

Re: Etch to Lenny, two kernel options now, why?

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Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2008-01/msg01623.html>

- *From:* "Douglas A. Tutty" <dtutty@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 16 Jan 2008 22:03:30 -0500
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On Wed, Jan 16, 2008 at 06:10:34PM +0100, ?????????????????????? ?? ?????????????????????? wrote:

Quoth Douglas A. Tutty:

On Wed, Jan 16, 2008 at 01:39:51PM +0100, ?????????????????????? ??
????????????????????? wrote:

There's an advantage to having some kind of static-linked shell (at least). There used to be busybox static and now there's sash. You would start it (and bypass the standard lib-dependant init scripts with a kernel command line that contains:

```
init=/bin/sash
```

That's absolutely right. Combined with GRUB's ass-kicking ability to edit the kernel command (actually, the whole freaking `_boot-sequence_`) on the fly, this has saved my life a couple of times on all sorts of machines (I had this fuck-up in Gentoo once where glibc was FUBAR'ed and this came in really handy.)

Typically, though, you won't need that on a Debian system as a normal user. Most people wouldn't be able to get their environment working in busybox (never tried sash, thanks for the tip) – you have to mount `proc` and `dev` you have to load modules, probably set the terminal keymap, get networking to run, etc. Not that it's particularly hard, but it's not what you would do every day, so you have to really know your way around the system (and probably be able to use Google).

I just run `/etc/rcS.d/*` one at a time with the "start" parameter. If I get an error, then I work to fix it, then run the next script. To do that, you need a shell. If the `/` filesystem is having trouble, you may lose something in `/lib` and find it in `lost+found`

It shouldn't be needed, too, except you did something very kinky with your libs – in which case most users would probably go for a reinstall instead of trying to

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figure out what's broken and how to fix it.

Note that if your filesystem gets messed up and needs a manual fsck, life gets interesting in debian. single-user mode requires that all filesystems are mounted normally. That leaves `init=/bin/sash`.

The Etch installer image has a good rescue system that also gives you a shell, as does GRML. It is handy to have everything you need ready to boot. If you have more than one hard drive, its also handy to put a minimal debian install on it selectable from grub (and put grub on both disks and copy the `/boot/grub/menu.lst`). If one doesn't boot, boot the other and fix. Of course, debian keeps taking more and more disk space.

Too bad we don't have anything like OpenBSD's `bsd.rd` (ramdisk) with full tools to fix things right there in the ramdisk, bootable from the normal boot loader.

Doug.

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