



# Full Circle

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Linux  
for all



Emmabuntüs DE 6  
(Debian 13 XFCE)



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# EMMABUNTUS DEBIAN EDITION



Emmabuntüs was last reviewed by Full Circle Magazine in December, 2017 in FCM#128 by Lucas Westermann. At that time, Emmabuntüs was at its Debian Edition 2 release. Now, nine years later, it is time for an update on this interesting project and a look at what it has to offer.

Emmabuntüs is a Linux distribution that I have been wanting to look at for several years. It has an interesting name, an interesting history and in many ways it embodies the altruistic goals of Linux and the larger free software movement. These reasons alone justify a fresh review, so let's dive in and see what Emmabuntüs is all about and whether it makes a good, general purpose desktop distribution.

## Background

Emmabuntüs is developed by a group who call themselves "Le collectif" Emmabuntüs, which is based in France. The project has been around since 2011 and had its

first release in 2012.

The group explains its aims: "This distribution was designed from the start to facilitate the refurbishment of computers donated to humanitarian organizations, particularly the Emmaus communities, and to encourage beginners to discover GNU/Linux, while also extending the lifespan of the hardware to limit waste caused by the overconsumption of raw materials. Emmabuntüs is used for computer reuse by numerous organizations in France and Africa."

Its name results from its association with the Emmaus communities plus initially being based on Ubuntu 10.10, with its GNOME 2 desktop. Later it was based on Xubuntu with the Xfce desktop and, since February 2016, it has been based on Debian with Xfce, but the original name remains the same.

The Emmaüs community is an international solidarity movement founded in 1949, in Paris by Abbé Pierre, a Catholic priest and Capuchin friar, to combat poverty

and homelessness. The Emmabuntüs project also collaborates with a number of organizations with complementary goals including Debian-Facile, Blabla Linux, Tugaleres.com, Jerry – Do It Together, JerryClan Ivory Coast, YovoTogo, JUMP Lab'Orione, Friends of the Earth, Festival de la Récup, Trira (TRI Rhône-Alpes), THOT, Ailleurs Solidaires and Eisenia among many others. It works with the Lilo search engine to generate funds to support computer projects for schools in Africa, as Lilo returns 80% of its advertising revenue to charities that promote its use. To support the existing computer labs in Northern Togo and to establish new ones, in 2023 the Emmabuntüs collective decided to donate 100% of its Lilo revenue to YovoTogo & JUMP Lab'Orione. So, it is much more of a social movement, rather than just a Linux distribution.

The current version, Emmabuntüs DE6, ships with the Xfce desktop by default, but also includes the LXQt desktop as a built-in alternative, using these



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lighter weight desktops to keep older hardware in use.

One of Emmabuntüs' aims is that it can be installed without any internet connection, so the "Full" ISO file download includes everything possibly needed, although that does make it a fairly hefty 4.6 GB download.

Introduced with the release of Debian Edition 6 is a smaller "Core" ISO download, which is only 2.8 GB and which omits some of the very extensive list of default applications, as well as educational software and accessibility features. The Core download does include an interface to selectively install applications and other features

from the Full version, though.

As a size comparison, the latest Xubuntu release, Xubuntu 25.10, which uses the same Xfce desktop, is slightly larger at 4.7 GB and it comes with a lot fewer default applications.

## Getting Emmabuntüs

I downloaded the ISO for "Emmabuntus Debian Edition 6 Full – 64 bits (Debian 13 XFCE/LXQt amd64)" using BitTorrent provided by Linux Tracker, although HTTPS downloads are also available directly from SourceForge. The BitTorrent download actually ran quite quickly.

Three checksums are provided for each download: MD5, SHA1 and SHA256, which is a nice touch. SHA256 is the most secure choice of the three, so I used it to confirm that my download was accurate.

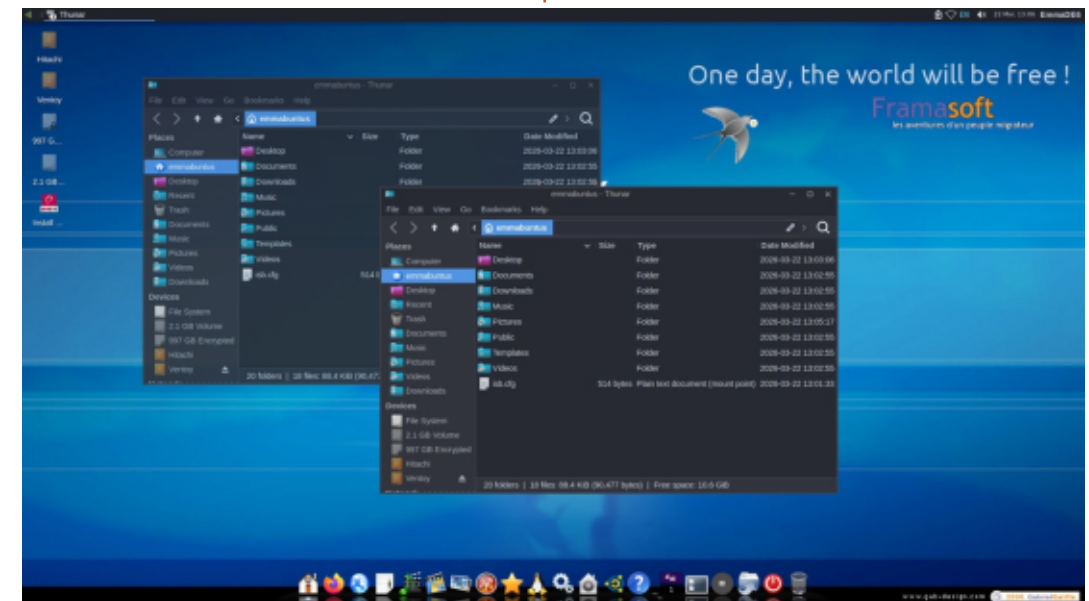
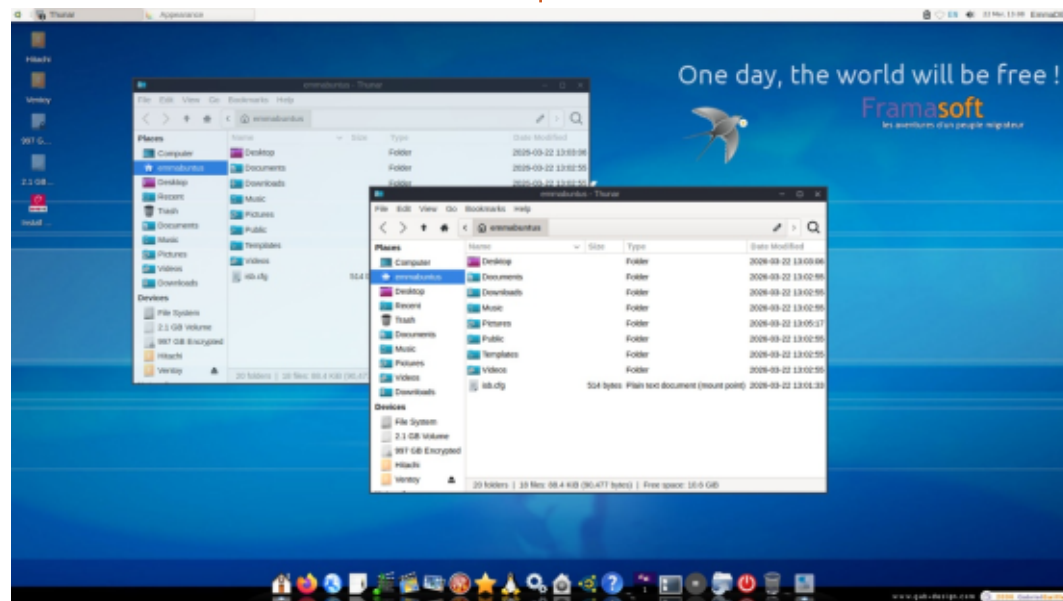
Also provided is a .txt file for download that lists all of the included packages, a useful tool. In case they are needed, Emmabuntüs includes all of their old version downloads as well. You can't fault the organization for completeness or attention to detail!

## Installing

Emmabuntüs recommends using

Ventoy to boot up the ISO file for live session testing and installation and even includes it on the ISO itself for installation on a USB stick. I already had a stick equipped with Ventoy 1.1.10 and so just dropped the ISO file onto that for boot-up, which worked perfectly, as expected. Emmabuntüs is officially supported by Ventoy, as is its parent distribution, Debian.

Oddly, the distribution did not support the wifi card for drivers on my 15 year old desktop computer, although the previous release Emmabuntüs Debian Edition 5 did.



## System requirements

The last published hardware requirements were for the older Emmabuntüs 4 release and are:

Processor: Intel or AMD (2.0 GHz or faster), minimum Dual Core

RAM: 1 GB minimum for 32-bit versions, or 2 GB minimum for 64-bit versions

Hard drive: 80 GB minimum, more to allow for installing other software and your data

Video card: nVidia, ATI, Intel, SiS, Matrox

Sound card: Sound Blaster, AC97 or HDA compatible

Other: DVD drive required or a PC that can boot from the USB port

I will note that almost any computer used for web browsing these days really needs a minimum of 8 GB of RAM.

## Trying out Emmabuntüs

Emmabuntüs Debian Edition 6 1.01 is 64-bit only. Previous releases included 32-bit support, but that has ended now. It is probably worth noting that 32-bit computers are mostly at least 20 years old now so it probably is time to move on.

As I noted above, this release introduces the use of two different downloads: "Full" and "Core". The Full ISO file is a better fit for

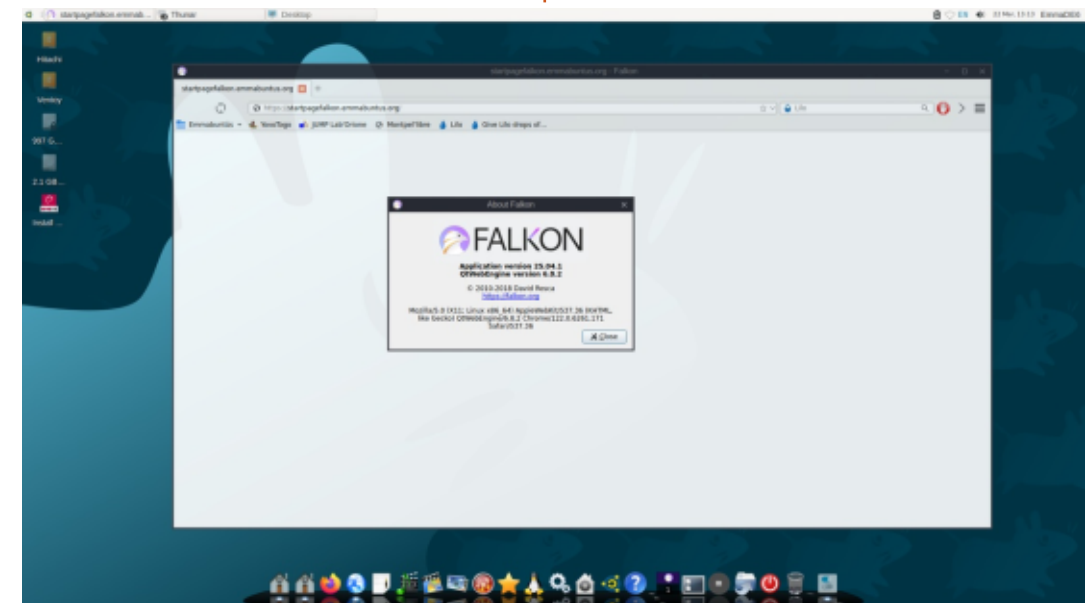
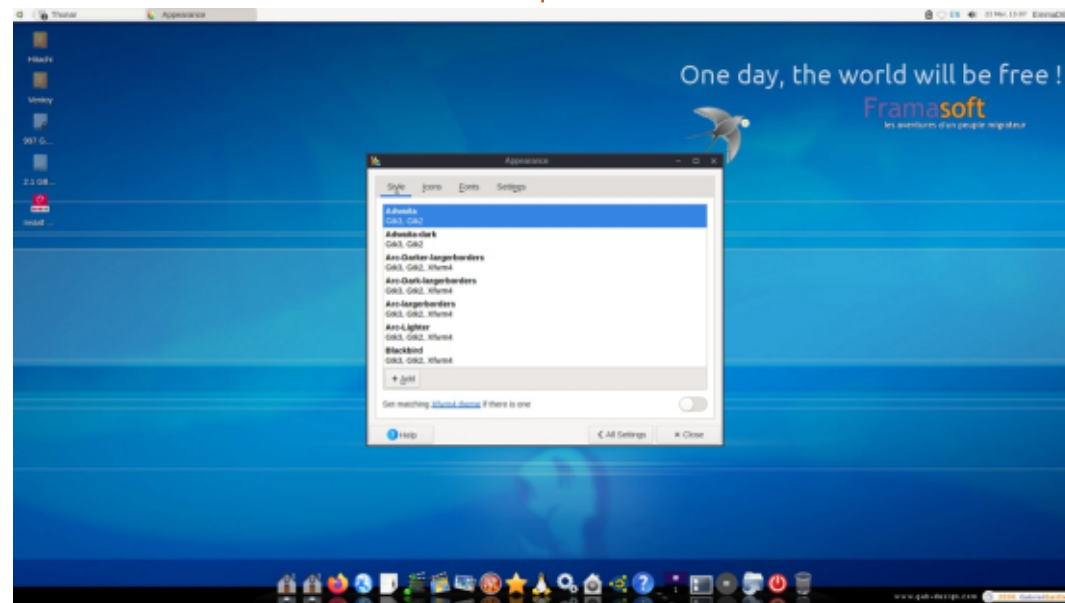
educational institutions and Emmabuntüs' other charitable installations, while the Core version is probably a better choice for personal use, particularly for experienced users.

Based on Debian 13.4 Trixie, this release includes the default Xfce 4.20 and optional LXQt 2.1 desktop environments and it runs on the Linux 6.12 LTS kernel.

Booting up to the Xfce desktop is quick and the result is a pretty stock Xfce interface, with the addition of the very "Mac-like" Cairo dock. It will certainly be an easy transition for both Mac and Windows users.

## Settings

Emmabuntüs' Full ISO includes a wide range of accessibility features aimed at making computing easier for disabled people, especially the visually disabled. They have been working with the Togolese Federation of Associations of People with Disabilities (FETAPH) to develop and test these. In fact, they provide a whole manual on how to use these features. The Core edition does not include these but Emmabuntüs also notes, "sighted and visually impaired users will also be able, from the Core edition, to install accessibility features via a dedicated audio-guided interface. This interface is activated



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automatically when starting in accessibility mode, making it easier for them to set up the appropriate tools."

It also includes a wide range of the usual Xfce desktop user customization features, including 11 window color themes and a choice of 53 included wallpapers.

The Cairo dock has three different modes which can be selected at installation or later on from the settings. These modes are labeled child, beginner and expert, but in use are all pretty similar.

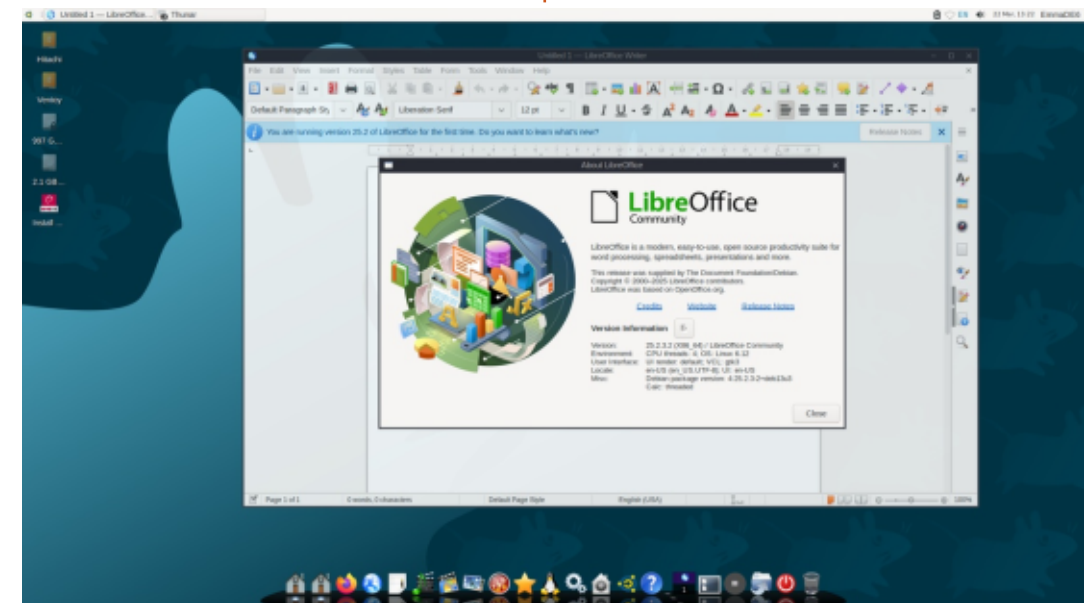
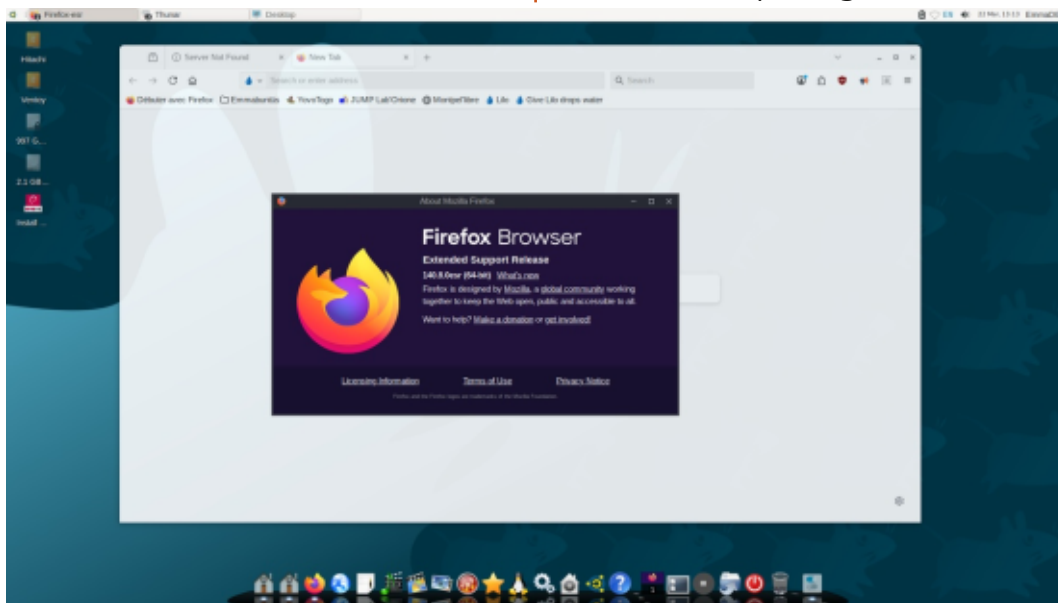
## Applications

Some of the applications included with Emmabuntüs Debian Edition 6 1.01 Full are:

- Ancestris 12.0.12685 genealogy application
- Ark 25.04.3 file archiver
- Asunder 3.0.1 audio CD ripper
- Audacity 3.7.3 audio editor
- BleachBit 4.6.2 file deleter
- Calibre 8.5.0 ebook reader
- Clementine 1.4 rc-2 music player
- Drawing 1.0.2 raster image editor
- Evince 48.1 PDF viewer
- Falkon 25.04.1 web browser
- File Roller 44.5 file archiver
- FileZilla 3.68.1 file transfer protocol client
- Firefox 140.8.0 ESR web browser
- Gcompris 25.0 game
- Gdebi 0.9.5.8 package installer

- Geany 2.0 programming text editor
- Gimp 3.0.4 image editor
- GNOME Calculator 41.2 calculator
- GNOME Disks 46.1 disk manager
- GNOME Disk Usage Analyzer 48.0 disk usage and available space
- GNOME Packages 43.0 (gnome-packagekit) graphical distribution neutral package manager
- GNOME Software 48.3 software installer and updater
- GNOME Sudoku 48.1 game
- Gnote 48.0 note-taking application
- GPartEd 1.6.0 disk partition manager
- gPodder 3.11.3 podcast client
- gscan2pdf 2.13.4 scanner for creating multipage PDFs
- gThumb 3.12.7 image viewer
- Guvvview 2.2.1 webcam
- Gufw Firewall 24.04.0 firewall

- controller
- HandBrake 1.9.2 video format converter
- Handytri 0.5 file sorter
- HardInfo2 2.2.10 system information and benchmarker
- HomeBank 5.8.6 accounting
- Htop 3.4.1 system use statistics
- Image Magick 7.1.1 command line image editor
- Inkscape 1.4 vector graphics editor
- Kaffeine 2.0.19 media player
- KDE Connect 25.04.2 wireless communications and data transfer between devices
- Kdenlive 24.12.3 video editor
- KeyPassXC 2.7.10 password manager
- Ktuberling 25.04.0 game
- LibreOffice 25.2.3.2 complete office suite



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Luanti 5.10.10 game  
LXImage-Qt 2.1.1 image viewer  
OnBoard 1.4.1 white board  
OpenBoard 1.7.3 white board  
PDF Arranger 1.11.1 PDF editor  
Pidgin 2.14.14 IRC client  
qclipper 5.1.2 clipboard manager  
Redshift 1.12 screen colour temperature adjuster  
Scratch 3.29.1 simplified programming language for children  
Scribus 1.6.3 desktop publishing  
Sweet Home 3D 7.5 architectural design  
Synaptic 0.91.7 package management  
Thunar 4.20.2 file manager  
Thunar Bulk Rename 4.20.2 bulk file renaming  
Thunderbird 140.8.0 ESR email client

Timeshift-gtk 24.06.6 system restore tool  
Transmission 4.1.0-beta.2  
BitTorrent client  
TuxMath 2.0.3 math game  
TuxPaint 0.9.34 raster graphics editor for children  
TuxTyping 1.8.3 keyboard instruction  
Ventoy 1.1.10 ISO bootable USB creator  
VLC 3.20.23 media player  
Xfburn 0.7.2 CD/DVD creator  
xfce4-screenshooter 1.11.1 screenshot tool  
xfce4-terminal 1.1.4 terminal emulator

I think that this is the most extensive list of default applications I have ever seen in a Linux

distribution. There is a lot of duplication here like two image viewers, two web browsers and three package managers, but the aim, even for an off-line installation, is to give a range of choices and it does accomplish that. If this list looks like there would be much that you would need to delete, then it may make sense to install the smaller Core version and then just add what you need instead.

Because these applications come from a wide variety of desktops, projects and sources, the end result is not what I would call a "well-integrated" desktop experience, but a bit of a mash-mash of applications, some of which fit well into the Xfce desktop and some which don't, but at least everything does work. Given the huge number of applications included, this is probably hard to avoid.

## Conclusions

Overall Emmabuntüs DE6 is a great release, with a lot going for it in both its Full and Core versions. What you get is a well thought out and complete Xfce distribution (with LXQt as an option, too) with a

lot of applications and accessibility features included. The Full version probably makes sense for refurbishing old computers to be used for charitable donations in off-line, educational or institutional settings, while the Core version is probably more suitable for personal use. Either way, it is a good general desktop operating system and an easy introduction to Linux for beginners.

Probably best of all, in using Emmabuntüs, is the feeling of contributing to a bigger and more altruistic project, whether you are preparing old donated computers for use, or just using the Lilo search engine to funnel some financial support back into the project.

## External links

Official website:  
<https://emmabuntus.org/>



**Adam Hunt** started using Ubuntu in 2007 and has used Lubuntu since 2010. He lives in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, in a house with no Windows.

