

I have always regretted how Microsoft price gouges and rips off computer users. I really regret Windows XP activation. I have always intended to convert to Linux, but it isn't easy for a Windows user since version 3.0.

Recently, I purchased the book "Moving to Linux" by Marcel Gagne. The interesting thing about the book is that it includes a bootable Linux CD-ROM. "Knoppix" is a special version of Linux that you can run entirely from your CD drive. You can run Linux without uninstalling Windows or making any changes to your PC.

I tried the Knoppix CD on a Windows 2000 machine with a 200 MHz pentium II and 128 RAM, a very low power machine by today's standards. Linux provides you with step-by-step status information, and I ignored several error messages as Knoppix was booting. It took a while for Linux to boot from the 52X CD-ROM drive, but then Windows 2000 also takes forever to boot on this machine.

To my amazement, Knoppix booted successfully, with the proper screen resolution and access to all the drives. To my further amazement, the CD-ROM contained OpenOffice.org 1.0. I used OpenOffice to create a file. I couldn't save the file to the hard disk, probably because of access rights (NTFS or Linux), but I could save it to a floppy disk. Later, I opened the floppy disk file on a different Windows 2000 machine with the Windows version of OpenOffice.

In his book, Marcel Gagne gives you several tips to make knoppix start faster and work faster. For example, he provides a command that creates a Linux swap file on your Windows partition, and a command that saves Knoppix configuration to a floppy disk.

Note: If you have a broadband Internet connection, you can download Knoppix from www.knoppix.net (700 MB). You also need to know how to burn raw data to CD-R. The book gives you all kinds of information about the different Linux distributions, applications, and how to use Linux, plus the included Knoppix CD is all set to run, so I think the book is worth the extra cost.

If want you to explore and learn about Linux without uninstalling Windows or making any changes to your PC, Knoppix is the way to go. Maybe someday everyone will carry a Knoppix CD and a CD-RW to use on any computer they find. That day will truly be the death of Windows.

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