

Comparisons Of OS

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Choosing an operating system for your computer would not be very difficult considering that almost all computers come pre-installed with Windows 98 or ME. Unless you are stuck with an archaic 2.1 GB hard disk, or you are not adventurous, you should consider installing another operating system. Here a few other Operating Systems have been reviewed.

If you are anti-Microsoft, then the following operating systems should really whet your appetite.

BEOS 5.0

Free, free, free. Be Incorporated offers its BeOS 5 Personal Edition--at no charge--to anyone with the time and bandwidth to download a 42MB file. Unfortunately, this version takes up a whopping 512MB of disk space and doesn't install on non-Windows computers. Personal Edition is worth a try, but only to get a feel for this Mac-like platform.

Good News:

- 1) The installation is very simple. No need to partition your hard disk.
- 2) It has built in support for multimedia tools.
- 3) The interface is similar to a Mac and has all the essential utilities close at hand.

Bad News:

- 1) Runs only on machines running Windows.
- 2) Unless you boot from a floppy disk every time you restart a BeOS 5 machine, you'll automatically return to Windows.
- 3) Bad hardware support.
- 4) Virtually no software is available except Quake II and Civilization.

Result:

This OS is good for a new experience but it gets pummeled as a stand alone OS.

RED HAT LINUX 7.0

While this release of Red Hat represents an excellent summary of all that Linux has had to offer so far, it is the next anticipated point release that will bring some of the most eagerly awaited features to X Windows desktops everywhere. Specifically, those with their hearts set on stable releases of the Linux 2.4 kernel should probably sit tight. While preview releases of both

are provided with Red Hat 7, neither can be considered completely stable at this point. However, if you're new to Linux, or you're looking for the most comprehensive, up-to-date distribution currently available, Red Hat 7 won't disappoint.

Good News:

- 1) Installation is MUCH better.
- 2) Improved hardware support over the previous versions of Linux.
- 3) 3D support for Intel i810, ATI and Matrox chips and a preview driver for 3Dfx video cards.
- 4) More software than ever before.

Bad News:

- 1) Manipulating files under Linux is still a chore
- 2) A centralized control is still needed.

Help is in dire need of Help itself. There is no master index, no universal search feature, and no way to find groups of related commands without breaking a sweat.

Result:

Look Out Windows! While Red Hat certainly has some major terrain in front of it, with this release most of its rough days are behind it. With careful attention to usability and a more centralized approach to its help and configuration, we're likely to see hordes of new Linux users.

WINDOWS ME

The latest edition of Windows has a brand-new name, but it's not the whole new bag of tricks you might expect. Microsoft's Windows Millennium Edition (a.k.a. Windows Me) is the company's third update to Windows 98. But despite the brouhaha, it turns out that Millennium only adds up to about Windows 98; it offers the same customizable user profiles as Windows 95 and only a few upgrades from Windows 98.

Good News:

- 1) Promises of greater speed and stability.
- 2) Has a streamlined interface.
- 3) Comes with "cool new multimedia tools".
- 4) And most importantly, faster start-up times.

Bad News:

- 1) Most of these "cool new multimedia tools" can be downloaded from the Internet. Examples of these are IE 5.5 and Windows Media player.
- 2) Runs Windows applications slower than Windows 98.

Result:

Millennium is a great face-lift for Windows 98, but it's not really a necessary upgrade. If you have frequent technical difficulties or work with a lot of pictures or music on your home PC, try the new OS. But if you're happy with Windows 98 or use your PC for business, stick with what you've got. If you run Windows at home, on the other hand, the decision to upgrade is a toss-up. You'll be able to download cool new Millennium tools such as the new Media Player and IE 5.5

for free without the upgrade, and Me's speedier boot-up time won't even work unless your entire PC supports it (which it undoubtedly won't). But for home Windows buffs who like the idea of better technical help, improved sound and video features, and other small but neat enhancements, Windows Me might sound mighty tempting.

So what is our suggestion? Stick to Windows 98 as long as the next release of Windows!!

The next release is in the final stages and is NOT called 'Windows'. It's code name is Whistler. More on that later.