

RE: Cloning system disk

Source:

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Addendum to my previous post:

If you can afford to install a second "rack" (drive carrier) in the slave position, then you could simply swap drives and avoid messing with boot.ini – but you'd have to change the slave jumper to master. Better yet, if you have a reasonably modern system, you can try switching from master/slave to cable select (this may require a cable upgrade). Many systems won't recognize a drive as "master" unless it's plugged into the connector on the _end_ of the ribbon cable. Using cable select avoids these problems entirely.

We used to fiddle with automated ghost backups in our shop before we finally "took the plunge" and began trusting that NTFS wouldn't become corrupt and recoverable. One trick was to create a small FAT partition at the head of the drive, just large enough for the NT boot files, a minimal DOS installation, and ghost.exe, with an extra boot.ini file pointing to the DOS partition. An AT job in the NT OS would rename the boot.ini files and then reboot the system. The modified boot.ini would load DOS, and autoexec.bat would ghost the disk to a second drive, rename the boot.ini files again, and reboot the system, which would then boot back into NT.

In truth, as far as I know we've never lost an NTFS drive to "corruption" per se – just the usual bad sectors and dying actuator arms. So we haven't used this trick in awhile. DOS partitions aren't advisable on an NT system anyway...

(Peter)