

Windows to Linux migration checklist.

1. Clean up your existing Windows system as best you can. Make sure all system updates are applied and that your Internet Security suite is fully up to date. Maybe also defragment your hard disk(s). You'll be needing your Windows system for a while longer but hopefully this will be one of the last times you need to do all this housekeeping!
2. Start using free and open source software alternatives to the programs you are currently using, to familiarise yourself with the kind of applications you will be using. For example: browse the web with Mozilla Firefox, read your emails with Mozilla Thunderbird, perform your office tasks with OpenOffice.org, play your music and video with VLC. Just Google these apps to find the official download pages.
3. Visit <http://distrowatch.com> and look down the list of distributions on the right hand side of the page. Browse through them, read reviews and choose your first one to try. Maybe join the relevant community forum and ask a few questions regarding how to get started to gauge how friendly they are.
4. When you're ready to take the leap, save all your documents, pictures, music etc. to an external drive or similar.
5. If you're comfortable with doing so having asked a few questions as suggested above, go ahead and install your new operating system from whatever source you chose, be it CD, DVD or flash drive. If the installation phase daunts you, ask for help from your local Linux Users Group or similar.
6. Transfer your saved documents back onto your new system and enjoy computing as it should be!

This is just a guide of course. There are other ways of migrating from Windows to Linux and a lot of the above shouldn't be attempted unless you have done some research, taken some knowledgeable advice and are confident in what you are doing.

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