

The Perfect Desktop - Linux Mint 7 (Gloria)

Version 1.0

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Last edited 05/28/2009

This tutorial shows how you can set up a [Linux Mint 7 \(Gloria\)](#) desktop that is a full-fledged replacement for a Windows desktop, i.e. that has all the software that people need to do the things they do on their Windows desktops. The advantages are clear: you get a secure system without DRM restrictions that works even on old hardware, and the best thing is: all software comes free of charge. Linux Mint 7 is a Linux distribution based on Ubuntu 9.04 that has lots of packages in its repositories (like multimedia codecs, Adobe Flash, Adobe Reader, Skype, Google Earth, etc.) that are relatively hard to install on other distributions; it therefore provides a user-friendly desktop experience even for Linux newbies.

I want to say first that this is not the only way of setting up such a system. There are many ways of achieving this goal but this is the way I take. I do not issue any guarantee that this will work for you!

1 Preliminary Note

To fully replace a Windows desktop, I want the Linux Mint 7 desktop to have the following software installed:

Graphics:

- The GIMP - *free software replacement for Adobe Photoshop*
- F-Spot - *full-featured personal photo management application for the GNOME desktop*
- Google Picasa - *application for organizing and editing digital photos*

Internet:

- Firefox
- Opera
- Flash Player 10
- FileZilla - *multithreaded FTP client*
- Thunderbird - *email and news client*
- Evolution - *combines e-mail, calendar, address book, and task list management functions*
- aMule - *P2P file sharing application*
- Transmission BitTorrent Client - *Bittorrent client*
- Azureus/Vuze - *Java Bittorrent client*
- Pidgin - *multi-platform instant messaging client*
- Skype
- Google Earth
- Xchat IRC - *IRC client*

Office:

- OpenOffice Writer - *replacement for Microsoft Word*
- OpenOffice Calc - *replacement for Microsoft Excel*

- Adobe Reader
- GnuCash - *double-entry book-keeping personal finance system, similar to Quicken*
- Scribus - *open source desktop publishing (DTP) application*

Sound & Video:

- Amarok - *audio player*
- Audacity - *free, open source, cross platform digital audio editor*
- Banshee - *audio player, can encode/decode various formats and synchronize music with Apple iPods*
- MPlayer - *media player (video/audio), supports WMA*
- Rhythmbox Music Player - *audio player, similar to Apple's iTunes, with support for iPods*
- gtkPod - *software similar to Apple's iTunes, supports iPod, iPod nano, iPod shuffle, iPod photo, and iPod mini*
- XMMS - *audio player similar to Winamp*
- dvd:rip - *full featured DVD copy program*
- Kino - *free digital video editor*
- Sound Juicer CD Extractor - *CD ripping tool, supports various audio codecs*
- VLC Media Player - *media player (video/audio)*
- Helix Player - *media player, similar to the Real Player*
- Totem - *media player (video/audio)*
- Xine - *media player, supports various formats; can play DVDs*
- Brasero - *CD/DVD burning program*
- K3B - *CD/DVD burning program*
- Multimedia Codecs

Programming:

- KompoZer - *WYSIWYG HTML editor, similar to Macromedia Dreamweaver, but not as feature-rich (yet)*
- Bluefish - *text editor, suitable for many programming and markup languages*
- Quanta Plus - *web development environment, including a WYSIWYG editor*

Other:

- VirtualBox - *lets you run your old Windows desktop as a virtual machine under your Linux desktop, so you don't have to entirely abandon Windows*
- TrueType fonts
- Java
- Read-/Write support for NTFS partitions

All desired applications are available in the Linux Mint repositories.

As you might have noticed, a few applications are redundant, for example there are two CD/DVD burning applications in my list (Brasero, K3B). If you know which one you like best, you obviously don't need to install the other applications, however if you like choice, then of course you can install both. The same goes for music players like Amarok, Banshee, Rhythmbox, XMMS or browsers (Firefox, Opera).

I will use the username falko in this tutorial. Please replace it with your own username.

2 Installing The Base System

The installation of the base system is easy as 1-2-3 because the Linux Mint installer doesn't offer a lot of options to choose from, so you cannot go wrong.

Download the Linux Mint 7 iso image from <http://www.linuxmint.com/download.php>, burn it onto a CD, and boot your computer from it:



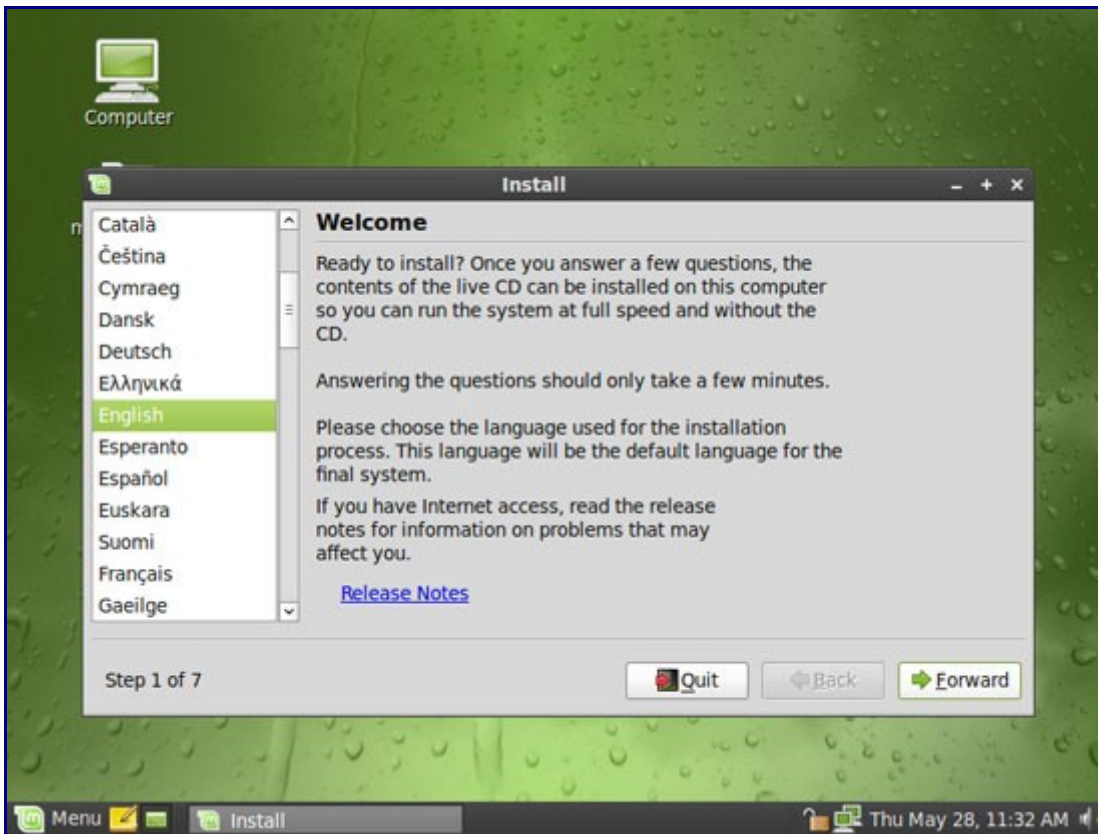
The system boots and starts a desktop that is run entirely in the RAM of your system (the Linux Mint installation CD is also a Live-CD) without changing anything on your hard disk. This has the advantage that you can test how Linux Mint works on your hardware before you finally install it.



This is how the Linux Mint desktop looks. Double-click the Install icon on the desktop to start the installation to the hard drive:



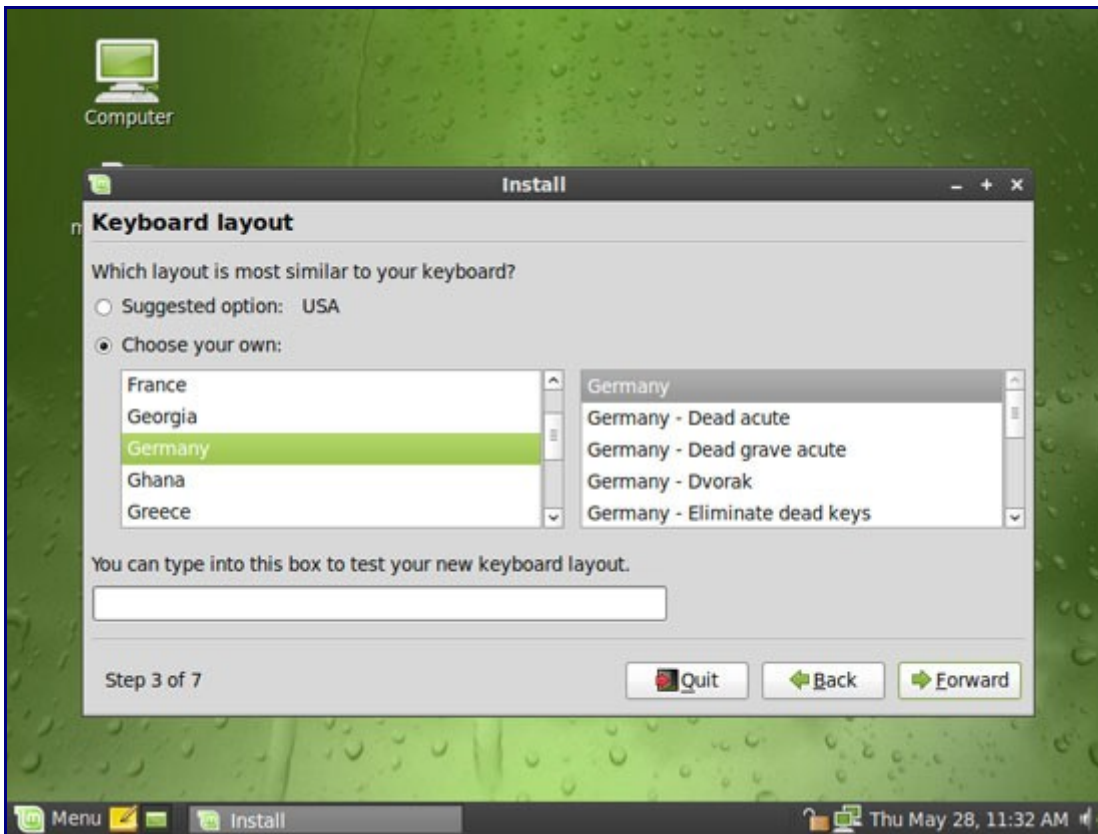
The installer starts. First, select your language:



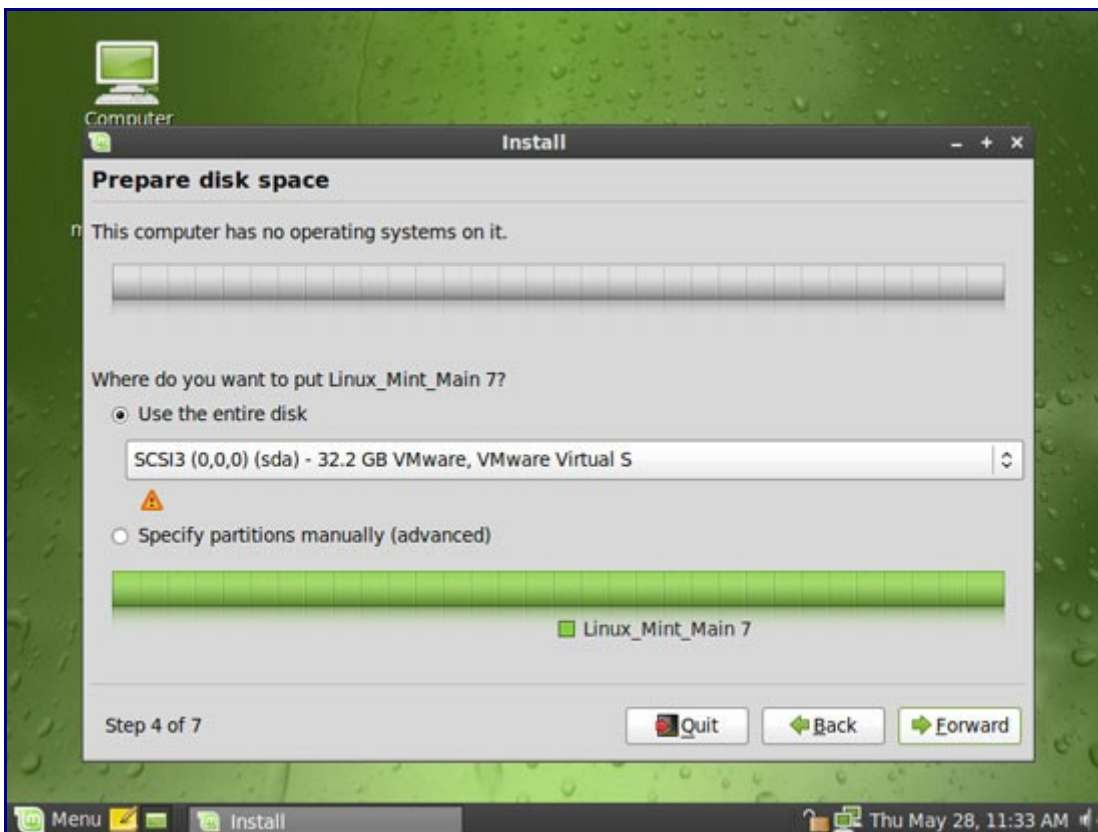
Then choose your time zone:



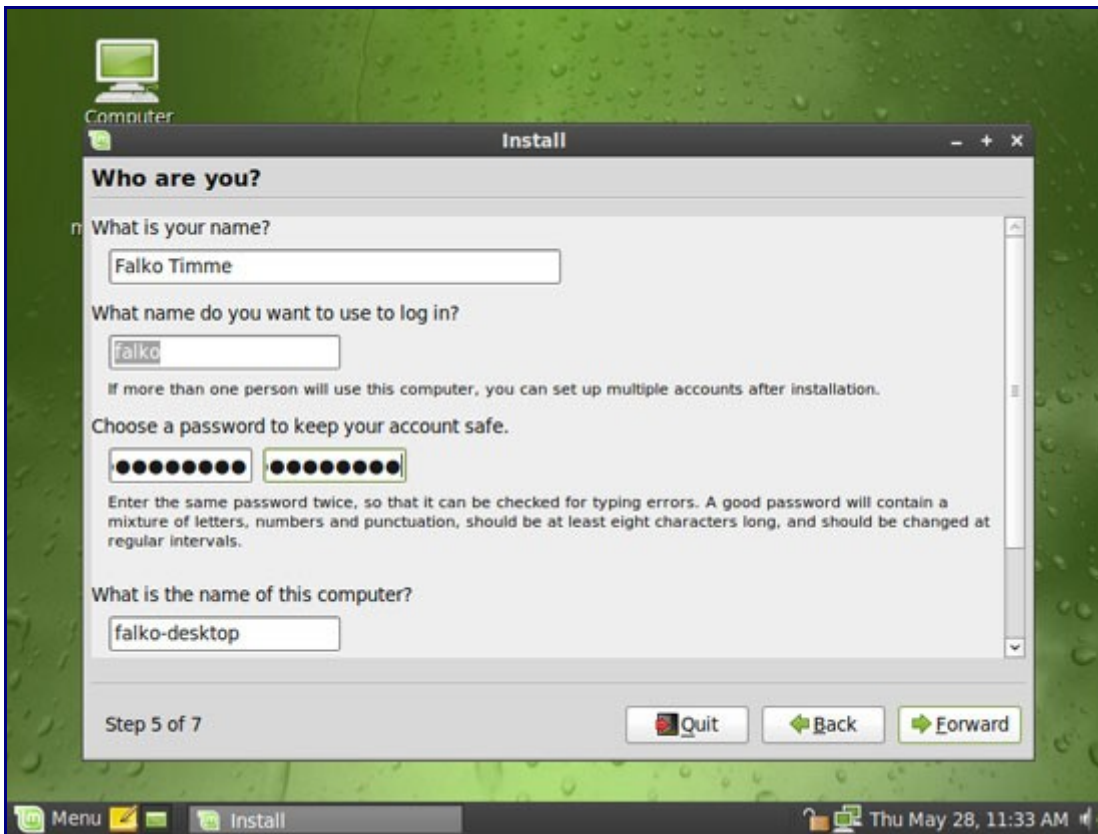
Change the keyboard layout, if necessary:



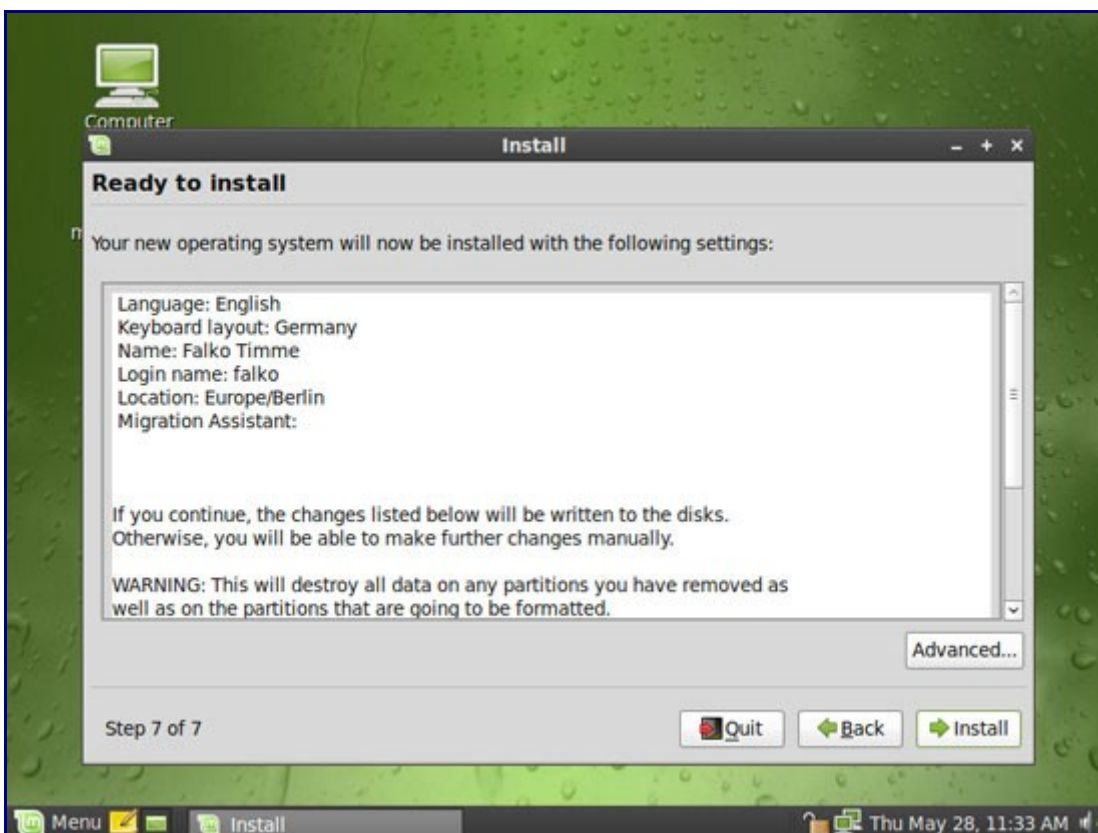
Now we come to the partitioning of our hard disk. Usually Use the entire disk is a good choice, unless you need custom partitions and know what you're doing. Use the entire disk will create one big / partition for us:



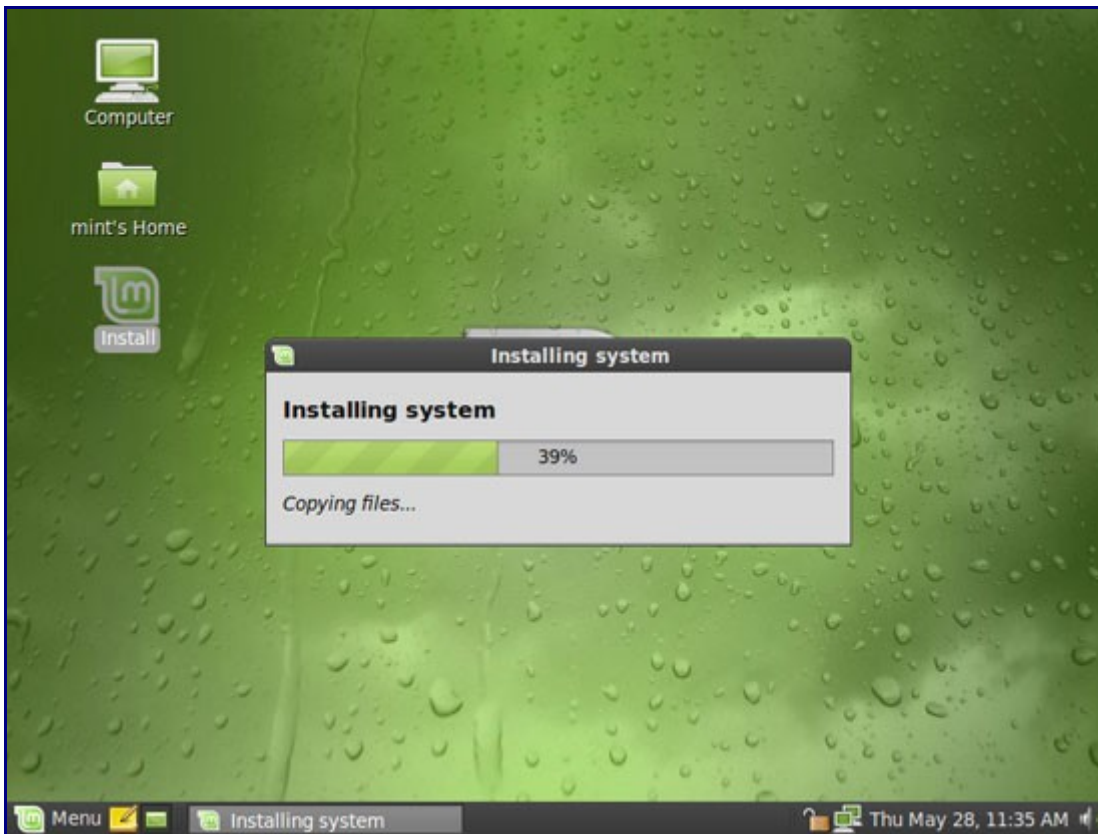
Type in your real name, your desired username along with a password, and click on Forward:



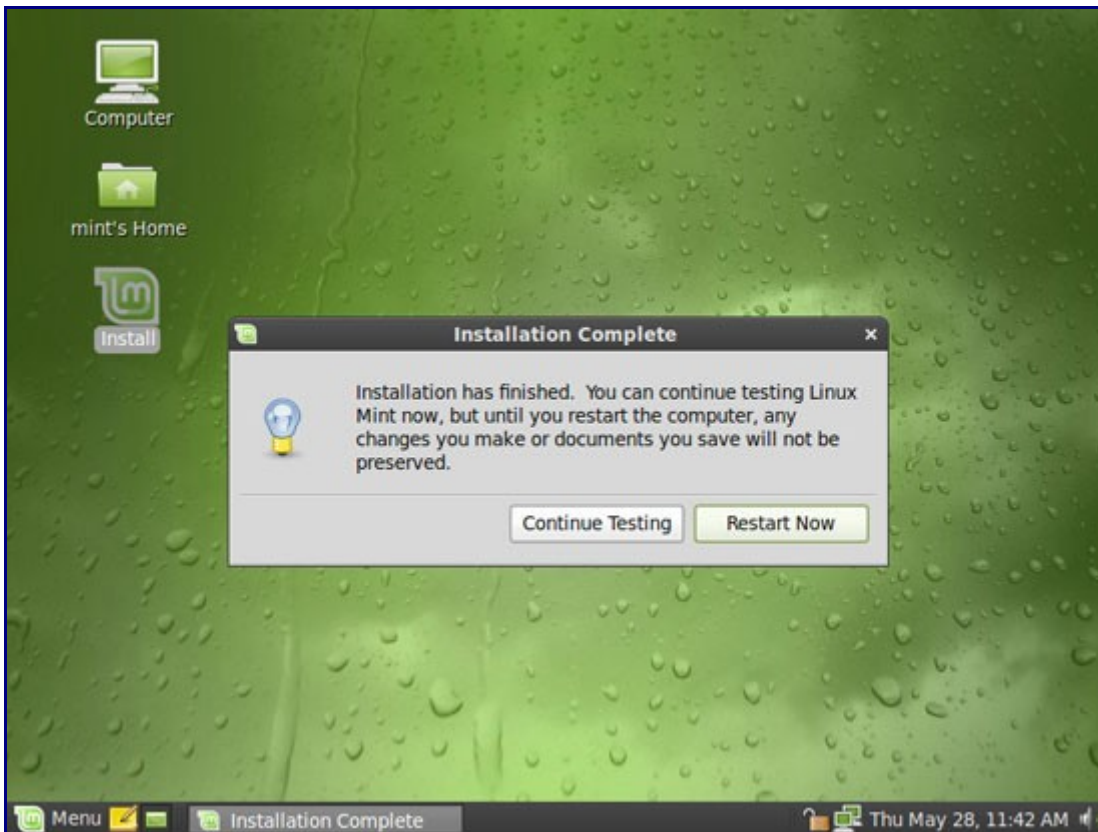
The next screen shows us a summary of the installation settings. Click on Install to start the installation:



The Linux Mint system is being installed. This can take a few minutes, so be patient:



After the installation is complete, we must reboot the system to use it. Click on Restart now:

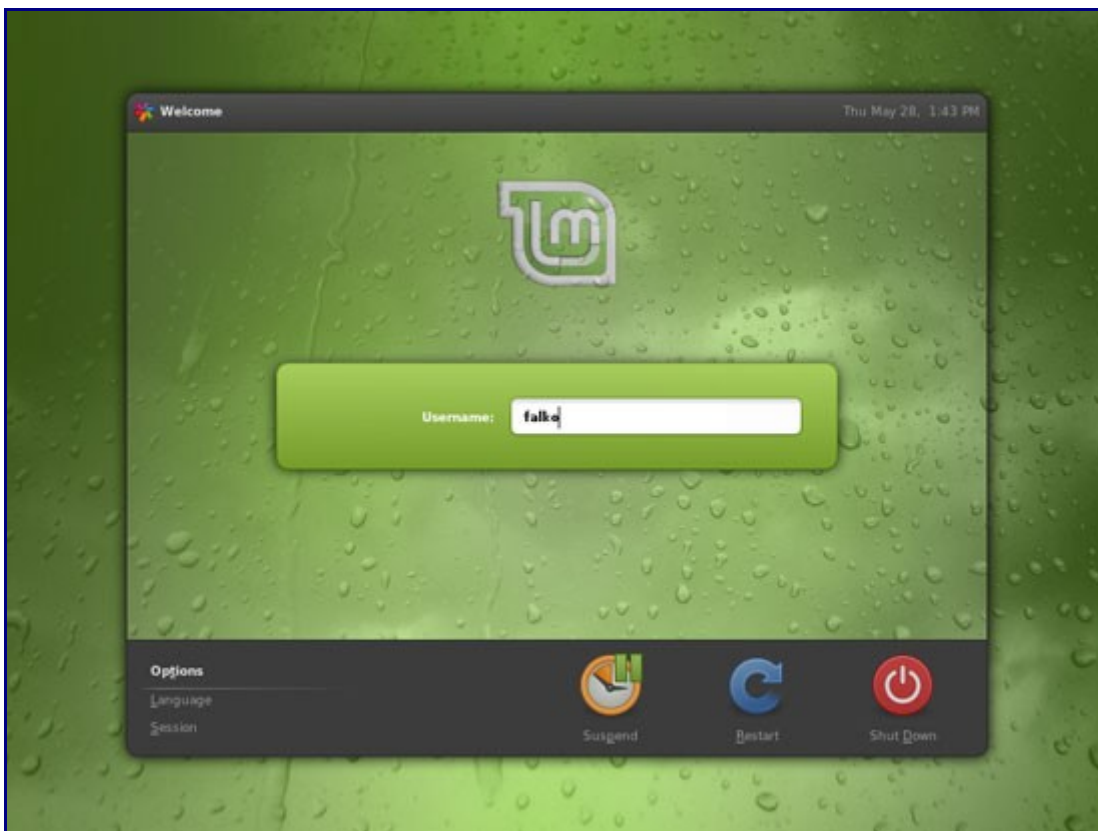


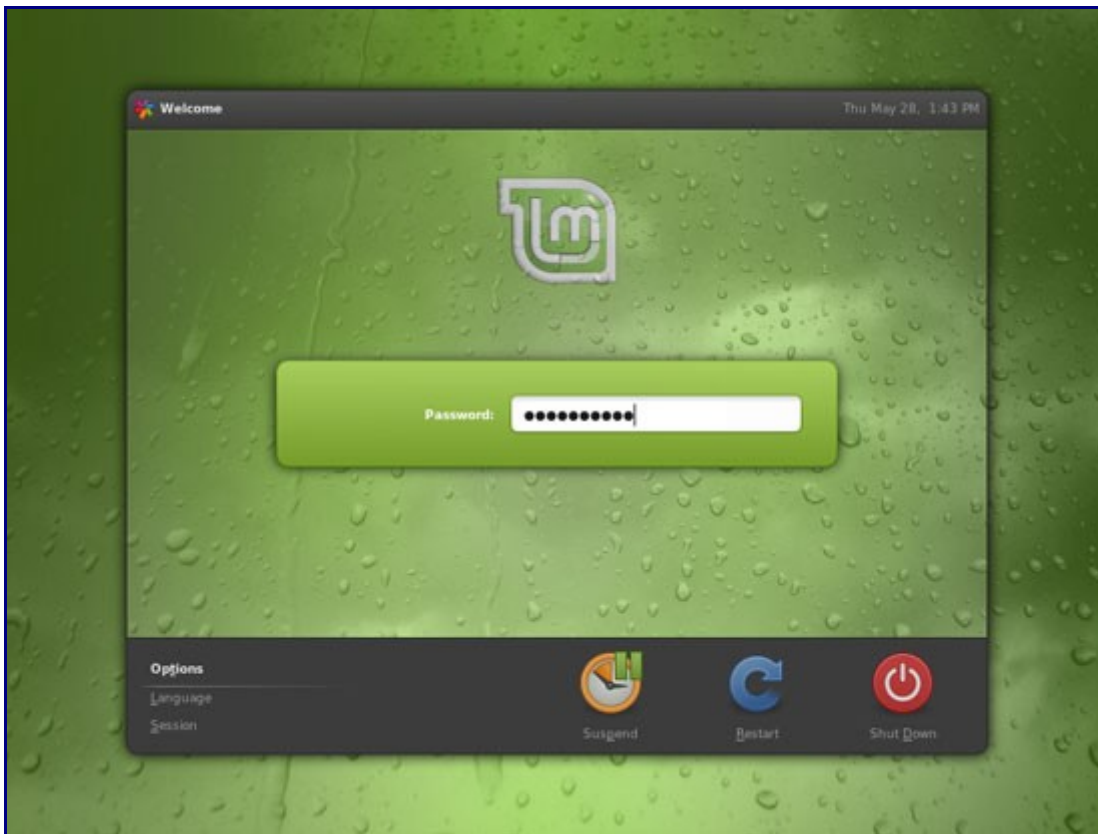
The Live-CD desktop shuts down. At the end, the Linux Mint CD is ejected. Remove it from the CD drive and hit the <ENTER> key to boot into your new Linux Mint desktop:



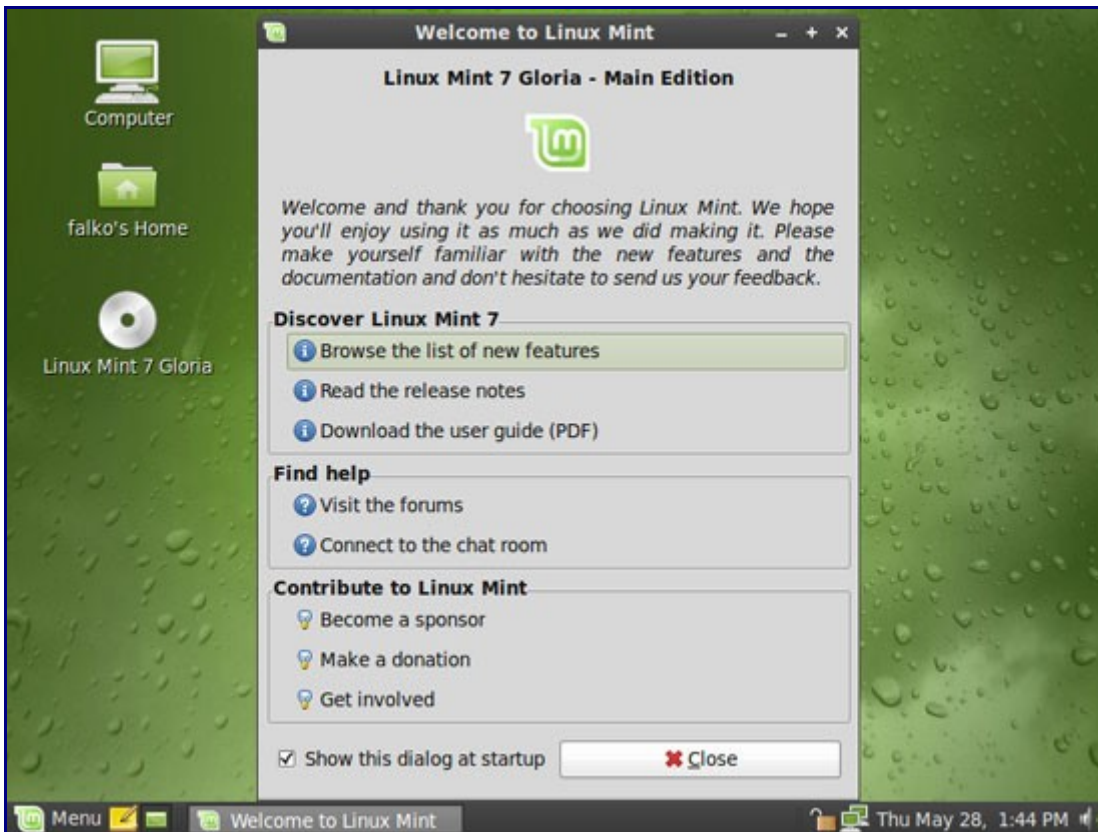
Please remove the disc, close the tray (if any)
and press ENTER to continue

Your new Linux Mint system starts. Log in to the desktop with the username and password you provided during installation:

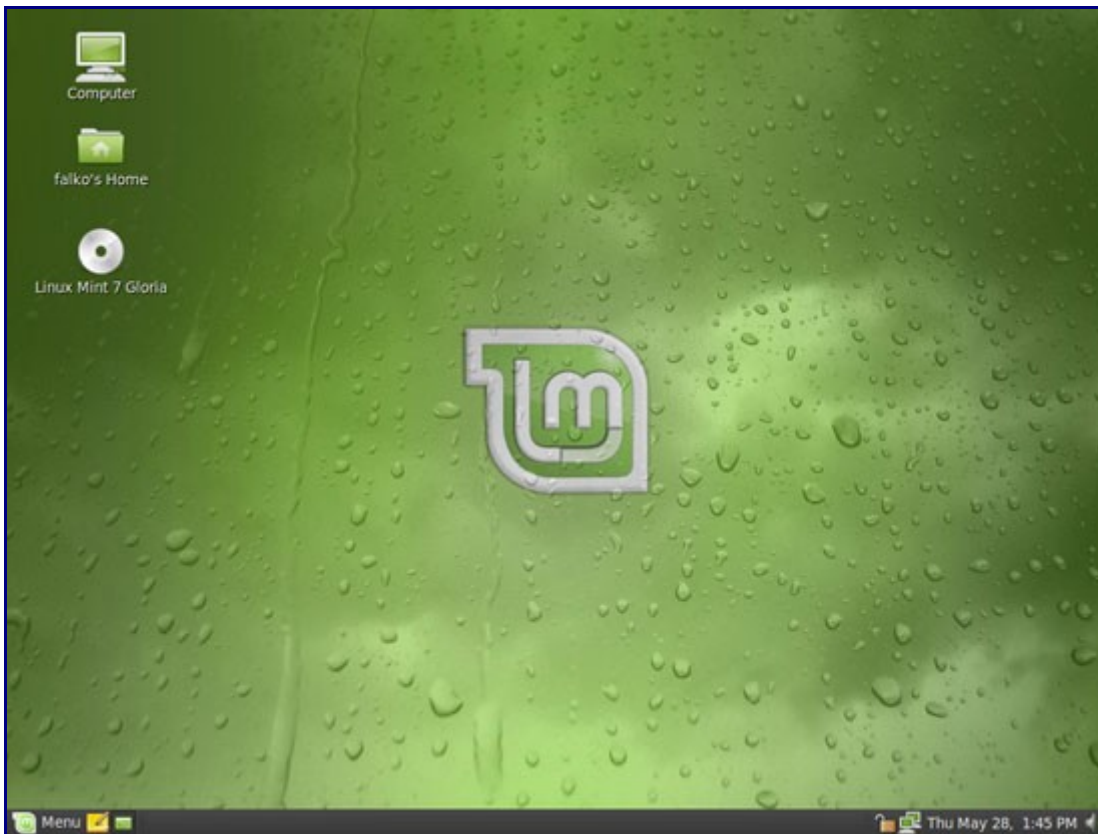




When you log in for the first time, you will see the following help window. Click on Close:



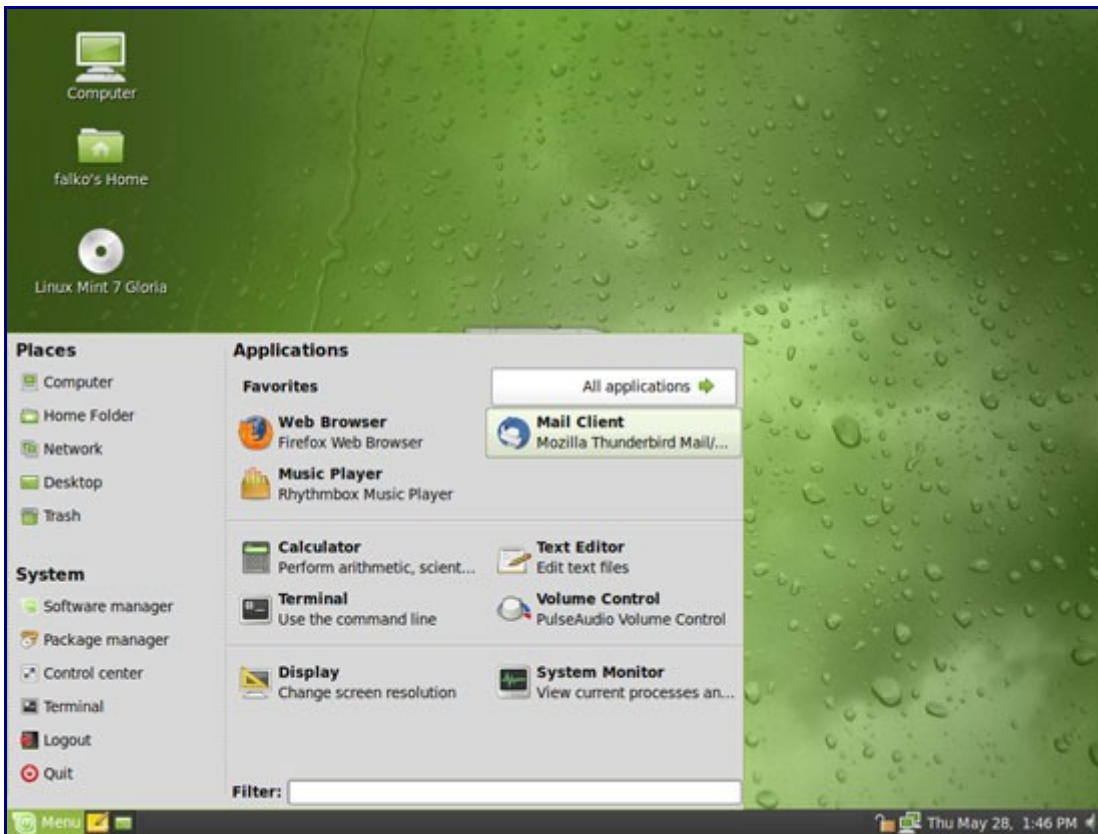
This is how your new desktop looks:



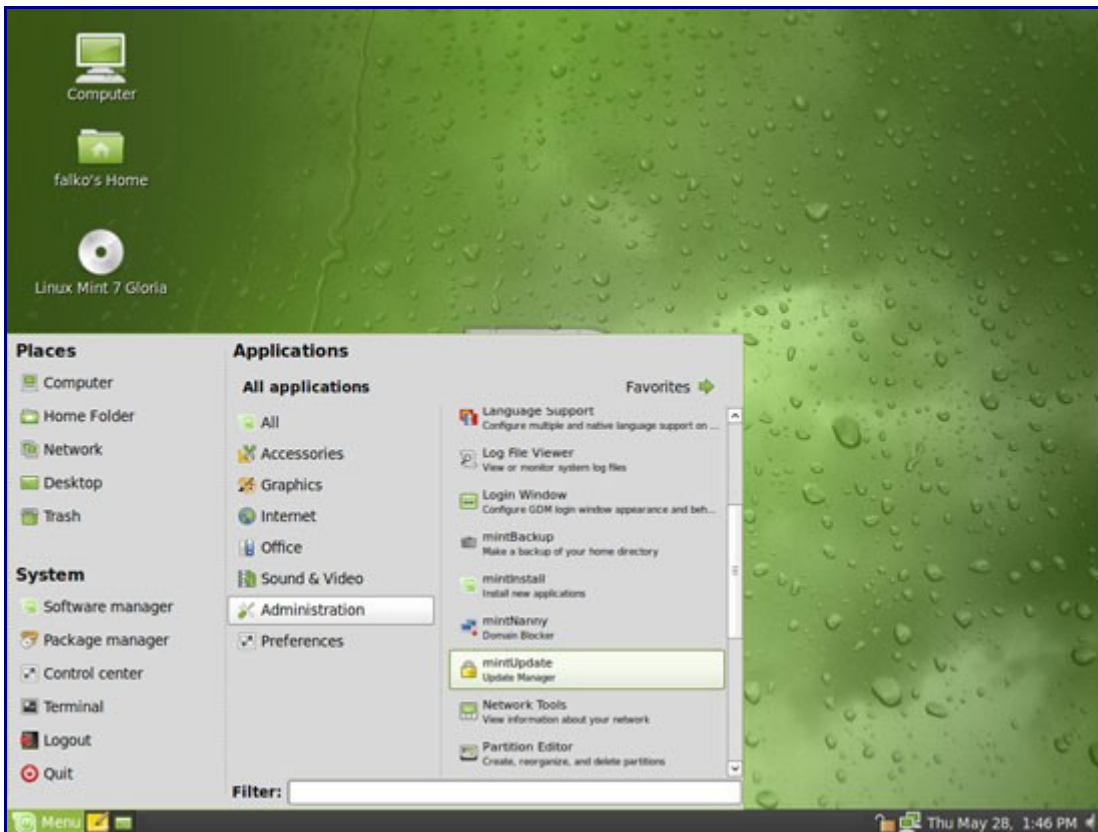
Now the base system is ready to be used.

3 Update The System

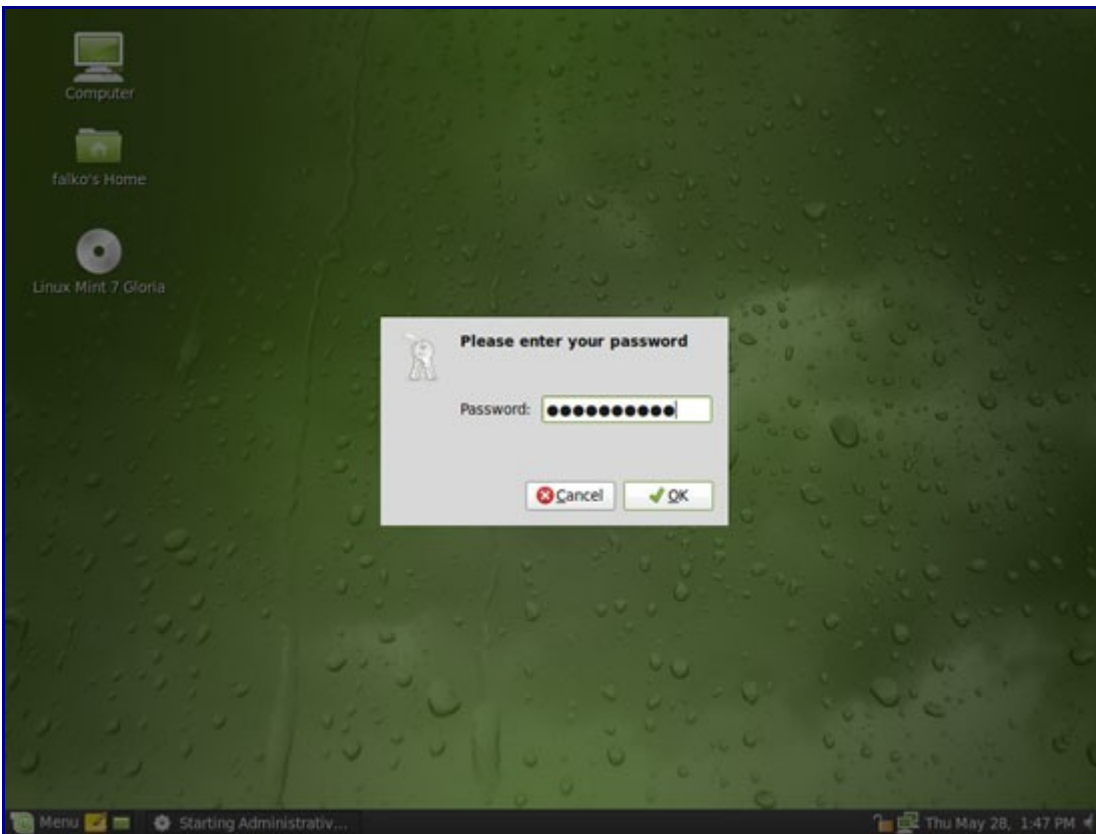
When you log in for the first time, you will most likely see an open lock icon in the lower right corner which means that updates for the installed software are available. Open the main menu and click on the All applications button:



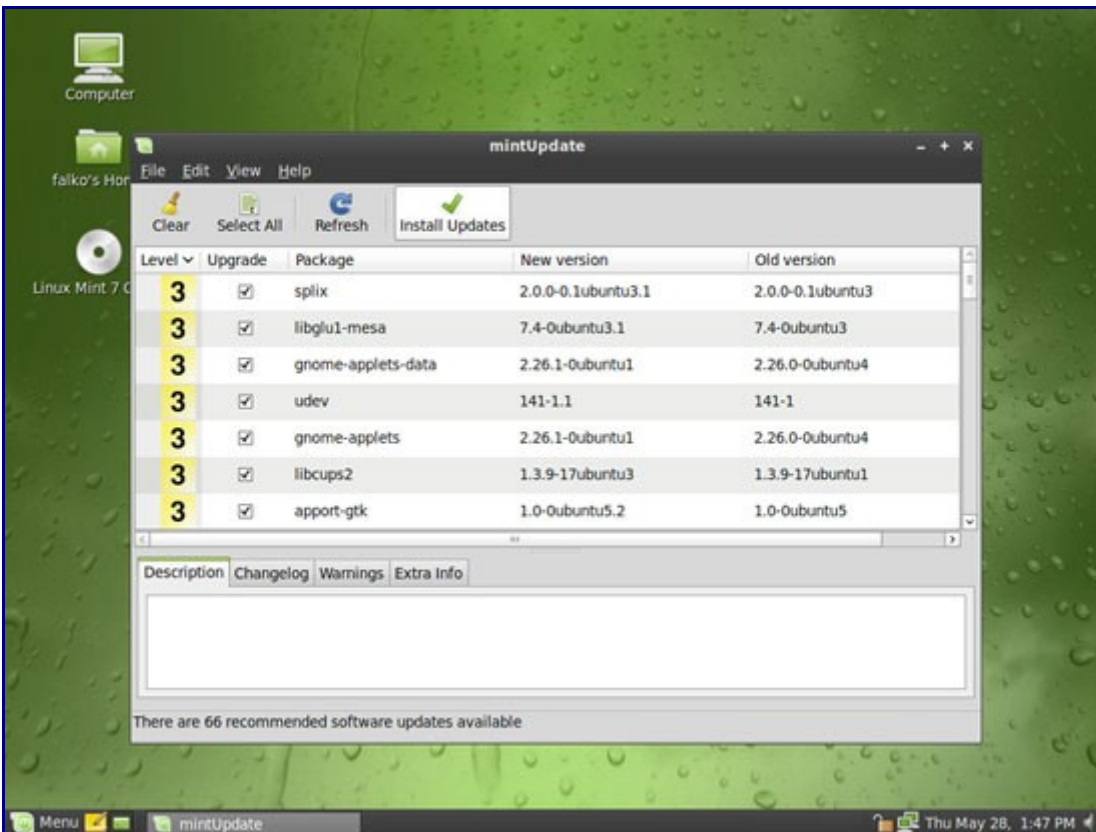
To install the updates, go to Applications > Administration > mintUpdate:



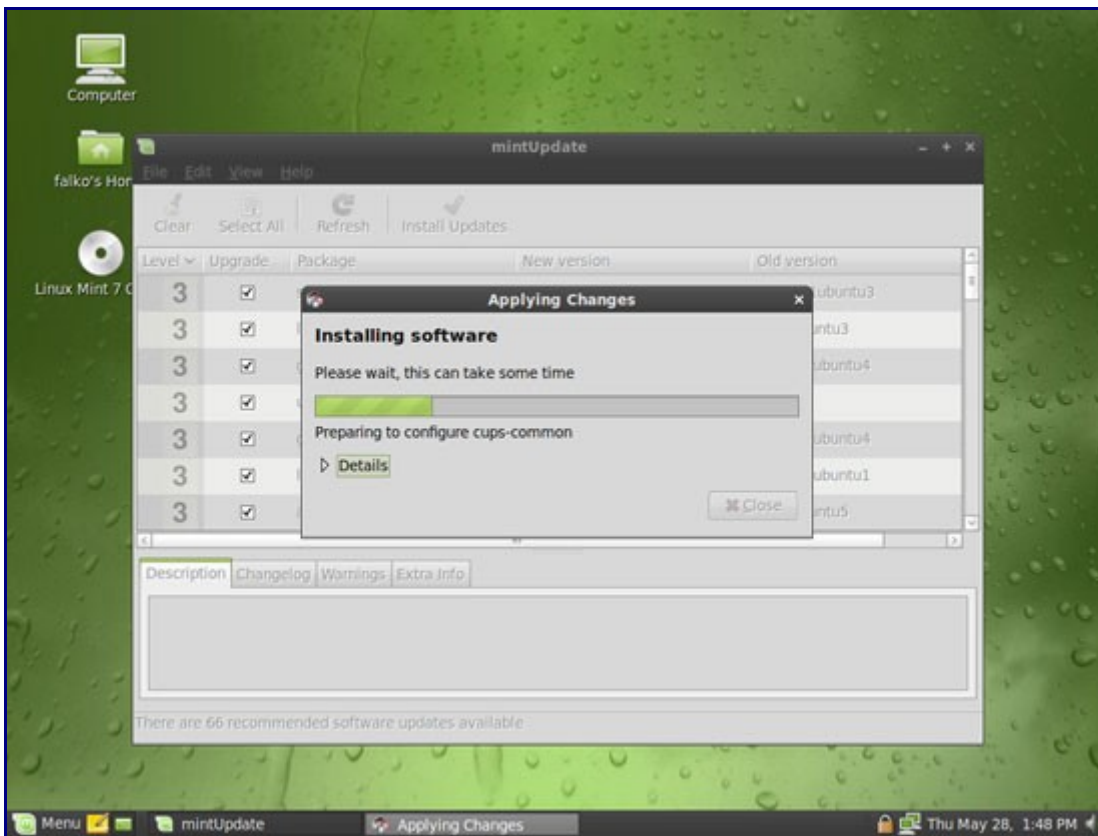
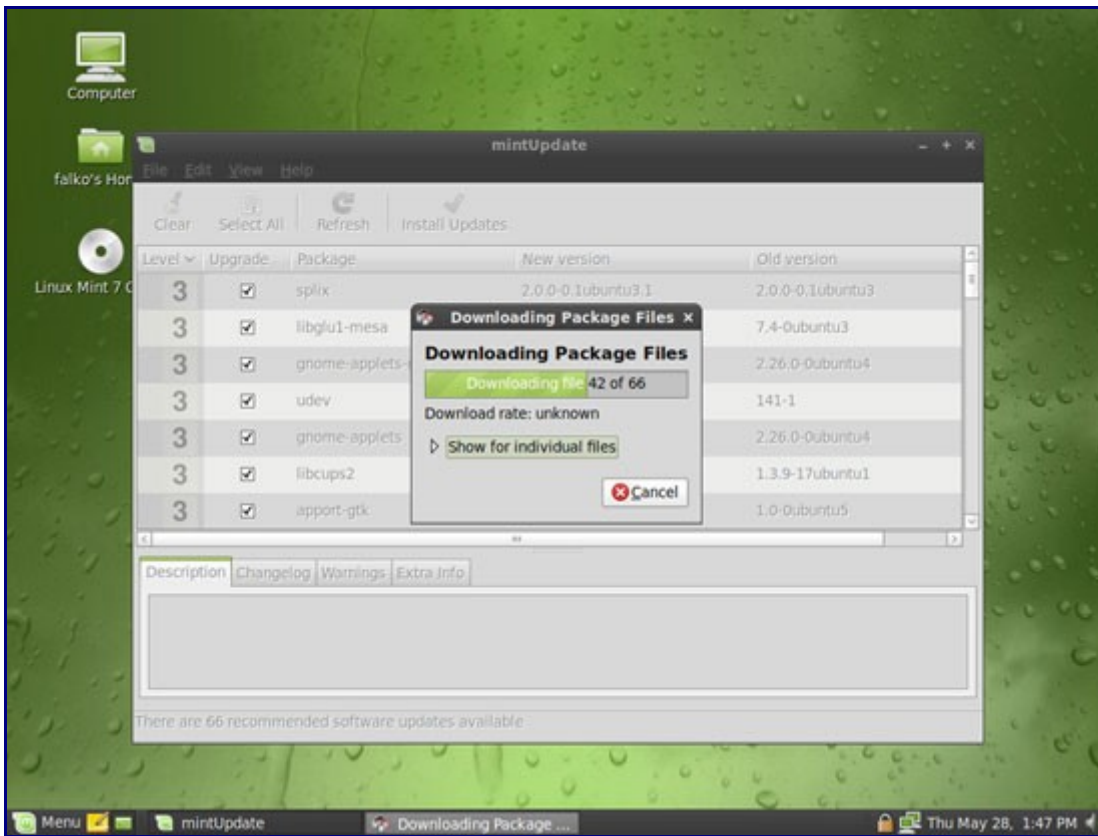
Type in your password:



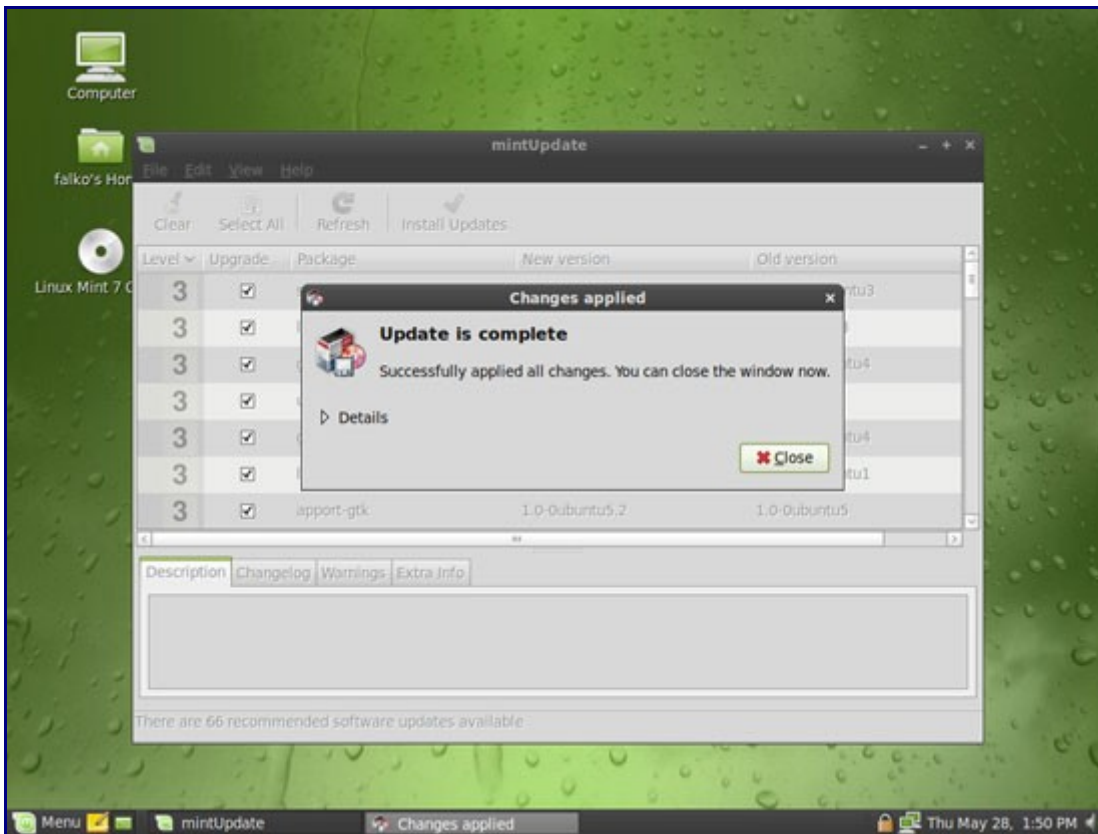
mintUpdate tells you which updates are available. Click on Install Updates to install them:



The updates are being downloaded and installed (this can take a few minutes):



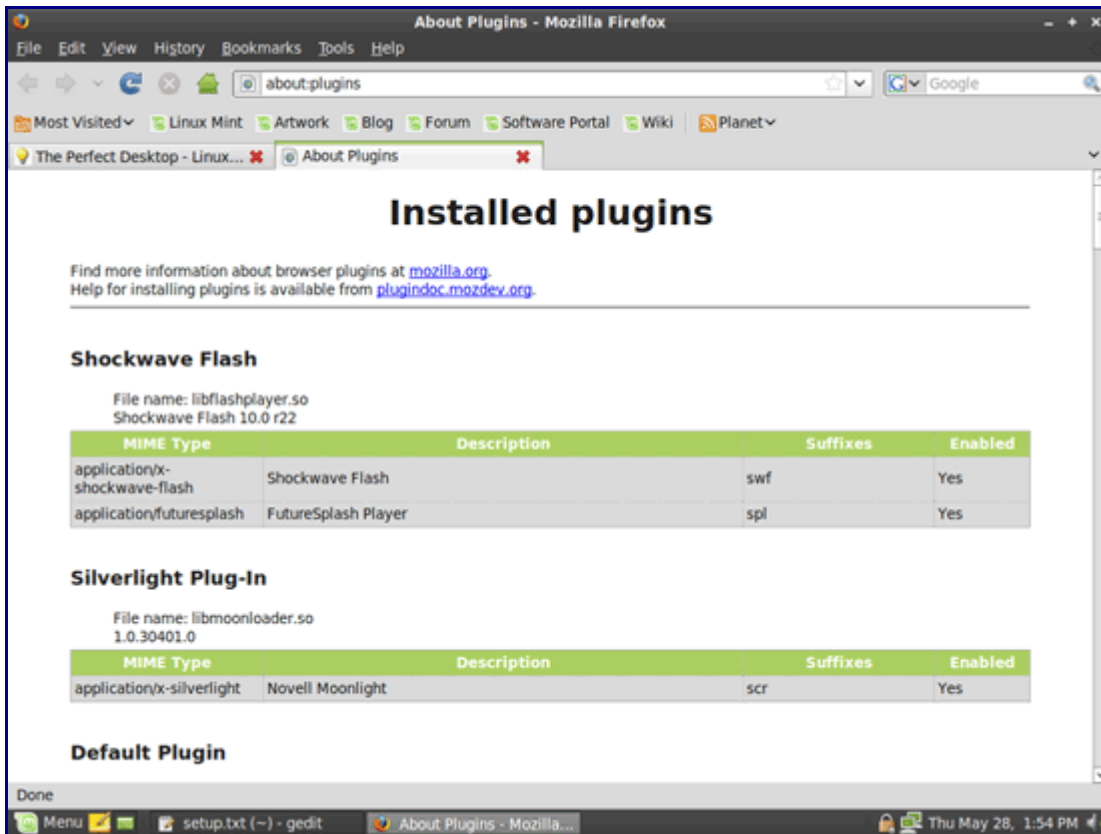
When the update is complete, click on Close and leave the mintUpdate window:



The lock icon should now be closed. The system is up-to-date.

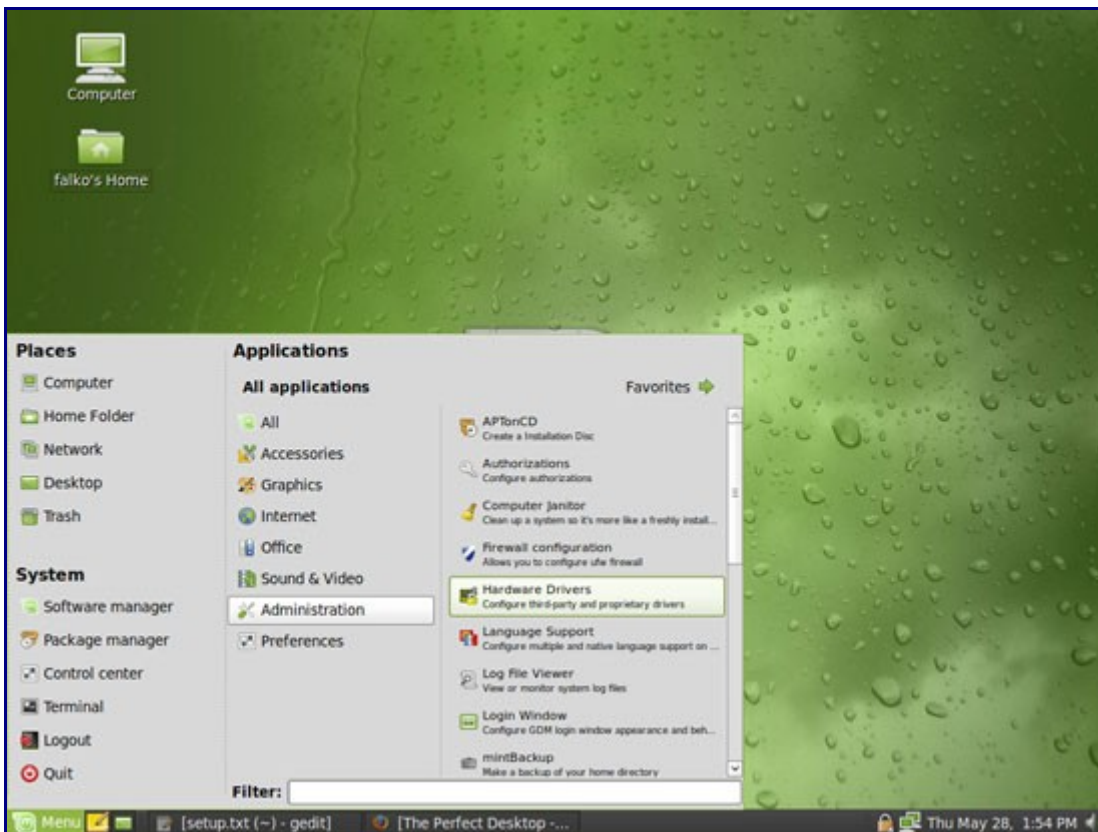
4 Flash Player

Linux Mint 7 installs the Macromedia Flash Player by default. To see if the Flash plugin is working, start Firefox (Applications > Internet > Firefox Web Browser). Then type about:plugins in the address bar. Firefox will then list all installed plugins, and it should list the Flash Player (version 10.0r22) among them:



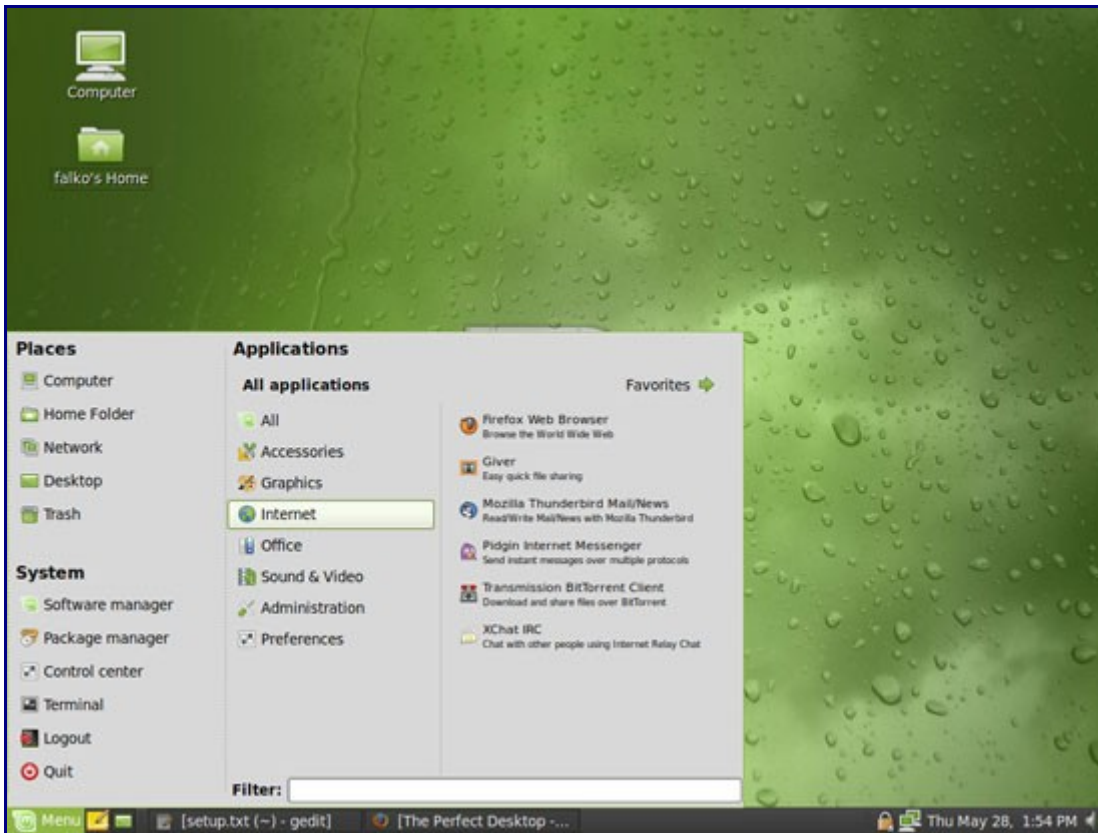
5 NVIDIA/ATI Drivers

If you have an NVIDIA or ATI graphics card and want to use 3D acceleration (e.g. for Compiz-Fusion), you must install the proprietary NVIDIA or ATI driver. To do this, use the Hardware Drivers Manager (Applications > Administration > Hardware Drivers):



6 Inventory Of What We Have So Far

Now let's browse all menus under Applications to see which of our needed applications are already installed:



You should find the following situation ([x] marks an application that is already installed, where [] is an application that is missing):

Graphics:

- [x] The GIMP
- [] F-Spot
- [] Picasa

Internet:

- [x] Firefox
- [] Opera
- [x] Flash Player
- [] FileZilla
- [x] Thunderbird
- [] Evolution
- [] aMule
- [x] Transmission BitTorrent Client
- [] Azureus/Vuze
- [x] Pidgin
- [] Skype
- [] Google Earth
- [x] Xchat IRC

Office:

- [x] OpenOffice Writer
- [x] OpenOffice Calc

- Adobe Reader
- GnuCash
- Scribus

Sound & Video:

- Amarok
- Audacity
- Banshee
- MPlayer
- Rhythmbox Music Player
- gtkPod
- XMMS
- dvd::rip
- Kino
- Sound Juicer CD Extractor
- VLC Media Player
- Helix Player
- Totem
- Xine
- Brasero
- K3B
- Multimedia-Codecs

Programming:

- KompoZer
- Bluefish
- Quanta Plus

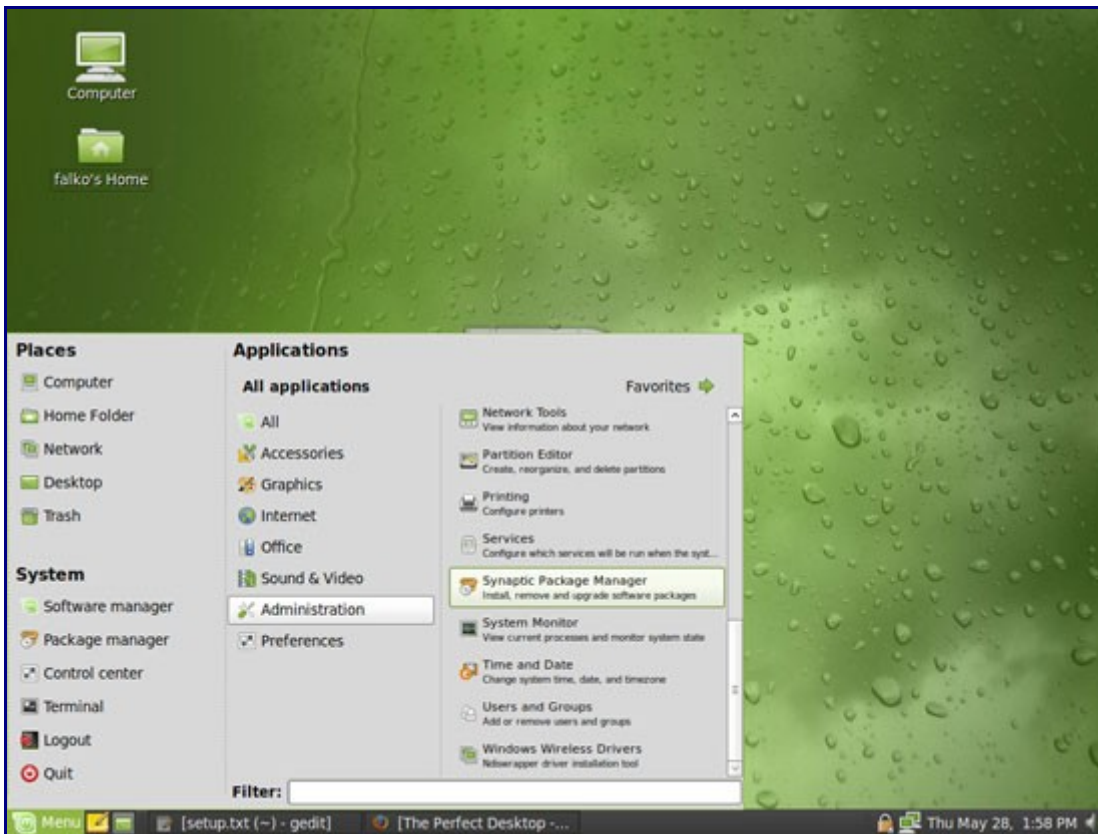
Other:

- VirtualBox
- TrueType fonts
- Java
- Read/Write support for NTFS partitions

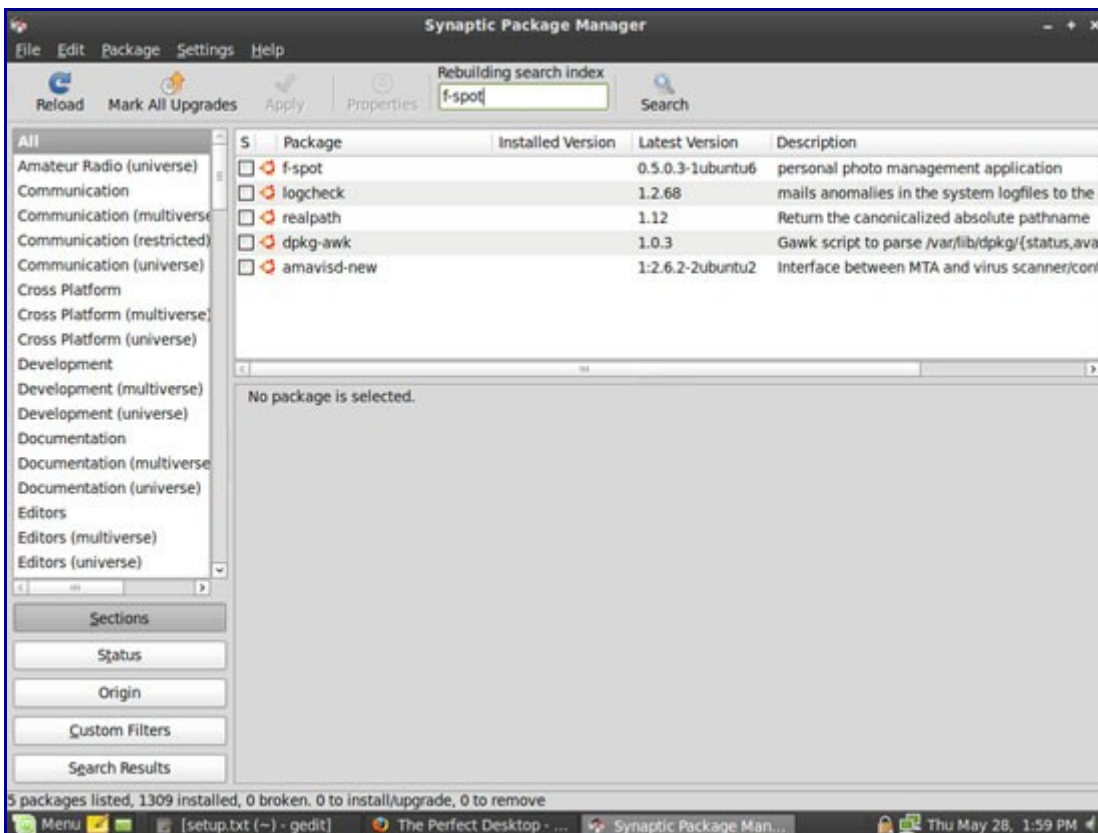
So some applications are already on the system. NTFS read-/write support is enabled by default on Linux Mint 7.

7 Install Additional Software

To install additional applications, open the Synaptic Package Manager (Applications > Administration > Synaptic Package Manager):



In the Synaptic Package Manager, we can install additional software. You can use the Quick search field to find packages:

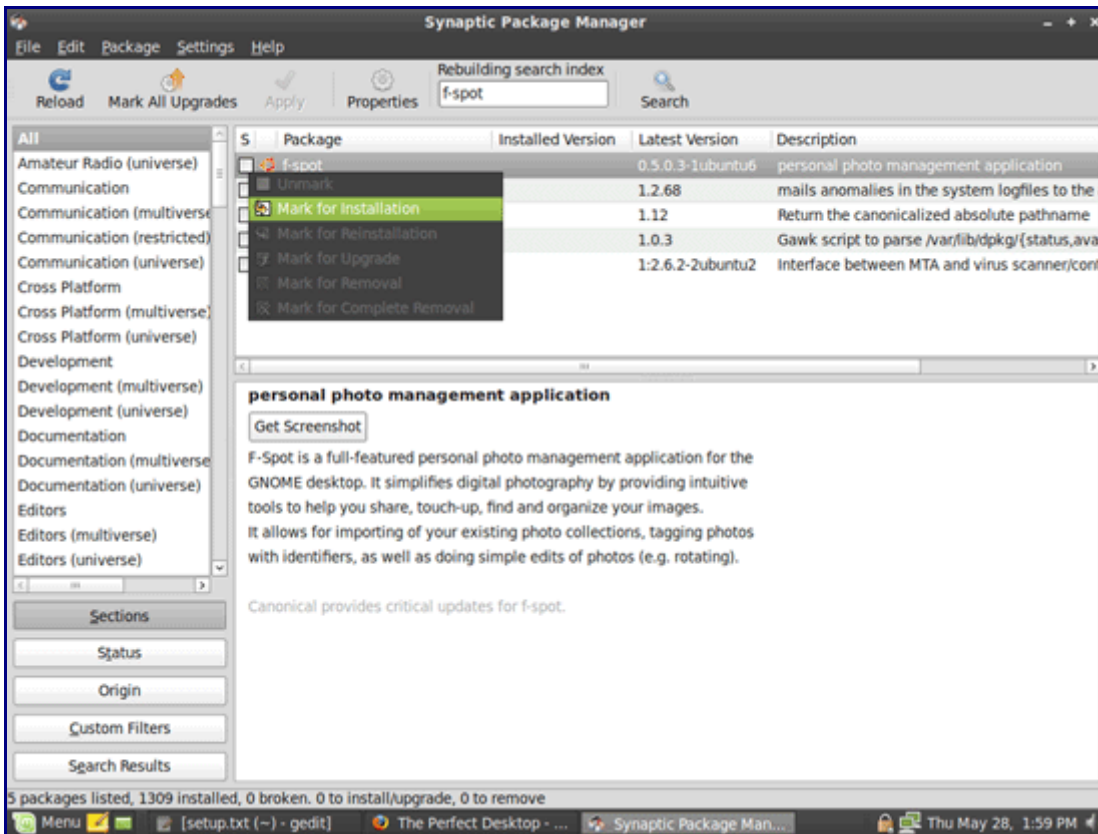


Select the following packages for installation (* is a wildcard; e.g. gstreamer0.10* means all packages that start with gstreamer0.10):

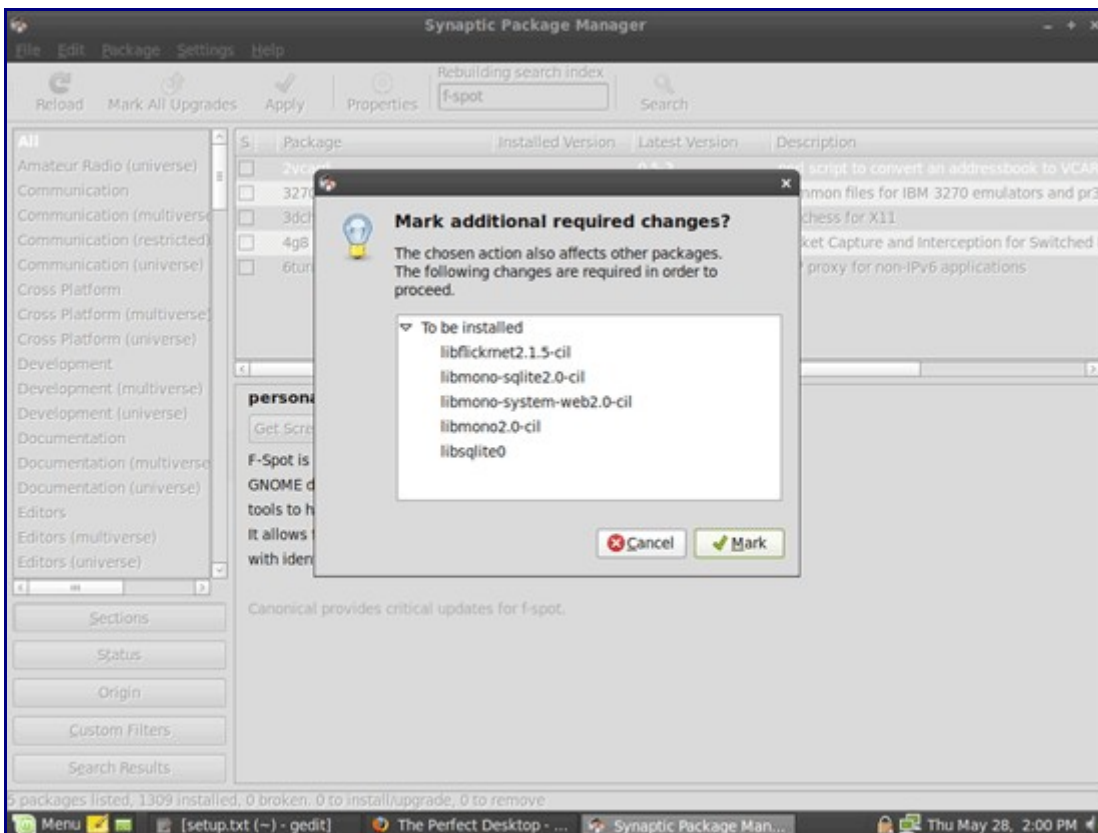
- f-spot
- picasa
- opera
- filezilla
- evolution
- amule
- azureus
- skype
- googleearth
- acroread
- gnucash
- scribus
- amarok
- audacity
- banshee
- sound-juicer
- gtkpod-aac
- xmms2*
- dvdrip
- kino
- vlc*
- mozilla-plugin-vlc
- helix-player
- mozilla-helix-player
- xine-ui
- xine-plugin
- k3b
- normalize-audio
- sox
- vcdimager
- non-free-codecs
- gstreamer0.10*
- kompozer
- bluefish
- quanta
- msttcorefonts
- sun-java6* (except sun-java6-doc)
- virtualbox-2.2

There are also lots of other applications available that you can install as well if you like.

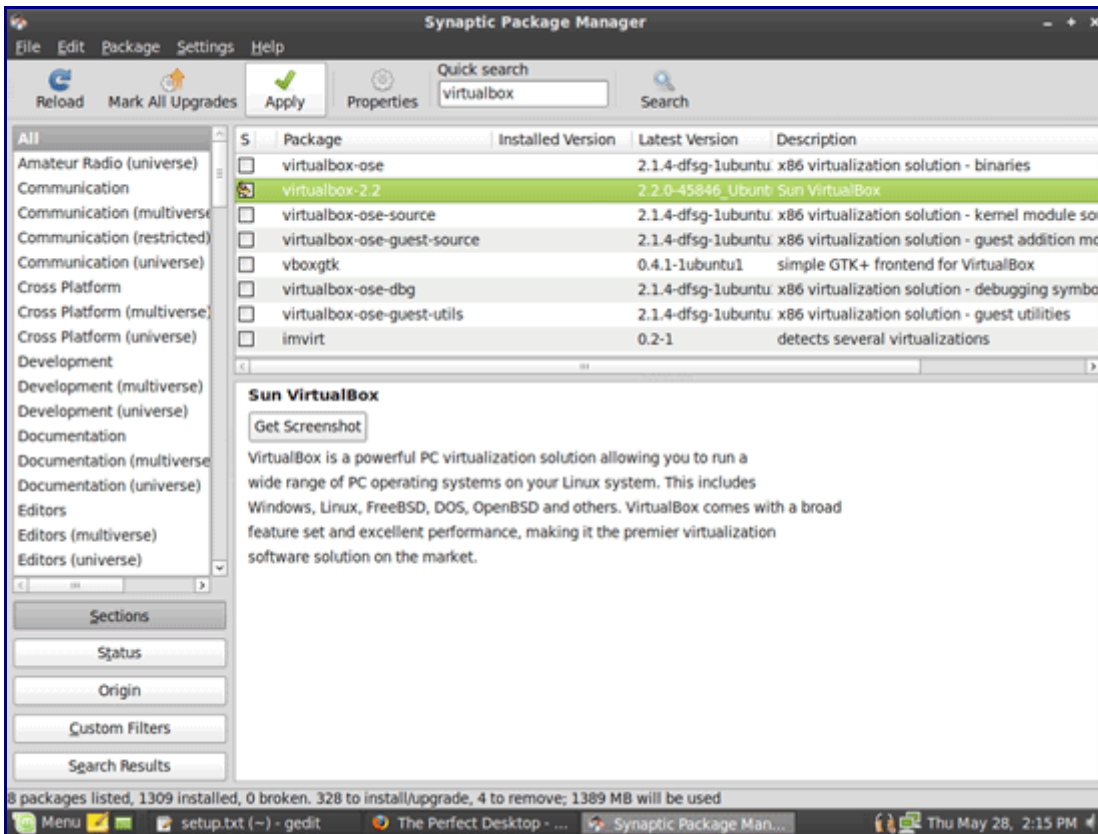
To select a package for installation, click on the checkbox in front of it and select Mark for Installation from the menu that comes up:



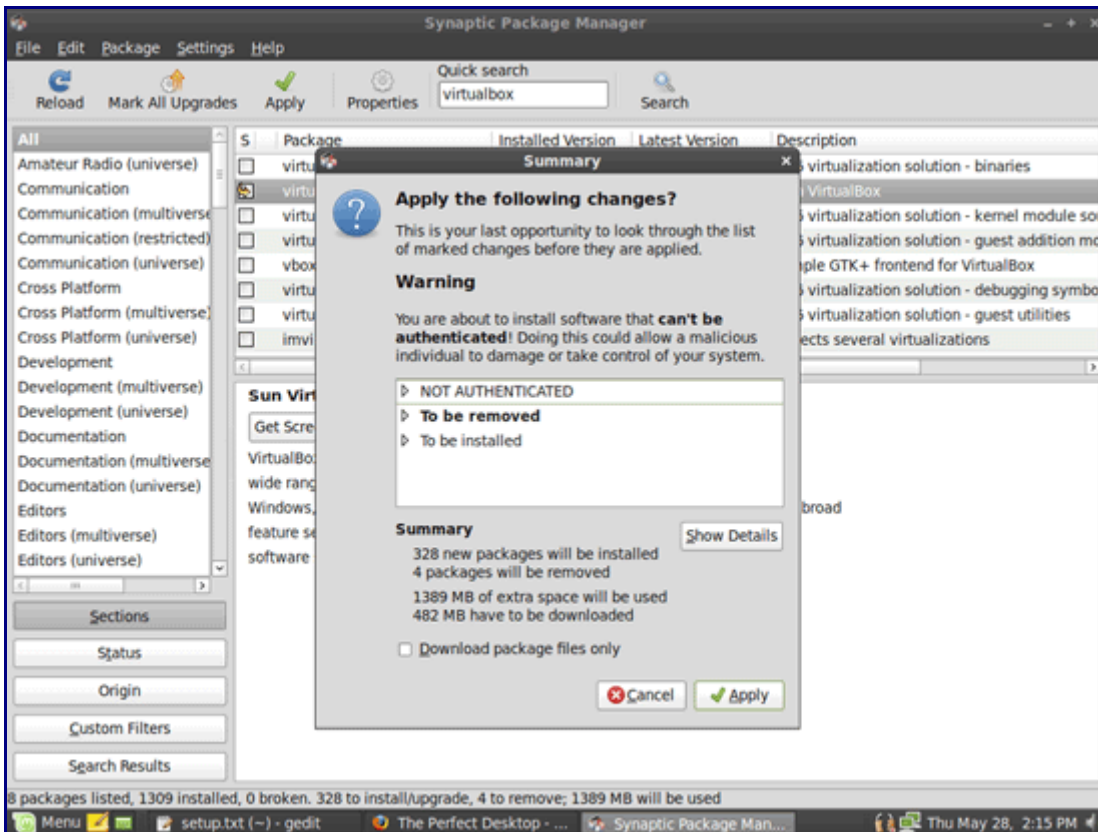
If a package has a dependency that needs to be satisfied, a window will pop up. Accept the dependencies by clicking on Mark:



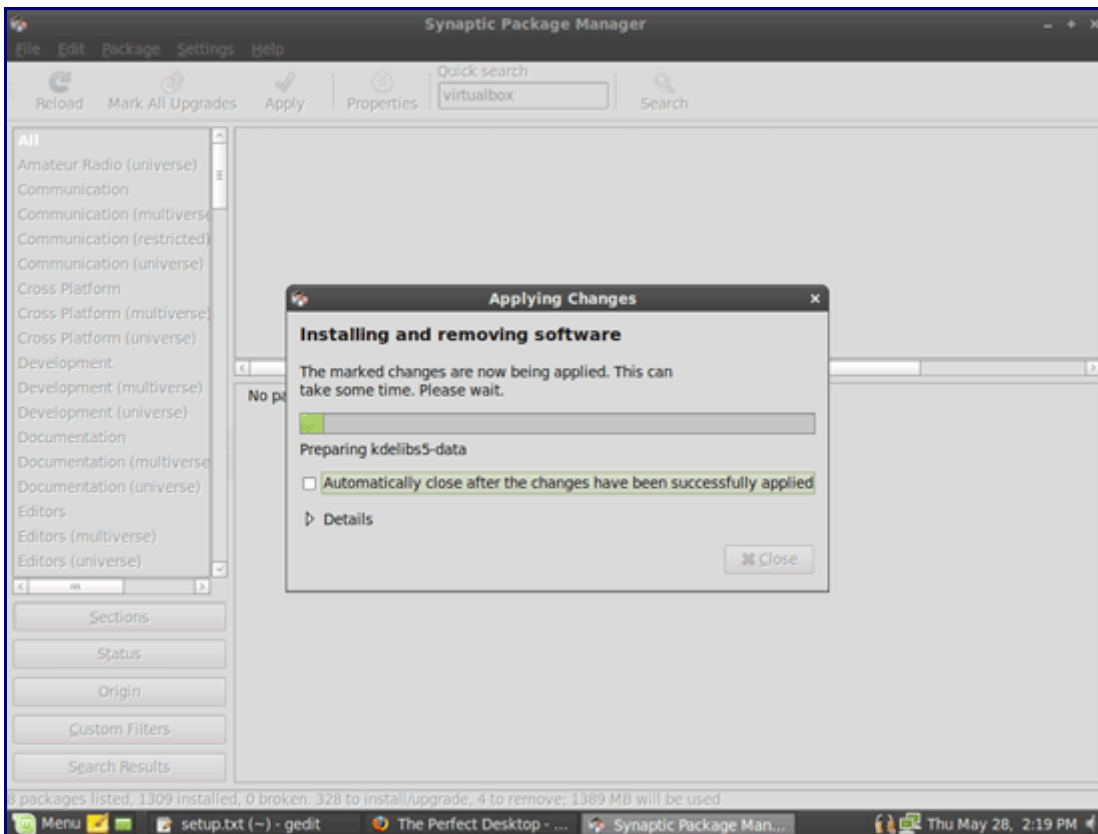
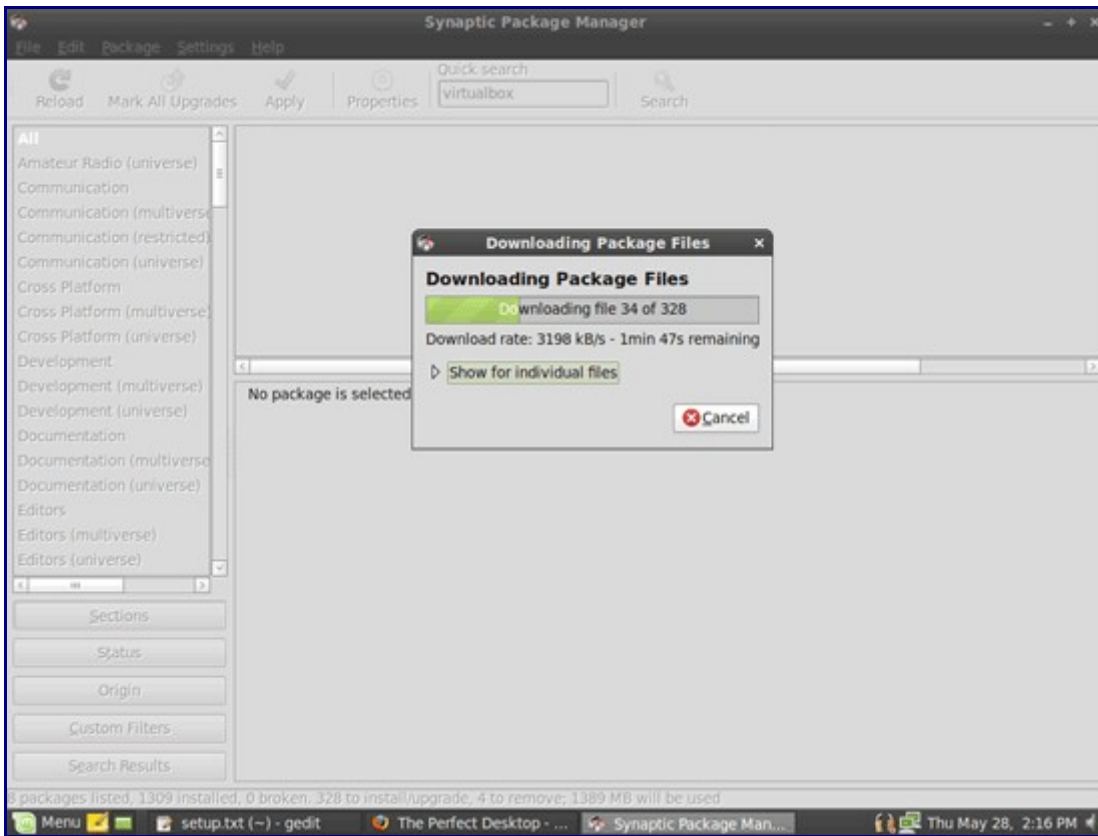
After you've selected the desired packages, click on the Apply button:



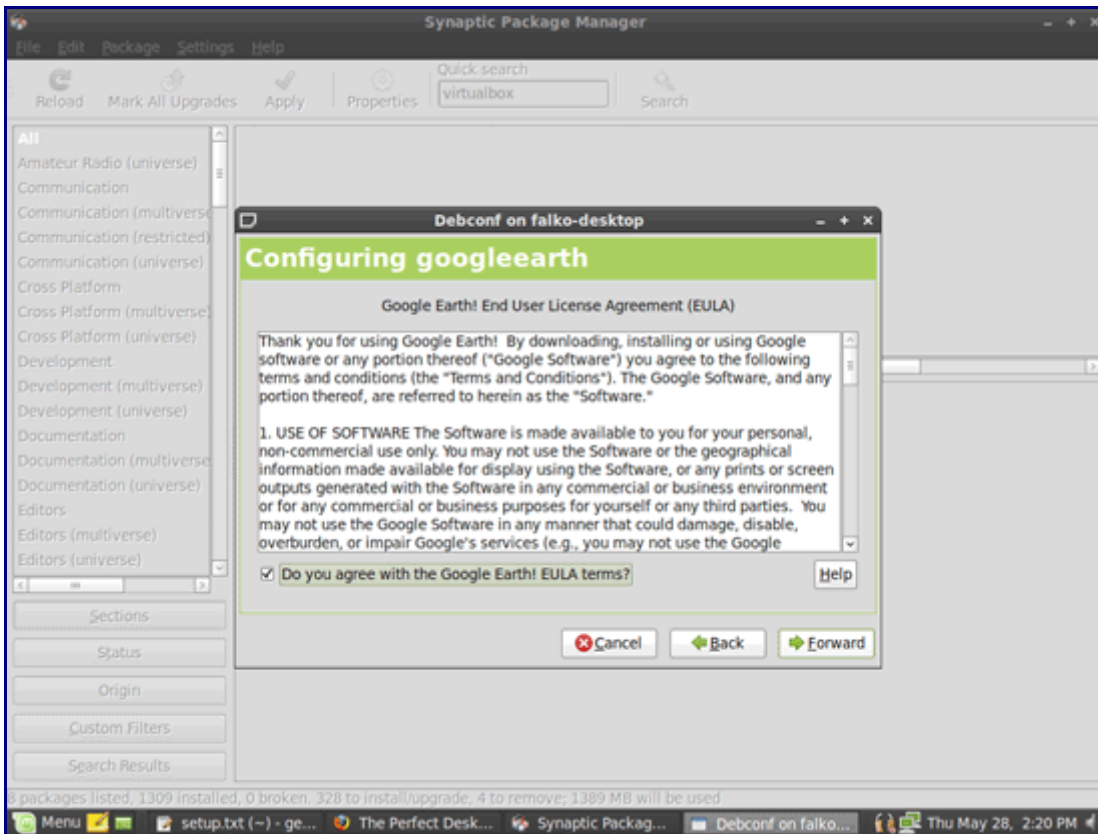
Confirm your selection by clicking on Apply:



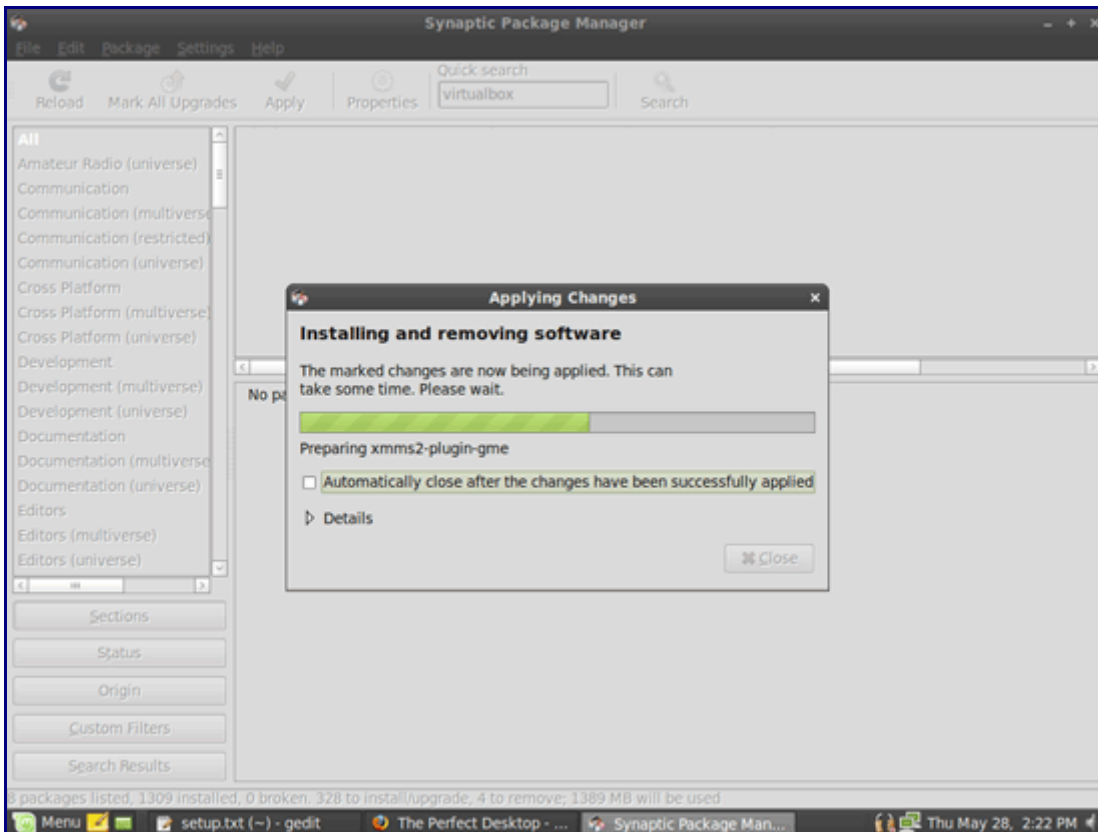
The packages are now being downloaded from the repositories and installed. This can take a few minutes, so please be patient:



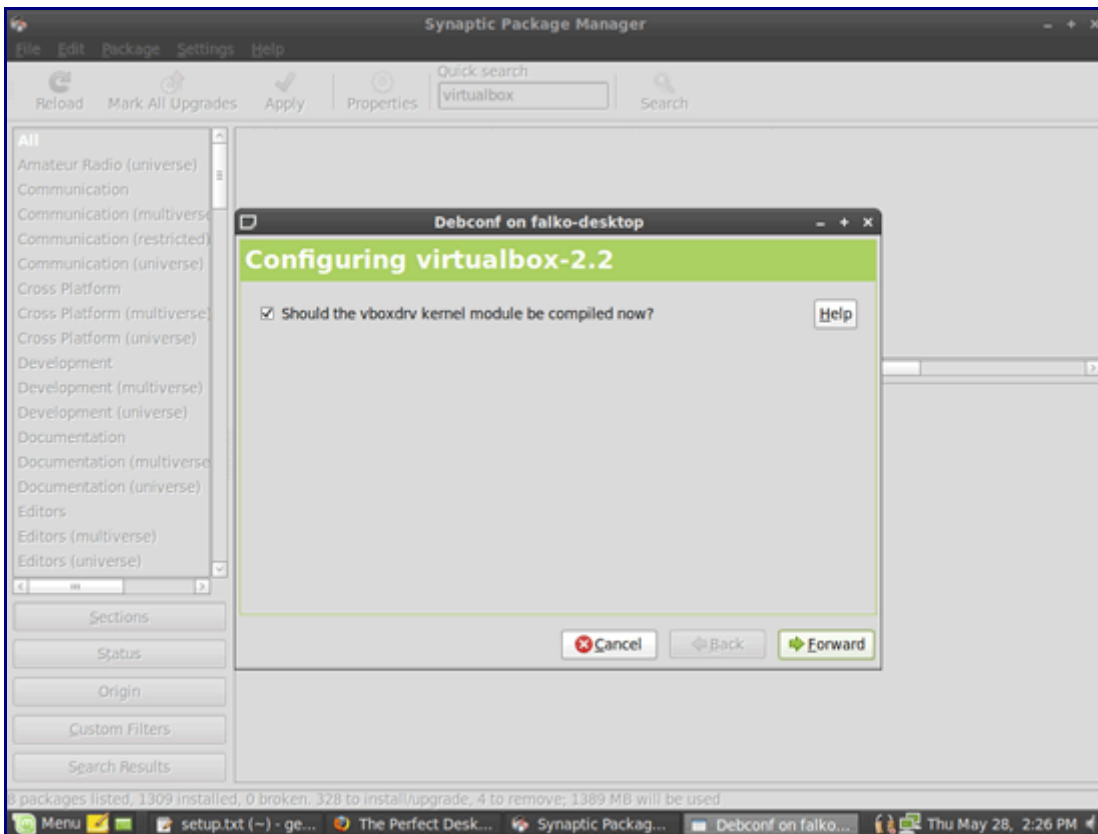
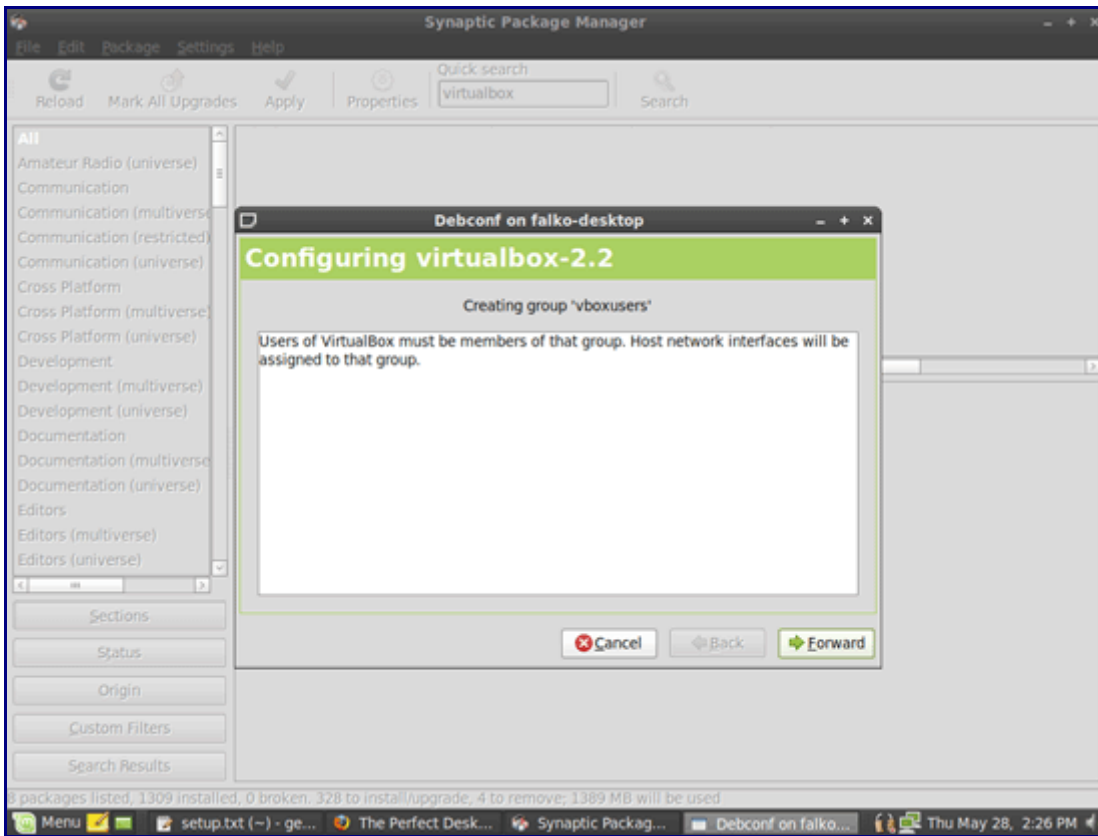
Some packages require that you accept their licenses (for example googleearth):

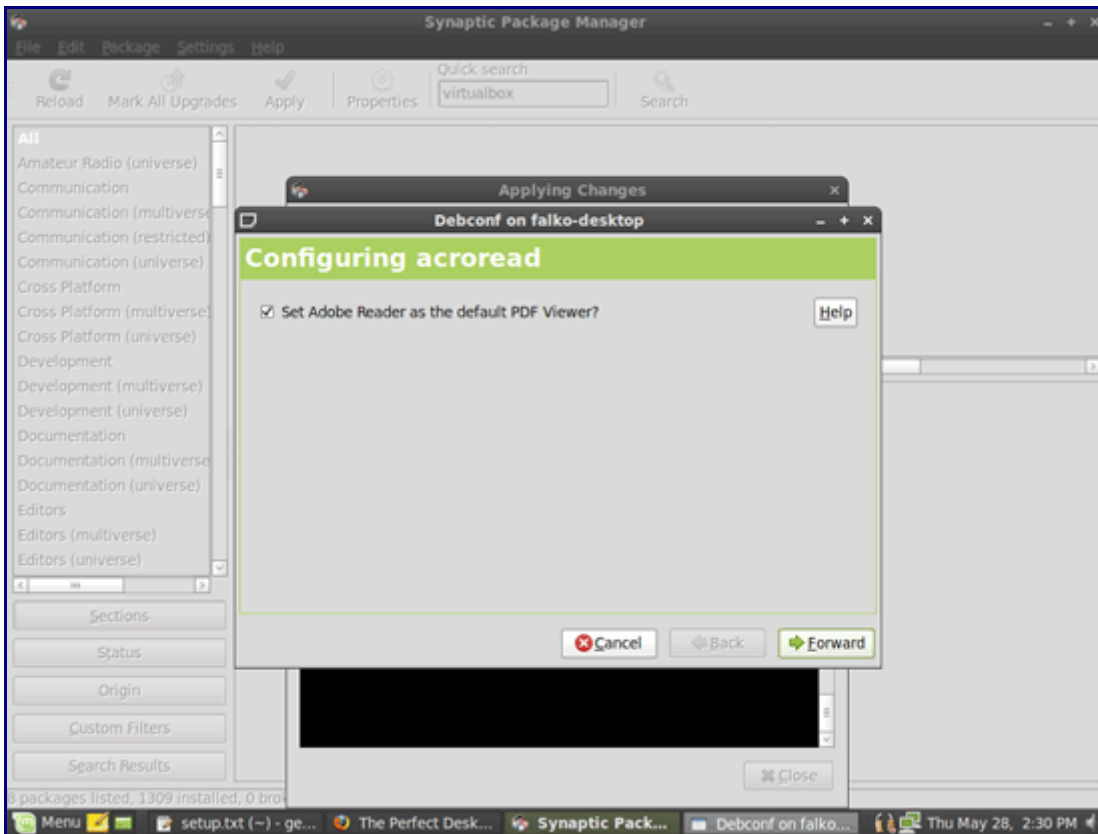


The installation continues:

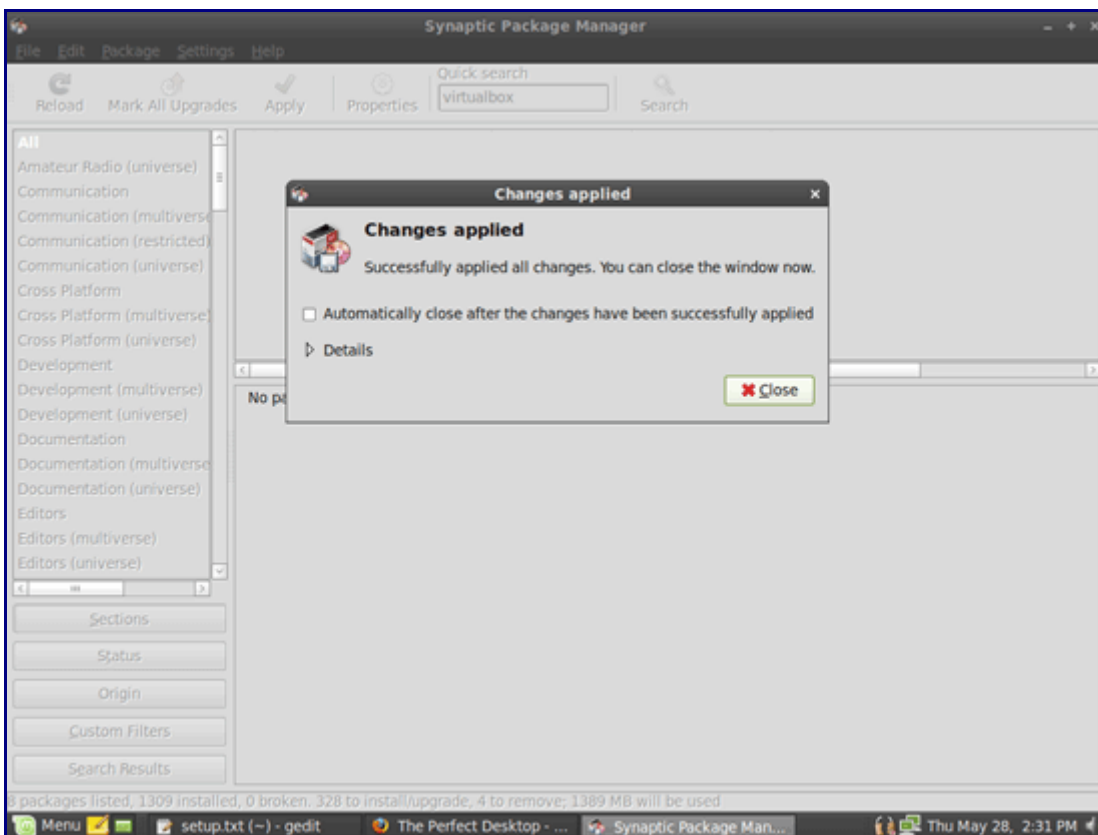


You might also see some other messages. Click on Forward to continue the installation:



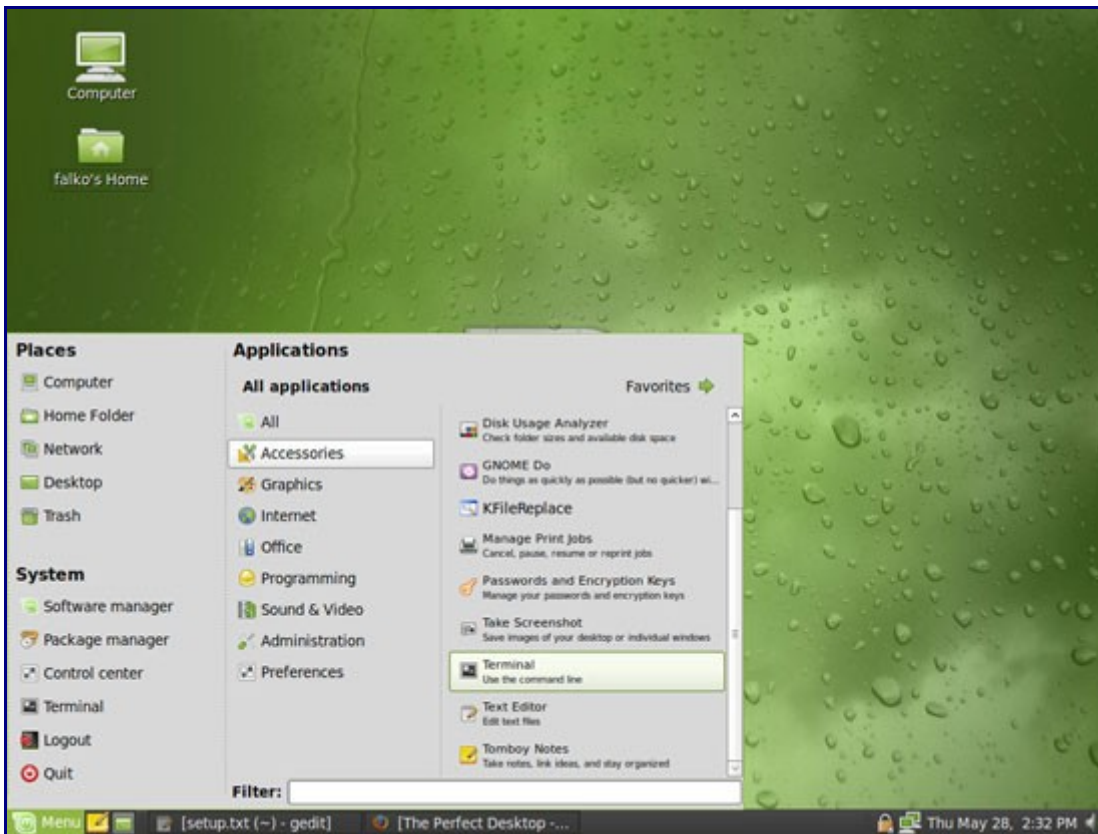


After all packages have been installed, click on Close:



You can leave the Synaptic Package Manager afterwards.

To finish the VirtualBox installation, we must add the user that will run VirtualBox (falko in this example) to the vboxusers group. Open a terminal (Applications > Accessories > Terminal)...

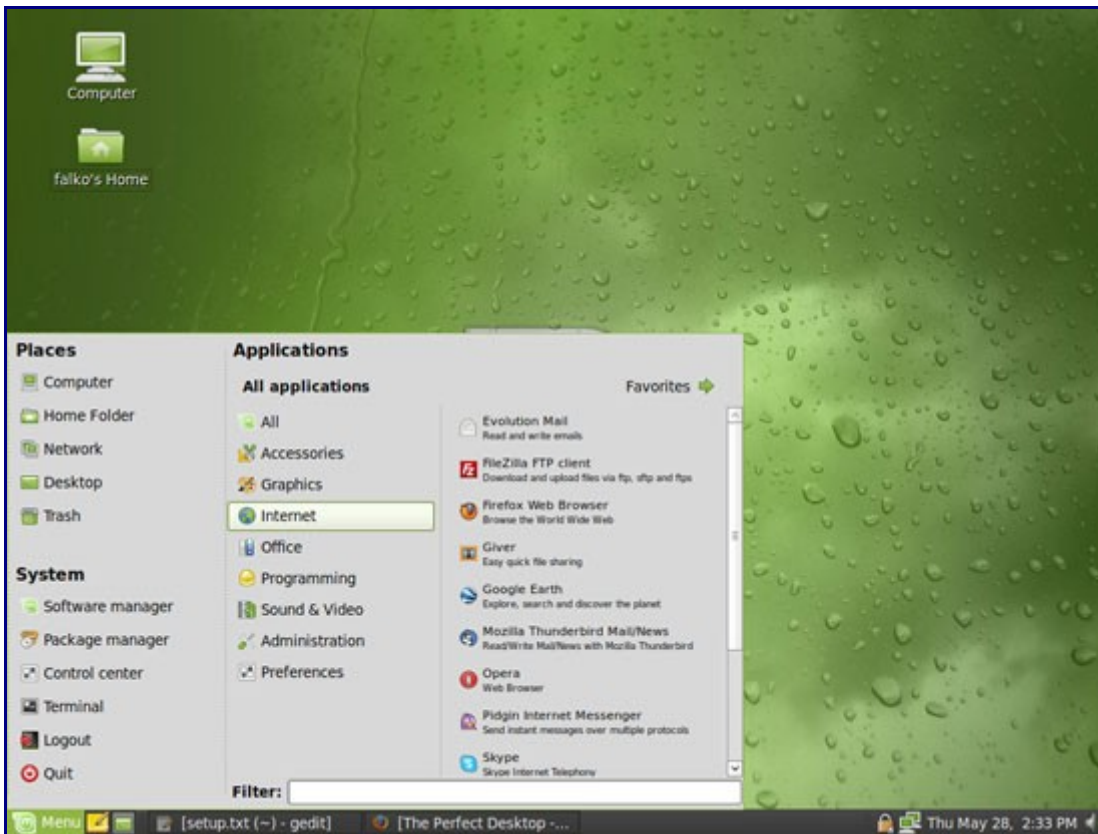


... and run:

```
sudo usermod -G vboxusers -a falko
```

8 Inventory (II)

Now let's check again what we have so far by browsing the menus again:



We have now all wanted applications installed:

Graphics:

- [x] The GIMP
- [x] F-Spot
- [x] Picasa

Internet:

- [x] Firefox
- [x] Opera
- [x] Flash Player
- [x] FileZilla
- [x] Thunderbird
- [x] Evolution
- [x] aMule
- [x] Transmission BitTorrent Client
- [x] Azureus/Vuze
- [x] Pidgin
- [x] Skype
- [x] Google Earth
- [x] Xchat IRC

Office:

- [x] OpenOffice Writer
- [x] OpenOffice Calc
- [x] Adobe Reader
- [x] GnuCash
- [x] Scribus

Sound & Video:

- [x] Amarok

- [x] Audacity
- [x] Banshee
- [x] MPlayer
- [x] Rhythmbox Music Player
- [x] gtkPod
- [x] XMMS
- [x] dvd::rip
- [x] Kino
- [x] Sound Juicer CD Extractor
- [x] VLC Media Player
- [x] Helix Player
- [x] Totem
- [x] Xine
- [x] Brasero
- [x] K3B
- [x] Multimedia-Codecs

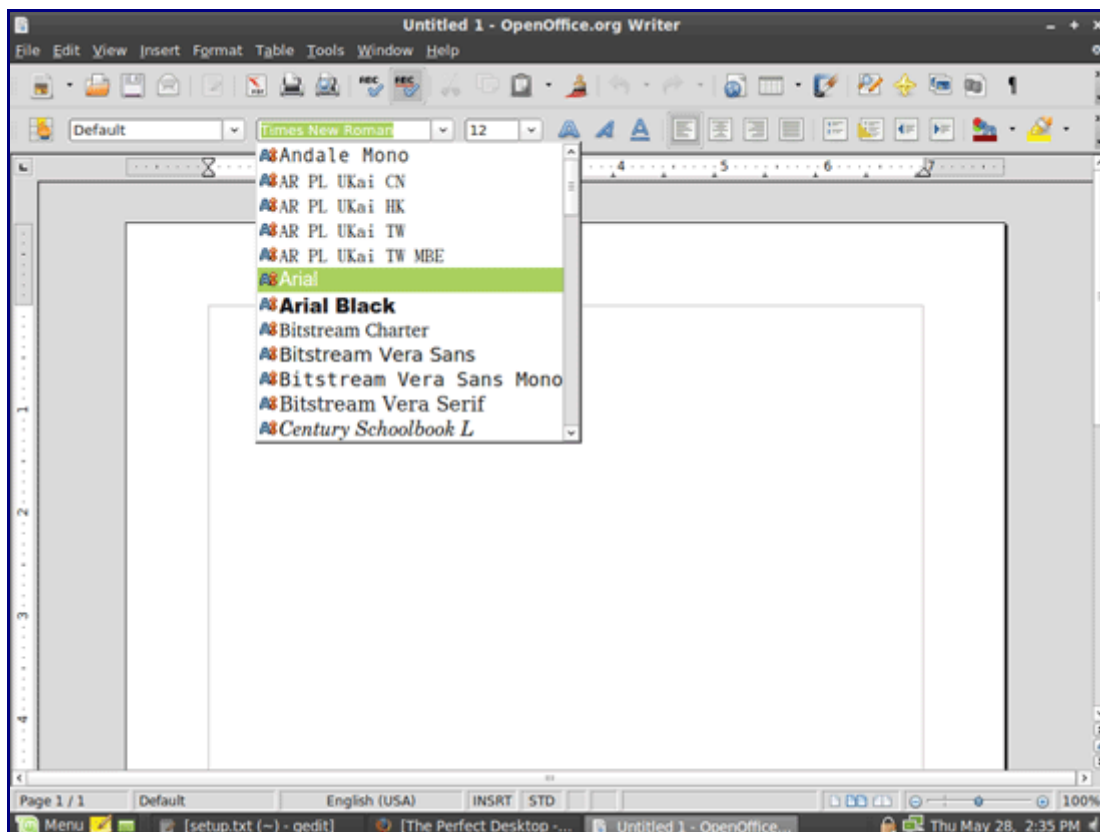
Programming:

- [x] KompoZer
- [x] Bluefish
- [x] Quanta Plus

Other:

- [x] VirtualBox
- [x] TrueType fonts
- [x] Java
- [x] Read/Write support for NTFS partitions

Microsoft's TrueType fonts are now installed, you can check that for example by opening the OpenOffice Writer. Take a look at the available fonts, and you should find fonts such as Arial, Times New Roman, Verdana, etc.:



9 Links

- Linux Mint: <http://www.linuxmint.com>