

Re: Grub Read Error on 1st boot after install

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From: Nobody Here (*nobby_at_invalid.invalid*)

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On 8 Nov 2005 14:46:15 -0800, fireball wrote:

- > *I'm new to Linux. Been considering getting started for years. Now*
- > *that I have gotten started, I've crashed my Win98 system or at least it*
- > *won't boot now.*
- >
- > *The system is a Dell Pentium 233 with Win98 on Drive C which also has*
- > *or had two logical partitions E: and F:. I installed a 20gb hd to*
- > *install Linux on. The Linux distro. I used came with Christopher*
- > *Negus' book "Red Hat Fedora 4.0 Bible". I followed the install chapter*
- > *to the letter I think, to set up a dual boot system, with the complete*
- > *Linux install. The setup routine formatted the drive and installed*
- > *seemingly without a hitch.*
- >
- > *When it came time to reboot, I got a "Grub Read Error". I shut off*
- > *the power a number of times, but "Grub Read Error" is the only response*
- > *that I get. I don't find anything in the "Red Hat Fedora Bible" book*
- > *that covers this problem.*
- >
- > *Thanks in advance for any help in recovering from this. I'd be really*
- > *dissappointed if I can't get this working, I mean I've waited for so*
- > *long. I was really looking forward to getting away from Windows.*

A couple of brief observations, sorry if they assume too little about your knowledge:

It sounds like you've broken the master boot record on the hard disk. That's probably because it's slightly more complicated to use a second hard disk rather than just different partitions on the first.

Presumably you installed Linux on the second hard disk not the first? You should have been using /hdev/hdb probably, if the Windows disk is the first (master) disk on the primary controller and the new disk is the slave. In other words, are you sure you've not overwritten your Windows install?

Secondly, at what point does Grub give the read error? Is it after it displays the selection/countdown page or right at the beginning

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before anything else is displayed? If you get the countdown/selection page then there are things you can type at grub to help resolve the problem. If nothing at all appears, you're a little more stuffed.

If you're using Fedora Core 4, you can boot the install CD in rescue mode. If you do that, it'll eventually get to a point where it tells you it's searching for installations, and with any luck it'll find your newly installed second hard disk. If it does that, that opens up a whole range of possibilities to fix things. After the CD boots, there will be a bunch of "help" options displayed, but you can type "linux rescue" without the ""'s to boot in rescue mode. One of the first things you can do is to use fdisk at the command prompt to see all your disk partitions. That's "fdisk /dev/hda" for the first disk and "fdisk /dev/hdb" for the second. Type "m" for help in fdisk – don't ask me why? Type "q" to exit without changing anything. Don't type "w" unless you know what you're doing.

Does the W98 CD self boot like the XP one? The XP one seems to look at the hard disk and give you the opportunity to boot either the CD or the contents of a windows partition. If the '98 one will do that, you might be able to boot windows, and repair the disk's master boot record to at least boot Windows using something like "fdisk /mbr" (RTFM!!) in a command prompt. Then you can start again, at least, and also use Windows' disk manager thing to at least see if there are some partitions on the second disk.

Hope this helps a bit. Almost certainly your system can be recovered by booting into rescue mode – probably by mounting your installed system, chrooting to the root of the mounted install, fixing your grub configuration file in /etc/grub.conf and possibly reinstalling grub. Sounds easy, and it is when you know what you're doing, but I remember well enough that it's a bit daunting at first :-)

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Nobby