Tools and techniques for Windows integration

LIVING WITH WINDOWS

Dualbooting Linux with Windows is the easiest thing in the world, you think, so you install your favorite Linux distro on top of a Windows system, and it sets itself up perfectly. A handy menu even asks which system you'd like to boot, and each system starts as if it were the only brain in the drum.

But what if something goes wrong? What if you lose a partition? What if your Windows system gets sick with spyware and you have to re-install? What if you just want to change your configuration – or if are weary of rebooting and would like to simply access Windows files from Linux? In this month's Linux Windows Integration cover story, we'll describe how dual boot really works and show you how to configure your own dual boot system.

In our lead-off article, "Boot Polishing: Putting Linux and Windows on a single hard disk," we'll describe what really goes on behind the boot menu, and we'll show you some techniques for customiz-ing dual boot. You'll learn how the Grub bootloader handles dual boot systems. We'll show you how Grub boots Windows, and we'll even take you to the Windows side to show how you can configure a Linux boot from the Windows boot.ini file.

Our second story, "Crossing Over: Accessing partitions on dual boot systems," describes Captive NTFS, a free tool for Linux that reads and writes to Windows NTFS partitions. We'll also show you some free Windows tools for accessing files on Linux ext2 partitions.

If you're looking for yet another kind of integration, where you don't even have to reboot to run Windows programs, you'll like our third article on running Windows apps in Linux with Wine. Wine is a much-covered topic in the press – you may have even seen our story on Wine in the May, 2005 issue – but this month's article, by a member of the Wine development team, delivers some practical, real-world details that are rarely described anywhere. If you only read one Wine article this year, this is the one to read.

If you really need to live with Windows, why not bring Windows to Linux? We hope you enjoy our Linux Windows Integration cover story. ■