

Re: [SLE] Package installers in SUSE10.1

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On Tuesday 13 June 2006 15:42, Clayton wrote:

OK.. maybe I'm missing the point here.. but... the package installers that are included with SUSE10.1 seem to me to be a major step backwards in end user functionality.

I've been tinkering with the "Software Installer" tool that I found in the KDE > System > Configuration menu. So far I've not been able to figure out how to easily add more installation sources. Can I add 3rd party repositories to this too – say... Packman for example? What about sorting the results... all I get is one MASSIVE long and VERY unmanageable list of available apps (I'm assuming it's what is available on the DVD?) I can only imagine it will get a lot more unmanageable if I add more sources. What about a way to see what's new since I last queried the DB? Is that possible?

Figuring that to be a work in progress, I decided to try out SMART again... and it's still very user unfriendly (from a newbie user perspective). I've added a bunch of the 3rd party repositories.. and have been able to use SMART GUI to install several apps... I've also managed to install multiple versions of an app using SMART – why is this still possible (without some manual override)? And again... how do I see what's been added since the last repository update? (how do I tell what's new in the 7000+ apps that are available?) How do I compare the installed version with the available version/update? Is there some way to compare versions side by side?

Now.. to put this in perspective, I'm a long time Linux user, and I can easily manage the command line tools, and I can deal with broken or very badly designed tools (from a usability perspective like I feel SMART-GUI is)... but, I'm planning on turning a bunch of newbies loose on 10.1.. and they all need to have simple tools to use. Synaptic was simple to set up... simple to use, simple to manage, and simple to explain (I've showed many people how to manage their system with Synaptic in 10.0 with great success). The newbie users could easily tell what had been added, what version they had installed, and easily compare it to the available version. I don't see that in SMART (not obviously anyway) and I definitely don't see it in the ZEN/ZYPP tools.

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So... I guess I'm asking.. what's so great about SMART (SMART-GUI) from an end user perspective? How are new users expected to use this new ZEN/ZYPP installer tool? What is the vision here? Where is this moving? Are there plans to make these tools more useable for new users?

C.

On the positive side, with Smart, you get a set of predetermined mirrors and channels. Also when you go to add a channel, you can do it by cutting and pasting a URL. Not all URLs work but most standard ones do. You can set the view to Updates Only. Also before you start downloading, hit Fix All Problems to avoid conflicts. Compared to a command line, it is pretty good. Yast worked well for me once I figured out how to add new installation sources. The syntax is a little complicated but there is a nice Cool Solutions article that walks you through it and also there is an article on OpenSuse.org as well. Zen works well now on my machine but I like to choose my updates rather than take the set list. When I was feeling adventurous and had a backup, I set the SUSE factory distribution as an update source. 1,400 updates later and a new kernel, the overall package works well and is stable but one or two items like the Epiphany web browser, which I don't normally use have problems. As long as I have a disk image to go back to, I am willing to take some chances.

Ralph Ellis

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