

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [A Guide to &\[b\]#34\[/b\];Which Linux Distribution is for Me?\[b\]#34\[/b\];](#)

?Solace - August 11, 2013, 10:17 pm

Hello fellow Linux User!?

If you're reading this thread, chances are you need help deciding which Linux Distro is for you.

Before we get started, I'd like to make one simple idea very clear. All distributions are relatively the same, and capable of performing the same tasks.

Essentially what makes one distro different from another, is the amount of pre-installed software that you'll be receiving with your distribution.

Let's take a look at a few distributions and see what's right for you.

"The Noob"

This is a series of distributions aimed towards migrating users (Usually from Windows).

The Noob 1 - Ubuntu

[img]http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/48/Pantallazo_Ubuntu_11_10.png[/img]

Ubuntu is the most used Linux Distribution.

You can get it [by clicking here](#).

The Noob 2 - Fedora

[img]http://168hours.files.wordpress.com/2008/08/fedora.jpg[/img]

Fedora is about as easy to install as Ubuntu, and uses .rpm packages instead of .deb packages.

[You can download Fedora here](#).

The Noob 3 - Mint

Linux Mint is essentially a fork (source code has been borrowed) of Ubuntu. Now aside from the appearance, one of the things different about Mint, is that there is less bloatware (extra software) or spyware (yes, ubuntu spies on you).

[You can download Mint here](#).

"The Intermediate"

The builds are focused more on specialized use with the Operating System, rather than everyday use and *nix learning purposes.

The Intermediate 1 - CentOS

[img]http://www.darkgovernment.com/images/Screenshot2.png[/img]

CentOS is mainly used for Server purposes, however just like every other distro, it can be used for just about everything.

[You can download CentOS here.](#)

The Intermediate 2 - Suse Linux

[img]http://www.pcc-services.com/articles/images/suse_kde.jpg[/img]

Suse linux uses .RPM packages, however debian packages can be converted and built to work on SUSE. Suse is however meant to be a day to day OS, I just felt it deserves it's intermediate position as it has a rather tricky install.

[You can download SUSE here.](#)

The Intermediate 3 - Debian

[img]http://on-disk.com/images/600pix-debian-gnome.jpg[/img]

Debian is a very stable distro, it probably belongs in the noob section, but seeing as it makes quite the excellent server, maybe it deserves it's place here.

[You can download Debian here.](#)

"Advanced Users"

You know what you're doing. You're comfortable and ready to dig through some source code, and be reliant on the command line.

Advanced Users 1 - Arch Linux

[img]http://fc03.deviantart.net/fs71/f/2010/246/a/4/mydesk_arch_linux_by_satyriko-d2xxqt6.png[/img]

[img]http://damnlunix.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ArchLinux_and_Awesome2_at_Work_by_nustyle.png[/img]

Arch Linux is my personal favourite distribution, it's quite tricky to set up as a first time user (it's done only using the command line), but offers superior customization and the most up to date software.

[You can download Arch Linux here.](#)

Advanced Users 2 - Kali Linux

[img]http://img266.imageshack.us/img266/971/screenshotfrom201303130.png[/img]

Now, Kali Linux (the new Backtrack) is essentially a Debian distro that has been modified to include literally hundreds of Hacking Tools. If you are a noob to Linux, please don't jump right to this distro because it "looks the coolest" or has tools "you can learn in a week".

[You can download Kali here.](#)

Advanced Users 3 - Gentoo

Gentoo is a Hacker's classic. This distribution forces the user to download and compile each piece of software he/she wishes to use, including the kernel. Be prepared to wait long durations if you choose Gentoo.

[You can download Gentoo here.](#)

Seeing as there are a billion posts per day on which distro one should use, and the simple answer is that "IT DOESN'T MATTER", hopefully this guide can answer a few people.???

Gent - August 12, 2013, 6:11 am

While the effort is admirable, this will just become buried beneath all the crap in this section. We had a paid sticky for a while that was just pages of tutorials, but it's gone now because of how this forum is ran.

Browzer - August 12, 2013, 6:13 am

It's a nice idea, but anyone who needs to ask 'which distro is for me' should just stick to Windows/OS X

Gent - August 12, 2013, 6:20 am

(Aug 12, 2013 06:13 AM)Browzer Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) It's a nice idea, but anyone who needs to ask 'which distro is for me' should just stick to Windows/OS X

The funny thing about OS X is it actually belongs in this section. It's the last true UNIX system left. I also don't expect many on this forum to have the ability/attention span to setup OSx86, which blows Linux and BSD out of the water in the difficulty department. Also, you must be new to this section. There are threads constantly posted asking which distribution one should use, and they all get the same responses. People here are entirely too reliant on others.

Browzer - August 12, 2013, 6:23 am

(Aug 12, 2013 06:20 AM)Gent Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The funny thing about OS X is it actually belongs in this section. It's the last true UNIX system left. I also don't expect many on this forum to have the ability/attention span to setup OSx86, which blows Linux and BSD out of the water in the difficulty department. Also, you must be new to this section. There are threads constantly posted asking which distribution one should use, and they all get the same responses. People here are entirely too reliant on others.

I wasn't talking about Hackintosh setups, I was talking generally about going out and buying a Mac or Windows machine, why do people use Linux for the sake of feeling like a hacker?

Gent - August 12, 2013, 6:30 am

(Aug 12, 2013 06:23 AM)Browzer Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) why do people use Linux for the sake of feeling like a hacker?

Because 15 year olds have the constant need to impress their other prepubescent friends with

green on black terminals and it's not Windows. I know you weren't talking about Hackintoshes, but who in their right mind would actually pay for a Mac? You can get the same, or better hardware for cheaper. The OS is technically free, but it's not like \$30 is a lot for an OS.

Browser - August 12, 2013, 6:32 am

(Aug 12, 2013 06:30 AM)Gent Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Because 15 year olds have the constant need to impress their other prepubescent friends with green on black terminals and it's not Windows. I know you weren't talking about Hackintoshes, but who in their right mind would actually pay for a Mac? You can get the same, or better hardware for cheaper. The OS is technically free, but it's not like \$30 is a lot for an OS.

Not even going to get into the "Mac's are overpriced" argument, it's not the section for that, and I'm tired of discussing it with people who can't see past the general opinion that anything Apple is automatically bad.

Gent - August 12, 2013, 6:36 am

I never said anything Apple was automatically bad; I said they're over priced. I love OS X as a system. Apple has done an amazing job with it. I just don't see the point in dropping \$2k on hardware that I can buy elsewhere for cheaper and run the same software on.

Im gone brah - August 12, 2013, 6:54 am

Really good tutorial/introduction. I'm sure it will help out someone.

?Solace - August 12, 2013, 9:55 am

Thanks guys ^^

I do agree, OS X does deserve it's place here as it's a BSD Fork, however I didn't include it as this was Linux specific.

It would be great if this was kept ed relatively to the top of the section, as questions that has been asked and answered thousands of times will overflow this thread.

webspider - August 12, 2013, 10:33 am

I feel like threads like "What is the right distro for me" are pretty much useless. It's not like you have to choose one distro and stick to it forever. Most distributions are free and open source so you can just switch your system daily if you want to and do it as long until you find a good one. Just test a few distribution and see if you like it. If not, get another one.

Also there are way more distributions than the major ones that you listed.

This is not meant to be offending towards you.

Gent - August 12, 2013, 10:44 am

(Aug 12, 2013 09:55 AM)-Solace- Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I do agree, OS X does deserve it's place here as it's a BSD Fork

No it's not. The XNU kernel only uses a bit of the FreeBSD code.

Quote:The Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) portion of the kernel provides the POSIX API (BSD system calls), the Unix process model atop Mach tasks, basic security policies, user and group ids, permissions, the network stack, the virtual file system code (including a filesystem independent journaling layer), several local file systems such as HFS/HFS+, the Network File System (NFS) client and server, cryptographic framework, UNIX System V inter-process communication (IPC), Audit subsystem, mandatory access control, and some of the locking primitives. The BSD code present in XNU came from the FreeBSD kernel. Although much of it has been significantly modified, code sharing still occurs between Apple and the FreeBSD Project

Apple's OS is actually derived from NeXTSTEP. The irony is XNU stands for "X is Not Unix".

DpzFAsq4UEK8 - August 14, 2013, 12:48 am

Your screenshot of Fedora doesn't look like a default fedora install.
Default fedora install looks like this:

Also, current default Debian install with gnome desktop environment looks like this:
[img]http://sabza.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/debian-desktop-screenshot.png[/img]

Loki123 - August 14, 2013, 9:34 am

(Aug 14, 2013 12:48 AM)korn36 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Your screenshot of Fedora doesn't look like a default fedora install.
Default fedora install looks like this:

Also, current default Debian install with gnome desktop environment looks like this:
none of those images in the OP's post are with the "default" install.. ?
except maybe Ubuntu and Mint.

moosa666 - August 15, 2013, 11:48 pm

i would go with cent os but if ure a beginner go with ubuntu

Ballinn - August 16, 2013, 8:41 pm

Nice guide, OP. I decided to put Mint on my laptop since I've only ever tried Ubuntu. Once I get to know my way around Linux I want to try Arch, it looks really nice.

L3ARN3R - August 18, 2013, 4:53 am

So after using windows for over 10 years, I've finally installed Ubuntu for starting on my pen drive..
nice post!

vtwm rocks - August 18, 2013, 8:15 am

OP uses Screenshots of non-default-Linux GUI's whichs not nice, also the GUI's are sometimes more than overaged, Gnome 2 is too old most new Distributions use Gnome 3 and also this guide sucks in generell because you can't tell anything about an DIstribution by just showing the (default) GUI because you can install nearly every GUI on any Linux System.

Guess when people still ask "what distribution is the best for me etc..." I am gonna change their Thread to an official Spider-Man Thread.

samxceptionalx - August 19, 2013, 9:11 pm

I am a Beginner here.
can u specify me which Linux i must get with link
and how to have it on VM?

I am currently Using Ubuntu12.04 desktop amd64

Han. - August 20, 2013, 7:24 am

(Aug 16, 2013 08:41 PM)Ballinn Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Nice guide, OP. I decided to put Mint on my laptop since I've only ever tried Ubuntu. Once I get to know my way around Linux I want to try Arch, it looks really nice.

This made me cringe.

How can you say you want X distro because it looks nice? They can all be made to look the same for the millionth time. You could make Arch look like Gentoo look like Debian look like Ubuntu look like .. and go on forever.

It's not the distro that makes it look a certain way. It's the way it's been configured.

Boing - August 20, 2013, 9:11 am

(Aug 20, 2013 07:24 AM)Han. Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) This made me cringe.

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Exactly. What I don't get is, what makes you choose a distro over another?

I know there are different package managers, like pacman for Arch or apt-get for Debian, but, other than that, what makes you pick THAT distro over all the others?

I've tried Arch Linux on my netbook, but had to switch back to Windows 7 cause Intel didn't make the drivers for Linux..

Gent - August 20, 2013, 11:16 am

Damn, I stand corrected. This thread is staying at the top.

s sergejev - August 26, 2013, 7:08 am

(Aug 20, 2013 09:11 AM)Boing Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Exactly. What I don't get is, what makes you choose a distro over another?

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Well it's a total lie there's no difference even if it's popular to say so and this thread does too. You're typically installing binaries that were compiled with different priorities, the security/hardening philosophy for distros is very different and you will have a very hard time sometimes trying to make one packed solution work in others. And you will want automatic updates and an up to date repository for your security solution.

The major options here:

Ubuntu -> all software is compiled with (circumventable) buffer overflow protections. nx bit and emulation supported. No ASLR implementation AFAIK. Apparmor default implementation, no idea if you have grsec or selinux goods in repositories. Probably.

Debian -> unclear whether software is compiled with any security, Debian doesn't really seem to have a security policy other than keeping packages up to date and disclosure (their priority is compatibility after all). Notoriously bad default security features, but can support apparmor, selinux and importantly grsecurity+pax without breaking straight from repos, you just won't have a default configuration. Uses sysvinit by default. Default grsec deb is outdated and no longer maintained, from 2012, so it's actually a trap.

Fedora/CentOS -> all software is compiled with buffer overflow protections and canaries, exec shield by default in kernel, selinux default implementation. Fedora uses systemd, Centos sysvinit

Hardened Gentoo -> has and uses anything you could want, but doesn't hold your hand. the only

one that will provide you with automatic grsecurity+pax kernel updates.

Arch -> systemd

If you're worried about buffer overflows, the most common vuln, breaking your security setup, you want a distro that compiles with bof protections AND PaX or exec shield, and if you're worried about intruders on your system already you want grsec or selinux. If you want grsecurity+PaX, you will have to pick something that supports sysvinit and doesn't depend on systemd (or configure your own boot and be a clever little hacker) and will have to build your own kernel every time grsec or kernel is updated if you want to keep up, which becomes more automatic with gentoo only. If you want exec shield you want CentOS. If you want SELinux I would argue you want CentOS because it is such a royal PITA to set it up from nothing. Those are major reasons to choose.

But srsly

none of that matters for 9192% of users. It does not matter in the slightest if you're choosing a free windows replacement (you should go for mint then since it will install all those firmware drivers for you just like windows) and it does not matter a shit if you want to hack a website. What listed there matters if you assume very skilled people are out to get you.

And yeah you can theoretically compile from source, manually keep up to date and modify everything for any distro since it's all linux... good luck. ?

Boing - August 26, 2013, 7:27 am

(Aug 26, 2013 07:08 AM)ssergejev Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) ?

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Thanks for the long answer. So, what you're saying, basically, is that for the normal user, there aren't any big differences between distros.

What do you think of systemd? You only put systemd when describing Arch.

I kinda like Arch, but I'm scared of having problems when updating packages.

Loki123 - August 26, 2013, 7:29 am

(Aug 26, 2013 07:27 AM)Boing Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Thanks for the long answer. So, what you're saying, basically, is that for the normal user, there aren't any big differences between distros.

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I kinda like Arch, but I'm scared of having problems when updating packages.

You wont have any troubles updating packages as long as you are not forcing it. i.e using force option.

I personally like systemd more than init scripts. But I guess everyone have the own opinion on that.
?

s sergejev - August 26, 2013, 7:36 am

I didn't want to comment more on Arch because I haven't used it. I hear it's a great distro for configurability but that recently they've switched to systemd completely and removed init from repos. Which means it'll eventually get harder and harder to support it... but they have AUR which will allow you to compile things for yourself easily from outside their binary repositories apparently. Someone who uses it could tell.

I don't have any great in depth opinion on systemd. I actually like the features in theory, and lots of people are trying to make it work and it does make your boot faster and has more features. But since I use custom grsecurity kernels, and Poettering (the systemd author) has stated explicitly that he does not want to support custom out of tree kernel modules like grsec in response to a bug inquiry about systemd not playing nice with it, combined with there's almost no info out there on how to combine the two so it boots rationally, and people have had problems with the combo, I'm not going to switch yet.

But yeah there's also another big difference between distros: how easy it is to install and get working. There Mint is probably the king since it's apparently ubuntu with the non-free components coming with it, although it's another one I haven't used but reviews say that. I don't think if you're trying to learn Linux you should be thrust into a world where you start at command line, and have to manually turn on your networking devices and connect them. You'll just run back to windows if that's how you start. If you use Mint at first and then learn more and more then eventually you'll be

ready for that too.

Boing - August 26, 2013, 7:48 am

(Aug 26, 2013 07:36 AM)ssergejev Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I didn't want to comment more on Arch because I haven't used it. I hear it's a great distro for configurability but that recently they've switched to systemd completely and removed init from repos. Which means it'll eventually get harder and harder to support it... but they have AUR which will allow you to compile things for yourself easily from outside their binary repositories apparently. Someone who uses it could tell.

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I don't really consider myself a noob at Linux, I've used it quite a lot of times with VPS and installed Arch on my netbook. I also like Arch's community, the wiki and the forums.

I pretty much already chose Arch xD. The only thing that is holding me back from switching is the fact that there aren't the drivers for the logitech g35, muh games, and the problems with dual booting with Windows 8.

Thanks again man.

Loki123 - August 26, 2013, 9:48 am

(Aug 26, 2013 07:48 AM)Boing Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I'll have to look into BSD too.

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Thanks again man.

The only problem with dual booting Arch linux or any linux for that matter is that you are sitting in front of the computer. No disrespect or anything just seems like that is the problem.

- Install Windows
- Install Arch
- Make sure GRUB sees/finds the windows partition or make entry for it manually
- Boot ether windows or Arch.

https://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Windows_and_Arch_Dual_Boot

Now about that G35, that might be a problem. I have never used headset with linux anyways.. heh...

<https://bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=110267>

OP Wrote:Update:

I bought it and got it working using asoundconf as explained here:

https://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Advanced_Linux_Sound_Architecture#Using_a_USB_Headset_and_External_USB_Sound_Cards

The buttons works 100% as well, and I am very pleased. Haven't messed with surround sound yet though.

EDIT:

Obviously I had to make my headset the default soundcard, how would I be able to use both my speakers and my headset at "the same time"?

I want to be able to put my headset on the table and turn on my speakers instead, but without unplugging my headset and messing in Terminal to do that.

If I were you, I would give it a shot.. As long as you ain't loosing anything.. ?

P???ce - August 27, 2013, 4:09 am

This is really a nice guide, I got 3 good looking Operating Systems from this :)

Thank you dear.