

## Re: Looking for dual booting advice

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*Source:* <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.linux.misc/2006-08/msg00119.html>

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- *From:* ray <[ray@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:ray@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Mon, 24 Jul 2006 08:54:04 -0600
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On Mon, 24 Jul 2006 13:27:24 +0000, Aragorn wrote:

On Monday 24 July 2006 00:40, PaulFXH stood up and spoke the following words to the masses in /comp.os.linux.misc...:/

Hi

I'm going to dual boot WinXP and Linux (?) from a single HD. Although I've researched this quite thoroughly, I'm surprised that there is no simple step-by-step instruction available. In addition, there seems to be two distinct schools of thought as to whether Linux should be installed BEFORE or AFTER Windows.

*\*Always\** install whatever version of Windows you intend to be using as the first operating system on the hard disk, and make sure that you don't give it all the space on the disk.

Resizing and repartitioning is easily accomplished with the Linux installer. It is not really a big deal if you install Linux first then MS – it just means you have to reinstall the boot loader after MS overwrites it.

If you plan to use a common storage between GNU/Linux and Windows and you want your Windows to be secure, then install Windows in an NTFS partition, and create a second partition with a FAT32 – we call that /vfat/ partition – for the common storage. GNU/Linux can read NTFS, but it has poor or absent – depending on the distribution – write support for NTFS.

*\*Then\** install GNU/Linux, creating at least two partitions for it: one as the root filesystem and a swap partition. Set the /vfat/ you've created in Windows up to be mounted under *\*/mnt/common\** or something – in UNIX, filesystems are /mounted/ to directories, not to drive

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letters.

You /may/ – depending on the disk space you have – choose to create a third GNU/Linux partition, to be mounted on \*/home.\* If you don't do this, the contents of \*/home\* will simply sit on your root filesystem. It may however be a good idea to keep them separate, so as to minimize filesystem fragmentation and the risk to filesystem corruption and subsequent dataloss.

\*/home\* is where the user home directories live, with the user's own work and personal configuration files.

In any event, my intention is to install Linux after WinXP (which is already there).

This is a sane set-up. ;-)

I would appreciate if somebody can direct me to a link which might clarify some of the issues involved in this. I would particularly like to understand a little more about the whole boot loader/MBR thing. For example, it seems to be stressed in many of the articles I read to avoid the Linux boot loader installing into the MBR. OK, but how?

There were some issues with having the GNU/Linux bootloader in the master boot record on dual boot systems with Windows NT and Windows 2000, but for all other set-ups, it is recommended to have the bootloader in the master boot record.

There is a /HowTo/ regarding the use of the NT bootloader – which is also used by Windows 2000 and all current NT-based Windows versions such as XP – at the website for the Linux Documentation Project, i.e.:

<http://www.tldp.org>

Although I have tried a few of the Linux LiveCDs, I'm still unclear as to which Linux flavor to install on the HD. My needs are very simple (OOo, Media Player and Internet are the only essentials) and I would appreciate advice as to which is likely to suit my situation as outlined above.

In that case, I would advise Mandriva, SuSE or Ubuntu/Kubuntu. I have no experience with a boxed retail version of SuSE – Ubuntu and Kubuntu are download-only distributions – but if you buy a boxed version of Mandriva, you get so-called non-free software as well.

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This is software that wasn't distributed under the GPL, although it /may/ be free of charge. Examples of this are the proprietary video drivers for ATI and nVidia cards, the Sun Java Runtime Environment, RealPlayer and proprietary browser plugins and codecs.

A boxed retail pack usually also comes with a printed manual and a limited customer support. I would definitely recommend this approach for a beginner. You can always get into downloading and burning the CD's/DVD yourself later when you're more experienced.

Dell 4550 Desktop  
WinXP Home SP2  
CPU P4, 2.53 GHz  
1.0 GB RAM  
Int HD 80 GB ntfs, non-partitioned

If it's non-partitioned, it won't have NTFS on it. ;-)

Ext HD 160 GB ntfs, 3 partitions  
Ext HD 250 GB ntfs, 4 partitions

Hope this was useful... ;-)