

How to choose a Linux distro (v.2)

Because my original presentation got borked

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There are two main sides to choosing a distro (imo)

You need to choose your DE/WM



GNOME[™]



SWAY

You need to choose your distro



That's cool, but what are the differences?

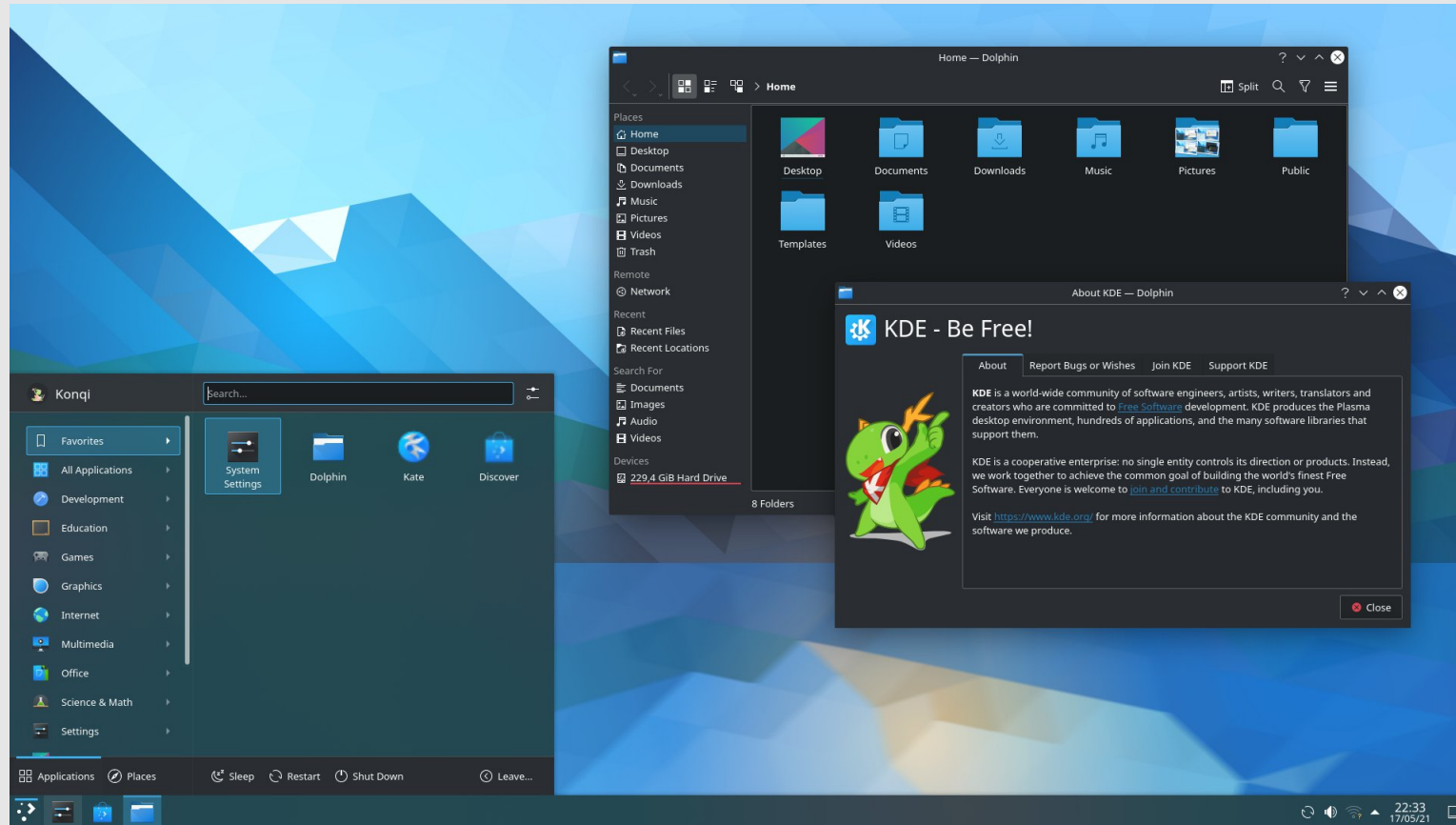
- Well for starters your DE/WM is one of the most important decisions you'll make, as it is the main thing that you will interact with to use your system.
 - However, it is relatively easy to switch them around if you don't like the one you decide to use
- Your distro choice determines lots of lower level things in your system, like where configuration files are stored, your package manager, etc.

Let's choose a DE then!

- So, to choose a DE, my advice would be to just look at screenshots of some, determine which look interesting to try, and just try them
- Most popular DEs are available on distro repos, so you can install multiple DEs at once to try them out
 - I would do this before you get your system set up the way you like it, just because installing a lot of DEs will take a lot of room and install a lot of extra packages that are hard to remove, so it may be better to try some out and then re-install.
- Let's take a look at some of the popular ones!

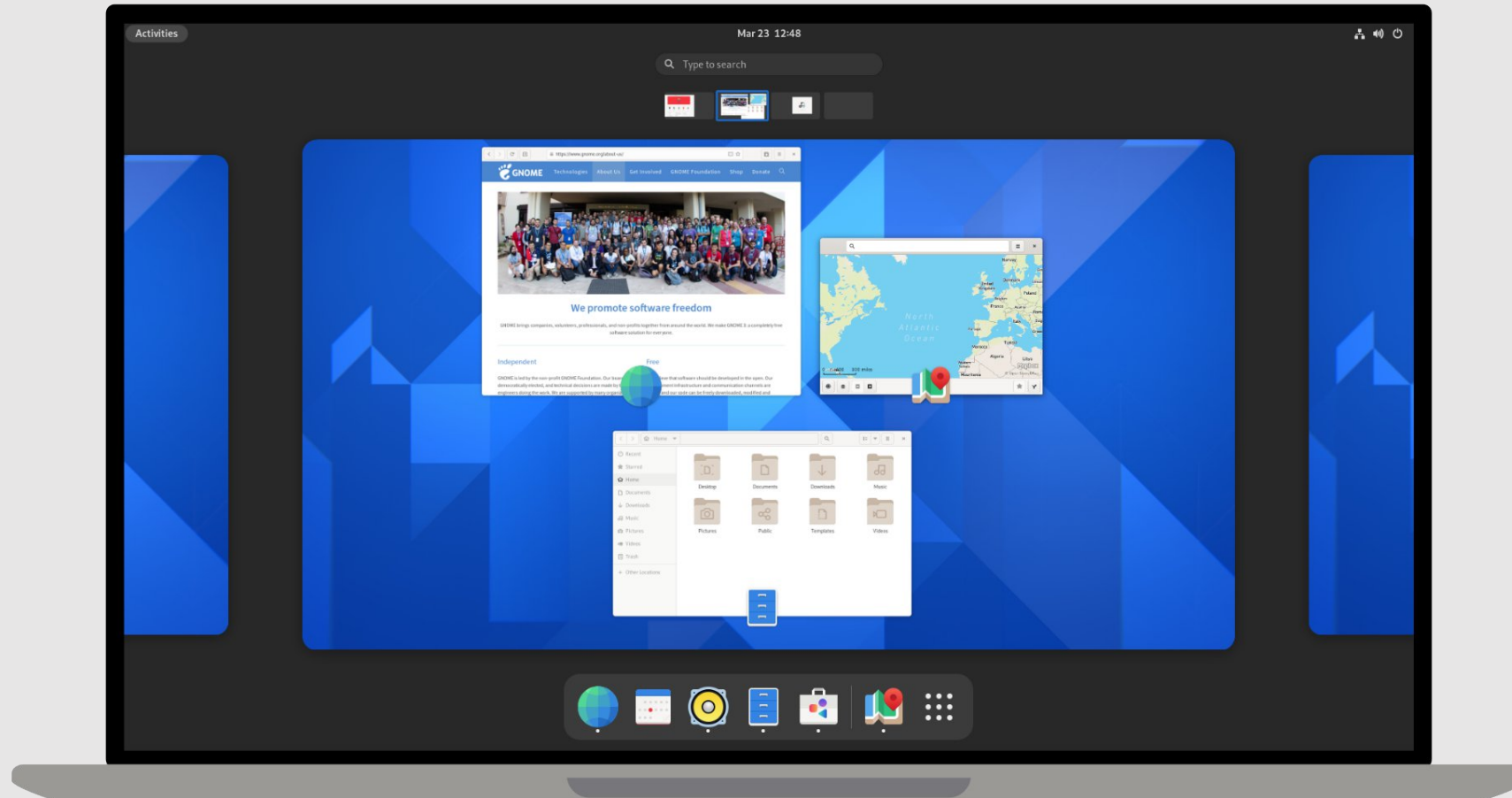
KDE Plasma

- Great for those coming from Windows
- Very customizable
- Based on QT



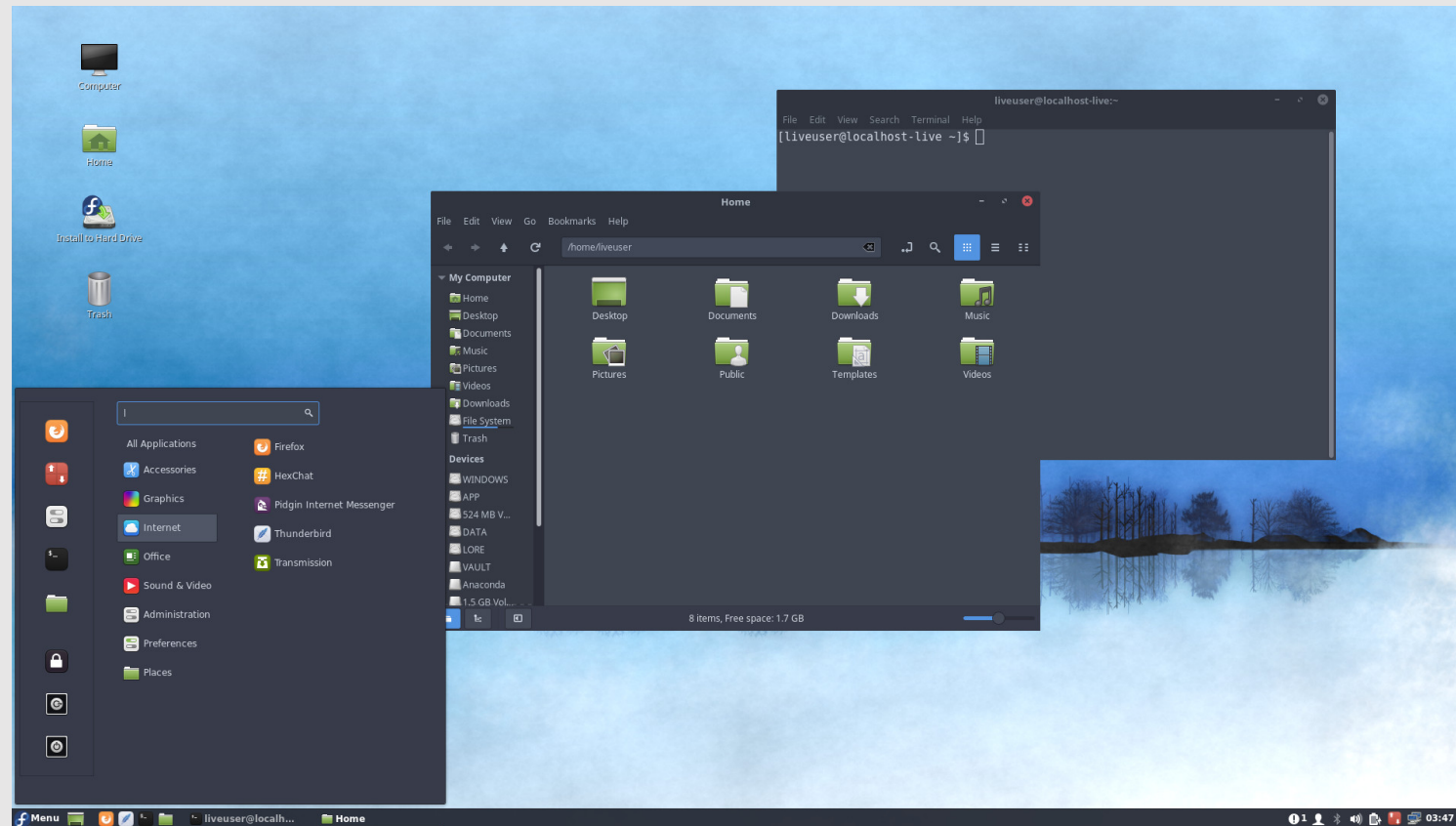
Gnome

- A different approach to the desktop
- Great for those used to macOS
- Based on GTK



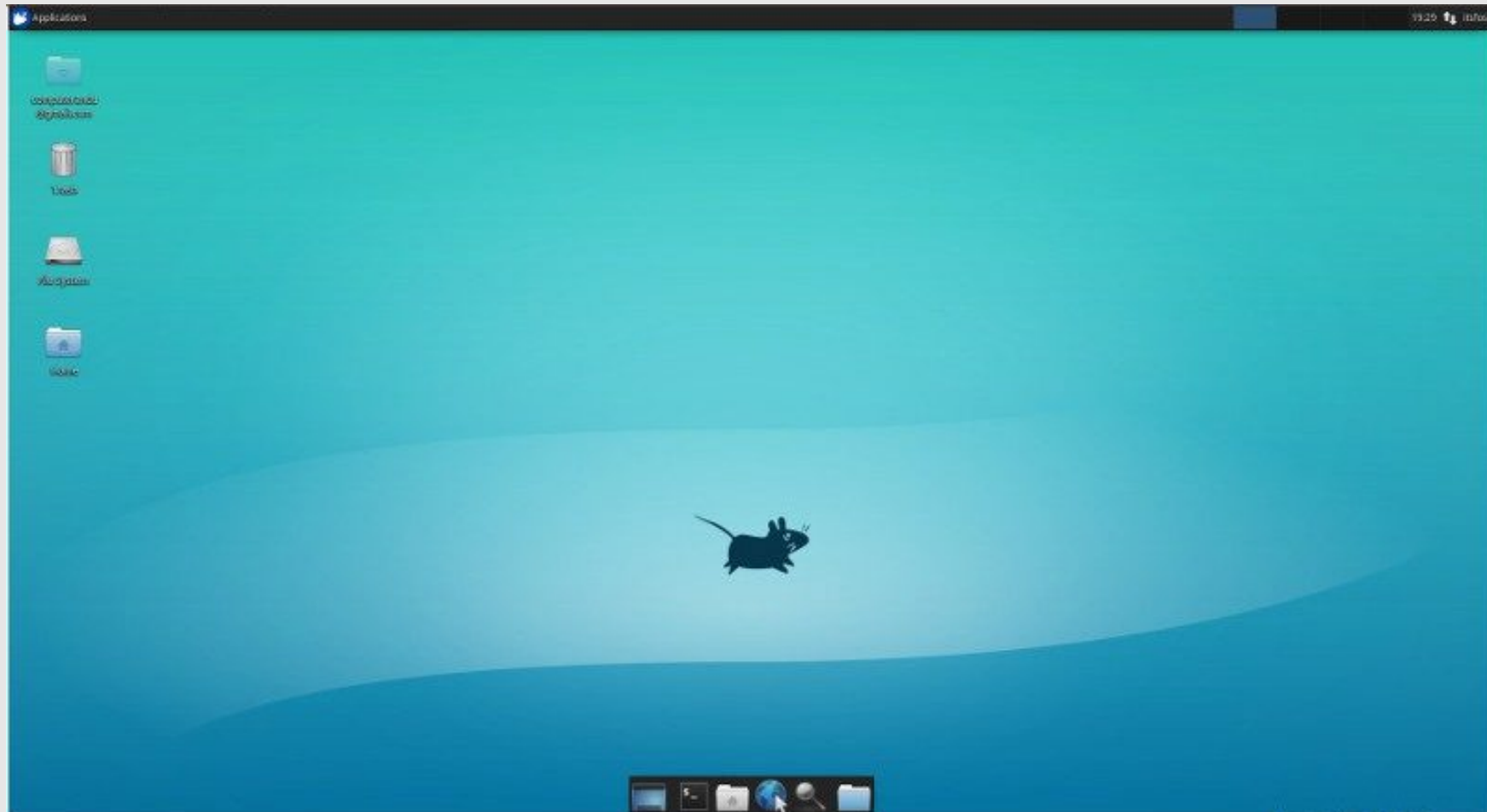
Cinnamon

- Started as a fork of GNOME when they switch over to GNOME 3
- Therefore, also based on GTK
- Great for people coming from Windows



XFCE

- Also based... on GTK!
- Very lightweight



Sway/i3

- I do not recommend these for beginners
- More of a honorable mention because I use sway
- Pretty much completely keyboard based



Now... How do I choose a distro?

- So, the distro is pretty much the “backbone” of your system
- Whatever you choose to install will influence pretty much every aspect of your system
- Unlike your DE/WM, components of this (like your package manager, init system, etc.) are pretty hard to replace. If you happen to replace one of those, let us know! It would be an interesting talk
- Choosing one is really a matter of preferences
 - Do you favor stability or newer packages?
 - Do you favor ease of use or control over your system?
 - Do you prefer package managers that don't suck?
- Let's look at some distros now!

Debian-based Distros

- So you're looking at Debian, Pop_OS!, Ubuntu (don't use Ubuntu), Linux Mint, etc.
- Distros derived from Debian all use the apt package manager
- Package support can be older than some other distros, but stability can be great (when you're lucky)
- Good amount of community support
- I don't like apt.



RHEL-based distros

- Now we're looking at RHEL itself (more of a server distro, not free), Fedora, CentOS (RIP), and its derivatives
- Uses DNF/YUM for package management
- Package support is still generally older, but not as bad



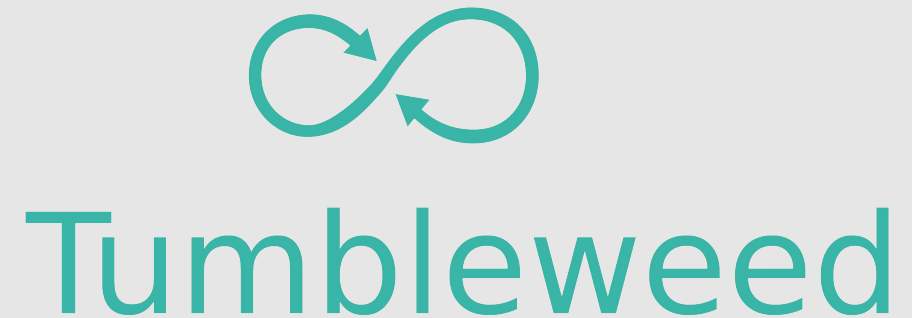
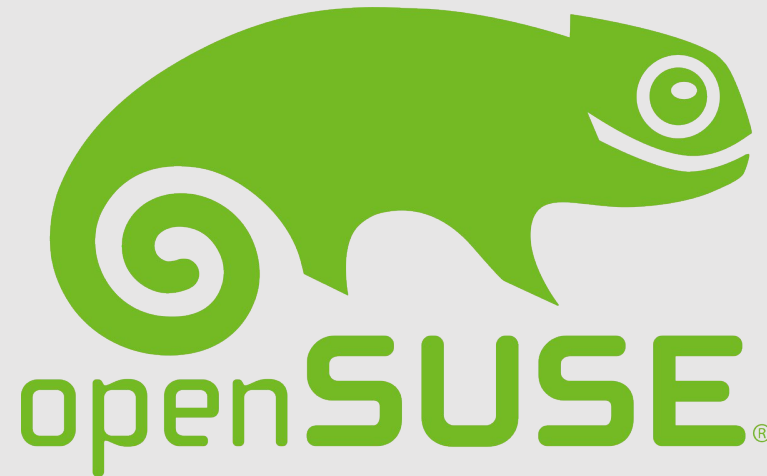
Arch-based Distros

- First of the distros that are rolling-releases
- Looking at Arch and Manjaro mainly, but others exist
- You get to use the meme (btw™)
- Uses the pacman package manager
- Latest and greatest packages in repos (sometimes break)
- Manjaro has less of a barrier to entry, but I hear it has its own issues (Never used it myself)



SUSE-based distros

- Looking at SLES (same model as RHEL, more of a server OS, also paid) and openSUSE
- Uses the zypper package manager
- You have the option of a stable release distro (Leap) or a rolling distribution (Tumbleweed)
- Tumbleweed has packages just about as up to date as Arch, just a few days behind usually
- Leap has older packages



Based distros

- Void Linux
 - No systemd
 - xbps package manager
 - Package support is spotty, but great when it exists
 - Community support is Dev, myself, and anyone in the void-linux IRC chat
 - You get to do everything yourself
 - Have the option to avoid GLib by using Musl instead! (But don't anyways)



Example Time!!!