Improving the Fedora 19 Boot Experience

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Recently Red Hat's Matthias Clasen started a new discussion on the Fedora Project developer mailing list to discuss possible ways to improve the Fedora boot experience.

I would love to see F19 make a good first impression. The first time you see something Fedora-related on the screen currently is the graphical grub screen, followed by the filling-in-Fedora of Plymouth, followed by the gdm login screen. Grub in particular is problematic, with a starfield background that looks like a Fedora background from a few releases ago and a progress bar that indicates the progress in 'booting the bootloader'.

There are also some issues on the login screen, with Fedora logo being at small-print size right now.

I think a few simple changes we can make a big improvement to the visual experience for F19:

– Turn off the graphical grub screen

Even if we are not able to suppress the boot menu entirely, or having a clean boot menu like this: https://raw.github.com/gnome-design-team/gnome-mockups/master/system-lock-login -boot/bootmenu.png, avoiding the graphical screen will be a win in terms of reduced visual noise.

– Switch to a simple spinner for the plymouth theme

This theme is available in plymouth today: https://raw.github.com/gnome-design-team/gnome-mockups/master/system-lock-login -boot/boot.png
I know when we've proposed this in the past, there was concern about loosing the one place where the Fedora logo is visible in the boot. I'd like to propose a compromise that will keep the Fedora logo _and_ improve the transition to the login screen: How about we use the spinner as in that mockup, but add a reasonably-sized Fedora logo in the top left corner.

– Replace the small print logo on the login screen with a bigger one

The idea here is to replace the small-print Fedora text logo that we currently have in that corner by the same Fedora logo thats used in plymouth, so that it remains unchanged as we transition from plymouth to gdm.

I have to agree with some of what he is proposing. Prior to the appearance of the monstrosity and bloated bootloader that is GRUB2 in Fedora 16, the GRUB menu used be hidden from users unless that user pressed the spacebar. GRUB2 should do the same. Most regular users of Fedora or any other Linux distribution should not have to see or interact with the GRUB2 menu.