BOOKS REVIEW

LINUX IN NO TIME BY UTE HERTZOG

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You've bought your new computer. You've taken the plunge and decided not to go down the Microsoft route, but instead you have got a copy of Linux. You need to install it and would like someone to hold your hand and talk you through it every step of the way. This is the book for you. The book assumes no technical knowledge whatsoever and even explains jargon in use in everyday speech, mouse mat, menu and window are examples.

Linux in No Time consists of a series of tutorials taking you from first putting the disc into the drive, through the process of starting up and configuring a Linux machine (in this case running Caldera OpenLinux). Later chapters include KDE applications and utilities; installing software; working with Star Office; the Internet and networking with Linux. Each tutorial is clearly set out, first telling you what it will cover and then going through it step by step with plenty of clear screenshots and an illustration of the mouse showing you which button to click on what. Even individual icons are clearly shown, so that there is no excuse for clicking on the wrong thing.

Chapter one deals with installation and covers partitioning, creating a boot disk, graphics setting and passwords, chapter two starts up the newly-installed program and deals with the desktop, the mouse, windows and the help function. The next continues with starting a program, virtual desktops and closing a program. Chapter four is starting to get more complicated and covers KDE configuration and modification of the desktop and windows, but its step-by-step instructions remain easy to follow.

Chapter five is more technical and explains files and directories as well as the trash bin. Lots of tips and definition boxes make it easy to follow, if a little

obvious. The next section goes further into KDE and formats text with the editor and tries out the paint package. It creates a diary as well as an address book. The chapter ends with some light relief by describing the games and toys on KDE with brief descriptions of how to play some of the games.

Chapter seven covers printing and system information. Chapter eight installs and uninstalls programs and introduces Star Office. Star Office is continued in the following chapter with tips on using the various packages. Chapter ten takes you onto the Internet using Netscape, and covers downloading, searching and email. Networking and using Samba are dealt with in chapter eleven. The book concludes with a section on troubleshooting, covering common problems that readers may come across.

The appendix includes a list of Linux-compatible printers, as well as a list of websites, including the book's only mention of other Linux distributions. Most of the sites would be a little beyond what is needed by the book's target audience.

The most noticeable thing about Linux in No Time is how clearly it is set out; it leaves no room for error, and explains everything to the point of oversimplification. The screenshots show you exactly where you should be at any given moment and the mouse pictures show exactly what you should be doing. Instructions do not get more straightforward than this. It must be acknowledged, however, that most Linux users do not need quite such basic instructions and the style may grate with some. It is, perhaps, padded out with some unnecessary definitions but on the whole it is a very attractive textbook. ■