



Introduction

CentOS is a free enterprise-class Linux distribution for desktops, workstations, and servers. It is derived from the Red Hat Enterprise Linux source packages to create an exactly compatible compatible Enterprise Linux product. CentOS is designed for people who need an Enterprise operating system, but don't need the support available from Enterprise Linux vendors.

CentOS is developed and maintained by a small but growing team of core developers. In turn, those developers are supported by a growing and active user community which helps testing software packages, providing mirrors, and answering questions on the project's support avenues.

What is an Enterprise distribution?

- You prefer stability over bleeding edge software
- You prefer long-term support over updating every year

- You need stable APIs and ABIs for your own software
- You need a distribution for your production environment
- You don't want program versions to change overnight
- You care about integration of modern security technologies
- You want backported security fixes, so updating doesn't break anything

CentOS delivers all that. A new release comes out every 18 to 24 months, and each release is supported for around 7 years.

With these characteristics, CentOS is an excellent desktop and server operating system for people who want a system that just works. Due to its heritage, CentOS is also an excellent migration path for former Fedora legacy users.



CentOS features

Package management

CentOS uses the yum package management tool to allow for seamless updating and installation of packages. The project provides some additional repositories with

optional software like the Cluster Suite and the Global File System.

The CentOS mirroring system automatically provides

mirrors that are close to the host that yum is being used on.

Security

In addition to traditional UNIX-like access control, CentOS includes the SELinux mandatory access control framework. This framework allows the system administrator to limit the rights of processes through policies. The default targeted policy

confines many commonly used server applications. Additionally, CentOS includes technologies to counter common vulnerabilities such as buffer overflows.

Virtualization

Starting with version 5, CentOS has integrated support for the Xen virtual machine monitor. CentOS 5 can run both as a privileged or unprivileged domain. The virt-manager tool allows system administrators to bootstrap new virtual machines with minor effort.

Included software

CentOS provides many popular software packages, including: Apache, Evolution, GNOME, GNU Compiler Collection, Mozilla Firefox, KDE, MySQL, OpenOffice.org, Perl, Postfix, PostgreSQL, Python, Ruby, Samba, Sendmail, Systemtap, and Xfce.

Supported platforms

CentOS supports i386, x86_64 (EM64T), IA64, s390, and s390x machines.