



OS4 OpenDesktop OpenDesktop User guide

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Introduction to OS4 OpenDesktop

OS4 OpenDesktop is a desktop Linux distribution. Its purpose is to allow desktop users to fully utilize the tools available to them in the Linux world and to use them as efficiently as possible. OS4 OpenDesktop is a free distribution, meaning it can be acquired free of charge without support from the Internet, or it can be purchased with support from the OS4 Store accessible from the OS4 OpenDesktop website. OS4 OpenDesktop was designed and implemented with four goals:

1. To be easy to use
2. To compete with mainstream operating systems, IE Mac OS and Microsoft Windows
3. To allow users to participate in the development of the Operating System
4. To deliver to users the most common tools they expect out of a modern OS

OS4 OpenDesktop is the ultimate Linux based distribution for common desktop usage and for the more demanding needs of the business desktop, and high end workstations.

With these goals we also instituted the principles of OS4 OpenDesktop:

1. To allow users to be able to easily acquire the software whether free or paid
2. to provide excellent accessibility tools for everyone to be able to use
3. To provide OS4 OpenDesktop in users native languages leading us to use superior language support
4. All of OS4 OpenDesktop's core applications are open source
5. To offer users excellent commercial support for the applications they want to use and to offer excellent commercial support upon deployment of OS4 OpenDesktop
6. To simplify computing for the masses

So with that lets look at the history of OS4 OpenDesktop

History of OS4 OpenDesktop

OS4 OpenDesktop started out in 2005 on a Gentoo Linux base. It was created by Roberto J Dohnert for a commercial company in Raleigh NC and was originally named OS/4u as in “OS for you” and was distributed by this company in house and was regularly updated by Roberto J Dohnert, Brian Johnson, and Sebastian Wells. Development was funded by this commercial company and since the team was given control of the direction of development, it was a lot of fun.

In 2006 the commercial company went bankrupt and development had ceased. OS/4u was lost and the company that eventually bought the assets of the bankrupt commercial company had no interest in continuing development of its own in house OS and went with a commercially supported Linux distribution.

In 2008, It was decided to start the development of the OS as an independent project and PC/OS was born. The one thing Roberto and the team wanted to do was create a user experience like no other. So the suggestion came in to use an Ubuntu base, as Ubuntu had a vast array of tools available and was becoming a fast success in the Linux community, next was the user interface. For this the team looked at four different desktop OS's that were the most popular during their time. NeXTStep, BeOS, AmigaOS and SGI Irix and work started to look at the best features those OS's had, what made them popular and translate that to current standards and develop something that is Unique and would stand out on its own.

With the idea in place Roberto set some goals which were:

1. Design a desktop that was easy to use for the average user, yet powerful enough for the more technical user.
2. Be light on resources and delight consumers upon first boot
3. new users be able to learn the new system within 10 minutes.
4. Make it as comfortable as possible for users coming from Mac OS X, Microsoft Windows and other Linux distributions.

With the stage set, OS4 OpenDesktop was poised to emerge as the premier desktop Linux distribution.

System requirements

OS4 OpenDesktop is set to optimally function with following set of system requirements.

Requirements for 32 bit Systems

Minimum

Processor PIII 800mhz
RAM 512mb
Hard Drive 10 GB
Graphics Standard VGA

Recommended

Processor Intel Cure Duo or higher
Ram 1 GB or Higher
Hard Drive 15 GB or higher
Graphics 3D Graphics Card

Requirements for 64 bit systems

Minimum

Processor AMD64 or Intel 64 1ghz Dual Core optimum
RAM 1gb
Hard Drive 10 GB
Graphics Standard

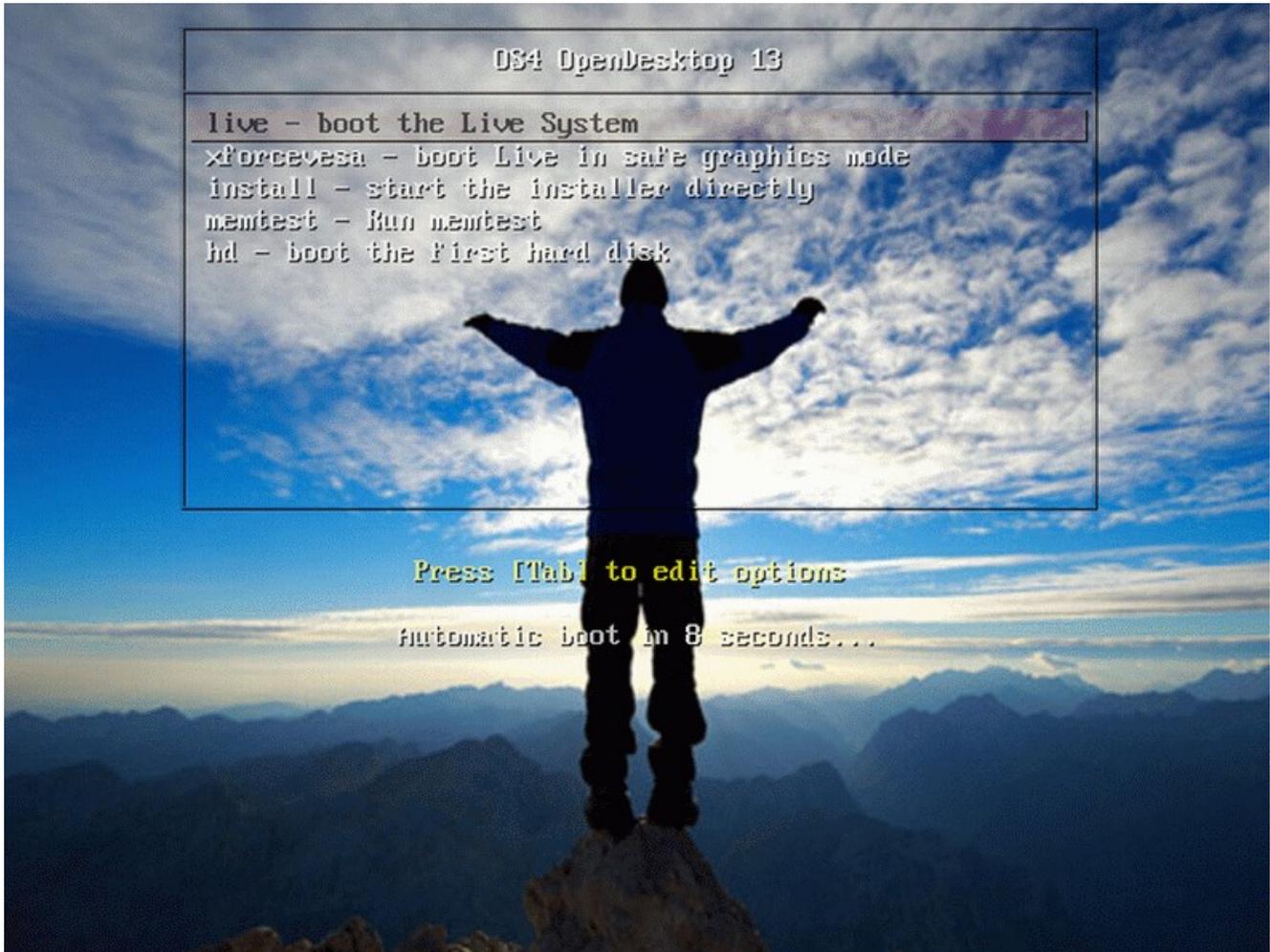
Recommended

Processor AMD64 or Intel64 Dual Core Processor
RAM 2gb or higher
Hard Drive 15 GB or higher
Graphics 3D Graphics Capable Card

Installing OS4 OpenDesktop

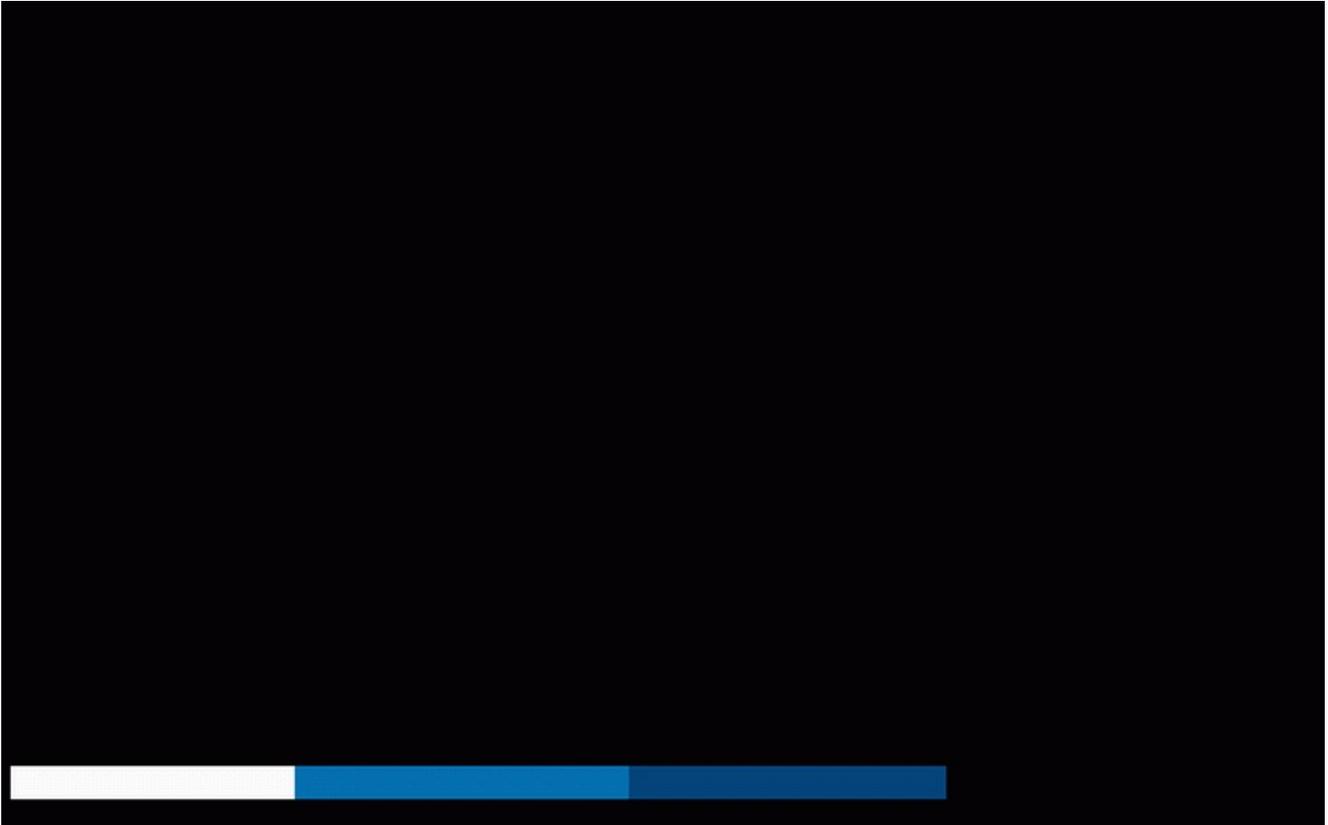
OS4 OpenDesktop can be installed with two methods. Users can either create a bootable DVD or bootable USB key.

You can install using the Installer by itself, or booting into a live system and invoking the installer. When you first boot OS4 OpenDesktop from the DVD or USB key you should be greeted with a screen that looks like this.



First Boot

Upon first boot there are a few things that happen. First the kernel is adjusting, detecting user hardware and preparing the system for the user. You will either see a thin silver line as the bootscreen or you will see a boot screen that looks like this.

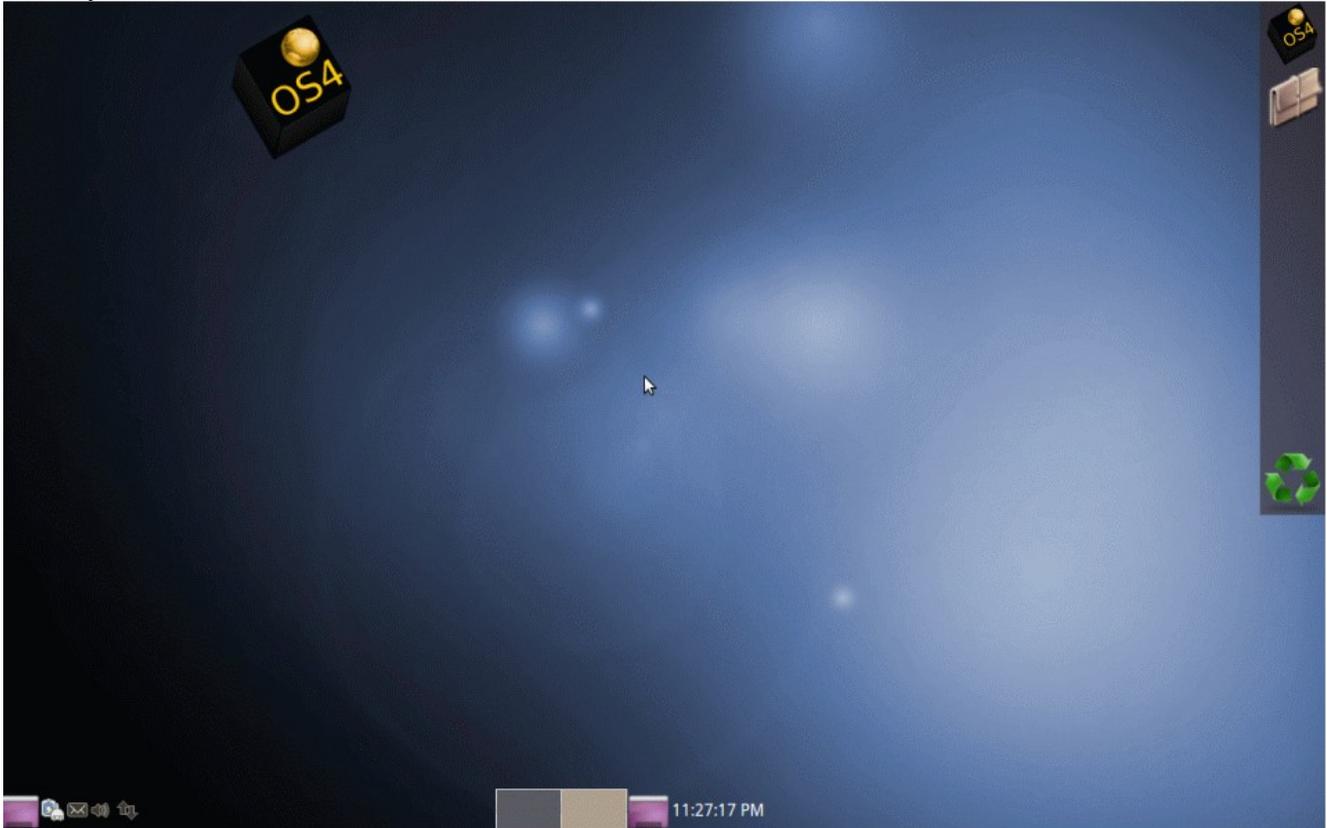


After the boot process finishes you will be greeted with a login screen. Type in the username and password you chose and you will come to the GUI.

Guide to the GUI

OS4 OpenDesktop uses the XFCE desktop, its heavily modified and the internal name for it is called the OS4 OpenDesktop Workspace Manager

When you first boot into the GUI it will look like this



On the right you have what's called the shelf. It contains the system menu, the trash can, and the file manager. From the system menu, you can drag and drop your most commonly used applications to the shelf, or you can create your own launchers from scratch.

At the bottom of the screen, you have what's called the applet bar. Here you can add XFCE applets and even more applications if that's what you, the user, wishes to do. Available by default from right to left are: The clock, Show/Hide Desktop, Screen Switcher (You have two screens by default), the indicator plug-in which encompasses the network applet, the sound volume manager, the notification area, and if you use a mobile device, you will have a battery indicator.

With OS4 OpenDesktop, you have a couple of useful system applications. You have a terminal emulator which lets you go into the guts of the Linux kernel and shell, you have a trash bin, and then you have a file manager. In the next section, we will look at the file manager.

The File Manager

For file management, we use what's called the Thunar file manager. The file manager has a few distinct uses. It allows you to easily find files stored on your system, you can view mounted external devices, external hard drives, USB keys, removable media, and it allows you to view file folders.

When you click on the attache case on the shelf, which represents a folder you will get a window that looks like this.



On the left hand side of your file manager you have a few shortcuts. Home, Desktop, Trash, and any removable drives you have mounted. You can also drag and drop your most commonly used folders to the left side and it will make them available via one click access.

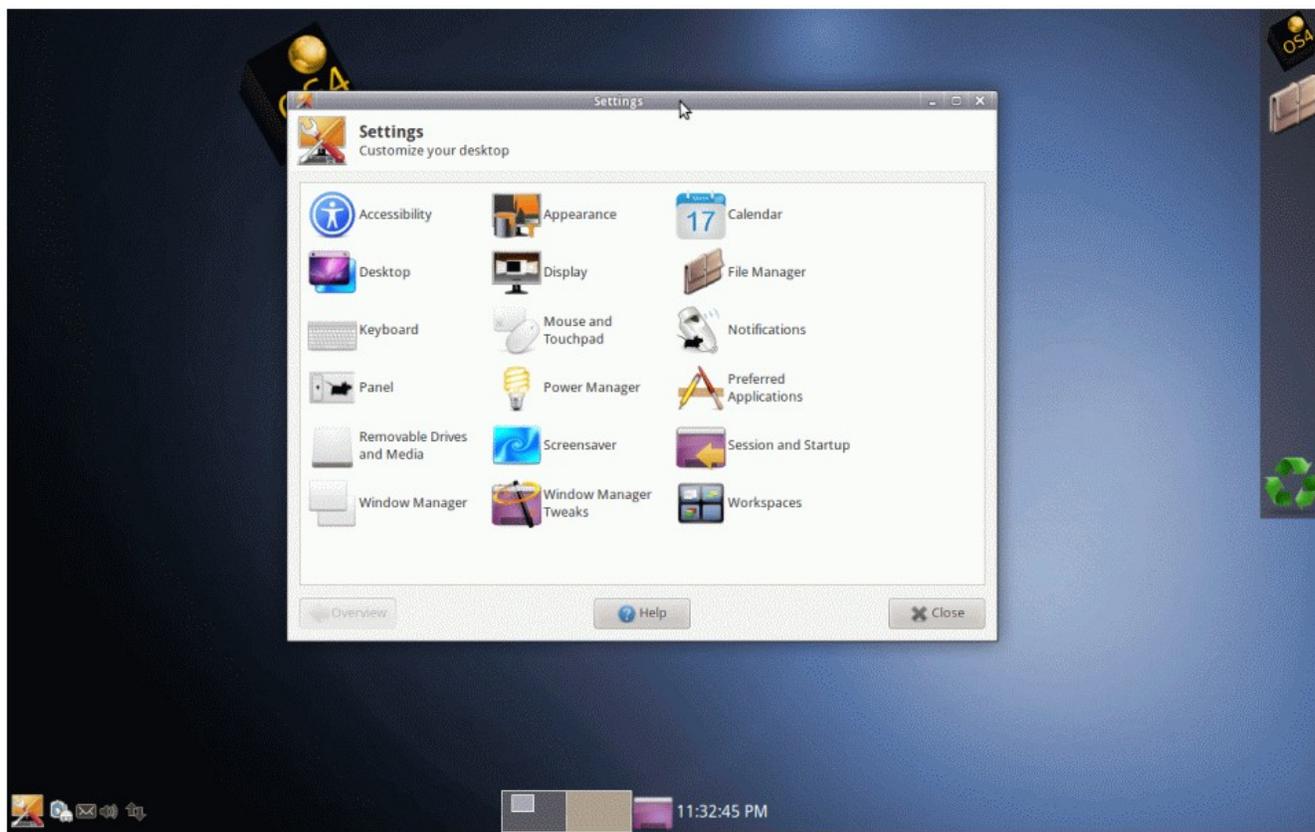
On the right hand side you have your home directory with your most common directories, Desktop folder, Documents folder, Downloads folder, Music folder, Pictures folder, Public folder which is a shared folder, Templates folder, and a video folders. In this area you can create new documents, new folders and adjust it to your liking.

The next section is on the settings manager. Here we will go ahead and explain the settings manager and what it does.

Settings Manager

The settings manager is the epicenter of your OS4 OpenDesktop experience. Here this allows you to decide your default applications, it controls your OS visuals such as wallpaper, icons, themes and windows borders. It also contains the settings for the Panels, removable media, accessibility controls and other options.

When you open the settings manager you will see a window like this.



The settings manager allow you to visually make changes under the hood.

Networking

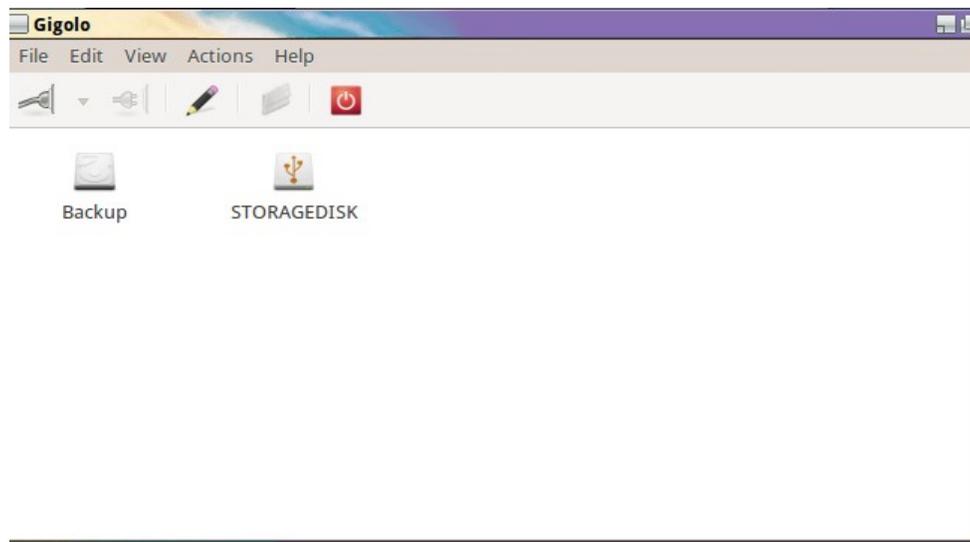
Networking is two fold there are three parts to the networking stack on OS4 OpenDesktop. You have the Network manager which connects to networks simultaneously when your hardware is detected. Network Manager is found in the applet bar



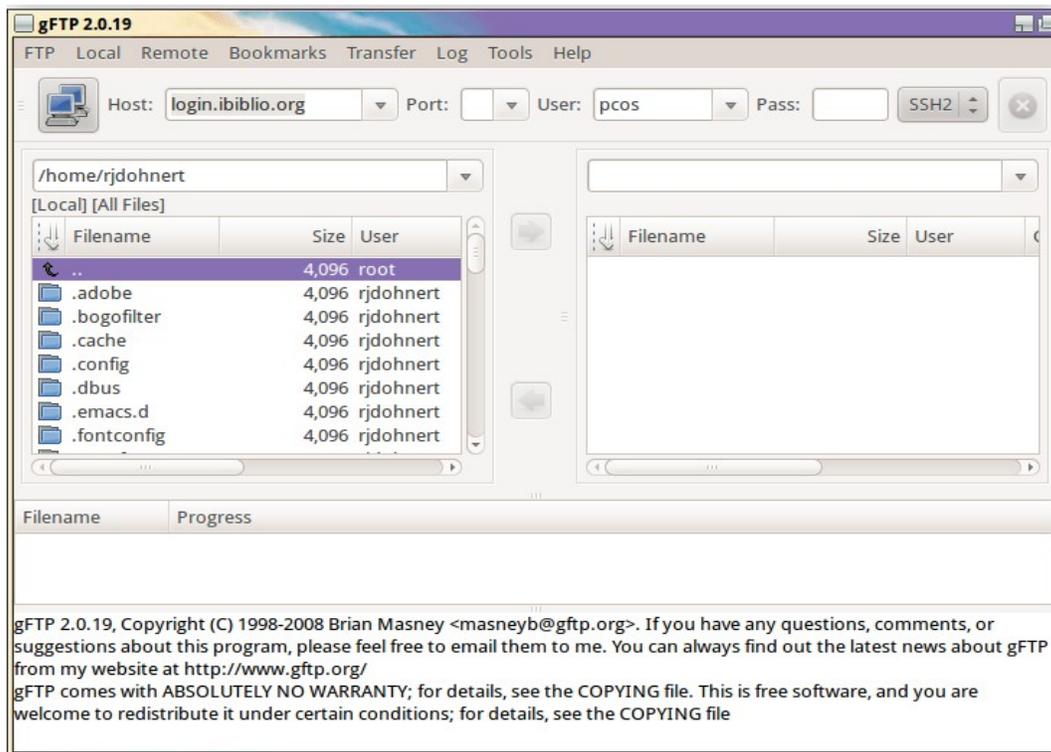
Whether its a wired connection or a wireless connection if you have connected to the network before it will remember passwords. If you use a public wifi service, your settings will be retained as well.

The next part of networking is under the system menu and its called Network. Network will allow you to connect to Samba, SSH and FTP shares. This will mount the shares as if they are part of your file-system and you can navigate it using the File Manager. You can create folders, delete files and change permissions, if your remote account allows you to do that.

This is what Network looks like.



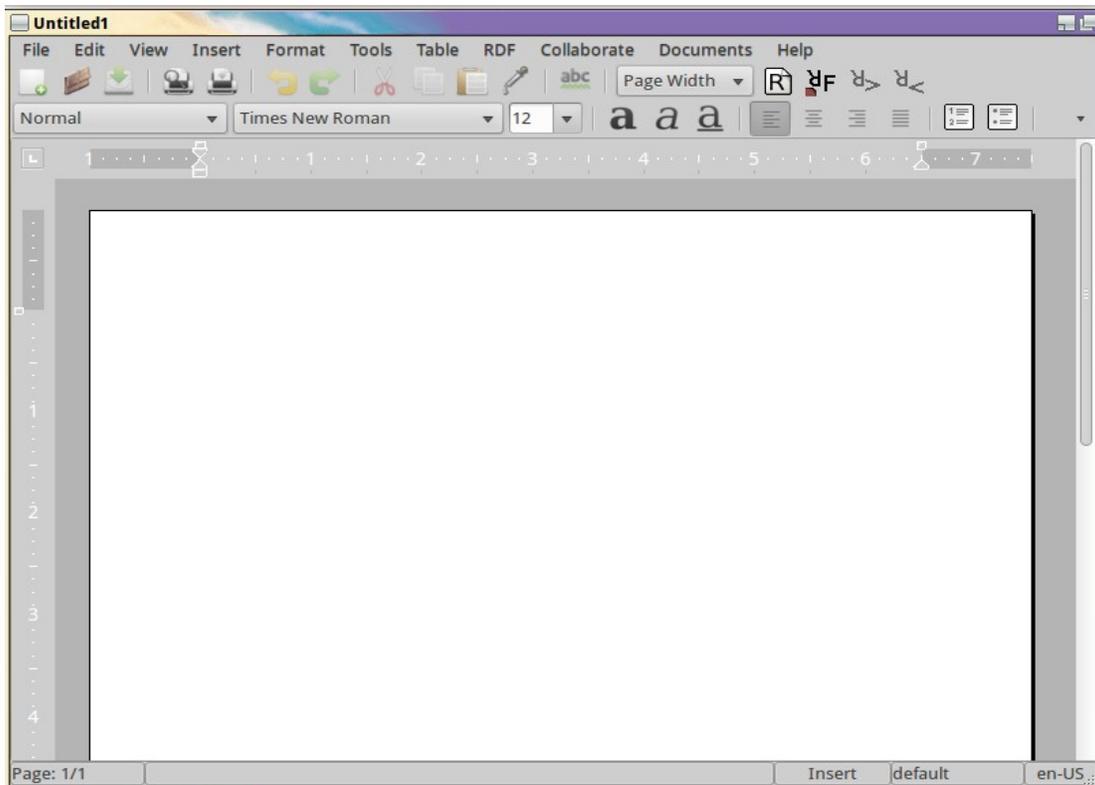
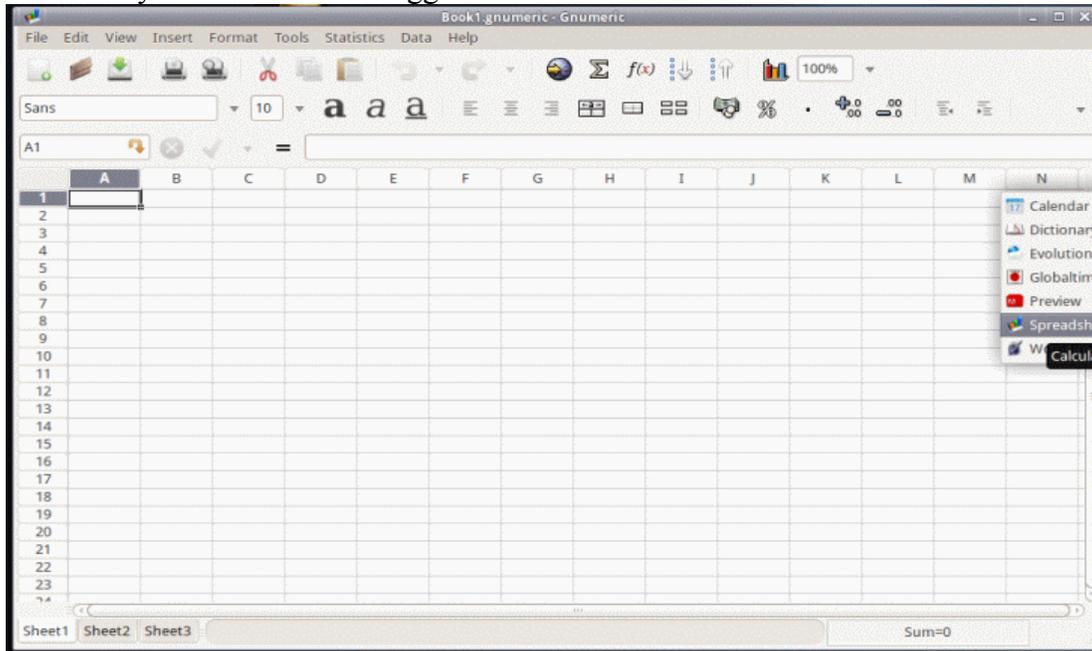
The next part of networking is called gFTP or the Remote File Utility. With this utility you can remotely connect to a remote site via telnet, SSH or FTP and manipulate files, folders and permissions as well as upload files. Here is what that utility looks like.



This utility is especially helpful if you you have extremely large files you want to transfer to a remote site. On the command line you have the SSH and FTP utilities but that is to broad for the scope of this guide.

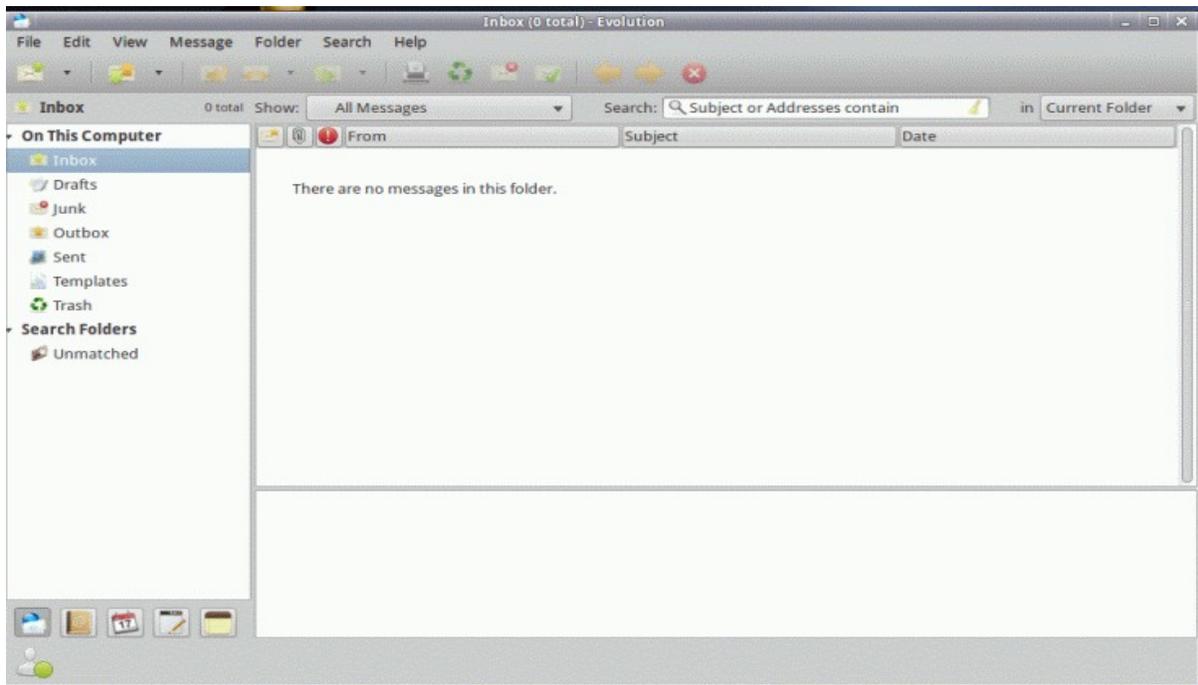
Office Tasks

There are a few things people do in the office. Spreadsheets, documents and e-mail. For those people OS4 OpenDesktop has a wonderful set of tools, Gnumeric aka Spreadsheet and AbiWord aka Word Processor. And they do as their name suggests.

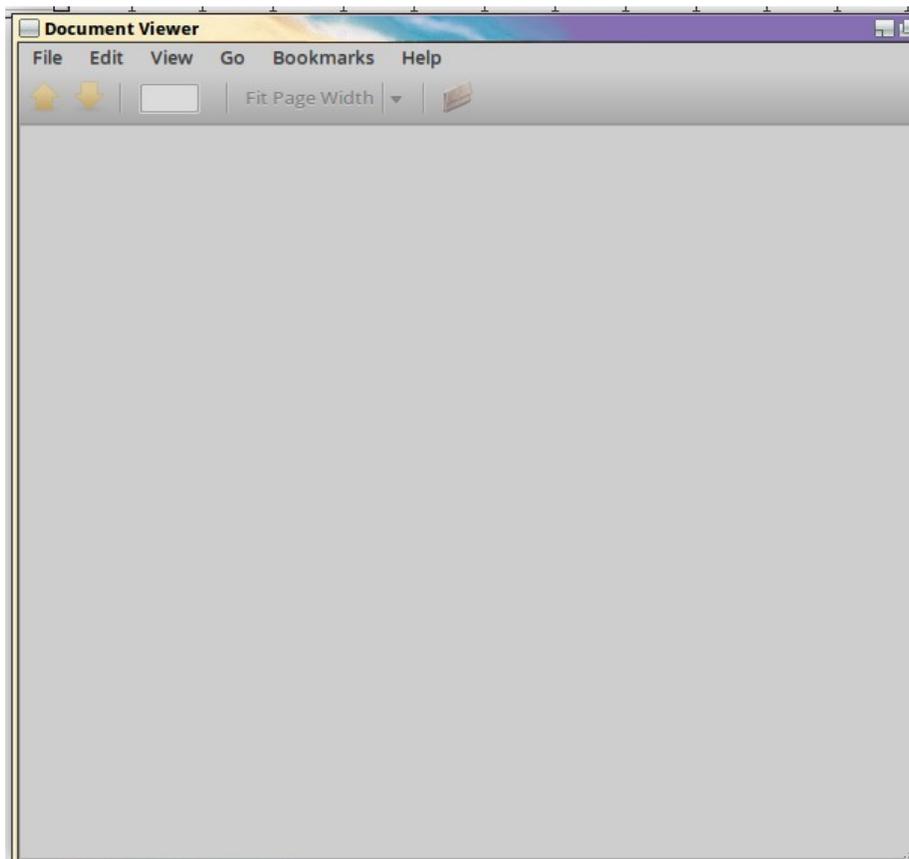


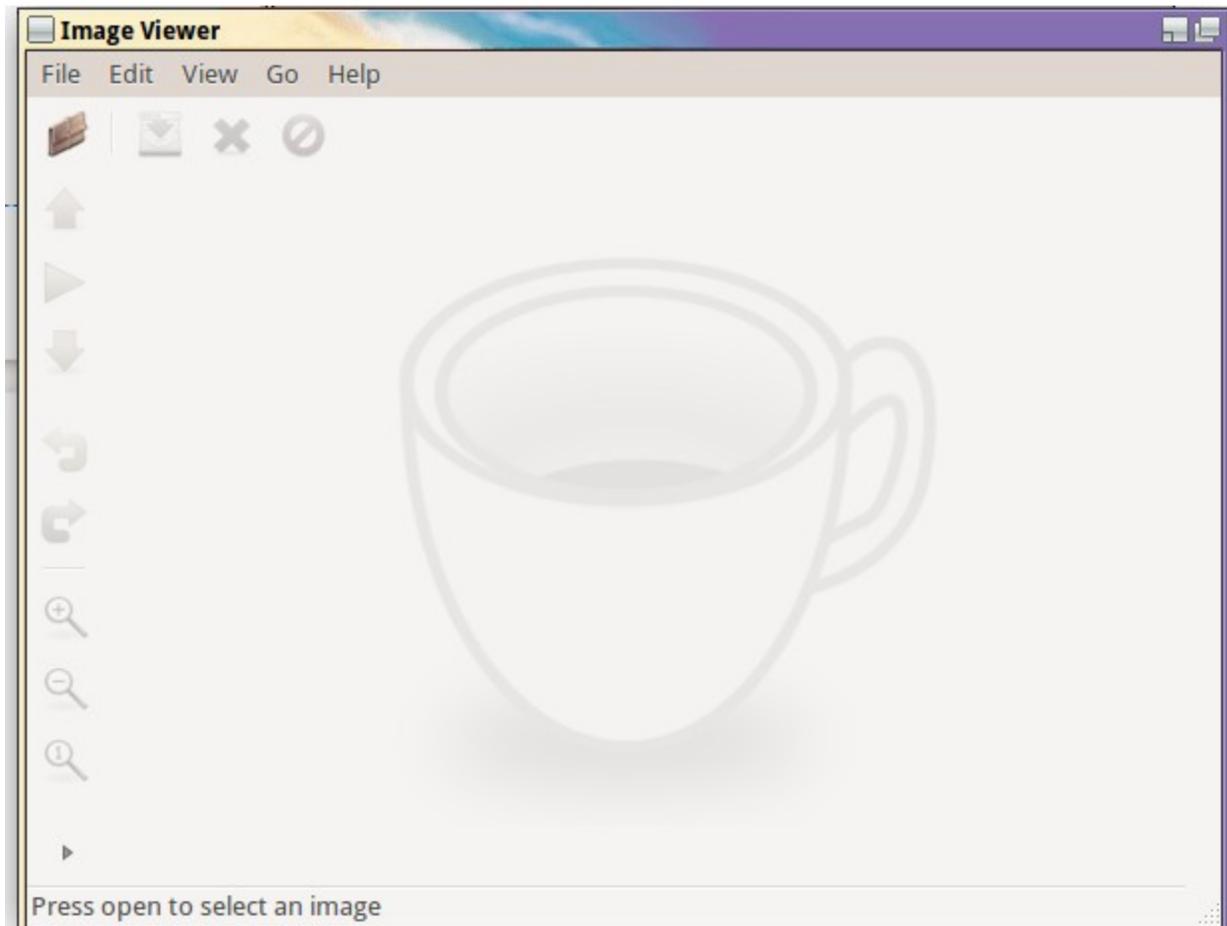
Of course you can install other office applications in case these are too light for you. LibreOffice, Oracle StarOffice and with wine Microsoft Office. Next we are going to cover the more intricate part of everyone's on-line experience, e-mail.

E-mail in OS4 OpenDesktop is made possible with a Groupware Suite called Evolution, aka Mail Reader. But its more than just a mere mail reader, you have calendaring, e-mail, contact management as well as memos and task management. You can use them all together or separately the choice is up to the user.



The next counterpart of any successful office system is a document reader and PDF viewer. For those we have Evince aka Preview and gThumb aka Image Viewer





Ristretto, the image viewer is capable of previewing many different types of images, from .jpg, .png, .gif and even fax, tiff images.

So as you can see, OS4 OpenDesktop is setup in the way where you can accomplish office tasks very efficiently and very effectively. These tools are supplied free and are preinstalled in every OS4 OpenDesktop installation. Now you the user can determine which tools you want to keep, which tools you want to use, and the most effective way to put them to good use.

The last piece of any desktop operating system is the use of a standards compliant web browser and IM client. For web browsing we use the popular Google Chrome web browser. Chrome is web standards compliant, is a light weight web browser and utilizes web apps that consumers can use and with the power of Chrome sync users can sign in and any web apps they use will show up in Google Chrome as well as bookmarks and history.

For IM we use the standards compliant Pidgin IM client. Pidgin can simultaneously sign you in to all of your IM accounts and it supports voice chat and webcam feeds

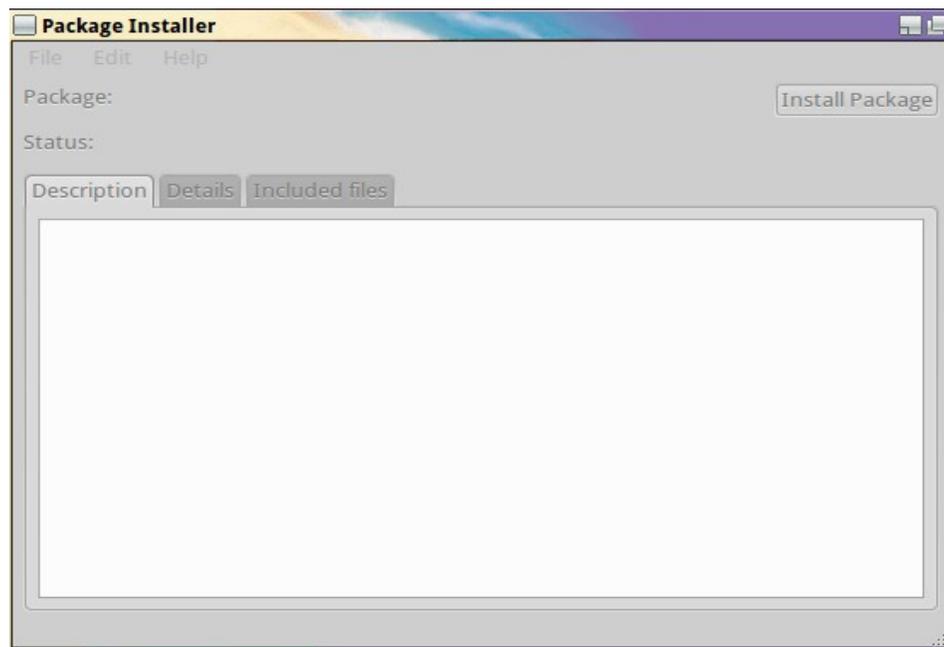
Package Management

Package Management or software installations are very important to users. This allows you to install

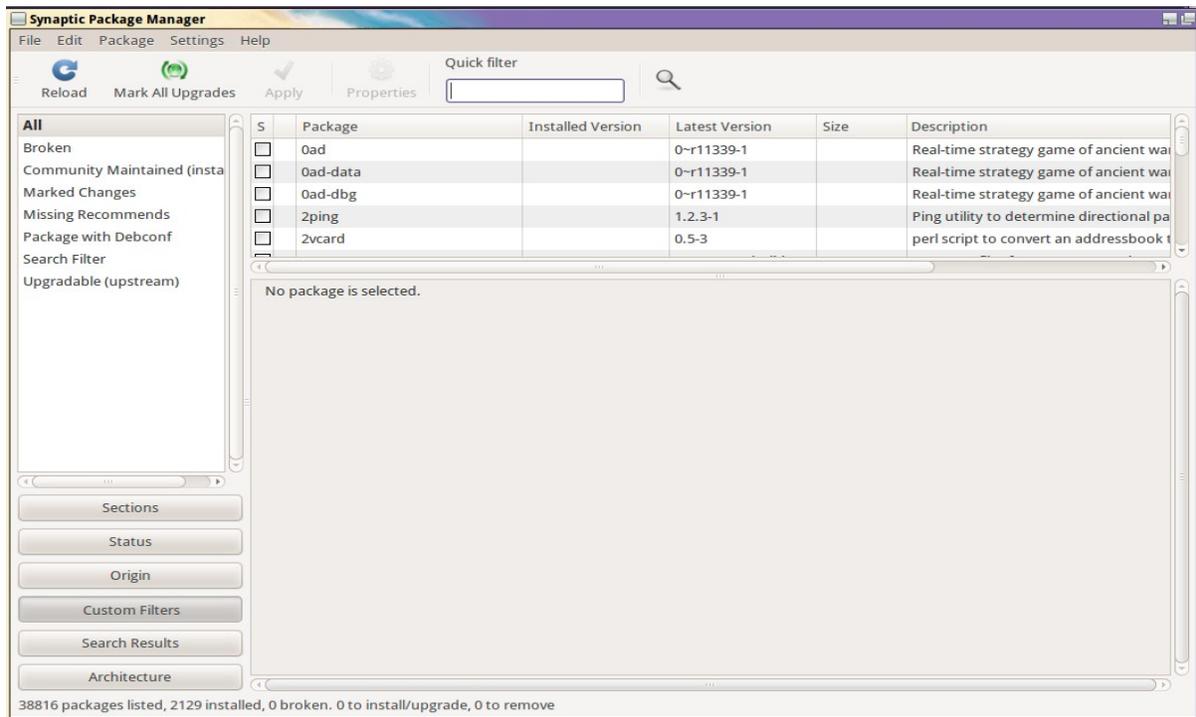
applications that are not in the default install of OS4 OpenDesktop. A package that can be installed in OS4 OpenDesktop is called a .deb package or Debian package. Its a package format that compresses the install files and puts them in the proper location for the file. It also resolves any other packages you may need to satisfy the requirements for that application to run, these are called dependencies. The deb package looks like this.



The Package installer is located under the system menu and looks like this



The package installer is used to install individual packages. Users of the Mac OS and soon to be bombarded with the latest iteration of Microsoft Windows know you have an appstore. Well we do too but its called the Software Package Manager. The Software Package Manager relies on a list of sources, called repositories that it downloads from and this is the application that you can use to get critical system updates. This is what the software package manager looks like.



Audio

OS4 OpenDesktop is a great platform for consuming or producing great multimedia content and the two most important files that are produced during multimedia creation are music and video. So let's look at some of the applications that are included with OS4 OpenDesktop to produce and consume this content let's start with Audio.

With Audio we have a few major tools here.

Banshee is a music player and it's found in the multimedia menu. With Banshee aka Music Player, you can listen to music files stored on your computer, stored on an external drive, and even stored on devices like Android based phones and tablets as well as iPods, iPads and iPhones. Music Player also contains the ability to buy and download music legally from the Amazon MP3 store. Mp3 is not the only format supported. With its iTunes like user interface, and extraordinary ease of use it will take no time to learn this tool.

For recording audio notes we also include the Audio recorder. This allows you to take voice memos and either save them to your hard drive or you can send them through e-mail or create podcasts and upload them to the web for others to enjoy.

For more complex audio recordings and the ability to add music and effects to your audio files we include Audacity, aka Audio editor. This tool allows you to add to your files and allows you to convert the audio files over to another format. It also allows you to custom record and manipulate sound for closer analysis. Audacity as a tool and example of this is used in the TV shows Paranormal State and Ghost hunters on the Syfy network.

An important tool is also the CD/DVD Burner utility. This allows you to burn audio CD's and MP3 compilations as well as DVD video and Blu-Ray video. If you need to burn a data CD or DVD as well

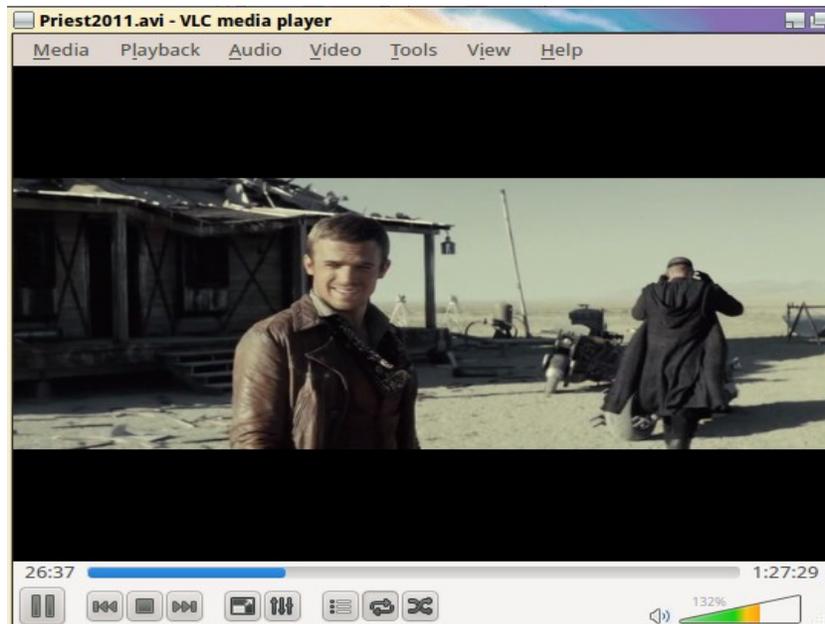
as burn a software image this utility is also the prime tool under OS4 OpenDesktop for doing so.

So those are the audio tools that are included with OS4 OpenDesktop. If you need other tools for more in depth tasks like making a digital DJ studio, there are a lot more included in the repositories and we will be compiling a list of those tools later.

Video

Video is another important tool for users who want to create multimedia content. While video is important users want to be able to consume flash, on-line video formats as well as Blu-Ray and DVD disks. Once again, OS4 OpenDesktop has you covered.

VLC is our Video player, this is the tool that you will want to use to watch your videos. We also include the VLC codecs so you can watch a variety of Windows Media and quicktime files. These plug-ins allow you to view this content through your web browser of choice.



With VLC you can watch your DVD video as well as your Blu Ray video. VLC has become widely known as the player that can play anything.

Imovie and Windows Movie Maker are well known on the Mac OS X and Windows platform. They are easy to use tools to produce home movies and to create your own digital masterpieces. Well in OS4 OpenDesktop we have a similar tool called OpenShot Video editor. With this tool you can produce simple home movies, edit video files of all formats as well as produce movies for YouTube or other video websites.

Most laptops and desktop monitors come with built in webcams and as OS4 OpenDesktop improves we offer support for many of those webcams. In OS4 OpenDesktop its called the WebCam viewer and it can take snapshots or record video from those webcams.

Like to make slideshows out of your photos for holidays birthdays or just to tell that certain someone that you care. We have the SlideShow Creator utility called imagination built in out of the box you can

create slideshows, add music add subtitles whatever you wish to do. Imagination is simply put, the tool for your imagination.

If you need video editing tools to produce more complex video, the repositories are filled with different types of easy to use pro tools that you can use to produce complex 3D animations as well as TV or theater quality productions.

We also include the Google Talk plug-in which allows you to use Google Voice and Google Hangout.

Gaming

Gaming is something that's always plagued Linux. Windows comes out with the best games and since users want to game, how do we compensate.

Well, for on-line games that you find in the Google Chrome store and on social networking sites we include the Java stack and the Flash player so you get the same quality game play on OS4 OpenDesktop that you get with Windows and Mac OS X.

For standalone games there is a tool available in the repositories called PlaysOnLinux which will allow you to play some Windows games on Linux. World Of Warcraft which is a very popular role playing game runs very well on the platform and it continues to improve.

Valve inc has started development on Steam for Linux which will allow you to purchase many titles and run them natively on the Linux platform. Steam will be included in the OS4 OpenDesktop expansion pack when its released.

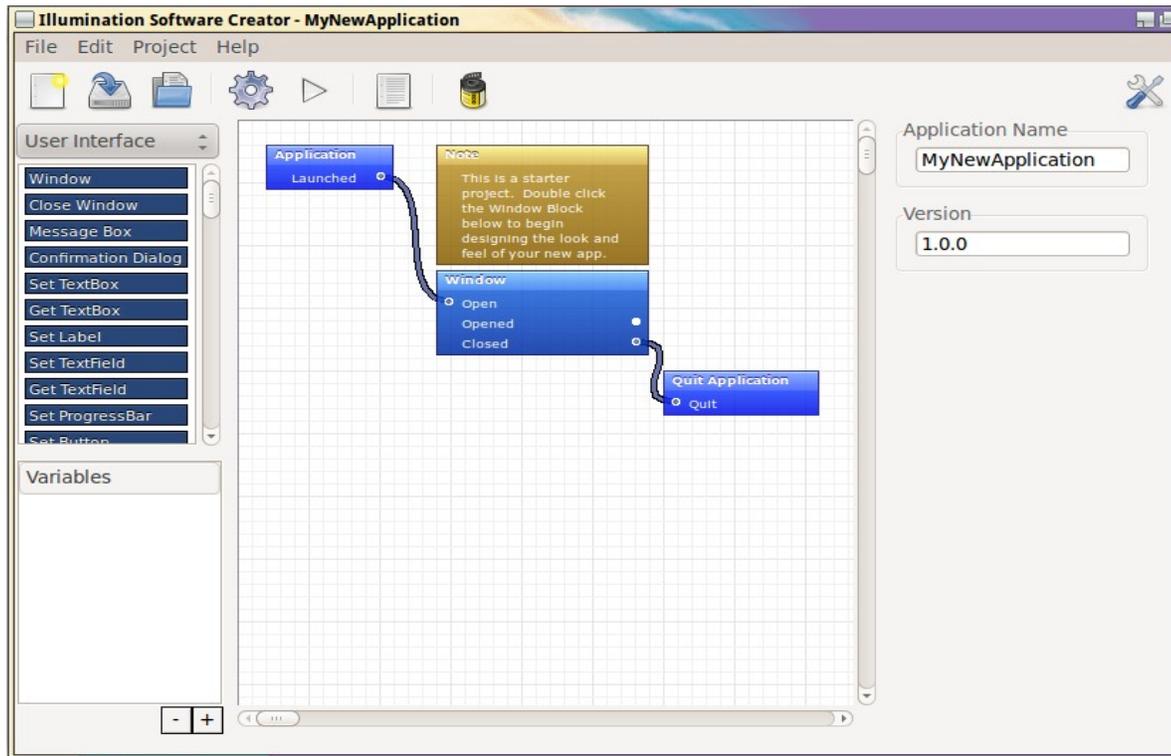
This does not mean native Linux games are not good. In the repositories we have everything from simple educational games to advanced 3D shooters and all these are available in the Software Manager



Development Tools

As developers you want a platform that supports all the languages and tools that you use. OS4 OpenDesktop does just that.

OS4 OpenDesktop ships with the innovative Illumination Software Creator designed by Bryan Lunduke for beginner programmers and people wanting to learn programming.



Another system standard tool that we recommend is Gambas. By default we use the Gambas runtime so you can run Gambas produced apps on all OS4 OpenDesktop systems. Gambas is an object oriented programming environment. Meaning you design your interface and the code is translated and all the developer has to do is write code for the individual elements.

OS4 OpenDesktop also offers many other programming tools for the more advanced users through the Software Package Manager. These include

Eclipse and Netbeans, which are tools for developing in the Java programming language. Eclipse is a plug-in extendable system meaning you add plug-ins for whatever type of program you wish to right. Netbeans is a GUI designer as well as IDE, code written with these tools can run on any Java enabled device.

Mono and QT creator are also available. Mono is a Linux translation of the Microsoft C# programming language that allows developers to easily port applications back and forth between Linux and Windows

QT Creator is a GUI designer and IDE that users can use to develop visual applications in the C++

programming language. QT is a visual framework that's available on many platforms such as UNIX, Linux, Mac OS X and Windows.

Conclusion

As we demonstrated here, OS4 OpenDesktop is exactly as we have described it. The premier Linux desktop distribution. With our focus on ease of use as well as using best of breed applications, OS4 OpenDesktop is perfect for the home desktop as well as the business desktop. Being extensible and expandable OS4 OpenDesktop can meet your needs.

If you would like more information you can visit <http://www.os4online.com>.

If you would like to contribute to OS4 OpenDesktop you can make a monetary contribution at the website or if you would like to donate hardware you can contact the OS4 OpenDesktop team directly.

We also pride ourselves on being the most open during our development. So if you have any suggestions, comments etc don't hesitate to give us that feedback.

Thank you and we hope you enjoy OS4 OpenDesktop.