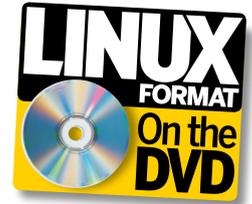# OS/4 OpenLinux

This Ubuntu derivative is packed with apps and aimed at ease-of-use, but as **Les Pounder** discovers, it might be trying to do a bit too much.

Ubuntu, itself a derivative of the upstream Debian operating system, has long enjoyed a reputation of providing a base for other derivative distributions. This has been more prevalent recently as Canonical's switch to Unity hasn't been widely accepted by stalwart FOSS advocates.

Enter OS/4 OpenLinux 13.6, an Ubuntu-based distro that aims to be "the most user-friendly operating system on the planet". For instance, it comes with all the necessary codecs to play proprietary audio and video files, which is a real bonus for new and inexperienced users. We tested it on a Lenovo x61, and it detected the Wi-Fi with no issues, even if it did generate a crash report when it couldn't find a Bluetooth dongle.

OS/4 comes with plenty of software pre-installed including classics such as *Firefox*, *Gimp* and *AbiWord*, and some really exceptional choices, such as *VLC*, *Blender* and *Steam*. Yes, you read correctly, the *Steam* client is installed as standard, so you can get up and gaming quickly (as long as you have the required hardware, of course).

This is where OS/4 is different to other Ubuntu-based distros: it provides everything you need to game, surf and work out of the box. Normally with Ubuntu-based distros, there's just a change of window manager and a few changes to the file manager and a choice of audio/video player. With OS/4 there's a great choice of software, which

❯ This version of OS/4 OpenLinux can run on 512MB of RAM – though we're not sure what sort of *Steam* performance a spec like that would give you.

is reflected in the size of the ISO file (1.7GB). One notable omission, however, is *LibreOffice*. OS/4 has chosen to use *AbiWord* and *Gnumeric* for word processing and spreadsheets. Both applications are light and provide enough functionality for the end user, but if you really need *LibreOffice*, then you can use the package manager to install it, which is where OS/4 becomes less user-friendly.
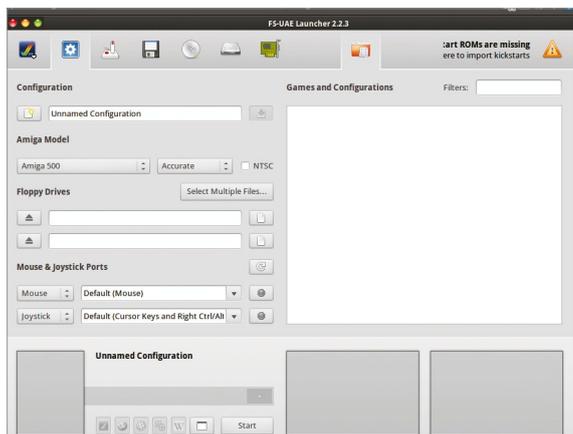
Packed with apps

Ubuntu has long since dropped *Synaptic* as its default package manager in favour of *Software Centre*, as it is designed to make it as easy as possible to find, add and remove software. Although OS/4's use of the old package manager reflects its intention to move back to Debian, *Synaptic* is an odd choice for a distro that aims to be the "most user-friendly".

This isn't quite as quirky a decision as another app choice: OS/4 comes with the *FS-UAE* Amiga emulator pre-installed. In isolation this might seem like a strange decision, but distros are made by mere mortals and many of OS/4 team have strong ties to the Amiga community. While OS/4 isn't an operating system for Amiga computers, it does provide the resources for enthusiasts to emulate their favourite machine. *FS-UAE* is great for doing that,

but you need a little knowhow to make the emulator work properly. Again, it made us wonder what it's doing here.

The question then is: who is OS/4 really aimed at? On one hand, it provides a lot of software out of the box, but on the other its choice of package manager isn't a gentle introduction to software management, and to top it off it plops down Amiga emulation into the middle, basically because it can.

We can't really recommend this distro to new users, because of its choice of package manager. But OS/4 OpenLinux will appeal to established users who want a quick setup and access to the vast amount of software in the Ubuntu repositories. **LXF**

❯ OS/4 ships with *FS-UAE*, an Amiga emulator, and the AROS subsystem, which aims to mimic AmigaOS 3.1.

LINUX FORMAT Verdict

OS/4 OpenLinux 13.6

Developer PC OpenSystems LLC
Web www.os4online.com
Licence Various free software licences

Features	7/10
Performance	8/10
Ease of use	7/10
Documentation	8/10

❯ *Not as easy as it claims, but good for mid-level Linux users, who want a working machine quickly.*

Rating 7/10