



P 07 3378 0570
E email@bizux.com.au
W www.bizux.com.au
ABN 26 077 704 824
ACN 077 704 824

Buying a Small Business Server

Most small businesses with 10 or more employees will face the task of buying a computer server, or adding to their existing inventory. Servers are most commonly used as central file repositories where users can easily share documents, but they can do many other tasks as well from print and mail serving to performing system-wide backups. Other key applications include hosting databases, running group-ware (such as calendar programs and customer relationship management software), and serving a company Web site or intranet. For creative studios or departments, a server might hold large image, video, and music libraries.

The type of server you choose should reflect the number and type of applications you want to run on it, and the number of users (clients) it will have. Many common applications such as print serving, sharing office documents like Word and Excel files, and running calendar programs impose such light processing demands that a single low-cost server may be able to handle your entire company with ease. Other tasks, like hosting large databases or image libraries, require more processing horsepower along with big, fast hard disks and capacious network pipes to match.

Servers are basically specialised PCs, and they run the gamut of speeds and capacities just as desktop workstations do. Nevertheless, they are a breed apart, designed to be secure (to protect your valuable company data) and fault-tolerant (to be available continuously). Servers also offer remote-management tools, so that an IT person can log in from a desk or workstation and check usage, diagnose problems, and perform routine maintenance such as adding new users or changing passwords.

After determining the functions you need your server(s) to perform, and the number of users you will have, you'll need to select a server operating system, such as Windows, Linux, or Mac, and choose the hardware to run it on. If you're upgrading existing servers, you'll probably want to talk to a consultant who will advise on the best value for money solution. For new servers, you're free to pick the combination of software and hardware that best meets your needs and budget. Don't assume that because you have PCs, you are locked into Windows; Linux servers can handle Windows clients with aplomb, and are better value overall. Windows servers require extra software to be purchased such as server anti-virus and a professional backup solution.

Server Operating Systems

Here is an article entitled “Five Reasons Linux Beats Windows for Servers” written by Katherine Noyes of PCWorld

Linux is eminently better suited to server use than Windows is, better than most any other competitor, I'd argue. Why? Let's count the ways.

1. Stability

Linux systems are well known for their ability to run for years without failure; in fact, many Linux users have never seen a crash. That's great for users of every kind, but it's particularly valuable for small and medium-sized businesses, for which downtime can have disastrous consequences.

Linux also handles a large number of processes running at once much better than Windows does, that's something, in fact, that tends to degrade Windows' stability quickly.

Then there's the need for rebooting. Whereas in Windows configuration changes typically require a reboot, causing inevitable downtime, there's generally no need to restart Linux. Almost all Linux configuration changes can be done while the system is running and without affecting unrelated services.

Similarly, whereas Windows servers must often be de-fragmented frequently, that's all but eliminated on Linux. Let your competitors endure the plentiful downtime that inevitably goes hand-in-hand with Windows; trusty Linux will keep you up and running and serving your customers around the clock.

2. Security

[Linux is also innately more secure than Windows is](#), whether on the server, the desktop or in an [embedded environment](#). That's due largely to the fact that Linux, which is based on Unix, was designed from the start to be a multi-user operating system. Only the administrator, or root user, has administrative privileges, and fewer users and applications have permission to access the kernel or each other. That keeps everything modular and protected.

Of course, Linux also gets attacked far less frequently by viruses and malware, and vulnerabilities tend to be found and fixed more quickly by its legions of developers and users. Even the six-year-old kernel bug that was recently fixed, for instance, an extremely rare instance in the Linux world, had never been exploited.

Internally, meanwhile, users of a Windows system can sometimes hide files from the system administrator. On Linux, however, the sysadmin always has a clear view of the file system and is always in control.

3. Hardware

Whereas Windows typically requires frequent hardware upgrades to accommodate its ever-increasing resource demands, Linux is slim, trim, flexible and scalable, and it performs admirably on just about any computer, regardless of processor or machine architecture.

Linux can also be easily reconfigured to include only the services needed for your business's purposes, thus further reducing memory requirements, improving performance and keeping things even simpler.

4. TCO

There's no beating Linux's total cost of ownership, since the software is generally free. Even an enterprise version purchased with corporate support will be cheaper overall than Windows or other proprietary software, which generally involve user-based licensing and a host of expensive add-ons, especially for security.

Same goes for most of the tools and [applications that might be used on a Linux server](#). The overall TCO simply can't be beat.

5. Freedom

With Linux, there is no commercial vendor trying to lock you into certain products or protocols. Instead, you're free to mix and match and choose what works best for your business.

In short, with all the many advantages Linux provides in the server realm, it's no wonder governments, organisations and major companies around the world, including Amazon and Google, rely on the open source operating system in their own production systems.

If you're looking for a Linux distribution to run on your business's servers, you'd do well to consider [CentOS](#) (or RHEL, the paid version from [Red Hat](#) that CentOS is based on).

This document was created with Open Source

The U.S Department of Defense approves the use of the Open Software Source (OSS) model because of the superior reliability, security and ongoing support advantages.