

8 July 2008

By: Marius Nestor, Linux Editor

wattOS Alpha 1  
Softpedia

## [Introducing wattOS - A Lightweight Ubuntu!](#)

### *Based on Openbox*

wattOS... the last frontier, the lightweight Ubuntu-based operating system is now here! Faster than anything else out there, wattOS is not just another Ubuntu clone, it is powered by the Openbox window manager, a standards compliant, fast, lightweight and extensible window manager. First time I heard about wattOS, I saw a single screenshot with it and I was like, "This looks cool! I should give it a try..." So, I've immediately downloaded the ISO image, burned it on a blank CD and started it in live mode. What's that? wattOS has a custom boot splash that looks simply glamorous... Now, you tell me you don't like it and that you prefer the usual Ubuntu one, or one that's just a little modified! I personally think it's really awesome and, even more, that it kinda looks like a Mac OS X boot splash. The CD booted very fast in live mode, as it took only 20 seconds to arrive to the desktop. The desktop is clean, you have only one Panel (it is actually called "Dock") situated at the bottom of the screen, and there are some shortcuts for the most used programs, such as Mozilla Firefox & Thunderbird, Terminal window and Home folder. On the right side of the panel, you notice a nice clock, the volume manager and the logout button. But let's have a closer look at the installed applications:

- Audacious - Audio player
- Brasero - CD/DVD burning tool
- Totem - Movie player
- The GIMP - Advanced image editor
- Mozilla Firefox - Web browser
- Mozilla Thunderbird - e-mail client
- Pidgin - Multi-protocol instant messenger
- Vinagre - Remote desktop viewer (VNC client)
- Transmission - BitTorrent client
- AbiWord - Word processor
- Gnumeric - Spreadsheet software
- PCMan File Manager

I really like the fact that I can find some of the applications I use everyday, like Mozilla Thunderbird, for instance, which is not included in a default Ubuntu installation. Plus, let's not forget that the developer did a very good job at cleaning all the junk from the system! Now that you've seen the installed applications, let's talk a little about Openbox and about what it can offer to the end user. *"Openbox works with your applications, and makes your desktop easier to manage. This is because the approach to its development was the opposite of what seems to be the general case for window managers. Openbox was written first to comply with standards and to work properly; when that was in place, its developers turn to the visual interface."* - from the official website of Openbox. And just in case you're wondering... is it stable? The answer is YES! Openbox can be used as a drop-in replacement for the default window manager in the GNOME or KDE desktop environments. It is also fully functional as a stand-alone working environment. Below you can see the Openbox configurator in action: wattOS will also offer you the powerful and lightweight PCMan file manager to navigate through your files and folders, Gtk+ 2.0 Change Theme utility so you can easily change the look of the windows, and the StartUp-Manager software (which is actually a really old version) to change some of the boot options and the appearance. The development team has some big plans for wattOS. In the near future, they will create a modular and specialized server edition called "Substation," a mini edition powered by the Xfce desktop, called "mWattOS," and an even smaller version (micro) with no window manager or a very basic one, called  $\mu$ WattOS. Last but not least, wattOS can be easily installed on your hard drive with the usual Ubuntu installer. Download wattOS Alpha 1 right now from [Softpedia](#), but be warned that it is not yet suitable for production use!