

Start Linux from the Windows XP bootloader

The idea is to do the same as Windows XP does automatically if installed after Windows 98. It copies the MBR (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_boot_record) made by Windows 98 in a file usually named bootsect.dos and add a line in the Windows XP bootloader (NTLDR) configuration file C:\boot.ini similar to C:\BOOTSECT.DOS="Microsoft Windows". Then, the Windows XP installer replaces the MBR with what it needs and so on. And when you start your computer and choose the entry "Microsoft Windows" on the Windows XP bootloader menu, it launches the code in C:\BOOTSECT.DOS and lets it play as if wants.

Therefore, for Linux, we need to capture the MBR made by Linux (with : dd if=/dev/hda of=/bootsect.lnx bs=512 count=1 on Linux in root or with dskprobe on Windows in Administrator : d'abord ouvrir le handle du disque, puis lire de 0 à 16) in a file bootsect.lnx, install Windows XP, put bootsect.lnx on C:\ and add a line C:\BOOTSECT.LNX="Linux" at the end of the C:\Boot.ini file (be sure to remove the read-only attribute and enable the view of hidden and system files in Windows folder options to be able to edit it).

This will probably also work with Vista and Seven if you add an entry with bcdedit to handle NTLDR.

Note :

You can restore at any time the MBR made by XP with the command FIXMBR on the Windows XP recovery console, or with the tool bootsect (type bootsect /nt52 C: /mbr) from Windows Seven or a Windows PE CD or USB key.

You can restore at any time the MBR made by Linux depending on which Linux and boot loader you use from a Live CD, USB key...