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On January 5th and the 16th, I transformed 2 messed up Windows XP PCs into fast and stable Linux machines. On the first one, I installed Fedora 16, and the second, the latest Linus Mint 14 "Nadia." In both cases I backed up the friend's documents to another media, installed Linux, and restored all the documents and Desktop files to the newly created home user partition.



My Fedora 18 KDE desktop screen with cool widgets: An analog clock , a weather widget, slideshow of photos in my Pictures album, world time display, and a calculator.

A local friend's Windows XP PC became unstable to the point it would not boot up anymore. The Windows XP Logo would appear but a few seconds later the boot process halted with a black screen. Is the problem system file corruption? Or is it hardware failure?

To test for hardware failure, I took a Fedora Linux Live CD, put it in the CD Rom drive, and booted up my friend's machine with it. It booted fine. I showed my friend there was nothing wrong with the hardware of his PC. Mozilla Firefox worked well. He was able to log into his Facebook account and browse through it without the PC hanging up as it did before. We saw that the Linux file manager was able to read all his documents on the Windows NTFS partition.

I told him, "You have two choices: You can buy a new PC with Windows and I'll restore your documents to it. Or you can let me install Linux on your PC and I'll teach you how to use it to view and edit your documents. As you already see, you have no problem in accessing the Internet in Linux. Mozilla Firefox in Linux looks and works just the same as it does in Windows. There may be some of your favorite Windows applications we can run using Wine, and I can show you good and easy to use Linux applications to replace those Windows applications that do not run well in Wine."

My friend was desperate to use his PC again because he wanted to use it to print out his New Year cards. "Let's go for installing Linux for now," he

replied, "If I can't use it to do all I need to do, I'll buy a new PC."

To make a long story short, he is happy with his new Linux system. He can do all he did in Windows, even make business cards using Glabels. He can use the Internet without fear of getting zapped by viruses or accidentally installing malware. His PC is now faster without the need of an antivirus program to slow it down, and he has the option to choose from 30,000 plus applications, including educational teaching aids.

The same is true with the second friend who lives in Kyushu – too far for me to visit at this time. He sent me his broken Window XP PC with all the CDs that came with it including the Windows XP installation CD. But because his son scratched off the Windows Product Key label from the side of the PC case, I could not do a repair of his Windows XP installation. I told him that a reformat of his hard disk and installing Linux in it was the only way to fix it.

It worked! He's happy with his new Linux Mint 14 system and can do everything he did before so far except using Itunes. Over the phone and sending him files via email, we were able to even install his Canon printer driver! It's a first for me to help a person convert over to using Linux without my physical presence with the person.