

1- Introduction

During the present academic year we will try to teach you how an operating system works, and particularly, how Linux works, what are its main features, and how to install and configure this operating system.

Today you can find different "flavours" of Linux. These "flavours" or variants are called distributions. One of the most popular distributions among systems administrators and software developers is Debian. We will work with Debian this year.

Apart from working with a special kind of operating system, this subject is going to be different because of the language. Our lingua franca will be English. Later I will tell you why we think that teaching in English is a good idea.

Nowadays, English is undoubtedly the most important language in technological and scientific areas around the world, and particularly, in the field of information technology. As a user you might not realize this fact, because often you are working with operating systems and software packages that have been previously translated into your language. But, as a system administrator or a programmer, if you do not have a good level of English, you will experience a lot of problems and inconveniences in your work and, furthermore, your professional progress might be seriously limited in the future. Probably, in your job, you will work with technical documentation written in English or you will have to meet with people from other countries of Europe, or any other country in the world, and usually the common language will be English. What is more, maybe you will have to attend courses where English will be the "lingua franca" (official language).

Because of these reasons, we strongly believe that everybody should learn English as soon as possible, particularly when you are young, and we would like to help our students in this difficult process. How can we help you? We think that the best way to help is using English as a lingua franca in some of the subjects to be studied over the next two years. We hope that studying operating systems in English will be a good training for you and for us, the teachers, as well.

We, Jordi Binefa and I, are not native English speakers, and we do not have a degree in English philology. We are people who "usually" know how Linux operating system works, and we will try to help you in the process of becoming a skilled junior administrator of this fascinating operating system. We are not teachers of English. If you want to improve your level of English, you should go to a good academy, you should listen to radio on Internet in English, you should speak in English every time you have an opportunity, and you should read in English (books, newspaper, etc). Our goal is to teach you how Linux works in English as we would teach this topic if we were in a meeting with colleagues coming from different countries in Europe.

Before I begin to speak about how everything is organized (subjects, exams, marks, documentation, and so on) I would like to tell you that we are involved in a pilot, in a test. If everything goes well, and language does not become a big issue for you and me then, we will work in English from now to the last day of this academic year. If we think that language is becoming a big issue we will not hesitate to cancel this test and we will work in Catalan the rest of the year. We are strongly committed to the success of this pilot, but teaching Linux is our main duty. It would be a shame if we had to cancel this pilot, and I hope it does not happen.

Method of assessment

1- Practical and theoretical exercises. Make a report. Send the report to our E-mail. The report will be a PDF file attached to the your message. You will find every exercise with questions to be answered on my website.

2- Exams

3- Absences

4- Your mark will be a weighted average of all your exercises, exams and absences.

To be in touch with us

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Our school will give you access to a private educational platform called NET. In a few weeks your tutor will give you a username and password and you will be able to gain access to the NET platform. Thanks to the NET platform, you will access some special services and your own email account.

What is an operating system and what is Linux?

Operating systems, Linux, GNU, FSF, kernel, GNU project, Stallman, Torvald, distributions (distrowatch): Debian, Red Hat. Ubuntu is a distribution based in Debian. Desktops: GNOME and KDE. Metadistributions.