Solving Installation Problems

There’s a very good chance that your Ubuntu installation will go smoothly, and you’ll find yourself with a first-rate operating system up and running within just a few minutes. However, issues do sometimes arise, so we’ve drawn together a list of common problems alongside their solutions, which should get you out of any tight spot. These problems are organized by when they occur: (A) before you start Ubuntu’s live distro mode; (B) while running the installation program; and (C) after the installation, when you boot for the first time. The final section of the chapter describes how to configure the graphical subsystem with the X.org configuration utility, which can be useful if graphical glitches arise. The latest version of Ubuntu has an all-encompassing recovery mode, which should assist in solving many problems.

A. Preinstallation Problems

Some problems might arise before you even boot Ubuntu’s live distro mode in order to run the installation program. This section addresses such issues.

The Disc Doesn’t Boot

*When I boot from the Ubuntu DVD-ROM, the drive spins up as if something is happening, but I see either nothing or strange graphics on the screen.*

**Solution**

The DVD-ROM disc might be either dirty or faulty. Examine its surface for scratches or try removing dust from it with a soft, lint-free cloth. A typical indicator of a dirty or damaged disc is that the drive spins up and then instantly spins down several times in succession—listen to the whir of the drive’s motor to tell whether this is the case.

If the disc seems okay, it might be that your computer is not set to boot from the DVD or is unable to display the Ubuntu boot menu. In the former case, you’ll need to redefine the boot order in the computer’s BIOS, as covered in Chapter 4. To get around the latter problem, when you see the blank screen or graphical corruption, press the Escape key twice. Then press Enter. You’ll see the word `boot:` at the top left of the screen, along with a prompt where you can enter commands. Type `live` and press Enter.
The Computer Is Having a Kernel Panic

*The DVD starts to boot, but then the computer freezes and eventually displays a message along the lines of “Kernel Panic.”*

**Solution**

Kernel Panic errors occur when Ubuntu cannot continue to load for various reasons. In this context, it’s likely that either the DVD is faulty (or dirty) or that the PC has a hardware problem.

First, check to make sure that the DVD is clean and not scratched. If possible, try it on a different computer. If it works, then it’s clearly not at fault, and your computer most likely has a hardware issue. In particular, bad memory can cause problems. Does the computer already have an operating system installed? Does it run without problems? If not, consider replacing your memory modules.

To thoroughly test your computer’s memory, boot from the Ubuntu DVD, press any key when you first see an Ubuntu logo, and select the Test Memory option on the menu (use the arrow keys to move up or down in the list, and press Enter to make a selection). This will run the Memtest86 program, and any problems with your memory will be reported in the Errors column on the right side of the program screen. For more details about how to use Memtest86, see [www.memtest86.com](http://www.memtest86.com).

The DVD Starts to Boot, but the Screen Goes Blank or Corrupted

*Soon after the DVD starts to boot, the computer looks like it has crashed—the screen goes blank or the display looks scrambled!*

**Solution**

Your graphics card may be incompatible with either the framebuffer graphical mode used by Ubuntu’s boot routine, or the new kernel-mode-setting technology which is now enabled by default on most common video chipsets. You can overcome these problems by following these steps:

1. Reboot the computer. As soon as you see the purple background, with two small icons at the bottom of the screen—a keyboard and an accessibility symbol—press any key to access the boot menu. Choose your language and then press F6. This will bring up a list of kernel boot options. Press Escape to dismiss this menu.

2. You should then see a cursor at the end of a line of text which starts with the words Boot Options. Using the Backspace key to delete quiet splash from the end of the line, as shown in Figure 5-1. Then press Enter.

If the problem persists, reboot, press a key to access the boot menu, choose your language, and press F6 again to bring up the boot options. This time use the arrow and spacebar/Enter keys to select nomodeset from the list. Press Escape, and then Enter.

Additional boot options which you can try adding manually include:

- `i915.modeset=0` (for older Intel graphics adapters)
- `xforcevesa`
- `fb=false`