USB Startup Disk Creator

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Introduction

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Introduction

USB Startup Disk Creator is a utility in Ubuntu that creates a persistent Ubuntu image on a USB disk. This is called a "Live USB". You can use the Live USB to install Ubuntu on your computer or to run Ubuntu without affecting your system hardware. The advantages to using a Live USB to install or test Ubuntu include:

- Less waste. A Live USB can be overwritten when a new version of Ubuntu comes out.
- Persistence. Changes made to the USB disk are saved, unlike a Live CD.
- No CD Drive required. Computers lacking a CD drive usually have a USB drive.
- Safe computing environment. Boot your computer from a Live USB to protect your system when accessing unsecured public networks or testing unstable functionality.

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Requirements

USB Startup Disk Creator requires the following:

- Ubuntu 8.10 or later
- USB disk 1 GB or larger
- Ubuntu Desktop Edition image

Currently **USB Startup Disk Creator** only runs on Ubuntu systems 8.10 or later. If you don't have access to an Ubuntu system, you can create a Live USB from a system that can boot from an Ubuntu Live CD. You can also install Ubuntu into a virtualization program like VirtualBox and create the Live USB from a virtual Ubuntu installation.

The USB drive capacity should minimally be large enough to hold the contents of the Ubuntu download image and any additional data you plan to store. The minimum recommendation is 1 GB, however 2 GB is suggested.

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Making a Live USB

Download the Ubuntu Image

Download Ubuntu from the Ubuntu website.

Use the standard Desktop Ubuntu installation with **USB Startup Disk Creator**. Other versions like Server and the Netbook Remix have additional system requirements that are not compatible with **USB Startup Disk Creator**.

The downloaded image file will end with the suffix ".iso".

Ubuntu System

1. Plug your USB disk into your computer's USB drive. Make sure your computer recognizes the USB disk before proceeding.
2. To launch **USB Startup Disk Creator**, choose *System → Administration → USB Startup Disk Creator*
3. Under *Source Disk Image* click the **Other...** button and specify the Ubuntu image you downloaded in the previous step. If you are creating the USB disk from a Live CD, insert the Live CD and **USB Startup Disk Creator** will automatically recognize it.
4. Under *USB Disk to use* your USB disk is highlighted. If you have more than one item in the list, select the USB disk you want to use for your Live USB.
5. To make the Live USB a writeable disk, indicate how much memory to use for extra storage. If you don't want the Live USB to be modifiable, select the second option, *Discarded on Shutdown*.
6. Click **Make Startup Disk** to make a Live USB.

USB Startup Disk Creator will erase any data on the USB disk. Back up any files you don't want deleted.

Non-Ubuntu System

If you don't have access to a system running Ubuntu, it is still possible to use **USB Startup Disk Creator** to create a Live USB. You can boot from a Live CD and run **USB Startup Disk Creator** from the Live CD environment. Alternatively, you can install Ubuntu into a virtual environment like VirtualBox.

Create a Live USB from a Live CD

1. Copy the Ubuntu image to a location on your hard drive that you have access to while running the Live CD environment. You can copy the image file into a publicly accessible folder on your hard drive or you can copy it onto a second external drive.
2. Once you have verified that you can access the Ubuntu image while booted into the Live CD, follow the steps outlined in the previous section to create a Live USB.

Create a Live USB in a Virtual Ubuntu Environment

1. Copy the Ubuntu image to a directory shared by both the virtual environment and your system. To set up shared folders, see specific instructions in your virtualization program. You can also use a Live CD as long as the virtual environment has access to your CD drive.
2. Insert the USB Disk. Make sure the virtual environment can mount the USB disk.
3. Once you have verified that you can access both the Ubuntu image and the USB disk from the virtual Ubuntu installation, follow the steps outlined in the previous section to create a Live USB.

Booting from the Live USB

While some computers automatically recognize the USB drive when starting up, others need to be configured to recognize the Live USB. If your system does not recognize the Live USB on boot, you need to set boot options in the basic configuration of your computer, known as the "BIOS".

To set boot options using the BIOS:

1. Press the key specified on the startup screen to enter BIOS setup. This key is usually an F key, such as F1, F2, or a key like Delete or Escape. If no information is available on the startup screen, consult your hardware manufacturer's documentation.
2. Set the USB disk to the primary boot device and save the changes.

Remember to unplug your USB disk or reset the boot order if you no longer want to boot from the Live USB.

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Troubleshooting

If your system won't boot from the USB disk, try the following:

- Insert the USB disk after starting your computer to make sure your system recognizes it. Some systems might not recognize mini USB disks.
- Enter the BIOS Setup and verify the boot order is set correctly. Make sure the USB disk is the first item on the list. See your hardware manufacturer's instructions for more information on your system's BIOS settings.
- The system might use a boot selector. Hit the Escape key on boot and select USB disk from the boot menu.
- Boot from the USB disk on another machine. If the machine boots successfully, it is possible that your computer cannot boot from a Live USB.
- If the above solutions are unsuccessful, you may need to use a different method than **USB Startup Disk Creator** to create a Live USB.

Visit an Ubuntu Support resource for more troubleshooting assistance.

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