

Multi BSD boot loader

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/questions/2007-09/msg01319.html>

- *From:* Joshua Isom <jrisom@xxxxxxxxxx>
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I've brought back to life a P3 I got at a school auction years back to use for testing software under various operating systems (presently all BSD) on i386. My main "server" is FreeBSD/amd64. The P3 has a 10 gig hard drive I'm not intending to upgrade (unless I buy a SATA hard drive and find that the bootloader works for ATAPI SATA hard drives in 7.0). I've currently partitioned it into four partitions, with FreeBSD, OpenBSD, and DragonFlyBSD. The fourth is unused at the moment, and I left it open for a fourth system to test on, but I partitioned it as "FreeBSD". Here comes the problem. The boot menu currently looks like this.

F1: FreeBSD
F2: BSD
F3: FreeBSD
F4: FreeBSD

Given the minimalistic nature of the 512 byte bootloader, and my understandings of the bootloader itself, it would be difficult to adapt to suit my needs. I doubt I'll be installing any Linux on the fourth partition as Linux/i386 is well tested (for this software anyway). As well, I have considered getting a null serial cable to connect the P3 to my amd64 box and, aside from SSH, manage it that way. At least until I get a larger hard drive for my main system that runs 24/7, I do not want to use netbooting. I also may want to install another operating system on the fourth partition (not necessarily BSD, or else I'd automatically choose netBSD). Also, I may not be in the room when I reboot into another operating system, and I know that netbooting would be best in this regard. Is there a good bootloader that would suit my needs, of easily and mostly remotely (such as via SSH) being able to control which operating system to boot next? I almost wonder if FreeBSD's loader could be repurposed for my needs but my forth isn't that good.

freebsd-questions@xxxxxxxxxxx mailing list

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