

Re: P-II ASUS box won't boot another drive

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2007-10/msg00312.html>

- *From:* "Douglas A. Tutty" <dtutty@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 3 Oct 2007 19:07:45 -0400
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On Wed, Oct 03, 2007 at 02:21:20PM -0500, Mumia W.. wrote:

On 10/03/2007 08:39 AM, Douglas A. Tutty wrote:

[...] Surely a P-II that came with an 8GB drive (with no extra jumpers) should be able to use a 1 GB drive. The BIOS does show the correct size for each drive, detecting the same geometry as printed on the drive.

Sorry about my other message. I had forgotten that you said that a 850MB drive works fine in that machine, and Etch installs.

However, maybe you should check the hardware anyway. The power supply might be "on the edge"—able to support some operations and not others. Use a boot CD or floppy to help you verify that the installation of Etch succeeded.

IOW, check that the files you placed on the HD are there. Write a few more files to the HD, reboot, then verify that the files haven't changed.

You can also copy the bootsector/MBR to a file using `dd` and check that it looks right (whatever that is).

Since I've never had Etch's installer actually `_install_ grub` to the MBR, I've always (on all my computers) had to reboot the installer in rescue mode and install grub. So yes, I can boot the installer and run a chroot shell (low-memory mode; won't pick up full rescue menu choices) and run `grub-install` and have it report no errors.

Before installing on the new drive (after installing in the box), booted GRML and:

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- ran wipe -k /dev/hda
- ran mke2fs -c /dev/hda
- ran e2fsck -c -c /dev/hda
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The badblocks run on the mke2fs does a write/read-verify cycle on all blocks, and on the e2fsck does a read/write/write/read-verify cycle on all blocks.

I also watched syslog during the whole thing and there were no errors of any kind showing up. Also, I can install onto and boot from these drives in my 486.

The P-II hardware itself is rather suspect in general but this seems a rather specific difficulty. When I was given the box, it was absolutely full of cat hair. It had clogged the CPU fan and the PS fan. I cleaned it all out and fixed the fans (too cheap/poor to buy a new ones). The case has no fans so I cut a grill and installed a 3" on the rear.

The BIOS checks for PS voltage before booting and while it occasionally finds a transient error, the non-booting is consistant.

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I've got a better computer: Athlon64 in the basement. The P-II is for upstairs with a small monitor for simple stuff like email or quick web browsing (ssh to the Athlon); sort of a slim X client box. The reason for the larger drive is that Etch barely fits on 850 MB and I can't keep OpenBSD up-to-date since security fixes are source-code patches requiring lots of room to recompile. Since this upstairs box is also a rescue toolbox (in that it has a modem, email, and web browser on its own) for getting help/software/whatever should anything happen to the Athlon, I don't want to make it dependant on the Athlon with something like NFS.

Thanks for the ideas.

Doug.

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