A Linux distribution (often abbreviated as distro) is an operating system made from a software collection that is based upon the Linux kernel and, often, a package management system.

Linux users usually obtain their operating system by downloading one of the Linux distributions, which are available for a wide variety of systems ranging from embedded devices (for example, OpenWrt) and personal computers (for example, Linux Mint) to powerful supercomputers (for example, Rocks Cluster Distribution).

A typical Linux distribution comprises a Linux kernel, GNU tools and libraries, additional software, documentation, a window system (the most common being the X Window System), a window manager, and a desktop environment.

Most of the included software is free and open-source software made available both as compiled binaries and in source code form, allowing modifications to the original software.   
Usually, Linux distributions optionally include some proprietary software that may not be available in source code form, such as binary blobs required for some device drivers.[1]

A Linux distribution may also be described as a particular assortment of application and utility software (various GNU tools and libraries, for example), packaged together with the Linux kernel in such a way that its capabilities meet the needs of many users.  
The software is usually adapted to the distribution and then packaged into software packages by the distribution's maintainers.   
  
The software packages are available online in so-called repositories, which are storage locations usually distributed around the world.