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Image by Ian Lindsay from PixabayYou can run a totally different operating system for free right on your Mac. It could be up and running windows (or another operating system) at some point. You might want to test out some cool tools or games that work off of Windows. You may have a desperate and immediate need for a different OS than the one sitting in front of you. You might need to check out some software that's having problems or work with a bug or a virus. It's possible that it's time for you to really start to play the game... GIF via GIPHYFortunately, it's incredibly simple to install a free virtual machine right on your Mac and run it like you would any other application. It takes less than five minutes once you know what you're doing! About virtual machines whether you're interested in penetration testing, hacking, debugging software, or you just want (or need) to run a few Windows-based programs and games, a virtual machine (VM) can be a handy thing to have. They allow you to install and run operating systems like Windows or Kali Linux in a window right on your desktop. This new guest operating systems like Windows or Kali Linux in a window right on your desktop. This virtual machine is "sandboxed" from the rest of your computer. That means that it's completely separate from your computer. You're safe from bugs, viruses, and a host of other security problems. Photo by MILKOVÍ on UnsplashVirtual machines allow you to run more than one OS at a time. You can run software written for one OS on another without needing to reboot. Because you can configure your virtual hardware, you can even install an old OS like DOS or OS/2. You can, at any point, save the state of your machine with software installations or by infecting your system with a virus, you can easily switch back to a previous snapshot. There are a number of popular VM programs out there, VirtualBox as good on VirtualBox as they might be on something you pay for. If it's speed and graphics that you're after, you might want to check out a paid version. I've heard that Parallels Desktop is amazing and wildly faster that VirtualBox, but I haven't actually tried it myself. If you have a favorite, let people know about it in the comments below! So what is a virtual machine? It's a computer file (often referred to as an image) that behaves like an actual computer. It's like you're creating a computer within your computer. This makes it an ideal spot for testing new releases, examining infected data, creating OS backups and running applications and software on operating systems that they weren't originally intended for You can even run multiple virtual machines simultaneously on the same computer. Image by (Joenomias) Menno de Jong from PixabayI want that We're going to do a simple walkthrough of the absolute basics you need to set up VirtualBox with the extension pack and run Windows 10. This is only one way to set things up. You can have a lot more fun from here if you're interested! The programs we're going to use are completely free and we have permission to use them. (I'm putting that out there because things can get pretty slippery as you get closer to the world of hacking.) We'll head over to Oracle to grab VirtualBox and the VirtualBox and the VirtualBox and the VirtualBox extension pack. Then we'll head to Microsoft to grab the version of Windows that we want to use. Step 1: Download VirtualBox, you'll see a giant green "Download VirtualBox" button. Go ahead and click that or head over to the VirtualBox downloads page to pick the right version of VirtualBox for your system. If you're on a Mac, you'll also see a section titled "VirtualBox for your system." The downloads page, you'll also see a section titled "VirtualBox for your system." The downloads page to pick the right version of VirtualBox for your system. If you're on a Mac, you'll also see a section titled "VirtualBox for your system." 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Then click the "Download .zip" button!***Update*** This is a totally free version of Windows 10, but you don't have unlimited and unrestricted use of this software. This is not an unlimited version of Windows that you can use without restrictions forever. I don't know where you would find something like that, but please let us know if you do!This software is provided by Microsoft for limited use. This license is valid for 90 days. You can make a copy and use it to reinstall the software no problem after your 90 days are up (that's specified right in the official documentation. Please make a copy for this purpose if you would like to continue using this software after 90 days), but this is not a full version of Windows 10 that's available for free forever without any restrictions. This is a legally available free version of Windows 10 provided by Microsoft that you can use for limited purposes for a limited time and quickly and easily reinstall any time, either from the website or from your backup copy. This is, of course, not the only way to install Windows 10 on VirtualBox. It's just an incredibly quick and convenient way for beginners and developers to access and test much of what Windows 10 has to offer. Please refer to the official documentation for clarification. Somewhat optional: the UnarchiverIt also makes sense to download The Unarchiver. It's a quick, free, and powerful way to open these files. It's also recommended in Microsoft's official documentation. You don't need to use it to open VirtualBox or the extension pack, but it's a good idea to use an app like this one to extract the Windows 10 downloads folder. Right-click the VirtualBox icon and go to "Open with" and click on "The Unarchiver." This will unzip and open your file. Step 3: Install VirtualBox and the extension packYou can install VirtualBox just like you would any program or applications folder. Of course, you can change the location if you want to. Then follow the installer prompts. Next, go to your Applications folder (or to the location you specified for VirtualBox. When you start your installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation, you'll see a popup window that lets you know what you're installation installation installation. it's time to create a virtual machine. To do that, you need to have an operating system. We're going to use our Windows 10 Microsoft download, but you have a lot of options if you want to use it as-is. To do that, click "Import." You can import it as-is and then modify your settings at any time. Go ahead and import it the way it is if you don't have a different plan in mind. Now go to VirtualBox and click "New." This will open a wizard that will guide you through installation. First, you're going to want to give your virtual machine a name. Because this is so fun, I strongly recommend giving your virtual machine a very descriptive and straightforward name. They start to look a lot alike after a while and this will save you some serious frustration. Something like "Windows 10" or "MSEdge-Win10" makes a lot of sense. If you choose creative names and really get into this, you might have trouble later remembering that "Muffins" is running Windows 10 while "Tchotchke" is running Kali Linux and so on Image by MrsBrown from PixabaySpecify the type of operating system you'll be running (Microsoft Windows) and the version (Windows 10 64 bit) and click "Next." Now you need to set the amount of RAM. You're specifying how much of your computer's RAM will go to your virtual machine. VirtualBox automatically lets you know the recommended minimum amount for the OS you selected, but you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase or decrease this if you want to.Remember that you can increase the your can increase t left for your regular OS to use while you're running multiple VMs at the same time. No matter what, your best bet is to stay in the green section. Otherwise, you'll probably face some serious performance issues. Click "Continue." Now you need to create a virtual hard drive. Select an option and click "Create" and then go through the prompts and click "Create" again. You do need a virtual hard drive is VirtualBox Disk Image (VDI). Make sure that it has at least enough space to install the operating system. Remember that any programs you want to install will also take up space on your virtual hard drive! I went ahead and chose "Dynamically allocated file will grow in size as you store data. It starts small, but it will grow. A fixedsize file, on the other hand, will immediately occupy the size you specify. Even though it initially occupies more space, this type of file incurs less overhead. That means that it's actually slightly faster. Click "Create" to create your new machine! Now you'll see your new machine listed on the left-hand side of your VirtualBox window. It's time to start the operating system installation! Once your virtual machine has been configured, the installation wizard will close and you'll be back at the VirtualBox main window. Double click your new machine on the left (or make sure it's selected and then click "Start"). To install from an image file (that's what we have), click the folder icon to browse for your file. You're looking for our Microsoft download. Select that file and click "Start." Now your installation will begin! Once it's complete, you're ready to go. Congratulations! You are now the proud owner of a Windows machine that's running right inside of your Mac! Make sure you think of your VM as a totally separate computer as you're setting things up. That will help you avoid getting frustrated. When you're running your virtual machine unless you set it up that way. Final details Double click on your machine on the left-hand side of the VirtualBox screen, or click on your machine. It can take a couple of seconds (or minutes) to really get up and running. Take a couple of breaths if it seems a little slow or glitchy at first.Once your new Windows machine is running, go ahead and click anywhere in the window to wake it up. It will ask you for your username and password. You can find those any time in the control panel under "User Accounts.") When you first boot up your machine, the window is pretty small. You can make that happen by selecting "Scaled mode" from the view menu. If you want to ignore the aspect ratio, hold down the shift key while you're resizing your window.At first, when you work on your VM, it will "own" both your keyboard and mouse. You can look at the bottom right corner of the window to see the command you need to swich from your keyboard and mouse. You can look at the bottom right corner of the window to see the command you need to swich from your wirtual machine to your screen while your VM is running and selecting "Mouse Integration." Moving files and programs that I had downloaded on my Mac. It was a minor emergency and there wasn't time for research. This may not be the best way to move your information from your Mac to your Windows machine (and vice versa), but I found that uploading my files into OneDrive was the easiest and fastest workaround for grabbing what I needed from my Mac. It was installed and ready to go on the Windows machine. Signing up for OneDrive is fast and free. This is definitely not the only solution, but it's here if you're in a hurry. (Dropbox would work just as well, assuming you aren't having a bit of a storage issue at the moment...) Snapshots Virtual Box lets you copy your virtual machine's exact state. That allows you to return to that state at any time. This is incredibly useful for testing software or other configurations. You can take a snapshot by clicking the Machine menu and selecting "Take a snapshot." The snapshot will be added to the list of your virtual machines on the left side of the VirtualBox menu. You can restore a snapshot by right-clicking the snapshot will be lost when you restore the snapshot should drive since the snapshot and selecting "Restore." Any changes to your virtual bard drive since the snapshot will be lost when you restore the snapshot will be lost when you restore the snapshot should be lost when you restore a snapshot and selecting the snapshot will be lost when you restore a snapshot will be lost when you restore the snapshot will be lost when you restored the snapshot will be lost will be lost when you restored the snapshot will be lost wi when you close your virtual machine. Each affects the machine a little differently. When you close your virtual machine in exactly the state that it's in when you close it. Any programs you're running will be saved in their current state and everything will be restored when you start the machine again. Send the shutdown signal. This will send a power-down signal to the virtual machine, and it will shut down just as though you hit the power button on a physical computer. Power off the machine again. saved. You did it! Congratulations!!! You are now the proud owner of a free Windows machine that you can pretty much do anything amazing with this information, let everyone know about it in the comments below or reach out any time on LinkedIn @annebonnerdata.Thanks for reading! If you want to reach out or find more cool articles, please come and join me at Content Simplicity!

