

Fedora: Subject: Re: Linux sucks?

## Subject: Re: Linux sucks?

**Source:** <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Fedora/2005-02/4384.html>

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**From:** Eric Vought ([evought\\_at\\_diversityink.com](mailto:evought_at_diversityink.com))

**Date:** 02/15/05

Date: Tue, 15 Feb 2005 14:35:25 -0600

To: [fedora-list@redhat.com](mailto:fedora-list@redhat.com)

On Feb 14, 2005, at 5:17 PM, [fedora-list-request@redhat.com](mailto:fedora-list-request@redhat.com) wrote:

> *From: Manu Schnetzler <[marsu@earthling.net](mailto:marsu@earthling.net)>*  
> *Date: February 14, 2005 5:17:25 PM CST*  
> *To: [fedora-list@redhat.com](mailto:fedora-list@redhat.com)*  
> *Subject: Re: Linux sucks?*  
> *Reply-To: For users of Fedora Core releases <[fedora-list@redhat.com](mailto:fedora-list@redhat.com)>*  
>  
>  
> *I know I might be setting myself up to be thoroughly flamed, but I*  
> *thought I'd share my experience anyway and request some advice.*  
>  
> *I am using Windows and there is no way I can avoid it, because most of*  
> *the applications I run in my field do not run on Linux. But some do,*  
> *and I thought setting up a dual boot machine would be nice, and quite*  
> *frankly I've always liked Unix and don't like Microsoft much (I tend*  
> *to like the David side of things in general), so anything I could do*  
> *another way would be great. By the way, I am not a beginner when it*  
> *comes to Unix/shells and such. In fact, I have cygwin on Windows*  
> *because I like the tools.*  
>  
> *So there we go: FC3 installed fairly easily. Now how do I set up my*  
> *dual head on here? Well that didn't go too well. There's a bug in FC3,*  
> *so I had to apply a patch. It went a bit further but it still doesn't*  
> *work: can't get the second monitor to be recognized. After letting*  
> *system-config-display rewrite my xorg.conf, it is not booting anymore,*  
> *so I have to get back in non-graphical mode and reset the old*  
> *xorg.conf. At this point, I have spent probably 6 hours setting up my*  
> *machine and looking for info on the web.*  
>  
> *Next thing, GRUB hangs and it takes me a few more hours of trying*  
> *several things, and I end up having to re-install FC3. I haven't*  
> *booted Linux since then...*  
>  
> *I know I won't make any friends here, but here's my conclusion. Linux*

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- > *is not ready. For someone like me who doesn't have days to waste on*
- > *configuration and trying to solve issues, we'll have to stick with*
- > *Windows. And I know I will get the usual "but Windows crashes all the*
- > *time" and such. Well XP has been good to me so far – I can't remember*
- > *a major crash, so that argument doesn't stand anymore. Maybe back in*
- > *the days of NT, but not today.*
- >
- > *I'd love Linux to work, I really do. I'd love to ditch Windows and put*
- > *a Tux sticker on my PC, but I can't depend on it for my work, so I*
- > *won't. I hope I won't simply get flames telling me that I'm too stupid*
- > *to get past the problems I face. It would be more interesting to*
- > *receive some advice: should I try Red Hat and pay for support? Wait*
- > *another 5 years? Should I spend another 10 hours trying to get FC3 to*
- > *work for me? Is it worth my time, or will I face some other problem*
- > *once/if I get my dual head to work?*

You have a point, but it is anecdotal. Nowadays, Linux and Windows users run into the same problem, just at different points. The reason this is experienced less often with Windows XP is that most people buy XP with the box. Someone has already spent the time to work out those warts and tweak the installation or the hardware to work. Even if you install XP yourself, it is often on a box which was originally spec'ed for Windows, so Windows users only hit this rarely at install. The rare exception: My last experience with dual-head problems was on a set of boxes that were ground up optimized for Linux, and I had a hell of a time setting it up when trying to put XP on the box and eventually gave up.

Instead, XP users hit this when they add hardware and the 'automatic detection' goes to work. Good examples are the 3Com cards that have you put a CD in *\*before\** installing the hardware so that the hardware detection can be tweaked or disabled. This wreaks havoc on a reinstall because you end up physically pulling hardware out of the box and trying to put it back in the right order in order to avoid the plug and play from killing the install. On Linux, the cards just work.

Any time you leave the beaten path of what the hardware/software was best tested with, you run into this problem today. We value innovation for the most part more than standards conformance, and we see proprietary interfaces as a way to limit competition. The only exception is on the Macintosh, and that is simply because customers are not *\*allowed\** to leave the beaten path. On Linux, the problem is sometimes less severe than on Windows simply because there is less of an expectation of one driver for each piece of hardware. Instead, the aforementioned 3Com driver uses a standard interface which exists on dozens of cards. This means that installation of hardware does not mean installation of software as often; the hardware either just works or it does not work at all. I have taken accessories back to Best Buy, CompUSA, etc., because they would not install just as often for Linux as Windows, but the Windows related return would much more frequently be followed by an OS reinstall because the software was irrevocably

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broken by an installable driver. The same goes for Linux and even Mac with vendor provided drivers, it is just necessary less often.

On Linux, it is fresh installs that tend to irrevocably hose things. It is often best to start with a bare bones system and add parts from a selection to get the most stable system. On reinstalls, the tweaking has already been done, so it goes in one step. New systems for an organization get built following this experience. The last Fedora install I did worked seamlessly— except for the sound, which is simply not worth my time (its a workstation). The last XP install I did was for a laptop which worked except for the video (would not use more than the middle of the screen). The updated video driver hosed the network support (????!). I gave up and put 2K on the system which had been tweaked by the manufacturer (HP).

The place where XP really loses is mixing software on the same system. The large corps spend years trying to assemble a stable, standard desktop where application A does not clobber application B ("DLL Hell") and often just fail, causing users to migrate their applications. Longhorn betas are improving this score but at the cost of essentially not sharing libraries rather than merely versioning them.

Hardware side, if there is a clear advantage at all, it is that Linux tends to support old hardware better/longer and XP tends to support new hardware sooner. If Linux is 'not ready', then XP certainly is not either. The IT Industry as a whole is only half baked and a lot of the blame is on the hardware side. Again, Apple shines here, but only through near-draconian measures.

Eric Vought

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