

Install Linux Mint on a Macbook Pro

A set of tips for installation and post install

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1 Introduction

To get started we'll need a desktop macbook pro running macos with either wifi or ethernet internet connectivity and at least one external port.

1.1 Install Mint on a macbook pro

The specific goal of this “DIY” project is to refurbish a seven year old macbook pro with a new operating system. The OS we'll focus on for this post is Linux Mint. Why Mint? As its been, “since the beginning” the main challenge of installing a

linux distribution on almost any PC or mac is wrestling with the hardware drivers: notably video, audio, trackpad, power management drivers. The Mint distro provide the drivers needed for our target mac making the install much, much simpler.

The target machine is a 2016 13-inch MacBook with four Thunderbolt 3 Ports.

To start the process get an `iso` file from the Mint website. The current “Vera” version of Mint `iso` file is 3.03 GB in size. The Victoria download site is [here](#). The download torrent file is [here](#).

On a macbook pro running `macos` you can use one of a number of apps to download the `iso` via torrent. we suggest `Transmission`.

Once downloaded we can transfer the `iso` file to a USB drive using one of several methods. On `macos` we suggest using the app `balenaEtcher`. Download `balenaEtcher` [here](#)

Insert the bootable USB flash drive into the target macbook and reboot. Hold the ALT key to allow booting from the external USB drive. Select the icon for the USB drive and a `grub` menu will appear. From the `Grub` menu choose `Start Linux Mint 21.2 Cinnamon 64-bit`. and the Mint install program will boot.

A linux mint desktop will appear. There is one icon on the screen labeled “install Linux Mint”. Double click it.

A setup dialog will start. Select in sequence

- Language (English for us),
- Network (suggest skip),
- codexes (suggest skip),
- options for a fresh install or “something else” (choose fresh to devote full hard drive to Mint).
- Location (Pacific region for us),
- name a root user, a hostname, and assign a password.

Thats it. Reboot and login.

At a minimum use a Panda Wireless modem for internet access since Mint 21.2 has `Ralink RT5372` drivers installed. (see appendix for Broadcom install instructions)

Add a second monitor via HDMI or use Cinema display 27" via Thunderbolt adapter on older macbooks.

Open Display menu. Select 2560x1440 as the resolution for both monitors. Set Monitor scale at 150%.

Turn on Timeshift to provide hourly snapshots.

Set keyboard and trackpad preferences:

- Open Mouse and Touchpad in settings. Turn on Tap to click and Reverse scroll.
- Open Keyboard > Layouts > Options > Caps Lock behavior and select Swap Esc and Caps-Lock

Update base software. (NB upgrade may be an issue with 2013 macbook)

```
sudo apt-get update ; sudo apt-get upgrade
```

2 Next steps...

Install basic utilities git, wget, curl, zsh, vim, zathura

```
sudo apt update
sudo apt install zsh wget curl git vim zathura -y
```

Install oh-my-zsh and oh-my-zsh plugins z and z-autosuggestions

```
sh -c "$(curl -fsSL https://raw.githubusercontent.com/ohmyzsh/ohmyzsh/master/tools/install.sh)"
git clone https://github.com/zsh-users/zsh-autosuggestions \
    ${ZSH_CUSTOM:--/.oh-my-zsh/custom}/plugins/zsh-autosuggestions
git clone https://github.com/agkozak/zsh-z \
    ${ZSH_CUSTOM:--/.oh-my-zsh/custom}/plugins/zsh-z
```

Don't forget to edit .zshrc to include z and z-autosuggestions in the plugins list.

Install Dropbox, Zotero and Texlive-full. The easiest way to install Dropbox, Zotero and Tex is with the Mint software manager.

Install qutebrowser and firefox.

```
sudo apt install qutebrowser firefox;w
```

Add Vimium extension to firefox.

Set up Zotero syncing.

3 Appendix 1. Script to set up links from local Home to Dropbox

set_up_links.sh

```
#!/bin/zsh
ff=".zshrc" ".vimrc" ".local" ".vim" ".config"
for P in "${ff[@]}"
do
    echo "create a link for Dropbox/dotfiles version of $P in Home"
    ln -v -s "$HOME/Dropbox/dotfiles/$P" "$HOME/$P"
done

dd=("sbx" "bin" "docs" "prj" "work" "shr")
for P in "${dd[@]}"
do
    echo "create a link for Dropbox/dotfiles version of echo $P in Home"
    ln -v -s "$HOME/Dropbox/$P" "$HOME/$P"
done
```

4 Appendix 2. Install Broadcom driver for wifi.

TBD