

1.4 Extended Partitions

Ok, we now understand what a primary partition is, and why we even need partitions in the first place. What if you wanted to go beyond just the four partitions that we have? Well, the way to do it is to use extended partitions.

Refer to the figure below. You can treat an extended partition almost like a new hard disk. This extended partition allows you to define a new partition table, containing a limitless number of partition records. So if I define one of my base partitions (out of the four) as an extended partition, I will get the situation as shown in the diagram.

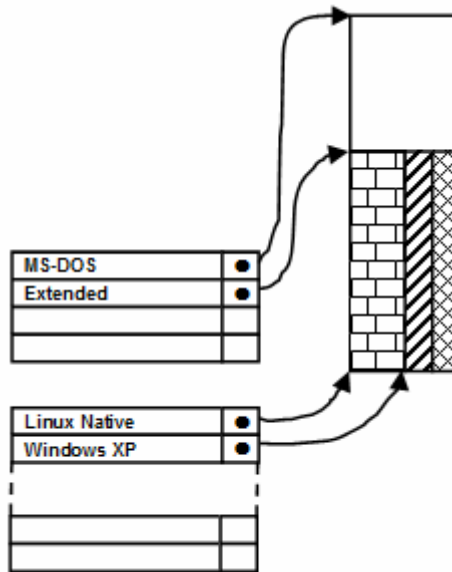


Figure 7: A diagrammatic view of how an extended partition in a hard disk

Take note of the term "limitless". You can indeed create partition after partition within the extended partition table. Each of these partitions in the extended partition is called a "logical partition". However, in practice you'd usually not do that to limit confusion. Also, personally, I tend to stick to only ONE extended partition in a particular hard disk. So I might have three base partitions and one extended partition in my hard disk.

1.5 Creating Partitions

We now turn our attention to the actual process of creating partitions and see how those diagrams we've been using change as we go along.

When we create a new hard disk partition, we can have a couple of scenarios:

- Make use of a brand new hard disk
- Make use of unused partition space in an existing hard disk
- Make use of used partition space in an existing hard disk

1.5.1 A New Hard Disk

This is the simplest case. Refer to the diagram below. Because you have a brand new hard disk (lucky you), you have all the flexibility to define the primary and extended hard disk partitions you want.

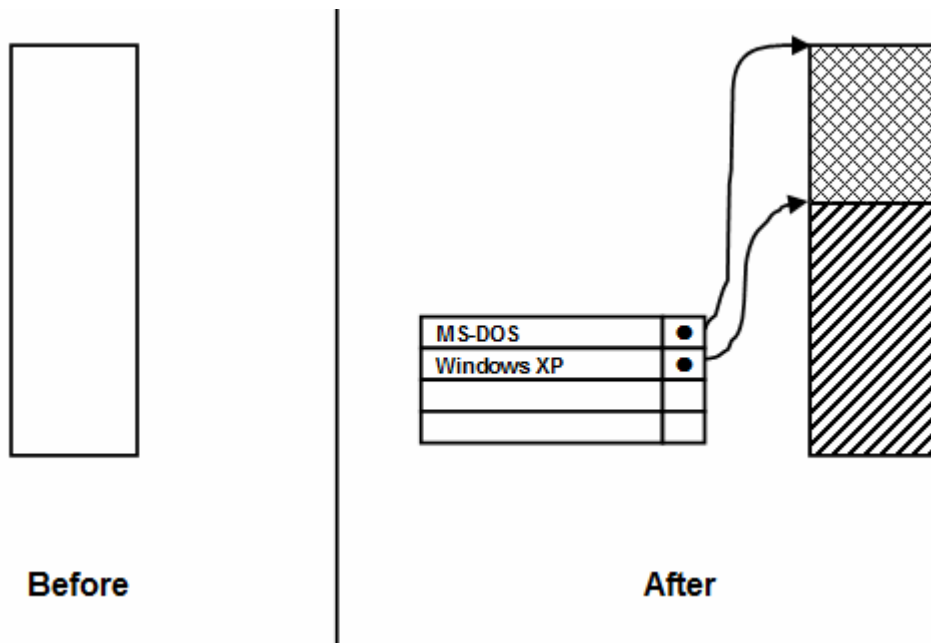


Figure 8: Creating a partition in a new hard disk

You can go with one single huge partition, define two partitions, define one primary partition and one extended partition. Then create many logical partitions in the extended partition. It's up to you. Each partition will of course need to be formatted before it can be used.