Voyager Live 14.04.1 Review: Xubuntu on steroids!

To me Voyager Live is a well decorated Xubuntu. I tried previously Voyager Live and it looked beautiful but I found it much less efficient than Xubuntu and felt, kind of defeats the purpose of XFCE distros. This was for Voyager spin of Xubuntu 12.04. However, the present release changed my impression and I’ll tell you how.

Voyager 14.04.1 is based on the latest LTS (3 years though) spin of Xubuntu and ships with XFdesktop 4.11.6 running on XFCE 4.10 and Linux kernel 3.13.0. The release note states “Rodolphe Bachelart has announced the release of Voyager Live 14.04, a Xubuntu-based distribution with a customised Xfce 4.11 desktop and a large number of usability improvements designed for power users and multimedia fans. Some of the new features of this release include: new light and dark themes, as well as a new icon set; Bluetooth and print services are now disabled by default; workspace switch by mouse action; Impulse screenlets for music integrated in panel; tightly integrated and automated music application trio - Clementine, Covergloobus and Impulse; detachable SMTube for viewing YouTube videos; a panel applet for graphical measurement of internet traffic; a modified Whisker menu with additional configuration options...”.

I downloaded the 983 MB 64 bit Voyager Live 14.04 ISO for this review. I created a live USB using Unetbootin and installed it on a 8 GB partition in my Asus K55VM laptop 2.3 Ghz Core i7 processor, 8 GB DDR3 RAM and 2 GB NVIDIA GeForce 630M processor. Initially I had a bit of issue in making Voyager recognize the already existing partitions I had on my system. However, after reformattting the drives by gparted CD and removing the existing partitions to create new ones, helped.

Aesthetics
Though Xubuntu, Fedora and Debian XFCE along with others ship very good and usable spins of XFCE but a lot of user customization is required as far as aesthetics is concerned. MakuluLinux and Voyager Linux possibly fill the gap to provide users a customized and aesthetically pleasing XFCE distro. Voyager's default look is similar to XFCE 14.04 with the same wallpaper and a plank at the bottom.
There is a conky control as well though it is not as functional as a conky manager. But, never-the-less, it is different and does what it is supposed to do.

Thunar 1.6.3 is the default file manager and it has a pretty nice interface, specially the icons.

Compositing is enabled in the distro but it doesn't ship with compiz-config (like MakuluLinux). So, you won't get the level of animations that is there in MakuluLinux.

Like Xubuntu 14.04, Voyager ships with a whisker menu. A good addition is sligscold which creates a dash like GNOME. So, users with preference for a GNOME / Unity dash, can be at home in Voyager Linux.
Further, I am happy to see USB stick formatter and USB Image Writer from Linux Mint stable in Voyager. Both are quite handy applications and save a lot of time to format and reuse USB drives, specially when you are a Linux tester!

Except for a mix up between French and English, Voyager ships the best looking XFCE I've used. The boot splash is fantastic with Voyager logo and looks very professional. Though MakuluLinux is more animated and has more options for Conky, nothing beats Voyager in terms of design and pure looks. It looks a way lot professional and has a more options for theme than MakuluLinux any day. So, my vote is for Voyager as far as aesthetics is concerned.

Score for Aesthetics: 10/10

Hardware Recognition
Like Xubuntu, Voyager Live recognized my laptop's screen resolution, touch pad, WIFI, LAN and sound. Everything worked as they are supposed to work and I go with full marks for hardware recognition.

Score for Hardware Recognition: 10/10

Installation
Voyager has a simple installation process like Xubuntu - I guess only addition is the selection of language upfront. This was not there with Xubuntu but is there in Voyager as the default distro is in French. Rest of the steps are the usual ones, as shown below.
Score for Installation: 10/10

Pre-installed Packages

Voyager Live 14.04 has a very strong multimedia and graphics section. Office and Internet packages are mostly similar to Xubuntu, barring one or two, namely:

- **Office**: Abiword, Gnumeric, Document viewer, Orage Calendar, Orage Globaltime, Dictionary
- **Internet**: Firefox 29, Thunderbird, Transmission bit torrent client, Chatlet G2 (Jabber client), Pidgin Internet Messenger, XChat IRC
- **Graphics**: Darktable, GIMP 2.8.10 Photo editor, MComix, Simple Scan, Ristretto Image Viewer, gthumb, Screen Shot
- **Multimedia**: Clementine music player, Kazam, Freetux TV, Parsley Media Player, VLC 2.1.2 media player, RYTM video editor, SMPlayer YouTube browser, Cheese webcam booth, XBurn CD/DVD creator, sound converter, Transmageddon video transcoder
- **Accessories**: Calculator, CoverGloobus, USB Image Writer, USB Stick Formatter, Koppler, Mousepad, Notes, Ontoview, Plank, Catfish file search, Screenlets, Simple backup, Screenshot, Terminal emulator, Bleachbit, Cryptkeeper, GDebi Package Installer, Tilda, Printer Manager

Multimedia codecs and Adobe Flash plugin pre-installed in the distro. I could play all my preferred online and offline media files immediately after installation in Voyager Live.

SMPlayer YouTube browser is an application which I am seeing for the first time. It is similar to Minitube but opens youtube media files in VLC player.

Freetux TV is another application which I liked. It aggregates the various live television channels across the world in different languages. About half of them don’t work but rest are quite good. I could watch regional Hindi TV channels and some sports channel in Freetux TV.
I found the right side transparent dock to be very handy as well to control settings and change themes. Further, it allows users to hide / unhide the top panel, in case required. Some of the controls like equalizer, impulse, etc. are pretty fantastic.

Overall, I am very happy with the applications shipped along with Voyager - it has a lightweight office and a mix of lightweight and heavyweight applications. For example, if you find VLC media player to be heavy, Parole can be good alternative as a lightweight media player.

Score for Pre-Installed Packages: 9/10

Repository

Majority of the packages are sourced from Ubuntu Trusty repos for Voyager. Further, I found quite a few useful third party repositories like Linux Mint, Plank, Grub customizer, etc. in the /etc/apt/sources.list.d folder.
Ubuntu Software Center is the default GUI to browse and access packages, like Xubuntu.

In addition, Voyager also ships Synaptic Package Manager (which is not there in Xubuntu). It is a good addition as I find Synaptic to be more efficient than Ubuntu Software Center.

To install packages locally, GDebi package installer is quite a useful package.

I didn’t download a whole lot of packages from Voyager repositories except bumblebee and nvidia-prime. The process to install Nvidia drivers is enumerated in my review on Xubuntu 14.04.

**Performance**

Voyager, in spite of all its tweaks, surprised me with its performance. It gave a comparable performance to Xubuntu 14.04 64-bit on the same machine. At steady state, it took about 300 MB RAM, 0-5% CPU and took about 25 seconds to boot. The numbers are comparable to Xubuntu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating System (64 bit)</th>
<th>Release Year</th>
<th>Size of ISO (GB)</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Desktop</th>
<th>Linux kernel</th>
<th>CPU (%)</th>
<th>RAM usage (MB)</th>
<th>Size of installation (GB)</th>
<th>Boot time (sec)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ubuntu 14.04 LTS</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>Ubuntu Trusty</td>
<td>XFCE 4.11</td>
<td>3.13.0</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voyager Live 14.04</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0.983</td>
<td>Ubuntu Trusty</td>
<td>XFCE 4.11</td>
<td>3.13.0</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From user perspective, I found Voyager to be easier to use than Xubuntu with a whole lot of controls on the desktop itself and Slingscold dash menu. Speed offered on my machine was fantastic and comparable to Xubuntu.
Overall
Undoubtedly Voyager has done it again. It is a gem of a distro with loads of themes and other customization options no other distro gives. Xubuntu can be a better option in low resource systems but if you have a medium to high resource system, Voyager 14.04 LTS can be a better option. It has everything to qualify for an attractive distro and ships with enviable collection of multimedia and graphic applications. Resource usage is also pretty low and comparable to Xubuntu Trusty Tahr. Plus, you add 3 years of LTS support and it is a winning combination.

Definitely recommended from my side for all Linux users and experienced users who don't like to spend much time in customizing the distro. You can download both 32 and 64 bit versions of Voyager Live from here.

Overall Score: 9.3/10

Breakup
Installation (20% weight): 10/10
Aesthetics (20% weight): 10/10
Hardware Recognition (20% weight): 10/10
Pre-Installed Packages (10% weight): 9/10
Performance (30% weight): 8/10

31 comments:

dee kern May 10, 2014 at 7:09 PM
Thanks for the fine review. I don't know which version to download for my 64 bit Lenovo G500s Laptop with Intel Core i3? Help please...cheers
Reply

arindam sen May 10, 2014 at 9:40 PM
Given your specs, always Voyager :). You have a laptop powerful enough to run almost all types of Linux distros. Regards.
Reply

dee kern May 11, 2014 at 4:21 PM
My ? was, which one of these 2 choices, which are on the download page You referred to in your review, thanks
Voyager-14.04.01-amd64.iso
2014-05-09 1.0 GB
1,652 weekly downloads
Voyager-14.04.01-i386.iso
2014-05-09 1.0 GB

arindam sen May 11, 2014 at 9:13 PM
One is for 64 bit version and the other 32 bit version. If you are not sure whethee you have a 32 or 64 bit machine, download the 32 bit one
Voyager-14.04.01-i386.iso
2014-05-09 1.0 GB

crabdog May 10, 2014 at 11:19 PM
Thanks for the review. It looks like Voyager has another fine release. Now I’m tempted to replace one of my Mint installs with this.
Reply

Rollins 7 May 11, 2014 at 5:18 AM
I could never really understand the point of not having Libreoffice i.e. by default in the 64-bit version. Yes, Abiword and Gnumeric might do the trick in old hardware but is there really a point in new powerful machines? Xfce is already a lightweight DE and Linux Mint ships with heavyweight apps without slowing the system down. Anyway, it is always nice to have a good choice of distros. One question though. Does it support a distribution upgrade like Xubuntu or do users have to reformat their HDD in 3 years?
Reply

arindam sen May 11, 2014 at 9:16 PM
About upgrade I am not sure. Generally derivatives like Mint, Zorin etc don't support upgrading.
Reply
Mikko Koski  May 11, 2014 at 5:27 AM

Is there a possibility that you could review debian edition of voyager?

Reply

arindam sen  May 11, 2014 at 9:16 PM

Sure. Will do it sometimes next week.

Reply

Mikko Koski  May 11, 2014 at 11:31 PM

thanks :)

Reply

Roger Peartree  May 12, 2014 at 4:08 AM

Many thanks dear Arindam for your excellent review of this beautiful distro. A bit too much overdone for me since I
don't have a powerful machine and so, I prefer my own customization of Xubuntu, but of course I will recommend it
for those with more up to date machines.

Reply

arindam sen  May 15, 2014 at 12:55 PM

Thanks Roger for liking my post. Indeed it is a wonderful distro but even I prefer running it on a powerful
machine. For the rest, Xubuntu works just fine, like you said!

Reply

dee kern  May 13, 2014 at 6:50 PM

Please, where do I find the MDS SUM or the SHA256SUM hashes to verify the download image for Voyager
14.04? Thanks...

Reply

arindam sen  May 15, 2014 at 12:54 PM

Not there unfortunately. I checked http://sourceforge.net/projects/voyagerlive/files/?source=navbar and
the voyager website.

Reply

dee kern  May 15, 2014 at 7:51 PM

I appreciate you for the effort to find it. I have had no luck either. Just have to hope all is well I guess.
Hell of a way to run a distro...

Thanks

jave200372  July 18, 2014 at 3:51 AM

FOOTPRINT ISO
(Check the integrity of the ISO) Version 01 MD5SUM 64 a4adb872375cbe0cbe2742be3e7b46fcb
MD5SUM 32 ccf7a8fd91c370de27428de506e746a To calculate md5sum with the command line Open
terminal (right click) in iso file and paste md5sum Voyager-14.04.01-amd64.iso md5sum Voyager-
14.04.01-i386.iso

Take from http://voyagerlive.org/

Reply

Mark the dark  May 31, 2014 at 7:12 AM

Dear Mr Arindam senor,

Many a thanx for your review, I know have tried “Voyager 14.04”, “Xubuntu 14.04”, and “Antergos 2014 XFCE”
(Spanish Arch derivate - a bit like Manjaro Linux or Archbang for me). Now my question: Beside the discussions between Arch and Debian nerds (mostly refering to package signings, security, rolling release bugs etc.) which XFCE distro you personally like the most ?

My personal opinion is that Voyager 14.04 is a kind of bloated Xubuntu (not that bloated than Makulu) and that
Antergos strangely did some “home calls” (fstop did let me see) when going online so I will stick to Xubuntu 14.04 a
healthy alternative to the Ad/Malware/Spyware Unity but still handy and secure.

Best regards,

Mark the dark ...
Hi Mark,

I personally use Xubuntu as my regular choice. Like you, I prefer using the original distro more than its fork. Two of my other preferred XFCE spins are Fedora XFCE and Manjaro. However, I found Makulu and Voyager to be quite safe and the third party ppa's they use are kind of widely used across Linux fraternity.

Regards,
Arindam

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Hey,

thanks or the great reviews and a quick question:
does the 32 bit version support non pae cpu's.

Reply

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Hi Sushant,

Sorry to reply late. Because of work pressure, I am a bit infrequent to my blog these days. I guess you would have found out by now - Yes, 32-bit version supports both pae and non-pae CPUs.

Reply

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Inspired by your interesting review I installed Voyager yesterday and was pleasantly surprised by this excellent looking modern distro. Being a great fan of XFCE, I find Voyager 14.04 a delight to work with. Some french in the software center still needs to be translated, but allez! This will now be my favorite distro besides the so far rock solid Mint 17 XFCE (as well as Lubuntu 14.04 for my old laptop). Voyager is more fun! Hopefully this will now remain stable on my PC after problems with some other distros, for which I cannot blame myself and which cannot be easily solved by an average person in userland not afraid of the terminal interface: Xubuntu 14.04 (no longer booting), SolydX (July upgrade crashing), elementary OS (not accepting latest Dropbox) and Deepin 2014 (Control Center disappeared when trying to download vlc).

Reply

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how to do you instll this with yumi?

Reply

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Great to know that you liked Voyager Linux. I found Voyager to be the best XFCE release in 2014 till date. It's aesthetics and functionality help it score over Linux Mint 17 XFCE, the next best XFCE release I reviewed this year. Voyager is definitely more fun!

Reply

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how to do you intall this with yum?

Reply

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Great great distro

Reply

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Arindam great review.

Please suggest me a distro for my laptop with AMD quad core with 4GB RAM (64bit). The distro will be installed in a separate partition along with windows 8.1 and will be used occasionally.

Reply

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Hi Arup, any of Ubuntu 14.04 or Ubuntu spins work fantastic on my Win8 laptop. I don't like Win8 and hence, use Linux primarily and Win8 only when I've no alternative. Also, yo can try out virtualbox with 2 GB RAM allocated for Linux.

Reply
Jenny Hayes  February 5, 2016 at 3:00 AM  
This comment has been removed by the author.
Reply

alex April 22, 2016 at 8:06 AM  
I like all information that you provide in your articles. Patent Attorney Ft Lauderdale
Reply

Healthy Diet Tips November 2, 2016 at 4:23 AM  
http://www.raspberryultradrops.com/phenq-review/
Reply

Healthy Diet Tips November 27, 2016 at 9:54 PM  
best diet pills
Reply

Margareth Wilson December 2, 2016 at 1:09 AM  
reduce bloating with best colon cleanser
Reply