
Fedora 15

Fedora Live Images

How to use the Fedora live image



Paul W. Fields
Nelson Strother
Nathan Thomas

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1. Introduction

A live image is a safe and easy way to test the Fedora operating system on your own familiar hardware. If you enjoy this experience, you can install the live system software to your system's hard drive. The installation can either replace your existing operating system, or co-exist separately on your hard drive. This live image provides you with an experience that is very similar to running Fedora, but there are some important differences. Refer to [Section 5, “Advantages of a Live Image”](#) and [Section 6, “Disadvantages of a Live Image”](#) for more information.

2. What Should I Do With My Live Image?

Before you use your Live image, read the next section to learn how to maximize your enjoyment of Fedora. You may also want to read [Section 4, “Booting”](#) for hints on starting — or *booting* — from this media. Then insert this media in your computer and boot from it.

3. Suggested Hardware

This live system successfully boots and runs on most computers with 1 GB or more installed system memory, or RAM. Your computer must have the ability to boot from the device holding the live image media. For instance, if the live image is on a DVD, your computer must be able to boot from the DVD drive.

4. Booting

To set up your system to boot from the live media, shut down or hibernate your computer. Power your computer on, and pay attention to the first screens that appear. Look for a prompt that indicates which key to use for either:

- a boot menu, or
- the *Basic Input–Output System* (BIOS) setup utility

The boot menu option is preferable. If no such prompt appears, consult your manufacturer's documentation for your computer system, motherboard, or mainboard for the correct keystroke. On many systems, the required key will be **F12**, **F2**, **F1**, **Esc**, or **Delete**.

Most computers normally boot from a hard disk. If you have a Fedora Live image on a DVD, then set the computer to boot from the DVD drive. If you have a Fedora Live image on a USB device such as a USB flash drive, set your computer to boot from the USB device.

If you must make changes to the BIOS configuration, record the current boot device selection configuration before you change it. This record allows you to restore the original configuration if necessary.

The BIOS on older computers might have a very limited range of boot options. If your computer can only boot from floppy diskette or hard disk, there is no practical way to boot from the Fedora Live image. Sometimes, an updated BIOS is available from the manufacturer of your computer. A BIOS update might offer additional boot menu choices, but requires care to install properly. Consult the manufacturer's documentation for more information.

Unless you choose to install Fedora from the live image to the computer's hard drive (as described in [Section 8, "Installing Fedora from the Live Image"](#)) the Fedora Live image does not make any permanent changes to the computer on which you run it. If your own computer cannot boot from the live image, you can safely explore the live image on a newer computer to which you have access, without fear of changing that computer.

5. Advantages of a Live Image

- While running this live image, you are in control. Unlike reading about Fedora in print or online, you are not limited to a set of screenshots or options chosen by others. Select which tasks or applications to explore with complete freedom.
- You can experiment with this live image with no disruption to your previous computing environment, documents, or desktop. Shut down or hibernate your current operating system, restart with the live image, and restart the original operating system when finished. Your previous environment returns with no changes made.
- You can use the live image to evaluate whether Fedora recognizes and properly configures your hardware devices.



Important — Full hardware recognition

In some cases, the live image might not offer the full range of hardware support offered by an installed Fedora system. You might be able to manually configure additional devices in the live image. If you use the live image from a DVD, you must repeat these steps each time you use the live image.

- You can use the live image to try different *desktop environments* such as GNOME, KDE, Xfce, or others. None of these choices require you to reconfigure an existing Linux installation on your computer. You can learn more about the various desktop environments in the *Fedora 15 User Guide*, available from docs.fedoraproject.org.
- Live images on USB can include both a *persistence overlay* and a separate area for user data. The persistence overlay allows you to make changes to the Fedora Live environment and retain these changes for the next time that you use the Fedora Live image. These changes can include system software updates, configuration changes, and new programs you choose to install. The separate user data area allows you to reinstall the live image with a newer version of Fedora later, while retaining your documents, media files, and other important information.

6. Disadvantages of a Live Image

- While using this live image on DVD, your computer might be much slower to respond or require more time to complete tasks than with a system installed to hard disk. DVD discs provide data to the computer at a much slower rate than hard disks do. Less of your computer's system memory is available for loading and running applications. Running the live image from RAM trades higher memory usage for faster response times.
- Due to space constraints, fewer programs are included than in a full installation of Fedora. Your favorite applications may not be present in this live image, even though they may be present and run quite well in a full installation of Fedora.



Important — Live USB persistence

Live USB images with persistence allow you to install new applications on your Fedora system. There is a limit to the space available for new applications. If you decide to make many changes to the software installed, install Fedora to a hard disk first.

- You cannot permanently install new applications in the live image on DVD. To try other applications, or newer versions of existing applications, you must either use a live USB image with persistence, or install Fedora on your computer. You might be able to temporarily install or update applications, however, if you have sufficient system memory. Most systems require more than 512 MB of RAM for installations or updates to succeed. These changes will be lost when you shut down the live image.
- Changes may also evaporate if your system's memory usage forces the system to reread the original software or settings from the live image on DVD. This behavior is specific to a live DVD image and does not occur in a full installation of Fedora.

7. Experimenting with the Live Image

Explore the icons and menus on and around the desktop to find programs that interest you. In addition, you may wish to explore other capabilities.

7.1. Accessing Existing Data

The live system can access existing data stored on:

- floppy diskettes
- USB drives
- disk partitions

You can therefore test how Fedora interacts with your documents, photographs, and multimedia files, and how files created by programs running in the Fedora Live environment work when you transfer them to your existing computing environment.

7.2. Making a Backup Copy of Data

You can use the live image to make backup or archival copies of data, if your computer system includes:

- a CD or DVD burning drive
- a hard disk with ample free space

Files normally in use by your previous operating system when it is running are not in use in the live image. Therefore, you can use the live image to copy files that are problematic for backup software in the previous operating system.

8. Installing Fedora from the Live Image

To install Fedora from the live image:

- In GNOME (the default desktop environment), move the mouse to the top left corner of the screen to activate the activities overview. Then click on the **Install to Hard Disk** icon at the bottom of the dash (the vertical strip of icons on the left hand side of the activities overview).
- In Xfce, double-click the **Install to Hard Disk** icon on the desktop.
- In KDE, double-click the **Install to Hard Disk** icon in the **Desktop Folder**.

After you install Fedora, you can customize the software and configuration to your liking on a persistent basis. Although the live image itself only offers a small fraction of the software available for Fedora, this limitation no longer applies once you install Fedora to a computer.

The *Fedora 15 Installation Quick Start Guide*, available from docs.fedoraproject.org, provides step-by-step instructions to use a live image to install Fedora on typical desktop and laptop computers.

9. We Need Feedback!

If you find a typographical error in this manual, or if you have thought of a way to make this manual better, we would love to hear from you! Please submit a report in Bugzilla: <http://bugzilla.redhat.com/bugzilla/> against the product **Fedora Documentation**.

When submitting a bug report, be sure to mention the manual's identifier: *readme-live-image*

If you have a suggestion for improving the documentation, try to be as specific as possible when describing it. If you have found an error, please include the section number and some of the surrounding text so we can find it easily.

A. Revision History

Revision 15.0 **Wed Apr 27 2011**

Nathan Thomas

nathan.thomas@peacenik.co.uk

Update for Fedora 15

Update instructions for browsing files on local partitions in Xfce 4.8

Revision 14.0 **Tue Oct 19 2010**

Nathan Thomas

nathan.thomas@peacenik.co.uk

Update for Fedora 14

Revision

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Nathan Thomas

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nathan.thomas@peacenik.co.uk

Update for Fedora 13

Add information about the live image no longer fitting on CD

Standardize capitalizations

Add information about accessing files on hard disk from Xfce