

Have You Tried Compiling It ? By Zugrăvel Teodor

Compiling is so cool!

About a week ago, I was procrastinating while thinking about free software, and I realized. Do you actually run the code you think you are running ?

Let me explain, so when a program is open-source, the code you are running is publicly available, let's take the Linux kernel as an example.

How do you know that the binary you are using as your Linux kernel is exactly the same as the Linux source code available on GitHub, and the binary you are running has not been altered after being compiled and shipped to your system ?

Of course, some operating systems add extra stuff to the kernel to make it more compatible or whatever. But I am not talking about that. What if, what you are actually running is the Linux kernel, but with a little “glow in the dark” twist, that is not shown on the GitHub repository ? You get me ?

The only way you can be sure that the binary you are using is actually the same thing as what is displayed on the GitHub repository, is compiling stuff yourself.

Gentoo – the OS, not the penguin.

That's where Gentoo comes in.

Unlike other GNU distributions (yes, I will call them GNU distributions). Everything in your Gentoo system including the Init system or the GNU coreutils has to be compiled. Instead of installing a precompiled Firefox binary, you compile Firefox using the portage package manager.

Which is pretty cool if you ask me, that means you have full control of what you are really using. With Gentoo, you can also configure everything to your liking, you can make Firefox to only work on your computer, on your specific hardware and your own specific software, failing to load on other computers, Completely maximizing efficiency since the Firefox no longer has the bloat necessary for it to run on other computers.

You can configure Gentoo so much!

You can chose to compile with GCC or Clang, you can chose if you want to use SystemD (very underrated) or OpenRC.

The amount of customization with Gentoo is endless and if you combine it with something like the Suckless DWM and an old Librebooted IBM Thinkpad X60, you create a monster of a system.

You are 100% on a “glow in the dark” list, if this is your setup.

Using Gentoo is really FUN.

The amount of stuff you learn about operating systems while using and installing Gentoo is absolutely insane and the documentation is so well written.

Installing Gentoo on an old computer was very fun, even if I ended up with a grub issue at the end, I learned so much about UNIX-like operating systems and software in general.

I installed Gentoo using a Lubuntu live environment on an old computer that used to run Windows 10 and was extremely slow.

It was the first time I typed the ``sudo su`` command in a terminal and it felt amazing.

After that I used these CLI partitioning software's called `cfdisk` and `fdisk` (I forgot exactly the names), and then downloaded some stuff using `wget` from the Gentoo wiki. I had to modify this `emerge.conf` file located in `/etc/emerge/...` a bunch of times. And then do some more stuff.

(Or something like that, look, I forgot exactly the steps of the installation. All I know is that I had fun. Don't judge me.)

Born to be a Gentoo-chad, forced to be a Fedora-normie.

At the end of the day, Gentoo is a “I use Linux because I don’t value my time!” distribution.

Something as simple as getting to use Firefox takes about 2 hours or even 6 depending on your hardware and your configuration.

As a full-time student I do not have the possibility of doing that.

And even if I did have the time, It would still be a nightmare to wait for stuff to compile.

I did not mention this earlier but after the failed grub attempt, I tried installing it again, starting in the next morning and ending up late at night with Gentoo still not being installed.

So, I will continue using Fedora workstation.

A secure, stable, semi-rolling-release, free software GNU distribution that is not a nightmare to use.

So, use Gentoo if you like sleeping during the day while compiling Firefox and you have nothing else to do.

Thanks for taking your time to read this. Bye, have a nice day!