Create Bootable USB Drive

I will go straight to the step by step instructions and put the so-called theoretical information towards the end of this page, so that people who are only interested in getting it done can get straight into it 😛

I have done this a lot of time on Linux, but I recently discovered that I may be able to do it on Windows as well - so I may insert something on that later.

Linux Platform

Tools needed (mostly available by default on all major Linux distro):

- fdisk - for partitioning (recommended for USB drives with >4GB storage)
- mkfs - for preparing filesystem (go for something specific e.g. mkdosfs for FAT filesystem)

Obviously, we also need a live system (system that mostly run on RAM and does no need to be installed to a hard disk) - for this, I recommend Slax or Porteus. Both (Porteus is actually a Slax spin-off) are based on Slackware, a highly recommended Linux distribution that I personally use.

Windows Platform

coming soon...

Hard Disks and Geometries

1. talk about CHS and LBA

Using fdisk

Creating 2GB partition at the end of the drive

- for 512-bytes sector size, allocate 2x1024x1024x1024/512=4194304 sectors
    - subtract this value from total sector
    - make sure the end value of previous partition ends on resulting value

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Case study 1

For 16GB devices (~14GB+2GB), when making the second partition as active partition, installing syslinux onto that partition is still okay. But when doing similar config on 32GB devices, syslinux fails.

Why?