

Switching from Windows

Back up first

You should be doing 3-2-1 backups already see [here](#). Before making any changes to a pc, check the back up. You need to be able to recover all your precious data. You can buy replacement software. But you cannot replace family photos if they are not backed up.

Safeguard valuable Windows license key with Belarc

Anyone who owns a Windows licence (including Win10) such as the one factory pre-installed with a PC should do this step immediately whether they are contemplating a move to Linux or not. The license key is valuable but is not easily readable.

In the future you may get a computer virus or suffer hard disk failure. If you have a license key, you can easily rebuild the software on a machine by reinstalling Windows.

Download and install Belarc adviser

- <https://www.belarc.com/products/belarc-advisor>

You may be asked to give your email address but I've never received spam. Run a detailed profile report. The resulting local HTML webpage report is very informative but not very convenient. To get a pdf,. “*print*” the web page from your browser and select pdf format as the output. This creates a more convenient pdf document from the report.

Email the pdf report to yourself so that it is secure and *off the machine*.

Try before you buy

If you download any “*LIVE*” Linux distribution as a “.iso” disk image file (wiki [here](#)), the image if burnt to a DVD will be *bootable*. Linux can run safely from a DVD disk drive without touching the hard drive or in any way changing the Windows setup.

These days, DVDs went out with the Ark. The iso image can be burned to a much faster USB and the live Linux system booted and run from the USB (or an SD card).

This point is extremely important and usually misunderstood:

- **copying the files to a USB drive does not work!**

The .iso image has to be “*flashed*” to the USB using special software. On Windows, this balenaEtcher app should do the job:

- <https://etcher.balena.io/>

Watch YouTube for Ubuntu 26.04 LTS install

This YouTube (better watched ad free on [FreeTube](#)) will show you how to run a live version or permanently install a version of Ubuntu 26.04 LTS:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2PWnpkFWcY>

It is fairly comprehensive but not *particularly entertaining*!

USB boot interrupting BIOS

The video above does show how to flash a USB (refer [here](#)).

In some ways the hardest thing of all is to boot from a USB. To achieve this one has to hit a key or key combination to interrupt the BIOS boot up programme to prevent Windows loading from the hard drive. The key to hit depends on the manufacturer. Read this:

- <https://www.tomshardware.com/reviews/bios-keys-to-access-your-firmware,5732.html>

Ubuntu release cycle

LTS – longer-term support releases of Ubuntu come out April in even numbered years. LTS [releases](#) are supported for 5 years – extendible up to 15 years free of charge. Non LTS releases are only for testing by expert developers. Ordinary users should stick to LTS releases. Ubuntu is the basis of many other Linux distributions including Mint. So the Ubuntu release cycle is very relevant.

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