

Rich's Ramblings for October 2005

I have been experimenting with Linspire Version 5.0, (WWW.LINSPIRE.COM) which is another Operating System that is based on the Linux operating system. The installation on a spare 80 gigabyte hard disk went very smoothly and Linspire found all my devices such as video, sound and network adapters. For once, I did not have to find all of my device driver cd-roms to be able to use the system. Out of the box, so to speak, the installation went very smoothly with very few questions. It installed a browser, e-mail and instant messaging programs. Then it went to their web site and installed all the updates to the Operating system and Open Office which is a competitor to Microsoft Office suite. If you have a broadband connection, you can download a cd-rom image of Linspire for \$49.95 or receive a cd-rom from Linspire for another \$10. To update the installed packages that come with Linspire the program automatically checks with Linspire and lets you know that there are updates to either your OS or installed software. Then you to log onto their CNR site which means Click and Run.

Of course Linspire makes their money if you subscribe to their basic software support for \$19.95 or their gold service for \$49.95 per year. Free support is provided on their website using forums and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section. It works and is pretty painless to keep your OS and installed programs updated. If you are on dial-up, It can be a pain.<G>

I was able to install Linspire on a spare hard disk for my Toshiba laptop and it found all the devices for the portable. It was very easy to install and each of the applications like Open office worked very very similar to Microsoft office products. The browser seemd to be as easy as well as the email program. For a cheap alternative to Microsoft Windows, then Linspire is a good choice. Believe me it is much easier to install than some of the Linux distributions that I have tried. If you don't think that your proficient at the command line in Linux, then Linspire is the answer for you. My opinion is that it was easier to install than Windows XP Pro on both my laptop and a Pentium 4 computer.

(PS: They sent me a free copy to review, so the price was even better)

From Linspire's web page: the minimum system requirements are:

- PC with 800 MHz or higher processor
- 128 MB of RAM (256 MB or higher recommended for best performance)
- Hard drive with 4 GB free space
- SVGA or higher resolution and monitor (3-D graphics accelerator card for some

games, screen savers, etc.)

- CD-ROM or DVD drive, Keyboard & Mouse
- Linspire-compatible sound card and speakers or headphones
- Linspire-compatible 56 Kbps hardware modem, cable modem, or DSL modem
- Ethernet card for Internet/LAN connectivity

(Linspire-Compatible means that the sound card or modem is on their list of supported devices, where almost every sound card and modem is supported)

Rant 0:

With the size of upgrades to today's operating systems and applications software, I highly recommend that everyone sign up for a DSL or high speed net connection. Or form a close personal relationship with a friend who has a high speed Internet access connection. Of course I recommend you use a Router to protect your computer(s) from the internet. It is not complete protection but a good start, along with your anti-virus, spyware and adaware programs, it should give you a warm fuzzy. On my web page on CPCUG.ORG, I list my recommended utilities for protecting your computer from virus's, adware and Trojan horses.

Go to www.cpcug.org/user/schinnel to see my list of free and or low cost programs.

Rant I:

I have a problem with people who know me but I don't remember who they are or what their name is. I go to many of the computer shows and computer events around the Washington DC Metro area and people who know me either thru my columns or my volunteering for Capital PC, keep coming up to me and starting a conversation as if I remember who they are. I recommend that if you come up to me and it is quite obvious that I am struggling with your name. Please remind me, and I will be glad to talk and help you with your problem. Or maybe I am just getting old <G>

Rant II

BACKUP BACKUP BACKUP!!!

Now there I have said it again. If you have files, which, if they disappeared, would make you cry or at least wimper, then there is no excuse for not saving them to alternative media. You can purchase a small USB device for a small investment. Also, many of the newer computers come with CD-R drives and CD-ROM media is less than \$0.20 per disk. Do it. Now!!

Rich Schinnell still uses his Macintosh Mini and his PC to evaluate and test programs

and to be able to answer questions from his small business clients. He has been a volunteer for Capital PC for over 20 years and still enjoys learning new things. He can be contacted at schinnel@cpcuyg.org, or richnrockville@mac.com. Last resort is by telephone (301) 949-9292.