Linux MINT, a friendly introduction

LIFE Computer Club
Friday, November 6, 2015
& Friday, February 5, 2016
Bob Fabian
http://LIFEcourses.ca/MINT

ZDNet (February 2016)

ZDNet SEARCH 🔍 WARE WINDOWS 10 IOT INNOVATION MOBILITY MORE

Why switch to Windows 10 or a Mac when you can use Linux Mint 17.3 instead?

Linux Mint 17.3 is the best Linux desktop operating system and it might be the best PC operating system, period, for you.

By Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols for Linux and Open Source | February 3, 2016 -- 13:18 GMT (05:18 PST) | Topic: Windows

- "While it's even easier for a Windows XP user to move to Mint than a Windows 7 user, any Windows user won't have any trouble picking up Linux Mint with Cinnamon. There's a Start Menu and settings are easy to find. I regard Cinnamon 2.8 as the ultimate Window, Icon, Menu, Pointer (WIMP) interface. Is it ideal for tablets or smartphones? No. Is it perfect for long-time PC users? Yes.

- "Cinnamon does add some nice features. For example, if you mouse over the Window list, you'll now see a thumbnail for each application. It also has improved performance, system tray status indicators, and music and power applets. "

The Linux Operating System

- 1970: Unix conceived by Ken Thompson and Dennis Ritchie (at Bell Labs)
  - Became *the* non-proprietary operating system
  - Code was widely shared, but not open source
  - But ownership issues grew
- 1991: personal project by Finnish student Linus Torvalds
  - Became *the* open source version of Unix

Linux Evolution

- Code was freely available, ran on wide variety of hardware

- Money could be made, but in providing support for the operating system

- Level of required tech support was high.

  – It worked well, but required considerable support

- Not right for all but a few power desktops

Ubuntu

- 2004: First release
  - To provide a practical Linux/Unix desktop
  - Everything in release to be open source
    - Proprietary codexs forbidden, (mp3 & dvd problems)
- Canonical funded Ubuntu Foundation
  - Made money by selling support
- 2006: MINT fork, but remained linked to Ubuntu
    - Free proprietary codexs allowed
    - Conformed to established WIMP interface

MINT, now version 17.3

- Freely available for downloading

- Can install from DVD or USB stick

  - 3 basic initial boot options

    - Run from DVD or USB
    - Establish dual boot (with Windows)
    - Install as the only OS

- Comes with a full suite of application software

  - Software Manager offers 74,000 free compatible packages

    - 45 featured; 1,225 graphics, 1,976 games, etc

Personal Experience

- Unix/Linux was always theoretically interesting
  - Dabbled with Ubuntu, but didn't commit
- XP neared the end of its (secure) life
- 2013: I took the first hesitant steps to Ubuntu
- End of 2013: I committed to MINT
- It was a good choice (for me)
  - I have a vast library of tested, compatible, free applications and WINE allows me to run many of my long-time Windows applications (Irfanview, PhotoFiltre, SketchUp, etc)
  - I can tweak the operation of the operating system by running simple scripts at system load time

Spectrum of optimal use

- Open the box, forget about the software

  - MINT excellent choice

- Commit to the vendor, limit choices

  - Apple excellent choice

- Want widest possible compatibility

  - Windows excellent choice

- Want the greatest possible flexibility

  - MINT excellent choice

simple minded, but useful summary

Next

on to a MINT demo