

CrossOver Games

Windows compatibility king CodeWeavers updates the playful part of its product line. **Andy Channelle** wastes a couple of days...

In brief...

» Windows emulation focused on running games. See *Wine*, *Cedega* and *CrossOver Office*.

CrossOver Games is based on *Wine*, the emulation layer that enables you to run Windows-based software on Linux without having to pay money to Microsoft for the platform. Where it differs from *Wine* is that the developers have put a lot of quite brilliant work into making sure it works with games (CodeWeavers also makes a version aimed at productivity software, called *CrossOver Office*).

Like the recently updated Office version, *CrossOver Games* has a new look that integrates better with the Gnome desktop, a new game installation system and better bottle management. This last update is vital, as bottles are what enable you to tailor the simulated Windows environment to each individual game.

CodeWeavers divides the world of Windows gaming into 'supported' and

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'unsupported', with supported titles now including everything from *Half Life* and *World of Warcraft* to newer fayre such as *Spore* and *Star Trek Online* (the latter is through Community Support). Performance in supported games tends to be almost as good as native, and *World of Warcraft* in particular appears to have received a lot of attention.

Version 9 appeared just as Valve launched the new user interface for its



» Bottle management has been given an overhaul with a native look and support for archiving and restoring bottles.



» This new edition boasts better support for the Steam game service.

Steam distribution channel, and CodeWeavers has done well to support the new system. It installs straight from the *CrossOver Games* interface and creates a new menu entry.

Steam punk

Once you've created an account with Steam, the new interface comes alive with demos, HD videos and reviews of games. Again, if you're interested in a particular game, check out the forums and, if possible, download a demo before you open your wallet.

It's also worth remembering that, though this is centred on games, the software will run productivity software, including *MS Office*, older versions of *Photoshop* and others supported by *CrossOver Office*, though the installation doesn't hold your hand quite so much.

The software itself works alongside *CrossOver Games*, standard *Wine* packages and the custom *Wine* used to run Google's *Picasa*. All this duplication does involve using more resources than using shared libraries, but it makes for a more stable experience: if *Picasa* crashes, it's not going to take down any other *Wine*-based applications.

CrossOver Games is a great addition to the *CrossOver* stable and is a worthwhile purchase/upgrade if your object of desire is on the supported list. The addition of unofficial, but robust,

support for a lot of Windows productivity apps is a bonus and will mean that even if you're running a Windows partition you can get a lot more done without the reboot. And the archive facility (which allows you to package up a bottle for installation on another machine) works well.

We have had some sound issues when running games alongside *Firefox*, which is something akin to the browser 'stealing focus' on the soundcard and preventing *Crossover* from accessing it. The other problem is the difficulty with configuring proxies through the UI. This is more of an issue if you're in an office than at home playing games, but solving it does demand a little work at the command line. **LXF**

LINUX FORMAT Verdict

Crossover Games 9.0

Developer: CodeWeavers
Web: www.codeweavers.com
Price: £25.99

Ease of use	7/10
Features	8/10
Performance	8/10
Value for money	9/10

» Much cheaper than a Windows licence, but most valuable if the game you want is on the supported list.

Rating 8/10