

Re: Installing Linux on Windows dual boot machine

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From: imotgm (*imotgm_REM_at_invalid-yahoo.com*)

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On Fri, 15 Apr 2005 23:10:42 -0400, xModem wrote:

- > *Whew! Thanks a bunch for the great explanations. Lots of good information to*
- > *peruse. Seems that it's a lot more hassle than I envisioned.*
- >
- > *Looks like it will be Method 2, if I decide to do this.*
- >
- > *I hate to ask you for more, but how should I partition the drive beyond XP on*
- > *C:\? Ideally, should Linux be installed before my data partition, after it,*
- > *or does it matter?*

First let me say that moving XP has the main advantage that you don't have to reinstall all your third party software. Whether that is a great advantage depends on how much third party software you have.

A complete reinstall of XP has the advantage of getting rid of all the old cruft that builds up over time, slowing down the OS. If you're comfortable with the complete reinstall of your third party software, this will give you the best overall performance, and is what I would do, as much as I hate doing all the reboots etc. that this entails.

As to the partitioning beyond C:\, that is almost a religious subject with some people. Everyone has a different view, so I'll preface my answer by saying my suggestions are based on what has been the most successful for ME, after trying many alternatives.

I'm assuming that your final lay-out will be C:\ = Windows XP, D:\ = shared storage of data, and a Linux installation; You'll note that I do not call the Linux installation E:\, because that is a Windows term, and Windows will not see the Linux installation at all. If, for some reason, you want an additional partition to isolate something specific, allow for that yourself.

Windows, by design, likes to be on the only primary partition, marked as

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active, with any other partitions being logical partitions on an extended partition. Every hard drive comes with a disk, floppy or CD, that has a partitioning tool that defaults to this behavior.

Linux doesn't care where it is installed, and will treat the space that it is allowed as virtually a separate hard drive unto itself, and will sub partition that area as it needs, and/or as you request.

To keep Windows happy, on any drive that will have both Windows and Linux, I let the mfg's partitioning tool create three partitions, of sizes I manually choose. By default, these will all be formatted as fat32.

While it shouldn't make any difference, I have had problems with Windows when I put Linux between two Windows partitions, but have never had problems if I leave all the Windows partitions grouped together. That said, Linux gets the last of the three original partitions. As I've already said, I'd give your Linux 6GB, to allow room to play with different Linux apps.

<Linux religious message> :-)

You don't put a long distance runner in a 10 ft square room, and ask him to show his stuff; he'll look foolish, and you'll be disappointed with his performance.

I, like you, wanted to just try Linux; play around with it, as my toy, when I wasn't doing "real work" on Windows. I started with 5GB on a 15GB drive. As I tried more apps, and saved the output therefrom, space got short, while desire to try more apps grew; added a 20GB hard drive for Linux only. Shortly thereafter, another 20GB hard drive, the biggest available at the time, and a second Linux distro. Long story short, today I have a dual boot Win98–Win2K 45GB drive, that I booted three times last year, once to get an old document that was stored in a Windows only proprietary format, and twice to reproduce a problem to help someone like you. Linux on the other hand occupies 415GB on four drives and currently I have nine different Linux distro's installed. I can't remember how long it's been since I've actually used an application on Windows.

</Linux religious message>

Installing Windows you already know, so I won't go into that, just do it first. When you get to the linux install, your partitions will look something like;

```
Device Boot Start End Blocks Id System
/dev/hda1 * 1 934 7502323+ b W95 FAT32/NTFS
/dev/hda2 935 5605 37519807+ f W95 Ext'd (LBA)
/dev/hda5 935 1868 7502323+ b W95 FAT32
/dev/hda6 1869 2802 7502323+ b W95 FAT32
```

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/dev/hda1 will be your XP, and either one of W95 FAT32 or NTFS depending on which you choose when you installed XP. /dev/hda5 will be your D:\ drive.

When asked where to put Linux, choose /dev/hda6. As this will be your first Linux, and you will either decide that it's not for you, or you need something more serious, because you do like it, don't get fancy on the partitioning. A swap partition and a / partition will do just fine. Make the swap first, so that you can define the size, twice installed memory. This will become /dev/hda6 when the installation is complete. Then create / using the rest of the space. This will be /dev/hda7 when the installation is complete. Let the distro format / using whatever fs it defaults to. Install lilo or grub, whichever the distro defaults to, in the MBR, and you're done.

Reboot, and have fun. ;-D

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imotgm