Subject: Re: Linux Help Needed
Posted by Michael Wallace on Fri, 27 Jan 2006 19:03:07 GMT

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> I have been taken aback to receive a number of
> private e-mails cautioning against expecting too
> much from LINUX on a laptop. This has surprised
> me. I guess because I got caught up in the excitement
> of the LINUX evangelists. I just *assumed* LINUX
> would work well everywhere. I am beginning to
> appreciate why the new Mac machines are such a big
> deal. It brings Windows reliability to the LINUX
> world. :-)

I have been taken aback by how many private emails you got cautioning
you against Linux on a laptop. Of course, I don't know how many emails
you got, but I'm assuming it was a pretty good number given your statement.

Linux DOES work well on most systems. I have Linux installed on my
laptop. My co-workers have many Linux installed on their laptops as
well. None of us have any problems.

I hear people say that Linux doesn't work well on laptops. I hear that
it's unreliable on laptops. But it every time someone says something
like this 9 times out of 10 they have a very unique non-typical hardware
configuration or have a misconception about what Linux can do. I had
Linux put on my laptop when I first got it and haven't had any issues
with it. Around here we have a lovely mixture of Dell and Micron and
IBM, and you might even see a Sony Vaio here or there and I haven't seen
anyone who has problems.

The problems I do see are people who think they can go buy the latest
bleeding edge hardware and expect everything to work. Because it's
still mainly a Windows world, the Windows drivers get written first.
That's especially true for graphics cards. I don't know if it's still
the case today, but I know that people would have problems with nVidia
cards because Linux was not allowed to include the driver that the
nVidia people wrote. There was some legal issue on the nVidia side, not
the Linux side, that caused this. Anyway, you had to download the
driver from nVidia and install it manually, but some people just didn't
know to do that. And then they complained about Linux not including the
driver even though the Linux folks wanted to include it.

>> I think it is probably pretty important to get the features you need/want
>> in a laptop purchase and then worry about adding LINUX later. There are
>> websites out there that describe how various LINUX distros work on many
>> laptops. They might be worth checking as you narrow down your choices.

This reads like it's really hard to get the features you want and have
Linux. It's not hard at all. Of course, my feature list only includes
a ton of RAM, big beefy processor, a nice graphics card, and a burner.
I guess some people just want more. ;-)

> The thing I am MOST surprised about, is that LINUX users
> will pay that extra premium to have Windows installed on
> their laptops. I guess they just think of it as an insurance
> premium. :-)

For a long time, some companies wouldn't let you buy a laptop if it
didn't have Windows on it. There were deals done between M$ and the
OEMs so that Windows would be on every laptop and there wasn't an option
to get a laptop with no OS.

I don't mean to sound like a Linux zealot or anything. Sure, I use it
and it satisfies my particular needs better than any other OS whether
that's Windows, OS X, Solaris or something else. If Windows suits your
needs, use it. If Solaris suits your needs, use it. If you have a need
for using Linux, that's one thing. If you don't have a particular need
for it, you'll probably wind up disappointed by something.

-Mike