How to Install Debian as a Dual-Boot (with Mac OS X) on the Mac Mini

February 16, 2009

Update: March 31, 2013 — I’ve since ditched this setup in favor of running ubuntu with a lightweight window manager under VirtualBox instead.

Inspired by this how to guide, I recently installed Debian 5.0 (a.k.a. "Lenny") on a new Mac Mini.

My experience was basically the same, with a few key differences (highlighted):

- Started MacOS X
- Ran BootCamp (my version of OS X already had BootCamp installed), and created a 32 gb sized partition for "Windows" (BootCamp assumes the partition is for XP). As per the original instructions, I quit BootCamp when it prompted for the Windows XP CD.
- Downloaded and installed rEFIt. Piece of cake.
- Downloaded and burned the i386 netinst CD version of "Lenny".
- Put the netinst CD into the drive and rebooted; the next time the Mini started, I saw the rEFIt menu.
- At the rEFIt menu, I scrolled to the "partition map tool" and, as suggested, copied the GPT partition map into the MBR. It left me with three partitions:
  1. Boot
  2. Mac OS X
  3. Empty (where Linux is going to go)
- Exit the partition map tool and booted Linux from CD; the familiar Debian install screen appeared. Two critical steps followed.
  - At Debian's disk partition step, I chose "manual" (using any other option would have given the Debian installer the all-clear to wipe out Mac OS X from the hard drive). Here I re-sized partition #3 to 31 gb, and created a fourth partition of 1 gb for swap. The final table was:
    1. Boot
    2. Mac OS X
    3. ext3 mounted as "/" with the bootable flag on
    4. swap
  - The installer continued, but when it prompted me to install GRUB, I hit "Go Back" and installed LILO instead (the original guide says install GRUB and then edit it manually; I simply could not get that to work, so I tried LILO instead, and LILO worked), allowing LILO to write to the Master Boot Record (MBR)
- After the Debian install finished, I rebooted, and saw the rEFIt menu offered two choices: start Mac OS X or Linux

Archived from the original at http://denis.papathanasiou.org/

Bitcoin Donate: 14TM4ADKJbaGEi8Qr8dh4KIPBQmjTshkZ2