

» First Steps Beginner-level tutorials for users dipping their toes into Linux

Chromium: Get

Chromium, the Linux version of Google's Chrome, is the shiniest browser on the market. **Andy Channelle** shows you what to do with it...



» **Chrome's super-fast JavaScript engine has been designed with services such as Wave in mind.**



Our expert

Andy Channelle

Andy seems to have been taking his first steps in free software forever, and has been interested in technology since the advent of the Dragon 32.

Google's entry into the web browser market was perhaps inevitable, but it was still a surprise. While *Chrome* hasn't yet made a big splash in terms of market share, this may change with next year's launch of Chrome OS, and the new Google Wave. While *Chrome* is not yet available for Linux, we're going to run through installing *Chromium* – the open source developer build – on RPM and Deb based systems, and explore some of the settings.

Binaries for Fedora 10 and 11 are available from <http://spot.fedorapeople.org/chromium>. It appears in your Internet menu once installed, which you do with a double-click. To keep up to date with the latest versions, you can add the location of the RPM as a *Yum* repository. To do this, open up a text editor and add the following code:

```
[chromium]
name=Chromium Test Packages baseurl=http://spot.fedorapeople.org/chromium/F$releasever/
enabled=1
gpgcheck=0
```

Save the file to your desktop as **chromium.repo**. Then open *Nautilus* as a root user. Open a terminal and type:

```
su nautilus
```

You'll be prompted for the root password and then *Nautilus* will launch. Beware that this file manager is running with full root privileges, which means you could easily delete or damage some vital system file. Use with care!

Copy **chromium.repo** to **/etc/yum.repos.d/**. Once done, close *Nautilus* and reopen the terminal. You can now install *Chromium* by typing:

```
yum install chromium
```

This is a longer install method, but the advantage is that whenever the repository is updated, you'll get immediate access to the new version.

Install on Ubuntu

Ubuntu is one of the distributions likely to be 'officially' supported by *Chrome* when the non-developer builds become available. The software has its own PPA launchpad page, so is quite easy to install. First, open *Synaptic* (System > Administration > Synaptic Package Manager), go to



» **The first step in installing Flash is finding out if you already have the plugin installed.**

» **Last month** We took charge of user privileges and kept software updated.

browsing



Settings > Repositories and look at the Third Party Software tab. Click Add and copy the following to the address bar:

```
deb http://ppa.launchpad.net/chromium-daily/ppa/ubuntu  
jaunty main
```

For good measure, you can also add the source repository:

```
deb-src http://ppa.launchpad.net/chromium-daily/ppa/ubuntu  
jaunty main
```

Note that the penultimate part of these lines should contain the codename for your version of Ubuntu (**hardy**, **intrepid**, **jaunty** or **karmic**).

Click Close and then hit the Reload button. Finally, find **chromium-browser** using the search box and install the latest version. The software will appear under the Internet menu. *Chromium* works best with the Microsoft Core Fonts installed, so if you haven't already, search for **msttcorefonts** and install the appropriate package before using *Chromium*.

Add Flash support

By default, *Chromium* won't be able to playback Flash content, which is a pain. Fortunately, we can enable support with a quick trip to the terminal. Check whether Flash is installed and find its location in your file system. Open a terminal and type **sudo locate libflashplayer.so**. If Flash is installed you'll see something like the following:

```
/opt/Adobe AIR/Versions/1.0/Resources/libflashplayer.so  
/usr/lib/flashplugin-installer/libflashplayer.so
```

To make Flash work, we'll need to copy **libflashplayer.so** from one of these locations to the **Plugins** folder within the *Chromium* working directory. The path is **/usr/lib/chromium-browser/plugins/**.

Copy from the first location to the folder:

```
sudo cp /usr/lib/flashplugin-installer/libflashplayer.so /usr/  
lib/chromium-browser/plugins
```

Now we could start *Chromium* with Flash enabled by typing **chromium-browser --enable-plugins**, but it would be more



» **Pin tabs reduce the clutter on your tab bar, so that you can add more clutter later on.**



» **Reorder the thumbnails in your start page by dragging and dropping them.**

efficient to append the actual menu command to do the same job. Do this with your desktop's standard Menu editor, which is likely to be in the preferences. Find the Chromium-Browser menu entry, right-click to edit the Properties and add **--enable-plugins** to the command that launches the application. Save or close the dialog and then select the *Chromium* entry from the menu.

Tips on usage

With *Chrome* and the Flash plugin installed and working, we can now look at some of the cool things you can do with your new installation.

If you don't like the default Chrome look in *Chromium*, click the Spanner on the top-right of the browser window and choose Options, then choose the Personal Stuff tab. In the Themes section, click Get Themes. A new tab will open with a selection of themes; choose one by clicking Apply Theme and watch as the browser's look changes.

When you launch *Chromium*, Google's equivalent of the *Opera* Speed Dial page appears. In the top-right corner, you'll see options to change from Thumbnail to List view. In Thumbnail, you'll see a screenshot of the most recent pages you've visited. You can move these around with drag and drop, delete a thumbnail by hovering over it and then clicking the icon on the top-right corner, or anchor a page in position by using the Pin on the top-right. Beneath the thumbnails is a list of recently closed tabs and windows, which you can reopen by clicking on them.

Tabs in *Chromium* are great. You can drag them across the bar to a new location, pull one out on to the desktop to create a new window and move an existing one into the tab bar. If you routinely have a lot of tabs open, things can become cluttered. Reduce the tabs you keep open all the time by right-clicking and selecting Pin Tab from the menu. This will shift the tab to the left and reduce it to a single icon.

To browse in private, click the Spanner and choose Create New Incognito Window. This launches a new window (with a subtle visual change and spy avatar) that will enable you to browse without saving which sites you visit – the history, cookies and cache of the main browser remain untouched. Downloads and new bookmarks are retained, however.

Quick tip

If you've installed Google's official *Chrome* build for Linux, the Flash plugin should go into **/opt/Google/chrome/plugins**. You may need to create this directory to house the plugin.

» **If you missed last issue** Call 0870 837 4773 or +44 1858 438795.

OpenSUSE: Be

Keeping up to date is a vital security task, whatever your distribution.

OpenSUSE is Novell's community development version of its commercial Linux distribution. It's built by both community and Novell engineers, and gives users a good idea of what the next paid-for version of the software is going to be like. In this tutorial, we're going to run through the various methods available for finding and installing new software and keeping your OpenSUSE system bang up to date.

The current version of OpenSUSE is 11.1. This comes in a couple of different flavours, most significantly the live CD version and a DVD edition, which contains a massive amount of software. In this tutorial we're using the live CD edition, which has been installed on a new machine. This means that our primary source of new software will be OpenSUSE's online repositories, so a broadband connection is pretty much vital. Those using the DVD will follow the same procedures with the exception that you'll be prompted to insert the appropriate DVD when you're installing.

We'll begin, though, with updates. By default, OpenSUSE is set up to look for these automatically and, if anything is available, you'll see a small orange star in the notification area of KDE's bottom panel. Click this to begin the process. The update dialog box is a little sparse, but if you click the Details button you'll see more information about what's going to be downloaded and installed.



Use the Details button to get more info on available updates, including how long each one is likely to take.

installed and then hit the Install button. You'll be prompted for the root password before anything is downloaded.

SUSE will look for updates every 24 hours by default and the updater starts when you log in. You can change these settings by right-clicking the small green Gecko in the system tray and selecting Configure Applet. In the top section, define the update period and the time between notifications – useful if you don't always want to update immediately, but still want a reminder that new versions are available.

More choices

You can also decide whether the detailed view is shown automatically – we like this option – and also to set the conditions under which the updater will begin its work. It's sensible to select When The System Is Under A Low Load and, if it's a laptop, When Connected To The Mains. The final option, which will automatically load the latest drivers when a piece of hardware is connected, is great if you're the kind of person who plugs in lots of different devices every day. Once you're done, click OK and the updater will continue its work in silence, bothering you only when new goodies are available.

If you can't wait for the system to run its update manager, you can initiate a check yourself by right-clicking the update icon and selecting Check Now. The utility will check your software against the latest changes in SUSE's repositories and notify you of anything that needs to be done. If you really don't want to be bothered with updates, right-click the icon and select Quit. This will stop the update manager for the current session, though it'll start the next time you log in – unless you switch off autostart in the configuration dialog. If you later want to restart the update utility, it's in the Administration Settings under the Software heading.

Quick tip

Updates don't only contain new versions of applications. They can also fix important security issues, so don't leave them switched off.

SUSE's update utility has a few options to play with, which is ideal if you're not on a broadband connection.

You're in charge

This option also enables you to deselect an update if, for example, it's very large and you're on a slow network connection, or if you simply don't want to upgrade a particular application. Just uncheck the items you don't want



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up to date



Step by step: Adding software to an OpenSUSE box

OpenSUSE has thousands of software packages available, covering everything from games to genealogy. You just need to know how to get hold of it – this guide will reveal all.



1 Use a SUSE

Your first port of call should be SUSE's own package manager. In KDE, open the panel and look under the Computer section. You want the Install Software menu entry. After typing in your root password, a package manager will appear. Use the Search box to find the application and then select it from the list on the left. A description of it will appear at the base of the window.



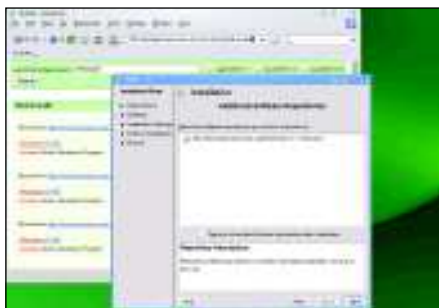
2 Add a repository

Like Ubuntu and Fedora, SUSE can use new repositories to install and update software. In the package manager, select Configuration > Repositories and then click the Add button near the bottom of the window. SUSE can access a variety of distribution media. Select the media you're using (in our case, it's a URL), then hit Next to input the appropriate details – web address, path to CD, etc. Experts can create local repositories.



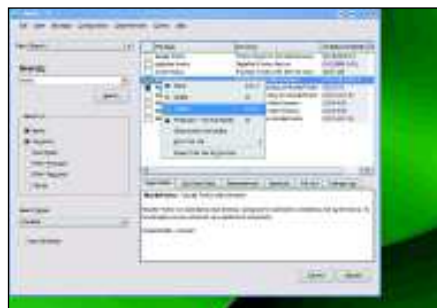
3 Find an RPM

OpenSUSE uses a package format called Red Hat Package Manager, or RPM. This is also used by Red Hat, Mandriva Linux and others, so you need to download a suitable version for your release of SUSE. Popular RPMs sources include RPMfind.net, Sourceforge and app sites. Once you download an RPM, you should be able to double-click it to start the installer. However, this isn't a good way to install software and may lead to dependency issues.



4 One-click installers

SUSE has its own one-click installation system, available on lots of software. To find packages, go to <http://packages.opensuse-community.org> and search using the package name and distro version. A click on the install icon will see the package downloaded and installed. We had to do this with *Konqueror* rather than *Firefox*, which didn't have the correct settings. This method should deal with dependency issues.



5 Manual tasks

You can remove or manually update a package by going into the main interface (Panel > Computer > Install Software), searching for the one to be altered and then right-clicking the tick in the left-hand column next to the package name. You'll see a basic menu of options. More settings are available by choosing the All In This List entry.



6 If all else fails...

If there isn't a binary of the package you want, you can compile the software from source. You'll need to install the C/C++ Compiler and Tools through the normal package manager. Now download and extract your source file at the terminal using `tar -zxvf filename.tgz`, use `./configure` to check everything's OK, then `make` and finally `make-install`. The last of these commands needs to be executed as root. **LXF**

» **Next month** Ubuntu's new IM client and using Bluetooth for file transfers.