# [Linux for Beginners](#)

## My introduction to Linux

From years ago I've heard of the advantages of using the Linux operating system and so I determined to make an all out effort to learn it. In 2003 I downloaded and experimented with several Linux distributions. All my previous attempts ended in discouragement. The Linux distributions I tried to install did not find all the devices on my machine, and I didn't know how to install the needed device drivers even if I had them available. I realized that if I, a person considered to be a power user in Windows and MS-DOS couldn't figure out how to install and use a Linux system, the common user who still has troubles with Windows certainly wouldn't be able to learn it either. So I determined to find a Linux distribution that I considered *simple* enough for the average person to install.

**Finally** in February 2005 I found the distribution that I like best and works for me — [Fedora!](#) If you are going to download it rather than order installation CDs or DVDs, you definitely need a broadband connection. Fedora 8 installation files add up to approximately 3.3 gigabytes in either a DVD ISO file or 5 CD ISO files. (However later I learned that it's possible to get by with only downloading the first two CD ISO files and choose the default minimum installation so that you can download later within Fedora what you need later.) Downloading with Bittorrent is also preferable to a direct FTP connection because Bittorrent has resume capabilities in case the connection breaks.

If you can install Windows on your own, you can install Fedora Linux. In fact, I would say Fedora is even easier to install than Windows XP. One reason is that Linux will give you your choice of a default language to use. That means if you are not a native English speaker and you would prefer to use the language of your mother tongue, that language is available in Fedora to use. Not so with Windows. You would have to buy that particular language version of Windows if you want to use that language for your interface.

Fedora will also give you your choice of a keyboard layout. It was no problem for me to install an English setup using a Japanese keyboard layout. Not so with Windows. Windows will balk at you if you try to change to a Japanese keyboard using an English version of Windows and tell you that you are making

a mistake, ha! I counted 26 steps to change the keyboard layout in Windows from English to Japanese! This is because the keyboard driver needs to be changed. In the Gnome Desktop in Linux, there are only 3 steps.

I am very pleased with Fedora Linux! In spite of some things I don't understand yet, and possible bugs in some applications, I really believe my production level has increased. I can do things more efficiently than I could in Windows, and in less time. This web page was created in Fedora Linux using Bluefish, a HTML editor.

Once when I got a new cell phone, it took me a while to figure out how to use certain functions, like composing email for example. At first I was tempted to think that I made a mistake in changing phones because the older one seemed easier to use, but then as I learned more and more about the new phone, I saw new features that the older one lacked and also noticed various improvements. I realized then that changing cell phones is like moving to a different operating system! In the beginning there are learning pains but the efforts are well worth it.

Six months after using Fedora Linux as the only OS for my desktop PC, though I still considered myself a Linux newbie, I've learned how to do everything I really need to do on a daily basis with my PC just as I did in Windows! And yet there is so much more to learn. That's really the fun part for me working with computers: learning and mastering new skills. Don't think you are too old to learn it; I was 37 when I started out with a PC (MSDOS) and now at 55 years old I picked up a whole new way of working in Linux!

**September, 2012 update:** I've now using Fedora 17. It was disappointing to see the Fedora totally dropped Gnome version 2, but Mate has proven a reasonable alternative. I also use KDE from time to time.