Linux made workable, productive, and easy!

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Linux made workable, productive, and easy!
By TGodfrey

So....you have downloaded and installed your first Linux distribution. Everything looks good and works even better, but you want to administer the computer easier, install some business applications, install a web browser, install an anti-virus program, firewall, share a folder using SAMBA, and mount a jumpdrive.....all in under an hour. After the packages have been downloaded of course.

I get these questions from people who want to fully utilize their new Linux installation, be protected, and want to be productive. We will walk through some popular applications on what they are used for and how to install them. I've tried these how-to's on SuSe, Red Hat, and Mandrake installations on various types of hardware and found the instructions below to work with little or no extra effort.

Let's get started...

Request: I want to administer my system without having to memorize a lot command-string items or I get confused when administering different Linux flavors.

Answer: Webmin is an easy to use browser-based administration tool that seems to work on SuSe-Red Hat-Mandrake that I have used. It comes with so many tools that will help the system administrator regardless of their knowledge level.

To install Webmin (a graphical way to administer):

- Go to TERMINAL

1. cd /

2. mkdir /Webmin

3. *** download the latest version to this subdirectory ***

4. cd /Webmin

5. rpm -ivh webmin-1.180-1.noarch.rpm

6. *** You will see the program install ***

7. Access Webmin from a browser at: http://<hostname>:10000/ [ENTER]

Note: You may want to bookmark this site

Request: I want to exchange documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and other typical business documents.

Answer: OpenOffice is a fantastic office suite developed by Sun that has a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation package, drawing application, math, and a simple database. I've found I can exchange documents with others using Office 2003 and below with little to no differences.

To install the latest OpenOffice (business productivity suite):

- Go to TERMINAL

  1. cd /

  2. mkdir /OpenOffice_2

  3. *** download the latest version to this subdirectory ***

  4. cd /OpenOffice_2

  5. tar xvzf Ooo_1.9.m79_native_LinuxIntel_install.tar.gz

  6. cd into the directory with the unpacked image. This could be RPMS

  7. Delete any rpm files that do not apply to your system. For example, on a Fedora Core 3 system, delete any rpms specific to another distribution such as openofficeorg-suse-menus-1.9.79-1.noarch.rpm.

  8. Then execute --> **rpm -Uvih *rpm**

  9. To run: Click on the [REDHAT] ? [OFFICE], then you will see icons created for each of the programs. The first time you run a program from here, it will take a little bit to load up ? Be Patient!

Request: I would like to install a web browser called 'Firefox' that I've heard quite a bit about. It is supposed to be

quicker and has a built-in pop-up blocker and some other nice features.

Answer: Just follow along below.

To install the latest Firefox (internet web browser):

- Go to TERMINAL

1. cd /

2. mkdir /Firefox

3. *** download the latest version to this subdirectory ***

4. cd /Firefox

5. You can use the graphical file manager to install this if you wish (for something a little different). Do a [RIGHT-CLICK] on firefox-1.0.1.installer.tar.gz and [ENTRACT HERE]

6. It will make another subdirectory called firefox-installer. Go into this subdirectory and double-click on the firefox-installer shell script (remember the gear?). Go through the defaults and make sure it will connect to the internet and exit the browser.

7. What about an icon to re-launch? Copy the watermark.png file to **/usr/share/pixmaps**. [RIGHT-CLICK] on the desktop and select [New Launcher], fill in the [NAME] --> Firefox. Fill in the [COMMAND], click on [BROWSE] and locate 'firefox' in the /Firefox folder. Click on the [ICON] and scroll to the bottom until you see watermark.png, then [OK]. Verify it works.

Request: Do I need an anti-virus or firewall program for Linux? I've heard it is so secure that I really don't need one.

Answer: Yes, you do. Any operating system that does not have its service and security patches updated, unnecessary services running, or out-of-the-box installations not updated is called an unprotected system. There is no silver bullet when protecting your system. The best approach is called a layered approach (think skins of an onion). Any task you do to protect your system and the data on it is time well spent. We will at least need an anti-virus and firewall to start with on the machine itself.

To load BitDefender (an antivirus program):

- Go to TERMINAL

1. cd /

2. mkdir /BitDefender

3. *** download the latest version to this subdirectory ***

4. cd /BitDefender

5. This is a fairly easy RPM install, but let's try using Webmin instead. Bring up Webmin in a browser (hopefully Firefox!) and see the beginning of this page for details. Click on [SYSTEM] ? [SOFTWARE PACKAGES], Select *'from local file'* and use the [...] button to help find the RPM file in the /BitDefender folder.

6. Click on [INSTALL] and wait a few moments. The next screen will show the application was installed, where, and any other important information. Exit Webmin, then open a TERMINAL session. BitDefender is a command-line based program and very powerful. Type in --> **bdc ?help** to see all the options available. You may want to update the definitions by typing in --> **bdc ?update** [ENTER], this will take a few minutes to update.

7. Scan your files, read more of the help options, you can even setup a cron job to run BitDefender at a certain time.

To load Firestarter (a better firewall than the RedHat default):

- Go to TERMINAL

    1. cd /

    2. mkdir /Firestarter

    3. *** download the 0.9.3 version to this subdirectory ***

    4. cd /Firestarter

    5. The install is straight forward. Open a TERMINAL session, change to the subdirectory, and type in --> rpm -ivh firestarter-0.9.3-1.i386.rpm [ENTER].

    6. It is always best to run one good application than two or more of the same type at the same time. This not only saves overhead, but one application will not interfere with the other, or worse case, cause false positives.

        - Please disable the Redhat firewall first before running another firewall.
            - Click [REDHAT] ? [SYSTEM SETTINGS] ? [SECURITY LEVEL] and change it to No Firewall if you are going to run Firestarter.

7. Open a TERMINAL session and type in --> **firestarter** [ENTER]. Walk through the configuration and see how easy it is to configure. After you get done then click on [SAVE]. The firewall will start immediately and display traffic on your segment. This firewall is made to be in between your network and the outside world and run all the time. Once it is stopped, you have no protection. You may want to consider enabling the Redhat firewall again ? it all depends on your requirements.

8. Firestarter can also be accessed (on a Red Hat system) by selecting [REDHAT] ? [SYSTEM TOOLS] ? [MORE SYSTEM TOOLS] ? [FIRESTARTER FIREWALL TOOL].

Request: I would like to share files on my Linux system with other users, regardless if they are Linux or Windows (even Solaris users).

Answer: SAMBA is the quickest, easiest, and most secure way to do this with little effort and has the ability to share

with other operating systems.

An easy way to setup a shared folder:

- Go to TERMINAL

1.On the host machine, make sure SAMBA is running. Open a TERMINAL session and type in --> ntsysv [ENTER]. Cursor down until you see 'smb', does it have a '*' to left? If not, press the [SPACEBAR] and one will appear. [TAB] to [OK] and press [ENTER]. Type in --> **xinet -9** [ENTER] to restart services. I would then reboot the computer since SAMBA can be a little finicky.

2.When it comes back, create a folder that you wish to share. Then click on the [REDHAT] ? [SYSTEM SETTINGS] ? [SERVER SETTINGS] ? [SAMBA SERVER].

3.Click [ADD], browse for the shared directory you created, give it a description (if you wish), and set the basic permissions. Click the [ACCESS] tab and either specify users or give access to everyone. In order to add users to SAMBA, they have to be created in Redhat first! (Remember useradd? Or you can use the GUI).

4.Two more things....make sure the proper permissions are setup on the shared folder -and- what are the settings on your firewall? The host is now ready to share. Make sure you also know either the hostname of the server or its IP address.

5.Sharing from a Linux box to another Linux box is easy. Please create a folder under the /mnt subdirectory. I like typing in commands, but you could also write a shell script to make things easier. Open a TERMINAL session and type this in (substituting your environment/setup):

```
mount -t smbfs -o username=<user>,password=p<assword> //<host>/<share>
/mnt/<folder>
```

> <user> user created on the host machine
> <password> the password you assigned
> <host> the name or IP address of the host
> <share> the shared folder on the host
> <folder> the folder you created on the client

6.Sharing a Linux folder to the Windows world is a little easier. Bring up Windows Explorer, choose [Network Places], then [Entire Network], and search for the hostname of the Linux box. If you double-click on it, the Linux box will ask for a username and password. It should then show you the available folder/s you will have access to. You could also type in --> \\<host>\share in the Address bar at the top of Windows Explorer as well. Either way will get you to the shared item.

Request: I would like to copy files from my USB drive ('jumpdrive', 'thumbdrive', etc), but Linux does not see it. What do I do?

Answer: This usually depends on the Linux flavor and what has been compiled in the kernel. An out of the box install of Red Hat 9 does not see a USB drive, but SuSe 9 Enterprise or Professional does. This is not a big deal and can be delt with quickly.

What if I wish to use my jumpdrive?

- Go to TERMINAL

  1. cd /

  2. cd /mnt

  3. *** create a folder, (example: 'jumpdrive') ***

  4. Insert the USB thumbdrive

  5. Type --> mount -t vfat /dev/sda1 /mnt/jumpdrive [ENTER]

      - * This seems to work with all 256mb drives *

Note: With newer Linux distributions, this does not seem to be an issue. It is with my older version of Redhat 9, but not with Fedora 3 or 4. My SuSE Linux boxes see it automatically as well as Mandrake 10, but 9 does not.

These are the most common requests for 'how to's' that I come across. Remember that Linux is not hard or only for the 'YaYa Brotherhood or Sisterhood of Geekdom'. It is just a different way of thinking and utilizing the potential of your computer. I hope the above helps you configure your new Linux installation to be productive and easy to administer.

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Linux HowTos

Source URL: http://www.tuxmachines.org/node/1537

Links:
[1] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/63
[2] http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/98