

Slackel 7.4

Before he couldn't work with Arch, he couldn't work with Slackware, which is why **Mayank Sharma** jumps at everything that mentions the venerable distro.

IN BRIEF

The distro is based on the Slackware project and borrows tools from the Salix distro, which is another Slackware derivative. However, unlike Salix, which follows stable Slackware releases, Slackel is based on Slackware's -current development branch.

SPECS

CPU: Pentium 2 and higher
Memory: 512MB or at least 1GB for programs like LibreOffice and Firefox
HDD: 10GB
Build: Both 32- and 64-bit

Slackel is one of those few one-man distros that continues to be powered solely by the love and affection of its dedicated community of users. The distro's Greek developer has just put out version 7.4, six months after the previous release.

Slackel has multiple editions, each with a different desktop environment. However, as usual the first one out of the gate is the Openbox edition, with others to follow in due time. The distro mixes the best of both Slackware and Salix to create an interesting offering. For starters, Slackel is fully compatible with the repositories of both upstream distros, which gives it a far wider choice of programs than you'll find in pure Slackware.

Second, Slackel is based on Slackware's development branch (-current), rather than its stable release, which was last released back in 2016. Thanks to this, Slackel 7.4 includes the latest Linux kernel 5.10.4 LTS kernel along with various other recent updates. One of the highlights of this release is its support for 64-bit UEFI systems. Slackel is one of the few projects that still produces both 64- and 32-bit ISO images. Starting with this release, you can now use the 64-bit images to boot on EFI-equipped machines.

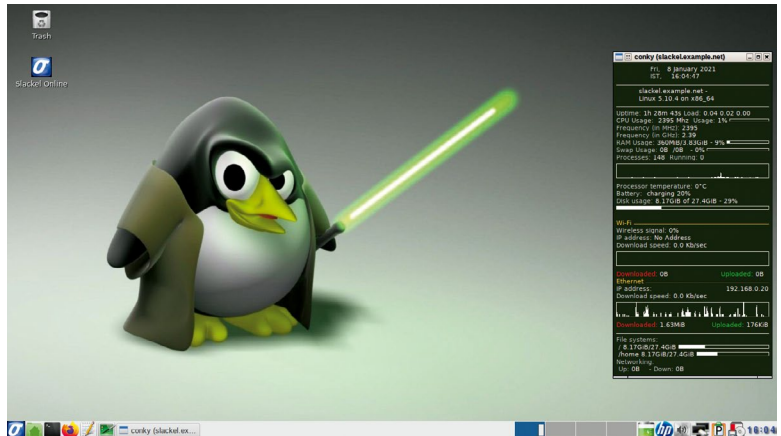
Slackel is available as a live installable isohybrid image that you can boot from optical media as well as USB devices. Interestingly, you can use Slackel from a rewritable media like a USB drive, in a couple of ways. For starters, you can use the included graphical tool to write the ISO image to a USB disk. You can also use the tool to create a persistence partition, which can optionally be encrypted as well.

This is a good option if you want to save files and carry them along with the Live environment. However, the developer suggests the Live environment loses its snappiness once you've installed a couple of applications in the persistent partition.

No slacker, this

The better option is to do a proper installation of the distribution on to an external drive. The process is slightly more involved and assumes that the USB is the second disk. You'll have to adapt the process to get the USB to boot on a computer that has multiple internal drives. But the performance advantages are worth jumping through the extra hoop.

For a traditional hard disk install, the distro uses a minimalist installer that it's borrowed from Salix. It fires up *Gparted* to enable you to make room for the distro



While Slackel defaults to GRUB, you can also install eLILLO instead, which is something we haven't seen Linux distributions offer for quite a while now.

and has textboxes to create a user and specify the password for the root user.

The installer supports three installation modes. Core installs without a desktop; Basic has a desktop and a few programs; while Full installs a ready-to-use desktop. Once installed, the distro looks and behaves like any other Openbox-wielding distro. It has all the usual tools you'd expect in a desktop distro, along with a few extras. The distro uses the *Gslapt* package manager, which is a *Synaptic* lookalike frontend to the *slapt-get* package management system, which itself tries to emulate Debian's *apt-get* for Slackware.

Thanks to *Gslapt* you can carry out a basic installation and then pull in just the programs that you need to use for a streamlined installation.

All things considered, the two things that attract us about Slackel are the 32-bit image and USB installs. The distro can really do wonders on an old computer. If that computer can boot from a USB then you'll be blown away by the performance of the distro. And the fact that you're running Slackware underneath will do wonders to your geek credentials. **LXF**

VERDICT

DEVELOPER: Dimitris Tzemos
WEB: www.slackel.gr
LICENCE: GPL and others

FEATURES	8/10	EASE OF USE	7/10
PERFORMANCE	9/10	DOCUMENTATION	6/10

Slackel combines the best of both Slackware and Salix, to offer a unique distro that'll work wonders on older machines.

» **Rating 7/10**