

# LINUX - GIVE THAT OLD HARDWARE A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Have you got an old PC or know someone who is getting rid of one? Then this article is for you. It may be time to try out Linux on that old machine. After all, what have you got to lose if you have already replaced it, or are thinking about replacing it?

If you have already replaced it then you will all ready have a machine that you can use to browse the Internet, and to send and receive your email, until you have become proficient and familiar with the Linux operating system. It will take time to learn the new operating system. However if you do, you may end up rescuing more than one machine from the dump.

The older and less demanding versions of Linux are available on-line and are usually referred to as "archived editions".

## Getting Started

In most cases you will want to start with a Graphical User Interface (GUI) and most users will have experience with MS Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, XP or now Vista. Or you may be familiar with Apple Macintosh operating system, Mac OS 6, all the way up to the current Mac OS X in its various forms.

The point is that by using the GUI your life is made a lot easier at least for learning Linux. You just point and click on the screen and things usually happen. The thing is that the inner workings of Linux keyboard command are still there under the surface, and you protected form them until later when you become more confident and you want to learn them.

Linux is one of the most powerful operating system out there today. Learning the Linux commands makes it one of the most versatile and powerful operating systems available. If you take the time to learn some of the commands available to Linux, you may find that you use the command line more than you thought you would. From experience I find that I will use the command line just because it's easier and faster to do it that way.

---

## Hardware requirements

Please note that you don't need to know any of the commands when you start, and most of the things you will do can be done in the GUI, but there are times when you really will need to know some commands to do something. Linux commands need to

be entered correctly to work and are case sensitive, so the command ls will list directory contents, and if you type LS it won't work. They also need to be entered in the right order and the syntax needs to be right. If not nothing will happen. And no matter how much you use the command line there will be a time when your fingers don't type what your brain says it should. I think it would be fair to say we have all done it at one time or other.

It is possible to install Linux on a really old machine such as a 386 or 486 with 8 or 16 MB RAM. However I would not recommend using these machines if you want to use a GUI setup in Linux as you will need a more powerful machine to do this.

If you have a machine that has the first generation of Intel Pentium machines, it was introduced in 1993 and runs at a speed of 200 MHz. As time went on, these Pentium machines got more powerful and were released as the Pentium 2, 3 and 4. A later number of Pentium computer will be faster than a previous number. For example a Pentium 3 will outperform any Pentium 2 computer in speed and power.

The other chip maker, AMD, made similar processors to Intel. In your early stages of learning Linux, it won't make to much of a difference which one you use. Both Intel and AMD processors make very similar chips, and Linux software will run on either of them.

The point is that you should get the most current machine you can if you want to learn Linux with a GUI. A newer computer will be able to handle the graphics better and will allow a newer version of Linux to run. It will also allow you to run it faster.

---

## Installing Linux

To install Linux you will need to have a working CD Rom and a Linux supported graphics card.

Used computers are usually reasonably priced. They can be found advertised in newspapers, shop windows and even on eBay.

Most users today want to run the newest version of MS Windows and just want their old machine to go to a good home. Yours could be that good home. Unlike installing MS Vista, you don't need a top of the range machine to run Linux, so by installing Linux on that old machine you will be doing your bit for the environment.