# Why GNU/Linux Isn't As Good As Everyone Makes It Out To Be

"GNU/Linux is advanced and stable operating system" – this, I will never question. It comes in every conceivable form – from server solutions that simply work to desktop releases with more software than anyone could possibly ever need. So why, is GNU/Linux still not ready for the desktop? After a long time using Linux as my primary operating system I'm just about ready to switch back to Windows. Read on to find out why I'm a sad penguin.

## Ubuntu

I've toyed with Ubuntu now for years, from the very first release. My decision to install Ubuntu came after trying out a live USB release and finally getting fed up of Windows. I know that Ubuntu does not represent GNU/Linux as a whole, so why am I doting on it? Because it is often referred to as the OS of choice for switchers. Much has changed since then. Ubuntu 11.04 introduced a crappy new interface – Unity – and I can't stand it. Sure, I could turn it off but most people won't – do you have to turn off the default Windows interface for it to become usable? You could argue that Microsoft has a crappy new user interface as well, and I wouldn't contradict you. But unlike Ubuntu – Microsoft is trying (at least, it appears to try) to fix the problem, and in the new Windows 10 – it really (finally) is the improved GUI over Windows 7. The Ubuntu machine in my household felt noticeably slower after the upgrade. Add to that the plethora of driver issues that appeared overnight with 11.04 – reduced wireless performance and graphical errors. Way to break a perfectly operable operating system. Which leads me on to…

## The Too Many Distributions

I'm not arguing with the server side of things. If you want a solid, reliable server and you're comfortable with command line access then do yourself a favor and build a GNU/Linux server. However – for the newcomer there's simply too much to choose from. Some people complained when Microsoft announced multiple versions of Vista and 7, stating it would "confuse the consumer" – but we all know that's rubbish as the manufacturer generally sells Home Premium or Professional versions, and if you really need Ultimate then you can always upgrade. The many possibilities that exist for those looking to install Linux can be off-putting and confusing. Of course once you've listened to all suggestions, read all the reviews, managed to rule out the ones you don't like and finally installed your distribution of choice you then have the small issue of…

## Linux Software

Free open source software isn't a bad thing, but sometimes it's worth paying for a quality product. Take GIMP for example, which after experiencing it, you're either going to love or hate. If you hate GIMP, be it the workflow, interface or just general shortcomings in comparison with Photoshop then you don't have much in the way of alternatives. GIMP is about as good as it gets on GNU/Linux when it

comes to imaging software, and even compared to the Windows-only solution Paint.NET it can feel outdated, messy and not particularly intuitive to the Adobe generation. There's no Adobe line-up for Linux despite the community's many pleas. If you're a musician used to Traktor, Cubase, Reason, FLStudio (I could go on) or even Garage Band then you're out of luck here too. There are a few decent solutions, but there's a reason most music is produced on Windows or Apple machine. Serious video editing is a no-go too. Despite the many capable solutions out there that are built for GNU/Linux, there is still nothing that compares to industry standards like Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premier. Of course these are expensive software suites I'm mentioning, but they're also widely used and bought for a reason. Linux software simply can't compare when it comes to this level of professional software, and it also can't compare when it comes to…

# Gaming

Things have got better when it comes to gaming on Linux over the last few years, but "better" should not necessarily be confused with "good". Valves distribution service Steam has had a major impact on GNU/Linux gaming since they introduced the GNU/Linux version. The bad news is that

- Most games still won't be ported
- Valve is attempting to introduce yet another distribution to choose from

There are lots of free games on Linux, but if you're into your hardware-testing first person shooters or any of the latest releases then you're going to need Windows. Aside from the odd free-to-play title, very little in the way of recent releases make it to Linux. Dual-booting is always an option, but if you're into your games in a big way you probably won't be bothered with that.

Linux is not a write-off, but as a primary operating system it's got some serious problems. Not all of these can necessarily be fixed either, though that's not to say the humble penguin doesn't have a place where it can be useful. If you're lucky enough to find a distribution you love, don't play games and couldn't care less about Adobe's Creative Suite or a powerful video editor then that's awesome. And those old PCs or notebooks without a lot of grunt might just get a new lease of life with GNU/Linux.

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