

CUSTOMIZE YOUR LINUX DESKTOP

In this article, we'll describe some of the ways you can customize your Linux desktop. We'll start with the simple, and progress to a few of the more advanced things you can do. Well actually, for veteran Linux users, what we call "more advanced" will be more "intermediate" than truly advanced. Even so, we're sure we'll have something in here for everyone.

Customizing the Linux desktop

Although you can do some basic tweaking out of the box with other operating systems, Linux is infinitely more configurable than Mac or Windows. Sure you can get add-on software to customize your Windows desktop quite a bit, but Linux provides the tools right out of the box, with additional utilities just a few clicks away in your distribution's repositories. What makes Linux so much more flexible is that it is designed to be that way, and there is so much that you can do, we'll only be scratching the surface. So feel free to search on your own for other articles from other sources, like your distribution's forums to get more ideas.

So, what can you do with Linux? From simply changing the background image (wallpaper) or menu position, to making your desktop a virtual "dashboard" for displaying the health and performance of your computer's hardware, Linux can do it. You can even revamp the Linux desktop to make it look and behave convincingly like Max OSX or Windows 7. We're not sure why you'd want to, but you can.

Before we can describe how to make the changes on your desktop, we need to know WHICH desktop you have. That's right! There are many desktop environments for Linux and each is configured in a different way. We can't cover them all so we'll limit our discussion to some of the most popular desktop environments. If we miss your favorite, this article will at least give you some ideas as to what can be done,

and it will be up to you to explore on your own how you can configure your system to make it look and work the way you want it to. We'll limit our discussion to KDE4, MATE, and Cinnamon. Of course, since you can install multiple desktop environments simultaneously, you can have an entirely different desktop experience by simply logging-out, and logging-in with a different desktop.

The basics: Changing the desktop background

Most desktop environments allow you to change the background image (wallpaper) by right-clicking on the desktop itself, then selecting the appropriate option from the context menu that appears. Changing the desktop background on KDE: The Plasma desktop is not a static background, but more like a canvas, where a picture, and many different widgets co-exist. You can have one or more desktops, all looking the same, or each desktop may have a different background and a different set of widgets.

MATE and Cinnamon:

1. Right-click the desktop and choose "Change Desktop Background"
(Or on MATE: **Menu** > **Control Center** > **Appearance** > **Background**)
(Or on Cinnamon: **Menu** > **System Tools** > **System Settings** > **Background**)
2. Select the image you want to use. Note that you have the choice to get additional backgrounds from online repositories.
3. If you have a picture on your computer's hard drive you want to use, click the **Add** button, locate the file and click **Open**.
4. Your background changes immediately. Click **Close**.

When using MATE, you can use the link on the lower left to download more images from the Internet. (Make sure you use only trusted sites.)

KDE:

(Thanks to Carlos F Lange for this section)

1. Menu > **Configure Desktop** > **Workspace Behavior**: set the number of desktops and their layout and set if you want different widgets for each desktop.
2. Right-click and "unlock widgets", if they are locked. (I always lock them, so I don't change things by mistake, while I am working.)
3. Right-click on the desktop background and choose "Default Desktop Settings". Here you can change not only the wallpaper, but also the layout of the desktop, as mentioned above.

Source : http://goinglinux.com/articles/CustomizeYourDesktop_en.htm