More Mileage from XP, and,

the Rising Stars of Linux Distros   9.10.13

More Mileage from XP:

This can be gained by partition alignment when using modern 4 Kb HDDs, ie, SATA and SSD, although re-alignment seems to help with efficiency, when utilised, for IDE HDDs as well. You can check for details of XP partition alignment for modern HDDs via Google, eg, Thomas Krenn Wiki Partition Alignment, and/or, just use Vista/Win7/Win8 OSs, to partition and format an HDD, **before actually installing XP.**   You are also advised to confine the OS to a separate partition, and then make additional cloning and/or Storage Partitions, for improved OS efficiency, as well as for a first stage of data security.

However, **the easiest and surest method of XP HDD partition aligning is to use a dedicated application,** such as the **Align** facility incorporated into MiniTool 8.   This program works in Windows, and/or, a bootable .ISO is downloadable via the Desktop version. You can actually align existing partitions as is, data and all, or, prior to a fresh OS install. When aligning any existing Boot Partition C:, **do so individually,** as a precaution, although multiple commands are executable for either bootable or non-bootable partitions. The **Align** facility will also indicate whether a partition may already be aligned. Clean and defrag the HDD partitions as per usual, both Registry and files, for best performance, and you will readily note an increase in speed, as well as a characteristically neat deployment of data when performing a defrag.

Installation or cloning to an already aligned partition gives the best results. Note also that **20 Gb HDDs** actually respond well to being formatted separately, **via Disk Management, using 1024 byte sectors**, making them ideal for XP OS clones, or data storage, given that they are in good condition still.

In the meantime, **XP SP3, plus combining Custom/OpenSource programs,** firewall, virus-checker, adware checker, browser, and Office etc, plus, sensible Internet use, will still keep XP safe and useable online. **If all you really need is email and web-surfing,** well and good, just keep your faithful XP system going as long as possible for these purposes...?

The Rising Stars of Linux Distros:

When you have had experience of a Linux OS demo, and thenceforth know what to look for and, where to look, there is a wide choice of freeware Linux OSs that astound and amaze, and they are rapidly getting better in performance, and, more tailored for easy use by non-afficionados. Speed, stability, simplicity are dominant, especially if you just need no-frills Web access, and, online email. A new computer, and vast, complex Apple or Win OSs, are simply not needed just for these purposes. Your older, still useful system, either laptop or PC, can be matched with a Linux OS that will rapidly boot, have good video, sound, speed, and, general easy useability. **Nofrillstech** has mixed and matched anything from Pentium 3s to dual-core systems, both laptops and PCs, with Linux OSs, and all performed with ease, especially when connecting to the Internet, using either cable or wifi. Smartfone tethering is a breeze with as well.

There are respective **Linux online updates** required at installation, including for security, but, never to the extent of then repeatedly using vital bandwidth and time, as do MS OSs, nor is there any validation to contend with. **Support for these Open Source distros** is up to you, so, if you like them, then either publicise them, and/or, send your favourites some useful $$$. They do such a great job, as well as freeing you from the software hegemonies of both Apple and Microsoft, and, their respective hardware exigencies. **You may need to test-install for different hardware systems,** especially older laptops, as heuristics may apply as regards compatibility, but, this will be a small inconvenience for the resulting ease of Linux OS use, and the Linux OSs will install quite quickly.

Note that MiniTool 8 , as a Third Party program, can be used most effectively to clean HDDs prior to any Linux OS installation, and, is also recommended when re-installing an Apple or Win OS, to ensure complete erasure of unwanted data and partitions, in all cases. Note that Linux OSs can be installed on Wintel-based Apple systems.

Re peripherals, such as printers, at this stage, you would be advised to check online for Linux printer drivers available for given brands, and, plan your printer purchase accordingly, although the general rule seems to favour more recent models. Note also, that, unless you need an inkjet printer for specialized printing, laser printing is much more economical, and reliable, check online to see if you can get generic refilled cartridges for your prospective laser printer. Cameras and smartfones should connect automatically, though in general, heuristics may also apply for scanners, printers, media centre, etc. (However, as backup, a faithful XP system, no longer powerful enough for fast Internet access, still with its trusty peripherals, can be used for offline printing, and/Photoshop, hardware testing, etc.)

Linux Mint, PeppermintOS, Ubuntu, Ubuntu Remix, Lubuntu, Kubuntu, Xubuntu, and Puppy (165mb!) are all Open Source Linux OSs that Nofrillstech has tested. See DistroWatch for the current top consumer choices. Some, such as **Linux Mint,** have **SMART technology** present, making HDD checks much easier, plus, after all, if the HDD is failing, a timely warning of this event is surely worth having.

Finally, **Nofrillstech** has been able to duplicate all Win apps, via Linux OSs, necessary for basic Internet access, and, Web page support. When the wheels do finally fall off XP, online, anyway, then for **Nofrillstech,** Linux OSs will take over, no doubts at all about that.

Home http://nofrillstech.net/