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Virtual Machines

I maintained a dual boot installation on my main desktop PC for some time now. Ubuntu is my default OS, providing all productivity tools like email client, OpenOffice for text documents and spread sheets, web browser, photo editing, network analysis and much more. But there are still applications requiring Windows. In my case it's the missing Linux support for my Canon 9000F scanner and my preference to use Paint Shop Pro over Gimp for some things. Therefore the XP on the second HD partition. But it's time consuming to reboot the PC to switch OS's.

Until today I did not want to invest time to set up a Virtual Machine environment on my PC. I also had doubts about the stability. I can not yet answer the question how reliable my setup is, but for sure Oracle's VirtualBox is super easy to setup fulfills all my requirement! I can only recommend to try it and for many it might be the preferable solution over a dual boot configuration.

There are two versions available: The Open Source Edition (OSE), which is part of many distribution's repositories, and the professional edition, to be downloaded from Oracle's web site. Both are Open Source, the professional version is freely available for private use.

Highlights of the VirtualBox are USB support and ability to map folders from the host OS to the guest OS. Unfortunately there is no drag- and drop between host OS and VM windows possible. For me it is possible to use the original Canon scanner SW (which is only for Windows available), scan my stuff and save it to a Linux folder for further processing or storage. This is a major improvement over rebooting the PC!

Besides this, it is very easy to create multiple VMs, install SW for testing, preserve the VM in any state and transport the whole VM elsewhere.

There are many instructions on the net how to install and use Oracle's VirtualBox. As a quick reference I put a short guide together here:

[HowTo short guide](#)