Install any Linux distro directly from hard disk without burning any DVD

Posted by Kaushik | Friday, August 31, 2007 | 178 Comments |

After you download any Linux distro from the internet, you have to burn it to a DVD, CD or a number of CDs to install it. That CD or DVD is generally used only once after which it lies unused , and worse, almost every Linux distro comes up with a new release every 6 months. So if you are in the habit of upgrading to every new version, you must have dozens of CDs lying at the bottom of your drawer. What a wastage of CDs! But with a little trick you can install any Linux directly from the hard disk without burning a single CD or DVD. The prerequisite of this trick is to have an operating system already installed on your computer. This is obvious because unless you are able to boot into your machine, you can't install anything; and we are not going to boot from the Linux disk because we aren't burning any. Here I'm going to focus on Microsoft Windows as the pre installed operating system.

Almost all Linux installers uses two files to boot the computer: a Linux kernel, and an initial root file system containing a minimal set of directories that is mounted prior to when the real root file system is available. This initial root file system is also called Ram disk (initrd). We will use these two files to boot our PC. Now lets get to the actual procedure.

1. The first thing you will have to do is copy the ISO file(s) of the Linux to your hard disk (ofcourse, you already have it). Make sure that the partition is FAT32 unless the distro you are installing has native NTFS read/write support. Some distros require you to copy the ISO file(s) to the root of the partition. If you keep it inside a folder, the setup might not be able to detect it.

2. Use Winrar to open the ISO file (you need not need to extract it). Now you will have to extract the two files I talked about earlier. The files are usually found inside a directory called *isolinux*. Different distros might place the files in different location; you just have to search for it, but it isn't hard to locate. These two files are also named differently in different distros. The files that you will need to search and extract are: (the kernel file is shown in **green** and the Ram disk is shown in **red**)

Fedora: **vmlinuz** and **initrd.img**

Suse: **linux** and **initrd**

Mandriva: **vmlinuz** and **all.rdz**

Ubuntu: **vmlinuz** and **initrd.gz**

Gentoo: **gentoo** and **gentoo.igz**

Knoppix: **vmlinuz** and **initrd.img**

Slackware: **bzImage** and **initrd.img**

Debian: **vmlinuz** and **initrd.gz**

3. After you have extracted the two files, copy them to c:\boot (you will need to create the folder "boot")

4. Now download the file called **grub4dos** from here. (**Note**: the new versions of grub4dos i.e. 0.4.2 and 0.4.3 does not work. So download the earlier version 0.4.1. Direct download link) Extract the folder "boot" and the file "**grldr**" from the downloaded zip file. Inside the folder "boot" is another folder called "**grub**"; *copy the folder "grub" to c:\boot. Copy the file "grldr" to c:*

5. Open **c:\boot\grub\menu.lst** and add these following lines. (Notice that hd0 refers to the first hard drive. If you have more than one hard drive, they will be named hd1, hd2 etc. Replace hd0 with the proper hard drive number incase you have windows installed on another drive.) Replace **Linux_kernel** and **Ram_disk** with the appropriate file names below. (the ones you copied to c:\boot)

```
title Install Linux
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/Linux_kernel
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/Ram_disk
```

6. Now you have to add grub to your c:\boot.ini file. You can open boot.ini by clicking on Start>Run and typing c:\boot.ini. If Windows does not allow the file to be modified, then go to Control Panel>System and click on the Advanced tab. Now under Startup and Recovery click Settings and then under System Startup click Edit. Open boot.ini and add this line in the end.

C:\grldr="Start GRUB"

7. You are now ready to install Linux. Restart your PC and from the boot screen select "**Start GRUB**". This will load GRUB. From the grub screen select "Install Linux". During the setup you will

be asked the source of installation. Choose hard disk and then select the hard drive partition where you copied the ISO files. Sometimes you might have to type the whole path of the partition and the exact name of the ISO. So write it down before you begin.

I have personally tested this with Fedora, Suse and Mandriva and it works without problem. I have no doubt it will work for others too.

Update: dougfractal adds that this is possible from Linux too. The method as he describes is:

From the terminal enter these commands

sudo mkdir /distro
sudo chmod `whoami`:`whoami`
cp MYLINUX.iso /distro/distro.iso

Now extract Linux_kernel & Ram_disk to /distro#

Open /boot/grub/menu.lst

#ADD NEW ENTRY#
title Install Linux
root (hdX,X)
kernel /distro/Linux_kernel
initrd /distro/Ram_disk

Reboot and select "Install Linux" from grub.

Update: For Ubuntu, see the Official Documentationhttps://help.ubuntu.com/community /BootFromUSB#Using_an_internal_hard_drive.

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178 comments:

Anonymous September 1, 2007 at 4:08 PM

Thank you, that was interesting and useful :-)

Reply

DB September 1, 2007 at 10:12 PM

Surely this only applies for a Linux-Windows Dual Boot system? Even then using a rewriteable disc is just as simple?

Reply

Karl L. Gechlik September 1, 2007 at 11:02 PM

Great tip. I am going to give this a shot in a few minutes. Thanks from your new friends @ AskTheAdmin.com

Reply

Bo September 1, 2007 at 11:26 PM

Or, if you're like the avarage computer user you have some old useless box sitting in the closet gathering dust. Install Ubuntu on it, load up tftp, rarpd, dhcpd, vsftpd and and start netbooting your installs.

Reply

Anonymous September 1, 2007 at 11:29 PM

From my experience this usually doesn't work with the now popular Live-CD distrobutions (PCLinuxOS, Ubuntu Desktop). I use a similar method for my Centos installs... and taking CD swapping out of the equation and adding the speed of hard drive data transfer... this method is pretty darn fast.

Reply

Miller September 1, 2007 at 11:29 PM

Personally, I favor the CD writing. While I condone the senseless wasting of CD's, CD-RW's I have no problem with. Also, I would think the delay inherent in simultaneously reading and writing to a drive, especially if it isn't very high-speed (7200 rpm or less), would make the process a little more time consuming.

However, this method is fantastic for a system with two or more hard drives in it. The data transmission speeds would be much better than even CD to HDD. I definately would try this out.

Reply

Anonymous September 1, 2007 at 11:45 PM

Miller, it's condemn, not condone. Even then, condoning the senseless waste of CD-RWs is silly. And it's spelled 'definitely'. Really helps with credibility.

Reply

Paul September 1, 2007 at 11:48 PM

What if you have a Window's Vista partition? Window's Vista creates a boot dir under the root of C:\. I am curious if this Linux install method would have technical difficulties or conflicts with an already occurring Vista boot dir.

Reply

Anonymous September 1, 2007 at 11:49 PM

Get the minimal CD of your distribution and put it on a usb disk. Boot from there and do a netinstall.

Reply

Eugeniu September 1, 2007 at 11:59 PM

"almost every Linux distro comes up with a new release every 6 months. So if you are in the habit of upgrading to every new version, you must have dozens of CDs lying at the bottom of your drawer"

Actually, I think most people just upgrade from online repositories.

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2007 at 12:11 AM

Gentoo, and some other distros rarely put out new releases. Plus, when installing gentoo, you just create a new partition and chroot.

Yum (and I'd assume apt-get) let you set the root path to install to. Just about every distro uses net-install these days too.

So, if you have room for another root partition, you can usually find a way to install a distribution without even downloading the CD.

Reply

phatsphere September 2, 2007 at 1:01 AM

i always press "upgrade" in my ubuntu box when a new release is in the wild. this requires nothing except some bandwith and time ...
but anyway, nice hack ;)

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2007 at 1:12 AM

"Gentoo, and some other distros rarely put out new releases. Plus, when installing gentoo, you just create a new partition and chroot."

Yeah, and Gentoo takes 10 hours to install because it compiles everything from source.

Reply

russoz September 2, 2007 at 2:45 AM

Nice tip!!!

Very ingenious :-) I never heard of grub4ds before, but that makes life way simpler! :-)

Thanks,
Alexei

Reply

... September 2, 2007 at 2:50 AM

Would you provide the info for Damn Small Linux and FreeNAS? What name is kernel file and the Ram disk this two distro used?

Is it possible have a similar common way to install them from linux?

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2007 at 3:06 AM

UNetbootin at http://lubi.sourceforge.net/unetbootin.html does the job for Ubuntu and

Debian automatically, for Windows and Linux

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2007 at 3:26 AM

Problem with step #4
Now download the file called grub4dos from here. Extract the folder "boot" and the file "grldr"
from the downloaded zip file.

There is no folder called "boot" in the downloaded zip file.

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2007 at 4:03 AM

grub_for_dos-0.4.1 which includes the boot folder can be downloaded at:
http://grub4dos.freespaces.com/

Reply

dougfractal September 2, 2007 at 4:23 AM

This is great.
I thought I'd try this out from linux.

sudo mkdir /distro
sudo chmod `whoami`:`whoami`
cp MYLINUX.iso /distro/distro.iso
#EXTRACT Linux_kernel & Ram_disk TO /distro#

sudo nano /boot/grub/menu.lst

#ADD NEW ENTRY#
title Install Linux
root (hdX,X)
kernel /distro/Linux_kernel
initrd /distro/Ram_disk

Reboot and select "Install Linux" from grub.

Reply

doug September 2, 2007 at 4:34 AM

sudo chmod `whoami`:`whoami`
whoops!

sudo chown `whoami`:`whoami`

Reply

mtnbluet September 2, 2007 at 5:31 AM

Please give directions for Xandros.

Thanks,
Cathy S

Reply

wwbein September 2, 2007 at 9:26 AM

This has another appliction: There are a number of sub-notebooks out there
which do not have a cd drive, for example the Acer Travelmate C 100, the IBM
Thinkpad X series, or the Toschiba Protege. Some of these do not boot some
distributions from an external
CD drive. For example, the Acer Travelmate C 100 will not boot off an exteral CD for
Fedora. So then the only option used to be a network install. This procesdure is much
easier. Thank you!

Reply

Kaushik　　September 2, 2007 at 12:30 PM

@Paul: I don't have Windows Vista installed right now on my system so I have no way
of telling. But I think the same can be achieved by adding the entries through BCDEdit.

@... (couldn't find a better name, did ya? ;))

I will see for DamnSmall Linux and let you know. And yup its possible from Linux too. See **dougfractal's** comment.

@dougfractal:

Thanks for that!

@mtnbluet: I will let you know. I have to search for my Xandros CD. :)

Reply

Shiben Bhattacharjee September 2, 2007 at 12:49 PM

Hey this is nice

Reply

ChevronX September 2, 2007 at 2:10 PM

Wubi is a GUI system for installing ubuntu based systems in windows.

Reply

Dietrich September 2, 2007 at 4:30 PM

Gentoo doesn't really make releases as we know them from Debian, Fedora, etc. The releases only consist of an installation CD, Live CD and stage3 tarballs which you need to install Gentoo. You install a Gentoo installation from scratch only once, after that you never need to download a "release" again (and thus certainly do not need to "spend 10 hours" every time). When connected to the Internet and using Portage you can keep your system up-to-date many years after you made the initial install. Every aspect of the system is reflected in a package, even the base stuff (baselayout package).

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2007 at 5:26 PM

simply use a rewritable media?

Reply

David September 2, 2007 at 8:12 PM

For Ubuntu Feisty, you need the following vmlinuz and initrd.gz for installing from iso:

http://archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu/dists/feisty/main/installer-i386/current/images/hd-media/

Reply

Ed Frome September 3, 2007 at 6:39 AM

If you burn a cdrom for every distro you download, and install from disk only once, that burn is not wasted if you pass the disk on to a friend or stranger.

Reply

Kaushik   September 3, 2007 at 11:56 AM

@mtnbluet: Sorry, I couldn't find the files in Xandros. The files on the CD are a bit differnt, not what we typically find on a Linux CD. Though there is one vmlinux but its empty and so is initrd. I presume those get created when the installation process starts. I will give you 3 alternatives.

1. Find someone who already have Xandros running and copy vmlinuz and initrd from /boot
2. Use a USB drive to boot from it.
3. Xandros allows you to boot from a floppy too. You can use that.

Reply

Anonymous September 3, 2007 at 5:27 PM

for ubuntu, installing from hard drive using grub usually need to download a special kernel file and initrd.img from their website, do you think using kernel file and initrd.img picked out from iso image as your description in this article also work?

Install any Linux distro directly from hard disk without bu...

https://www.instantfundas.com/2007/08/install-any-linux...

Reply

Kaushik   September 3, 2007 at 8:51 PM

Its not any special kernel file but the same one present on the disc. It will work.

Reply

Anonymous September 4, 2007 at 8:10 AM

For Ubuntu, you cannot use initrd.gz file extracted from iso file for hard drive installation, that's why Ubuntu provide a special initrd.gz for user's download.

The kernel file is same.

Reply

Anonymous September 6, 2007 at 9:10 PM

JFYI, installign Debian from Windows is easy via goodbye-microsoft.com

Reply

Антон Баранов September 8, 2007 at 8:20 AM

Hello. I do not have your permission, but issued a translation of your post on the Russian language at my blog. Translation is available here: http://demonjaka.blogspot.com/2007/09/blog-post_07.html

Reply

Kaushik   September 8, 2007 at 12:35 PM

@Антон Баранов:

No problem. :)

Reply

Anonymous September 10, 2007 at 4:38 PM

There used to be a utility 'loadlin' which came with redhat in old times. maybe it can be used instread of grub.

Reply

Gangsar September 14, 2007 at 7:16 AM

I've tried this to install Linux Mint from harddisk.
But I got an error message like this:
Error 17: File not found
Booting 'find /boot/grub/menu.lst'
Error 20: Select cylinder exceeds maximum supported by BIOS
Something wrong?

Reply

Kaushik   September 14, 2007 at 9:08 PM

Are you sure the file /boot/grub/menu.lst is actually there? Have you placed grldr on c:\?

Reply

Gangsar September 15, 2007 at 7:31 AM

I have copied grldr on c:\
and my menu.lst is on c:\boot\grub\ folder
Or maybe it just not work on Linux Mint?

Reply

Anonymous September 20, 2007 at 4:17 PM

Brilliant! This is exactly what I was looking for. Thanks

Reply

Oscar September 23, 2007 at 7:22 AM

This article has even higher potential, not only saves DVDs for Linux updates, but also

allows to install distros from scratch in machines with no DVD drive AND BOOT THEM FROM XP. I did as the article reads, installed Fedora in a HD not used by XP, selecting "No boot" during installation. Then deleted unwanted titles in menu.lst and added a new "Title Boot Fedora" with same lines described in the article BUT POINTING TO THE NEW vmlinuz and initrd.img that Fedora created in the installation. Now I can boot into XP (default) or GRUB, and then choose either to boot Fedora or install it. Note that GrubForDos version 0.4.1 works as described, but version 0.4.2 does not, has different files. Note that the vmlinuz and initrd created by Fedora in the boot area have long names including several dots that may need renaming to work. You may need to install a driver in XP that allows you read Ext2fs partitions and rename files. It can be found in http://www.fs-driver.org/

Reply

Kaushik   September 23, 2007 at 12:20 PM

@Oscar:

Thanks for the valuable inputs. Indeed, this method has a much higher potential.

Does Grub4Dos ver 0.4.2 not work? I didn't know that. Actually, I tried this stuff almost a year ago. Probably the version I used then was 0.4.1. I have been using that ever since.

Reply

DJ Gentoo September 28, 2007 at 9:38 PM

I'm amazed that I missed this. Thanks for pointing out the obvious (in a good way) for me, this is just what I've been looking for.
On a related note: Are you sure it works on openSUSE? It keeps track of package repositories on the CDs using their labels, and... Well, there's always the network install, but what if you want to install it right off the image? It shouldn't work, but if you say you've tested it, I'll take your word for it.

Reply

WebGk.com September 30, 2007 at 6:30 PM

I have always used "upgrade" from my ubuntu box. Eats up some bandwith and my

valuable time.

This is a great alternate you have giver here. Thanks for sharing with all of us.

Reply

Dnmt October 28, 2007 at 8:50 PM

how i should write path to file in the grub?

my suse cdimage (su.iso) is on C:\ disk.

when i'm selecting hdd as a source for installation, his asking me for path to the file and when I write C:\su.iso or su.iso,su,C:\su..., -grub cant find em. =\

Reply

dnmt October 28, 2007 at 9:23 PM

i have tried to put iso file on fat32 partition, tried to extract whole iso in folder and that did not helped.

Reply

Kaushik   October 28, 2007 at 10:06 PM

@dnmt:

Linux does not understand drive c,d etc. Your C drive is most likely to be called sda1. So the path name will be

/sda1/su.iso

Reply

Dins' October 29, 2007 at 4:13 AM

Hi, Its a great Guide... Thanks.

I've Successfully did it a few days ago, it worked good with the Win Xp, but on vista it is giving error as there is no boot.ini to add the entry "C:\grldr="Start Linux", and can't create "boot" folder, as it is already there but with no access to it, though I copied the

required files to the "boot" folder from Command Line,
and also I Tried to add the entry "C:\grldr="Start Linux", with the bcdedit.exe but avail no
result ... it says ".../Windows/system32/hal.dll missing"

If you have also faced this and got the solution please Let me know the Solution...

Reply

Anonymous October 29, 2007 at 7:52 PM

how to do it with free bsd? bsd?

Reply

飞扬跋扈 October 31, 2007 at 3:51 PM

I do not agree with! You can not do this with the Gentoo distro!

Reply

peter November 7, 2007 at 11:21 PM

hi,
the "/boot" folder is no longer available from grub4dos 0.4.2 and up.
update of this guide would be appreciated ... I will use the old G4D, probably works fine,
thanks!

Reply

Kaushik   November 8, 2007 at 11:01 AM

Guide updated with working links.

Thanks.

Reply

marshieparshie November 9, 2007 at 7:05 PM

to do this with debian images, do not use the kernel and ram disk files from the ISO.

these support installs from cds or the internet only. the files you need can be found on debian mirrors in:

/dists/*release*/main/installer-*architecture*/*version*/..

..images/hd-media/gtk/

the files i needed were located in:

http://debian.osuosl.org/debian/dists/Debian4.0r1/main/..

..installer-i386/current/images/hd-media/gtk/

for the latest version of etch for i386

Reply

Kaushik   November 9, 2007 at 8:29 PM

@marshieparshie:

Thanks for that. I didn't have time and the iso files of all the distros to test it.

Reply

nikoz November 16, 2007 at 9:14 PM

that's how I did with sodilinux (based on ubuntu 7.04)

create a fat16 partition (hd0,1) /dev/hda1
mkdir /media/fat16
mount /dev/hda1 /media/fat16
mkdir /cdrom
mount ubuntu.iso /cdrom
cp -av /cdrom/* /media/fat16

modify /boot/grub/menu.lst adding:

###
title setup ubuntu
root (hd0,1) #second partition
kernel (hd0,1)/casper/vmlinuz file=/cdrom/preseed/ubuntu.seed boot=casper
initrd (hd0,1)/casper/initrd.g

```
##########################################
```

umount /cdrom
umount /media/fat16

reboot

at boot select "setup ubuntu"

NiKoZ

Reply

Rascalico November 17, 2007 at 6:55 PM

I've got to the stage just after i choose Install Linux and it says stuff about each of these
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/initrd.img
in a few lines but then just freezes with the cursor flashing - is this part suppost to take a while or has something gone wrong? Any ideas?

Reply

Rascalico November 17, 2007 at 9:02 PM

... more info:

Here's what i'm getting after I choose 'Install Linux':

kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
[Linux-bzImage, setup=0x1e00, size=0x1e3354]
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/initrd.img
[Linux-initrd@0x7976000, 0x5695c0 bytes]

(is this usual)

forgive me im reading my atrocious writing, some 0s may be os, 1s may be ls or Is and

es may be cs but the rest it what im getting defo.

this remains on screen but all i get is a cursor flashing underneath and nothing else happens! help, please i've been trying to get this installed for ages!!

Iam intending to use Fedora7-i386 DVD iso which i have placed both in the root of on my windows C drive and the F drive which i want to install linux onto.

I have just converted both these from NTFS to FAT32 using partion magic.

But I haven't even been asked where the source file is and where i want to instll linux, it's just frozen at the point I mentioned.

I thought i had done everything correctly - i extracted both those files into c:\boot, extracted that other one into c:, extracted the grub folder from within the boot dir in the zip into the boot dir in c, edited the menu.lst, then edited the boot.ini.

Any thoughts?

Reply

Kaushik   November 17, 2007 at 9:40 PM

@Rascalico:

The first thing is: you can't install linux on your F drive. Linux can't be installed on FAT32 or NTFS. It has it's own file system. To install linux you need to have free space on your hard disk - space free of any partition. During installation process you should "tell" the setup program to use the free space. If you don't have much experience about installing linux, you could try installing it inside a virtual machine. Search on Google.

Regarding to your actual problem, I don't remember exactly whether it shows such information. Usually, as soon as you choose "Install Linux", it displays some mesage like "kernel found" and then "uncompressing kernel image" etc. After a few more messages (different files loading etc), the graphical interface takes over.

Check whether the files **vmlinuz** and **initrd.img** are inside c:\boot.

Reply

Rascalico November 18, 2007 at 12:07 AM

^ (thanks i've merged my partitions now)

Still no luck though, the files are defo. in c:\boot, i tried a few different things but same thing is happening :-(

Reply

laks December 28, 2007 at 6:33 PM

If you want to do this for a system running Windows Me. Here is what worked for me.

+ boot Windows in safe mode
+ C>: bootlace 0x80

follow the steps mentioned earlier - of copying Grub and menu.lst to C: . You will be on your way to booting from the distro on the hard disk.

the following tutorial for grub is very useful.
http://grub4dos.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Grub4dos_tutorial

In my case - Ubuntu7.10 could not recognize my hard disk - (my systems is a Dell Inspiron 8100), so I had to switch to Fedora.

Reply

Dulwithe February 5, 2008 at 11:37 PM

Thanks for your tutorial! It was AWESOME and did exactly what I needed.

Now I have PCLinuxOS installed dual-boot with WinXP on my Toshiba R100. Suspend to disk works with PCLOS, and the recent updates to PCLOS's printer databases have allowed me to enable my Canon Pixus i560, i4200, and network Brother MFC-7820N.

AWESOME!!! Thanks again.

Reply

Dulwithe February 5, 2008 at 11:40 PM

PS - For anyone who is interested, I didn't reformat my drive with a FAT32 partition for the ISO file before installing. I un-archived the .iso files and saved them on a USB card reader (1Gb SD card).

So, I suppose I could easily use this same technique for install to a USB memory stick.

AWESOME!!!

Reply

Kaushik　　February 6, 2008 at 8:44 PM

@Dulwithe:

I'm happy to learn that my tutorial worked for you. And yes, most new linux distros has inbuilt NTFS support and can be booted from the USB drive too.

Reply

need help.......amin February 10, 2008 at 10:35 AM

does the c:/ refer ot your pendrive or hardrive and i hav a problem for the hd0 number changing..i hav 2 hardrive and my windows is at hd 2 and i want to install ubuntu on hardrive 1...can somebody do it for me?? thanks :)

Reply

need help.......amin February 10, 2008 at 10:59 AM

and what does the distro refer to?

title Install Linux
root (hdX,X)
kernel /distro/Linux_kernel

initrd /distro/Ram_disk

Reply

Kaushik   February 10, 2008 at 5:39 PM

@amin:

C:\ refers to the c drive of your hard disk.

Since you have Windows installed on your second HDD, you will have to copy kernel, ramdisk, grub etc files to the second HDD.

(hd0,0) will change to (hd1,0) assuming the 2nd HDD is assigned 2nd in the BIOS configuration.

Copy the iso files to whichever HDD you want. Just rememeber to mention the correct path when it asks you to point to the iso file. HDD1 will be /dev/hda and HDD2 will be /dev/hdb

What is distro?
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distro

Reply

cristo February 14, 2008 at 5:58 PM

I own an obsolete ThinkPad 560x laptop without CD or FDD. I find your method perfect for giving a new life to my old IBM. But I realized I have no boot.ini file on my system (Win98SE). How to proceede then?

Reply

Kaushik   February 14, 2008 at 6:57 PM

@cristo:

This won't work with Win98. Win98 doesn't have boot.ini file or any boot manager. Since both the CD drive and the FDD are broken, the only option you have got is to install

Windows XP or Linux from a USB drive, provided the BIOS supports booting from USB. Another way is to use network install. If you can network your laptop to a PC, you can install any OS into your laptop.

Reply

Anonymous February 17, 2008 at 6:50 PM

Could I boot grub from my USB device and how ???

Problem: I don't see list of options when I'm starting GRUB which is allocated on ntfs C: partition.

Reply

Kaushik February 19, 2008 at 11:41 AM

^^ We aren't using Grub to boot the PC. The PC is booted using Windows bootloader. After the windows is booted the control is transfered to grub to load the Linux installer. So this process will work only if you have some mechanism to boot your PC - either through Windows or Linux or even an USB drive provided that you have the proper booting files on the USB drive.

Reply

Anonymous February 19, 2008 at 11:59 PM

You are right. I use Windows XP SP2.
But I was interesting how could I load grub from USB. And why data from menu.lst are not displayed when I load grub from ntfs ?

Reply

Kaushik February 20, 2008 at 11:33 AM

You can load grub from USB. Copy all the grub files on to the USB stick and add the line to the boot.ini file.

If you are unable to load GRUB from ntfs partition then maybe the distro you are trying

doesn't have NTFS support. In that case you have use Fat32.

Reply

Anonymous February 23, 2008 at 12:02 AM

What shoud I write in C:\boot.ini in case of USB ?
I can't convert my NTFS file system to FAT32.

Reply

Kaushik   February 23, 2008 at 12:55 PM

Find out what letter Windows assign to the USB drive by plugging it to your PC. Then replace "C" in C:\grldr="Start GRUB" with the drive letter. You should have GRUB on the USB drive.

Since the linux you are trying can't recognize ntfs you will need to have atleast one fat32 partition where you should place the iso file. There is no way to convert ntfs to fat32 without reformatting.

Reply

Anonymous February 23, 2008 at 6:11 PM

Had you tried it ?
I've tried change letter C: and it didn't work. Grub even didn't load.
Probably I should write smth like "sd(0)..." or "hd(1).." (because it is SATA HDD, connected via USB). I don't know.

Reply

Anonymous February 23, 2008 at 6:17 PM

Kaushik,
Have you tried this:

http://www.google.com/search?
sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rls=SKPB,SKPB:2008-06,SKPB:en&

q=Confert+NTFS+to+FAT32

???

:)))

Reply

Kaushik   February 24, 2008 at 12:20 PM

Windows does not allow converting ntfs to fat32 natively. But of course, there are tools like Partition Magic that can do that and even resizing and merging of partitions without losing data. But there is a risk factor involved and if the process fails all your data will be lost. Even Partition Magic displays this disclaimer. I wouldn't advise you to do that because there is a high chance of screwing up your data.

For your main problem, does your BIOS support booting from USB? First find that out. And names such hda, hd0 are for linux. the grub should be loaded by boot.ini file which does not recognise such names. You have to give the usual windows letter names.

Reply

Anonymous February 25, 2008 at 4:33 PM

Thanks, I've tried it. But it doesn't work :(((.
My BIOS supports booting from USB.
I couldn't do something with my main HDD because it is on my workplace. I don't want to damage my Windows XP system too. I'll try smth else.

Reply

Anonymous March 31, 2008 at 3:26 PM

I followed your instructions exactly.. But I still get a error said: unknown command...

the only difference is the version of grub4dos.. I am using grub4dos v0.4.3 right now.. I just rename the grub4dos folder to grub because i can't find the grub folder which you mentioned above..

so, about this new version, what should i do?

I am really looking forward your help..

Reply

Kaushik   March 31, 2008 at 4:36 PM

grub4dos v0.4.3 does not work. There is nothing you can do. Use version 0.4.1

Reply

Swathy April 19, 2008 at 11:07 PM

how to deal with the command line interface which starts up when one chooses start GRUB as the choice for installing LINUX? What commands are used for installation?

Reply

Anonymous May 7, 2008 at 9:05 AM

What happens if you want to partition the whole drive?

Reply

Myself June 3, 2008 at 8:33 AM

I tried using this to install Minime PCLinuxOS 2008. I got to the windows boot part, but when I go to GRUB, it says "missing MBR-helper."

Reply

VijayR June 16, 2008 at 6:39 AM

URGENT HELP REQ.
STUCK IN INSTALLATION.

I did all steps and the grub started. I selected the "Install Linux".

then the ubuntu installer started.
I finished the region and keyboard selection.

next, it asks for the ubuntu image from my cd rom.

The option there only has install from cd rom (I think so).

and since my ubuntu iso is not in cdrom, I have to abort the installation.

It gave an option to run the ash shell. but I did not know what to do from there.

please help.

Reply

Knight June 21, 2008 at 8:45 AM

I also got the same problem, i ran into the ash shell. nothing to do from there :/

Reply

Malachias July 10, 2008 at 9:38 PM

My favorite way has been to make an additional 750 megabyte partition on the hard-drive, and format it as ext3 - have it in /mnt/fakecd. Then do the following:

$ mkdir /tmp/install

$ sudo mount -o loop /path/to/cd/iso /tmp/install

$ sudo cp * /tmp/install /mnt/fakecd

$ sudo cp .* /tmp/install /mnt/fakecd

Now edit your /boot/grub/menu.lst to add an entry:

title Install Linux

root (hd0,1)

kernel /casper/vmlinuz

initrd /casper/initrd.gz

Note: this is for an *Ubuntu live-cd. For other distributions, your grub entry may be different, depending on where vmlinuz and initrd.gz are located. Also note that "root" will depend on what your fakecd partition is. Mine's /dev/sda2, hence (hd0,1).

Now when you reboot, select Install Linux and it'll be exactly like running it off the CD,

except a fair bit faster since you're reading from the HD.

Reply

N July 30, 2008 at 8:24 PM

Hi,

I am trying to do this from within PCLOS to install OpenSUSE. It crashes:

:Failed to detect CD drive !

I have grub's menu.lst editted correctly. Tried it with the iso fully extracted, as well as only linux and initrd extracted + full iso file copied to my dedicated 1.3 Gb drive for HDD version of LiveCD.

The only distro that successfully works so far is PCLOS.

Any help? You can mail me direct @

dulwithe [at] myrealbox [dot] com

- Dulwithe

Reply

Kaushik   July 31, 2008 at 10:52 AM

@Dulwithe: Why does the installation try to detect the CD drive? Are you sure you haven't mixed up the paths of the CD drive and the hard drive?

You should not extract the ISO file but copy it intact to the hard drive. And are you trying to install linux from a live CD? I'm not sure whether that is possible.

Reply

N July 31, 2008 at 8:07 PM

Thanks for your response, Kaushik.

I don't know why certain distros crash with the same type of hdd "LiveCD" method. I've tried extracting just the kernel and RAM disk files, and put them with the ISO file on the "LiveCD" partition.

I have had mixed results. I got Mepis to work yesterday. Some distros don't work with this method, others do. I have NO idea why.

My guess with the SUSE distro is that its kernel or RAM disk is directed to look exactly for a cd drive and boot from there. If no cd drive is found, "reboot in 120 sec..." Apparently suse 10 worked this way, but suse 11 doesn't (but I don't want to try and install a year-old distro).

. D.

Reply

Kaushik   August 1, 2008 at 10:32 AM

Apparently, Live CDs are different from normal installation CDs. Live CDs are programmed to look for the Cd drive and load from it. I suggest you get a normal cd and try that, or you can continue with your experiments. :)

Reply

abhi August 11, 2008 at 5:26 PM

hi,
I got preinstalled Vista on my laptop. I removed all the partitions by installing Ubuntu 8.04 making some partitions and keeping other space free for XP. But when I am installing XP from the bootable CD it says hard disk not found. Please help me how to get rid of this problem.

abhi

Reply

Kaushik   August 11, 2008 at 9:29 PM

Install any Linux distro directly from hard disk without bu...

https://www.instantfundas.com/2007/08/install-any-linux...

@abhi: Installing Windows after Linux is always going to create problems. Anyway, try this:

If Winxp can't detect your hard drive, then you will have to boot from a Win98 CD. If you don't have the Win98 disk then download the boot disk image from here and burn it to a CD.

Now boot from the disk, and at the commad prompt issue this command:

fdisk /mbr

This will rewrite the MBR and you can now load windows. After you have finished installing WinXP, install ubuntu's bootloader to dual boot WinXP and Ubuntu.

Reply

Vasu August 25, 2008 at 9:40 AM

Hi Malachias,
Very good to hear a nice tip from you, and especially booting Ubuntu live cd from hard disk. I tried the way you mentioned above but, it didn't work. At the copy commands,"$ sudo cp * /tmp/install /mnt/fakecd
$ sudo cp .* /tmp/install /mnt/fakecd
" I got "directories ignored" error message. I thought that may be 'coz of root security and I manually copied the total iso files in to 750MB new partion. Then I rebooted my system and got into ubuntu installation and I found the same error "mount CD failed. no device exist". Then I opted for command line. I found "cdrom" folder in '/' directory, and I thought it is place where cd drive is mounted and I mounted my 750MB drive to '/cdrom' and tried to install. Now, our 750MB drive works as a CD drive. Happy to get what we desire, but when I format swap partion it shows "device is use" error message. And here i got struck. And I also found that 750MB drive must be ext3/ext2/cdfs file system type. 'coz at the time of installation kernel cant mount a FAT file system.

Any help is appreciated.

Reply

Malachias September 4, 2008 at 7:40 AM

Vasu,

I'm very sorry, that was a typo on my part. Instead of

$ sudo cp * /tmp/install /mnt/fakecd
$ sudo cp .* /tmp/install /mnt/fakecd

I meant

$ sudo cp -R /tmp/install/* /mnt/fakecd
$ sudo cp -R /tmp/install/.* /mnt/fakecd

Basically the idea is to get all the files into the fakecd partition.

Hope that helps!

-Mala

Reply

malachias September 4, 2008 at 10:12 AM

Erk, my bad again - don't do the .* one as that'll catch everything in ../ as well =P
Replace the second line with
$ sudo cp -R /tmp/install/.disk /mnt/fakecd

Sorry again >_<

--mala

Reply

Anonymous September 14, 2008 at 2:26 PM

Is it possible to for me to install Linux on Extended partition ?

If so my other question is ......

I am going to install Linux Mint on Extended partition.

What is the correct entry for Step 5, that is when i am going to edit the menu.LST ?

PS: I have one hard drive and i have installed Win XP in primary partition and i have 4 logical drives in extended partition.

Thanks in Advance

Reply

Kaushik   September 15, 2008 at 4:06 PM

@mldarshana: You can install Linux in the extended partition. No problem with that. I have always used the extended partition for linux.

The step5 will be the same. No change, since you have only 1 HDD. So it will look something like this:

title Install Linux
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/initrd.img

Make sure you use the correct file names.

Reply

blossa September 16, 2008 at 12:20 AM

I think I have followed your instructions... I have two HDs:
*One that has one big FAT32 partition(dev/hda1). On this one I have the iso-file (called su.iso), boot directory with grub and the original windows installation
*The other hd (dev/hdc1) is empty and here is where I plan to install Linux (gentoo).

When I boot and have selected to install linux i get to a point where I get this message:
!!Could not mount specified ROOT, try again.
!!Could not find the root block device in .

Any suggestions about what I have missed?

Teh iso that I am using is the "Gentoo 2008.0 Minimal CD/InstallCD" for x86 found at http://www.gentoo.org/main/en/where.xml

Thanks in advance! / Anders

Reply

Anonymous September 28, 2008 at 9:22 PM

I have copied disk image image.nrg to partion 'H' having fat32 file system and and my 'C' drive is having ntfs file system which is used by windows operating system.
I extracted the file vmlinuz & initrd to c:\boot
also the grub. Also added the lines with exact replacement to menu.lst under the grub.
I restarted the PC and selected "Install Grub" option, it shows...
Booting 'Install Linux'
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
error 14: Invalid or unsupported executable format

how to get out of this problem.....any suggestions...

Reply

Kaushik   September 28, 2008 at 9:44 PM

You can't use .nrg format. You need ISO file. Convert it to ISO.

Reply

Anonymous September 28, 2008 at 9:57 PM

thanks to reply kaushik....
as i was suspecting the same
but can it be converted to iso format......

Reply

Anonymous September 28, 2008 at 9:58 PM

how to convert nrg to iso format ?????

thanks in advance....

Reply

Anonymous September 29, 2008 at 3:11 AM

I have converted .nrg format image to .iso format but it is still showing the following error.....

Booting 'Install Linux'
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
error 14: Invalid or unsupported executable format
Press any key to continue.........

now what to do ....i'm not getting the things causing to happen it....
how to resolve this error...any suggerstion???

Reply

Anonymous September 29, 2008 at 3:11 AM

I have converted .nrg format image to .iso format but it is still showing the following error.....

Booting 'Install Linux'
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
error 14: Invalid or unsupported executable format
Press any key to continue.........

now what to do ....i'm not getting the things causing to happen it....
how to resolve this error...any suggestion ???

Reply

Anonymous October 2, 2008 at 8:19 PM

i did the whole steps, i just cant select the instalation source, with a ubuntu server
i just go the option to use the cdrom has a source (at the instalation menus)

Reply

Anonymous October 17, 2008 at 4:12 PM

Sorry man...no working with ubuntu 8.04 alternate disk...help me

Reply

Anonymous October 22, 2008 at 2:17 PM

This guide's crap.

Don't use it.
It won't work.

I don't believe that the author has ever sucessfully pulled this off.

Reply

Anonymous October 28, 2008 at 1:15 AM

i want to try the option installing using the network, i got a distro with a sort of feature,
that allows that i think..

Reply

Anonymous November 15, 2008 at 8:38 AM

The chown command gives a missing operand error. I'm sure it's something obvious,but
I'll be damned if I can find it. Might have something to do with Slackware 12.1.

chown: missing operand after yada : yada

Reply

J.O.L. November 15, 2008 at 8:41 PM

@fugiwara01

No, it's not Slackware. I noticed that also, while reading the command. I'm surprised some of the more Linux-savvy users didn't notice. I am in the midst of trying to install Intrepid using the method described, and I'm no expert. But, I BELIEVE (can't guarantee) that what dougfractal had in mind was POSSIBLY this:

sudo chown `whoami`:`whoami` /distro

Maybe it has something to do with the boot process being able to read or write to that directory during installation? After I downloaded and copied the two files, I was already set as the owner so I didn't have to touch the permission of those files.

Good luck! (to both of us)

Reply

J.O.L. November 15, 2008 at 11:36 PM

After configuring the keyboard, the installation fails to find the ISO image. I was delighted to find an option that reads something like "Scan hard drives for installer ISO image", but I was disappointed to see that it always fails to find it. I moved the ISO from /distro to /boot to /media/sda1 (Windows partition), all to no avail.

I am currently downloading the alternate installation ISO to give it one last shot. If that doesn't work, I may be forced to burn yet another CD. :(

Reply

Anonymous November 17, 2008 at 3:24 AM

i found a tiny installer that boots the sistem and starts the setup
it worked perfect it runs with a internet connection

Reply

Anonymous December 13, 2008 at 2:16 PM

some body help me,

i want install linux bactrack2 to my old laptop,
did all steps and the grub started. I selected the "Install Linux".

i have partition, c: system xp (ntfs) , d: data(fat32) and for source e:(fat)
title install linux
root(hd0,4)/BT
kernel(hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/initrd

when procees
display
kernel panic , no init found .

so i move to install BT 3 but
stop
Usage:init 0123456sQqAaBbCcUu

what i was do?

Reply

Swati December 14, 2008 at 11:30 AM

Thanks Kaushik ! for this wonderful article. But need some more help from u.

I'm a newbie for Linux. I have single OS, win XP media center installed on 4th partition(F:,NTFS).

I'm interested in installing Fedora 9 on E:,FAT from the CD ISOs through the hard disk directly. For this i followed your steps. I downloaded grub and put the iso, grub and boot etc. on the F:
Then i updated boot.ini from control panel. When i rebooted the system, i selected the 'tart Grub' option. But then after it shows the error "hal.dll missing or corrupt".

I'm not getting what had gone wrong ? Please tell me whr i may have made a mistake.

Reply

Anonymous December 30, 2008 at 11:02 AM

This is great. Just what I was looking for to install Debian on some old laps without CD, floppy or USB boot capabilities, but with Windows. It worked very fine. It avoided me the necessity of creating a net install server, and the waste of installing everything from Internet for all laps with netbootin.

Reply

Anonymous January 2, 2009 at 4:29 AM

Thank you very much, my old lappy has a buggered optical drive and therefore cant boot from dvds or cds, this is incredibly useful to me, cheers

Reply

hjk January 12, 2009 at 11:24 AM

for vista you can use easybcd which is free select add and remove entries and then select neogrup then install neogrup then select configure
and add at end

C:\grldr="Start GRUB" then save and reboot

but i have problem i want chose direction of my iso image i do not want scan hard disk

please tell me if you know

Reply

Anonymous January 13, 2009 at 11:26 AM

amazing, thank you very much!

Reply

hjk January 15, 2009 at 3:36 PM

it works with suse i finally did it
under vista

thanks

Reply

Tags Photo February 3, 2009 at 9:07 AM

I can't get this to work. Is there something I am doing wrong or is it just that this is just crap. Somebody help!

Reply

ashish March 11, 2009 at 6:55 PM

Thanks for such a good article, but I faced problem in installation:
initially all went well like butter, when I selected the hard drive partition and provided iso image name, then it was not able to find the iso image:

Actually my hard disk is partitioned in 4 parts + one unformated partition(deleted the F 50 GB, created FAT32 30 GB, and left 20GB free for linux)
it shows four partition like
/dev/sda1/ NTFS
/dev/sda5/ NTFS
/dev/sda6/ NTFS
/dev/sda7/ FAT32

I provided it like:(as iso is on F: drive, so I assume F=/dev/sda7/)
/dev/sda7/fedora.iso

I tried other permutations also like:
1.
a. selected /dev/sda7/
b. path: fedora.iso (I renamed iso image to simple name)

2.
a. selscted /dev/sda7/

b. path: /fedora.iso/

but it does not work, and I get error like: Error occured in finding image file on hard disk.... /dev/sda7/ does not seem to contain any image...
can somone please help as what would be going wrong..?

Reply

hjk March 18, 2009 at 8:50 PM

for ashish
you must write the entir path of iso even a dot

entire.iso

for open suse 11 it do every thing for you just

under windows mount iso by daemon tools and reboot and you will find optin to install opensuse 11 press it and then it will say to you to insert dvd or cd ignore it and press back button and then countnu installation by select install or boot from hard disk

Reply

fennec March 22, 2009 at 5:23 PM

"Unetbootin" is a simple open source tool that allows you to install a variety of distributions over the Internet, without burning a CD.
The "Wubi" tool for installing Ubuntu this way has been around for a while, but unlike UNetbootin, Wubi installs Ubuntu on a file stored in a Windows environment and creates no actual partitions. UNetbootin will create a partitioned dual-boot system as though you installed with a CD. It's useful if you're working on a machine with a slow or no CD/DVD drive or don't have any spare discs to burn.
I prefer the "Wubi" for Ubuntu it's very simple to install and to uninstall

http://wubi-installer.org/

Reply

Anonymous April 28, 2009 at 11:05 PM

Hi, idon't know what to say imazing tutorial.
But i hava problem it didn't work on my PC it's freez on "Launching GRUB..." i tried to copy boot folder and grldr to older PC and bam it's works
Can anyone help me ?

Best regards, John.

Reply

vlper April 29, 2009 at 2:32 PM

i have this error after Time: acpi_pm clocksource has been installed.
DONE.

Check root= bootarg cat /proc/cmdline
or missing modules, devices: cat /proc/modules ls /dev
ALERT! /dev/rd/0 does not exist. Dropping to a shell!

That's it :(are anyone can help me ?

Reply

maddy June 4, 2009 at 9:10 PM

After configuring the keyboard, the installation fails to find the ISO image. I was delighted to find an option that reads something like "Scan hard drives for installer ISO image", but I was disappointed to see that it always fails to find it. I moved the ISO from /distro to /boot to /media/sda1 (Windows partition), all to no avail.

I am currently downloading the alternate installation ISO to give it one last shot. If that doesn't work, I may be forced to burn yet another CD

Reply

BinaryBrother June 30, 2009 at 1:12 PM

Really nice instructions. +1

Reply

Alex July 3, 2009 at 4:13 AM

This is seemingly a life saver for those of us with an old machine and only CD-ROM drive (NOT a DVD drive) as we can instal bigger, DVD only versions of Linux instead of just being outta luck, however...I agree that it doesn't seem to work on Linux Mint :(

Reply

Anonymous July 27, 2009 at 1:20 AM

It won't find the iso file. I'm trying to install xubuntu 9.04. I have copied its iso file into root and /boot, still no luck. It scans the hard drives, but fails to find the iso file.

Any suggestions?

Reply

Anonymous August 8, 2009 at 6:15 AM

I hv XP installed & installing Fedora 11.
I hv 3 drives C,D,E all FAT 32 & a free space of 15 GB. I hv done following entries in menu.lst:
title Install Linux
kernel (hd0,0)/boot/vmlinuz
initrd (hd0,0)/boot/initrd.img

It is booting perfectly.
While installing it shows 3 partitions:
/dev/sda1
/dev/sda5
/dev/sda6
when i choose anyone of them or enter full image file name with extension in Directory option it says image file (*.iso) not found.
Why is it not finding image file? What to do?

Reply

Anonymous August 28, 2009 at 6:38 AM

Can't install ubuntu 9.04 following this method.
?????

Reply

Anonymous August 30, 2009 at 7:01 AM

Trying to install Mandriva 2009.1 over XP on Eee 1005HA..

mount: could not find filesystem 'LABEL=One-20091-KDE4'

and then multiple mount and
SQUASHFS error

Reply

Anonymous August 30, 2009 at 7:04 AM

I copied .iso files to C:\linux which is NTFS

Reply

Anonymous September 2, 2009 at 7:18 PM

I am trying to install linux on a small server on a local network. The server will work as a NAS, does not have any keyboard or monitor or USB or DVD/CD reader, but it is connected to the local network. All the other computers are laptops so I do not have monitors and so on. How can I install using network install?

Reply

Kaushik   September 2, 2009 at 10:03 PM

I have never done network install, much less on a PC without keyboard and mouse. You have to ask a Linux system admin. Try asking for help at some Linux forum.

To the other people who are facing trouble with Fedora 11 and Mandriva, I'm not sure because I have not tested whether this procedure holds true for newer distros. Just

make sure you are following the steps correctly. It should work.

For Ubuntu 8.04 extract /casper/vmlinuz and /casper/initrd.gz from the ISO file. The files should be the same for later versions of Ubuntu.

Reply

Federico September 13, 2009 at 2:02 AM

Hi, I want to install a Slackware derived distribution in a laptop without USB nor CD. It has a blank HDD, without any OS. I'll try to connect the HDD as an slave in a winxp PC, in order to properly format different partitions for a full Linux installation. Does anybody have any idea to achieve this difficult installation? I'll make the blank HDD a boot disk, and try to obtain a result.
Thanks if there's any idea...

Reply

Anonymous November 5, 2009 at 12:27 PM

Does this work for Puppy linux?

Reply

Kaushik   November 6, 2009 at 10:40 PM

I haven't tried this on Puppy Linux but I can't see why it wouldn't work. You just need to identify the vmlinuz and initrd.img files (could be differently named) and the rest is the same.

Reply

anurag November 11, 2009 at 3:23 PM

Is it possible to have diskless installation on Windows 98 PC?

Reply

Totem December 15, 2009 at 6:20 PM

Wooh! Thanks for the tut.. Anyway, does it work with any Linux Mint version? Thanks ^^

Reply

Raz December 17, 2009 at 9:08 PM

This is something I am looking for a looong time... my old think pad that has no cd and bootable usb support will ne soooo glad about it!!

Thank you and best wishes from me and the old damn Thinkpad

Reply

Stepan January 2, 2010 at 5:58 PM

I have a Windows ME laptop and after doing most of these steps I learned that it doesn't have a boot.ini file. What can I do?

Reply

Anonymous May 24, 2010 at 10:49 AM

This worked for me as I have an old notebook that does not have a CD and trying to load the drivers I need to a boot disk for the ext CD drive are just a pain in the butt with this I can just copy the file and then install
Thanks

Reply

Anonymous August 2, 2010 at 1:08 AM

hello Dear
Great works
Every Thing is OK but it stuck and give error Missing Iso 9660 Image #1
What can i do

Reply

Anonymous August 12, 2010 at 2:24 PM

Really wonderful, Kaushik. It really worked well for me in the first try itself. You post was really helpful and hope it would be the same for all others too.

Praveen Raj

Reply

yog August 12, 2010 at 10:14 PM

I'm trying to install Linux Mint that way but when I'm doing step 7 (" From the grub screen select "Install Linux". ") I get this message (after something being loaded...):

Console: switching to colour frame buffer device 160x64
[drn] nouveau 0000:01:00.0: 0x111D: parsing clock script 0
ALERT! does not exist. Dropping to shell!

BusyBox v1.14.4 (Ubuntu 1:1.13.3-1ubuntu11) built-in shell (ash)
Enter 'help' for a list of built-in commands.

(initramfs)

need help plz!

Reply

blaze August 21, 2010 at 12:36 PM

after selecting "install Linux" the kernel appears to boot . but it halts at :
"begin : waiting for root filesystem" . it halts there for some 5 minutes and then drops to busybox shell. need help plz

Reply

blaze August 21, 2010 at 12:38 PM

help plz...plz...

Reply

Kaushik   August 21, 2010 at 12:51 PM

@blaze and @yog: This type of things are difficult to troubleshoot without knowing what's exactly happening.

You should go to the distro's support forum and ask your questions.

Reply

robertroll September 1, 2010 at 10:49 AM

thank you!!! i have been looking for this and you explained so clearly... i have a toshiba portege 7020ct with no cd/floppy/usb bootable.

any doubt i'll bother you

thanks!!

Reply

xtreme97 September 23, 2010 at 7:13 PM

does not work....i follow the direction and still black screen...need help..

email me: sweet7592@hotmail.com

Reply

Anonymous December 4, 2010 at 1:09 AM

how to do this with pc bsd

Reply

Anonymous December 17, 2010 at 7:43 AM

Hi, i tried this but when i reboot it says cant mount the selected partition what should i do?

Reply

overtheclock January 27, 2011 at 6:11 AM

Now extract Linux_kernel & Ram_disk to /distro#

How these is done???

Reply

Fabrics Limited March 19, 2011 at 11:37 AM

This tips is very useful. But it works upto Fedora 8. Not upper version.Kaushik, i have a wireless internet connection. It run in windows xp. But not fedora 8. my wireless adapter is TP-LINK 11b/g.Fedora 8 does not recognize it. I tried installing ndiswrapper rpm packages. But it shows fails dependency and want ndiswrapper-kmod-common-1.48 when try to install ndiswrapper-kmod. But i did not find ndiswrapper-kmod-common-1.48 in the net. Would you pls help me giving suggestion how i can run internet in Fedora 8.

Ahid

Reply

Tima March 25, 2011 at 12:48 PM

When I attempt to enter the path of the .iso file for openSUSE 11.2 it says that it cannot find the repository.

I have the .iso file at the root of sda1 and tried the partition sda5 but neither have worked, any help appreciated.

Reply

TN0 March 25, 2011 at 9:37 PM

Everything went smoothly until I got to iinstallation, says:
Cannot access Installation Media
opensuse 11.2 0 (medium 1)
Check whether the server is accessible

Reply

TN0 March 25, 2011 at 9:43 PM

Failed   to   mount   iso:///?iso=openSUSE-11.2-DVD-i586.iso   &
url=hd:/OpenSuse?device=dev/sda1 on: Unable to find iso filename on source media.

Reply

Anonymous May 23, 2011 at 10:18 PM

Any Idea how I could do that on windows 7?

Reply

dupontkearney June 22, 2011 at 3:20 AM

Hi.
I am trying to install the latest Ubuntu (11.04) on an old Dell laptop that does not have
an optical drive and cannot load from USB.
I have gotten as far as step 7, but when I hit Start GRUB, I get the message
"Windows/system32/hal.dll missing or corrupt."
I am wondering if this is because I have Windows on D:?
C: only has MS-DOS.
Should I have copied the files to D: and pointed to hd0,1 in step5?
I could use some expert advice.....

Reply

virtuagirl July 4, 2011 at 9:17 AM

PS - For anyone who is interested, I didn't reformat my drive with a FAT32 partition for
the ISO file before installing. I un-archived the .iso files and saved them on a USB card
reader (1Gb SD card).

So, I suppose I could easily use this same technique for install to a USB memory stick.

Reply

Jules August 31, 2011 at 2:05 PM

Was having trouble installing Ubuntu using this approach. Problem is the ubuntu CD

tries to automatically find the CD, and there appears to be no way to tell it to look for an image on the hard disk.

In the end, I solved it by using my network: I extracted the ISO onto a server, set up NFS to share it, then put the following in my menu.lst:

title Ubuntu network CD
kernel   (hd1,0)/ubuntu/casper/vmlinuz   boot=casper   netboot=nfs
nfsroot=192.168.1.2:/mnt/lv2/export/ubuntu -- splash
initrd (hd1,0)/ubuntu/casper/initrd.lz

Obviously you'll need to change the IP address and paths to work with your local setup, but this worked for me.

Reply

Anonymous October 16, 2011 at 11:16 AM

is it working for fedora 15 ?

Reply

Ed Townes November 15, 2011 at 4:58 AM

CAUTION - since the fellow who talked about installing FROM LINUX caught a little error he made that did NOT make its way into the main text, who knows how reliable all this is?! I don't mind - well, maybe I *do* - wasting hours and hours because intelligent and basically caring individuals do NOT care enough to test things before disseminating them.... And who knows whether the advice relating to 4-year ago distros still holds?

I'm not ungrateful, but it would be GREAT if somebody confirmed this or that way above ... Otherwise, use at extreme risk of significant waste-of-time!

Reply

Kaushik   November 15, 2011 at 11:55 AM

@Ed Townes: This is reliable, but since I haven't tested it on newer distributions I have no idea whether this method is still applicable. I will try to test it on recent distributions

as soon as I can get my hands on them.

About not including some workaround that a commenter posted on the main article, I can't do that without testing it myself. Users are employing all sorts of hacks and tweaks to make this work on the newer distors. But like I said, I will try to update this.

Reply

Les Carbonaro January 4, 2012 at 2:00 PM

Hello and thanks @Kaushik for this step-by-step explanaton. I am trying to install Lubuntu 11.10 on an old Sony Vaio - no cd, no floppy, cannot boot from USB.
I have followed the steps you listed to the letter and always end up at a initramfs prompt. Does this indicate something has failed along the way? I see no error messages per se. I never get prompted for the ISO file, which I have on c:\

Is there some command I can run at this initramfs prompt to continue on to the actual booting/install process?

Thanks again.

Reply

Anonymous May 20, 2012 at 10:04 PM

Dear
I havefollowing common prompt:

THen what next?

I am helpless here onwards.....

It says type 'help' to get list of commands.

WHich command to use for Linux Mint 12
?

Any valuable suggestions?

Vaibhav

Reply

Vaibhav May 20, 2012 at 10:06 PM

Dear
I havefollowing commond prompt:
initramfs

THen what next?

I am helpless here onwards.....

It says type 'help' to get list of commands.

WHich command to use for Linux Mint 12
?

Any valuable suggestions?

Vaibhav

Reply

Jereme Guenther May 29, 2012 at 2:48 AM

For all those having problems getting this process to work with Lubuntu, there are a couple of differences:
when modifying the menu.lst file, simply copy the contents of the install paths from /boot/grub/loopback.cfg
you will have to change the paths to the correct paths for the files.

Reply

Anonymous July 27, 2012 at 8:44 PM

Totoaly usless because i don't have windows!!

Reply

Anonymous August 11, 2012 at 3:05 PM

From a mint 10 installation with GRUB2 as bootloader I have not seen how to do this with GRUB2 using CentOS 6.3 install (bin) DVD iso on hard disk. For instance: I have in GRUB2 command prompt tried:

loopback loop (hd0,1)/iso/CentOS-6.3-x86_64-bin-DVD1.iso
linux (loop)/isolinux/vmlinuz [boot=isolinux] ......iso-scan/filename=CentOS-6.3-x86_64-bin-DVD1.iso
initrd (loop)/isolinux/initrd.img

After line 2 (starting linux) the system attempts to run but fails and then recycles to GRUB2. not sure where to go from here without further knowledge ....any clues??
There is an install.img file under directory images on the DVD maybe this is the answer. what do I use for the boot parameter?

Reply

Abhilash August 20, 2012 at 4:14 AM

Is it possible to do this on Windows 7? There isn't a boot.ini file in windows 7, so is there an alternative file that I can edit?

Reply

Donald Shimoda April 16, 2013 at 7:20 AM

I'm really interested in this method of installation since I don't have any USB sticks laying around and only a USB-HDD available (I do have CD-RW's but using them is certainly less fun! :-)

I've been trying to get this method to work with a pretty weird Distro (ArchBang i686 03.03.2013) where kernel is vmlinuz but there's not initrm file anywhere...there is only one other file together with vmlinuz inside ARCH\BOOT\i686\ called archiso.img and

that's the one I've assumed to be the initrm, but who knows...and on top of this I'm modifying the boot sequence in a pre-installed Windows 7 hard drive, so...I've been defeated ¬¬ for now...

In any case, I found out about bcdedit.exe and the BCD stores, which are the equivalent to the Windows XP boot.ini referred to in this article, but not nearly as easy to edit in the right way -- if anyone can shed a bit of light on this, it would be very much appreciated, so I can go to sleep with my Linux Distro already installed :-)

Thanks

Reply

Anonymous April 16, 2013 at 8:06 AM

Yes, it is possible to do this from Windows7.

Open an elevated Command Prompt (cmd.exe with Administrator rights) NOT a PowerShell, and then type the following (use top left corner of cmd prompt to Edit->Mark/Copy/Paste):

bcdedit /create /d "Start GRUB4DOS" /application bootsector
*you will be able to Mark and then Copy the {id} value
bcdedit /set {id} device boot
bcdedit /set {id} path \grldr.mbr
bcdedit /displayorder {id} /addlast

Then copy grldr.mbr to C:\, grldr and menu.lst to the root directory of any FAT16/FAT32 /NTFS/EXT2 partition.

Reply

Anonymous August 14, 2013 at 4:44 PM

What really doesn't make sense here, is where the distro gets its install files from. They normally get them from filesystem.squashfs, but there is no step that extracts this, and AFAIK, they can't automatically find it in the iso.

Reply

Anonymous April 28, 2014 at 12:43 AM

I have a message when I run GRUB, it says "grldr is compressed" and I can't do a thing. They try hd0,0; hd1,0, hd2,0... until 5 and then it stucks. Anybody know why?

Reply

Anonymous April 28, 2014 at 4:50 AM

About GRDLR being compressed, I found out. Right clic on the file, copied on c:\, and clic on properties. On the general tab, clic on Advanced. You have to uncheck the compress square. Sorry about my english I have a french OS. :-) I also unchecked the first square in archive attributes. Done now. :-)

Reply

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