Bringing Old Computers Back to Life with Linux

SKILL SHARE and REPAIR CAFÉ 2019

Silver Spring TimeBank

Feb 10, 2019

Did you know that a Windows Vista laptop or desktop computer is actually very fast? The reason it seems sluggish is not the computer, it is the Windows Vista operating system. After installing the free Linux operating system, a Windows Vista laptop or desktop could be almost twice as fast. And you could potentially use it with the latest web browsers right into the 2020’s.

This booth has been set up to give you a taste of Linux. I have a version of Linux called Linux Mint running on my ThinkPad laptop. It is connected to 24-inch monitor, with 2560 x 1440 pixels. I use this arrangement to make my video book reviews at <http://sites.google.com/site/philshapirobookreviews>

Come try out LibreOffice, the free replacement for Microsoft Office. I’m particularly fond of the simple, basic, but very useful drawing program within LibreOffice. You can use this drawing program to create any combination of shapes, text, photos, and other graphics.

Did you know you can revive a 2002 laptop using Linux? See my YouTube video – “My $20 eBay Laptop.”

Linux is owned by everyone, so when you use Linux, you have stepped off the treadmill that Microsoft and Apple run. You no longer need to follow their rules – and open your wallet when they dictate it.

Are there down sides to using Linux? Good question. Yes, some printers might not work well with Linux. Search the web for: “Finding Linux Compatible Printers 2019” for a very good and up-to-date guide. Also, you are more on your own when you use Linux, as the general public might not have experience using Linux. Never to fear! Stop by the Takoma Park Maryland Library to ask questions of Phil Shapiro (me), who works there Mondays thru Fridays, Noon to 8 pm. The public computers at this library run Linux. So do all the public computers in the Howard County Libraries.

If you have a laptop or desktop computer that you think has come to the end of its life, consider giving it a second life with Linux. That step is good for the environment, good for your pocketbook, and makes you more autonomous. Where can you learn more about Linux, you might ask? There are lots of online resources, but a good starting place is opensource.com Your local makerspaces might have Linux install workshops. Ask there – and ask at your local public library – if they have any Linux trainings.

Linux is “open source” software – sometimes referred to as “free software.” Other open source software includes LibreOffice, Audacity, Inkscape, and GIMP (a free substitute for Photoshop). All 450 public computers in the Montgomery County Public Libraries have these programs installed. Search the web to find my book review of *The Book of Audacity.* Search for the title of this book and my last name: Shapiro

Lastly, send me questions via email. [pshapiro@his.com](mailto:pshapiro@his.com) Your email subject line should be: Skillshare Linux question. I will then know to give that email my full attention.

Please pass along word about the Silver Spring Time Bank – and consider joining. It’s free! Also, you might want to join the DC Metro Simplifiers email list – a separate entity. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dcmetrosimplifiers