed on their laptops as
>> well. None of us have any problems.
>>
>
> I think Linux does run well on most laptops, but you will most likely
> have problems gettings all of the little features like sound volume,
> screen brightness, external VGA output etc. to work, which are all very
> vendor-specific. The touchpad will probably work, but its scroll feature
> might not...

These days the only thing that is really vendor specific is the graphics
card. Most sound and other features are covered. The last laptop
install I did was when Fedora Core 4 came out. With Fedora,
everything worked out of the box. The only hiccup was that I had to
add some vendor specific settings to get the full use of my graphics
card. Out of the box, I could use an external display with my laptop.
The vendor specific settings were only to allow the external display to
use higher resolutions. I did not have to tinker with anything else.

> Things which are important to some people, but less
> important to others. If you're lucky, somebody wrote a driver, but it
> might not be included in your Linux distro. You'll have to get your
> hands dirty yourself.

A few years ago, I would have agreed with this. I can't speak for all
distributions since I don't use them, but Fedora and SuSE have been very
good recently with respect to supporting things out of the box. I
actually don't remember the last time I had to search a sound driver and

configure something by hand except for the case of the graphics card
I've already mentioned. Everything else Just Works(TM).

-Mike

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by savoie on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 20:18:31 GMT
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Michael Wallace <mwallace.nospam@swri.edu.invalid> writes:

> A few years ago, I would have agreed with this. I can't speak for all
> distributions since I don't use them, but Fedora and SuSE have been very good
> recently with respect to supporting things out of the box. I actually don't
> remember the last time I had to search a sound driver and configure something
> by hand except for the case of the graphics card I've already mentioned.
> Everything else Just Works(TM).

I'll agree for the most part, but having yesterday (and the 3 or 5 days
before that) just put suse10 on my inspiron 8500, I'm aware of a few things
that can be tricky, mainly wireless. It certainly doesn't work out of the
box. And finding the "right" drivers was nothing short of Homeric.

I'm not a sysadmin, but have been using *nix for many many years, and I
nearly threw my computer out the window.

Matt

--
Matthew Savoie - Scientific Programmer
National Snow and Ice Data Center
(303) 735-0785   http://nsidc.org

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by jeyadev on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 21:22:41 GMT
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In article <MPG.1e440d21573f5daa989b42@news.frii.com>,
David Fanning <davidf@dfanning.com> wrote:
>
>   .... It brings Windows reliability to the LINUX
a   ^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^
> world. :-)

Good one, that! Glad to see the Linux has not yet destroyed
your sense of humour :-))

--

Surendar Jeyadev   jeyadev1@wrc.xerox.com

                    The 1 in the email address is fake

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by David Fanning on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 22:00:04 GMT
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Surendar Jeyadev writes:

> Good one, that! Glad to see the Linux has not yet destroyed
> your sense of humour :-))

Thanks goodness. I was afraid no one was reading my
posts anymore. :-)

Cheers,

David

--
David Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by jeyadev on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 23:17:17 GMT
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In article <MPG.1e4445d1d35a2373989b43@news.frii.com>,
David Fanning <davidf@dfanning.com> wrote:
> Surendar Jeyadev writes:
>
>> Good one, that! Glad to see the Linux has not yet destroyed
>> your sense of humour :-))
>
> Thanks goodness. I was afraid no one was reading my
> posts anymore. :-)

Wouldn't miss even one! But, can't add much to what has been
said before. Did get the WalMart Linux laptop and is just
fine for the purpose for which it was bought. But, once
you get to vendor specific stuff .... I agree with the rest
that it can be painful.

--

Surendar Jeyadev   jeyadev1@wrc.xerox.com

                  The 1 in the email address is fake

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by JD Smith on Sat, 28 Jan 2006 01:32:45 GMT
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On Thu, 26 Jan 2006 12:22:01 -0700, David Fanning wrote:

> Sid writes:

> By the way, I am *really* getting into this. If I wanted
> to buy a new laptop with LINUX installed and ready to go,
> what would you LIXUX users recommend? I need a pretty
> powerful machine for a new proposed project.

Installing Linux is usually trivial these days. I'd shop for the
laptop you want (I hear good things about the new Core Due systems),
with the features you want, and then head to:

http://www.linux-laptop.net/

to see if there any compatibility issues (sound cards are common). Mostly
things do indeed just work.

The reason IDL complains is that it needs an old, old version of the C
library and other libs, which most distros offer as a "compatibility"
library install. You can blame RSI for this, building against what is
essentially a 4 year old library set (not that it doesn't work).

If the Macbook Pro's are as nice as they seem to be, getting one of
those, and dual-booting linux/OSX would seem a rather nice solution.
Redhat recently officially announced support for Mac Intel. It would
be interesting to see how much Linux/IDL 6.2 cleans up OSX/IDL 6.2
Rosetta (assuming it runs), and then repeat the comparison when they
finally compile IDL for OSX/Intel later this year (hopefully).

I have friends in the laptop market now, and no clear RSI statement on

their commitment to support this new architecture is unsettling to them. "We'll look into and get back to you" is less than confidence-inspiring.

JD

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by JD Smith on Sat, 28 Jan 2006 01:55:58 GMT

On Fri, 27 Jan 2006 19:47:53 +0000, Greg Hennessy wrote:

> On 2006-01-27, Nigel Wade <nmw@ion.le.ac.uk> wrote:
>> It seems that the Intel Macs are not all that Apple would like you to believe:
>>
>>   http://www.macworld.com/2006/01/features/imaclabtest1/index. php
>
> Not that I have a dog in this fight, since I use Linux on opterons,
> but a different viewpoint can be found at:
>
>   http://www.macspeedzone.com/html/hardware/machine/performanc
e_in_the_raw/06/1_23.shtml

My strong impression is that, for large arrays (say 200,000 elements and more), the MacBook should be around 4-5 times faster at basic processing in IDL (not reading/writing to disk, drawing to screen, etc, but FFT's, arithmetic, etc.) than the Powerbook G4's they replace. In fact I'd be willing to make a wager to this effect.

Each core of the Core Duo is about as fast as a G5. If you are hammering away at both cores, you'll really embarrass your old PB. I expect *very* similar performance for Linux laptops with the Core Duo and the MacBook: same compiler, very similar libraries, same processor, same memory sub-system, etc. Macs may lag a bit due to the extra overhead of function calls, but it should be close. It will be nice not to suffer the "PPC" penalty under IDL (though we lament the unrealized potential which was Altivec).

Macworld's test was something of a joke. Though useful, because it reflects real world typical-use performance, we could easily design benchmarks in IDL which actually stress the dual CPU cores to their maximum, and we would find much different results. Here's a hint. This is not a CPU benchmark:

IDL> openw,un,/get_lun & writeu,un,lindgen(10000000L) & free_lun,un

---

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Paul Van Delst[1] on Sat, 28 Jan 2006 02:25:29 GMT
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JD Smith wrote:
> On Thu, 26 Jan 2006 12:22:01 -0700, David Fanning wrote:
>
>
>> Sid writes:
>
>
>> By the way, I am *really* getting into this. If I wanted
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> to see if there any compatibility issues (sound cards are common). Mostly
> things do indeed just work.
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> library and other libs, which most distros offer as a "compatibility"
> library install. You can blame RSI for this, building against what is
> essentially a 4 year old library set (not that it doesn't work).

That's just laughable.

> If the Macbook Pro's are as nice as they seem to be, getting one of
> those, and dual-booting linux/OSX would seem a rather nice solution.
> Redhat recently officially announced support for Mac Intel. It would
> be interesting to see how much Linux/IDL 6.2 cleans up OSX/IDL 6.2
> Rosetta (assuming it runs), and then repeat the comparison when they
> finally compile IDL for OSX/Intel later this year (hopefully).
>
> I have friends in the laptop market now, and no clear RSI statement on
> their commitment to support this new architecture is unsettling to
> them. "We'll look into and get back to you" is less than
> confidence-inspiring.

From my uneducated viewpoint, RSI always seems to be playing catch-up in this regard.

On the plus side (and off on a tangent - crikey, it's late), I bit the bullet and spent an hour plotting gobs and gobs of data using iPlot and, somewhere, somehow, I managed to figure out how to use it effectively despite the clunkiness of the "Visualization Browser". Even with the slowness of the application I guess I'm, well, impressed. (off I go into the corner to eat my hat....)

paulv

--
Paul van Delst
CIMSS @ NOAA/NCEP/EMC

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Foldy Lajos on Sat, 28 Jan 2006 10:00:53 GMT
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Hi,

from the IDL 6.2 system requirements:

> IDL 6.2 was built on the Linux 2.4 kernel with glibc 2.3.2
> using Red Hat Linux.

glibc 2.3.2 was released in March 2003, so it was ~2 years old when IDL 6.2 was released. And it also means, that it will not run on a three years old system, which IMHO is a bad thing. There are so many older systems hanging around. (Eg. I have a 4 years old linux machine with Mathematica, and it can not be upgraded without losing it.) Newer glibc's are compatible with the older ones.

X11 libraries: linux distro's changed from XFree86 to Xorg recently (because of some licensing issues), this can cause some library incompatibilities.

Gcc's standard C++ library API change frequently (~ yearly), so it is not possible to pick up a version which will work everywhere, "compatibility" packages are needed.

regards,
lajos

On Fri, 27 Jan 2006, JD Smith wrote:

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> library and other libs, which most distros offer as a "compatibility"
> library install. You can blame RSI for this, building against what is
> essentially a 4 year old library set (not that it doesn't work).
>

Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by swisswuff on Sat, 28 Jan 2006 17:51:33 GMT
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In our office, we have tried Debian, RedHat/Fedora and Suse, and for
most application, the Suse package was found to work best. It may be
important to make sure you install something else than (a) a preset
config ('workstation', 'graphical software', or what they are all
called) or (b) a minimum config. Some of these 'lib missing' problems
simply disappeared when we'd install a full set of everything contained
in a Linux package (what's using up a bit of harddisk against using up
all of my time trying to find a certain little library file?). By and
large, we had less problems with missing files on Suse than on other
Linuxes - at least as far as IDL and The Gimp are concerned... Wolf.