osFree distribution (draft I)

osFree distribution must use:

- WarpIN as a package management tool, with enhancements. WarpIN's purpose is maintaining the installed packages database, understanding the .WPI format, installing/deinstalling each package
- Also, a tool like eCoShop or Linux-like repository access client is needed. It can be like apt or yum in Linux, but with OS/2 specifics. This tool must be separate from WarpIN, i.e., it is specific to repositories/package sources, not packages format. So:
    - it must handle different package sources, like
        - files in the current directory
        - special directory layouts (on the current machine, or on remote http or ftp server), like diskette images with bundles (as used by IBM OS/2 distributions so, the installer will be capable to install old IBM OS/2 distributions as well)
        - other directory layouts, like APT or RPM repositories
    - different file transport protocols support, like ftp, http, etc, via plugins
    - maybe, support for handling the different packages formats, other than WPI, i.e.:
        - plain ZIP's with metainfo and installation scripts included (like it was in UnixOS/2)
        - RPM - for software ported from UNIX.
        - pack/unpack-created bundles, as usual with IBM's OS/2 distributions
    - the package source frontend will handle different package types via special plugins (or backends), and invoke different tools when installing packages (invoke WIC, UNZIP, UNPACK or RPM)
    - maybe, even, the possibility to create the decentralised network of package repositories is needed – this will allow to use any nearest mirror, or use another mirror if the main mirror is down. Even we could try to create the repositories network on Peer-to-Peer basis ;)
- The enhancements to WarpIN should include:
    - "Sticky" flag for packages which should not be upgraded
    - Support for simultaneously existing versions of different packages with libraries, which are needed for different applications
    - Maybe, "Unstable" flag for apps and libraries, so, unstable package don't replace stable ones, they only create a separate branch in dependencies tree.
    - Coexistence of several package trees, which are updated separately, and do not influence other trees – some analogies with source code repositories with branches
    - Support for separating and merging the branches, rollback of packages to an older (but stable) version
- response-file-driven installer:
    1. response file can be created manually
    2. response file can be generated by UI (VIO or PM-based)
- so, installer must be divided into four separate parts:
    1. UI for choosing user options and generating the response file interactively, it can be:
        - textmode UI with pseudographics
        - graphical, PM-based
    2. installation engine, based on invoking the package access frontend to retrieve the packages. It acts according the response file
        - it can be started by an experienced user, system administrator, or by the installation UI.
        - installation engine is independent from UI and can be started separately; and more:

the user can start the UI on one machine, save the resulting RSP (response) file and apply it on another machine, by pointing the installation engine to the needed RSP
  - the single installer for initial machine setup, and subsequent option changes/additional software installation – something like FreeBSD sysinstall
    - also, DOS (DPMI)-based version of the installation engine and UI would be desired
    - a Linux- or Win32-based version (?)
3. package access frontend, handling different package sources, via backends:
    - different package storage/repository types
    - different access protocols are implemented as special plugins
4. enhanced WarpIN as the main package handling tool.

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