

Introducing Ubuntu: Desktop Linux book review

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Ah, yet another book about Ubuntu Linux. Is there no reprieve from the bombardment of Ubuntu and beginner Linux books (and Ubuntu for beginners books)? For *Introducing Ubuntu: Desktop Linux* to impress me, it had to offer something new and unique, and it had to successfully address the reality of introducing a new operating system to a computer user. I'm impressed with the scope of the book's coverage on frequently encountered Linux problems, but I don't think this book was as good as it could have been.

Introducing Ubuntu: Desktop Linux's language is irritatingly long-winded (I really hate the "the author is your best pal" colloquial narrative -- it makes me feel like I'm being talked down to), and the subject matter is mired in too-deep explanations of trivial details, such as a breakdown of what every button on the OpenOffice.org Writer button bar does. Any information that can be obtained by mousing over an item and reading its tooltip is unnecessary in a book like this. Essentially, over-explanation of obvious functions implies either that the software is not user-friendly enough to be self-explanatory, in which case it is not suitable for non-technical people (which appears to be the book's target market); or that readers are too stupid to read tooltips and figure out obvious functions of desktop software that should already be familiar to them as Windows or Mac users, which is insulting. So the fact of this book's confused focus and target market is evident not only in the subject matter, but also in the style of the writing.

Editing-wise, *Introducing Ubuntu: Desktop Linux* seems to be quite sound. I did not discover any of the stupid mistakes that reduce the authority and effectiveness of so many other technology books these days. In terms of layout and construction, this book is in the top tier.

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