Feature-rich, fast, and free — what’s not to love about Linux?

You’re going to love Linux, the open-source operating system that lets you create documents, browse the Web, work with audio and video files, and everything else you need without tossing your wallet out the windows. This easy-to-use guide tells you what you need to know to get a Linux desktop system installed, personalized, and working just for you!

- **Start Here** — If you’re new to Linux, learn what it is, how it works, and how to install it on your computer
- **Get to Know GNOME® — and the KDE®, the two Linux desktops**
- **How the Fun Begins — enjoy music, video, and games: use the GIMP image editor; explore the Internet; and make Skype® phone calls**
- **Get Work to Do? — use the word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software suite from OpenOffice.org®**
- **A Few Cool Tricks — discover how to handle file formats, create and manage user accounts, secure your system, and use virtual servers**

**Bonus DVD Includes**
ISOs of Ubuntu Linux 9.04 and Fedora Core 11 Preview Edition for you to try
Please see the DVD appendix for details and complete system requirements.

Richard Blum has been both a systems and network administrator over the past 20 years. He has administered UNIX, Linux, Novell, and Microsoft servers, and has helped design and maintain a 3,500-user network. Richard is an expert in working with and programming Linux.

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**Learn to:**
- Install open-source software with Synaptic or Fedora PackageKit package managers
- Browse the Web, listen to music, use e-mail, and edit photos with free software
- Work productively with OpenOffice
- Start using Ubuntu® 9.04 or Fedora® 11 Preview Edition from ISO images on the DVD
About the Author

Richard Blum has worked in the IT industry for more than 20 years as a network and systems administrator. During that time, he’s had the opportunity to work with lots of different computer products, including Windows, Netware, Cisco, Avaya, different flavors of UNIX, and of course, Linux. Over the years, he’s also volunteered for several nonprofit organizations to help support small networks that had little financial support. Rich is the author of several Linux-based books for total Linux geeks, and a couple of Windows-based books for programmers.

When he’s not being a computer nerd, Rich plays the electric bass in a church worship band, and enjoys spending time with his wife, Barbara, and their two daughters, Katie Jane and Jessica.

Dedication

To my daughters, Katie Jane and Jessica. Remember: It’s always a good time to learn new things (even when you’re not in school).

Author’s Acknowledgments

First, all praise and glory go to God, who through His Son makes all things possible, and gives us the gift of eternal life.

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Introduction

Welcome to the fascinating world of open-source software that is Linux. In this book, we introduce you to the wonders of the Linux operating system, originally created as a labor of love by Linus Torvalds in the early 1990s. Our goal is to initiate you into the rapidly growing ranks of Linux users and enthusiasts busily rewriting the rules for the operating system marketplace.

If you've contemplated switching to Linux but find the prospect too forbidding, you can relax. If you can boil water or set your alarm clock, you too can become a Linux user. (No kidding!)

When this book appeared in its first edition, Linux was an emerging phenomenon that was neither terribly well known nor understood. In this edition — for a new generation of Linux users — so much material is available that we have steered this particular title toward what Linux is and how you can make the best use of it on your desktop. To that end, these pages contain various online resources, tips, and tricks, as well as more general instruction. If you're looking for material on servers, Linux All-In-One Desk Reference For Dummies by Naba Barkakati (Wiley Publishing, Inc.) can serve your needs.

In this book, we keep the amount of technobabble to a minimum and stick with plain English as much as possible. Besides plain talk about Linux installation, boot up, configuration, and software, we include many examples, plus lots of detailed instructions to help you use your very own Linux machine with a minimum of stress or confusion.

We also include with this book a handy DVD-ROM that contains image files for both Ubuntu 9.04 (the most popular workstation Linux distribution around) and Fedora 11 (a project sponsored by Red Hat, the leading Linux vendor). To find out what exactly is included on the DVD-ROM, see Appendix B. If you have no idea of what we're talking about, don't worry. You'll know soon enough!