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Exploring Linux – Part 33 – A Backup Solution for Linux Systems

by Alan German

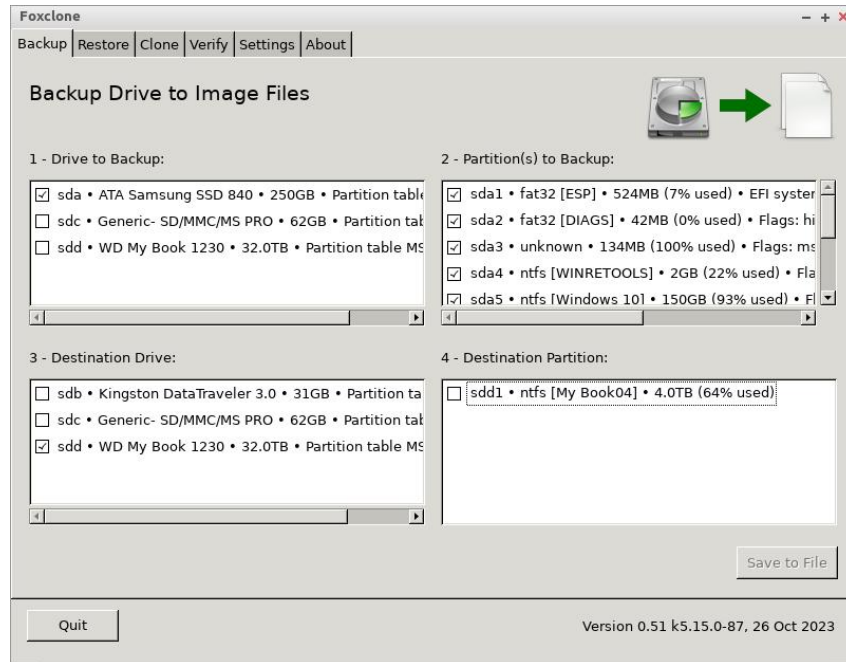
While there are several disk imaging programs available to backup Linux systems, very few of these feature a graphical user interface (GUI). Foxclone is one of the exceptions. Furthermore, it is open-source software and so has two major features that make it worthy of further examination.

Foxclone can be downloaded in one of two versions, each of which provides an ISO file. One version, labelled as standard, is based on Ubuntu Linux Version 18.04 (Bionic Beaver). The focal version is based on Ubuntu Linux Version 20.04 (Focal Fossa).

I selected the most recent version and installed the ISO file on a multi-boot USB drive using Yumi (<https://pendrivelinux.com/yumi-multiboot-usb-creator/>). Foxclone isn't supported directly in Yumi, so it is necessary to select *Try an Unlisted ISO* as the source for the ISO file. Once the relevant files have been copied, the USB can be booted and Foxclone is listed in the boot menu under the category *Unlisted ISOs* as the file *foxclone51_focal.iso*.

Booting from this menu item loads a Linux desktop that includes icons for Foxclone, the Fox guide user manual, a file manager and a web browser. The Linux panel (equivalent to the Windows task bar) is displayed across the bottom of the screen, with a button to access the main menu in the lower-left corner. The options available are more limited than for a full Linux distro but still include applications such as a text editor, PDF reader, Terminal, and the GParted partition editor.

Running Foxclone displays the main program window with sections where the drive to be backed up and its partitions, as well as the destination drive and partition, can be selected for the backup process. The program scans the computer's filesystem and populates the entries for the source and target drives. Consequently, the backup drive must be present when Foxclone is initiated in order that it can be displayed as being available as a target.



Once a drive to be backed up has been selected, all the partitions on this source drive are automatically selected for backup, but individual checkboxes allow the selection to be refined. Selecting an external USB drive as the destination drive and pressing *Save to File* brings up a second dialogue box where the target location can be further specified by browsing the drive's file system. Other options are to create a backup folder, and overwriting the current date (in the format 20240215) as the default prefix for the names of the backup files.

A final dialogue box requests confirmation of the backup selections and pressing *OK* starts the backup process. The result is essentially a series of compressed image and text (log) files that relate to the contents of the individual disk partitions (identified here as sda1, sda2, etc.)

| My Book04 (M:) > z_images > Foxclone | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name | Date modified | Size |
| 20240215.backup | 2024-02-15 5:42 AM | 2 KB |
| 20240215.grub | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 1,024 KB |
| 20240215.sda1.img.gz | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 17,560 KB |
| 20240215.sda1-log.txt | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 1 KB |
| 20240215.sda2.img.gz | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 21 KB |
| 20240215.sda2-log.txt | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 1 KB |
| 20240215.sda3.img.gz | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 45,629 KB |
| 20240215.sda3-log.txt | 2024-02-15 4:58 AM | 1 KB |

Restoring a disk image or partition is essentially the reverse of the backup process and is accessed through the *Restore* tab at the top of the program window. Other tabs provide options to clone disks, verify backups, and change various program settings. An *About* tab indicates the

version of the software and its release date, together with a notice that the program is free software under the terms of GNU General Public Licence (GPL).

The Foxclone User Guide (63 pages) can also be downloaded from the developer's web site. The manual provides clear, detailed instructions about every aspect of using the program with the text illustrated using annotated screenshots. Documentation is even provided on the utility programs (image viewer, text editor, etc.) that are provided in the distribution, together with overviews of disk partitioning and bootloaders.

Foxclone provides support for both Linux and Windows, runs from a bootable USB drive, is intuitive to use, and has excellent documentation. The program essentially runs a Linux distro as a live-USB and, while this won't be an issue for Linux users, even those familiar only with Windows will know to double-click the Foxclone icon on the desktop to run the program. The user interface is simple, and the backup process easily understandable, so running this software is well worth a try.

Bottom Line

Foxclone (Open source)
Andy Hardwick
<https://foxclone.org>

