A look at Ubuntu 10.4

Fedora Firewall GUI. The services
checked in this picture do not
represent my personal
configuration.

I downloaded the latest version of Ubuntu Linux, version 10.4, and installed
it as a [virtual machine](#) with [VMWare](#) on my [Fedora 12](#) pc. I also ran it as a
live CD from boot. I'm still not convinced that Ubuntu is better than Fedora
for me. Ubuntu is missing two GUIs (software with a graphic user interface) I
use all the time in Fedora. There is

- no firewall GUI
- no services GUI

The basic configuration screen of the Fedora firewall GUI is clear to
understand and easy to use to open the IP ports the user needs to use, and to
block the ones not needed. This makes for better security, and it makes it
easier to set up other features such as networking with the other PCs on the
property.

The services GUI makes it easy to turn off services I don't really need which
conserves resources. I remember that previous versions of Ubuntu had a
services GUI, but it wasn't as comprehensive as Fedora's.

There are firewall GUIs for Ubuntu you can download and install, like
Firestarter, but none are as easy to use as the Fedora firewall GUI.
Firestarter requires a basic knowledge of TCP/IP protocols and ports, but the
Fedora firewall GUI does not.

I really think that Fedora is not only a more mature Linux distro than
Ubuntu, but it's also *easier* to tweak to do what one needs to do.

Another problem with Ubuntu 10.4 is I couldn't install Flashplayer on my 64
bit system. I had no problem with this in Fedora.

Using Gnome Shell

Screenshot of Gnome 2.8 desktop

I installed a beta version of the new [Gnome Shell desktop environment](#) on my Fedora Linux PC, and it seems to be very cool indeed! And it's free, not only free in in the meaning of "freedom" but even free as in "free lunch."

[Gnome](#) is the standard desktop graphical environment for many [Linux distributions](#), including [Fedora](#), the Linux distribution I've been using on my PC since February 2005. Another popular Linux desktop environment is [KDE](#). Some people like it better than Gnome, because it looks a bit more like Windows®, but I found KDE buggy and unstable, at least it was 5 years ago, and stuck with Gnome. There are even more desktop environments besides these two.

The first screenshot shows my normal Gnome desktop using a top bar to show open applications, and a bottom toolbar showing the standard Gnome toolbar. The wallpaper contains a not so subliminal message.

By default the Gnome toolbars are on the opposite sides, but like to change them because it's more what I was used to when I worked in Windows®. Click any of the pictures to see an enlargement.

This screenshot is of the Gnome Shell after first running it. Notice the Gnome applets are now missing with the bottom toolbar gone. Maybe later I'll figure out how to add them again. Or possibly that feature is still not available in this beta version of Gnome Shell.

Gnome Shell after startup

Here's how it looks like after clicking on "Activities" in the top left corner!!

Gnome Shell after clicking on Activities

All open applications are in the right side of the screen. Just clicking on one of the icons show the application to a full screen! The area on the left shows all the folders I have for easily finding files.

When I click on the time display on the top bar, a calendar drops down and stays down until I click on the time display a second time. Cool! Click on the graphic below to see it more clearly.

Gnome Shell with dropdown calendar

Eat your hearts out, Windows® lovers!

Upgrade to Fedora 12 beta

November 2: [Fedora Linux](#) version 12 is due to come out on November 18, but I couldn't wait to try it out and installed the yet beta version.

Improvements from Fedora 11 that I've noticed:

- The default video driver recognized my dual monitor setup and automatically gave me the correct screen resolution and spanning monitors.
- Gnome seems to run faster. Terminal now comes up instantaneously.
- Many of the applications appear to load faster.
- Pulse audio now works as it should without quirks. In Fedora 10-11 I could not use other audio applications when Firefox was accessing a flash media file.
- Mplayer plays my MP3 files without the irksome shuddering sound it used to have during the first couple seconds when playing the file. This was a problem in Fedora 10 and 11 but now seems fixed.
- Bluefish HTML editor doesn't crash anymore when I do a spell check as it used to do in Fedora 10 and 11
- The new version of [Dansguardian](#) Internet content filter now runs. I couldn't get the latest version to work in Fedora 11. Dansguardian has improved with options to weed out unwanted pop-ups and advertisements. Using the Fedora Linux — Firefox — Dansguardian combination gives me the safest browsing imaginable! Eat your heart out, Windows 7!

The downsides of upgrading to Fedora 12 beta:

- In the beginning Firefox crashed a couple of times. It seems to be stable now after a week.
- I can't yet install the Nvidia video driver. But this only means I can't run applications that take a lot of video power such as Google Earth. Video files play perfectly fine.
- Wine doesn't run anymore. I have to wait for a Wine upgrade to fix a conflict with Pulse audio.

  All of the above are fixed now after Fedora 12 came out with the final release, and also thanks to the good advice on [Fedora Forum](). I found a fix for Wine by installing the 64 bit version with the command:

  yum install wine.i686 -y