

SystemImager

Automates Linux Installs and Software Distribution
<http://systemimager.org/>

SystemImager automates the installation of Linux to large numbers of similar machines. It also automates software distribution, content distribution, and operating system updates.

Custom Loads

SystemImager allows you to maintain your own custom loads and automatically install new machines to match your current configuration.



Features

- Open Source software
- Installs to machines in parallel
- Multicast coming "Real Soon(TM)"
- Autoinstall clients can boot off of:
 - Hard Drive
 - CD-ROM
 - Floppy
 - Network
- Over fast Ethernet, a full 1.2GB autoinstall can take as little as 3 minutes!

- Partitions and formats disks
- Works with disks of different sizes
- Images are based on working machines
- Images are stored as a directory of files
- Multiple images can be maintained on the imageserver
- Different clients can install different images at the same time
- Clients can be upgraded incrementally by syncing them to an updated image
- Client upgrades are very fast as only differences are replicated
- Software and content distribution are predictable and reliable as they are based on images taken from working machines
- An autoinstall of any running Linux machine can be initiated remotely allowing re-installation of servers at remote locations without personnel on site

Security

If you suspect one of your machines has had a security breach, simply tell it to autoinstall itself from scratch or sync it to the appropriate image. This brings it back to a known (uncompromised) state in just minutes!

Safe Production Rollouts

SystemImager can help ensure

a successful rollout of your latest changes to your production systems. With SystemImager, you can have a stable image and an updated image. When you are ready to rollout modifications to your production systems, just sync them to the new image. If you then find that your modifications break things, simply sync your systems back to the stable image.



Cold Hard Cash

SystemImager saves organizations vast amounts of time which translates directly into money. Assuming a conservative 4 hours per machine, it would take 400 man hours to install and configure Linux and your applications on 100

machines by hand. With SystemImager, the same install can be done in 8 man hours. Saving you valuable time to launch, not to mention the cost of 392 man hours.

Open Source Software

Because SystemImager is Open Source software, you can modify it to suit your needs. Support for new or special client hardware is easy to add. See systemimager.sourceforge.net for details.

File Based Images

Many automated installation tools are distribution specific and are based on packages. SystemImager's file based images allow you to install and distribute non-packaged applications. Custom and in-house applications often fall in this category.

Other automated installation tools use a disk based image. SystemImager's file based images allow for incremental updates to installed machines. With disk based replication tools, incremental updates are not possible, and

a full re-install is required to update even a single file!



epicRealm

There are countless challenges when building and maintaining over 1,500 Linux servers in diverse locations around the globe. epicRealm, Inc. uses SystemImager to manage this deployment on a global scale from a centralized location.

"Whether we're installing large groups of new machines, managing the synchronization of installed software on multiple hosts, or completely eradicating and reinstalling machines – SystemImager has become integral to our maintenance model.

SystemImager has scaled to meet our needs, and has saved immeasurable person hours. High praise for Brian Finley for making this tool possible."

David Hughes
Senior Security Architect
epicRealm, Inc.

Author

Brian E. Finley

Code Contributors

(listed alphabetically)

Wichert Akkerman

Tony Beauregard

Cath Burrowes

Jose AP Celestino

Phil Champon

Susan Coghlan

Paonia Ezrine

John Goebel

Drew Hess

Michael Jennings

James Oakley

Ari Jort

Adam L. Lambert

Ian McLeod

Michael P. McLeod

Michael R. Nolta

Laurence Sherzer

Wesley Smith

Curtis Zinzilieta

Ordering Information

SystemImager is Open Source software and can be downloaded from <http://systemimager.org/>.

Implementation and support of SystemImager is available from Brian Finley at <brian@systemimager.org>.