

Re: Best OS version for Opteron cluster?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.math.num-analysis/2005-04/msg00038.html>

- *From:* Jon Harrop <usenet@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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Phil Hobbs wrote:

- > Well, hell may not have frozen over, but my purchase req for 5
- > dual-Opteron pizza boxes with 20GB of memory got approved, and now I have
- > to figure out what to do with them.
- >
- > I'm running a big FDTD electromagnetic simulation code I wrote myself, but
- > at present it runs on Windows and OS/2, neither of which is terribly
- > attractive
- > on a 64-bit machine due to compiler issues, if nothing else. Accordingly
- > I'm planning to use Linux, but you could fit my Linux expertise into a
- > matchbox
- > without taking the matches out first. Fortunately the code is all console
- > mode, and I think I have the slight differences in the sockets API figured
- > out—if not, it's not a big deal to fix.
- >
- > What distro is best for this kind of service? Any other experiences to
- > share?

Yes, I have some semi-relevant experiences to share. :-)

I just bought an Athlon 64 laptop. I found installing 64-bit Debian Linux (from alioth) to be vastly easier than installing 32-bit Debian. However, it may be worth having both 32- and 64-bit installations as some programs run significantly faster in 32-bit mode (due to smaller address sizes => better cache coherency, less bandwidth use etc.).

Debian is an excellent Linux distribution with a superb (very stable) package manager, very carefully vetted software in the "stable" distribution, more recent software in the "testing" distribution and cutting edge software (and packages with dodgy dependencies) in the "unstable" distribution. Basically, you just download the "netinst" ISO CD image, burn it, stick it in the drive, reboot and follow the instructions. Then you upgrade to the latest version of everything using the package manager and install any extras you want. Let me know if you need a hand installing Debian.

If you're interested in some performance measurements, I posted some in `comp.lang.functional` and on the `caml-list` recently (I use the programming language OCaml for most of my work but there are C++ measurements too).

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Also, nVidia's AMD64-native OpenGL drivers work beautifully. :-)

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• **References:**

◆ **Best OS version for Opteron cluster?**

◇ *From:* Phil Hobbs

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