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Stuff that matters to Wayne

How to Make Your Big External Drive an Ubuntu Studio computer With a Big Storage Drive Accessible by Any Ubuntu Computer

Posted on February 13,2014 by Wayne Taylor

I was given a big hard drive by my friend so that I could start using Ubuntu Studio ('USTUD' from hereon in) and working on some audio. The challenge was that when I installed USTUD on the drive it could only really be used as a self contained computer. I thought it would be useful to have the option of using the drive as an external hard drive that for file transferring or backing up...or whatever the need between any of my regular Ubuntu machines and USTUD. One use case example was if I was exporting a big audio project and wanted to immediately transfer it to my friend's USTUD machine for immediate and further editing or publishing. The way it was now, if he wanted to access that big file it could either a) have issues mounting or accessing (rights and all that) or b) be so many directories deep even if it was accessible that it would be annoying to browse for it. So, I found a few tutorials about partitioning and here is a summary of how to make a 500 some-odd gig USTUD computer with a 500 some odd 'secondary drive' out of the same 1 TB external USB drive. Hope it helps you. *Disclaimer: You are messing with partitioning here and it's always possible to forever wipe a drive you weren't intending to. **Disclaimer Summary: Always be careful and don't blame me for anything. We assume the following for this tutorial:

1. You already have an Ubuntu Studio installation usb drive or CD already created. This is not a tutorial about creating a bootable install CD so look that up on your own. I use either the built in Ubuntu Startup Disk Creator or a program called Unetbootin to get this done.
2. You understand that when I say "Ubuntu Studio" or "USTUD" you can replace this with whatever distribution you are working with and it should work the same for this process
3. You have an external hard drive of 1TB. If you don't, adjust this tutorial accordingly
4. You are an Ubuntu (the www.ubuntu.com Ubuntu) fan already. If not, go get excited and come back.

Let's begin

1. Make sure your main big drive to which you will be installing USTUD and the storage partition is wiped and doesn't have anything you want on it. It's going to get forever wiped.
2. Plug in your install usb flash drive or CD and start up your computer. You will have to make sure your computer BIOS is set to boot up the right order. Look that up if you don't know how. It's usually by pressing something like F12 when the screen is black at startup.
3. When USTUD install shows up go through all the steps until you reach step 5 <http://askubuntu.com/questions/343268/how-to-use-manual-partitioning-during-installation> of this tutorial. Please note that every screen will not look exactly like this especially the 'something else' screen. I found that I did not need to go through all the steps of creating the /home and /var etc directories manually. I just stopped after creating the SWAP partition (I used 512) and the / step (step 5). In step 5 I choose 450,000 MB (450Gigs) for my USTUD drive. Then I pressed 'install'.*Note. I'm sure that if you are advanced and fearless than you could accomplish the entire goal of this tutorial during this process but I wanted to make sure that USTUD was working perfectly before proceeded to create the storage partition out of my disk.

4. Once USTUD is installed and updated, shut computer down and turn on regular Ubuntu machine and wait until it's booted.
5. Plug in your USTUD drive
6. Press the super key and type 'disk' and open the program called 'disk utility'. You should see your big drive listed.
7. Click on that drive once and you will see its attributes populate the screen. You should now see your Ubuntu installation about 450GiGs and a bunch of free 'unallocated' space.
8. Click on the unallocated space and then the plus sign 'create partition'. Choose ext4 (assuming you are using Ubuntu like a good citizen) and let the default number stay in the size field unless you want to repeat this process and make more drives out of it.*Note: in all these partitioning steps I always make easy to remember labels like "UstudOS" and "UstudHD"
9. Wait.
10. Done.

Now if you plug this same external hard drive into any Ubuntu machine you should see a big drive appear (In my case labelled 'UstudHD') that you can use just for just storage and the other drive which will have your install which can remain dedicated to its purpose. This gives lots of space for running USTUD and lots of space for a nice backup drive. Hope this helps.

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