

5 key insights on the transition from Windows to Linux

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Created 21/04/2014 - 11:27am

Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Monday 21st of April 2014 11:27:04 AM Filed under [GNU](#) [1] [Linux](#) [2] [Microsoft](#) [3]



Use Linux all the time. Although there was common ground in the networking and development world, there was almost none in the system administration arena. The only way to remedy that was by using Linux all the time. This was daunting. Just trying to find my way around the Linux file system was hair-pulling frustration, yet work needed to get done. I experimented with different forms of coexistence: Linux virtual machines hosted on Windows; Windows virtual machines hosted on Linux; the Windows Ubuntu Installer (WUBI), formatting old workstations. They all have their advantages and disadvantages, but in the end I decided the best setup was to format a workstation as a Linux workstation with a full GUI desktop, and to format a remote server as a typical Linux server. I found keeping a Windows workstation too tempting; it was too easy to fall back into old habits. With this setup it was possible to power up a Windows VM when necessary, but the inconvenience of working on an underpowered VM encouraged me to stick with Linux, regardless of frustrations. The setup gives you the full Linux experience: learning how to connect printers and handle things like email on the workstation side, while also administering a server via secure shell (SSH). Then it was a matter of figuring out how to get productive, especially at the command line.

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