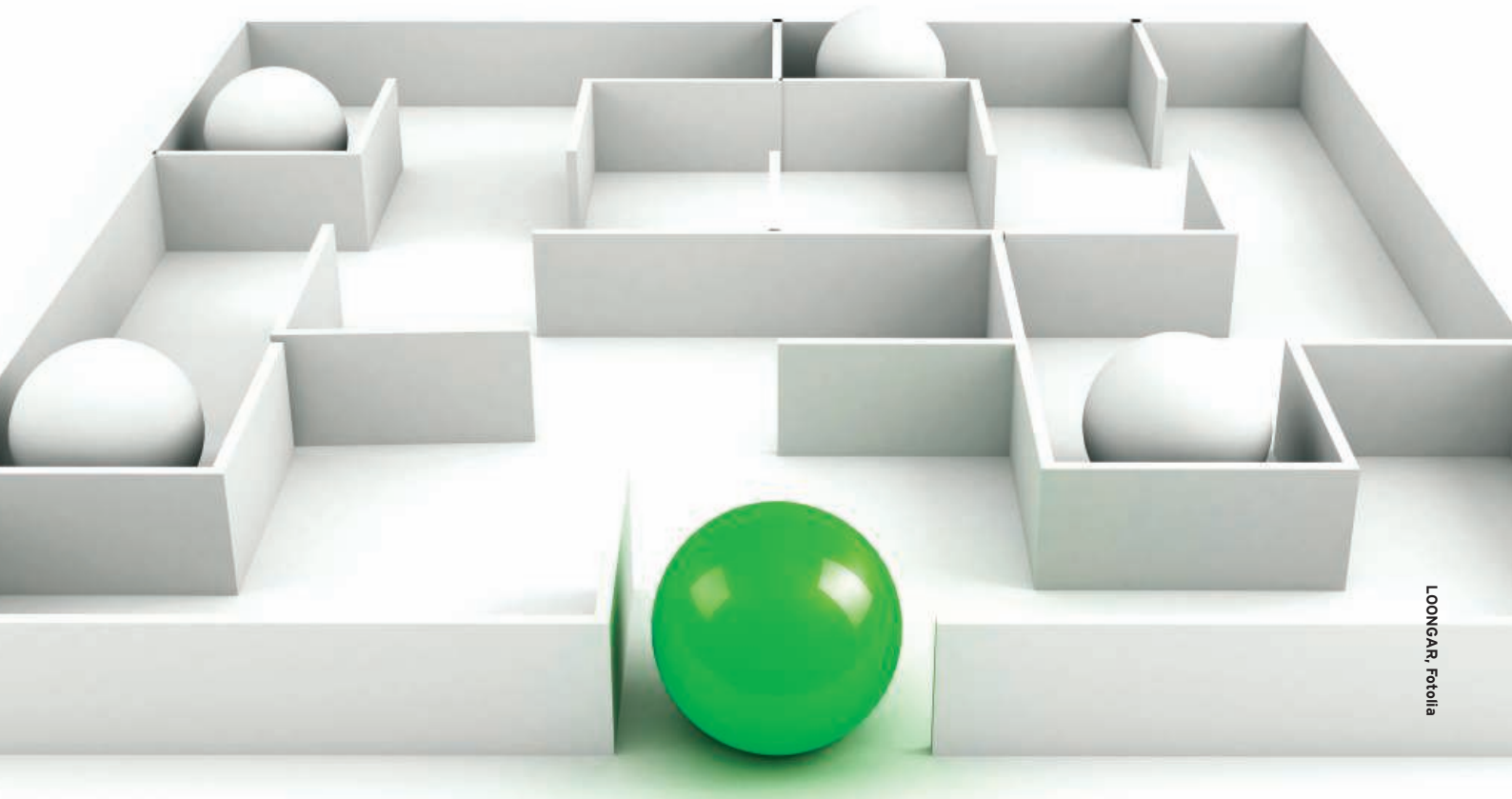

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What to do after you install openSUSE

WHAT'S NEXT?

After you finish installing openSUSE, you can start by preparing your system with these simple steps. **BY BEN KEVAN**

The articles on setting up openSUSE (and other Linux distros) usually end with the installation instructions and don't give much guidance about what to do next. In this article, I highlight some common post-installation tasks you'll need to tackle.

Setting Up Repositories

Once your openSUSE system is up and running, the first thing you will want to do is set up your package repositories. A repository (sometimes called a *repo*) is basically a collection of software. Different repositories contain different collections. The openSUSE Project has a wide range of repositories available – from basic repositories that hold the core software in the openSUSE distribution, to extra project repositories that let you track the development of favorite desktops like Gnome and KDE.

First, add the official and update repositories. To add repositories in openSUSE, go to YaST and click *Software Repositories*. If you installed from the DVD, you should have four repos enabled:

- openSUSE DVD
- Updates for 11.0
- openSUSE 11.0 OSS
- openSUSE 11.0 non-OSS

A fifth repo, openSUSE 11.0 Debug, holds packages with debug information. Unless you're a developer, you probably won't need this one.

If you're going to keep the openSUSE DVD with you at all times, you can safely disable the DVD repo. Just uncheck *enabled*, and it will disappear from the rotation.

To add a few repos, click *Add*, and then select *Community Repositories* from the list of options.

YaST will download some information from the openSUSE.org site then present you with a list of options (Figure 1). You'll want to choose many of the following repos:

- VideoLan Repository
- Packman Repository
- Wine
- GNOME Community
- ATI Repository (for your ATI card)
- NVIDIA Repository (if you have an nVidia card)
- KDE Community
- OpenOffice.org (if you want to follow OpenOffice.org development)
- Mozilla (if you want to follow Mozilla development)
- openSUSE Education

The education repository is great if you have kids on openSUSE!

If you use KDE, you'll want the KDE repos; if you don't, they're not so useful. The basic idea is to take what makes sense for you. Note that you don't need to enable Gnome, KDE, OpenOffice.org, or Mozilla to get updates for the stable versions – just if you want to follow newer versions.

Once you've selected the repos, click *OK*, and you'll see a few dialogs that mention downloading the software; you'll also probably be prompted to accept GPG keys. (It's used to "sign" software so that you know it's trusted.)

Unsupported Wireless Cards

The Linux community has done a great job of providing support for wireless

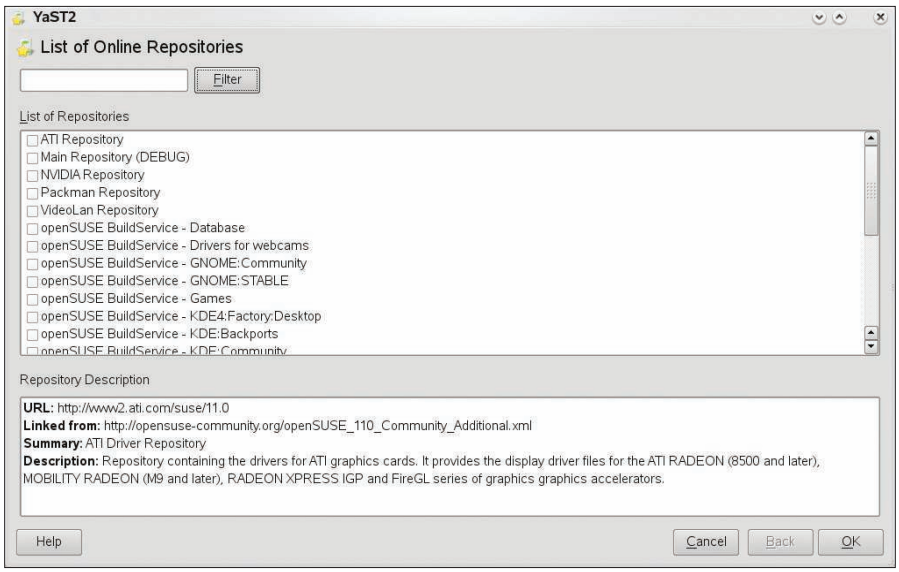

Figure 1: Community Repositories within openSUSE.

cards. Still, some cards aren't Linux compatible out of the box, either because the manufacturers are not providing support for Linux or because they provide insufficient documentation for the kernel developers to write drivers.

If you have an Atheros wireless chipset, you might be able to get your card working with the MadWiFi package. To install MadWiFi, you'll need to add the MadWiFi repository, or just use 1-Click Install to get the packages you need.

The 1-Click URL is available on the openSUSE wiki [1] – just click the link and you'll be prompted for the root password; then, you can walk through the steps to install the packages necessary for MadWiFi.

Once you've installed the necessary packages, you can run *modprobe ath_pci*, and it should show that your card has been detected. At this point, you can manage the card normally with NetworkManager or KNetworkManager (depending on your desktop).

Get Your Video Card Running

OK, so you've got a fancy high-end nVidia or ATI video card, but the open source drivers aren't quite doing the trick. That is, you have video, but you don't have accelerated 3D video, which is what you dropped the big bucks for when you bought your computer, video card, or both. You want 3D, and you want it now. No problem.

The good news is, if you run a laptop with an Intel chipset, you're already good to go. The latest X.org drivers support your Intel chipset.

If you use an ATI or nVidia video card, however, a few extra steps are needed, not because the openSUSE folks are lazy and don't want to enable the "official" drivers for ATI or nVidia, but because those drivers are closed source and can't be pre-configured by openSUSE for your video card for licensing reasons.

With ATI, it's simple. Just go to the openSUSE wiki page for the ATI HOWTO [2] and then to the 1-Click Install for openSUSE 10.3 and 11.0. If you click that icon, you'll walk through a brief set of questions about the install and be prompted to enter the root password up front. Then, it's a piece of cake. Just restart X (or if you're paranoid, the entire system). That's it!

For nVidia cards, again, installation is very nearly painless. In the nVidia section of the openSUSE wiki [3], use the 1-Click icon. After a few prompts, in no time at all, you'll have the nVidia drivers. Make sure to restart X.org.

Note that the openSUSE wiki has some tips and troubleshooting tricks if you're interested.

Fire Up 3D Effects

Once 3D is working with your video card, you can turn on desktop effects (Compiz Fusion under Gnome or the native desktop effects in KDE 4.0) to improve usability and spice up your desktop a bit with some eye candy.

Note that desktop effects might not be available with all graphics chipsets. OpenSUSE 11.0 enables desktop effects for a wide variety of systems, but some video cards simply aren't supported.

To enable desktop effects under Gnome, go to the main menu and select Control Center. Then, select *Desktop Effects*, which will bring up the Simple Compiz Config Settings Manager (Simple CCSM; Figure 2).

This dialog makes it easy to enable desktop effects. Just click the box next to *Enable desktop effects* in the top of the dialog. Also, you can configure broad Compiz settings in the various tabs or select a pre-configured profile from the drop-down menu. The default is probably a good setting to begin with.

If you are warned that your video chipset is unsupported, go ahead and enable desktop effects anyway. Likely they'll work just fine.

Figure 2: The Simple Compiz Config Settings Manager.

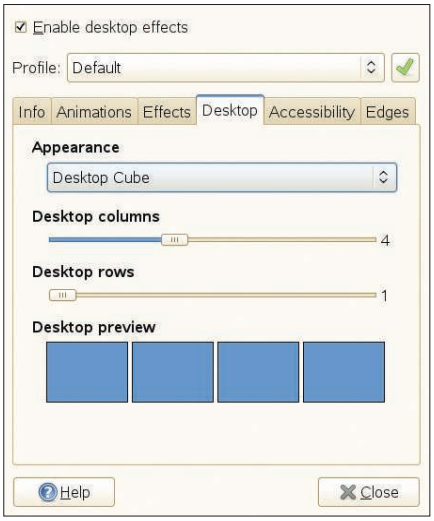

Figure 3: Desktop Dialog under Simple CCSM.

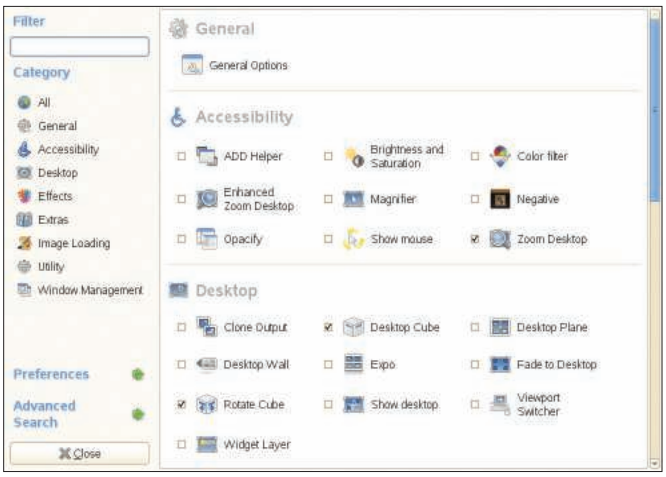

Figure 4: The Compiz Config Settings Manager.

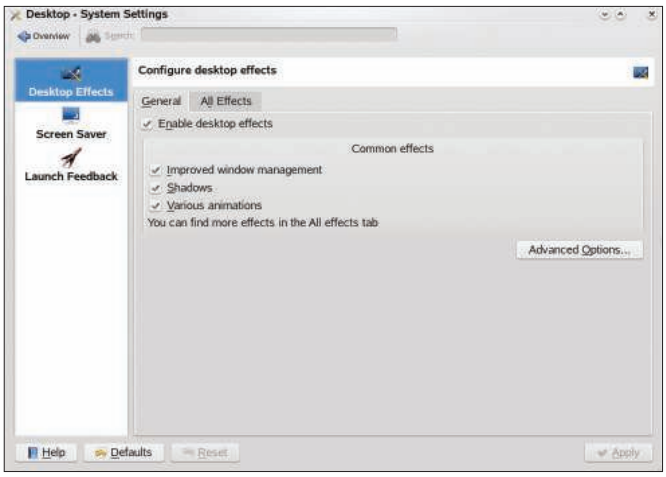

Figure 5: Configuring Desktop Effects in KDE 4.0.

Once effects are enabled, you can set up the famous desktop cube effect under the *Desktop* tab. Select *Desktop Cube* from the *Appearance* drop-down menu, and choose the number of columns and rows you want (Figure 3). (Four columns is probably the best default.)

To make the cube spin, press Ctrl+Alt+right arrow and Ctrl+Alt+left arrow. Also, you can move the cube around by holding Ctrl+Alt, clicking the mouse (left-click) on the desktop, and manually guiding the cube. (It sounds more difficult than it actually is.)

For more advanced settings, you can use the Compiz Config Settings Manager. Just go to the *Computer* menu, and select *More Applications*. Then, under *Utilities* (on the left-hand side) select *CompizConfig Settings Manager*.

Note that this Manager provides a lot of options (Figure 4), and it's probably a good idea to stick with the Simple CCSM dialog unless you're fairly comfortable working with the computer.

Desktop Effects in KDE 4.0

If you want to enable desktop effects in KDE 4.0, go to the main menu and select *Configure Desktop* (under the *Favorites* tab). Just select *Desktop* and click *Enable desktop effects* from the *General* tab (Figure 5).

After you've checked the *Enable desktop effects* checkbox, click *Apply*. You'll have the chance to confirm the new settings (or cancel the change).

Note that this procedure enables the KWin desktop effects, not the Compiz effects.

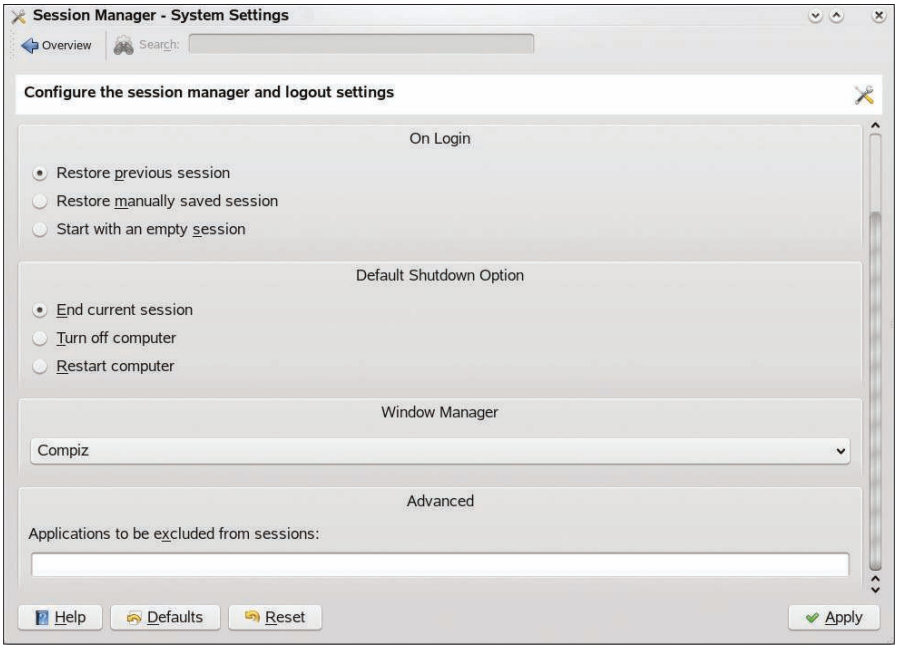

Figure 6: Enabling Compiz in KDE 4.0.

If you'd prefer to use Compiz, go to *Configure Desktop* and select the *Advanced* tab; go to *Session Manager* and then look for *Window Manager*. A drop-down menu should be set to *KWin* (the KDE default). Now select *Compiz* (Figure 6) and then click *Apply*.

You'll have to restart KDE to enable Compiz.

"Restricted" Formats and Multimedia

If you installed openSUSE from the DVD, you will have support for MP3 playback and encoding by default – although this is not true for Live CDs, which are entirely open source software. However, you might occasionally want to play a media type that is not enabled right out of the box.

This hurdle is legal, not technical. Depending on where you live, certain formats are encumbered by patents or other restrictions, which means Novell and the openSUSE Project are not free to ship them.

If you live in a region where you're free to enable these formats, you can find information on how to do it at the openSUSE website [4]. If you want to enable the formats, despite the restrictions, you can install the following packages from the Packman and VideoLan repositories: libdvdcss, libxine1, w32codec-all, k3b-codecs, and vlc.

To install the codecs in one shot, enter this command as root, or use sudo:

```
zypper in libdvdcss ➥
libxine1 w32codec-all ➥
k3b-codecs vlc
```

Some multimedia packages from the VideoLan repositories might conflict with openSUSE's default packages.

Installing Additional Fonts

The default fonts from the openSUSE live CDs are a good start, but the odds are you'll want to install a few more packages from the repos to get all the functionality you'd like.

Unfortunately, much of the world still defaults to Windows, so a lot of the world's documents and Web pages just don't look quite right if you're not using the Microsoft fonts. What's a Linux user to do? Well … install the Microsoft fonts. However, you won't find them in the openSUSE 11.0 repository.

First, you need the Cabextract application, which uncompresses files in Microsoft's *.cab* (compressed) format:

```
zypper in cabextract
```

Of course, you can install from the GUI tools, but it's usually easier to just whip open a terminal and go from there.

Now run the following commands to get Microsoft's fonts:

```
wget ➥
http://download.opensuse.org/➥
update/10.3/scripts/➥
fetchmsttfonts.sh
chmod a+x fetchmsttfonts.sh
sudo sh fetchmsttfonts.sh
```

If free software licensing is important to you (Microsoft's fonts are "free as in beer," but not "free as in freedom") you might also try the Liberation Fonts as a suitable substitute. These fonts were developed by Ascender Corp. at the behest of Red Hat to provide metrically equivalent fonts to the Microsoft fonts. They are usually suitable substitutes, and they're available under a more friendly license. To install the Liberation fonts, run *zypper in liberation-fonts*.

Post Post-Install

This certainly isn't a comprehensive list of things you can do with openSUSE. If you'd like more tips and tricks on openSUSE, be sure to follow Planet SUSE [5] and openSUSE News [6]. The Planet SUSE site aggregates blogs by openSUSE contributors and community members, and openSUSE News carries announcements and features of interest to openSUSE users.

The openSUSE wiki is also an excellent resource [7]. If you're an English speaker, you'll find lots of useful documentation and resources there. ■

INFO

[1] MadWiFi: *http://en.opensuse.org/Atheros_madwifi*

[2] ATI driver HOWTO: *http://en.opensuse.org/ATI_Driver_HOWTO*

[3] nVidia at OpenSUSE: *http://en.opensuse.org/NVIDIA*

[4] Restricted formats: *http://en.opensuse.org/Restricted_Formats*

[5] Planet SUSE: *http://www.planetsuse.org/*

[6] openSUSE News: *http://news.opensuse.org/*

[7] openSUSE wiki: *http://en.opensuse.org/*