# Resources for Windows developer to switch to Linux [closed]

Asked 16 years, 2 months ago    Modified 16 years, 2 months ago

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**5**

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I'm looking for some help and it goes like this: I'm a fairly green software developer, and focus mainly on the web (python/PHP) but am pretty well experienced with Java applications and as an electrical engineering student, looking forward to dive into some c/c++. I've pretty much grown up on Windows machine, but hate .net with a passion and dont really have a need to develop on Windows - besides the fact that i'm used to it.

I'm looking to switch to Ubuntu as my development machine entirely (without having WinXP on another partition) as I'm quite fedup with Windows, but am tempted to go back to it everytime i'm stuck with countless driver issues (be it headphone drivers, or dual monitor setup, etc). I'm looking for a comprehensive resource that will help this transition and doesn't assume you know alien linux shell keywords.

Cheers.

windows    linux

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asked Oct 11, 2008 at 18:32

**Karan**
**1,676** ● 4 ● 19 ● 35

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1    As an exclusively .NET developer, I'm curious to know what about .NET you hate with a passion... I've only otherwise written in Java, which I find awful by comparison... Let me know what you don't like! :) – Grank Oct 11, 2008 at 18:45

@Grank, Out of interest, what do you find is awful about Java? – SCdF Oct 11, 2008 at 21:01

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# 5 Answers

Sorted by:    Highest score (default) ⇕

In my personal experience with Ubuntu, the two places that I consistently found help were Ubuntu Forums and

**4**

Ubuntu Wiki. These two sites demonstrate just how helpful, organized, and motivated the Ubuntu Community is.

An additional resource is also the Ubuntu channel on IRC. Whenever I was stuck with an issue that I felt warranted a discussion with someone (or a handful of people), IRC was always a good place to go.

Lastly, I tend to learn a lot from reading blogs from people that are heavily involved in Ubuntu's development. Planet Ubuntu is a pretty good feed to keep in your reader. It's essentially an aggregation of a number of blogs. The majority of the posts are related to Ubuntu; however, there are occasional posts that are just about the developer's thoughts and opinions.

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answered Oct 11, 2008 at 18:43

Tom
**15.9k** ● 5 ● 50 ● 63

I would recommend you set up your PC in such a way that:

**3**

- Have three partitions, one for swap (1-2x ram size), one for / (root dir) and one for /home.

- Keep **everything** not related to running linux in /home, or on completely separate harddrives. Don't store stuff you wanna keep on the partition that holds /.

This allows you to rather effectively nuke your entire linux install and install another one without losing your data *or* your settings. This lets you do two things:

- If you really break your install you can often just nuke it and reinstall. Most distros you're going to try will deal with upgrading you back to the current version quickly.

- If you're not happy with, say, Ubuntu, you can just nuke it and install something else, say OpenSUSE, CentOS or Fedora.

The key thing to remember is that all your personal settings (desktop background, application settings etc) are stored in /home/yourname/ under hidden directories, definied by naming them with a '.', `.gnome` for example. System settings are stored in /etc, but with most distros these days system settings are so well guessed you never need to care. The data you care is under /home/yourname.

If you're going to move to another distro I would recommend copying those hidden directories into another directory under your home/yourname directory, say 'old-prefs' or something. This is because you want to start 'fresh' with the new install. You can copy back hidden dirs you know you want later (I for example would always copy back .opera, .mozilla).

Also, don't throw away your Windows install, not yet anyway. You may find Linux is not for you. You may find

the inability to play any new games without rebooting a pain. You may find various things don't work as seemlessly as they do on Windows, in my experience that includes Adobe Flash and various sound-related things (sound has recently been rooted imo due to early PulseAudio adoption).

As other people have said, the Ubuntu wiki and Ubuntu forums are good, and for that reason it's the first distro I suggest you try. It's so popular that you often get better results in google by replacing 'linux' with 'ubuntu'.

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answered Oct 11, 2008 at 21:00

**SCdF**
**59.3k** ● 24 ● 79 ● 114

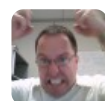---

Not an answer, per se, but some unsolicited advice:

- All platforms have problems

- Developing on one platform is pretty much like developing on another

- Familiarity with both the *nix and Windows worlds is useful

Good luck!

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answered Oct 11, 2008 at 19:13

**matt eisenberg**
**183** ● 6 ● 22

I would agree with [Tom's answer](#) in terms of resources to answer questions. In addition to that, I would recommend being prepared to learn to use a command prompt and to learn a lot more about the underpinnings of the system than you are probably used to on Windows. Linux in general exposes the "machinery" of the OS quite a bit more frequently than Windows, and if you're the type of person that doesn't like to tinker with things occasionally then it is probably not for you.

For example, my dad is an engineer and experienced programmer, and he has no interest in using Linux, because he doesn't want to have to futz with things to get them working. For him, using Windows is all about the path of least resistance. I on the other hand, use OS X and Linux on a regular basis and I love that when things don't work, I at least have the option of digging in and fixing the problem. I love the ready availability of command line interfaces, multitude of scripting options, and the general openness Linux has. It's hard to tell from your post which type of personality you have, but if you're looking forward to digging into C/C++ and you enjoy electrical engineering, Linux will probably be a good fit for you.

Lastly, I highly recommend using the command prompt frequently, even when there are GUI interfaces. Linux GUI apps are frequently built on top of the console applications. It almost always will be easier to work with things if you're familiar with and comfortable with the

command line. Most seasoned *nix users also find that eventually it becomes more efficient and comfortable to get many types of tasks done from a command prompt. If you plan to develop on Linux then this is all the more likely to occur as you get used to thinks like working with build tools and scripts that are common on UNIX platforms.

**EDIT**: One last thing I cannot recommend enough: use virtualization! Install something like VirtualBox, VirtualPC or VMWare Player to run Linux in a virtual environment. Virtualization has come along far enough since the days I started using Linux such that you can now install and run Linux in a full-screen environment almost indistinguishable from running it natively. Using a virtualized environemtn also will make things like drivers a non-issue, since the generic "hardware" should be supported out of the box. Virtualization or a "Live CD" version of Linux (such as the Ubuntu live CD) is a fantastic way to get used to Linux without having to throw out the safety blanket of Windows right away.
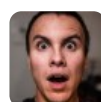
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edited May 23, 2017 at 12:33

Community Bot
**1** ● 1

answered Oct 11, 2008 at 20:58

Jay
**42.6k** ● 14 ● 68 ● 83

The other advice here is excellent. As somebody who made the same leap at the end of 2005, I just wanted to add my own two penneth.

1. Expect a steep learning curve. I'd been using Unix / Linux type servers for best part of 13 years when I switched. Not the same. When I switched is when I started learning. My productivity dipped at first, but I know SO much more about our deployment environment now - and of course productivity back an exceeded original. But it 'aint easy.

2. When you DO switch, you never look at an OS in the same way again. Makes it easy treating any OS as just a set of things you have to learn. This in itself is a good thing (tm)

3. The biggest problem at first is looking for linux equivalents of windows ways of doing things. I remember looking for decent FTP client (in the end IF I am forced to use FTP now, I use konqueror with two windows - but just wait till you discover rsync!), a decent graphical subversion client (then realised that knowing how to use find, sed, grep and svn cmd line client was much much better) etc.

4. I have heard people before say that resorting to the command line is admission of failure. While this may

be true if there is no choice in it, you soon come to revel the blending of graphical and command line tools to get the job done. For example, I tend to use find and grep and xargs to load up my IDE with stuff I want to work on.
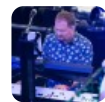
5. You learn to love computing again. The whole computer becomes a tool for getting things done.

6. The biggest change is the freedom. Not the cost. But that fact that installing software is as simple as "sudo apt-get install" or graphical equivalent. Even a very non-technical windows user soon comes to relish this amazing aspect that of Linux.

Enjoy!

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answered Oct 11, 2008 at 21:47

reefnet_alex

**9,745**  ● 5  ● 34  ● 32