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NeroLinux Review

Born to burn!

The disc authoring practice has become quite wide spread these days. Once the optical units became affordable for anyone, they have also become a vital need for most users as the hard-disk capacity limitation is one of the most annoying problems when it comes to computers. I am one of those users who have experienced messages such as "not enough disk space" many times, therefore burning CD-s and DVD-s is a task I perform almost daily. I could say that the main role in a disc burning process is played equally by the authoring unit as well as the application you use for that purpose. A quite nice burning application I've dealt with was *Nero Linux*. It is made by Nero AG (previous Ahead Software) and I must say that it is worth most of the popularity gained from its MS Windows-designed "brother". The latest Nero Linux 3 release of which I intend to tell you about in this review, is yet a beta version and it was first introduced at CeBIT 2007. With a decent user interface, based now on the GTK2 graphical toolkit, the newest Nero Linux release works with a lot of the CD-image formats, including ISO image and also brings in the ability to burn Blu-ray and HD DVD discs. Many might get disappointed to hear that, despite the tricky name, Nero Linux is not a free software. However, the EUR 19,99 price for the serial number is not exactly a huge amount reported to the quality of this application. Actually, Nero Linux and [K3b](#) were the only burning applications I've really enjoyed working with. The only difference between the two programs would be that K3b is free. They have a nice and easy-to-use UI and they came with some clever default configurations so that the end user will not have to worry too much about confusing check boxes or options lists. According to its user guide, Nero Linux comes with almost all of the necessary functionalities already built-in. There are a few packages, for special features, which Nero does not bring in, as they should be already installed on your system. There is no problem though if your system misses one of those packages, as Nero Linux will inform you about the missing package name and an URL where to get it. Another major specification I found in the "requirements" section is that Nero needs at least a 2.4 kernel version. Regarding the fact that most of the Linux distros are based on the 2.6 version, the kernel should not be a problem. Leaving the more "technical" details aside, let's go straight to its basic functionalities. The first thing you encounter in program start-up will be a dialog asking you about the compilation you want. You can choose from a rich list of options, according to your need, the CD/ DVD type, either Audio, Data, Mixed, Video, Boot, ISO a.s.o. This new version also includes a new Audio Plug-in Manager for decoding/encoding WAV, MP3, Ogg Vorbis and FLAC audio files. Just as any respectable application, Nero Linux will not affect any system files or directories directly on your computer. It creates instead a virtual file system representing only a prototype of the disc you want to create. The incorporated browser is a bit advanced in this 3.0 beta version compared to the previous one. You should now receive a context menu when you right-click a certain file which provides you editing options such as copy, rename, delete etc. I was expecting also to have a clue of some common shortcuts such as the *Delete* key for deleting a file, or *Ctrl + C* for copying, but I think this is a bit too much to ask from it. Also the cut, copy and paste options from the context menu do not behave as expected. I've tried to copy a file from one folder to another, but nothing happened, and I've got the same result when I was trying to move it. When you click on the copy option, it actually activates the copy content to clipboard, but when I've tried to paste that content elsewhere, I had no result. However, the Create new folder and Delete options, the ones I use the most, worked just fine. Too bad their shortcuts were missing though. But the aspect I don't like is counter-balanced by the Precaching feature. What does it do more exactly?

Well, it comes very handy when you deal with old CDs you want to make copies of. Most of the recorders are known to expect a certain raw stream, that cannot be assured by the CD-ROM device if the CD is too worn out. In order to enable the preacaching option you can hold down your right mouse button when dragging the files/tracks to the Track Editor. The nice user interface I've mentioned above is similar to the look and feel of the current Nero Burning ROM 7 edition. One thing I don't like about it is the *Options* panel, which deals with too much miscellaneous-like options, while the more advanced ones are not so easily accessible. On the burning side, I think you already know what I am about to say. Everything goes as smooth as possible. **The Good** could give a lot of credit to Nero Linux for being a solid application which does exactly what it said it would do. I must say that while using it, I did not encounter any crashes, which I don't happen to see very frequently when dealing with more complex programs. **The Bad**One thing that disappointed me was the lack of a CD speed writing tool. I've looked for an option list where to select a specific writing speed, but I wasn't able to find any. Moreover, the fact that I have to pay for this program is not exactly something I like about it; usually when I say Linux, I think of free and open source software. **The Truth**This is a beta version of NeroLinux, therefore it is still under development and it might need some improvements and corrections. However, it is one of the few applications of its kind that manages to do its job in a perfectly nice and easy manner. *Please enjoy the screenshots below:*