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| Bochs User Manual | | |
| [Prev](http://docs.google.com/who-uses-bochs.html) | Chapter 1. Introduction to Bochs | [Next](http://docs.google.com/will-it-work-for-me.html) |

1.3. Is Bochs right for me?

Bochs is very useful for some applications, and not well suited to others. This section tries to answer the question, "Is Bochs right for me?"

Bochs may or may not be right for you, depending on what it is you want to do. Perhaps all you want to do is run one or two applications native to Microsoft Windows on GNU/Linux, or vice-versa. Perhaps your biggest concern is speed and performance. Maybe you don't mind tweaking a few files here and there when you want another application to work in that setting. In cases where the objective is to simulate x86 hardware on an x86, VirtualBox, Wine, and VMware might be your best options.

On the other hand, perhaps you have a vital application running on an older operating system that only runs well on old hardware. You are concerned that the life cycle of this hardware is coming to an end, and your backup and restoration hardware and tools no longer suffice for the amount of data that you have. You need to transfer backup disk images over a network, and want to use modern procedures for hardware maintenance. Perhaps the application is important enough to run on a larger computer, such as a 64-bit machine, or even a mainframe. Bochs would be an excellent option in such a scenario.

Perhaps your objective is to debug software or hardware drivers. Bochs offers a controlled environment that can better assist you in determining cause and effect relationships. You can take snapshots that show you what is going on behind the scenes. You can isolate the line that caused that crash. You can have multiple images and compare them under a microscope. In these situation, Bochs could save you time and resources.

Information Technology changes faster than any other field. It is very easy to forget transitional software that came and went. But history is important to all fields, and to build on the future, it is important to understand the past. Computer programmers, however, do not have the same advantage as an architect, who can, for example, take a trip to Greece and touch a pillar. Much of the history of Computer Science is left on corroding floppies and malfunctioning hardware. Bochs gives you the benefit of having one or more complete environments where you can understand firsthand the behavior of operating systems and programs. This cannot be achieved with an "emulator" such as Wine.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| [Prev](http://docs.google.com/who-uses-bochs.html) | [Home](http://docs.google.com/index.html) | [Next](http://docs.google.com/will-it-work-for-me.html) |
| Who uses Bochs? | [Up](http://docs.google.com/introduction.html) | Will it work for me? |