

Advice from Middle Aged Female Tech  
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I have been in the industry and with my own company since 1994. In the entire time I have worked in this field it has been very few times any two techs ever agree completely. What advice I give here is based on my experiences, testing and what I know that works.

I am always about saving money, not spending on things you don’t need to.

## **Linux, the OTHER operating system.....**

### **7 common myths busted**

When it comes to operating systems people have always looked up to Windows and Mac OS as the front-runners of the OS battle. Thanks to its escalating popularity amongst desktop users worldwide, the open source Linux operating system has already been deemed as a serious competitor. Similarly on the server side, many corporations are switching to Linux due to its reliability and speed. So then, what is it that makes Linux so special when contrasted with other OS’s? This article answers many such questions.

## **Why not Windows or Macs?**

Ok, let us tackle the problems with Windows and Macs first. Windows, developed by Microsoft Corporation, is the Operating System with the largest market share. However, it is constantly marred with problems of viruses and malware, thank endless hackers and worm writers for that, Since Microsoft has 80% of the world share, that is what the hackers target. As for computers that come with Windows pre-installed, the cost of antivirus, Office utilities and other non-free programs usually overwhelms people, for they don’t read my articles to know where the free versions of the software is. Furthermore, the version of Windows provided is usually Home or Business edition, which lacks many features the Ultimate version provides, yes, new versions (basic to home, pro, ultimate etc.) are expensive.

Macintosh computers, they, unlike Microsoft, prefer to sell their software bundled with their own hardware. Apple ‘claims’ that their design, feature-set and stability are much superior to any of Microsoft products; even if it comes at a very high price, nevertheless, Macs, despite their holier-than-thou attitude towards Windows and Linux, are far from being the perfect computers. Consumers and Microsoft employees frequently complain that Macs are significantly overpriced than a normal laptop/PC, are now being plagued with viruses and malware (more users, more of a target), Apple does have many quality programs for its users but most of them are very highly priced. Furthermore, Apple has gained notoriety for making closed, locked-down Mac exclusive products thus creating a walled garden of their own.

## **Why Linux?**

After pointing out all the downsides of Windows and Macs, I come to the main point, that is, why should anyone switch to Linux. Besides, how good can an OS be if it completely free?

### **Myth 1: Linux is just for technical professionals**

Linux is for everyone. While Linux based distributions like Ubuntu, Kubuntu (my favorite), Linux Mint and Fedora are developed with the non-technical user in mind, Slackware and others appeal to the more geeky ones. Believe it or not, installing Ubuntu, or Kubuntu is actually easier than a Windows installation, and using it requires no special skills. There are over 200 version of the Linux OS, one is right for you. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Linux\\_distributions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Linux_distributions)

### **Myth 2 : Linux can't handle Excel, Word, PowerPoint**

Linux can handle all the major file formats when it comes to documents as it comes with a powerful opensource Office suite called Openoffice.org (soon to be replaced by Libreoffice) \*both mentioned in my prior article\* . So, apart from doing all the spreadsheets, presentations, and word processing out of the box, Linux can do tasks like publishing, image editing using only free and open source applications.

### **Myth 3 : Linux is free, so how can it be any good?**

Many people think that Linux, because it is free, cannot be considered as a 'product', and thus, it may not be as good as Windows and Macs. This belief however, is completely wrong. Linux is the result of contributions by millions of users from all around the world, (thus called open source) and it is through their incessant efforts that Linux continues to be free.

### **Myth 4 : Desktops are dead, so is Linux**

With the rapid emergence of smartphones, tablets and a myriad of handheld devices running powerful software's, the popularity of desktops is slowly falling. However, this process is slow, and many have denied the fact that desktops will get replaced by devices like tablets; at least for the next 5 years. Consider for example, Android smartphones (which I use) which are rapidly overtaking Apple's iphones; these devices are running on Android Operating System which is based on ... yes, you guessed it ... Linux. Also when it comes to tablets, Android powered tablets have started appearing in the market ready to take on Apple's ipad. Finally, with the steady growth of Linux based netbooks, one can without any doubt, conclude that whatever happens to desktops, Linux isn't dead or dying; it is in fact, the future.

## **Myth 5 : But Linux can't handle my favorite software XYZ which is windows-only.**

Linux maybe not be capable of running a particular program like Photoshop, but it does have a free alternative with equivalent features called Gimp. Gimp is available for Windows also; many such closed-source programs exist to which Linux provides great open source alternatives. A popular software called Wine makes it possible for Linux users to run many Windows programs without any virtualization or emulation. This is where some limitations and learning curve comes in. (Firefox browser was originally designed for Linux)

## **Myth 6 : Linux can't do gaming**

Windows, unlike Linux and Macs can always boast of the thousands of games it is capable of running. However, that doesn't mean gaming is an Utopian concept to the Linux world. Many indie developers have started developing games for Linux , and of course many games that run on Windows work flawlessly on Linux thanks to software add-ons. Again, this is where the learning curve comes in, and just a little patience.

## **Myth 7 : Linux lacks support.**

While Microsoft and Apple both boast of an excellent support, Linux, by default doesn't offer any professional support. To make up for the lack of support, Linux offers multiple ways of seeking help; one such way is through forums .The Linux community is very large and simply posing a question in a forum, one gets a reply within a few minutes, sometimes longer. For the impatient ones, there is IRC; that is, internet relay chat, where many developers and users hang out to helping other users. If that isn't adequate, one can always buy professional support (<http://www.canonical.com/enterprise-services/ubuntu-advantage/desktop>) offered by Ubuntu, which comes at a fair and reasonable price.

## **Conclusion**

Summing up, Linux installs on *NON*-mac machines, Linux is working on being able to be installed on Mac, but not as of yet (easily). Linux in **almost all** aspects matches up to its closest competitors. That said, Linux's market share still stands at a meager 3% thanks to a general lack of awareness amongst non-technical folk. Most users are overseas; the 'free' computers given away are Linux. The heavy marketing on Apple and Microsoft's part to sell, to overwhelming, since Linux is free, very little marketing, so I am here to spread the word.

Send me your questions: [Montgomery@Hollyecho.com](mailto:Montgomery@Hollyecho.com) and I will answer, include if I could post your questions in my next article.