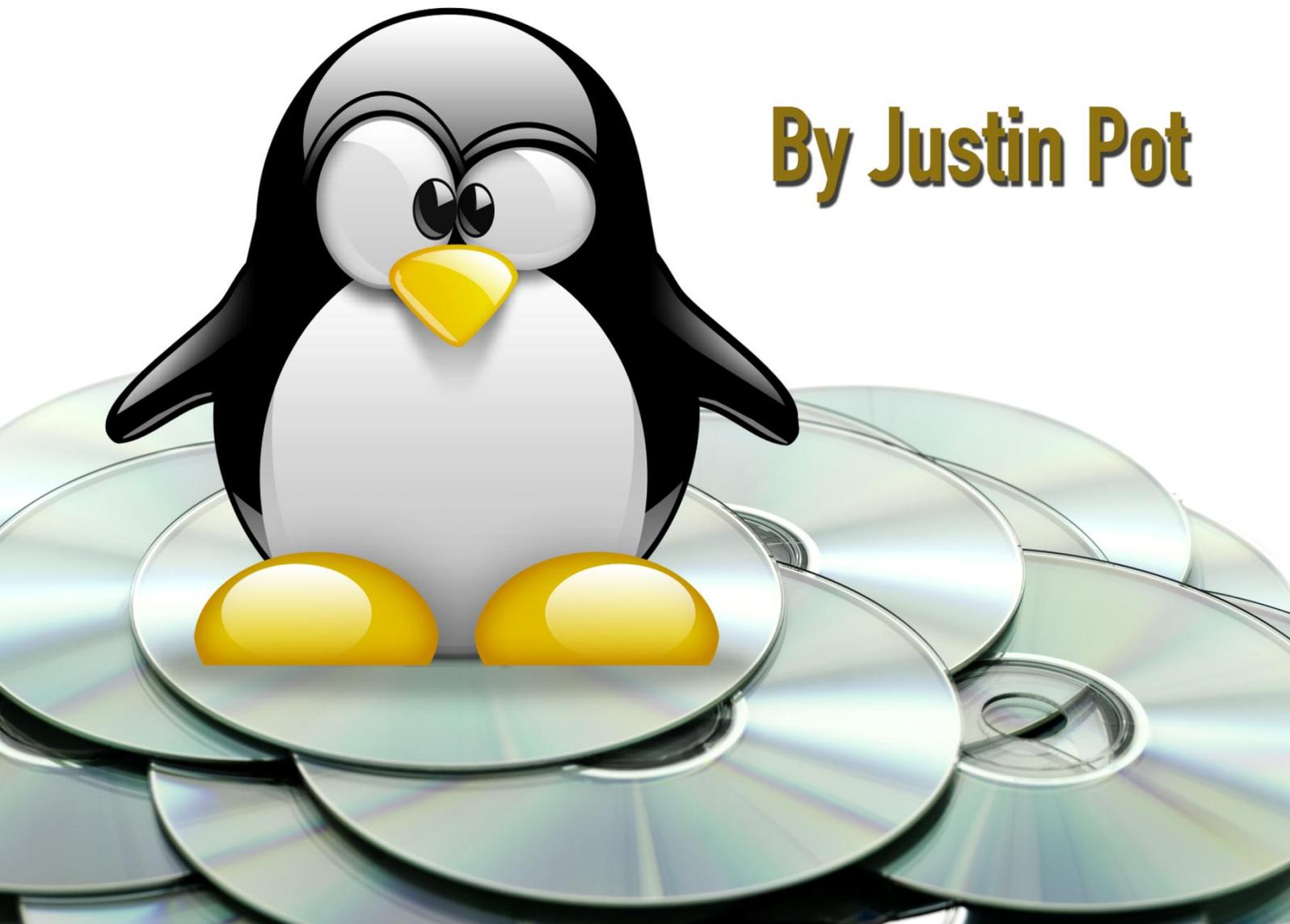


50 Cool Uses - for Live CDs

By Justin Pot





50 COOL USES FOR LIVE CDS

By: Justin Pot

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Cover Photo: Gemenacom [via Shutterstock](#)

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Getting a Live CD	5
1. Boot From CD	6
2. Boot From A Flash Drive or SD Card	8
3. Recover data	9
4. Restore data	10
5. View data in a map	10
6. Browse hidden data	11
7. Search for a file quickly	11
8. Bypass Windows permissions	11
9. Delete excess files	12
10. Edit Office files	12
11. Connect to a network server	13
12. Set up a temporary SSH server	13
13. Set up a temporary VNC server	14
14. Recover From Corrupt NTFS Drive	15
15. Force Windows to scan partitions	15
16. Test memory	15
17. Test your hard drive	16
18. Test Other Hardware	16
19. Diagnose if an issue is hardware or software	17
20. Use a computer without the password	17
21. Hack XP Passwords	18
22. Hack Vista Passwords	18
23. Safely use infected computers	19
24. Scan with BitDefender	19
25. Scan with Avira	19
26. Scan with AVG	20
27. Scan with Kaspersky	20
28. Scan with Panda	20
29. Edit partitions	20
30. Add partitions	21

31. Delete partitions.....	21
32. Hack Wireless Passwords.....	22
33. Play your Media	22
34. Test drive software	23
35. Clone Your Hard Drive to Image	23
36. Clone Your Hard Drive to Disk	24
37. Browse the Web Securely	24
38. Securely use a public computer	25
39. Bypass snooping parents or employees.....	25
40. Work around filters	25
41. Bypass a corrupt master boot record.....	25
42. Repair a corrupt master boot record	26
43. Playing games at work.....	26
44. Using unauthorized software at work.....	26
45. Guest operating system.....	27
46. Try Out Sugar, the OLPC interface	27
47. Try Google's Chrome OS.....	28
48. Try out Linux.....	28
49. Install Linux!	28
50. Coasters!	29
Conclusion.....	29

Introduction

Your computer won't boot.

"Crap," you say to yourself out loud, "I really need to finish that paper. Today."

Your computer doesn't respond to your mutterings, however. Happily displaying its error message, your computer waits for you to turn it off or throw your keyboard across the room in frustration.

You think it might hate you.

Don't panic: you've got a live CD handy.

What's a live CD? It's an entire operating system, on a CD. With this, you can boot your computer regardless of what software problems your computer might have.

Get your computer started up from a live CD and you'll have access to a lot of software. You'll typically find a web browser, some system recovery software and even a word processor or image editing software.

It's the perfect tool for computers that won't boot, but these things can do so much more than just that. Whether you want to quickly access your data, partition your hard drive or browse the web securely you should have a live CD handy.

This manual will list many of the things you can accomplish with a live CD, from data recovery to virus removal to trying out cool operating systems.

There are two ways you can use this manual. The first, of course, is to read it from cover to cover. You'll learn a lot about live CDs and what they can accomplish. The other way to read this book is to explore the table of contents and look for any tips you might not know already. You're bound to learn something, regardless of how experienced you are, so take a look at the table of contents now if you haven't already.

Getting a Live CD

Before you try out any of these tricks, however, you'll need to get your hands on a live CD. This can be overwhelming: there are many different CDs out there, many serving specific purposes.

This manual mainly focuses on Linux live CDs, and will often recommend specific live CDs for specific functions. In general, though, most of the tips found here can be done from any environment. If you've got a favorite tool already, use that.

If not, I highly recommend Ubuntu. It's easy to use, works on most hardware and is quite reliable. In fact, many of the screenshots you'll see in this manual will be from Ubuntu 11.04, the version released in spring of 2011.

[Download Ubuntu](#)
www.ubuntu.com

Want to try something besides Ubuntu? Check out the Live CD List:

[The Live CD List](#)
www.livedclist.com

You'll find a variety of systems worth trying there; one will be right for you. Not sure how to use the file you just downloaded? Keep reading; your live CD adventure starts at the beginning.

1. Boot From CD

We'll start with the most obvious use for any live CD: booting it from a CD. Live CDs are usually downloaded from the Internet, and are typically offered in the .iso format.

Don't be afraid: this file can be burned to CD quickly quite easily. You'll need a CD burner, of course, and a blank CD. Some larger live environments require a DVD, so you'll need a blank DVD for those. In either case, I highly recommend using a re-writable disk for your live environments—this makes updating or switching to a different live environment easier.

If you're already running Linux burning this file to a CD will be self-explanatory. Just right-click the ISO file and click "Burn Image to Disk". The process is pretty much the same for Mac users.

If you're using Windows, however, you're going to need some software for the job. If you have Nero or similar software on your computer, use that. If not, check out this article to find software right for the job:

[The Best Free Alternatives to Nero](#)
bit.ly/25Xv0h



Once you've burned your CD you'll have to boot from it. How to do this depends on the sort of computer you're using. On most PCs a live CD will boot automatically if it's in the drive when you start up. If this doesn't happen, you can change the boot order in your BIOS by entering setup.



If you'd rather not do this, you can also usually select which device to boot from by pressing a certain key when the computer turns on; on a Dell, for example, the button is almost always F12. Most computers will tell you, at boot, which key to press to enter the boot menu; check your computer's documentation if you can't find this information.

On a Mac the process is simpler: hold the "C" button when you turn your computer on. That's it.

Once you've started the boot process there really aren't many steps; just follow any on-screen instructions and wait for your system to boot.



On rare occasions your computer won't boot a particular live CD. It's good to try a couple of different live CDs on occasions such as this. I recommend the Live CD List for this:

[The Live CD List](http://www.livecdlist.com)
www.livecdlist.com

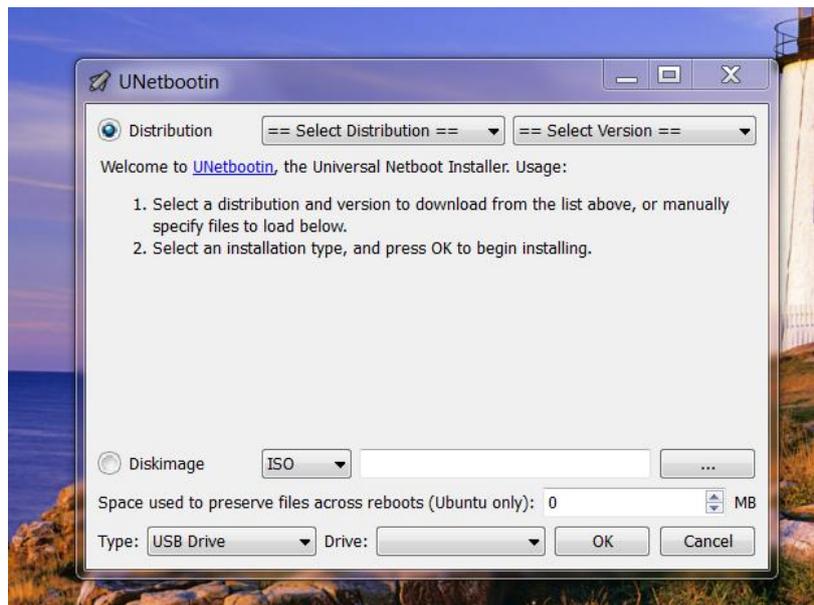
2. Boot From A Flash Drive or SD Card

Don't have a CD drive? Run your live CDs from a flash drive or SD card instead. Even if you have a CD drive, booting from a flash drive is frequently faster than booting from a CD; even better, you won't be wasting CDs trying out live environments. You're going to need an extra drive handy, of course. Ideally this drive should be empty, because the process of writing a live environment to a flash drive might wipe your drive clean.

There are two main programs for writing an .iso file to a flash drive or SD card. The first is a piece of software that runs on Windows, Mac and Linux machines:

[UNetBootin](http://bit.ly/xd5du)
bit.ly/xd5du

This program is easy to use:



Tell UNetBootin which Live CD you'd like to download, or point the software towards an .iso file you've already downloaded. Then tell UNetBootin to start the process.

If you're using Windows to create your live CD, there is another piece of software you can try:

[Linux Live USB Creator](http://bit.ly/hl1vL5)
bit.ly/hl1vL5

Similar to UNetBootIn, but with a very clear user interface, Linux Live USB Creator is a series of simple steps to follow. For example, you need to pick which USB drive you want to make bootable:



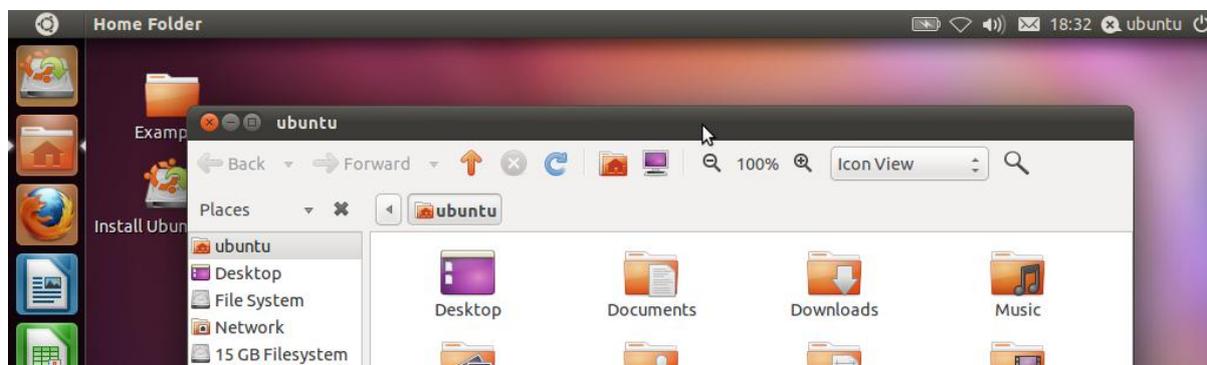
Once you've done that you simply pick your live CD and a few more settings; the above article will fill you in but it's pretty easy overall.

Once you've created your flash drive, you've got to boot from it. The process is pretty much the same as booting from CD, so review section one to find out about booting from different devices.

3. Recover data

Got your live CD started? Cool. Now you can access your data, even if your primary operating system isn't working.

You'll need to fire up your live CD's main file browser. On Ubuntu, this program is called Nautilus; you can launch it by hitting the home button in the application launcher.



Open the file browser and you'll see your computer's drives listed. Simply click them to browse their files. Most of the time this will give you all the access you need.

From here you can grab any data you want and back it up. The best way to do this is with an external hard drive or a flash drive, but you can also access network drives for the job if you like.

4. Restore data

You can do more than read and recover your data; you can write to your drives as well. If you've got information you want on your drive, live CDs can sometimes be a faster way to copy large volumes of information (particularly if your primary operating system is Windows XP.)

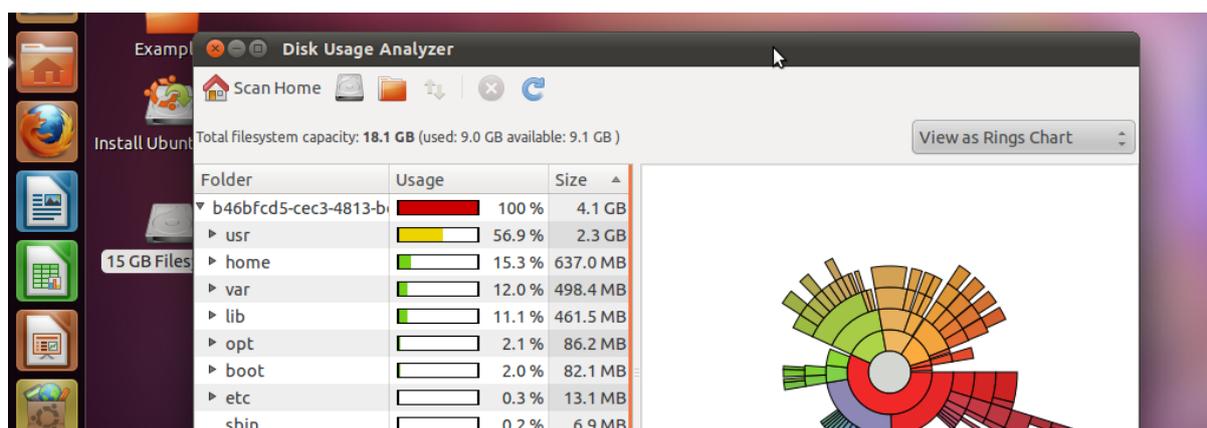
Just open the file browser, and then open the drives you want to move information to and from. Then copy your data!

Note that not every live CD supports writing to NTFS drives, the default sort of drives used by Windows. Ubuntu does, as do a number of other CDs, so research your live CD before you try to use it for writing to Windows drives.

I don't know of any live CDs that can write to Mac drives, unfortunately.

5. View data in a map

Sometimes it can be hard to figure out what information you need to back up, or even where most of your information lives. Luckily most live CDs include some sort of disk usage analyzer, showing you a map of the content on your drive:



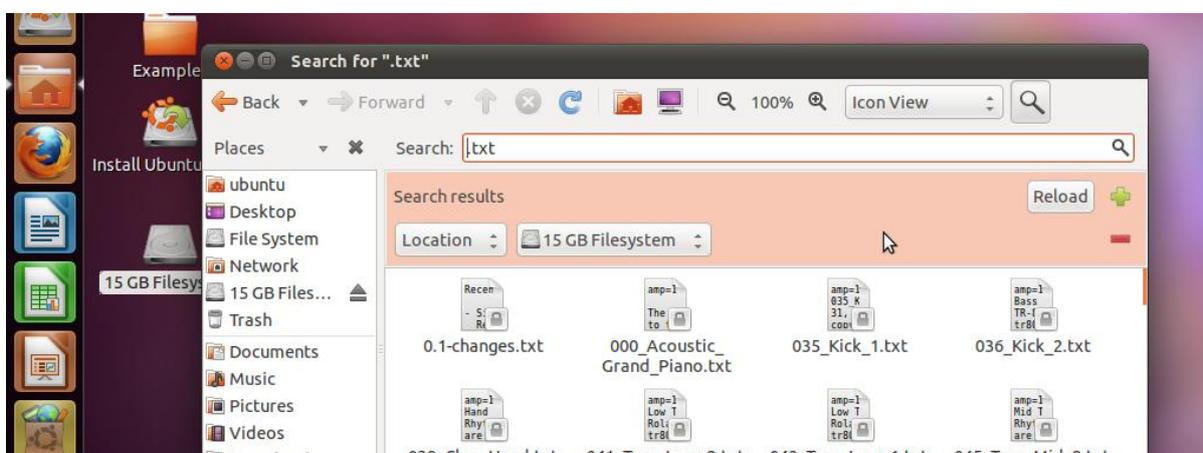
You'll find a "Disk Usage Analyzer" in Ubuntu by hitting the top-left menu button and typing "Disk". On some disks you can browse the menu to "System," to find the same application. You'll need to run a scan, but once you do all files will be exposed.

6. Browse hidden data

Some folders are hidden. You can expose these folders on any Linux live CD with your file browser: just press “Ctrl” followed by “h”. This will show off all hidden folders, giving you easy access to them.

7. Search for a file quickly

Still can't find the file you're looking for? Lucky for you every live CD comes with some sort of search feature. Open your hard drive, and then check your file browser for a search bar and you'll quickly be scanning every file on your computer for a certain drive:



This is great if you know the name of a file you're trying to recover, but not where it's located. It can even come in handy if you only know the type of file you're trying to recover; just search for the file extension.

For example, a QuickBooks file will typically be sporting the file extension .qbd, but where on the hard drive QuickBooks stores its data seems to be random. A search can reveal all such files quickly. You can use the same method for almost any file type, so have fun.

8. Bypass Windows permissions

So you want to recover files that, for whatever reason, are not accessible to you from within Windows. Perhaps they are stored in a protected user account, and the password is lost. Later we'll show you how to recover that password, but if you just want to access the files that's also possible.

You're going to need to run your file browser as root. Don't worry; it's easier than it sounds.

If you're running Ubuntu, simply press "Ctl" followed by "F2", then type "gksu nautilus". You'll soon have a file browser open that can open any folder, regardless of permissions.

Still can't access certain folders? You might have a corrupt hard drive, but keep reading to find out how to crack Windows passwords just in case.

9. Delete excess files

Filling up your hard drive too much can cause Windows, or other operating systems, to run painfully slow. Delete excess files from a live CD to get your system running at full capacity.

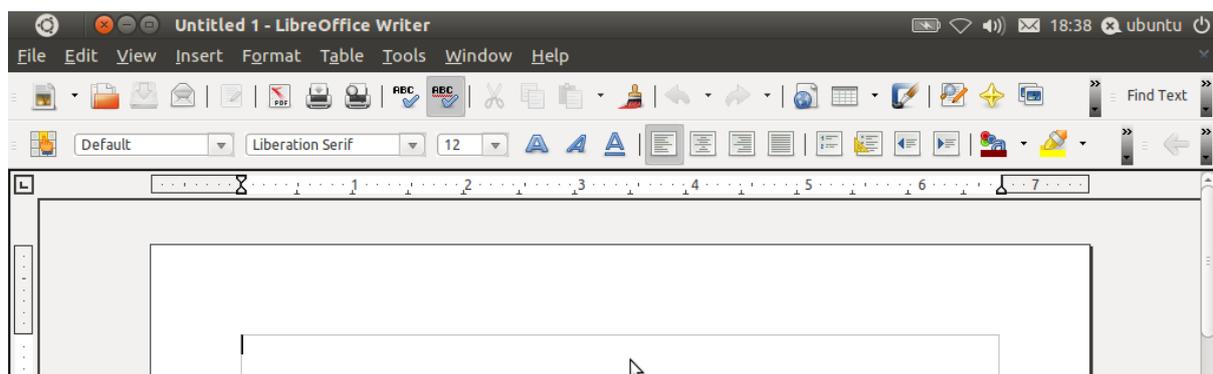
Simply use your file browser to delete any excess files. Be sure to empty the recycling bin as well, or this will have no effect.

Need to know which files to delete? I highly recommend using the above-mentioned drive mapping tools to see what's taking up the most space.

10. Edit Office files

Did your main operating system crash at a bad time? Don't worry; you can access and work on your files from the Ubuntu live CD.

Libre Office, which is built on to the Ubuntu live CD and many others, can open all of your Microsoft Office files, giving you a way to work when your main operating system has completely crashed.



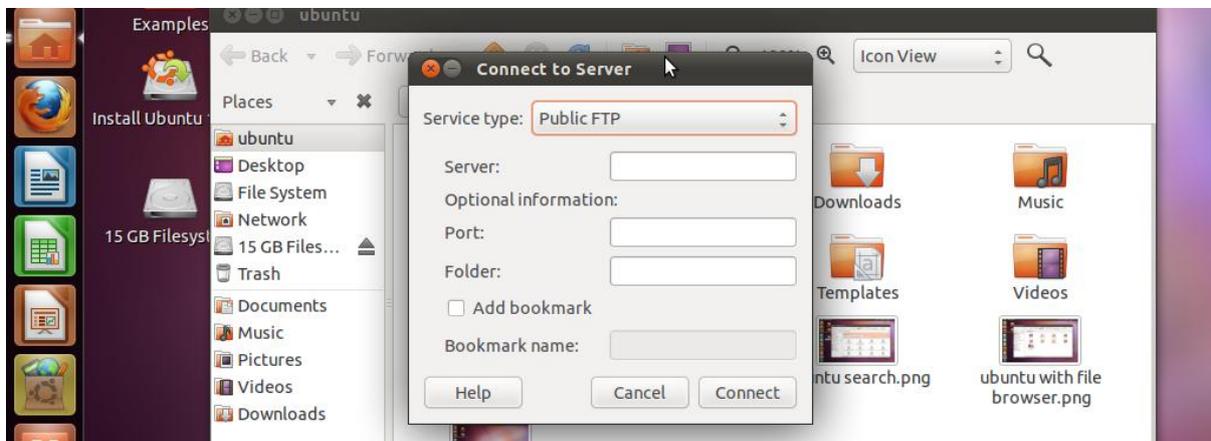
This can be a life saver if you've got a paper due tomorrow and don't have time to fix your computer.

11. Connect to a network server

A great way to back up any data you want to recover is to upload it to an FTP server, or any other network location. Luckily you can do this from Nautilus, the main file browser for Ubuntu and many other live CDs. You'll need an Internet connection first, of course, so check the system tray to make sure you're connected to the Internet. Ubuntu supports most wireless cards, but you may need to plug your computer into the Internet directly.

Once you've worked that out, open your file browser. Now you can get connected:

Simply open your file browser, then click the "File" button on the main menu. Once you've done this, click "Connect to Server."



As depicted above, you'll see a bunch of different server types to connect to. FTP and SSH are great if you have such servers set up elsewhere. If you want to connect to a Windows computer you can do that as well, but you'll need to know the computer's name or IP address.

There's an easier way to connect to Windows shares, of course: just click the "Network" icon in your file browser. You'll find a list, much like you do in Windows, to browser and to explore.

12. Set up a temporary SSH server

You're not limited to just connecting to servers, of course; you can also run a server from a live CD. The simplest way to do this is to install OpenSSH. To do this on Ubuntu, open the terminal and type this command:

```
sudo apt-get install ssh
```

Alternatively, you can find the "ssh" package in the Ubuntu Software Center (or whatever the package manager is on your live CD of choice.) Once you're done installing this package you'll have an operational SSH server.

Of course, you'll need to know the password for the main user account. The username is "ubuntu", and you can set whatever password you like by running this command:

```
sudo passwd ubuntu
```

Once you've set your password, you'll be able to connect to your computer of SSH.

[Read more about SSH](#)

bit.ly/jm3RHV

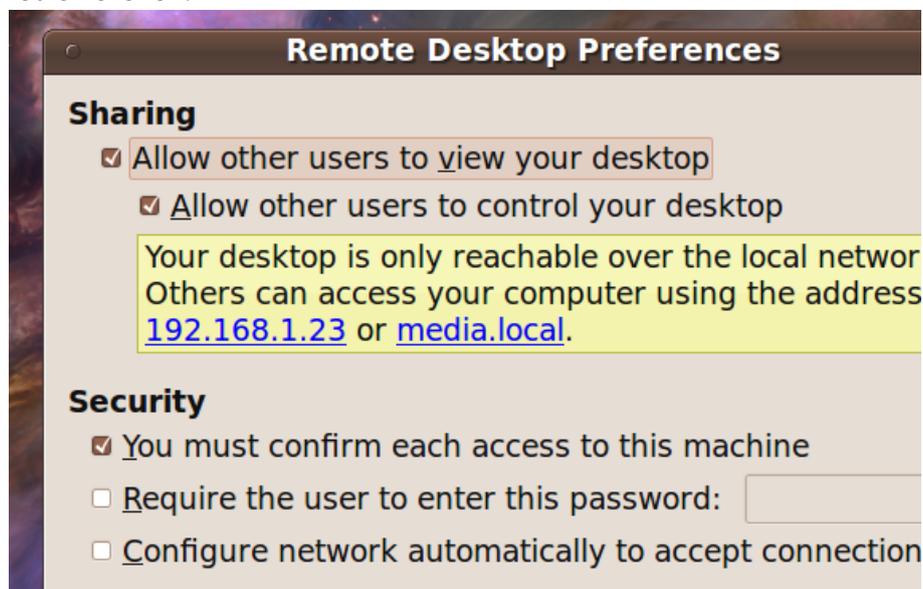
13. Set up a temporary VNC server

If SSH isn't your style maybe VNC is. This allows you to graphically control your computer from Windows, Mac or Linux computers.

[Read more about VNC](#)

bit.ly/gO3EH2

Enabling VNC on Ubuntu and most Linux-based live CDs is simple; just enable the "Remote Desktop" function in the menu. You can find this by searching in Ubuntu, or by browsing the "Preferences" menu in other Linux-based systems. Setting everything up only takes one click:



Read more at MakeUseOf:

[Ubuntu Remote Desktop](#)

bit.ly/aiNGsp

14. Recover From Corrupt NTFS Drive

Have an NTFS drive that won't boot, or that Windows won't open? You'll be surprised how frequently a live CD won't have any trouble with such partitions. Simply start up your live CD when this happens and see if you can't get in. If nothing else, you might be able to recover a couple of vital files.

This isn't a sure thing, though, so don't get your hopes up.

15. Force Windows to scan partitions

Still can't get at your data? Perhaps NTFS is corrupt. Sometime a drive just needs to be checked in order for Windows to boot and for you to get at your data. You can force Windows to run this check from Linux, which sometimes can be enough to get your Windows computer up and running again.

Simply install the package "ntfsprogs" in your live environment, using whatever package manager your live environment has. In Ubuntu, this is the command-line based apt (command: `sudo apt-get install ntfsprogs`) or the Ubuntu Software Center.

Once you've installed the package, you can use the command "ntfsfix" to schedule the repair. You'll have to point to the partition as it exists in /dev to use this command, of course, so this might not be a great tool for the command-line shy. Windows will check the drive next time you boot it, unless the problem is hardware related.

16. Test memory

A bad stick of RAM can drag your entire computer down. As such, if your computer crashes constantly, it can be a good idea to check if your RAM is functioning. Almost every live CD includes a "mementest" option during boot. Select this option and a test will run:

```

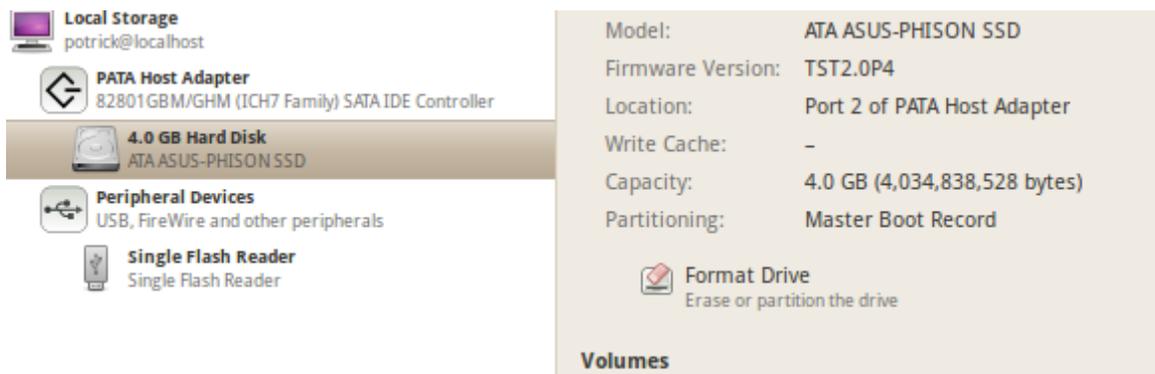
Mementest v1.00 | Pass 24% #####
Intel Core 2 1903 MHz | Test 46% #####
L1 Cache: 32K 748 MB/s | Test #5 [Block move, 80 moves]
L2 Cache: 2048K 632 MB/s | Testing: 176K - 1024M 1024M
L3 Cache: None | Pattern:
Memory : 1024M 599 MB/s |-----
Chipset : Intel i440FX

WallTime  Cached  RsvdMem  MemMap  Cache  ECC  Test  Pass  Errors  ECC  Errs
-----
1:07:10  1024M    0K      e820    on   off  Std   0     0
-----
(ESC)Reboot (c)configuration (SP)scroll_lock (CR)scroll_unlock LOCKED
    
```

Bad blocks will be pointed out to you; if you see many of these it's time to replace a stick of RAM.

17. Test your hard drive

Hard drive problems can also drag a system down, so it's a good idea to check their health from time to time—particularly if you're having problems with your computer. Ubuntu, and many other live CDs, come with a disk utility for checking this:



This software will show you all the information you could ever want about your storage devices. You can even check your SMART data, which will give you an overview of the drive. Things like bad sectors are counted, and if it's time for a new drive you'll see a recommendation to that effect.

18. Test Other Hardware

The Ultimate Boot CD, built from the ground up to allow you to test hardware, contains hundreds of different tests for a wide variety of different hardware. Whether you want to know if your graphics card, CPU or anything else is starting to fail, this is the disk to get.

```
Ultimate Boot CD V5.0.0 http://www.ultimatebootcd.com
-----
BIOS
CPU
HDD
Memory
Others
Peripherals
System
Parted Magic U4.10 - Press F1 for more information
UBCD FreeDOS R1.36 (Based on NwDsk V3.40)
User-defined

Boot next device
Reboot

GRUB4DOS menu
```

The text-based interface can take some getting used to, but it's worth it; there's a lot of power here.

[Download The Ultimate Boot CD](#)

bit.ly/3Vk4Uo

19. Diagnose if an issue is hardware or software

Have a computer problem, but don't know whether the problem is hardware or software? Live CDs are perfect for diagnosing this.

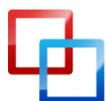
Simply boot your computer from a live CD, and see if the crashes you've been experiencing happen. If they do, you will know your problem is hardware: no virus, registry corruption or other software issues can affect your live environment. Inversely, if the problem doesn't occur in the live environment, you've probably got a software issue on your hands.

This is by no means a surefire test, but it's a great way to figure out where you should focus your efforts.

20. Use a computer without the password

Don't know the password to the family computer, and can't get in touch with anyone to get it? Don't worry: you can use any computer from a live CD whether you have a password or not.

Since the environment is completely separate from the computer's main environment, knowing the password isn't necessary. You won't have access to any software installed on the computer, of course, but it's a great way to get to the web and a few odd documents.



21. Hack XP Passwords

Of course, if you're feeling evil, you could just hack the password. A piece of software called Ophcrack can get you into almost any Windows computer.

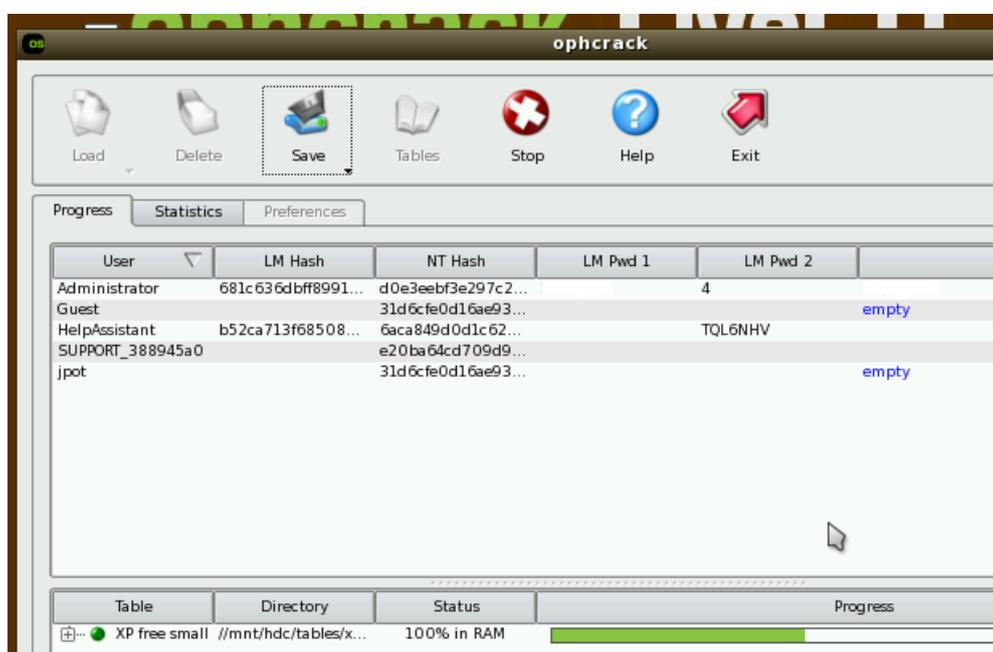
[Ophcrack can Crack Almost Any Windows Password](#)

bit.ly/wKQoZ

This program can decrypt any Windows password, but needs tables to do so. The easiest way to use it is from a live CD, built specifically for cracking XP passwords and including all necessary tables. Happily it's an easy download to find:

[Download The Ophcrack Live CD](#)

bit.ly/YgONE



Just boot this live CD and you'll have your password eventually. How long it takes to get the password depends on how secure the password is, but you'll get in eventually.

22. Hack Vista Passwords

Need to hack a Vista password? It doesn't work as frequently, but there is a live CD for this from OphCrack as well. The CD works just the same as the XP version: boot it and wait for your passwords.

[Download The Ophcrack Live CD](#)

bit.ly/YgONE

Windows 7 users: you're out of luck for now. Sorry about that!

23. Safely use infected computers

Concerned about using an infected computer? That makes sense; you don't want to spread the virus to your flash drive or any other computers on your network.

If you need to get some work done on a computer you know is infected, however, a live CD is the tool for the job. The virus won't be running in the live CD environment, so you can make temporary use of your computer without fear of infection. Best of all: you can access your files.

24. Scan with BitDefender



That's right: you can scan your computer with BitDefender from a live CD. This is perfect if a virus has infected your computer so badly that it cannot boot. You can update virus definitions and run a scan easily with this dedicated live CD; read all about it in this article:

[BitDefender Scans Your Computer When All Else Fails](http://bit.ly/ca5QdX)

bit.ly/ca5QdX

25. Scan with Avira

Whether BitDefender didn't do the trick or you just prefer Avira, it's good to have another option. The Avira Rescue system is a live CD from the Avira team that makes scanning your system for viruses easy; just boot, update and scan.

[Download Avira Rescue System](http://bit.ly/euGNCu)

bit.ly/euGNCu

26. Scan with AVG

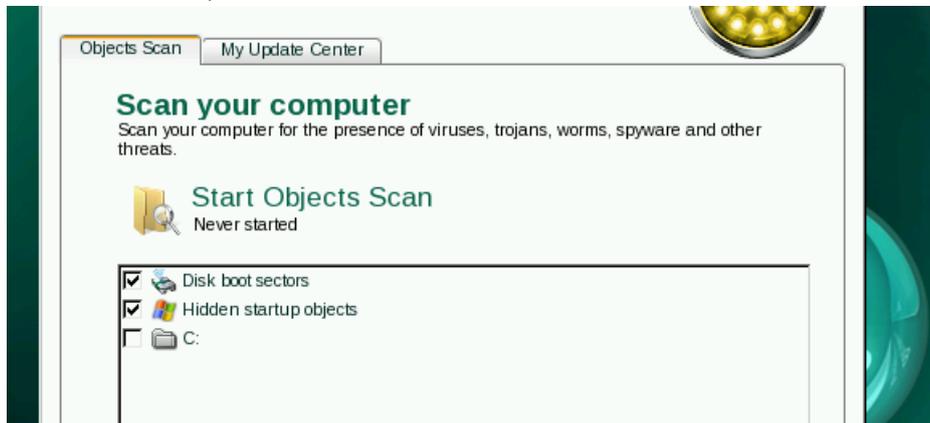
That's right: AVG also offers a scanner that boots from CD. Whether you really like AVG's protection, or are just collecting anti-virus live environments, here's the download:

[Download AVG Rescue Guide](#)

bit.ly/cQE0iy

27. Scan with Kaspersky

Yet another live CD from yet another anti-virus company, but this one's really worth having around. Kaspersky's protection is among the best, and this live CD gives you access to it even when you don't have access to Windows.



[Kaspersky Rescue Disk Saves You From Reinstalling Badly Infected Windows](#)

bit.ly/9Oi2gr

28. Scan with Panda

Just for good measure, you can also scan your computer from a Panda live CD. An up-and-coming antivirus vendor, Panda's offering gives you access to even more malware scanning.

[Download Panda SafeCD](#)

bit.ly/9fRjn9

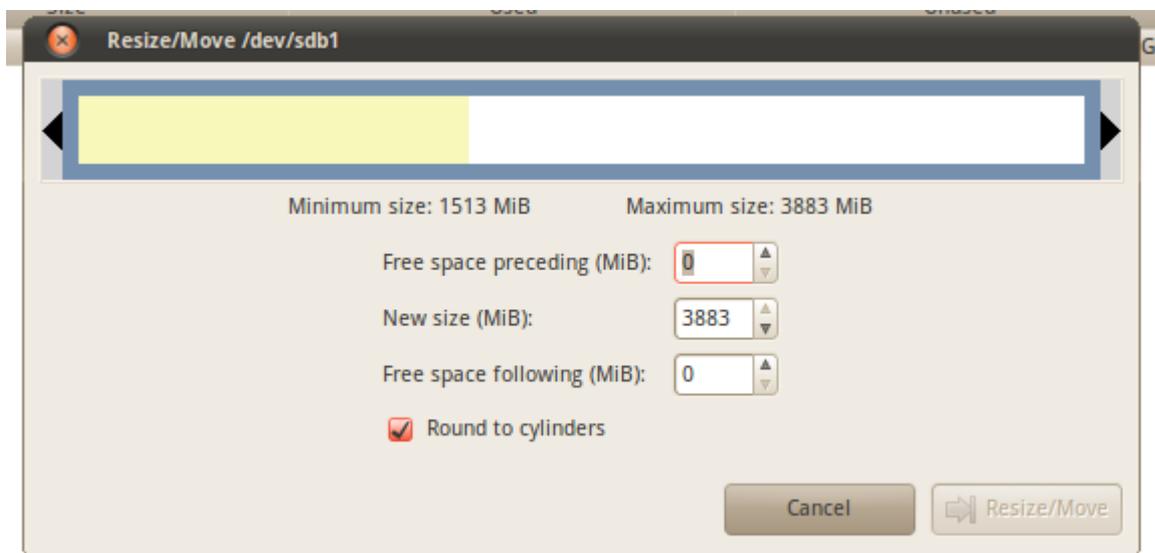
29. Edit partitions

On just about every live CD, including Ubuntu, is a program called GParted. This piece of software is a very good partition editor:

[GParted – The Ultimate in Partitioning Software](#)

bit.ly/b3Do2L

From within the software you can change the size of any partition. Just right-click the partition, then click Resize. You'll see an easy-to-understand window:



You can use this software to edit the size of your existing system partitions, which is nice if you're looking to free up space for dual-booting or if you just want to separate your data from your operating system.

Just so you know: **always** back up your data before editing your partitions. It's unlikely, but something could go wrong resulting in you using your data. Want a live CD specifically for running GParted? Check out the GParted Live CD:

[Download The GParted Live CD](#)

bit.ly/3hhg

30. Add partitions

GParted isn't just great for resizing partitions; you can also create new ones. Click on empty space to get started. Formats supported depend on which live CD you're using, of course, but Ubuntu and the GParted CD support NTFS, FAT, EXT2-4 and more.

31. Delete partitions

Ready to get rid of an old operating system? Deleting a partition is easy: just right-click it and click "Delete." You'll be warned of the implications of this, but go through with it if you'd like.

This might affect your boot loader, so only do this if you really know your way around computers.

Note that data can be recovered from deleted partitions, so don't consider this protection from the CIA.

32. Hack Wireless Passwords

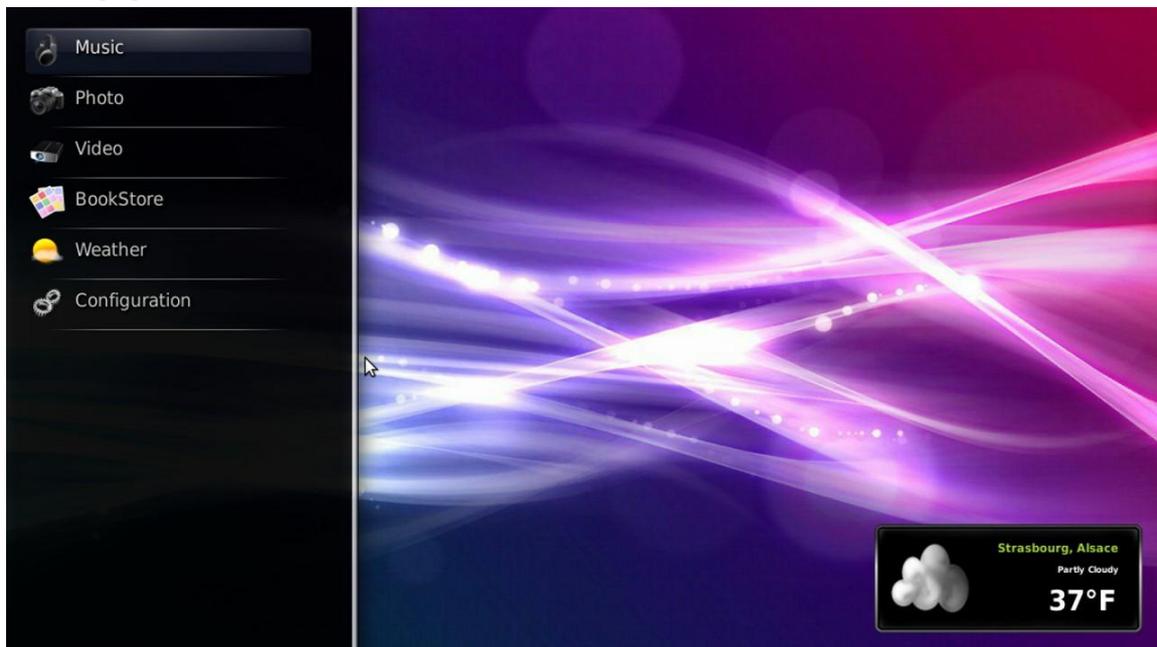
Feeling evil? You can always try your hand at breaking into your own protected wireless network. Breaking into someone else's network is illegal; we're not responsible for your actions.

BackTrack is a security-oriented Linux distro, capable of many things. It really could be the subject of its own guide (and might be in the future), but part of its toolkit is a piece of software that can break WEP passwords.

[Read More About BackTrack](#) to see if you might be able to use it.

backtrack-linux.org

33. Play your Media



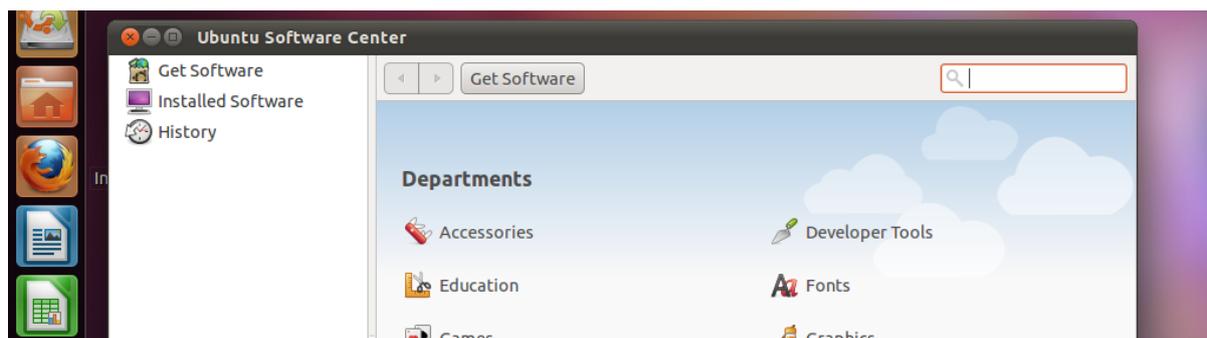
Want to play your media in an operating system that boots quickly? GeexBox might be what you're looking for. This live CD starts quickly, and gives you an elegant way to browse your media files.

This is a fun piece of software to explore, so get started:

[Download GeexBox](http://geebox.org)
geebox.org

34. Test drive software

There are thousands of free programs out there, and most of them can be quickly installed in Ubuntu. If you want to try these programs out, but don't want to install them on your hard drive, why not try them from a live CD?

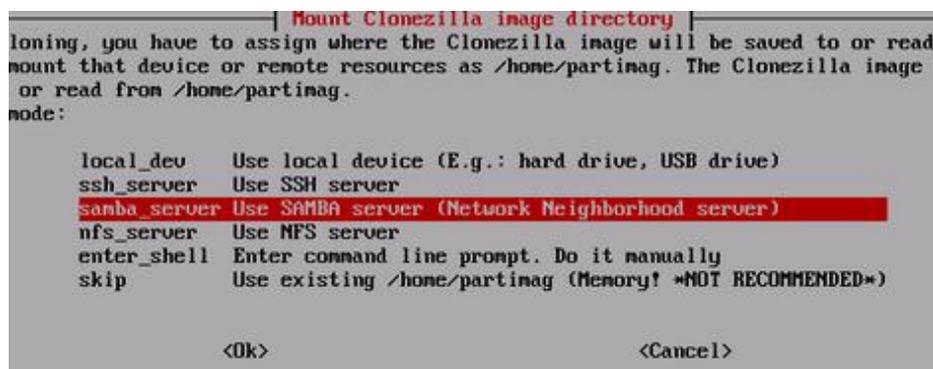


You'll find the Ubuntu Software Center once you start Ubuntu; from here you can install a lot of software. This works in the live environment, giving you a chance to try out lot of great Linux software without having to install Linux.

Naturally this trick can work on non-Ubuntu live CDs as well, though your mileage may vary. Try it out with your favorite live CD to find out!

35. Clone Your Hard Drive to Image

Want a backup of your entire hard drive, including your operating system? It's possible. Clonezilla, a live CD made specifically for cloning hard drives, can create an image of any hard drive. Best of all, you can create this image on a variety of different places:



That's right: the image can be created on a local disk or a variety of network locations. The process can take a while, but it's always nice to have a complete system backup.

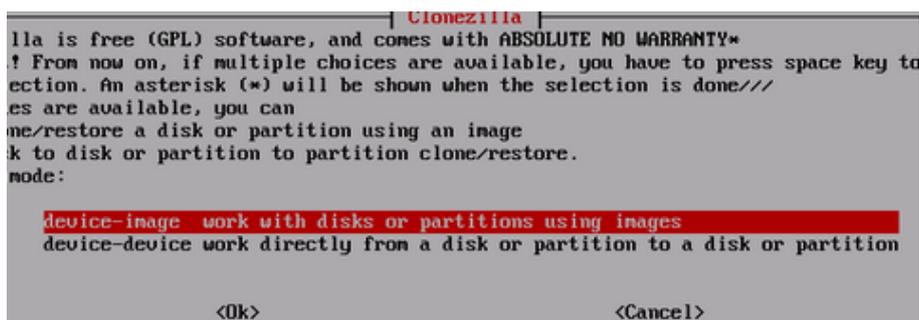
You can also use Clonezilla to restore your hard drive from an image, of course. The text-based interface is spartan but easy to understand, so give it a shot. As always: be careful and back up your data.

[Clonezilla: Free Advanced Hard Drive Cloning Software](#)

bit.ly/44LKY3

36. Clone Your Hard Drive to Disk

If you bought a new, bigger hard drive, you might think replacing your current primary drive with this new drive will be complicated. Not with Clonezilla. This live CD is not only great for backing up your system to an image: you can also copy your entire hard drive to a different drive.



Just select "device-device" to get started. You'll need both hard drives hooked up to your machine, of course; a USB enclosure can make this simpler but installing both drives internally works too.

[Clonezilla: Free Advanced Hard Drive Cloning Software](#)

bit.ly/44LKY3

37. Browse the Web Securely

Most browsers come with a privacy mode. This mode usually leaves no trace of your activity, be it in cookies or the browser history. For most people, this provides enough cover.

If you're really paranoid, however, I highly recommend using a live CD for truly secure browsing. No information from your browsing session will ever be written to your hard drive, leaving your session completely secure.

38. Securely use a public computer

Do you trust the public computers at hotels or at your local web café? Me neither. They're likely to be infected, and there's always the chance that someone is logging your browser history or otherwise invading your privacy.

It's best to avoid accessing private information from such terminals, but if you must use one a live CD can give you quite a bit of added protection. None of your information will ever be written to the hard drive, and you'll be completely safe from any software-based keyloggers and malware.

It's not completely secure, however: people watching you could compromise passwords and hardware-based keyloggers do exist. Still, a live CD is the ultimate software layer of protection.

39. Bypass snooping parents or employees

Do your parents, or your employers, log everything you do on your computer? Creepy.

If their logging system is software-based, and runs on your computer, don't worry: you can bypass it. Just use your computer from a live CD and you'll be completely in the clear.

Note that this will not help if the monitoring system works on the network level. Sorry!

40. Work around filters

This strategy can also apply to filtering systems, if these systems are local and software based. Whether you want a Facebook fix at work or something else at home, a live CD can give you access to the entire Internet easily.

Note that this won't help if the filter works on the network level, as many filters do today. You'll need a [proxy](#) for that.

41. Bypass a corrupt master boot record

The previously mentioned Ultimate Boot CD contains a handy feature: you can boot Windows even when the Master Boot Record is missing or corrupt. You'll see the option right when the CD starts up.

This will allow you to boot from your partition of choice. Once you get into Windows you can fix the boot record, if you know how.

[Download The Ultimate Boot CD](#)

bit.ly/3Vv4Uo



42. Repair a corrupt master boot record

Of course, you can repair your master boot record from within the Ultimate Boot CD as well. Under the "partition" menu of this CD you'll find an option called "fixmbr". This tool is your ticket to getting everything back to normal on your computer.

43. Playing games at work

Does your employer prevent you from installing software on your work computer? Is this keeping you from playing games at work? That's a shame.



Good thing live CDs can give you access to any software you want. You could just boot the Ubuntu live CD and install games from the Software Center, or you can use a dedicated gaming live CD.

For your convenience, find a list of gaming-oriented live CDs over at the Live CD List.

[Live CD List: Gaming](#)

bit.ly/IWi3ig

44. Using unauthorized software at work

Of course, the above method works for more than just games: you can make use of any unauthorized software at work using a live CD. Just find a CD with the software that you want to use, or just run Ubuntu and install your programs using the Software

Center. With thousands of programs to choose from you won't go wanting for variety.

45. Guest operating system

Want your guests to be able to use a computer, but don't want them infecting your primary operating system? Why not start up a live CD for them to use instead? It's a secure environment but is more than enough to get people onto the web.

Things could get messy if they mount your drives and delete things. If you're afraid of this you could always temporarily unplug the hard drive, though.

46. Try Out Sugar, the OLPC interface

The [One Laptop Per Child](#) project aims to put a laptop into the hands of every child on earth. The project involves cheap laptops, and a custom Linux environment. This environment is famous for its deceptive simplicity, which slowly expands as the child learns more about more about the system. It connects children with friends around the world and ultimately aims to make kids experts with computers and even basic programming.

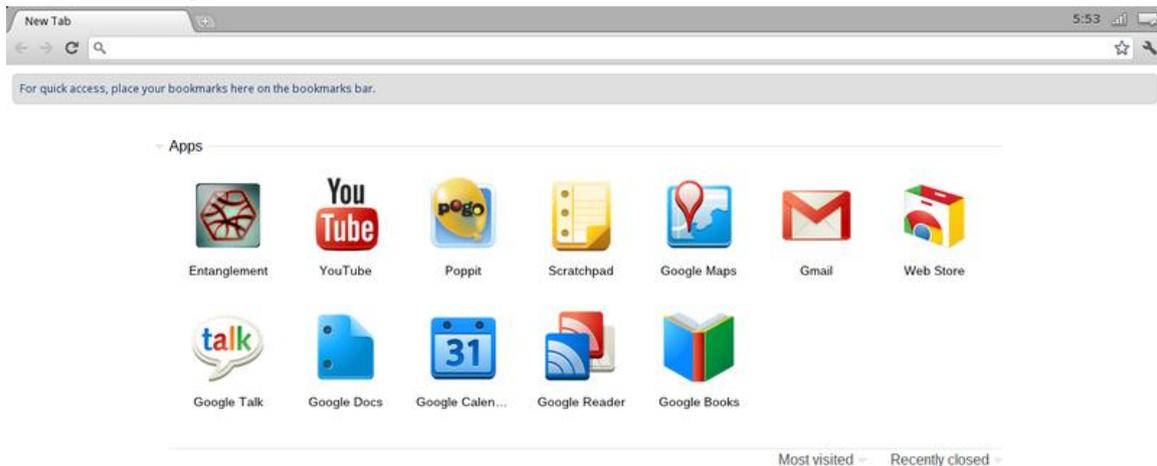


You can't buy one of these systems for yourself, but you can try out the Sugar interface that powers them.

[Download the Sugar Live CD](#)

bit.ly/3vjfs

47. Try Google's Chrome OS



The next step in Google's mission to take over the world is Chrome OS. Based on the assumption that, on the modern web, only a browser is necessary to use a computer, Chrome OS is revolutionary (and, some say, misguided.)

Judge for yourself. As of this writing there is no official download for Chrome OS, but an unofficial download of the system is ready for you. Find it here:

[Download Chrome OS \(unofficial\)](http://getchrome.eu)
getchrome.eu

48. Try out Linux

Of course, you can try out pretty much any Linux distro from a live CD these days. Ubuntu is a great starting point, but there are so many CDs worth checking out. Browse the Live CD List to find one right for you!

[The Live CD List](http://www.livecdlist.com)
www.livecdlist.com

49. Install Linux!

If you've done even half of the tips in this guide, you've realized the power of Linux on the live CD. Why stop there? Pretty much every live CD out there allows you to install the system to your hard drive. If you think Linux may be right for you as a

desktop operating system, it's probably time to take the plunge. Don't worry: you can dual-boot, leaving Windows in place. You might one day stop using it, though!

50. Coasters!

Have an outdated live CD you no longer need? It's always best to use re-writable disks or USB drives for just this reason, but if your live CD was neither of these you might think you have a useless hunk of plastic.

You don't. Such CDs make great coasters. While protecting your table from water damage isn't terribly geeky, these coasters are pretty awesome looking.

Conclusion

You may have noticed: live CDs have many, many uses. I'm sure I've missed some, but that only goes to show just how useful these tools are.

We write about live CDs fairly regularly at MakeUseOf; you can keep track of such stories using our live CD page:

[Live CD stories at MakeUseOf](http://www.makeuseof.com/tags/live-cd/)
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Thank you for taking the time to read this guide, and have fun exploring those articles. Feel free to email me with any more live CD ideas:

JustinPot@makeuseof.com



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