

Can you teach on Linux? (Of course not?)

You might be pleasantly surprised!

Crashes. Forced updates. Viruses. Spyware. Micro\$oft telemetry. Copilot and it's recall feature. OneDrive. Oh, and a rented billboard not an operating system. Why are there advertisements in my OS for crying out loud? All things Micro\$oft are trying to force down our throats without even bothering to ask users if they either need or want them. Microsoft always was a nightmare, but these days it is taking surveillance capitalism to the ultimate extreme.

I am not interested in providing Microsoft with a free quality control service to fix problems and bugs which should honestly have been fixed prior to leaving the factory. I am at my wits e with eternal updates, constantly virus scanning, patching, troubleshooting Microsoft systems. Life is short. Too short. I am at the end of my tether.

Those still suffering with Windows do so for a whole list of (mostly) escapable reasons.

- Your employer forces you to.
- It was bundled with your PC.
- You use software available only on Windows (true or not).
- You can only game on Windows (no longer true, actually).
- You don't know any better.

All but one of these reasons are escapable; the specialised software issue might be a problem – or not. I will come to this later.

[Here is my previous list of personal dislikes of Windows itself from a prior article...](#)

“One of the things I've disliked most about Windows itself is that it takes over my computer like it owns it. And it's rather difficult to wrestle back control. If I don't stop it, Windows constantly churns on my hard drive, rearranging files. This bothers me because when I am not doing anything, nothing should be happening. I have no way of knowing whether Windows is doing this or whether my computer has viruses.

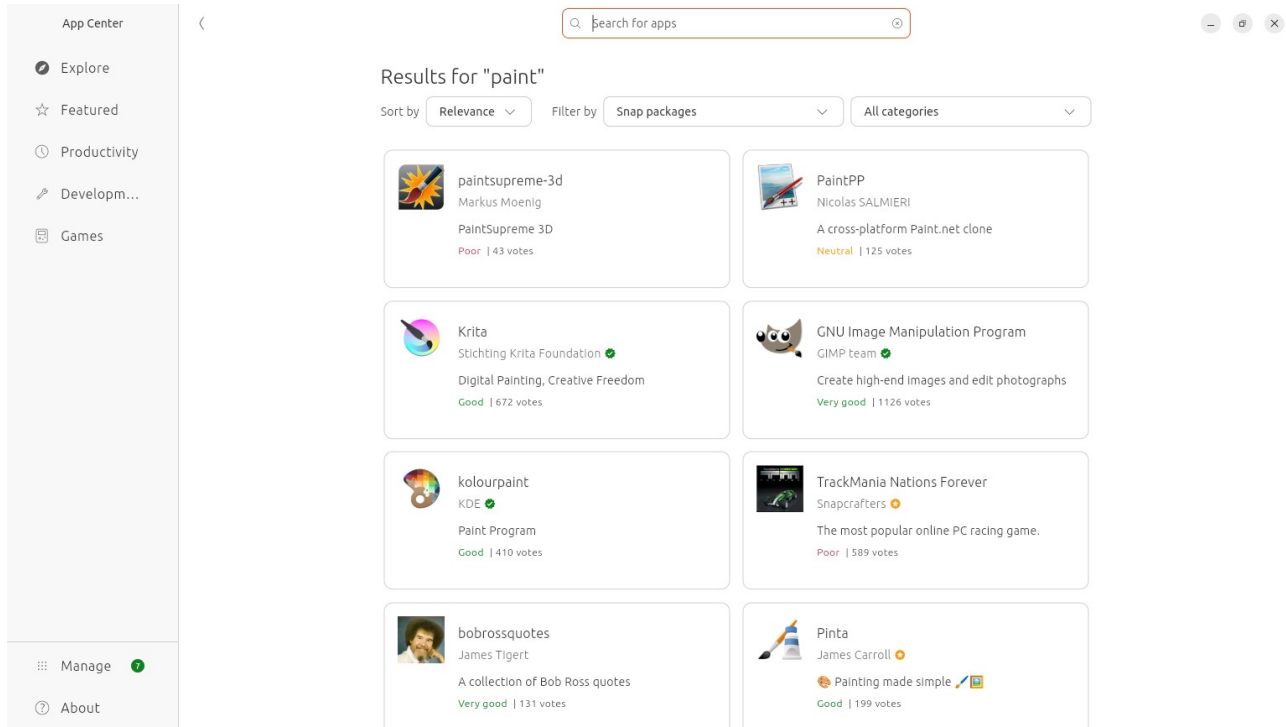
If I don't stop it, Windows will take full control of my computer to do "updates", and it will completely lock me out, sometimes for over an hour. This is all occurring while I need to get work done. For years, I've hated fighting with my operating system for the right to have top priority on the computers that I own.”

Then Windows 10 came out, and on top of all the other things Windows was doing, it added to the list:

- *Updating itself without my permission, with no settings that I can use to stop it*
- *Tracking everything I do online*
- *Possibly snooping on everything I write in MS Office*
- *Using my computer as a server and my Internet connection to update other people's computers! Seriously Microsoft?!!!*
- *Most likely backdooring its disk encryption*
- *Displaying advertisements for Microsoft Products (Microsoft, how unprofessional are you trying to be!)*
- *Disabling Windows 7 and 8, so that I am forced to use Windows 10.*

But what about software?

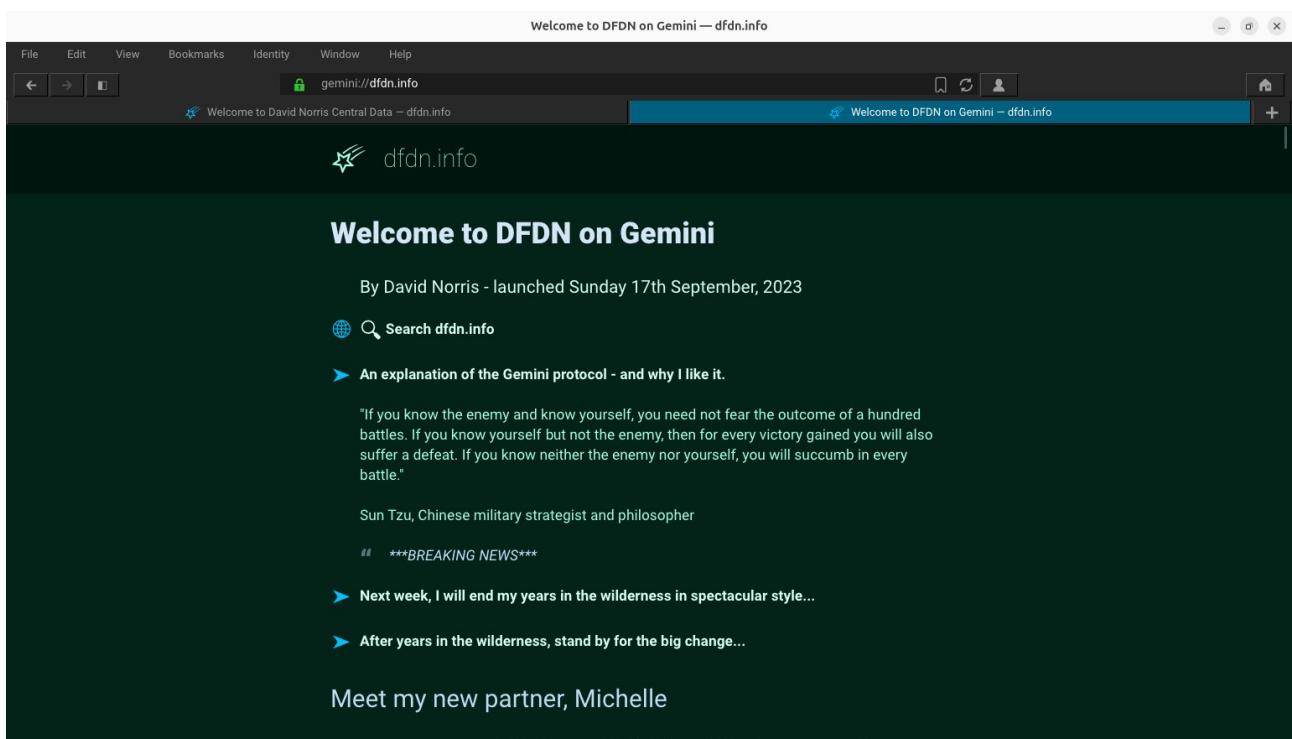
Well, these days almost anything mainstream has its equivalents on Linux. For example, Kcolorpaint is the equivalent of – you’ve guessed it, Microsoft paint...



So let's give you a brief explanation of a few things you might recognise before I answer the big question. Can you teach online on Linux?

For email, Usenet etc., use Mozilla Thunderbird in place of Outlook.

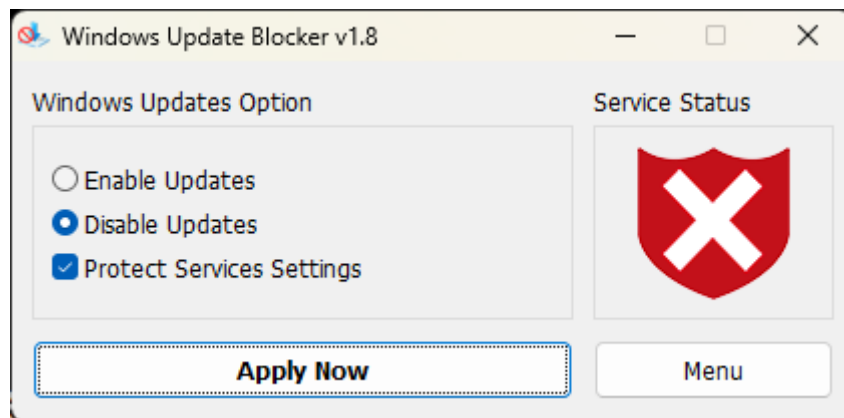
Well, I am a big fan of both the venerable gopher and the modern, relatively new gemini protocol. These are like the web in the days before surveillance capitalism took it over with excess JavaScript, incessant user tracking, pop up advertisements, autoplaying videos and prompts to



accept cookies on every single page. And I use Lagrange as a client for both gopher and gemini on Windows (not for much longer!), Android and – guess what, it is very easy to install from.... A Linux repository, packed full of free – and useful software. Not Micro\$oft crap-ware like candy crush and copilot.

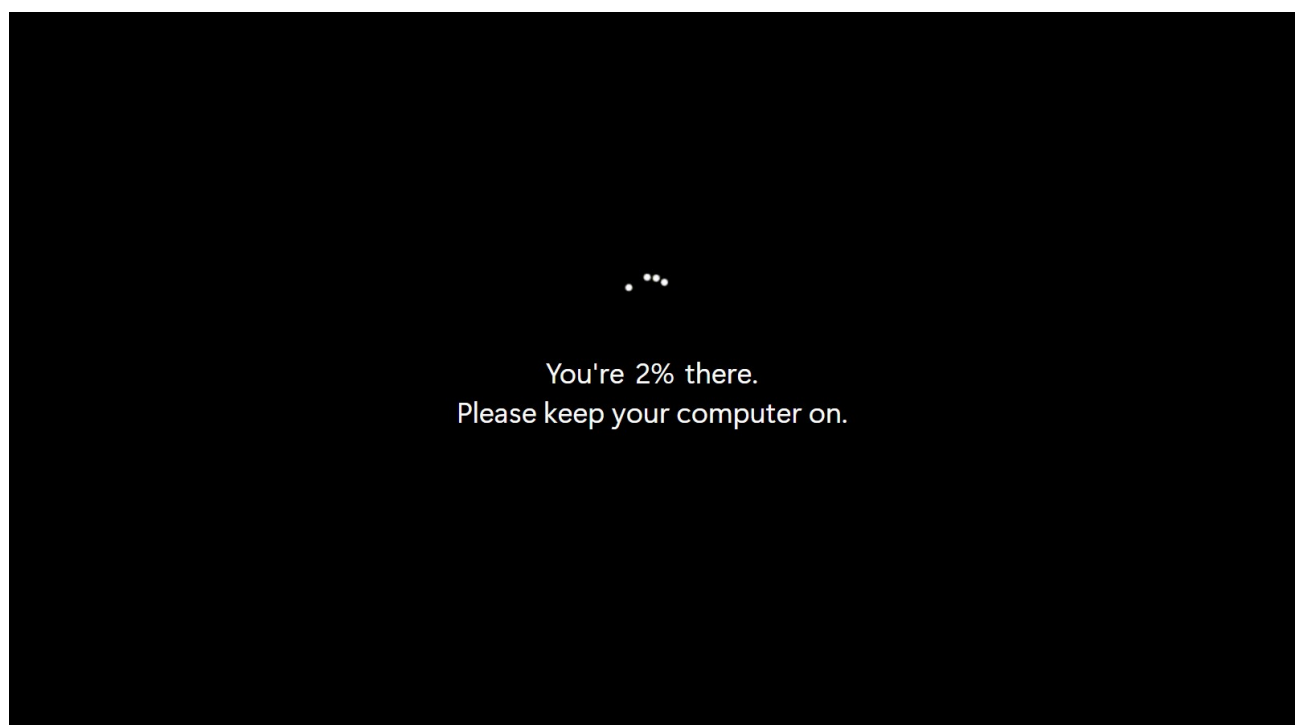
Speaking of Microsoft, what is the equivalent of Microsoft telemetry, for sending your personal details of how you use your computer back to Microsoft for sale to advertisers, scammers and lord knows who else? Oh, and Copilot with its recall feature (known to send screenshots of your bank details and personal images back to Microsoft every three seconds – indeed anything the screenshots might capture from the display? There have no equivalents I am happy to mention! So, better for privacy and security by 100%. These are Windows equivalents we definitely do not require!!!

And where are the forced updates? Absent! Updates are entirely the choice of, and at the behest of, the users. I will not be needing this to be running at all times...



To avoid this 'go to hell' screen happening at the start of every other presentation....

Or this happening in the middle of most classes...





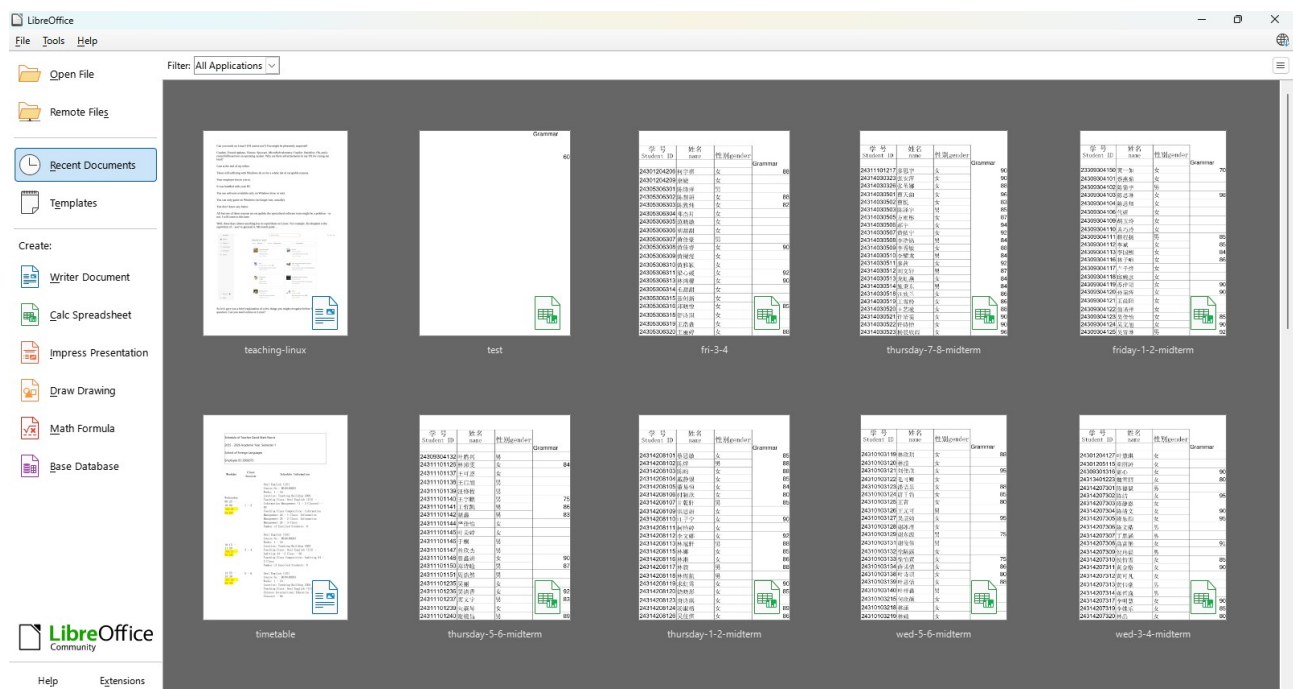
Preparing to configure Windows
Don't turn off your computer.

Your PC will restart several times

Or this either - for the next ten hours while my students bang their heads on the desks and roll their eyes at me while I stand there like a lunatic.

So now I will be in true ownership of my computer, not some foreign tech company who treats me as a cash cow to be milked on demand for my cash and if not, my personal files and usage history, and abused at will.

Now that my computer is my own once more, lets take a look at how I can use it in peace...



Recognise this? Well, you should. It is LibreOffice, which I have now been using to make my teaching materials – among other things – for many years. As I mentioned elsewhere, I dumped Micro\$oft Excel about 20 years ago because Micro\$oft kept changing the menus repeatedly for no apparent reason. I am a busy man, and I have no time for Childish games. And, as documented on

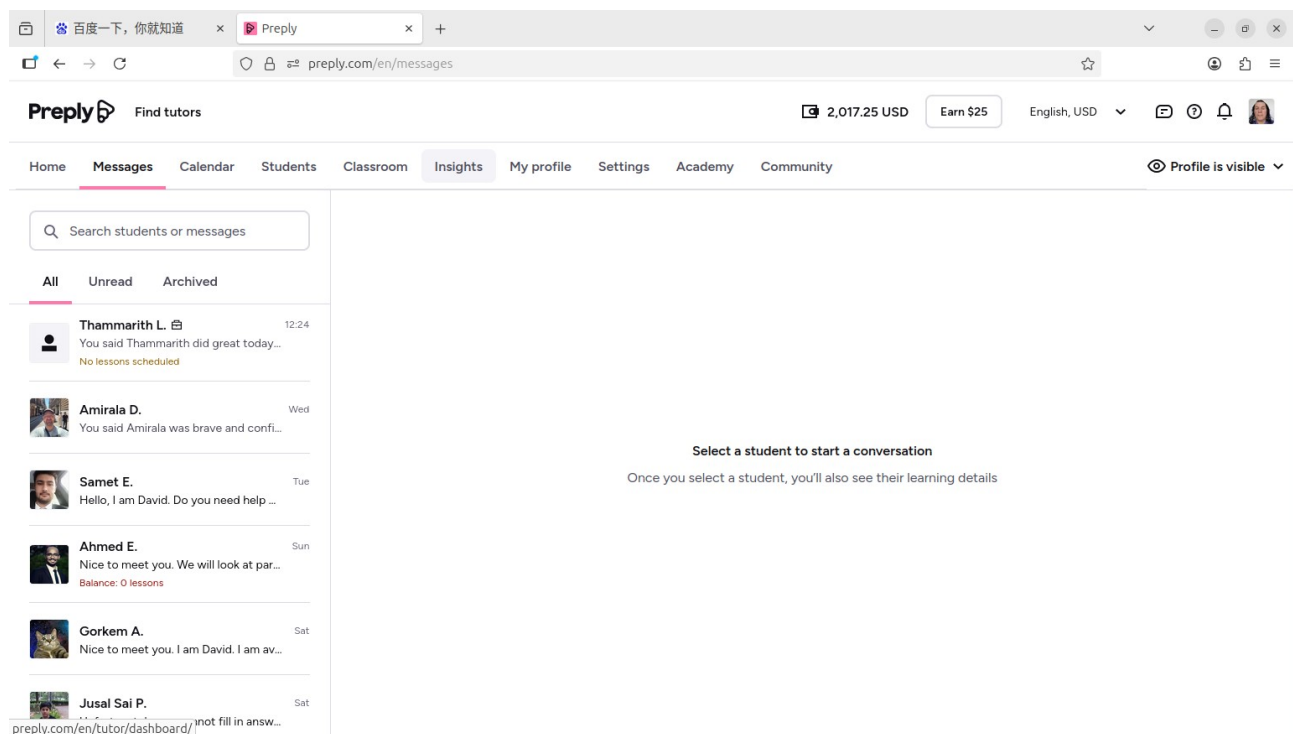
Gemini, the first thing I removed from this teaching laptop in 2021 was Office 365 – when it demanded I be online just to open files stored locally on my own hard drive! I do not want Micro\$oft ransoming my own files back to me or spying on the contents. My advice: dump any software that demands you be online to open local files! For that matter, dump any operating system which cannot be installed without being online or forcing you to sign up for online accounts or cloud services. **There is NOTHING you can do with a cloud service which cannot be done on your own equipment at considerably less cost and with considerably greater security and privacy.**

LibreOffice comes with most Linux distributions; if not you can easily obtain it from the repository. It is free, though donations are of course welcome.

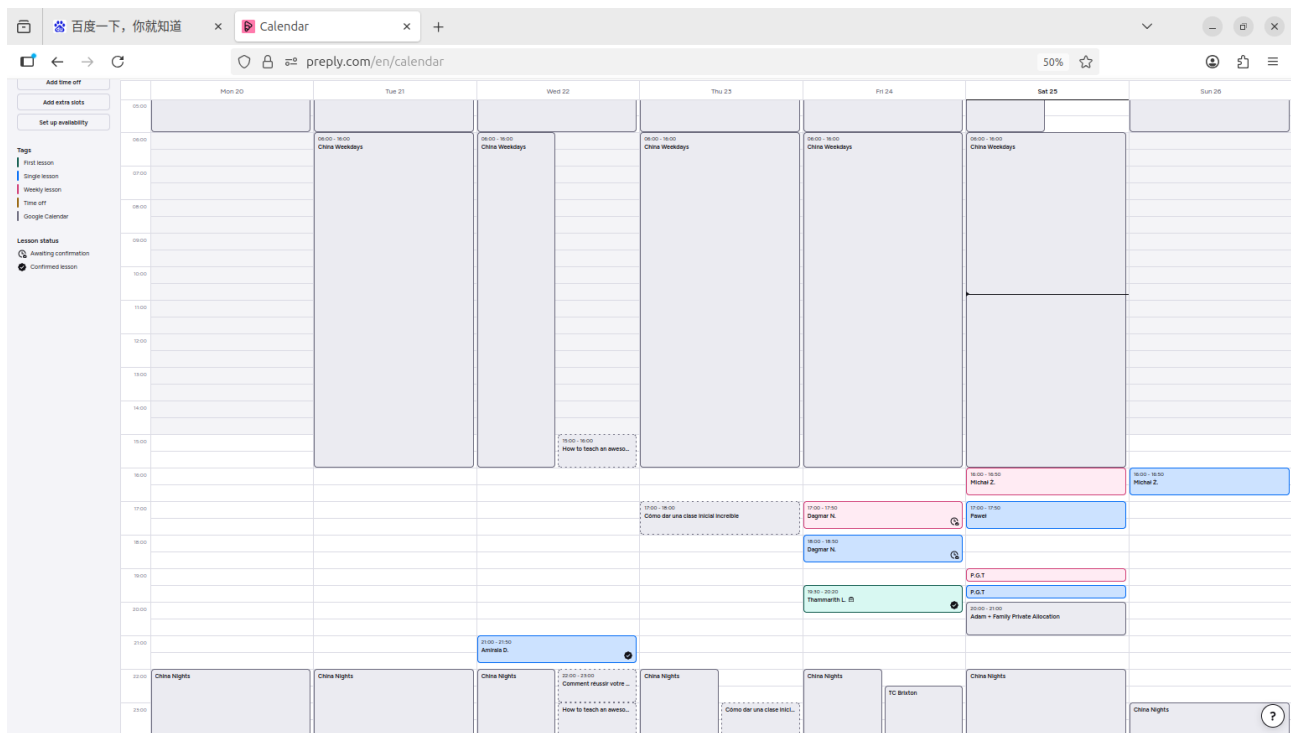
I am not a big gamer – but I am assured that gaming is easy enough in most cases. For guidance here, others are more knowledgeable than I, but a lot of material is available on YouTube on this subject.

For web browsing, Ubuntu comes with Firefox – but in actual fact, Chrome, Opera, Brave, and Duckduckgo are all available among others. TOR is available, but it is becoming harder to use these days; this is a crying shame. A year ago, I was able to use it even in China.

So, speaking of Firefox, I tried two online lessons on Preply in Firefox. But, did it work?

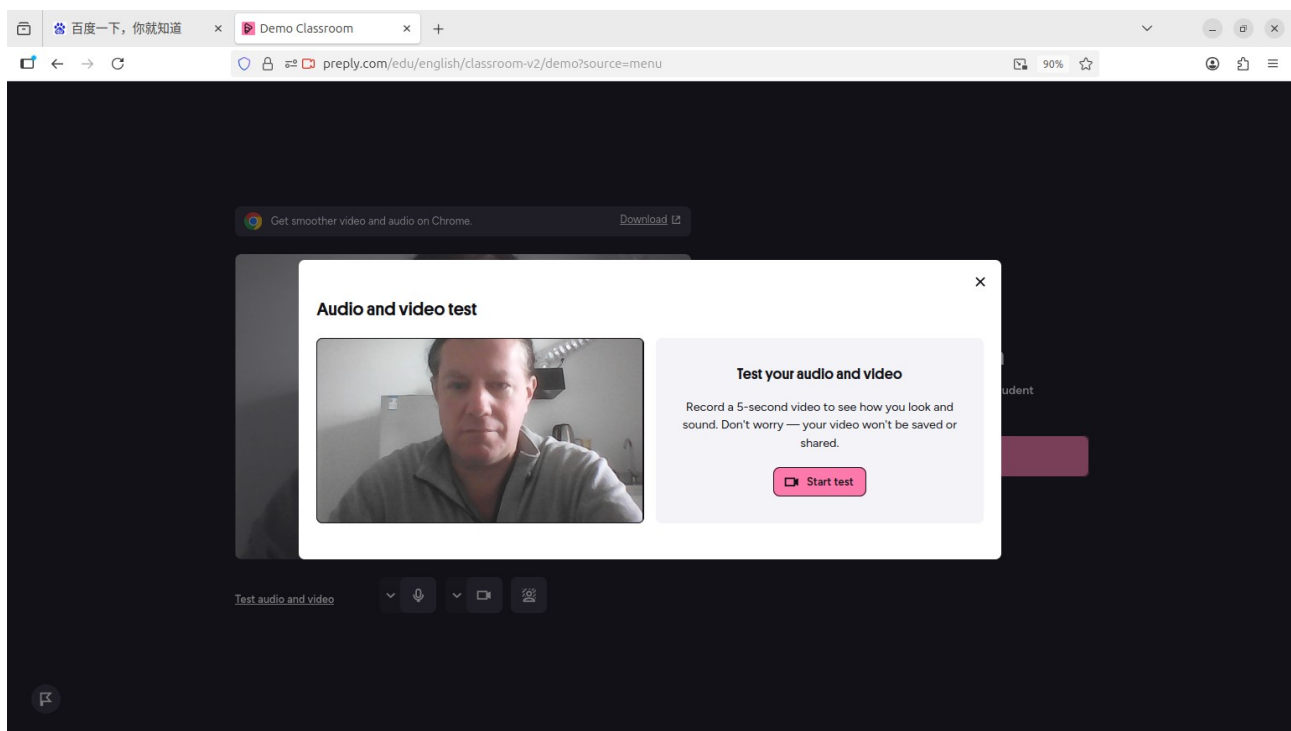


Logging into the site worked, and the message feature worked too....

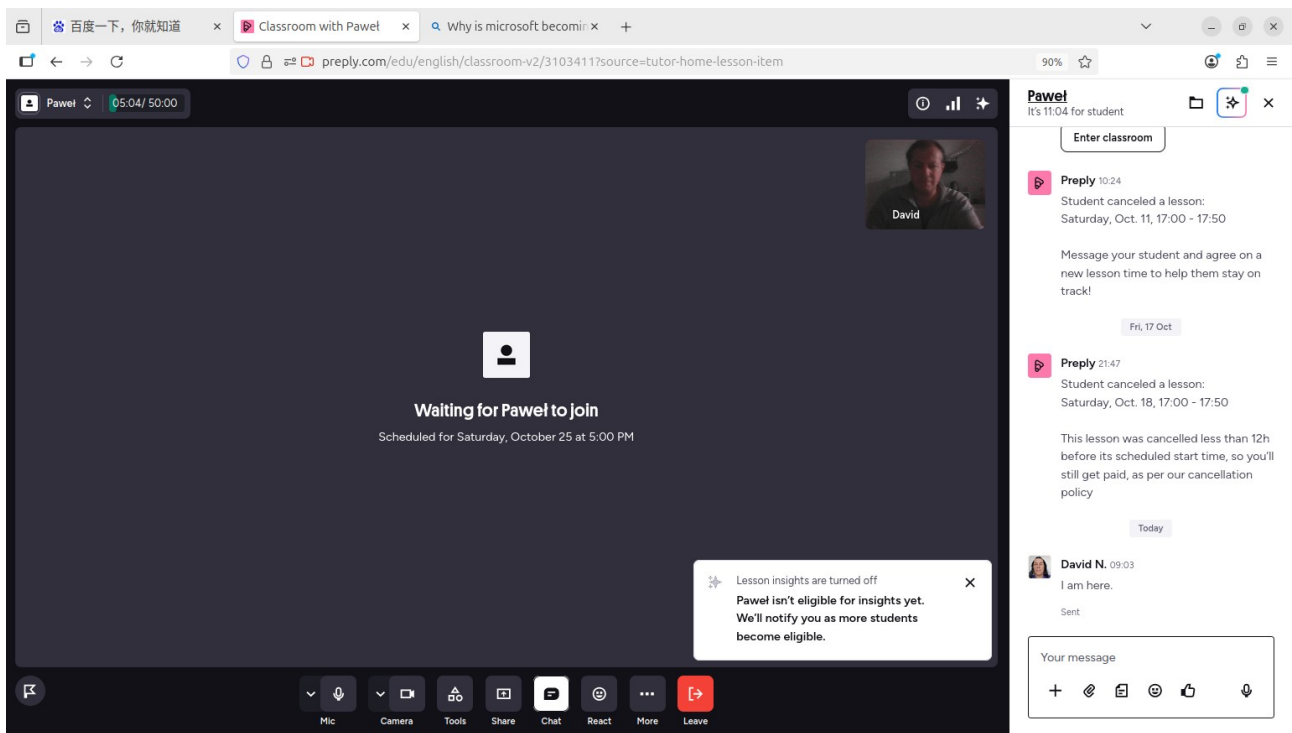


The calendar displayed...

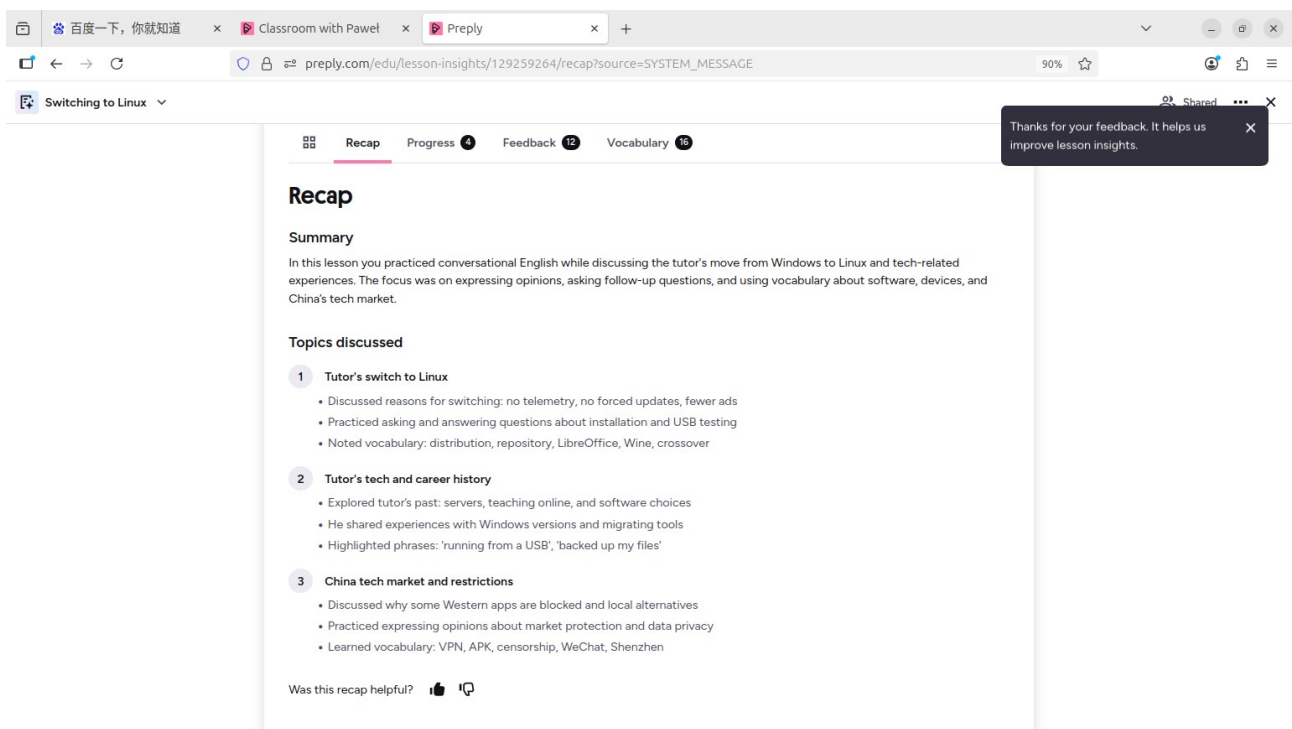
And how about a test lesson? Big role of drums in order next...



Well, the online classroom test is always a good idea to check your camera, microphone and speakers are working. And they worked first time! Unlike in Windows, where Chrome keeps wanting to default to an external device which is not even connected.



Now I needed the student to show up (one part Linux cannot guarantee to happen!).



Well the student finally joined and – as arranged, had agreed to take part in the test. And Linux will make both my online and offline lessons more reliable and free of Micro\$oft based chaos and mayhem. I know the saying that a bad workman always blames his tools. Well... My own version of this is, 'the best workman can only ever be as good as the worst of his tools'. And this is very pertinent as far as his computer hardware and software are concerned.

So now we know. I can indeed teach online on Linux! Gone are the days when Linux was used only by geeks and masochists :It is now mainstream, usable (with drivers for most hardware your computers more than a couple of years old may have), gone are the days when Linux installation meant searching for device drivers on obscure websites for months to come. I rest my case.

So, as soon as mid-term assessments are completed, and as soon as all my files are backed up (remember, Linux cannot recreate your files if you do not have backups!!!), I am dumping Windows forever.

It even mounts my USB storage drives, and I can access my NAS backup using Samba (TCP port 445), Apple Filing Protocol (use Netatalk to provide from Linux, and allow port 548 TCP through a firewall, and Network Filesystem (TCP port 2049) for network connection. For SSH and SFTP, TCP port 22 is required.

[I have not mentioned Macintosh as I have never been tempted by the high cost, and captive market, as well as deliberate incompatibility with any device not made by Apple \(This is Apple's anticompetitive practice; but this article is about Micro\\$oft.\).](#)

So now we know! The answer is.. yes, you can teach online on Linux. I will be needing alternatives to more specialised software (for example, Camtasia studio for video editing which I occasionally use). But there are workarounds such as WINE to run Windows applications on Linux – they translate Windows system calls into Linux equivalents, but this is beyond the scope of this article). I might write an article on the topic of getting Windows software running on Linux later as time and work allow.

For you long suffering online teachers, and their students, I think this is a much needed piece of good news for you all!

David, 27/10/2025

[My own teaching material can be found here.](#)

[And on Gemini also.](#)

[Another article about Microsoft and its poor products and business practices](#)