How to set Windows bootloader as default bootloader?

Asked 8 years, 1 month ago   Active 3 months ago   Viewed 194k times

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I have a Win 7/11.10 dual boot system with Grub 2 as the default bootloader. However, I want to make Windows bootloader the default bootloader (grub 'dos' like interface scrares the hell out of my sister) so when I start the PC I will have the following boot options: 1. Windows 7 2. Ubuntu

NB: A process to reverse this operation so Grub can be the default bootloader again will also be appreciated

dual-boot   windows-7   bootloader

edited May 17 '14 at 20:08   asked Oct 14 '11 at 9:24

Jorge Castro   **Mysterio**
61.4k 110 430 624   **10.5k** 26 74 112

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6   Don't miss Burg: goo.gl/w0msb Your sister may like it :-) – Ivan Oct 14 '11 at 9:30 ✎

I don't know if the MBR can be moded to show Linux, but, if you want an attractive, not DOS-like console replacement for Grub, you can try burg. Also Burg Screenshots of various themes – Nitin Venkatesh Oct 14 '11 at 9:31

As for me, I have a very related question: how to make Windows a default option in a standard Grub menu. – Ivan Oct 14 '11 at 9:32

1   @mikewhatever: Last time I checked Startup Manager it was only working for GRUB and not recommended for use with GRUB2. I'm not sure if that's still the case though. Mysterio, you can use GRUB themes to make it less look like an ancient stone. – Lekensteyn Oct 14 '11 at 9:39

1   possible duplicate of Is it possible to boot Ubuntu using the Windows bootloader? – fossfreedom ♦ Nov 16 '11 at 20:55

8 Answers

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✓

There is a programm for windows called easy bcd. Install it when running windows and the proceed a described in the following link:

how to use easy bcd

Nevertheless I think also the other answers are valid as the question was basically how to avoid that the sister is scared by grub to choose windows if necessary.

answered Nov 16 '11 at 21:00

dago

First of all we are here to answer questions and not to question the questions. – dago Dec 1 '11 at 20:09

I tried installing EasyBCD to use with a broken grub2, but it requires Vista/Win7 to install. – keepitsimpleengineer Dec 1 '11 at 20:29

Googlers: First of all: Anno 2019 BcdEdit is Windows10 and (U)EFI ready. And if command line is good enough for you, look at `bcdedit` – Frank Nocke Aug 27 at 6:50

Edit that file, from terminal run

16

```
sudo gedit /etc/default/grub
```

(file has comments to help you). Find that line and set Windows number (number of Windows line in Grub, starting from 0). In my case that will be

```
GRUB_DEFAULT=2
```

Then save file and close gedit. Run that command to update grub:

```
sudo update-grub
```

edited Oct 14 '11 at 14:13   answered Oct 14 '11 at 9:58

Extender
2,078   1   19   23

Please could you be specific. I am a newbie – Mysterio Oct 14 '11 at 10:40

1   Ok, when I will be at home with my ubuntu box – Extender Oct 14 '11 at 10:43

1   Thanks for your answer i will like to know if i use your answer i will only get two options during the boot screen 1. Windows 7 2. Ubuntu. This way i only get to see Grub2 if i choose the Ubuntu option – Mysterio Oct 14 '11 at 16:00 ✎

3   This makes GRUB2 treat boot Windows as the default operating system. That is not what Mysterio was asking. Mysterio was asking how to make the Windows boot loader load *first*, before GRUB2, so that GRUB2 loads *for the first time* when the `Ubuntu` option is selected in the Windows boot loader. – Eliah Kagan Nov 16 '11 at 20:46 ✎

PART 1:

Make Windows (ANY variant) the default Grub2 menu option.

5

Description: This sets Windows as the default boot option, and (with NO user action) the PC will auto-launch Windows on startup.

STEPS:

A. List your current menu items

B. Edit setup file

```
sudo gedit /etc/default/grub
```

Set the boot default to your Windows boot partition (eg.)

```
GRUB_DEFAULT="Windows 7 (loader) on /dev/sda1"
```

WARNING: Just setting '**GRUB_DEFAULT=n**', will **NOT** work after kernel updates, etc.

(Save the file and close.)

C. Update grub settings

```
sudo update-grub
```

Now, on boot, you will AUTOMATICALLY default to MS Windows.

PART 2: (Optional Extra)

Hide the Grub2 menu, and use the default menu option.

Description: This both hides the startup menu, and shortens the (usually 10 second) timeout. The PC will auto-launch whatever the default option is on startup.

NOTE: *The user just needs to hold down the* <kbd>Shift</kbd> *key (on startup), to again see the Grub2 menu.*

STEPS:

D. Edit setup file

```
sudo gedit /etc/default/grub
```

Uncomment the line '#GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT=0', to look like:

```
GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT=0
```

(Save the file and close.)

E. Update grub settings

```
sudo update-grub
```

Now, on boot, you will AUTOMATICALLY boot to the default menu option, UNLESS you hold down the <kbd>Shift</kbd> -key at boot time. Then the grub2 menu will re-appear.

FURTHER DOCUMENTATION:

http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=1195275

1   Like the other two answers so far, this tells how to make Windows the default system in GRUB2. But what Mysterio was asking for was how to make the *Windows boot loader* come up first, so that GRUB2 does not even run unless the user selects `Ubuntu` in the *Windows boot loader*. – Eliah Kagan Nov 16 '11 at 20:49

This does make *Windows boot loader* come up first, and **hides** the Ubuntu Grub2 menu. My solution **avoids** using a Windows-based solution (if that is what you are suggesting). – david6 Nov 20 '11 at 22:25

In this solution, GRUB2 still loads first. It doesn't display a menu, but it still loads and then hands off control to the Windows boot loader. This solution prevents Ubuntu from being loaded at all, unless it is separately added to the Windows boot loader, which would then become a "Windows-based solution" differing from dago's solution only by the addition of considerable unnecessary complexity. – Eliah Kagan Nov 21 '11 at 1:20

1   No. Simply hold down [Shift] key, and Grub2 menu appears. quote: "*Hold down SHIFT to display the hidden menu during boot (formerly ESC is GRUB legacy)*." from link (above). – david6 Nov 21 '11 at 1:58

Good point; I don't know if that was in your answer when I commented, but if it was, then I apologize for not noticing! This is still not what Mysterio had asked for ("*I want to make Windows bootloader the default bootloader .... so when I start the PC I will have the following boot options: 1. Windows 7 2. Ubuntu*"), but it might meet his/her needs. – Eliah Kagan Nov 21 '11 at 3:18

Grub2 can be set to boot any system by default, but to change the order they appear in would be difficult.

2

It is also possible to hide the grub boot menu (for your sister) and only show it by pressing the **shift** key. I recommend caution here. Details here.

There are two ways setting the default boot using editing a grub file.

These are described in the Ubuntu Communuity Documentation Grub2 page

The two ways are

- Boot which ever operating system you booted last time, the "saved method"

  This is the on I use. It lets me decide which one I going to use and will allow me to reboot into that system, handy when I'm updating.

- Boot a specific operating system by default, your exact question

To start we need to find out what we are booting, open a terminal (dash, type terminal, …) and type in **grep menuentry /boot/grub/grub.cfg**

```
user@YourComputer:~$ grep menuentry /boot/grub/grub.cfg
menuentry 'Ubuntu, with Linux 2.6.35-31-generic' --class ubuntu --class gnu-linux
--class gnu --class os {
menuentry 'Ubuntu, with Linux 2.6.35-31-generic (recovery mode)' --class ubuntu -
-class gnu-linux --class gnu --class os {
menuentry 'Ubuntu, with Linux 2.6.35-30-generic' --class ubuntu --class gnu-linux
--class gnu --class os {
menuentry 'Ubuntu, with Linux 2.6.35-30-generic (recovery mode)' --class ubuntu -
-class gnu-linux --class gnu --class os {
menuentry "Memory test (memtest86+)" {
menuentry "Memory test (memtest86+, serial console 115200)" {
menuentry "Windows NT/2000/XP (loader) (on /dev/sda1)" {
```

```
menuentry "Ubuntu, with Linux 2.6.32-33-generic (recovery mode) (on /dev/sdb1)" {
menuentry "Windows Vista (loader) (on /dev/sdc1)" {
```

From mine you can see why I prefer the "saved" method.

Now you are ready to edit the grub file…

- Note: If you would rather use a GUI editor like Gnome Text editor, see the note at the end.

Type in the terminal **sudo nano -B /etc/default/grub** and your password if asked

```
user@YourComputer:~$ sudo nano -B /etc/default/grub
```

and the **nano** editor will open, thus (for mine)...

```
# If you change this file, run 'update-grub' afterwards to update
# /boot/grub/grub.cfg.

GRUB_DEFAULT=saved
#GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT=0
GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT_QUIET=true
GRUB_TIMEOUT=10
GRUB_DISTRIBUTOR=`lsb_release -i -s 2> /dev/null || echo Debian`
#GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX_DEFAULT="quiet splash"
GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX_DEFAULT="delayacct"
GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX=""

# Uncomment to enable BadRAM filtering, modify to suit your needs
# This works with Linux (no patch required) and with any kernel that obtains
# the memory map information from GRUB (GNU Mach, kernel of FreeBSD ...)
#GRUB_BADRAM="0x01234567,0xfefefefe,0x89abcdef,0xefefefef"

# Uncomment to disable graphical terminal (grub-pc only)
#GRUB_TERMINAL=console

# The resolution used on graphical terminal
# note that you can use only modes which your graphic card supports via VBE
# you can see them in real GRUB with the command `vbeinfo'
#GRUB_GFXMODE=640x480
GRUB_GFXMODE=1280x800
GRUB_GFXPAYLOAD_LINUX=1280x800x8

# Uncomment if you don't want GRUB to pass "root=UUID=xxx" parameter to Linux
#GRUB_DISABLE_LINUX_UUID=true

# Uncomment to disable generation of recovery mode menu entries
#GRUB_DISABLE_LINUX_RECOVERY="true"

# Uncomment to get a beep at grub start
GRUB_INIT_TUNE="480 440 1"

GRUB_SAVEDEFAULT=true
GRUB_BACKGROUND=/usr/share/images/grub/Apollo_17_The_Last_Moon_Shot_Edit1.tga
```

In my preferred way, I made these changes from the standard grub file:

- I changed the value of GRUB_DEFAULT to "saved"

```
GRUB_DEFAULT=saved
```

In the way you are asking far to this

- Change the value of GRUB_DEFAULT to the name of the Windows system you want to always boot. This will be found in the previous `grep …` output prior. For my system if I wanted to only allways boot my Window XP, I set GRUB_DEFAULT to "Windows NT/2000/XP (loader) (on /dev/sda1)", everything between the "'s.

```
GRUB_DEFAULT="Windows NT/2000/XP (loader) (on /dev/sda1)"
```

You could set GRUB_DEFAULT to the line number in the menu entry list (with 0 being the first), but when the kernel in Ubuntu is updated grub adds the new kernel to the top of the list, you would have to change the number, since Windows is the last one in the menu entry list. You can see this in my menu entry list.

Important last step

Now you have to run update-grub to update the system generated grub.cfg file in the /boot/grub directory.

Type into your computer **sudo update-grub** and your password if asked…

```
user@YourComputer:~$ sudo update-grub
Generating grub.cfg ...
Found background: /usr/share/images/grub/Apollo_17_The_Last_Moon_Shot_Edit1.tga
Found linux image: /boot/vmlinuz-2.6.35-31-generic
Found initrd image: /boot/initrd.img-2.6.35-31-generic
Found linux image: /boot/vmlinuz-2.6.35-30-generic
Found initrd image: /boot/initrd.img-2.6.35-30-generic
Found memtest86+ image: /boot/memtest86+.bin
Found Windows NT/2000/XP (loader) on /dev/sda1
Found Ubuntu 10.04.3 LTS (10.04) on /dev/sdb1
Found Windows Vista (loader) on /dev/sdc1
done
```

Notes on nano

nano is especaly easy to use in the terminal. Move around with the arrow keys. Type in you addtions, delete the unwanted.

The " -B" (or " --backup") option backs up the previous version of it to the current filename suffixed with a ~. Very handy in case of the dreaded *Fat pfinger effect*.

When you are though, **Crtl-O** will allow you to save your edits by hitting **Enter**. Closing nano without saving, **Ctrl-X** These and other options are shown at the bottom of the terminal screen with the ^ indicating **Ctrl**

```
^G Get Help    ^O WriteOut    ^R Read File   ^Y Prev Page   ^K Cut Text    ^C Cur
Pos
^X Exit        ^J Justify     ^W Where Is    ^V Next Page   ^U UnCut Text  ^T To
Spell
```

Notes about nano, sudoeditor, and other editors.

Some in the Ubuntu community suggest **sudoedit** instead of **nano**. I recommend **nano** (which is the default sudoedit editor in later distributions of Ubuntu) instead of **sudoedit** because the

If you prefer not to use the **nano** editor and prefer the Gnome Text Editor, instead of **sudo nano -B** use **gksu gedit**. I generally do this for large files, and `/etc/default/grub` could easily be considered a large file. Thus type in **gksu gedit /etc/default/grub** instead of **sudo nano -B /etc/default/grub**. Note that the Gnome text editor does not automatically make a backup!

Notes on my grub file

I made some changes to grub for my personal needs. Such as the background picture of the moon launch. How to do these are discussed at the Ubuntu Community Documentation page on Grub2, recommended.

Good luck!

edited Dec 1 '11 at 18:39

answered Dec 1 '11 at 18:08

keepitsimpleengineer
5,875   4   38   63

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1   you didnt read the question – Jayo Dec 1 '11 at 19:19

1   Well Jayo, I did read the question, but if you'll check askubuntu.com/questions/82928/how-to-make-windows-boot-first/… you'll see "closed as exact duplicate by fossfreedom, Jorge Castro, Javier Rivera, Marco Ceppi" along with the suggestion that answers to that question be merged here ⋯ along with my comment that they were not exact duplicate questions. Check it out. – keepitsimpleengineer Dec 2 '11 at 21:52

2

Most reliable way is to use Windows' own tool that Microsoft ships on every Windows CD

1. Boot from Windows CD
2. From title screen, open terminal (the button is usually in bottom left corner)
3. Execute `bootrec /fixmbr`

If that didn't work, try `bootrec /fixboot` instead

edited Oct 4 '18 at 19:52

answered Apr 18 '18 at 14:39

Anton Khamets
21   3

2

Why has nobody mentioned Clover EFI bootloader? I got 5 OSs to boot, always the choice that I want to boot Windows 10, macOS High Sierra, macOS Mojave, Linux, Ubuntu 19.04 and last but not least Phoenix OS aka Android OS distributed over one hard drive.

I can even trugh mine hackintosh, my Windows 10 existing HDD virtualizes all data including the OS in front of me without restarting macOS, so I would definitely recommend Clover to any of you.

edited Aug 9 at 6:53
karel
71.5k   15   160   186

answered Aug 9 at 6:46
Skankhunt42
21   1

1

DEL in my case).

Go to Boot Options --> (This step may vary) Hard Disk Drive priority --> 1st Priority -> Windows Boot Loader

The second step may vary depending on how you installed Ubuntu / Windows

The key is that if ubuntu is set to a higher priority (HDD priority or boot device priority), you should replace that with the Windows Boot Loader

answered Apr 14 '16 at 11:30

Rufus
374   2   8

1

The problem of using grub to dual boot Windows 10 and Ubuntu, is that Windows update would refuse to run. If you are OK with not being able to update Windows 10, then grub is the best bootloader.

If otherwise, Windows update is needed for your work (Windows Defender etc...), then BCDEdit is the way to go.

answered Oct 22 '18 at 23:24

B   BennyTH
11   1