

Discussion comments

Safety and security issues

Removing data from old disks

The question came up on how to remove all traces of data on a machine that you will be discarding. There are two cases here, depending on whether the machine is still bootable or not.

If you can still boot the machine, then Darik's Boot and Nuke is a program that you can boot and will overwrite all data seen on a machine. It will give you options on what to delete and how severely it must be erased. The advantage of doing this would be if you want to pass it on to someone else, who can then install whatever they want.

If, however, the machine will no longer boot, then you will have to take the hard drive out and destroy the data on it in some way. If you have access to another machine and a suitable caddy to mount it in, then it would be possible to do a complete reformat of the drive that way.

Destruction of the older drives with spinning platters is not as simple as it sounds as they are very tough, and the most thorough method would be to drill holes through them all. Modern solid state drives can be more easily destroyed.

Personal data on phones and tablets

It is good practice to keep all your apps up to date. In most cases this can be achieved by setting it so it updates automatically, say, overnight.

You should have no difficulties if you install only from the Google app store (Android) or Apple app store (iphone). If you get apps from anywhere else you are on your own.

Space short in /boot

If a Linux installation reports a shortage of space in the /boot partition, then this will be due to updates of the Linux kernel without old ones being removed.

The first thing to try will be to run this command in a terminal:

```
sudo apt autoremove
```

which will remove all kernels that no longer have support available, leaving (I think) the last two of each development series).

But you may well wish to remove more than just those.

A good way is to open the update manager (either click on the shield in the system bar, or find it in the main menu → Administration → Update manager). Under View → Linux Kernels you will see

the kernels that are currently available, and shows in the central column which are installed. The active one is also indicated as such.

You can then click on one of them and uninstall what you do not want.

How much space is used on a partition?

The amount of space available on a partition can be found in a couple of easy ways. A summary of all of them is found by issuing the command in a terminal:

```
df
```

and the hard drives are shown in the left column with names like /dev/sdx, and the right hand column will show you where each one is found in the file system.

The file browser normally installed in Ubuntu and its derivatives will also show you the free space in the partition where the current directory is found. Usually listed in bottom bar of the window. So by opening the file browser and going to File System and then opening the boot directory will show the free space in the same partition.

LibreOffice dictionaries

If you find spell checking is not working in LibreOffice Writer, the first thing to do is find out which language it thinks is in use.

In Writer, hit F11 to open up the list of styles, ensure that the list of paragraph styles is shown by clicking on the left most icon at the top of the pane/window. and right click on Default Style and select Modify.

Then select the Font tab and see what Language is listed.

In the drop down list of languages, those for which a dictionary is available are given a blue tick mark. The others cannot be checked for conforming orthography.

You can also check whether it will default to correct language by going to Tools → Options (I think it might be Edit → Options for Windows) and then go to Languages Setting → Languages and see what the defaults are for various localisation attributes. You should do this whilst in Writer.

Also under the Tools → Options → Language Setting → Writing Aids, you should make sure all the options are as you want them with ticks against the various spellcheck settings. In particular that something like Hunspell is ticked as the spelling checker in use. If it is not, then it should be installed from the Hunspell package together with the appropriate languages.