

Linux Turns 20

You've come a long way, Tux!

By Rikki Kite



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The Linux Foundation recently kicked off its celebration of 20 years of Linux. Check out their site [1] to watch a great commemorative video, see the Memorable Linux Milestones infographic, download an anniversary web badge, record a message about your favorite memories of Linux, or enter the t-shirt and video contests. In honor of 20 years of Linux, I asked our Facebook and Twitter followers: How long have you been using Linux, and how did you get started using it? I received quite a few responses that illustrated the spectrum of entryways into the world of Linux. Here's a sample from our Twitter account (@linux_pro):

- **Slackware** – @linuxpacket: Since 1998. Set up proxy server for the company using Slackware Linux. Still remember struggle with root and boot floppies.
- **Knoppix** – @jugaltheshah: Since 2003. Friend gave me a Knoppix CD 'cause my computer was having issues, been messing with it since!
- **Red Hat** – @gaswold: Started nine years ago with Red Hat 9.
- **Ubuntu** – @MinimumPC: Started by using Wubi to set up dual boot with Ubuntu and Vista. A few years later, one OS remains.
- **Puppy Linux** – @metafaniel: My first one [was] Linux Puppy because I was discovering portable apps for Windows, then I saw I could have a complete distro in USB.
- **Fedora** – @rbnschwartz: A friend had Fedora running in a virtual machine and I thought it looked sweet and decided to try it. That was 4 years ago.
- **K12LTSP** – @debwhite: Our K-5 school has been using K12LTSP since the 2006-2007 school year when looking at economics of upgrading our technology.
 - **Debian** – @amatosg: 10 years ago. I started with Debian but I couldn't install it, so I tried Gentoo. I learned A LOT ... seriously! Now I'm a Debian guy.
 - **Mandrake** – @dirk1978: Full time about 10 years, bits before that. Story in *PC Pro* got me interested.

Ditched XP for Mandrake 7 full time, Ubuntu since Breezy. Not had a Windows install for 10 years.

Our Facebook [2] friends shared some great stories, including their fond (or not so fond) memories of floppy discs. Orv Beach responded: "Going on 15 years now – started with Slackware, on 16 floppy discs. Those were the bad old days." John Van Ostrand remembers: "In 1994 (or was it 93) I downloaded the Slackware floppies over my 9600-baud modem and loaded them on my 486. I was a Unix user so trying out Linux was a natural curiosity. In 1995 I started a company using Linux as part of our solution."

Some respondents have tried multiple distributions. Tony Harris writes, "Since 1997 when I started playing with Red Hat 5.1. Fully migrated my desktop a few years later to RH6.2, now CentOS and Ubuntu at work. At home, Ubuntu, and now Fedora 14."

Microsoft Windows inspired other respondents to move to Linux. John Keenan says, "I first started using Linux when Ubuntu 9.10 (Karmic Koala) released. I was getting pretty sick of Windows, and heard much great news about Ubuntu, so I said 'What the hell! I'll give it a try!'. I'll never be going back to Windows. Ubuntu – and Linux in general – rules!" And Johannes Thobias writes, "Windows Vista made me switch to openSUSE."

Visit us on Facebook or Twitter and let us know how you got started with Linux! ■■■

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- [1] *Linux Foundation Celebrates 20 Years of Linux:* <http://www.linuxfoundation.org/20th/>
- [2] Find us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/linuxpromagazine>
- [3] Dmitri Popov's blog: <http://www.linuxpromagazine.com/Online/Blogs/Productivity-Sauce>
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- [5] Bruce Byfield's blog: <http://www.linuxpromagazine.com/Online/Blogs/Off-the-Beat-Bruce-Byfield-s-Blog>