

10 Reasons To Use Linux

and 5 reasons why not

You've probably heard of Linux before, and you may have even used it before for a short period. Depending on where you were exposed to it, you might have a wildly different impression of it than someone else. Before we start, we should cover some very common misconceptions about Linux.

1. Linux is not just a command line. Movies and TV shows often make Linux out to be a super advanced looking command line only OS. While there are forms of Linux that do look like this, there are also many others that look very similar to Windows or macOS
2. Linux is not a single OS or company. Instead, Linux is the kernel that various so-called Linux distributions (often shortened to Linux distro) run on. This concept might be slightly confusing to newcomers, but it is somewhat analogous to different Windows versions. The difference is that different Linux distros are maintained by different groups of developers, and typically work independently of each other. Unlike Windows, Linux distros don't usually come out sequentially. For example, Windows 7 preceded Windows 8, but Pop!_OS Linux is developed at the same time as Manjaro Linux by independent groups.
3. Linux can be used by non technical users without issue. While the installation process might be too technical for non tech savvy users, there are Linux distributions specifically designed to be easy to use. Once everything is installed, it takes almost no technical knowledge to use these Linux distributions.

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Now into the reasons why you should consider using Linux in place of Windows

1. Freedom

Unlike Windows, almost all Linux distributions are completely free to use. Not only are they free in terms of cost, but also free in terms of usage. When you install and use Windows, you agree to the terms set by Microsoft. Microsoft defines what software you can and can't use, what tasks you can do, and even reserves the right to revoke your access Windows. With Linux, you fully own your computer, and the software the runs on it. Nobody can remove your access to your computer, and you have full control over what you do with your computer

2. Privacy

In Windows, Microsoft records much of what you do with you computer through telemetry, which allows them to determine problems with their products, but also sell your information. Even if you disable telemetry, researchers have determined that Windows still reports your information. Almost all Linux distributions are open source, which means anyone can review the code that makes them run. This makes it much harder for developers to sneak in code that records your information without your permission. Even if you personally don't understand the code behind a certain Linux distribution, you can still be fairly confident that everyone else who has reviewed the code hasn't found anything questionable.

3. Choice

With Windows you are stuck to whatever Microsoft decides to do with their OS. If they do something you don't like, your only two choices are to put up with it, or get a new OS and relearn everything. With Linux, you aren't tied down to a single team of developers. If your current Linux distribution does something that you don't like, you can choose to switch to another Linux distribution without having to relearn everything you already know. There are hundreds of

distributions to choose from, so it's almost certain that you'll find something that fits your needs.

4. Customizability

This aspect of Linux is tied closely with #3. While you don't have to, you're free to choose almost every aspect of your OS if you desire. If you don't like how the icons look on your Linux distribution, you can choose a new set, or make your own. If you don't like how your windows look, you can choose a new window manager to completely change the way they look! You can even completely change your desktop environment, which changes how your entire computer looks and operates while preserving all of your files and applications.

5. Performance

As a general rule, Linux distributions are far more lightweight than Windows. This means that less of your computer's resources are being used to load ads, run background tasks, and execute unnecessary processes. This leaves more of your computer to process the things you care about, giving you more performance in games, utilities, and other software.

6. Diversity

Due to the wide variety of Linux distributions there is almost certainly something that fits your needs already, without having to do any modifications yourself. There are Linux distributions for gaming, for content production, for general use, for extreme efficiency, and many other specialized categories. Of course, there are distributions geared towards a little bit of everything as well.

7. Software

While not all software that you are used to on Windows will run on Linux natively, through programs like Wine, Lutris, VirtualBox, and others like them, you can actually run most Windows software and games as if you are using Windows! While there are exceptions, generally speaking you won't encounter any issues using this method to run your Windows software. Linux also has a large amount of natively support software, and you can almost always find an alternative to your Windows programs that runs on Linux

8. Community

Instead of having to talk directly to Microsoft Support, the massive Linux community is always there to help regardless of any warranty status, or support fees. Everything from computer problems to advice can be answered in various online groups of Linux enthusiasts.

9. Efficiency

Most Linux distributions come with various features designed to make your workflow as efficient as possible. These features include things that you're probably already familiar with, like window snapping, which allows you to quickly position windows beside each other. However, there are others that you might not be as familiar with, like workspaces, hotkeys, and extensive shortcuts.

10. Continuity

Things that you learn with Linux, especially things related to the command line, can also be applied to other Unix operating systems like macOS, BSD, and Solaris. Windows is one of the very few modern operating systems not based on Unix, which means things you learn and get familiar with on Windows don't apply to nearly any other operating system you might encounter. For example, if you use the Linux command line frequently, you'll feel right at home if you use a friend's computer with the macOS command line.

5 Reasons not to use Linux

While there are a plethora of fantastic things about Linux, there are a few reasons why you might want to avoid it as well.

1. Familiarity

If you've used Windows or MacOS your whole life and have a deep technical knowledge of either, it might not make sense to switch to Linux. Jumping straight into Linux without learning about it and getting familiar with it might severely disrupt your workflow. You'd likely be better off dual booting your computer with both Linux, and the OS you feel the most comfortable with. This would allow you to get used to Linux without disrupting your entire workflow. If you do decide to take the plunge, chances are you'll pick up on what you've already learned fairly quickly though.

2. Choice

While choice is a very clear benefit of Linux, it can also be overwhelming to new users. Being free to decide between hundreds of different Linux distributions can feel like being in an ice cream store with hundreds of flavors. You'll likely second guess any choice you make, no matter how fitting it is. It may be a good idea to use bootable flash drives to 'test drive' each Linux distribution before you install it to make sure there aren't any issues. While bootable flash drives will be significantly slower than a full install, it will still give you the chance to make sure everything works how you want it.

3. Support

Most developers will only natively support Windows, or maybe macOS. While software like Wine can help mitigate this, it's still far less fluid than the native integration you'll find on Windows. Of course, there are tens of thousands of games and programs that support Linux natively, but you might have to use some software you aren't used to using.

4. Hardware

Linux doesn't always play well with certain hardware. While there are distributions that run better than others, you can expect to lose battery life on laptops, or have to jump through hoops to get your device drivers working if you choose an under supported distribution. However, keep in mind that most mainstream Linux distributions don't have much of a problem with this.

5. Marketshare

Desktop Linux distributions have a much lower marketshare than other operating systems, which means it is used far less frequently. This means that most tutorials, software, and resources will be made with Windows users in mind. There are plenty of resources for Linux users, but you might have to spend more time looking for them.