

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 287: Linux Mint 20.3 Is Out

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Labeled “UNA” (but I don’t know why; the justification has not yet been printed), Linux Mint Cinnamon version 20.3 is out and ready to install on your laptop, desktop or other configuration of computer, so long as it is a 64-bit machine. (All versions past version 19 require a 64-bit processor, but don’t assume that your old beater handles only 32 bits; check it out and you may be pleasantly surprised.) This new version is good until at least 2025, so you need not worry about changing versions for awhile.

Your machine needs a bare minimum of 2Gb of RAM, though you will be more comfortable with 4Gb. You’ll need a minimum of 20Gb of disk space, though 100Gb is recommended. Your screen should be capable of 1024 x 766 pixel resolution, but if you have less you will be able to adjust for that.

As always, it comes with the Firefox browser (my personal favorite for ease of use and safety), and Libre Office for more or less seamless use with Microsoft Office products (why on earth would anyone spend hundreds of dollars for Microsoft Office today with several products including Libre Office available totally free?).

The Hypnotix IPTV Player has been much improved (my copy sported 859 TV channels from around the world when writing this on 17Jan). A new XApp gadget that comes with this release helps you keep track of your documents and reading program. And Sticky Notes has a new search function that should be helpful.

The themes have been cleaned up and improved for slicker views the way you like them. And there have been printing and scanning improvements that help especially with Hewlett-Packard hardware. I have always said that HP makes the best printing hardware in the world, but the worst printer software in the world, so anytime you can use controlling software from Linux and avoid HP’s stuff, you are definitely ahead!

If you already have an earlier version of Linux, like 20.2 (“UMA”) on board, upgrading is a snap. I recommend you first use the Update Manager (the little shield icon in your system tray). Click it to bring it up on your desktop, then click the refresh button and install all software that it lists. Reboot if suggested. By then, you should find a little System Reports icon in your tray that looks like this: [!]. Click it to expand it on your desktop and it should show an invitation to upgrade to 20.3. The instructions that follow will be clear and easy to follow.

If you want to install Linux on a machine that does not have an earlier version on it, you will have to take a couple of extra steps. You will need to download a copy of the .iso file: **linuxmint-20.3-cinnamon-64-bit.iso** which you can safely get from Majorgeeks.com in their Linux Distros section (left column of their opening screen). Find it under Linux Mint 20.3, and make sure it is described exactly as shown above in red when you actually begin the download process. The file is 2.1Gb in size, so it will take some time to download it. When you have it, use burning software to make a live, bootable copy of the installation program and use that to actually produce the operating system on your computer.

How is this for an offer? Paid-up ORC members can request a live, bootable copy from me. I will burn one for you, but you will need to pick it up from my QTH. Email or call me for the request, and I will let you know when it is ready to pick up. Happy computing!