

Part 2.1

Operating System

Preference, performance, and personality

Introduction

An operating system, or OS, is the main software program of a computer. It allows the computer's hardware and other software to communicate with each other, enabling nearly every action of a computer. Without an operating system, a computer is nothing more than a box and a screen!

There are three popular types of operating systems for personal computers including Mac OS, Microsoft Windows, and Linux. Mac OS and Windows are the two most recognized operating systems. Some people prefer Linux because it is an open source operating system, meaning that anyone can access and modify its code—and you can use it free of charge.

Your operating system choice will determine the type of hardware you get, in other words, the actual computer equipment. There are multiple hardware vendors available for Windows and Linux, but Apple is the only manufacturer of computers that run Mac OS. The operating system also determines your computer's interface, or how you interact with software on screen. Because each operating system offers a different look and feel, it's important to consider what personality or look you would like your computer to have.

Item List

What to look for:

When selecting an operating system, there are many factors to consider including personality, performance, and price. Because we all desire different things from our computers, knowing what you will use your computer for and what you value the most (e.g., compatibility, interface style, security) can help determine which OS is right for you.

Windows

Windows is an OS developed by Microsoft Corporation that has become the most popular operating system, dominating the market with over 84% of computer users.

Pros

- **Standard of Choice.** Windows has become the most common OS for the majority of business and home users worldwide.
- **Compatibility.** Nearly every program, game, or computer device works with Windows.
- **Reliability.** Support for Windows is easy to come by and can be efficient for troubleshooting computer problems.

Cons

- **Viruses.** Because of the widespread use of Windows, hackers often target it with malicious software and viruses.

- **Price.** Unlike Linux, Windows is not free and there are restrictions to what a user can modify.

MAC OS

Created by Apple Inc., Mac OS is preferred by over 14% of computer users and is most commonly known for its sleek graphical user interface.

Pros

- **Interface.** It offers a unique and intuitive graphical interface, making it popular with graphic designers and other creative media producers.
- **User-friendly.** Many users find Mac OS computers easy to set up and simple to use.
- **Stability.** It is often considered stable and less susceptible to virus attacks because hackers target Windows computers more heavily.

Cons

- **Compatibility.** Not all games or applications will run with Mac OS.
- **Manufacturer.** Apple is the only manufacturer of computers that will run Mac OS, eliminating the opportunity to shop from multiple vendors.
- **Price.** Mac OS is not free like Linux, and since it runs only on Apple computers, it can cost more than Windows.

Linux

Linux is an open source operating system developed collaboratively by many different companies and users. Linux is free and widely used on computer servers, but still holds less than 1% of the OS market share.

Pros

- **Price.** Anyone can access and modify the Linux code, making it entirely open and free for use.
- **Flexibility.** Many users find Linux a good choice because it can be configured and developed in new ways.

Cons

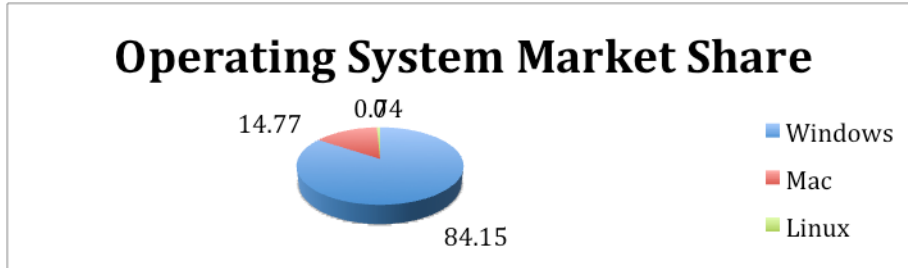
- **Complex.** Linux requires a lot of computer knowledge to use and can be more difficult to manage than Windows or Mac OS.
- **Compatibility.** Some software, such as high-end graphics programs or games, is not typically compatible with Linux.

Illustration Factoids

Windows wins as the operating system of choice with 84.15%. Mac OS scores second at 14.77%, and Linux is a distant third with 0.74%. ([Stat Owl](#))

[Design Note to BE Publishing]

Insert visual representation of the statistics above, such as a pie chart.



Activity Assessment

Do your research

Which OS is for you?

There is no right or wrong operating system. The choice is really a matter of personal preference, and based on what you will use your computer for. If you're interested in graphic design, Mac OS may be a favored choice, or if you are an avid gamer, Windows may be the top contender—even though both operating systems handle both tasks. If you really like to get involved in how your computer works and thinks, then Linux might be a fun choice. The best way to decide is to explore all of your options to see which will work best based on your interests, needs, and budget.

Research the different operating systems and begin thinking about which one will work best for you. You will use your research in Sections 2 and 3 when comparing which computer to purchase later on in Part 2.

- What are the similarities and differences between operating systems?
- What do you value most from an operating system (e.g., interface, stability, price)?
- Which operating system best meets your needs and budget?

User Type Matrix

Which OS Are You?

Based on how you will use your computer, determine which operating system will best meet your needs. If you are considering Linux, be sure to check compatibility of your software needs with it first.

Computer User Types:	Everyday Pro	Media Pro	Production Pro
Windows	X	X	X
Mac OS	X	X	X
Linux	<i>Check compatibility of your software with Linux.</i>		