

Windows 7 Declares War on GRUB

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In preparing for a training class next week, I have acquired a quite nice new HP Pavilion dm1-3105ez sub-notebook. I need to have one system running Windows (XP/Vista/7) and one running some version(s) of Linux. This new HP came with Windows 7 Home Premium, so that should fit the bill nicely. I unpacked it and booted up, went through the normal Windows first-start blathering, removed all the Symantec trashware that was pre-installed, and it seemed to be running reasonably well.

I then installed openSuSE 11.4 to multi-boot with Windows, and configured GRUB (Legacy) to control the boot process. So far, everything was hunky-dory. I could boot Windows or openSuSE, both worked fine, and I worked with each of them for a while, preparing the software that I needed for the course. At one point when I was going to shut down Windows it informed me that it had updates to install. Ok, I went and looked, and there were 50 or so updates already downloaded and ready to install. I let it do the installation, then rebooted "to finish the Windows update installation". Except, it wouldn't boot. Something that Windows Update had done had scribbled on the Master Boot Record (MBR), and it just kept cycling through the HP splash screen. Sigh.

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