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New attempts to build a custom ISO

At the beginning of March 2019 I (JN) looked into

- a reported update of Linux Respin (the Gitlab repository shows activity in January 2019), see https://gitlab.com/remastersys/LinuxRespin and http://www.linuxrespin.org/
- a “new” remastering script (to me), JLIVECD. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JLIVECD and https://github.com/neurobin/JLIVECD
- the iso-snapshot capability of Antix Linux. See https://antixlinux.com/

I only got as far as investigating the repository for Respin.

JLIVECD-release.tar.gz dated 2018-12-17 was downloaded and I made a few attempts to run the script. It seemed to be “mostly” working, but subject to some to the usual script glitches related to needing precise paths for different resources. I believe this script is rather similar to the original **remastersys** or to **CrunchMaster** in this respect. That is, it needs a careful hand controlling its us.

Antix Linux turned out to be surprisingly helpful. Using antiX-17.3.1_386-base.iso in a VirtualBox VM, I was able to add Abiword, gnumeric and Double Commander to the set of software tools, then create a new iso with my personal username and password using the iso-snapshot tool built in. Furthermore I subsequently made a “distribution” version with username and password equal to the default (demo/demo). It appears that there is also a remastering functionality if one uses a **frugal install** of the distro.

Still to check with Antix:

- changing splash screens etc.
- scripts to install different collections of software that might be useful to linux-ottawa members or their friends
- a better wifi setup tool than that supplied (the text based network control is clunky, the GUI did not seem to work).

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Persistence

Persistence is the term used to describe the facility to update the live-usb (new packages or files) and have them stored on the storage media. Ideally we want this to be the SAME usb-stick as the live OS. Where the live-usb mimics a CD/DVD, the whole device is used for the live system and this is not possible. However, often the OS and boot setup use only a part of the storage media. However, getting persistence set up can be awkward.

??links?? – be good to explain why, and also to suggest diagnostic tools to determine what is possible.

One approach

The Antix 17 live media provide a live-USB-maker (under Applications/System Tools). JN managed to create a live-usb with this tool having static-persistence (directories for john and root). At 20190308 this has not been extensively tested. To make the stick I booted with one live-usb containing an Antix system (this had in fact already been modified by addition of several packages). Then I plugged in an empty 8G Lexar stick and had live-USB-maker build a new stick, selecting space for persistence.

Open questions:

- What exactly does the script do? Why?
- Does the new stick allow files and new packages? Also apt update/upgrade?
- ?? More precise documentation of the steps
- Can we do the job from a Virtual Machine? Direct to USB? Can we fake a USB image for build and test?