



**OUR  
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## What is Linux?

Linux is a computer operating system which belongs to the Unix-like family. At the heart of Linux is the Linux Kernel, the core 'traffic controller' as mentioned under the Operating System section. On this is built a full operating system which takes care of the booting up, detecting hardware or provide security. Linux is free and open source software, so anyone can study, use, modify and re-distribute its source code. Basically, anyone could take the Linux Kernel and bundle it with a selection of the many other Free Software applications in the world and ship it in an easy to install package - this would be called a Linux distribution. Different distributions are developed for different needs and tastes, but in the end, they have much in common as they all take from a common pool of Free Software. Moreover, many distributions work with others or build upon other distributions.

Most Linux distributions incorporate some software tools and data developed by the GNU Project founded by Richard Stallman, so you'll often see Linux distributions referred to as 'GNU/Linux'. This is still Linux - just a more formal and actually a more proper way of referring to a particular version of it.

Linux has been under development for many years, and has become a powerful and flexible operating system. Because it is freely available for anyone to use and contribute to, users and developers have created it to work the way they want. You can find versions of Linux for your netbook, for your old computer, for your server and for your brand-new desktop. Some linux distributions are developed entirely by volunteers, others have commercial parties involved. Usually these companies provide additional services to corporate customers using the linux distribution, contributing a portion of their income back to the linux distribution to improve it. Linux is an ideal operating system for both home and business. The graphics and menus that you see when you log onto your computer are called a 'desktop'. With Linux, you aren't locked into a single layout. You can choose a desktop that suits your style, such as Gnome, KDE or the lightweight LXDE.

Most distributions include plenty of free software, as well as easy to use software managers that let you install new free software in just a few clicks. You can use Calligra or Libre Office for your word processing, spreadsheet and presentation needs, paint using your tablet with Krita, while GIMP is a complete and powerful image editor. You can play music with Rhythmbox, Amarok or Banshee and use Mozilla's Firefox or Google's Chrome to browse the web. In addition to some well-known names, there are many other options available for you to try.

## Why to use Free Software?

"Free software" is a matter of liberty, not price. To understand the concept, you should think of "free" as in "free speech," not as in "free beer."

Free software is a matter of the users' freedom to run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software. More precisely, it means that the program's users have the four essential freedoms:

The freedom to run the program, for any purpose (freedom 0).

The freedom to study how the program works, and change it to make it do what you wish (freedom 1). Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor (freedom 2).

The freedom to distribute copies of your modified versions to others (freedom 3). By doing this you can give the whole community a chance to benefit from your changes. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.

Understanding those four Freedoms is really important since it is basically defines what we can actually do with all that hardware we bought and how installing Free software can make us better persons and the world a better place to be.