

Day One: What is Linux?

Linux Week SP26

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1. Introduction

2. The Technical Answer

3. The Philosophical Answer

4. The Practical Answer

On “Learning Linux”

You can use the GUI. You can download things from the internet. You can effectively use Linux like Windows.

HOWEVER, “Learning Linux” makes your life easier.

- Manually search through tons of folders and files => a little CLI-fu
- Updating & installing programs is slow and tedious => `sudo apt install x`
- “Oh god why is my machine broken” => Seeing the exact error message

The best way to learn? Ask questions & practice skills to solve everyday problems.

- How to find files from terminal? Practice it!
- Something broke. How do I fix it? Investigate it!
- I want to change something on my system. Research it!

It is 2026, not 2006. Use the internet!

What is Linux Week?

Demystifying the Command Line

Basic command line usage & filesystem traversal via scavenger hunt!

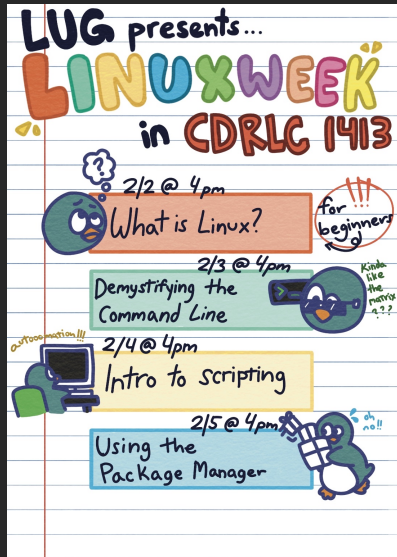
Intro to Scripting

How to solve problems, use novel CLI tools, all to solve challenges!

Using the Package Manager

How to use package manager & find right tool to solve a problem. Collective problem solving!

TL;DR: Learn by doing!



The Technical Answer

What is Linux?

The Kernel

Any answer given short of a lecture will be riddled with asterisks.

Your computer can run multiple programs at once* because of the Kernel. It is the core of any Operating System. It manages and shares system resources between programs by:

- Managing Memory
 - Programs are greedy and assume they have ALL of memory.
- Scheduling processes
 - Only so much CPU, many things that need to run.
- Managing Filesystem I/O
 - Hardware: Kernel is your buddy. Tells you what to do.
 - Software: Kernel is your buddy. Tell it what you want to write.
 - User: Kernel is your buddy. Symlinks, rearrange files, etc.

Package Managers

- Release Cycle
 - Debian: Super Stable
 - Months of testing & QA, smooth as butter.
Stability > Novelty
 - Arch: Bleeding Edge
 - No releases, just package most recent version of software.
Novelty > Stability.
- Package Repositories
 - Availability
 - Arch AUR
- NixOS

Ancestry

Most popular OSes are typically based off of:

- **Debian**
- **Ubuntu**
- **Arch**

There are *quite a few*.

The Philosophical Answer

What is Linux?

Free, as in Libre

Windows

- Effectively monetarily free, still requires you trick activation server
- Random updates at worst possible moment
- Always forcing new Microsoft bloat down your throat:
 - Copilot
 - OneDrive EVERYTHING
 - Start menu now searches internet!?
- Something broke? Pray its just Windows being Windows

MacOS is locked to Apple Hardware.

Linux

- GPLv2: Copyleft
 - TL;DR: Go crazy as long as you GPLv2 your code & open source it
- Something broke?
 - Everything that your system has done since boot has been logged.
 - 99% chance that your problem has an Arch Wiki article.
- “Windows supports so much more!”
 - Community patches, Containerization, Proton
 - Mainly CAD & Adobe Suite Software stuck on Windows

Open Source

Linux promotes an Open Source ecosystem!

Open Source:

- Free, as in Free!
 - Share Open Source software all you want!
- Secure
 - Volunteers find bugs, vulnerabilities, review security
- Developers are Users
 - Focus is on making something actually usable, not extorting users for profit

You probably already use some Open Source projects:

- OBS
- Blender
- Programming Languages
- Git
- Godot



The Practical Answer

What is Linux?

Not Windows.

Things will take time to get used to.

- Command Line
- Package Manager
- Setting some things up by hand

However, a lot of things will be better!

- Super efficient
- FOSS Ecosystem
- Infinitely more customizability

[illegible]

Where to start?

Ubuntu & Mint are common for good reason. I'd recommend Mint over Ubuntu.

Many people try to “learn Linux”. What they generally mean is they want to learn:

- How to get comfy with the command line?
- How do I fix problems?
- What does a free operating system even mean for me?