

Choosing an Operating System

In the last lesson, you learned how an operating system boots up. It's an important concept to understand since you'll be faced with troubleshooting boot up issues in IT support. Now, we're going to walk through the steps to select and install an operating system. We're going to focus on operating systems in the IT space. First, we'll talk about deciding which operating system to install in a business setting. Second, we'll dive into the overall process of installing an operating system. How do you decide which operating system to install? Well, you need to ask yourself a couple of questions. Has the decision already been made? The operating systems in use by an organization have a lot to do with the applications and systems that they need to run. Are you working with an organization or service that requires the use of a specific operating system? If so, you're done. That was easy. If a decision hasn't been made on what OS to use or if you're looking for an operating system for personal use, then you need to ask yourself what software will need to be run on this device and lots of cases the software will be designed to run on a specific operating system. It's also possible that the software is cross-platform, meaning it can run on more than one operating system. Another question to ask, is what hardware will be used? Modern operating systems do a pretty good job of supporting common hardware. You should keep in mind that some manufacturers allow their operating system to be only installed on their hardware. There's one more thing I should call out. Remember that we have different CPU architectures, 32-bit and 64-bit. Our operating systems will also be optimized for this architecture. Make sure that the CPU and OS are compatible. If you have a 64-bit CPU, you should also install the 64-bit version of the operating system you choose. Okay, now that you've chosen an operating system that you want to use, let's work on getting it installed on our hardware. Many computers come with an operating system pre-installed. If you boot the computer in this condition, the operating system will continue from whatever point the vendor left it at. You'll need to do a couple of things to finish the installation, like choosing a computer name or host name, or configuring the network for the device. If you're going to be installing an operating system from scratch, you can use different installation media. Some operating system manufacturers sell their operating system in disk form or USB form. Some let you do reinstalls directly over the Internet. As an IT support specialist, you will install an operating system many times, so using one single disk won't be time-efficient or scalable. Scalability is an important concept that we'll cover later. If you want to scale or accommodate multiple computers the added support is something you need to keep in mind. For now you're only working with one computer, so let's focus on that. Let's just use a USB drive to install your operating system. Most manufacturers have their own special USB drives with the installation image like Windows. For Linux, we can load up an OS onto any USB drive.

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