

Re: Automatic Clone of Ubuntu systems

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Ubuntu/2006-04/msg02851.html>

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Hi John!

I've been trying to solve a similar problem and I'll be happy to share what I've found. FYI, the problem I've been trying to solve is that of an OEM selling PCs, so I have to install Ubuntu from bare metal.

My suggestions:

* I think that your best bet is partimage:

http://www.partimage.org/Main_Page

There is a server and client version. You make a partition image, and the server sends it to all the clients. The problem I had with partimage is that it only does an image of a *partition*. In particular, it doesn't touch the MBR. So it's no good for my situation.

* Though this doesn't directly address your question, you'll want to bookmark this page:

http://www.sysresccd.org/Main_Page

SystemRescueCD is a neat live CD with tools like qparted, partimage, and the like. It includes instructions for making your own custom CD or DVD. So, for example, you could make a DVD that contains the very same disk image that you want to install. This could be very useful for doing a bare metal installation.

* An alternative to Partimage is SystemImager.

<http://www.systemimager.org/>

From what I can see, it's the same sort of cost-benefit trade-off of Partimage.

* Another alternative is dd

<http://www.inference.phy.cam.ac.uk/saw27/notes/backup-hard-disk-partitions.html>

dd does a byte-by-byte copy of either a partition or a disk. The benefit is that it does include the MBR, so it works for a bare-metal installation. The drawback is that the two disks must be identical, up to the disk geometry level. If they have different disk geometry, dd won't work and you'll have to sfdisk to make the drive usable again.

Another drawback of dd is that it is really slow because it also copies all the 0 bits at the end of the drive. Partimage uses the filesystem so it only copies actual content. dd will take *hours*.

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* What solution did I pick in the end?

Well, I don't have a solution yet. I want a bare-metal solution that is fast, so none of the above do it for me. I'm currently going for a custom script. I made an Ubuntu installation and did this:

```
tar -zcf disk_files.tgz /
```

My script does the following:

1. sfdisk to partition the new disk properly.
2. mkfs.ext2
3. mount the ext2 partition.
4. Untars the files.

For the final part (MBR) I plan to 'sudo chroot' and then run 'sudo grub install'. I don't know if that will work and I haven't had time to test it.

I would be interested to hear what solution you end up choosing. Maybe you can help me find a good solution for my problem also.

Cheers,
Daniel.

John Schofield wrote:

I'm looking for a tool that lets me clone and restore an entire disk image from an Ubuntu box, a la Norton's Ghost. (But from what I understand, Ghost isn't all that great with Linux volumes.)

The idea is that for servers, I would set them up once correctly, clone that image, and then simply do a bare-metal restore from the cloned image if necessary due to hardware failure or OS corruption.

If there's a tool you've used for this with success, I'd love to hear your stories.

Thanks a bunch!

John Schofield

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^ ^) <http://opendocumentfellowship.org>
^ _/
^ _/ A life? Sounds great!
v _/ Do you know where I could download one?
/

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ubuntu-users mailing list

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<https://lists.ubuntu.com/mailman/listinfo/ubuntu-users>