The State of Desktop Linux: Interviews with Different Users About Their Linux Setups

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My Linux Rig

A site about how we all use Linux.

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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2013

The Linux Setup - Alistair Munro, Blogger/Podcaster

I was happy to hear Alistair talk up Evolution so much because I was just reading about what went wrong with Geary, the attempt to crowdfund a new email client. Like many, I thought there was no need for another (or any...) email client, but, as the article pointed out, the fact that so many people donated as much as they did shows there’s definite interest in a new email client, even if that new client wasn’t Geary. Alistair shows not everyone is entrenched within webmail. And that some people are happy with their current client options.

You can find more of The Linux Setup here.

You can follow My Linux Rig on Google+ here and follow me on Twitter here.

1. Who are you, and what do you do?

I'm Alistair Munro. I'm often known as "B1ackcr0w" on various bits of the Internet (a reference to my favorite rock band. The Black Crowes). I'm a bit of a loudmouth who who loves to comment on various Linux media. I write the wtfinux micky-taking website, and recently I started the "Shot of Pal" podcast with my friend Peter Cannon. I am currently looking for work. My day jobs have tended to be database and Unix analyst jobs.

2. Why do you use Linux?

I use Linux for many reasons. I was finding the cost of the upgrade treadmill of MS operating systems annoying, particularly when they didn't work up to the standard I'd expect of a paid product and required me to invest in further costly software just to maintain the system, let alone get anything productive done. I first used Red Hat and SUSE around 1996. I found them entertaining but difficult to configure. Over the next few years I hunted around for a distro that was more friendly on
The Setup’s Questions

• Who are you, and what do you do?
• What hardware do you use?
• And what software?
• What would be your dream setup?
The Questions (first iteration)

• Who are you, and what do you do?
• What distribution do you run on your main desktop/laptop?
• What software do you depend upon with this distribution?
• What kind of hardware do you run it on?
• What is your ideal Linux setup?
• Will you share a screenshot of your desktop?
The Questions (current)

• Who are you, and what do you do?
• Why do you use Linux?
• What distribution do you run on your main desktop/laptop?
• What desktop environment do you use and why do you use it?
• What one piece of software do you depend upon with this distribution? Why is it so important?
• What kind of hardware do you run this setup on?
• Will you share a screenshot of your desktop?
Interview Subject Gender (n=83)

- Male: 83%
- Female: 17%

Who is Interviewed?
What Do They Use?

Interview Subject Desktop Environment (n=83)
What Do They Use?
Lessons Learned
Desktops are very personal.
Linux “just works.”
(The Cloud helped).
Intuitive = Familiar
“You may always choose none of the above. Withholding choice is not death. Quite on the contrary, it is one of the few things distinguishing life from its digital imitators.”

– Douglas Rushkoff, Program or Be Programmed: Ten Commands for a Digital Age
Defaults are bad. Defaults are good.
Successful users understand their options.
For non-technical users, having to go under the hood is a feature, not a bug.
Linux doesn’t force you to think about your workflow, but it makes it easy to think about your workflow.
Change is OK
Desktop Linux is not for everyone.
Questions?
Plugs

• Let me interview you! steven@mylinuxrig.com
• My Linux Rig: www.mylinuxrig.com
• Twitter: @steven_ovadia
• “What Linux Taught Me About Productivity”: https://medium.com/what-i-learned-today/b7bc9f3511f2