How to customize the Ubuntu Live CD?

Asked 8 years, 5 months ago Active 2 months ago Viewed 82k times

206

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I would like to customize Ubuntu live CD by installing some additional packages. I have followed this but it doesn't seems to work. Can anyone provide clear instructions?

Note: I do not prefer Remastersys, manual way will be appreciated.

Customization

Packages that I want to install:

- Thunderbird
- Samba
- SSH

Changes that I need:

- Remove Games menu from the Application menu
- Firefox shortcut on Desktop
- Radiance as the default Theme
- Different default Ubuntu Wallpaper

Configuration file changes

- I want the panel to be placed at the bottom
- I want to paste my Samba configuration file instead of default Samba configuration
- I have few Firefox shortcuts and folders I would like to show that in Desktop
- Also it will be nice if you say me how to change the icon sets

Recent Updates

- I have customized Ubuntu 10.10 with Firefox shortcuts and few folders on desktops. Everything went smooth. But the installer gets crashes after choosing the timezone. How do i fix this issue?
- Also setting wallpaper affects the login screen. The wallpaper which i set is displayed on the login screen also. I just want the default one for the login screen.

custom-distributions

edited Feb 24 '15 at 15:15 asked Jun 13 '11 at 16:34

Do you want updates for 12.04 with Unity or do you prefer Gnome-Shell/Classic? – ish Jun 23 '12 at 12:45

2 Answer added, overall easier method using Ubuntu Builder :) Please let me know any feedback, etc. in the comments. – ish Jun 29 '12 at 11:10

1 @mniess " How would you remaster 14.04 or newer?" the manual version posted by izx and me are still valid for setting up the root system for editing. The new answer highly depends on knowing what you mean with "given recent changes". Every change will have a specific approach (edit dconf or edit a conf file) and all of that is already covered in the current answers. The one thing it is not is "copy/paste"; these new changes require someone to think beyond what is written. BUT I believe the answer also already requires this. – Rinzwind Aug 21 '14 at 13:26

1 2nd: askubuntu.com/questions/409607/... is a newer version using a server ISO and a kickstart file. Works for desktop ISO's too. – Rinzwind Aug 21 '14 at 13:31

Note for customizations to themes programs etc, most probably needs to be done to the respective *packages*, not the installed files. Then setting a newer version number will mean that your changes should not be overwritten by updates (though you likely will want/need to update these packages every so often to adapt to newer versions) – Wilf May 20 '15 at 20:11

15 Answers

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+500

Note: The Ubuntu Builder project has been discontinued.

Creating a custom 12.04 CD with Gnome-Classic using Ubuntu-Builder

(for now, this is specific to Karthik's needs; I will update answer later with more general/Unity-specific stuff)

1. Get Ubuntu Builder and your source ISO

Ubuntu Builder automates many of the preliminary steps that had to be done by hand (mount ISO, extract squashfs, create chroot, etc.) It gives you Synaptic and a "graphical" chroot as well (Unity UI).

Add the PPA to install Ubuntu Builder:

```
sudo add-apt-repository ppa:kamilion/ubuntu-builder
sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get install ubuntu-builder
```

Also download the Ubuntu Desktop ISO you're planning to work with.

2. Ubuntu Builder Basics

- Start Ubuntu Builder from the Launcher. I recommend you set all three fields to "Ubuntu" (like the actual LiveCD), because setting custom fields led to Software Center crashing. When you install, you can choose your own username, machine name, etc. as always.

  enter image description here

- Load your ISO; I loaded the 64-bit with the *Local Disk* option, although Ubuntu Builder should be able to download the ISO if you want it to.

to load). Note that the `Select DE/WM` does an incomplete job sometimes, so it's better to install via *apt-get*/Synaptic.

3. Updating, adding Gnome Classic and other package management

> **Note:** All this can also be done from Synaptic if you are more comfortable with that.

- You can edit the `sources.list` with the button (or via the console) to add your own mirrors, ppas, etc.

Let's start with:

- Remove the games

```
apt-get remove --purge aisleriot gnome-games-data gnomine mahjongg -y
```

- Do a general update and dist-upgrade to the latest stuff (optional, but recommended since the Gnome-classic and other packages you add will be the latest versions) -- on 12.04, this step also installs Thunderbird and the core Samba components. It will also save time on the actual install.

```
apt-get update && apt-get dist-upgrade
```

- Install Gnome Classic (`gnome-shell` to pull in indicators, etc.), Samba and SSH:

```
apt-get install gnome-shell samba ssh
```

4. Customization 1: Files, configs and removing the top-panel

> **Note:** All commands must be run from the chrooted console of Ubuntu Builder *unless otherwise noted* (usually when copying files from your own system). The absolute path of the chroot is `/home/ubuntu-builder/FileSystem`

1. Replace Samba configuration file (from your own system terminal, i.e. outside chroot!)

```
sudo cp /path/to/mysmb.conf /home/ubuntu-builder/FileSystem/etc/samba/smb.conf
```

2. Put Firefox shortcut on desktop:

```
mkdir -p /etc/skel/Desktop && cd /etc/skel/Desktop
cp /usr/share/applications/firefox.desktop .
chmod +x firefox.desktop
```

3. Copy custom shortcuts and folders to Desktop (from outside chroot!)

```
sudo cp -r /path/to/mydesktopitems/ /home/ubuntu-
builder/FileSystem/etc/skel/Desktop/
```

4. Set `gnome-classic` as the default shell:

```
/usr/lib/lightdm/lightdm-set-defaults -s gnome-classic
```

```
nano /usr/share/gnome-panel/panel-default-layout.layout
```

- Delete the top-panel, by removing lines 1-4:

```
[Toplevel top-panel]
expand=true
orientation=top
size=24
```

- Move the Start Menu to the bottom left by modifying the **bolded** value for the *italicized* parameter as below:

```
[Object menu-bar]
object-iid=PanelInternalFactory::MenuBar
toplevel-id=bottom-panel
pack-index=0
```

- Move the indicators to the bottom right, just to the left of the Workspace Switcher, by modifying the **bolded** value for the *italicized* parameters as below:

```
[Object indicators]
object-iid=IndicatorAppletCompleteFactory::IndicatorAppletComplete
toplevel-id=bottom-panel
pack-type=end
pack-index=1
```

- Remove the "Show Desktop" button from the bottom left; I prefer the Start Menu to be the first thing there, you can leave it or move it to the bottom right, etc. Delete these lines:

```
[Object show-desktop]
object-iid=WnckletFactory::ShowDesktopApplet
toplevel-id=bottom-panel
pack-index=0
```

- Save and exit.

5. Customization 2: Backgrounds and Themes

> Note: `/usr/share/glib-2.0/schemas` contains most of the default background/theme settings; I found it easier to directly modify those for a LiveCD instead of having to deal complicated stuff just to, for example, prevent the login screen background from being the same as the desktop background.

1. Disable the login screen *(lightdm)* from "copying" the desktop background and other changes:
   - Open `nano /usr/share/glib-2.0/schemas/com.canonical.unity-greeter.gschema.xml`
   - You can change the login background from the default here if you want:

```
<key name="background" type="s">
<default>'/usr/share/backgrounds/warty-final-ubuntu.png'</default>
```

- Set the login theme to Radiance:

```
  <key name="theme-name" type="s">
<default>'Radiance'</default>
```

2. Change the default wallpaper; here, we'll set it to the included "Tie My Boat" (`/usr/share/backgrounds/Tie_My_Boat_by_Ray_García.jpg`):
   - Open `nano /usr/share/glib-2.0/schemas/10_gsettings-desktop-schemas.gschema.override` , and change the below line to the path for your file:

```
picture-uri='file:///usr/share/backgrounds/warty-final-ubuntu.png'
```

3. Change the theme to *Radiance*
   - Open Ubuntu's theme override file ``nano /usr/share/glib-2.0/schemas/ubuntu-artwork.gschema.override`, and change the *Ambiance* below to *Radiance*:

```
[org.gnome.desktop.interface]
gtk-theme="Ambiance"
...
[org.gnome.desktop.wm.preferences]
theme="Ambiance"
```

4. **Important: Compile the modified schemas!**
   - Now that we're done customizing, compile the modified schemas with:

```
glib-compile-schemas /usr/share/glib-2.0/schemas
```

6. Build, test and install!

- Press the `Build` button in Ubuntu Builder to begin building the custom Live-CD ISO. UB automatically handles the cleanup, etc. that previously had to be done manually.

  enter image description here
- The ISO can be found in `/home/ubuntu-builder` ; you can test it using the built-in QEMU, or in another virtual machine.
- My finished CD size was 778 MB (after removing the old `.23` kernel), with Unity and Gnome 3D still available if the user wishes to, so that's pretty good for a customization! :)

The following should result:

1. After bootup, you get the "Try Ubuntu" or "Install Ubuntu" option:

   enter image description here
2. Clicking "Try" gets us our custom desktop!

   enter image description here
3. And logging out (login with `ubuntu` , blank password) shows that the login wallpaper is kept at the default:

5. Select username, etc. for install:

    enter image description here

6. Installed login screen:

    enter image description here

7. Installed desktop:

    enter image description here

edited Apr 13 '17 at 12:25
Community ♦
1

answered Jun 29 '12 at 11:09
ish
123k 35 281 299

1 How to update/install a package which requires system-restart (for example kernel or dbus)? When I try to update it installs; but in gui-mode, session-indicator turns red & says `restart to complete the update` . – Khurshid Alam Apr 1 '13 at 12:17

How do I replace the Ubuntu artwork with my own artwork ? – Roshan George Jun 10 '13 at 14:03

This one doesn't work. I dont know why. I am not sure whether this happens to me alone. When I run it inside a virtualbox, it shows a popu saying that "/casper/vmlinuz.efi: file not found". How to correct this? s24.postimg.org/jbez8svx1/Untitled.png – Roshan George Jun 19 '13 at 5:42

@izx Can you please tell me, how to set working directory for ubuntu-builder? It is creating directory in /home/ubuntu-builder. I run it with root access. – shantanu Nov 28 '13 at 22:20

5 This project is discontinued. The PPA does not work, and the website has no download links. I suggest to add this info at the beginning of your answer to help others arriving here not wasting his time. – Sopalajo de Arrierez Mar 3 '15 at 16:02

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Creating your own Custom Live CD - the manual way.

1. Preparations

- First you download the Live CD ISO. While it is downloading install some software that is needed for rebuilding: `sudo apt-get install squashfs-tools schroot`

  Squashfs Install squashfs-tools is a compressed read-only filesystem for Linux.

  schroot Install schroot allows users to execute commands or interactive shells in different chroots.

- Mount the Live CD:

```
mkdir /tmp/livecd
sudo mount -o loop ~/Downloads/ubuntu-11.04-desktop-i386.iso /tmp/livecd
```

  If you use another ISO or another location for your download please adjust accordingly.

- Create a working area and copy contents over to the working area:

```
sudo modprobe squashfs
sudo mount -t squashfs -o loop /tmp/livecd/casper/filesystem.squashfs
~/livecd/squashfs/
sudo cp -a ~/livecd/squashfs/* ~/livecd/custom
```

- If you get an error like this while doing modprobe:

```
sudo modprobe squashfs
WARNING: Deprecated config file /etc/modprobe.conf,
all config files belong into /etc/modprobe.d/
```

  move the modprobe.conf `mv /etc/modprobe.conf /etc/modprobe.conf.OLD` and try again!

- Network access:

```
sudo cp /etc/resolv.conf /etc/hosts ~/livecd/custom/etc/
```

- Create a pseudo filesystem:

```
sudo chroot ~/livecd/custom /bin/bash -l
mount -t proc none /proc/
mount -t sysfs none /sys/
```

2. Customizing

- You can get a list of all packages with `dpkg-query -W --showformat='${Package}\n' | less`
- You can remove games with `apt-get remove --purge gnome-games`
- Update your sources with `sudoedit /etc/apt/sources.list` . Comment out lines you do not want and uncomment the ones you do want, add in PPAs if you want and then you need to update with `apt-get update && apt-get dist-upgrade`
- Adding packages like thunderbird, Samba, Samba system config and SSH is done the same way as you would normally install from command line. So `sudo apt-get install thunderbird samba system-config-samba ssh` will add those.
- If you've manually downloaded the package from you can install it with `sudo dpkg -i {file_name}.deb`
  - You can check Ubuntu Software Center, Synaptic or the packages website for the names if more need to be installed.
  - You might consider adding (wireless) network utilities.
  - You will quickly run over 800 Mb; if you do you either remove more packages to get under 800 or you need to use a DVD when burning. Removing libre office will free up you 33+ Mb if you do not need it.
- To create an AskUbuntu shortcut on the desktop:

```
mkdir -p /etc/skel/Desktop && printf '[Desktop Entry]\nVersion=1.0\nName=Ask
Ubuntu\nComment=Ask Questions About Ubuntu\nGenericName=Question and
Answers\nExec=xdg-open http://askubuntu.com\nTerminal=false\nX-
MultipleArgs=false\nType=Application\nIcon=firefox\nCategories=Internet;\n' >
/etc/skel/Desktop/askubuntu.desktop && chmod a+x
/etc/skel/Desktop/askubuntu.desktop
```

- Changing settings inside gconf-editor.

  You can change any gconf option if you know what the path is of that option and the value you want it to be (and the type of the value of course).

   enter image description here

  Changing the wallpaper is done with the path I pointed arrows to: `/desktop/gnome/background/` , it is a string value and it uses `picture_filename` as an option. The value it currently holds on my desktop is `/discworld2/Downloads/fantasticwall_2.jpg` . The background itself should be copied into `/usr/share/backgrounds/` . Make sure to set permissions and owner.

  Examples:

  - To change the wallpaper (change the filename in the 1st command to your own image) to this image and to change the theme to Radiance you can use this information to create commands to set this for your live cd:

    ```
    gconftool-2 --direct --config-source xml:readwrite:/etc/gconf/gconf.xml.defaults
    --set -t string /desktop/gnome/background/picture_filename
    /discworld2/Downloads/fantasticwall_2.jpg

    gconftool-2 --direct --config-source xml:readwrite:/etc/gconf/gconf.xml.defaults
    --set -t string /desktop/gnome/interface/gtk_theme Radiance
    ```

    Courtesy of dv3500ea

  - Enable remote desktop:

    ```
    gconftool-2 --direct --config-source xml:readwrite:/etc/gconf/gconf.xml.defaults
    --set -t bool /desktop/gnome/remote_access/enabled true
    ```

    Settings for icons, panels etc are all done by adding a command like this.

  - Alternatively you can edit `/etc/gconf/gconf.xml.defaults/%gconf-tree.xml` (or when you are down save this file for future usage). All the configuration settings done through gconftool-2 are stored in this file.

- Change the default timezone used by the live cd

  ```
  dpkg-reconfigure tzdata
  ```

- Change locale setting to english (of course change it to what you want)

  ```
  locale-gen en
  update-locale LANG=en LANGUAGE=en LC_ALL=en
  ```

- Configure configuration files.

  If you want to have a custom configuration file for a certain package you can do this in several ways.

  The difficult (but most logical) way would be to either find the package, change the configuration file and repackage it or to find the source files, figure out where they store their

script so it would make it rather difficult to get this done.

The easiest way would be to create a script and copy your current config to `/etc/skel` so they get added to your desktop (similar to adding firefox shortcuts as explained above) and after installing click the desktop link to set the config file to the place it needs to be. The script could both do the copying and removal of both the script and config file from your desktop after it succesfully installed. This method can be used to update the Samba configuration (put your current config in `/etc/skel/` . Put a script in there that has execute permissions and contains a move of said config to `/etc/samba/smbd.conf` and all you need to do afterwards is execute the script).

- This basically always works since it replaces a post-install manual action with a post-install manually activated script. But it also means it is not part of the custom live cd.

3. Cleaning up

```
apt-get clean
rm -rf /tmp/*
rm -f /etc/hosts /etc/resolv.conf
umount /proc/
umount /sys/
exit
```

This removes all the temporary files; not what we created. `~/livecd/` is readonly so a normal `rm` will not remove these files. You need to mount it with write access (or as I did use the new live cd to boot and mount the home and `rm` it from there.

4. Setting up the ISO

- Manifest files.

```
chmod +w ~/livecd/cd/casper/filesystem.manifest
sudo chroot ~/livecd/custom dpkg-query -W --showformat='${Package} ${Version}\n'
> ~/livecd/cd/casper/filesystem.manifest
sudo cp ~/livecd/cd/casper/filesystem.manifest
~/livecd/cd/casper/filesystem.manifest-desktop
```

- Regenerate squashfs file.

```
sudo mksquashfs ~/livecd/custom ~/livecd/cd/casper/filesystem.squashfs
```

- Update md5 sums.

```
sudo rm ~/livecd/cd/md5sum.txt
sudo bash -c 'cd ~/livecd/cd && find . -type f -exec md5sum {} +' > md5sum.txt
```

5. Creating the ISO.

```
cd ~/livecd/cd
sudo mkisofs -r -V "Ubuntu-Live" -b isolinux/isolinux.bin -c isolinux/boot.cat -
cache-inodes -J -l -no-emul-boot -boot-load-size 4 -boot-info-table -o
~/Downloads/ubuntu-11.04-desktop-i386.iso .
```

```
sudo umount ~/livecd/squashfs/
sudo umount /tmp/livecd
sudo rm -fr ~/livecd/
```

7. Comments:

- Everything was tested with an Ubuntu 11.04 Live CD. Only thing that went wrong was chrooting: I added dchroot to the files you need to install to do this.
- Regarding "should create some firefox shortcuts on desktop", "Should change the default theme to radiance" and "Should change the default ubuntu wallpaper". I edited these in after dv3500ea put it into the comments; I did not test this while creating the 11.04 live cd.

edited Sep 18 at 22:18

community wiki
23 revs, 6 users 75%
Rinzwind

Will `apt-get update && apt-get dist-upgrade` also upgrade the kernel/initrd used on the Live CD? I mean the kernel for the boot process form the live medium, loaded by Syslinux, not the one installed. – gertvdijk Jan 29 '13 at 22:24

`apt-get dist-upgrade` works without a flaw, except for some `warning: could not determine root device from /etc/fstab` messages. Is it supposed to become a problem? – Sopalajo de Arrierez Mar 3 '15 at 21:58

No. But to be sure have a look at yours and see how / is mounted. – Rinzwind Mar 4 '15 at 7:35

1 According to help.ubuntu.com in 12.04 and 14.04 the `/etc/resolv.conf` may not be removed as a part of the **cleanup** – souravc Mar 8 '15 at 5:13

1 This method still works: Tested with Kubuntu 18.04.2. note: that I could only make the .ISO bootable using unetbootin (etcher did not work). No problems booting when burning .ISO to a DVD. – Nmath Jun 2 at 6:27

Creating a live CD from an existing/new installation

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EDIT: This method doesn't seem to work anymore. I suggest you try other methods suggested in this QA.

A good way would be making a live CD from a current installation. This can be done using a virtual machine (just don't install any VM tools inside the guest OS)

So, first we need a fresh install(if you can't install it for real, try using a virtual machine) with only things that you need (in your case thunderbird, samba and ssh). Then we tweak the system and record where the tweaks are (e.g. you change your desktop background, the settings are in ~/.gconf or you add firefox shortcuts, they are located in ~/Desktop). This is needed for step 4.

1. Set up some variables:

```
export WORK=~/temp
export CD=~/livecd
export FORMAT=squashfs
```

Replace ~/temp with a path to a temporary directory in which we will work in. Replace ~/livecd with a path to the CD tree.

2. Make the folder structure. `sudo mkdir -p ${CD}/{${FS_DIR},boot/grub} ${WORK}/rootfs`
3. Now we will need to install some packages:

```
sudo apt-get install grub2 xorriso squashfs-tools
```

4. Now we will copy the current installation, modify the exclude flags to fit your needs:

```
sudo rsync -av --one-file-system --exclude=/proc/* --exclude=/dev/* \
--exclude=/sys/* --exclude=/tmp/* --exclude=/home/* --exclude=/lost+found \
--exclude=/var/tmp/* --exclude=/boot/grub/* --exclude=/root/* \
--exclude=/var/mail/* --exclude=/var/spool/* --exclude=${WORK}/rootfs \
--exclude=/etc/fstab --exclude=/etc/mtab --exclude=/etc/hosts \
--exclude=/etc/timezone --exclude=/etc/shadow* --exclude=/etc/gshadow* \
--exclude=/etc/X11/xorg.conf* --exclude=/etc/gdm/custom.conf \
/ ${WORK}/rootfs
```

If you have a separate boot partition, execute this: `sudo cp -av /boot/* ${WORK}/rootfs/boot`
In your case, you want to copy settings and some files from the home directory. First, define what directories we want to copy: CONFIG='.config .gconf Desktop someotherfolder andanotherfolder' And now we copy that:

```
cd ~ && for i in $CONFIG
do
sudo cp -rpv --parents $i ${WORK}/rootfs/etc/skel
done
```

5. Now we chroot into the new system and modify it.

```
sudo mount  --bind /dev/ ${WORK}/rootfs/dev
sudo mount -t proc proc ${WORK}/rootfs/proc
sudo mount -t sysfs sysfs ${WORK}/rootfs/sys
sudo mount -t devpts devpts ${WORK}/rootfs/dev/pts
sudo chroot ${WORK}/rootfs /bin/bash
```

The next commands are done in chroot:

```
LANG=
apt-get update
apt-get install casper
```

Casper contains live scripts. If you want an installer too, run this:

```
apt-get install ubiquity ubiquity-frontend-gtk
```

Or if you want KDE:

```
apt-get install ubiquity ubiquity-frontend-kde
```

6. Update modules dep and initramfs:

7. Remove non-system users - do not worry, we have copied the settings and data into the "skeleton" of users. That means all new users will have them.

```
for i in `cat /etc/passwd | awk -F":" '{print $1}'`
do
    uid=`cat /etc/passwd | grep "^${i}:" | awk -F":" '{print $3}'`
    [ "$uid" -gt "999" -a  "$uid" -ne "65534"  ] && userdel --force ${i}
2>/dev/null
done
```

8. Clean up:

```
apt-get clean
find /var/log -regex '.*?[0-9].*?' -exec rm -v {} \;
find /var/log -type f | while read file
do
    cat /dev/null | tee $file
done
rm /etc/resolv.conf /etc/hostname
```

9. Exit chroot. `exit`
10. Now, we copy the kernel:

```
export kversion=`cd ${WORK}/rootfs/boot && ls -1 vmlinuz-* | tail -1 | sed
's@vmlinuz-@@'`
sudo cp -vp ${WORK}/rootfs/boot/vmlinuz-${kversion} ${CD}/boot/vmlinuz
sudo cp -vp ${WORK}/rootfs/boot/initrd.img-${kversion} ${CD}/boot/initrd.img
sudo cp -vp ${WORK}/rootfs/boot/memtest86+.bin ${CD}/boot
```

11. If you have installed the installer, you will need to do this, so that the installer doesn't install things like casper:

```
sudo chroot ${WORK}/rootfs dpkg-query -W --showformat='${Package} ${Version}\n' |
sudo tee ${CD}/${FS_DIR}/filesystem.manifest
sudo cp -v ${CD}/${FS_DIR}/filesystem.manifest{,-desktop}
REMOVE='ubiquity casper user-setup os-prober libdebian-installer4'
for i in $REMOVE
do
    sudo sed -i "/${i}/d" ${CD}/${FS_DIR}/filesystem.manifest-desktop
done
```

12. Unmount what we have mounted:

```
sudo umount ${WORK}/rootfs/proc
sudo umount ${WORK}/rootfs/sys
sudo umount ${WORK}/rootfs/dev/pts
sudo umount ${WORK}/rootfs/dev
```

13. Convert to squashfs:

```
sudo mksquashfs ${WORK}/rootfs ${CD}/${FS_DIR}/filesystem.${FORMAT}
```

14. Make filesystem.size: `echo -n $(sudo du -s --block-size=1 ${WORK}/rootfs | tail -1 | awk '{print $1}') | sudo tee ${CD}/casper/filesystem.size`
15. And md5: `find ${CD} -type f -print0 | xargs -0 md5sum | sed "s@${CD}@.@" | grep -v`

```
sudo nano ${CD}/boot/grub/grub.cfg
```

(replace nano with your fav text editor, it doesn't matter) Paste this and save:

```
set default="0"
set timeout=10

menuentry "Ubuntu GUI" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}


menuentry "Ubuntu in safe mode" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper xforcevesa quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}


menuentry "Ubuntu CLI" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper textonly quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}


menuentry "Ubuntu GUI persistent mode" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper boot=casper persistent quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}


menuentry "Ubuntu GUI from RAM" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper nopersistent toram quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}

menuentry "Check Disk for Defects" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper integrity-check quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}


menuentry "Memory Test" {
linux16 /boot/memtest86+.bin
}


menuentry "Boot from the first hard disk" {
set root=(hd0)
chainloader +1
}
```

17. If you want, you can add an additional menu entry, which allows you to jump straight into Ubiquity.

```
menuentry "Install Ubuntu" {
linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper only-ubiquity quiet splash
initrd /boot/initrd.img
}
```

18. Make the CD/DVD! `sudo grub-mkrescue -o ~/live-cd.iso ${CD}`

edited Jun 20 '13 at 15:30

answered Jun 20 '11 at 12:49

nickguletskii

4,040 3 17 28

I have a question about the grub.cfg. Is this file grub.cfg just used while installation, or is it persistent to the installed system also. What if I dont edit the grub.cfg ? – Roshan George Jun 10 '13 at 14:13

@RoshanGeorge This configures GRUB on the CD. It shouldn't persist after installation. – nickguletskii Jun 12 '13 at 12:55

Can we just have the installation like how it is for Ubuntu normally, that is, show the ubiquity installer, rather than showing grub? Means, in Ubuntu installation, when we insert and run the cd, ubiquity shows up rather than grub menu, Can we do like that ? – Roshan George Jun 12 '13 at 17:14

@RoshanGeorge It should be possible by adding a menu entry with `linux /boot/vmlinuz boot=casper only-ubiquity quiet splash` . I will test and verify. – nickguletskii Jun 13 '13 at 16:18

@RoshanGeorge I have successfully added an option to launch Ubiquity from the boot menu. However, I need to fix the guide - some ubiquity steps are missing. I will attempt to fix it tomorrow. – nickguletskii Jun 13 '13 at 21:22

15

You can use `uck` or the `live-magic` to customize your Live CD.

`uck` is available from Ubuntu's official software sources, in all versions of Ubuntu since 10.04 LTS Lucid Lynx. You can install `uck` from the Software Center, with `apt-get` on the command-line, or by clicking here Install uck.

edited Mar 11 '17 at 18:56

Community ♦

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answered Aug 4 '10 at 8:50

yevhene

1,426 2 14 17

1 looks like UCK has been discontinued :(– amc Jun 15 '16 at 22:17

Ubuntu Builder was discontinued in 2014; Ubuntu Customization Kit installs but doesn't work and was discontinued in 2015; System Imager was discontinued in 2016. This answer really needs to be updated. Is there an offiically supported method in 2019? – allquixotic Jul 4 at 23:36

@allquixotic `uck` is in the 18.04 universe repository. Does this version not work? – mchid Jul 30 at 7:36

10

Ubuntu Customization Kit

It is a collection of scripts that make it easier to create a custom LiveCD from an existing .iso image. It is very similar to Remastersys, with the difference that it is actively maintained. It has a GUI to help with the customization, but one can also use the command-line to do the same.

1. It will ask to select which language packs to include in the CD.
2. Then, it will ask to select the .iso image file, which will be used as the base for the new CD.
3. Give a name for the new .iso image that will be created.
4. Then, it will ask for the packages that are to be added/removed to/from the LiveCD. It will

center from the command-line). You can also modify configuration settings for all the software/apps.

5. After you have finished (it might take some time to download the required packages), continue.
6. Now, just sit back and relax. After some time, your customized LiveCD will be ready.

answered Nov 11 '11 at 15:25

rigved
2,139 1 15 22

2 looks like the UCK project has been discontinued :(– amc Jun 15 '16 at 21:59

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If you need more control over exactly what changes are made, it is possible to make the modification manually.

The process consists of unpacking the SquashFS data file containing the live OS's root filesystem, chrooting into the extracted filesystem, making your modifications, exiting the chroot, repacking the SquashFS file, and then regenerating the ISO image.

Complete details are described on the LiveCDCustomization page of the Ubuntu wiki.

answered Oct 10 '10 at 4:39

ændrük
60k 65 206 346

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In Ubuntu Software Center

> **Edit>Software Sources>Other Software>Add..**

Paste the following line in the box and click add source.

> deb http://www.geekconnection.org/remastersys/repository karmic

Reload the sources and install Remastersys from Software Center.

Once done, install all the media codecs and apps you'd like on your custom ubuntu. Start remastersys from

> **System>Adminstration>Remastersys**

Pick **dist** mode, click ok and Wait for the process to finish. Once done, you'll find your custom iso in

> **/home/remastersys/remastersys/custom.iso**

I've followed exact the same procedures as you described here, but unfortunately during boot it's showing "could not find ramdisk image: /ubninit" and get refreshed again and again with 10 seconds interval. Result: I can't boot my customized ISO. Could you tell me how can I solve this? Please. – tuxtu Jun 13 '13 at 9:17

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Remastersys could be the answer to your needs. You need to go to http://www.remastersys.com/ubuntu.html and follow the instructions. This program makes an iso from your running os including all settings and apps. Than you can burn a CD using this iso. Unfortunately, there was in the past an issue to get it running as a live cd, while installing was no problem (I dont know if this is still a problem).

edited Jun 14 '12 at 21:39

Eliah Kagan
96.7k 25 260 415

answered Jun 13 '11 at 19:46

dago
2,274 3 19 27

1 or UCK which uses GUI and is less difficult – Uri Herrera Jun 18 '11 at 4:05

Remastersys is dead. Now this site is owned by a domain squatter. – allquixotic Jul 4 at 23:38

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There is no "GUI" that I know of outside of Lucid, however gNewsense, which is a fork of Ubuntu makes their scripts to take an Ubuntu release and make a custom fork freely available and rather well documented.

Its basically a process of:

1. Placing your custom artwork where the scripts can find it
2. Deciding what you want in your kernel (or what you don't want)
3. Deciding what packages you want (or what you don't want)
4. Running a script that mirrors an apt repository
5. Creating the distribution CD / ISO.

While not exactly 'novice friendly', their tools are relatively easy to use.

answered Aug 4 '10 at 13:27

Tim Post ♦
782 7 25

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I have tinkered with a new web-based service called Reconstructor. According to their website,

> Reconstructor is a toolkit for creating custom versions of the GNU/Linux operating system, specifically Debian and Ubuntu.

According to a Linux Journal article about Reconstructor, they charge small fees for customizations. Whether it's worth it depends on your needs.

link is dead and domain redirects to potentially malicious site! – amc Jun 15 '16 at 22:05

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I would advise you to try Reconstructor

"Reconstructor is an Ubuntu GNU/Linux CD Creator that allows you to modify an existing Ubuntu distribution and save as your own Linux distribution. It uses the Desktop(Live), Alternate(Install), or Server disc as a base, and then allows for user customization. You can basically customize the entire environment, such as add/remove software, change the default look (splash, themes, fonts, wallpaper, etc.), add desktop links, etc."

Also for more info you should read these links: http://maketecheasier.com/reconstructor-creating-your-own-ubuntu-distribution/2008/07/05

http://maketecheasier.com/build-your-own-ubuntu-based-distro-with-novo-builder/2010/07/02

http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=869659

answered Mar 21 '12 at 9:43

LnxSlck
10.8k 1 34 49

But these tools wont let me rebrand my distro, they will only allow me to build images and add packages, or atleast that's what I know. – user51447 Mar 21 '12 at 9:48

reconstructor link is dead and domain redirects to potentially malicious site! – amc Jun 15 '16 at 22:08

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You can use JLIVECD too to customize a ISO image. It's a command line tool to customize Ubuntu and Ubuntu based distros. It gives you complete control over things that needs customization but you need to know what needs to be done i.e it only prepares the chroot environment for you (the rest is upto you) and builds the final ISO. You can keep adding new changes to the existing changes and keep checking the ISOs built on them.

answered Oct 26 '15 at 20:16

Jahid
317 3 9

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You can use Cubic -- this utility has been tested (by me) and works on Ubuntu 18.04 host with an Ubuntu 18.04 image, which is more than can be said for most of the other tools that don't work or are discontinued.

Here is a guide to use it from the website Linoxide.

The rough steps involve:

- Make sure you're using a supported version of Ubuntu (I tried 18.04; it works)
- Install the GPG key for the Cubic PPA

- Run it, and follow the GUI prompts

answered Jul 5 at 0:28

allquixotic

547 3 16

Also, see this answer askubuntu.com/a/741770/100356 for instructions. – PJ Singh Jul 30 at 16:04

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Download http://sourceforge.net/projects/uck/files/uck/2.4.6/uck_2.4.6-0ubuntu1_all.deb/download follow the instructions and when it asks to run package manager, a console application or continue packing, select Console application.

Now you can run

> nautilus
>
> unity-2d-launcher
>
> unity-2d-panel

and do everything.

If this doesn't work first try running the package manager, then try again with the console.

Hope this helps.

answered Jun 24 '12 at 11:04

nastys

5,315 3 15 28

ubuntu customization kit (UCK) has been discontinued – amc Jun 15 '16 at 22:09

0

You can modify the default `/etc/hosts` file (as well as some other default files) by editing `/usr/share/ubiquity/plugininstall.py`

I thought it would be helpful to share as I needed to know how to do this.

edited Oct 7 '14 at 18:40

muru

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answered Oct 7 '14 at 18:09

SW_user2953243

61 1 8

Actually after further review it appears the `/etc/hosts` file that gets installed is not generated by the ubiquity `plugininstall.py` module. If you do wish to modify the default `/etc/hosts` file you will likely have to make a script that will run once after first boot and delete or rename itself. Unless you recompile the netcfg module - which is not recommended. – SW_user2953243 Oct 10 '14 at 18:14