

## **Linux (a great alternative to Windows)**

Linux is a **totally free**, open-source operating system (OS) which is a great alternative to the “have-to-pay-for”, proprietary OSs from Microsoft (Windows) and Apple (OS X).

Linux is available in many different *distributions*, but the 3 main ones are Linux Mint, Ubuntu and Debian.

**Linux Mint 17 MATE** (a desktop variant) has probably the nearest thing to a Windows interface and is an ideal starting point for a Linux beginner.

**NB One major advantage of Linux** is that there is *no need for any antivirus or anti-malware security software*.

There is no need to worry about CryptoLocker, Windows Expert Console, viruses, worms, trojans etc because all this malware has no effect whatsoever on a Linux computer.

Linux computers do not have regular, annoying, nagging “pop-up” messages about security software upgrades and updates.

Linux is simply *far more secure* because of its superior design. Linux also has far fewer updates/security patches than Windows.

Linux does **not** require large amounts of memory and fast processors like Windows to run efficiently and therefore many older computers can be recycled instead of being scrapped.

### **Tell me, if Linux is so good, then why are so few people using it?**

1. Lack of advertising, hence few people even know of its existence. Most people assume Windows is the only operating system available. When people buy a new computer, it usually comes with a Windows OS. Microsoft spends millions of dollars annually in advertising to promote its products.
2. Some people may wrongly assume that because Linux is free then it must therefore be an inferior product to the paid-for Microsoft Windows OS.
3. Fear of the unknown and resistance to change. Even if their current Windows experience may not be very pleasant, some people surmise that Linux may be even worse.
4. There is a misconception that Linux is very complicated to use and therefore only used by computer “geeks” or “nerds”. In fact Linux is actually very simple and straightforward to operate.
5. Quite rightly most people are not bothered about what particular operating system they are using. It is totally irrelevant. They simply want to get on with their usual everyday computing tasks such as writing their documents, browsing the internet, sending emails, using Skype, Youtube etc. They just want a *good reliable, uncomplicated computing experience, without any*

*hassle or virus infections.* Linux is the perfect solution to their problems and at the same time it gives them *total control over their own computers.*

6. Fear of lack of compatibility with, for example, Microsoft Office. Libre Office is an open-source, **totally free** alternative suite of programs which is supplied with most Linux OSs and is capable of reading Microsoft Office documents.

### **Is Linux suitable for everybody?**

No, Linux is not going to suit everyone, particularly if they have a favourite program such as Family Tree Maker which is Windows-based.

It should be pointed out that there are *many alternative programs available* which do run perfectly well on Linux. In this particular instance there is the open-source, free genealogy program called “Gramps”.

On the plus side, if someone is *a total computing novice* then they will probably find learning Linux from scratch a much shorter and easier affair than learning to use Windows, because for one thing, a *whole raft of security software is not needed.*

### **Will all my hardware work with Linux?**

Most hardware will, but some **printers** and multi-function devices do **not** have suitable Linux drivers available.

HP is generally very good at providing Linux drivers for their printer products. Brother and Epson are good and more recently, Canon has improved its Linux support.

It is advisable to do a search via Google to check for Linux driver availability for a particular piece of hardware before purchase.

By the same token, **Microsoft** does **not** necessarily have backdated driver compatibility for older hardware. A product that works with Windows XP will **not** necessarily work with Windows 7/8/8.1.

The other area where problems may occur is Linux support for wifi/**wireless devices** (WLAN). To see whether support is available, visit:

<http://linux-wless.passsys.nl/>

### **How Many Linux Users Are There (Really)?**

In one way, *we're all Linux users now.*

As Jim Zemlin, executive director of The Linux Foundation, points out, “I am not joking or trying to be trite, but the answer to this question is: *every single person in the modern world every day*”.

“Everyone who searches Google, picks up a phone and uses telecommunication infrastructure, watches a new television, uses a new camera, makes a call on a

smartphone, trades a stock on a major exchange, watches a weather forecast generated on a supercomputer, logs into Facebook, navigates via air traffic control systems, buys a netbook computer, checks out at a cash register, withdraws cash at an ATM machine, fires up a quick-boot desktop (even those with Windows), or uses one of many medical devices; the list goes on and on."

*"It is hard to think of someone in the developed world who doesn't touch Linux every single day.* The better question here is, *who isn't a Linux user,*" Zemlin concluded.

He's got a point there. If you buy something from Craigslist or keep up with friends on Facebook, you're using Linux. To be exact, you're using Big-IP 9.4.6, which is an embedded high-speed networking system that incorporates Linux.

Do you watch videos on YouTube? Linux again.

Google? Yes, they run Linux too.

### **Linux users worldwide**

French Gendarmerie

[http://www.wired.com/wiredenterprise/2013/09/gendarmerie\\_linux/](http://www.wired.com/wiredenterprise/2013/09/gendarmerie_linux/)

Munich City

<http://www.itworld.com/operating-systems/321474/switching-linux-saves-munich-over-11-million>

Linux is Running in 50 places that you might not expect

<http://www.comparebusinessproducts.com/fyi/50-places-linux-running-you-might-not-expect>

### **Linux Articles**

Linux vs Other Operating Systems-7 common myths busted:

<http://fossmaniac.hubpages.com/hub/Linux-vs-Other-Operating-Systems-7-common-myths-busted>

Review of Linux Mint 17.1 MATE:

<http://mylinuxexplore.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/linux-mint-171-rebecca-mate-review.html>