

Distro : **Pop!_OS**
Wikipedia : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop!_OS
Website : <https://pop.system76.com/>
Twitter : [@system76](https://twitter.com/system76)
Status : May 2021
Author : [summertime tech](#)
CPU : Tested on x86 – 64bits architecture

Installable complete .iso:

- Desktop is GNOME & Including latest Updates
- Report about: see Annex-checklist

Conclusion:

- Because of the built-in(*) telemetry this distro is only suitable for use in DEV- & TEST environments. At this moment there is no .iso without telemetry, so distro is not useable in ACC- & PROD environments.
- (*) in general User can block specific package: <[read article](#)> ; but because of dependencies in "popularity-contest" this seems not to be advised. For long-term solution ask/tweet distro to remove telemetry package from Repo.
- Distro is not "Privacy by Design" ; Overview & Suggestions for improvements: <[read here](#)>

Cat.0 Telemetry

- [Pop!_OS 20.04 LTS.iso](#)
See Cat.1,2 & 3 and images Annex-1

Cat.1 Telemetry

- Initial Welcome screen Location Services default set to <on> (with Mozilla Privacy Policy). Recommended user set this to <off>

Cat.2 Telemetry

- "popularity-contest" telemetry is installed and active; see Annex-1 Img3
Package has forced dependency with "ubuntu-standard" so when user uninstalls telemetry also dependency will be removed (not advised) ; see Annex-1 Img6 & Img7
- Connectivity Checking telemetry is installed and default <on> ; via App Settings Privacy Connectivity user set to <off> ; see Annex-1 Img8

Cat.3 Telemetry

- Crash Report "Apport" telemetry installed; see Annex-1 Img9

Cat.4 Telemetry

- N/A

Remarks:

- Instructed by KDE-org all distros desktops have to create forced dependencies with cat.4 KUserFeedback telemetry if user is to install KDE software like Kate or Dolphin. And Pop!_OS did not comply and made no forced dependency.
- Because Location telemetry settings in downloadable .iso is default <yes> it is not clear if info is send to System76.
- If user has previous multiple boot distro's on bare metal target "/dev/sdx" then when Pop!_OS installer comes along it will skips these distros, resulting only Pop!_OS in GRUB-menu while other distro's stay hidden, but not deleted.

Annex-checklist

Implementation of Telemetry and "Spying on User"-software within Linux desktop domain is expanding and as such a moving target. Therefore investigation results can vary. Occurrence of known software situation as listed below are checked at date: see "Status" in header this document.

- KUserFeedback Telemetry package (KUFB)
- Dolphin: target KUFB track& trace
- Kate: target KUFB track&trace
- Discover Software Store KDE Plasma: target KUFB track&trace
- popularity-contest: reporting to Distro HQ
- Crash Report App Apport: reporting to Distro HQ
- Bug Report: reporting to Distro HQ
- Connectivity Checking: regular reporting to Distro HQ
- Info Update: reporting to Distro HQ
- User Location: reporting to Distro HQ
- OS Settings: Cookies & browserID reporting to Browser HQ

About:

- Origin & instruction to distro of KUFB & App targeting
→ KDE.org
- Implementation & control of KUFB & App targeting
→ Distro.org

- Survey package "popularity-contest": <https://popcon.debian.org>
- Crash Report: <https://launchpad.net/ubuntu/+source/apport>

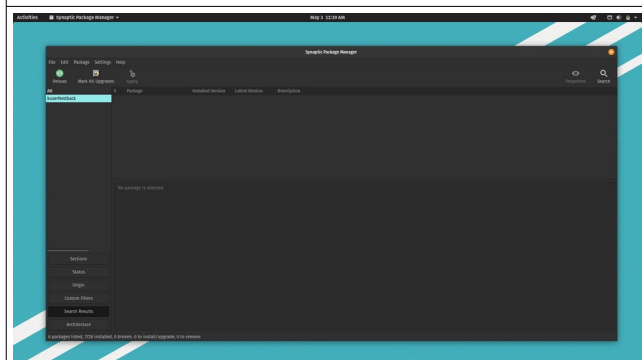
Annex-1

Pop!_OS
2021-05

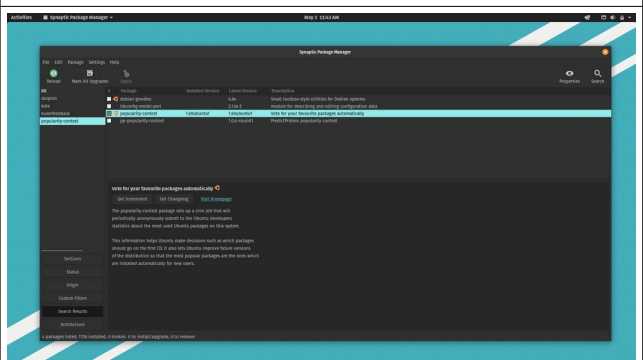
with GNOME desktop



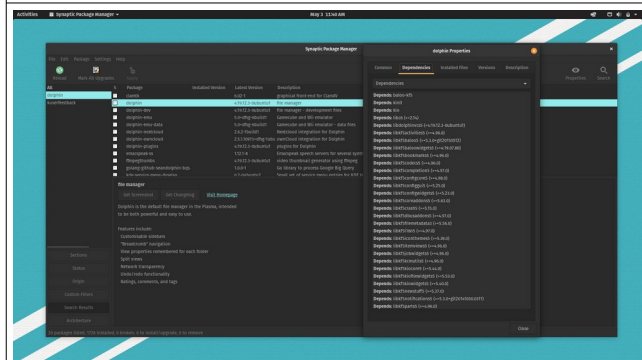
Img1 neofetch



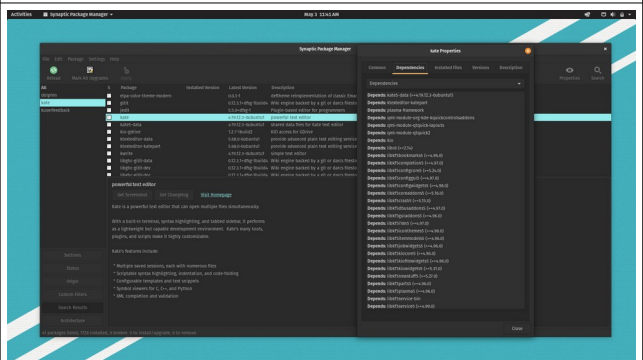
Img2 KUserFeedback Telemetry not in repo



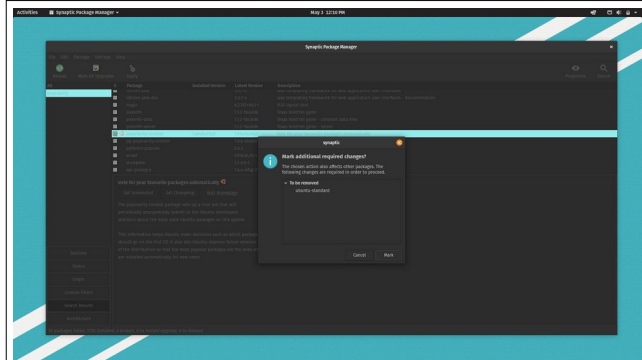
Img3 popularity-contest telemetry installed



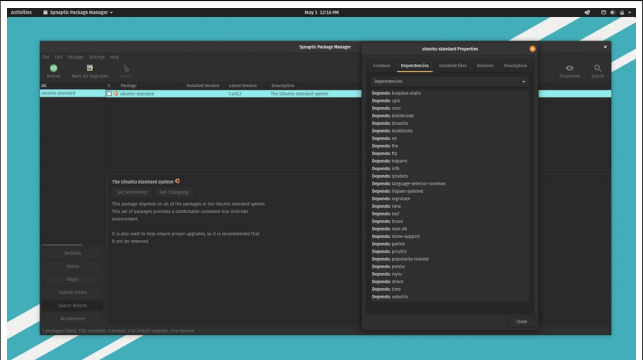
Img4 dolphin in repo – no KUserFeedback dependency



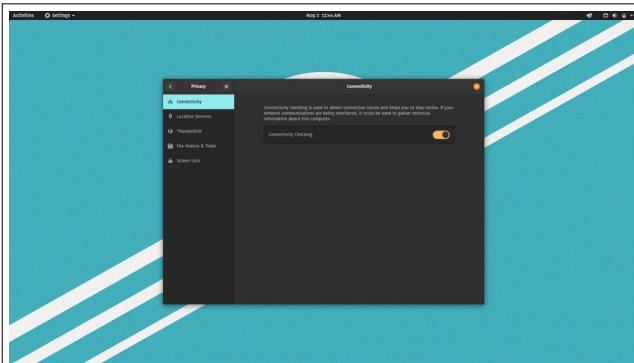
Img5 kate in repo – no KUserFeedback dependency



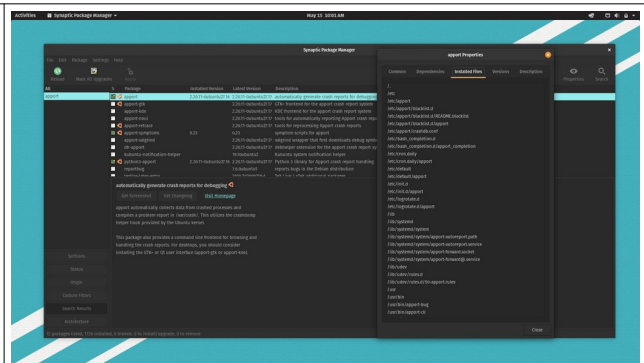
Img6 popularity-contest uninstall dependency is "ubuntu-standard"



Img7 ubuntu-standard – advised not to uninstall



Img8 connectivity checking telemetry default <on> user set to <off>



Img9 Crash Report app Apport telemetry installed

Linux distros categorized:

- Cat.0 is having no telemetry



Zero telemetry is the reason for companies, governments, organisations and users all over the world to adopt & migrate to "Privacy by Design" Linux.

- Cat.1 software for location telemetry built-in



As is downloadable .iso has Usage statistics telemetry and is not suitable for Production Environments & Personal use. Installation need change of settings or Command Line Interface CLI & privacy health check after Updates.

- Cat.2 is Cat.1 & user survey telemetry built-in



As is downloadable .iso has Survey telemetry and is not suitable for Production Environments & Personal use. Installation need change of settings or Command Line Interface CLI & privacy health check after Updates.

- Cat.3 is Cat.2 & QI collect & analyze user data telemetry built-in



Quality Improvement (QI) via collect & analyze user data built-in downloadable .iso is not suitable for Production environment & Personal use. Installation need change of settings or Command Line Interface CLI & privacy health check after Updates.

- Cat.4 above & track/trace user activity & content telemetry built-in



Distro downloadable .iso not suitable for Production Environments & Personal use. Installation has sophisticated non deleteable non stoppable "spy on user" engine. Either built-in (KDE) or in repo's.