

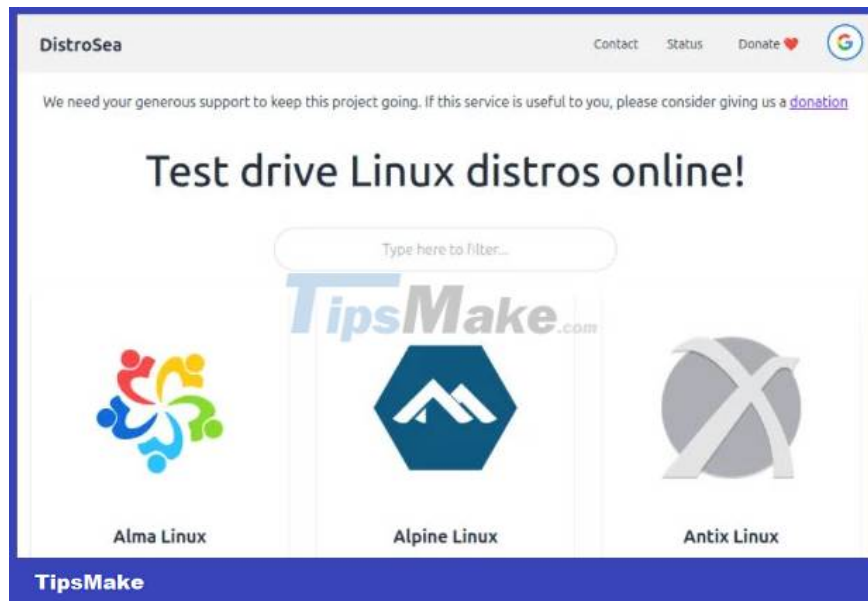
6 emulator websites to help use Linux online

While there are compelling reasons why you should learn Linux, there's no denying that using Linux is intimidating for any new user.

While there are compelling reasons why you should learn Linux, there's no denying that using Linux is intimidating for any new user. The prospect of obtaining an ISO file, burning it to USB and installing it on your computer is a daunting task. One way to reduce complexity is to load the distribution in a secure environment, such as an emulated virtual machine. This article will introduce you to some of the best online emulator services for Linux that you can use today.

1. DistroSea

DistroSea is a fully featured online emulator website that hosts over 50 Linux distributions. From popular systems like Ubuntu to niche systems like NixOS, DistroSea sets up GUIs that you can boot from for free.



Additionally, DistroSea offers many different versions for every distribution it serves. This provides flexibility for users who want to test features on different versions of the same distribution. For example, DistroSea offers a runnable version of Ubuntu from version 7.04 to 23.10.

2. Onworks

Onworks is a simple emulator website that provides online graphical environments for some of the most popular Linux distributions. Currently, this website serves multiple versions of Ubuntu, Fedora, Mageia Linux,

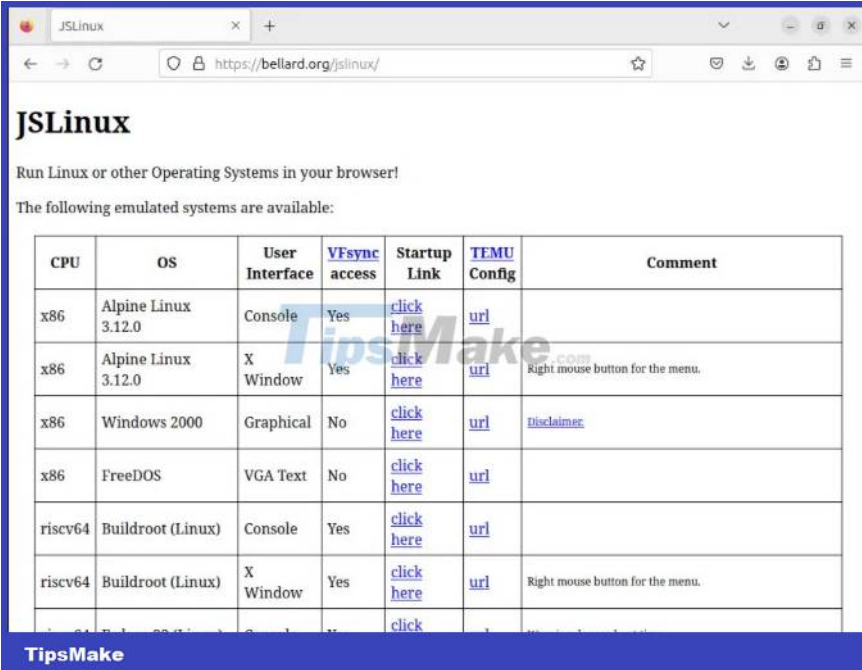
elementary OS and Manjaro.

Picture 2 of 6 emulator websites to help use Linux online

One of the attractions of Onworks is that it can also serve application-specific Linux distributions. For example, you can load ParrotOS, a lightweight alternative to Kali Linux, as well as the popular Windows alternative: ReactOS. These features make Onworks ideal if you're looking for a service that can run both Linux and Windows-like operating systems.

3. JsLinux

JsLinux is a lightweight website emulator that can run Linux, Windows and FreeDOS. Unlike Distrosea and Onworks, JsLinux is a native 'virtual machine' that exists in your local browser. This means that any programs and data you transfer to the virtual operating system will only stay on your local machine.



The screenshot shows the JsLinux website interface. At the top, it says "JsLinux" and "Run Linux or other Operating Systems in your browser!". Below this, it lists "The following emulated systems are available:" and provides a table with columns for CPU, OS, User Interface, VFsyc access, Startup Link, TEMU Config, and Comment. The table lists several systems including Alpine Linux 3.12.0, Windows 2000, FreeDOS, and Buildroot (Linux) for both x86 and riscv64 architectures.

CPU	OS	User Interface	VFsyc access	Startup Link	TEMU Config	Comment
x86	Alpine Linux 3.12.0	Console	Yes	click here	url	
x86	Alpine Linux 3.12.0	X Window	Yes	click here	url	Right mouse button for the menu.
x86	Windows 2000	Graphical	No	click here	url	Disclaimer
x86	FreeDOS	VGA Text	No	click here	url	
riscv64	Buildroot (Linux)	Console	Yes	click here	url	
riscv64	Buildroot (Linux)	X Window	Yes	click here	url	Right mouse button for the menu.

Another advantage of JsLinux is that you can upload arbitrary files to it. Combined with an integrated GUI, UNIX tools, and text editor, JsLinux is a great lightweight emulator that can give you a feel for what the basic workflow is like in Linux.

4. Copy.sh's v86 emulator

Copy.sh's v86 is a powerful x86 emulator that runs inside your browser. Like JsLinux, it uses WebAssembly to emulate the entire virtual processor and components that you can run Linux on. By default, the site provides images for Arch Linux, Damn Small Linux, and even the basic version of Android Open Source.

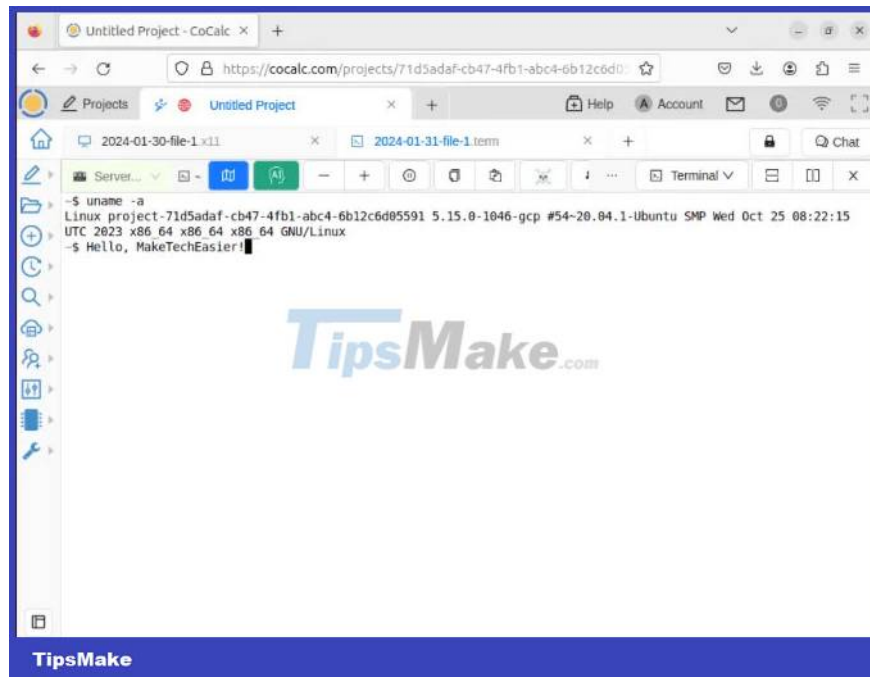


Since v86 is a generic x86 emulator, you can also run and install custom Linux images through it. So the site has a simple web form where you can upload and customize your own x86 virtual machine. For example, you can run Puppy Linux running Ubuntu Bionic complete with GUI and basic utilities.

Note: v86 only emulates Pentium 4 CPUs and does not support 64-bit. This means you can only run 32-bit Linux distributions with up to 4GB of RAM.

5.CoCalc

CoCalc is a collaborative computing platform that aims to provide a complete set of tools for mathematical modeling and documentation using LaTeX. Its collaborative focus means you can share your Linux shell with other users and they can directly edit and run commands for you. This is helpful if you have someone who knows Linux and can walk you through the basics.

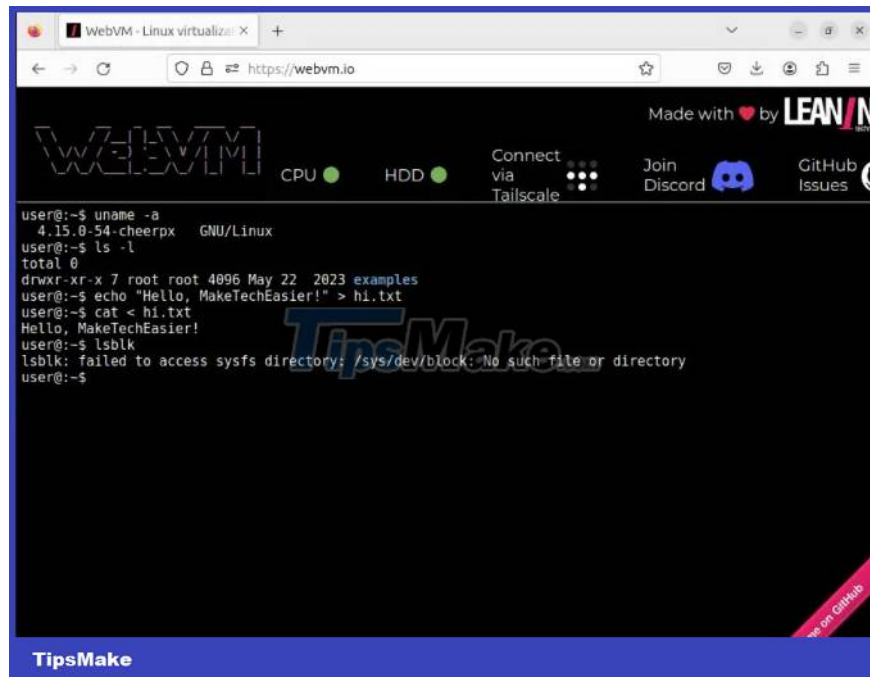


Additionally, CoCalc has a basic X11 GUI that you can load immediately. This also comes with a powerful text editor in GNU Emacs and a full office suite in Libreoffice. So CoCalc is a good choice if you are looking for an online Linux emulator that you can use with others.

6. WebVM

WebVM is a native virtual machine emulator that runs a fully customized version of Linux in your browser. Unlike JsLinux, it provides a console-only environment with an entire development toolchain that you can use to create and compile programs.

The biggest advantage of WebVM over other emulated Linux services is that it supports Tailscale by default. This means you can easily plug this system into tailnet and use SSH to send files directly to it. That can be useful if you're looking for a system that you can quickly set up, test, and destroy simply by clicking the Close Tab button.



Using a browser-based virtual emulator can be a slow and frustrating way to learn and use Linux even on good computers. Take the next step in your Linux journey by installing some of the best Linux distributions of 2024 on your machine today.

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