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What Is Ubuntu?



Ubuntu is an ancient African word meaning 'humanity to others'. It also means 'I am what I am because of who we all are'.

Proprietary Software vs Free/Libre Open-Source Software

Proprietary software is designed, developed and marketed by a company as their own system. It is sold for profit and functions on only one type of computer. Examples of proprietary operating systems include Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X. The source code of these systems is not freely available and if you tried to modify or distribute it would constitute a felony.

Ubuntu, on the other hand, is NOT proprietary software because it is actively maintained by the FLOSS community.

What Is FLOSS?

FLOSS is the acronym for Free/Libre Open-Source Software. FLOSS software is different from proprietary or commercial software because it is:

- FREE to use
- FREE to share, and
- FREE to develop

This means you can download and use Ubuntu without paying money. You can then make copies of the software and distribute it to as many people as you want. Finally, the source code of Ubuntu's operating system is freely available, so you can inspect the program and make changes to suit your own needs.

This freedom is made possible because Ubuntu uses the GNU General Public License (or simply GPL) which is the most widely used software license in the FLOSS community.

The GPL was written by computer programmer Richard Stallman in 1989, and explicitly states that users are free to run, copy, distribute, inspect, change, develop and improve the software provided they provide the same freedom to others.

The GPL is sometimes nicknamed “copyleft,” because of how it uses the copyright system to enforce sharing instead of discouraging it ☺

How Can Ubuntu Be Free?

Ubuntu is free because:

1. It's Maintained By The FLOSS Community.

Since Ubuntu is open source software, users are free to access and modify the source code, helping to improve the operating system for everyone.

Ubuntu is both a global community and collaborative software project. People around the world freely share their time and skills to:

- test software bugs
- write user documentation
- design artwork
- provide user feedback, or simply
- spread the good word of Ubuntu.

2. It's Managed & Funded By Canonical

Although Ubuntu is *maintained* by the FLOSS community, it is managed and funded by a privately held company called Canonical Ltd. Canonical was founded (and funded) in 2004 by South African entrepreneur, Mark Shuttleworth, the visionary behind Ubuntu. Canonical provides commercial support to companies using Ubuntu for a fee. The revenue from this support then goes towards the ongoing development of Ubuntu, developments such as:

- releasing new versions of Ubuntu every six months
- coordinating security, and
- hosting servers for Ubuntu's online community
- Canonical's main offices are in London, but it also has offices in Canada, the US, and Taiwan.

The Ubuntu Operating System

As you've hopefully learned by now, Ubuntu is many things, but it is most famous for being a computer operating system. In simplest terms, an operating system, or OS, is software that communicates with computer hardware. What sets Ubuntu apart from proprietary operating systems, and what makes it similar to other FLOSS operating systems, is that Ubuntu uses the Linux kernel.

What Is The Linux Kernel?

A kernel is the core component of any operating system and acts as the mediator between software and hardware. A kernel, on its own, is not an operating system, but rather a set of computer instructions that enable communication between software applications and the data processing done at the hardware level.

The Linux kernel is used in many FLOSS operating systems and, just like Ubuntu, is released under the GNU General Public License.

It is called 'Linux' because it is named after _____, the Finnish computer programmer who created it in 1991.



Contrary to common belief:

- Linux is not a corporation
- Nobody owns Linux
- Ubuntu is not Linux

How Then Are Ubuntu & Linux Related?

Ubuntu is a FLOSS operating system that uses the Linux kernel. Put simply, Linux is one part of Ubuntu, which is made of many different parts.

Why Use Ubuntu?

There are many reasons to use Ubuntu, but here are some of the most important ones:

- It's free and open source: shared code, shared efforts, shared principles, no cost.
- It's easy to use, trial and install: you don't have to be an expert.
- It's beautiful, sleek, and stylish
- It's stable and fast: usually loads in less than a minute on modern computers.
- It has no major viruses! Ubuntu is immune to computer-crashing Windows viruses. Say goodbye to Blue Screens of Death!
- It's up-to-date: Canonical releases new versions of Ubuntu every six months and also brings you regular updates for free.
- It is supported: you can get all the support and advice you need from the global FLOSS community and Canonical.

Releases

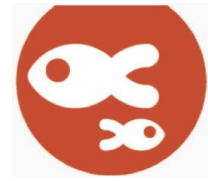
One of the great features of Ubuntu (and there are many) is that it is supported within a structured time frame. New versions of the operating system are released every six months and are normally supported by Canonical for 18 months thereafter. These versions are referred to as normal releases.

In addition to normal releases, Canonical also develops Long Term Support (LTS) releases which are versions of Ubuntu that are released approximately every two years (if on schedule) and are supported for three years thereafter. The upcoming version of Ubuntu, 12.04, will be a Long Term Support release.

Version	Code name	Release date	Supported until
4.10	Warty Warthog	October 2004	April 2006
5.04	Hoary Hedgehog	April 2005	October 2006
5.10	Breezy Badger	October 2005	April 2007
6.06 LTS	Dapper Drake	June 2006	July 2009
6.10	Edgy Eft	October 2006	April 2008
7.04	Feisty Fawn	April 2007	October 2008
7.10	Gutsy Gibbon	October 2007	April 2009
8.04 LTS	Hardy Heron	April 2008	May 2011
8.10	Intrepid Ibex	October 2008	April 2010
9.04	Jaunty Jackalope	April 2009	October 2010
9.10	Karmic Koala	October 2009	April 2011
10.04 LTS	Lucid Lynx	April 2010	April 2013
10.10	Maverick Meerkat	October 2010	April 2012
11.04	Natty Narwhal	April 2011	October 2012
11.10	Oneiric Ocelot	October 2011	April 2013
12.04 LTS	Precise Pangolin	April 2012	April 2017

Ubuntu Local Communities

Ubuntu Local Communities, or LoCos for short, are groups of users and enthusiasts working together in regional settings to advocate, promote, translate, develop and otherwise improve Ubuntu. If you're a new Ubuntu user, a LoCo will provide you with advice, technical support, and a community to join.



To find an Ubuntu Local Community near you, please visit the Loco Team Directory (<http://loco.ubuntu.com/teams/>)

Free Documentation

If you're stuck on a problem, it's very likely that other users have encountered it before and someone else has documented the solution. Access Ubuntu's official documentation here: <https://help.ubuntu.com/>

This site is developed and maintained by the Ubuntu Documentation Project. It is fully searchable and provides documentation for current and previous Ubuntu releases.

If you can't find what you're looking for, there is also a separate site for community documentation that was created by users just like you. Access Ubuntu's community documentation here: <https://help.ubuntu.com/community>

Launchpad Answers

What Is Launchpad ?



Launchpad is a web application and website developed and maintained by Canonical. It is a major knowledge base of Ubuntu, but it is also much more than a questions and answers site. It is within Launchpad that most of the collaborative work of Ubuntu and other free software projects happen. Launchpad has several dedicated areas including code hosting and review, bug tracking, web-based translation, and Launchpad Answers.

Welcome To Unity! – Ubuntu’s Default Desktop Environment.

What Is Unity?

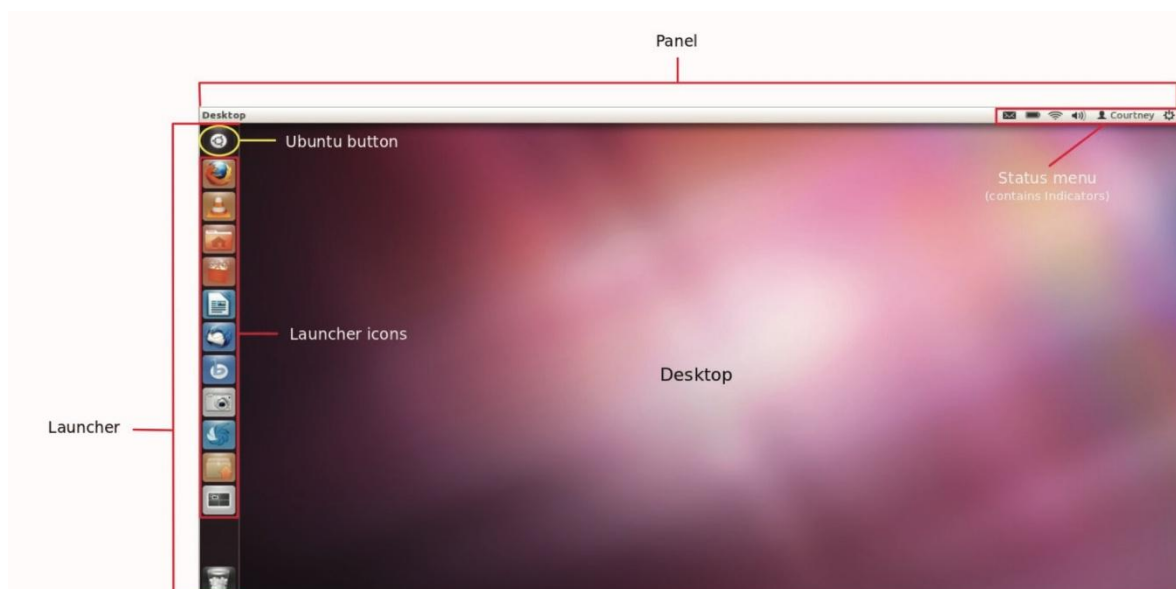
Unity and its range of technologies brings simplicity, power, and integration to both users and application developers. Unity puts design, integration, and Free Software at the heart of delivering a powerful and attractive experience. — www.unity.ubuntu.com

Unity is Ubuntu’s default desktop environment. In simplest terms, it is what you see when you log-in to Ubuntu. It is within Unity that you can drag, drop, and click on various icons and menus to interact with the Ubuntu operating system.

The Unity Interface

The Unity interface is made up of four main components:

- Desktop
- Launcher
- Panel
- Dash (accessed by the Ubuntu button)



Desktop

The desktop is your main work space and it is here that you can open, run and rearrange multiple programs and applications.

Launcher

The Launcher is a vertical docking station for your favourite folders and applications. It lives on the left-hand side of the Unity desktop environment and will automatically hide itself until you hover your mouse over it. Launcher icons indicate the specific applications that can be run and managed through the Launcher.

Panel

The panel is the horizontal bar located at the very top of the Unity desktop environment. The panel is important because it contains the status and application menus which allow you to control and change settings for your system and programs.

Dash

The Dash is an interface within Unity that allows you to search for and run any file, folder, or application. To open the Dash, simply click on the Ubuntu button at the top of your Launcher.

Navigating The Launcher

The Launcher, located on the left-hand side of the Unity desktop environment, allows you to:

- Open folders
- Run and manage your favourite applications
- Access the Dash

It's important to note that the Launcher will automatically hide itself if you are not actively working with it. To make the Launcher reappear, simply hover your mouse over the left-hand side of your screen.

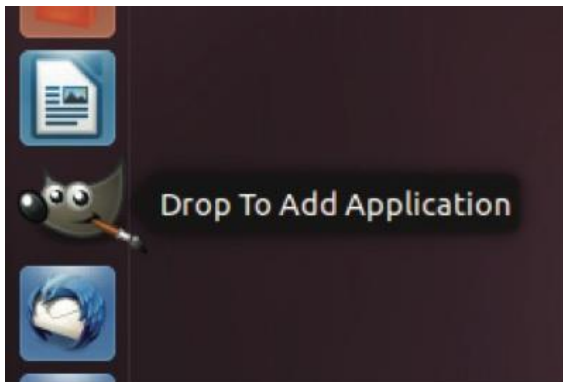
Opening Folders & Running Applications From Your Launcher

To open a folder or start an application from your Launcher, simply click on the Launcher icon. As the application begins to load, the icon will flash and become translucent before returning to its original colour.



Once an application has loaded, a small white arrow will appear on the left-hand side of the Launcher icon. In programs where you can have multiple sessions, like web browsers, the number of arrows on the left-hand side will indicate how many windows you have open. If an arrow appears on the right-hand side of a Launcher icon, this indicates your active application, or the one you are currently using.

Adding Applications To Your Launcher



To add an application to your Launcher:

1. Click on the Ubuntu button to open the Dash
2. Type in the name of your software application
3. Drag the software icon to your Launcher
4. Drop the icon where you want to place it

EXERCISE: Add a Terminal Window to your Launcher

Rearranging Applications On Your Launcher

If you want to change the order or position of an application in your Launcher, you can:

1. Click and drag the Launcher icon that you want to move, and then,
2. Release the mouse button to place the icon in its new location



Removing Applications From The Launcher

The Launcher comes with several default applications that you can rearrange or remove completely. Removing an icon from your Launcher, however, will not remove or uninstall the application from your computer. You can still access any program or application from the Dash.

To remove an application from your Launcher:

1. Right-click on the Launcher icon
2. Un-check Keep in Launcher to remove the application

Navigating The Panel

The Panel is the horizontal bar located at the very top of your screen and contains two main components: the application menu on the left-hand side and status menu on the right-hand side.



Application Menu

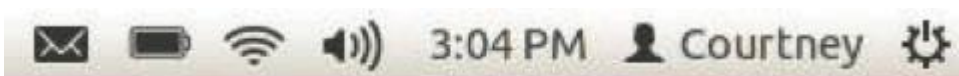
The application menu allows you to control the active application's functionality and modify its settings and preferences. The window title, or name of the active application or folder, is displayed in bold. To the right of the window title is the application menu (File, Edit, View, etc.).

It is important to note that the application menu will not appear unless you hover your mouse over the left-hand side of the panel.

This functionality of automatic hiding is called menu discoverability, and while some users may find it inconvenient, the decision to hide the menus was an aesthetic one so that the panel would have a clean and uncluttered look.

To close (X), minimize (-) or maximize (?) the application, click on the appropriate window button. If your application menu is not maximized, however, the window buttons will not appear in the panel but in the application window instead.

Status Menu & System Indicators



The Status menu, located in the right-hand side of your panel, contains system indicators which notify you of important changes to your system and allow you to control and change preferences for the following:

- email, chat, and social media messaging
- power settings (if using a laptop)
- network connection
- sound preferences
- date and time
- user accounts
- computer session

Navigating The Dash

The Dash is an interface within Unity that provides you with fast and easy access to your files and applications. You can search your computer using titles or keywords and filter your results based on specific categories. One of the most helpful features of the Dash is that it is able to recognize what you have opened most recently and most often making access to all of your favourite things that much faster.



Accessing The Dash

To open the Dash, simply click on the Ubuntu button at the top of your Launcher or click the Super Key (sometimes called the “Windows Key” for some reason.)

The Dash Interface

The Dash has a simple interface with a few components. It is basically a large screen where you type a query in your search bar and are provided with results below.



Lenses are essential elements of the Dash through which you can search for specific types of files and applications. You can think of a lens as a filter for your search results. There are currently four lenses which are accessible through icons located at the bottom of the Dash:

- Global Search Lens
- Applications Lens

- Files and Folders Lens
- Music Lens

You can also access the Application Lens (Media, Internet, and general applications) and Files and Folder Lens through shortcut icons in the Dash home

How Do I Download Software & Applications?

Are you not sure which software programs are compatible with Ubuntu? Do you want a central application that will manage all of your software needs? Then look no further than **Ubuntu Software Center (USC)**, an application that allows you to download, install, and remove software in a single window without ever having to launch an Internet browser.

Ubuntu Software Center is accessible through your Launcher as well as the Dash. Use USC to discover thousands of FREE applications, games, fonts, and other software that has been tested and validated to work seamlessly with Ubuntu

How Do I Watch Videos?

The best application for watching videos in Ubuntu is the free-of-charge VLC Player. It is NOT currently installed with the default operating system, so you must go to the Ubuntu Software Center to download and install it

How Do I Edit Images & Videos?

Use Gimp Image Editor to enhance, edit, and retouch photos, create drawings, and make your own images. (again, use the Ubuntu Software Center to download and install it)

How Do I Use Cloud Storage?

Use the free cloud storage application, Ubuntu One, to store and manage all your files safely in one place. With Ubuntu One, you can share and access your files from multiple devices and stream your music collection anytime, anywhere.



Sign up for a free 5 GB account here:

(https://login.ubuntu.com/6pBdRGC7XZVllDVK/+new_account) and then access the Ubuntu One application through your Launcher.