

Re: UPDATE ON "WARNING ON RED HAT"

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From: straydog (straydog_at_invalid.email.com)

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chris@nospam.com wrote:

>
> > *The problem (not MY problem) is that RH does not put out drivers for*
> > *certain CDROMs any more. ALL of mine are non R-RW, i.e. old. Maybe that*
> > *is the problem (but another guy said he had an old CDROM and it worked).*
>
> *Just curious, are you using burned disks?*

Never. All the distros I used, RH and non-RH (eg Mandrake, Caldera), were as they come from retail outlets.

I've had a few older IDE

> *(pre-cdr craze) cdrom units that could not reliably read burned disks.*

I'll drop you another little bombshell: I was able to do clean (no glitch, no failure, and boots-up-fine) installs on some boxes and not other boxes (with a different CDROM drive, and all different hardware). Just to prove its not a bum CDROM drive, on the boxes that failed to install some distros, there was always a distro that WOULD install just fine (no glitches, no crashes, goes to completion, AND it boots up fine).

And, another bomshell: I've had a few CDROM disks from commercial sources in retail environments where there isn't zip on the disk. No matter what box/CDROM drive/OS, I can do dir or ls and there's nothing on the CDROM disk. Nothing. That's out of about 300 CDROM disks I've had. And, that includes looking at the CDROM disk in any version of Linux I had.

> *The symptoms were that the RH install would randomly hang, typically*
> *during package installs. Using different media and burning the disks*
> *at 1x speed sometimes helped. Usually in this case, I either do a*
> *network install or grab a newer one off the spares shelf.*

I, unfortunately, don't have any resources to examine, technically, the performance of any of my CDROM drives OR examine, technically, whether any of my CDROM disks were produced within spec.

I did have three separate sets of McAfee's software firewall (a real POS), and every one of the disks had a visible bubble on the track side AND the damned things would crash on install. i.e. not go to completion.

> >Well, now, a used computer I picked up yesterday for \$50 installed RH EL
> >just fine. So, at least when the CDROM drivers are there, and there is no
> >hardware compatibility problem, and there are no defects in the CDROM
> >disk (I've had these, too), then you might get an installation.
>
> All ide cd-rom drives should use the same driver.

There are CDROM drives which have 16 bit drivers, others that have 32 bit. Others have both. I've had SW aps that said "min requirements" right on the box for 32 bit CDROM drivers. Funny, nobody I ever asked about their CDROMs knew if their drivers were 16 or 32 bit. But the box said it on the outside. I know there are CDROM drives that have drivers for WindowsXX but not for linux, not for DOS. I know, from my work with OS/2 Warp 3 and 4 that one OS, during installation, may recognize the CDROM drive or not recognize it (OS/2 also started running into hardware compatibility in the mid-late 1990s, so be warned). Its also a fact, because it comes up on the screen during the installation, that Windows98SE (full install), tries a total of five DIFFERENT CDROM drive software drivers! And, on the screen, it tells you which driver, manufacturer, and dates, etc., which CDROM driver it is trying. I've watched this happen and on different boxes, as soon as it finds a driver that works, then the motor starts running and the lights start blinking, and the data starts moving. Oh, yeah, they're all IDE CDROM drives.

Also, on the RH EL floppy install boot disk AND on the separately rawritable block device disk and the rawritable driver disk, when you do the install "linux dd", and it asks you for the driver disk to be inserted, it gives you a list of all the CDROM drivers to try (yes, many of them).

Now, above, you said "all CDROM drives should use the same driver." Would you care to modify your understanding of this situation?

Thats why I

> *questioned whether you were using IDE drives, vice a proprietary older
> interface which would require unique drivers.*

Did you know that CDROM driver software can have bugs in it just like for any other peripheral? Friend of mine, much more knowledgeable too, found out the hard way on video drivers. His CPU kept crashing and after replacing his MOBO three times found an updated video driver where they actually said there were bugs in the earlier version.

It would not surprise

> *me if RH dropped support for antiquated interfaces under the
> assumption that someone willing to pay for RHEL would be running it on
> newer hardware.*

>
> *>And, the disclaimers on the box are poor. And, the instruction manual has
> >a lot of errors in it as well as poor explanations. I say this after
> >having read many 800–1000 page books on Linux.*
>
> *I've only read an RH manual once to figure out what switch I need to
> use to disable USB probing. It wasn't listed and I had to use Google,
> so I completely understand your comments about poor documentation.
> It's worse than some other distros, but certainly better than MS.*

Fine, thanks for the acknowledgement. MS is a big factory of thugs with two big thugs at the top. I was just soooo very pleased and happy with my RH 5.2 and 6.2 distros that I was expecting a linear extrapolation to nirvana or something and RH fell down on documentation, they fell down on tech support (I had to call IBM back in early '90s about OS/2 and the guy was knowledgeable, focused on my problems, gave me important warnings that were not in the book, etc., but they don't do that any more...you get a guy in Bangalore now who trys to control the conversation and reads answers NOT out of a book but off his computer screen! They do that at IBM now, too, when I was asking a tech questino about OS/2 Warp 4).

> *>Yes, I 'play' with my computers as well as use them to do gainful
> >employment. Now, what is YOUR history of experience?*
>
> *I've been a network admin since 1995 on various MS, hpux, solaris,
> sun, and RH systems. I also use and tinker with computers
> recreationally. Sorry if my comment came off sarcastic, it wasn't
> intended that way.*

Fine, I'll accept that. I'm neither a heat-seeker, nor a know-it-all. But, I definitely cut my teeth learning Linux and learned stuff that's not in the books but it should be in the books (I guess you can say that about a lot of books), and I know I read thousands of posts on the RH & Linux newsgroups back 4–5 years ago. After I read the books, then a lot of the stuff on the NGs made sense.

Now, I've given you (and anyone else following this) my five years of experience with this stuff. I hope you can file it away and learn something from it, and pass it on to the people who are clueless (pardon my harsh term, but, remember, I cut my teeth on this [and you can find tons of guys selling their software that won't work on eBay, trying to get some of their money back] the hard way and I mean really hard).

For the guys who just plopped their disks into their boxes and it played a tune, fine, good luck and be happy. Sure, its nice to be able to put a collection of hardware together that you know comes from a list of known compatible components, but most guys don't have the time to do that. So, half try it and get a smile on their faces and they automatically think they are hot shit. The other half gets pissed and they write "fuck linux" posts on the newsgroups.

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I respect you for hanging with me on my posts, counter-posts, etc. Just remember, just like in medaeval days, you haven't been anywhere until you get some scars and blisters to back up your "war stories."

Art S.

> *-Chris*