

# CrunchBang Linux

Andy Hudson wonders if it's CrunchBang by name, CrunchBang by nature.

## In brief...

» Ubuntu-derived distribution designed to be light on resource usage. Also consider Xubuntu.

Ubuntu has a lot to answer for – in four short years it has risen to dominate the Linux landscape. It has also spawned several re-spins, including the excellent Mint Linux, and now CrunchBang Linux.

The principal method of installing CrunchBang is by using a Live CD, which will enable you to get a taste of the distro before installing, and never before has this been more important than it is with CrunchBang. For starters, it's designed to be minimalist in order to increase performance, but not to lose any functionality in the process. To aid this, the developers have opted to use the *Openbox* window manager, which is extremely minimalist.

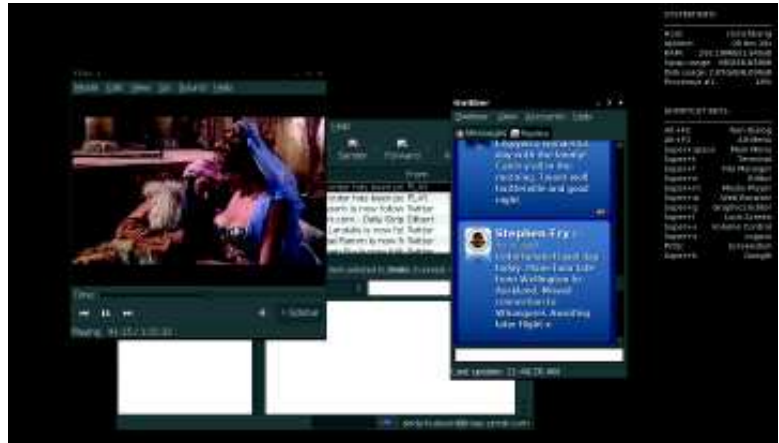
It's not helped by the fact that the theme is based on a greyscale look and feel, which takes some time to get used to, especially if you're used to the caramel colouring of Ubuntu. Once your eyes have become accustomed to the lack of colour, it becomes quite soothing to look at. As for the rest of the desktop, you get the ubiquitous

## Core software

- » Kernel 2.6.27
- » Openbox 3.4.7
- » Totem 2.24.3
- » AbiWord 2.6.4
- » Claws Mail 3.5.0
- » Gwibber 0.7

**“CrunchBang Linux is built with mostly Ubuntu packages.”**

*NetworkManager* icon, the clipboard, desktop switcher, clock and also a basic Conky task bar, which serves as a quick



» CrunchBang comes armed with an array of software, including *Gwibber*, *Skype* and *Claws Mail*, and codecs for playing our collection of classic DVDs.

reference guide to some of the keyboard shortcuts that come configured by default. We hadn't come across Conky until recently; however, we're very glad we did, as it's a useful resource and fits in very well with CrunchBang's minimalist approach.

## Build on brown

CrunchBang Linux is built with mostly Ubuntu packages, making it compatible with the already huge Ubuntu repositories, and therefore Debian also. However, the work only begins there, as the creator has taken the time to customise the distro to make it as speedy as possible. With the Conky sidebar, it's not long before you're well versed in pressing Super+Spacebar to get the menu on screen, or opening up *Firefox* by pressing Super+F – the speed with which the applications snap to life is extremely impressive.

Under the hood, CrunchBang retains the same kernel version as its parent (2.6.27 in this case), and rather annoyingly it also configures *Grub* to show Ubuntu 8.10 rather than CrunchBang, which is something of an annoyance when you have a multiboot system. As mentioned earlier, *Openbox* is the window manager of choice, allowing access to the *GTK* libraries and consequently any *Gnome* applications. *AbiWord* is bundled by default, along with *Claws Mail* which has long had a reputation for speed. Also included is *Gwibber*, a social networking

application that connects to multiple services, including *Twitter*, to keep you in the loop as to the activities of your social networking buddies. It's the first time we've come across *Gwibber* being included by default in a distro, and it only serves to indicate the trend of integrating web 2.0 technologies within distros. Codecs are in place to handle MP3s as well as DVD playback; our trusty collection of Carry On DVDs worked just fine, but *The Dark Knight* seemed to pose some problem, which prevented playback.

On the whole CrunchBang Linux offers an enticing performance-focused alternative to Ubuntu – it's unlikely to become a mainstream distribution any time soon, but it should appeal to those Ubuntu users who are looking to dig deeper into Linux. **LXF**



» The primary method of accessing the menu is to right-click anywhere on the desktop. Who needs a Start button?

## LINUX Verdict

### CrunchBang Linux 8.10.01

Developer: Philip Newborough  
 Web: <http://crunchbanglinux.org>  
 Price: Free

Features	9/10
Performance	10/10
Ease of use	8/10
Documentation	5/10

» *CrunchBang* should find a dedicated following among performance seekers.

**Rating 8/10**