

Re: Any way to write to an NTFS partition?

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Daniel Ganek <ganek@comcast.net> wrote in message news:<c20508\$p7f\$1@pcls4.std.com>...

- > *Our salesforce uses laptops with Win2000 or XP installed (Dell).*
- > *We currently add RH 7.3 and GRUB to the MBR for demos. IT would*
- > *be a lot happier if we didn't muck with the MBR. I know how to*
- > *modify boot.ini to boot Linux. The problem is that we would have*
- > *to manually modify the NTFS partition after installing RH7.3.*

Assume you mean writing boot.ini back to the ntfs disk.

- > *I'd like to use a script during the kickstart process to copy a*
- > *file to the NTFS partition and add a line to boot.ini. But, RH*
- > *doesn't support NTFS. Anyone know of a way to do this? ...*

You could not pay me enough \$ to try this! Reasons below.

- > *...Is there*
- > *a 3rd party module I can install during kickstart that'll let me*
- > *mount the NTFS partition and write to it?*
- >
- > */dan*

If you're the one (or you trust those) who are installing RH, the best you can do is come up with a Win script to copy the linux.bin copy of the /boot partition boot sector, edit boot.ini, etc. Here's why.

In an attempt to "harden" the Win OS, MS decided to keep close tabs on access to key system files, eg., boot.ini (and a host of others). It stores things like file size, modification/access(?) times, and a guid in several different registry keys. Thus, only the target OS installation should write the needed changes, or at boot the OS will choke when its keys don't match the changes. YUK!

This is even if you trusted a linux module to safely handle writes to an ntfs partition — which for your situation I would not do.

Another problem with "automating" this process is that the whole process would have to be duplicated step-for-step in code. Any differences in disk layout, size, or even CHS calculations could cause

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trouble (a Win thing) — you can't be sure that the /boot "dd if=..." copy will produce a consistent/accurate boot code or partition table from one laptop to the next. (Yes, I'm being somewhat paranoid, but experience with MS filesystems teaches you that.)

You might try leaving ntldr in the MBR and using a boot floppy for Linux — even place grub on a floppy. This, of course, means happy sailing till someone leaves behind their boot floppy.

If you are confident (after trying on a test-top) you could get by with a bash script that would make the linux.bin floppy and use a Win script to copy it and edit boot.ini. You might even be able to do this on/from the file server that you're using to do your RH kickstart install — big "if" here, of course.

BTW — if you re-run "grub-install" to place grub in /boot partition's boot sector, be sure to use the --recheck option to rebuild device.map.

hth,
prg
email above disabled