

Re: Is FreeBSD ready for desktop (Mozilla Flash)

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.unix.bsd.freebsd.misc/2005-09/0222.html>

From: Philip Paeps (*philip+usenet_at_paeps.cx*)

Date: 09/08/05

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Conrad <nospam@nowhere.com> wrote:

> # note: all dates are in American format mm/dd/yy

A bad habit like that can't be too hard to kick, can it? Same goes for sarcasm. It's the lowest form of wit. Really.

> # 09/05/05 Installed new FreeBSD – 5.4

>

> This is the allegedly "stable" version – right?

Not 'allegedly' or 'the', but it is a stable release, yes. Well-spotted.

> The install totally fails to figure out the onboard video, and settles on

> selecting the VESA driver as the best possible driver. (hint: some sort of

> attempt at the unichrome driver would have been nice)

Patches are welcome, of course. Or technical information which would allow competent hackers to do the patching for you. A number of hardware vendors like to keep their specifications secret for some reason, which makes it difficult for people to write drivers to support them.

> Of course, in spite of the fact that I also have a very generic monitor, (an

> AOC model 7F), somehow the install fails to detect such bizarre and weird

> parameters as the horizontal synch and vertical refresh – which I must

> configure manually, in order to even get an X desktop. (hint: basic

> identification of generic hardware would also be nice)

If the monitor doesn't support probing for this, or if the probing mechanism is kept secret by the vendor, naturally, X11 won't be able to offer you that feature. You've clearly been buying hardware from vendors who don't want you to use their hardware.

> Next, having finally gotten an X desktop, I fire up Mozilla. More bad news.

> The first site I hit tells me I have no Flash support. OK, OK, in spite of

> the fact that when I installed BSD I asked for a fairly complete X desktop,

> Flash is just too new, too wild, too far out there to consider for

> inclusion.

Flash is a worthless proprietary technology designed to cause discrimination on the www. It allows fools to hide information in bloaty animated formats which are impossible to understand by the visually impaired, even if they happen to be using a hardware/software combination blessed by Macromedia.

I like to use a null-plugin which replaces flash animations (and other silly proprietary plugins which add zero value to the browsing experience) by white space.

- > *What does ***THE HANDBOOK*** say? I quote, chapter and verse:*
- > *"Macromedia Flash plugin is not available for FreeBSD. However, a software*
- > *layer (wrapper) for running the Linux version of the plugin exists. This*
- > *wrapper also supports Adobe® Acrobat® plugin, RealPlayer plugin and more."*

...provided you are running on i386, Macromedia and Adobe don't provide any binaries for alpha, sparc64, ppc, or ia64. Adobe, at least, publishes its specifications so that others can write (and have written!) implementations for them. Macromedia doesn't do that.

- > *Cool. I mean, the Linux emulation on FreeBSD is highly praised, right? The*
- > *BSD developers have pulled a miracle out of their respective butts, and*
- > *against incredible odds have managed to support one completely open-source*
- > **nix on another completely open-source *nix. Nothing so trivial as*
- > *supporting, say, a completely obscure, closed source O/S.*

There is also binary compatibility for OSF1 on FreeBSD/Alpha, and I seem to recall support for other obscure operating systems also existed at some point, but died because no one was interested in maintaining it.

- > *I mean any code weenie could whip up something that would let users say, run*
- > *MS Word on their Linux desktop in a weekend. But supporting one *nix on*
- > *another *nix? That's bloody astounding.*

Yes. Why would anyone want to run Microsoft software? That's about as ridiculous as wanting to run Macromedia Flash, for instance, or using Adobe Acrobat instead of any of a number of Free implementations which work just as well but don't require you to enter into contracts requiring you to sacrifice your firstborn baby.

- > *OK, I need to install the linuxpluginwrapper port. I will ignore for the*
- > *moment the fact that documenting full pathnames might be nice, i.e.*
- > */usr/ports/www/linuxpluginwrapper, which is where I go to do a make install.*

Not everyone has their ports tree installed under /usr.

- > *Which fails. Why does it fail? Because of a dependency on a very weird and*
- > *obscure piece of software that almost nobody has ever heard of – Acrobat*
- > *Reader.*

yawn

If you'd read the Makefile, you would have known that you could easily build the pluginwrapper without plugins, after which you could install the plugins one by one. The ones you need, not the ones you don't.

- > *But that's OK – because I don't have a /etc/libmap.conf anyway. so even if*
- > *the port had built, I probably wouldn't have been able to "Follow the*
- > *instructions displayed by the port"*

cat pkg-message?

- > *A modest suggestion, folks. Drop the desktop support. Just get rid of it.*
- > *It's clearly beyond your scope, which is apparently devoted to niche server*
- > *markets.*

I've been running FreeBSD on my desktop machines (and indeed my laptop) for many years without any trouble. But then, I don't devote my life to watching bloaty Macromedia Flash animations on websites designed by fools to keep the information as inaccessible as possible.

- > *When the most popular browser on the planet (barring M\$ Internet Explorer)*
- > *can't be made to "just work"*

Mozilla Firefox works just fine here. As does Lynx.

- > *with the most popular plugins on the planet*

The plugins are 'popular' for exactly the same reason as Microsoft "Internet Explorer": fools design websites that only work with the things. Avoid sites designed by fools, and you have no problems.

- > *Should thing like libmap.conf really go in /etc ... or should it be in*
- > */usr/local/etc, or even, /usr/compat/linux/etc?*

No, why? Have you read the libmap.conf(5) manual page? Does it say anywhere that it's only for mapping libraries which happen to come from the ports tree or have anything to do with Linux binary compatibility? The only times I use libmap.conf(5) are when some library version has been bumped in -current and I'm feeling too lazy to rebuild everything linked to it.

- > *In the meantime, I can develop, say wxPython applications – but I still*
- > *can't hit a website with Flash content.*

Good. Macromedia doesn't want you to use Flash on FreeBSD anyway.

– Philip

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BOFH Excuse #29:

Please don't email any replies
I follow the newsgroup.

It works the way the Wang did, what's the problem