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Emmett Dulaney

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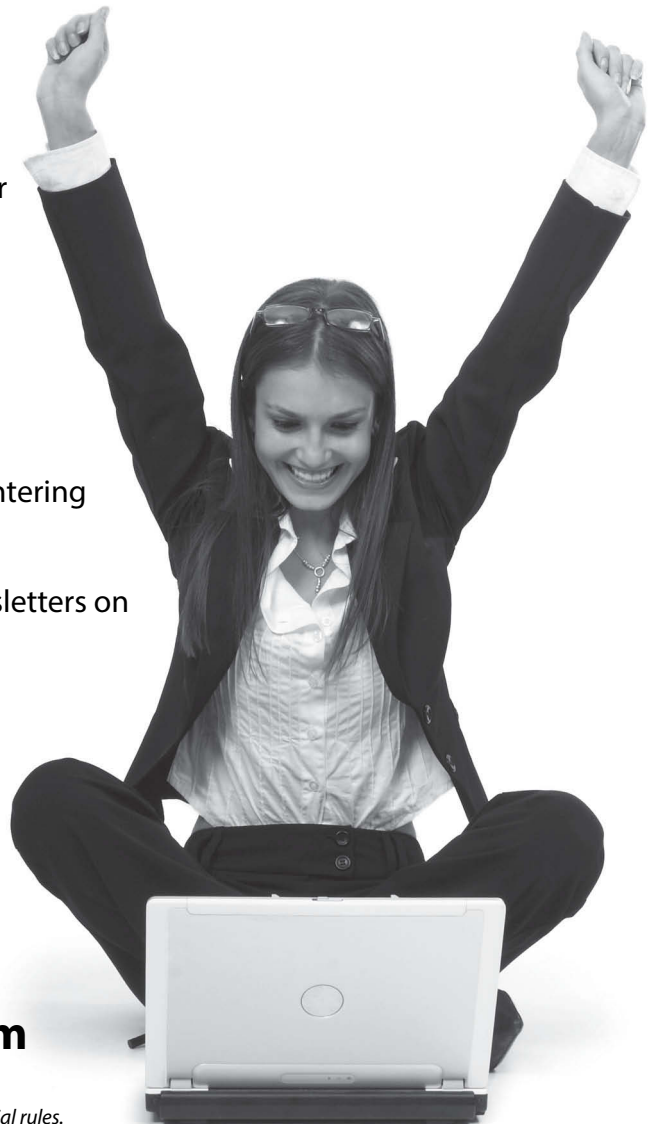
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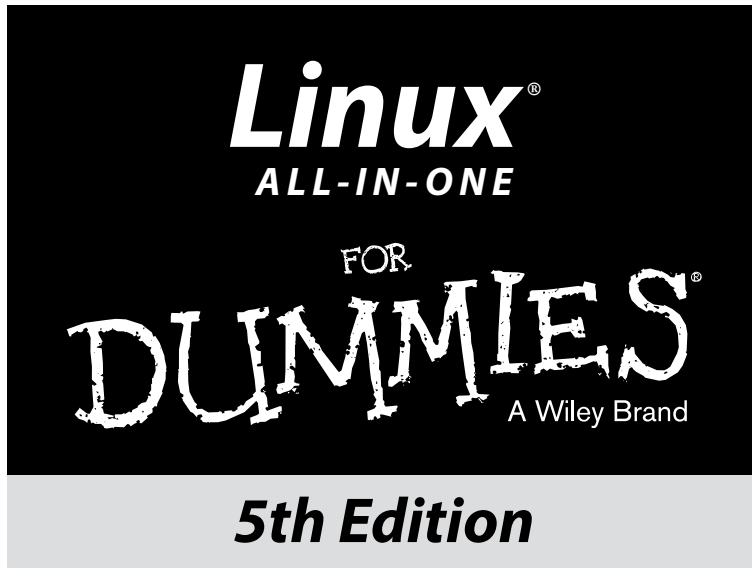
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by Emmett Dulaney

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Introduction

Linux is truly amazing when you consider how it originated and how it continues to evolve. From its modest beginning as the hobby of one person — Linus Torvalds of Finland — Linux has grown into a full-fledged operating system with features that rival those of any commercial Unix operating system. To top it off, Linux — with all of its source code — is available free to anyone. All you have to do is download it from an Internet site or get it on CDs or a DVD for a nominal fee from one of many Linux CD vendors.

Linux certainly is an exception to the rule that “you get what you pay for.” Even though Linux is free, it’s no slouch when it comes to performance, features, and reliability. The robustness of Linux has to do with the way it is developed and updated. Developers around the world collaborate to add features. Incremental versions are continually downloaded by users and tested in a variety of system configurations. Linux revisions go through much more rigorous beta testing than any commercial software does.

Since the release of Linux kernel 1.0 on March 14, 1994, the number of Linux users around the world has grown exponentially. Many Linux distributions — combinations of the operating system with applications and installation tools — have been developed to simplify installation and use. Some Linux distributions are commercially sold and supported, while many continue to be freely available.

Linux, unlike many freely available software programs, comes with extensive online information on topics such as installing and configuring the operating system for a wide variety of PCs and peripherals. A small group of hard-core Linux users are expert enough to productively use Linux with the online documentation alone. A much larger number of users, however, move to Linux with some specific purpose in mind (such as setting up a web server or learning Linux). Also, a large number of Linux users use their systems at home. For these new users, the online documentation is not easy to use and typically does not cover the specific uses of Linux that each user may have in mind.

If you’re beginning to use Linux, what you need is a practical guide that not only gets you going with Linux installation and setup, but also shows you how to use Linux for a specific task. You may also want to try out different Linux distributions before settling on one.

About This Book

Linux All-in-One For Dummies gives you eight quick-reference guides in a single book. Taken together, these eight minibooks provide detailed information on installing, configuring, and using Linux, as well as pointers for passing the vendor-neutral certification exams available from the Linux Professional Institute (LPI) to authenticate your skills.

What you'll like most about this book is that you don't have to sequentially read the whole thing chapter by chapter — or even read through each section in a chapter. You can pretty much turn to the topic you want and quickly get the answer to your pressing questions about Linux, whether they're about using the LibreOffice.org word processor, setting up the Apache web server, or a wide range of topics.

Here are some of the things you can do with this book:

- ◆ Install and configure Linux — Debian, Fedora, openSUSE, Ubuntu, or Xandros — using the information given in this book.
- ◆ Connect the Linux PC to the Internet through a DSL or cable modem.
- ◆ Add a wireless Ethernet to your existing network.
- ◆ Get tips, techniques, and shortcuts for specific uses of Linux, such as
 - Setting up and using Internet services
 - Setting up a Windows server using Samba
 - Using Linux commands
 - Using shell programming
 - Using the LibreOffice.org office suite and other applications that come with Linux
- ◆ Understand the basics of system and network security.
- ◆ Perform system administration tasks.

I use a simple notational style in this book. All listings, filenames, function names, variable names, and keywords are typeset in a `monospace` font for ease of reading. I *italicize* the first occurrences of new terms and concepts and then provide a definition right there. I show typed commands in **boldface**. The output of commands and any listing of files are shown in a `monospace` font.

The icons to the certification objectives are important after you've become comfortable enough with the operating system to consider taking the certification exams. They will draw your attention to the key concepts and topics tested upon in the LX0-101 and LX0-102 exams (both of which you must pass to become certified by the Linux Professional Institute).