

Ubuntu for Non-Geeks, 3rd Edition

Rickford Grant, 2008, 336 pages. No Starch Press, Inc, San Francisco, CA,
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This book is eligible for the User Group discount from O'Reilly

Rating: Timberline*

Start here. That is an approximation of the message of this book. For anyone just starting to explore the Linux operating system—or needing a place to start that exploration, this book is, in fact, a good place to start. It's not perfect, but it's still a good starting point. The book includes a CD with Ubuntu version 8.04 on it.

There is quite a bit of “new” jargon to learn in order to understand Linux. When I say “new,” I mean “new” to those new to Linux. In my judgment, the book could be a little more helpful here, but I have identified several Wikipedia references that helped me. I list those at the end of this review.

Despite that reservation, the author provides a great deal of information on Ubuntu Linux: how to find it, download it, install it, use it, and locate and install compatible applications (and there are many). He talks about Open Office, digital imaging (GIMP), audio and video applications, and even how to connect to an iPod.

There are chapters on connecting printers and scanners, connecting digital cameras, and even, for those who need it, how to use Chinese, Japanese and Korean characters. And, he has a chapter on installing and using more traditional fonts (for example, in English)

There are four pages of Linux resources at the end of the book. One of those references I highly recommend:

<http://www.distrowatch.com>, which has an excellent comparison of the top ten (as defined by the web master) Linux distributions.

Other resources I have found helpful:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linux>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debian>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNOME>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kde>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kubuntu>

Despite the need for additional jargon explanations, I consider the book worthy of your hard earned cash.

*Ratings Key:

Sandpit— Avoid

Small hill— Not recommended

Foothill— Average

Timberline— Excellent

Fourteener— Must have