Making a BitCurator Live CD/DVD

Information compiled by Erin Dix (Lawrence University) to supplement presentation at "I Jumped In, Now What?!: Keeping Your Head Above Water with Born-Digital Materials," Midwest Archives Conference annual meeting, 2016-04-29

Background:

From Wikipedia: "A live CD, live DVD, or live disc is a complete bootable computer installation including operating system which runs in a computer's memory, rather than loading from a hard disk drive; the CD itself is read-only. It allows users to run an operating system for any purpose without installing it or making any changes to the computer's configuration…The functionality of a live CD is also available with a bootable live USB flash drive, or even an external USB drive."

From BitCurator wiki: "The BitCurator ISO image is a customized version of Ubuntu Linux 14.04 LTS (64-bit). The ISO can be run as a live CD, or used to install BitCurator on a dedicated machine."

Situations in which you might want to use BitCurator as a live CD/DVD:

1. You just want to experiment with BitCurator. This method does not require setting up a dedicated work station or installing VirtualBox software. If you don't have an issue with #4 below, the whole process can be pretty easy.
2. You have a small-ish number of physical media items from which to transfer born-digital content and are not likely to be continuing to accrue large amounts of physical media. (E.g.: At the Lawrence University Archives, we used BitCurator in this way to image about 150 floppy disks.)

Instructions:

Note: these specific instructions are applicable only for PCs running Windows 7 or later

1. Download the BitCurator ISO file (available here.)

2. Burn the ISO file to a blank DVD. From BitCurator wiki: "You will then need to burn the ISO onto a blank DVD (the image is roughly 1.5 GB and thus too large to fit on a CDR). Don't forget that burning an ISO to a disc is different from burning other files; instead of dragging and dropping the ISO file onto the disc you want to burn, you'll need to right-click on the ISO image and choose 'Burn Image.'"

3. To run BitCurator from the disc: insert the disc into your disc drive. Shut down your computer, leaving the disc in the drive. Turn on the computer.

4. In many (most?) cases, BitCurator will automatically boot from the disc. **But:** if your organization's IT staff have changed the default boot order on your computer's BIOS (as a security measure), you will not be able to boot directly from the disc. (Nothing will break – it just won't work.) In this case, you'll need IT support to change the BIOS boot order (or pursue another method for installing/using BitCurator).

5. Be aware that launching BitCurator from a DVD can take 10-15 minutes. Using the ISO on a USB drive is much faster, but creating the bootable USB drive involves more steps than just burning the ISO image file on it. From BitCurator wiki: "Want to put BitCurator on a bootable USB stick? Download our ISO image and using Pendrive Linux's Universal USB installer."