

GNU/Linux Basic operating system

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Introduction

Although free software has existed for more than twenty years, it is only recently that it has started to be considered as a valid alternative for many users, companies, and increasingly, governments and institutions. Currently, GNU/Linux is one of the most reliable and efficient systems that can be found. Although initially the fact that it was free software made users and companies reluctant to adopt it, GNU/Linux has proven to be up to the task as well as any other operating system in existence.

The objective of this course is to introduce us to the world of GNU/Linux. It will also provide us with the keys to understanding the philosophy of free software, teaching us how to use it and to handle it to our taste, giving us the tools required to move easily in this new world. This document does not intend to be an essential reference guide for administrators and/or users; there are already hundreds of manuals, HOWTOS and many other references designed for this purpose, which would occupy millions of pages. Our aim here is to teach you how to take your first steps in this as yet unexplored field for many users and administrators and how to approach and solve by yourselves the problems that you may encounter.

The course is not intentionally based on any particular distribution, but in most examples and activities we need to be specific, so we will use Debian GNU/Linux (version 4.0 -Etch-). Although this distribution is not as intuitive and easy to use as some others, it will help us to explain all of the features of an operating system based on GNU/Linux step by step. Also, its extraordinary quality, stability and security make it one of the most valid choices right now. However, we should not forget about the support provided by other distributions (Debian is developed by volunteers and gives no type of support, which in the case of companies is indispensable). For this reason, we have included an appendix showing the installation process and main characteristics of RedHat Fedora Core (version 7).

We hope that you enjoy the course and that it helps you open the doors to the world of free software. The more users of free software there are, the more and better quality software we will have.

Welcome to GNU/Linux!

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