

Chapter 1: Ubuntu, your options, and is it right for you?

So, first off - what is Ubuntu?

The Ubuntu website says this:

“Fast, secure and stylishly simple, the Ubuntu operating system is used by 20 million people worldwide every day.”

Well, that's true, but it's also not true.

Ubuntu is more than just a Operating system, it's a way of thought. Ok, cue all the 1990's Linux Guys who are all like “OMG WHAT IS THIS GUY SMOKING?!” (no reference to the Ubuntu tabloid OMG! Ubuntu! - we'll get to them in the community chapter).

Ubuntu is..... Open Source.

Our global community is made up of thousands of people who want to help build the best open-source operating system in the world. They share their time and skills to make sure that Ubuntu keeps getting better and better. From IBM to Google, Firefox to Wikipedia – some of today's best software is based on an open-source model. Shared efforts. Shared principles. No cost.

That's what the Ubuntu website says - but is that really what Ubuntu is? Well, yes. And well, no.

Ubuntu is more than the sum of it's parts - Ubuntu has some very vibrant (and outspoken) upstreams - that is, the GNOME developers, the Firefox developers, and the Kernel Developers.

Ubuntu has a community. And that is what makes Ubuntu “awesome”. Yeah, it has some problem spots - it wouldn't be a community if it didn't. But they (traditionally) get resolved fairly quickly, and to the satisfaction of the parties involved.

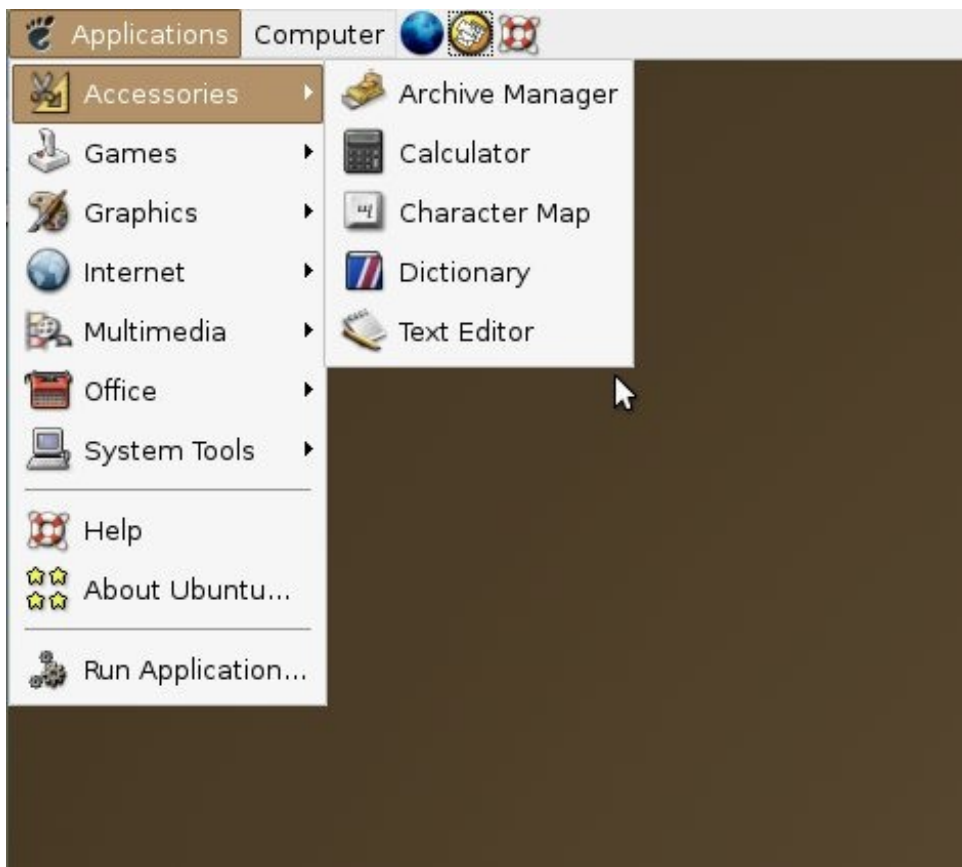
Ubuntu: A whirlwind tour through the history of the worlds most popular Linux distro.

Travel back with me to the year 2004. A guy by the name of “Mark Shuttleworth” had been doing something with a bunch of Debian Linux (more on that later) developers - they were known as “The super secret debian startup”. There was an IRC (internet relay chat) channel on Freenode - was known as #weirdos - the team hung out there.

The team comprised of folks such as Jeff Waugh, Robert Collins and Thom May - Scott James Remnant joined the team shortly thereafter. config

On the 20th of October, 2004, the world changed, just a little bit.

Ubuntu 4.10 was released to the world.



A little bit ugly, huh? Just a tad.

Over the years, Ubuntu got more and more powerful, and more and more popular. I chose those words for a reason - the "powerful" part is a big thing that people often forget.

Why is Ubuntu popular?

Well, there are a number of reasons for this - it's hard to explain, but it's easy to know.

Ubuntu has a lot going for it - it's based on Debian, which was one of the more popular rock-solid Linux distros, and still is popular to this day.

It works out of the box for most people. Have a rare, obscure graphics card? While you might have a little trouble with it in some edge cases, it will probably work without any issues.

It's powerful.

It uses good 'ole Debian (I keep going back to Debian), which has a large amount of packages, a awesome package system (dpkg, which we'll cover how to use later on), and you'll probably get packages for a Debian based Linux faster than a Red Hat Linux. (generally speaking) But Ubuntu doesn't realize that it can make (or break) a FOSS (FOSS = Free Open Source Software) project - when Ubuntu decides to ship something on the CD by default, it's a Big Thing TM - and rightly so.

Alright, enough of the history, and object lessons. Let's get a move on to the real stuff, ok?

Why would Ubuntu be right for you, and why might it not be right for you?

This is the question of the ages - and the answer doesn't always work for everyone, and it doesn't always work (or even make sense).

However, what follows is my opinion on this topic, and they might be yours.

Ubuntu is *not* for you if...

- You use Adobe products for a living - mainly, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Final Cut Pro, etc.
- You are a devout Windows user, and you pay homage to the Blue Screen of death.
- You work at Microsoft.
- You love gaming. Seriously, unless you only play Minecraft or Farmville, Ubuntu is not for you.

On the other hand, Ubuntu *is* for you if...

- You are a programmer in Ruby, Python, C++, C, or anything that will probably run on a Linux server.
- You only play Minecraft or Farmville.
- You're sick of paying homage to the Blue Screen of Death.
- You don't work at Microsoft.
- You are a server administrator.
- You want to give a new life to a older computer (or two, or three or... you get the point)

Decided if you're interested in running Ubuntu? Ok, if you're interested, next page please!

**Re-write in progress to use Wubi instead of the normal installer.
Incomplete.**

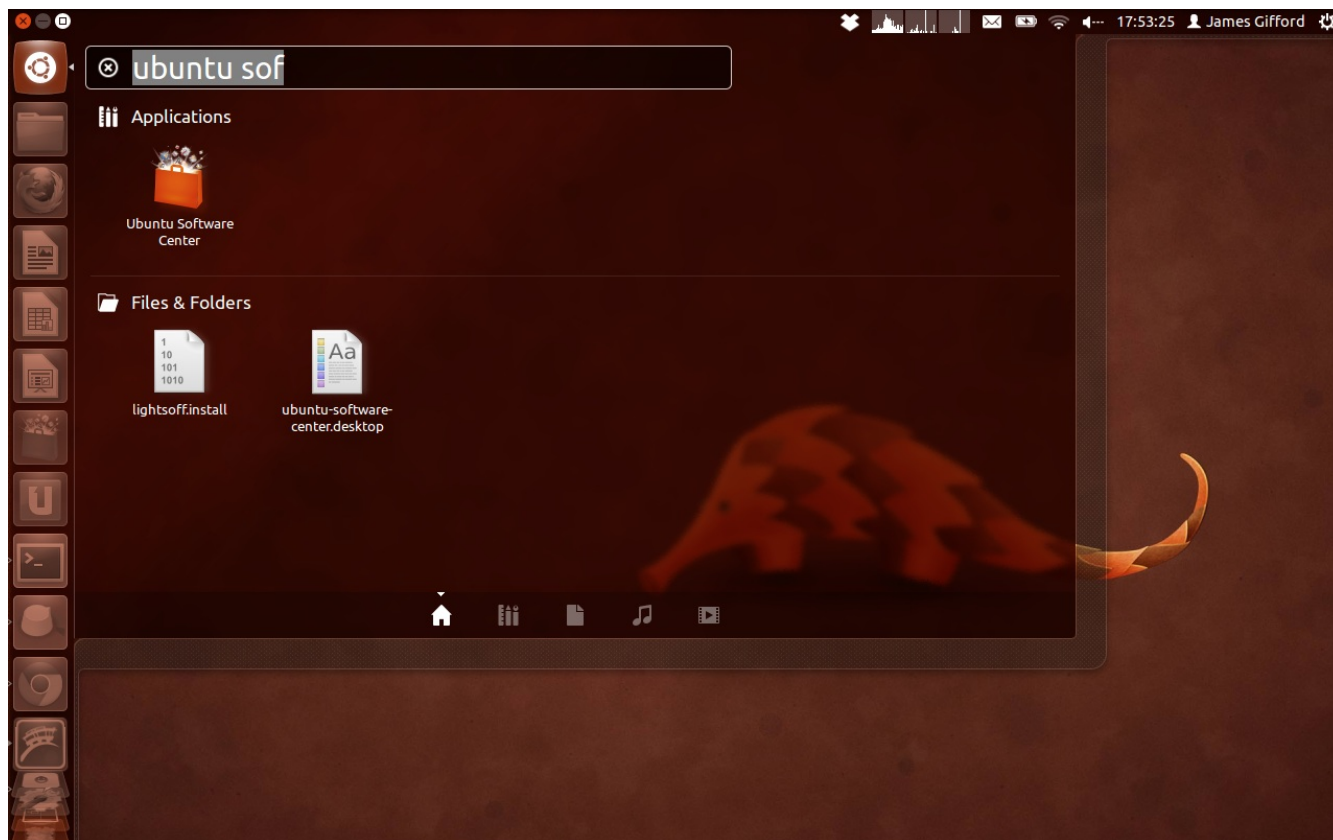
Chapter 3: Installing Software.

We'll be installing the Chromium web browser for this demo.

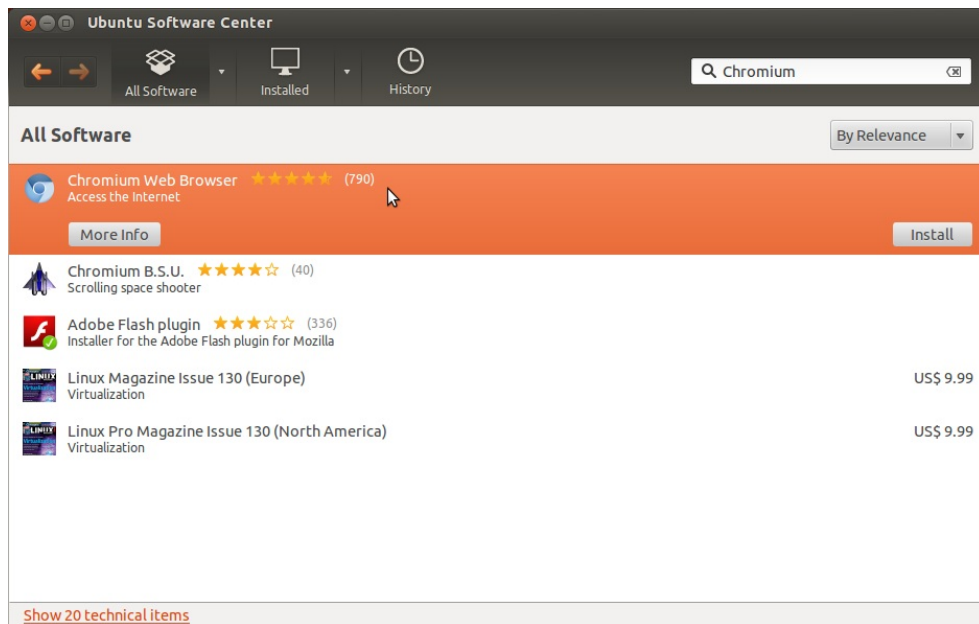
For a (possibly) updated version of this, take a look at the [original Ask Ubuntu Question](#).

Step one: Open the Ubuntu Software Center.

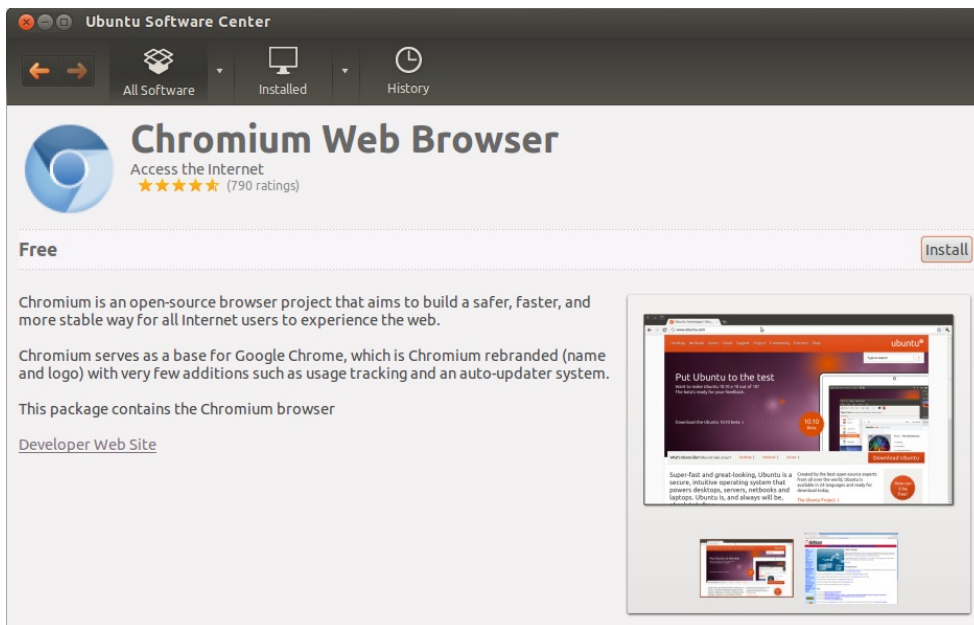
To do that, open the Dash and then search for the "Ubuntu Software Center", as shown below:



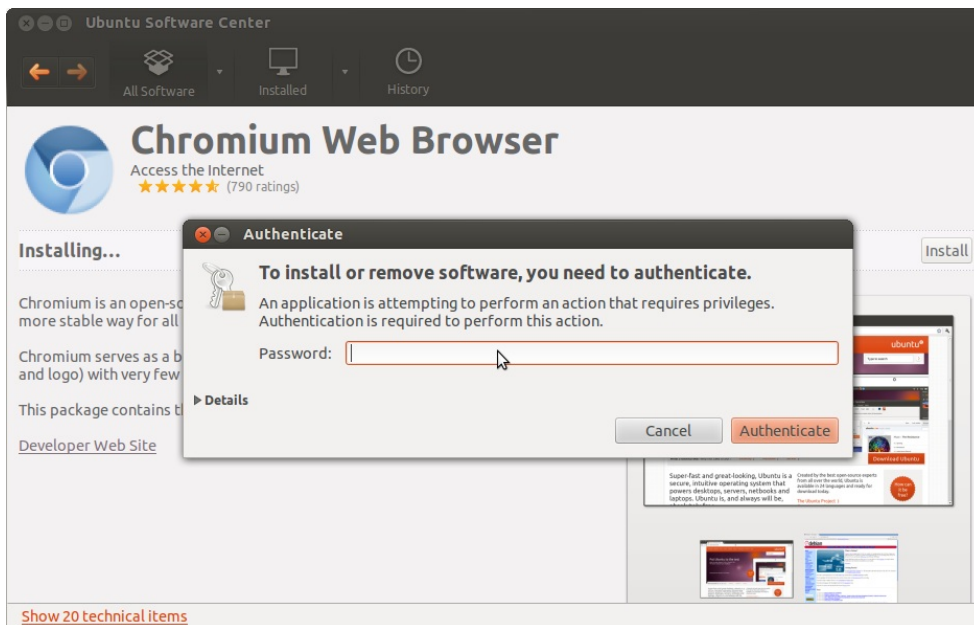
Now, search for "Chromium" in the search bar, like below:



Click the "More info" button, and then you should see this:



Now, you can click the "Install" button, and it will ask you for your password:



Enter in your password, and then wait for it to install. Once it is installed, it will show something like this:


Ubuntu Software Center

← →

All Software

Installed

History



Chromium Web Browser

Access the Internet
★★★★★ (790 ratings)

✓ Installed on 2012-04-11




Remove

Chromium is an open-source browser project that aims to build a safer, faster, and more stable way for all Internet users to experience the web.

Chromium serves as a base for Google Chrome, which is Chromium rebranded (name and logo) with very few additions such as usage tracking and an auto-updater system.

This package contains the Chromium browser

[Developer Web Site](#)

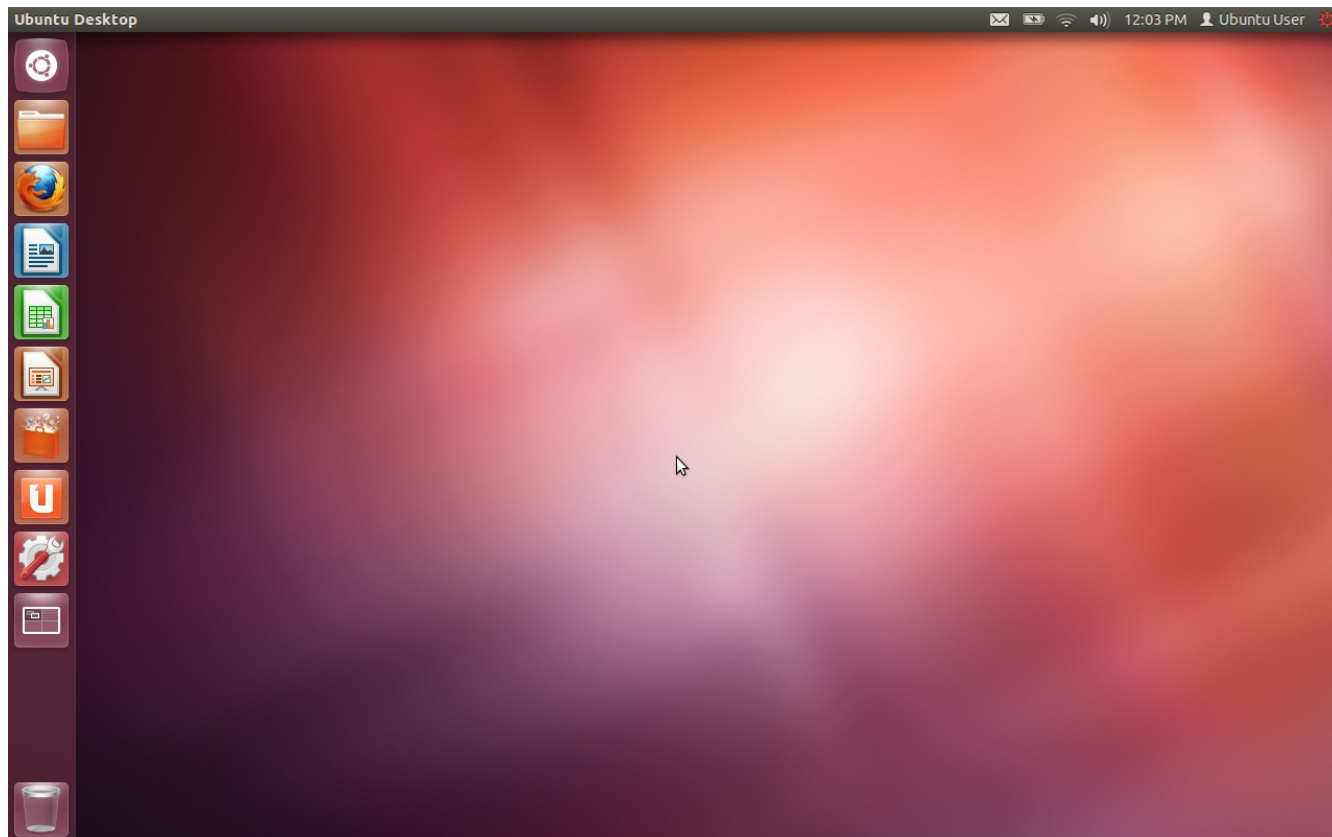


[Show 20 technical items](#)

After that, you should be good to go! You can change "Chromium" to almost anything, the instructions are the same for most software.

Chapter 4: Tweaking Ubuntu.

So, our desktop looks something like this:

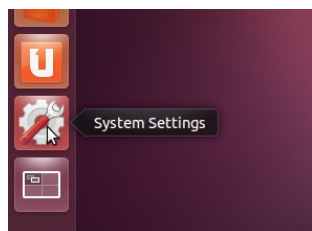


A little plain, huh?

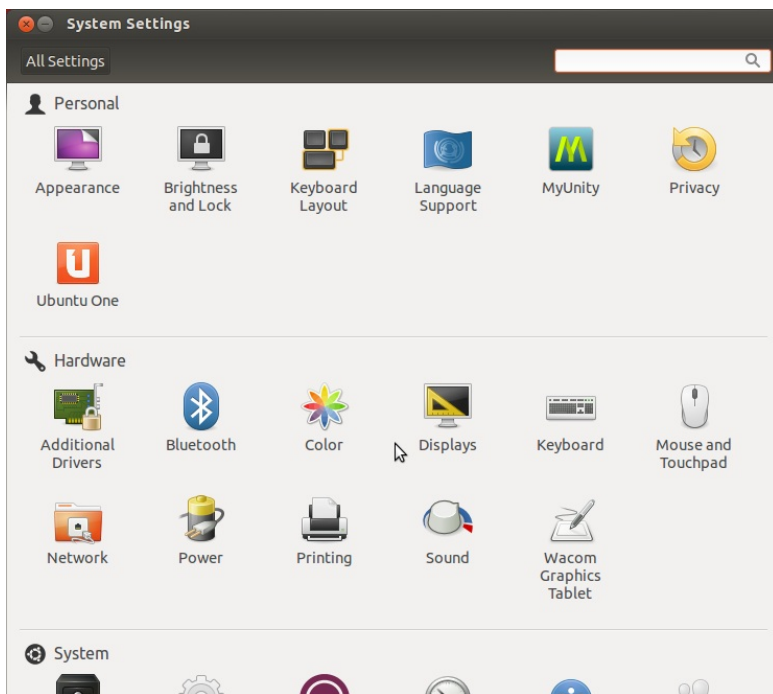
Let's spice things up with a cool wallpaper.

First, download a wallpaper you like - I'm just going to use one that I've had for a few months and lost track of where I found it.

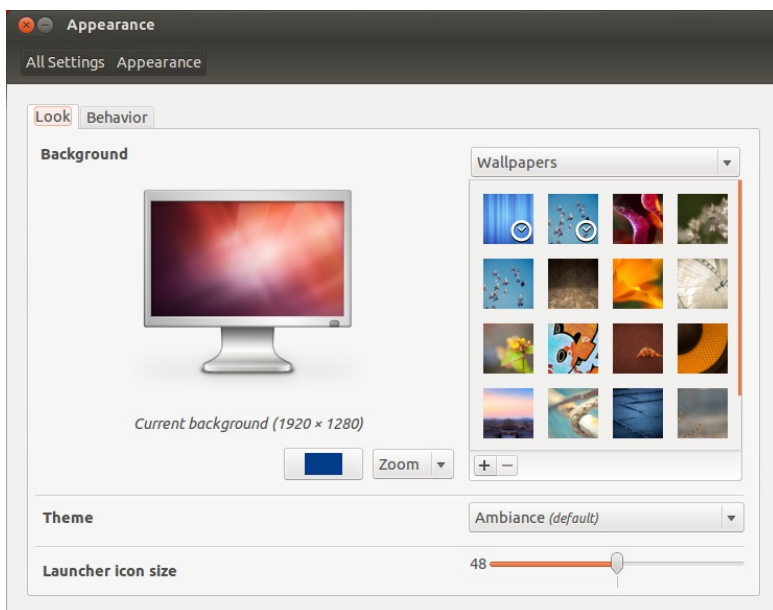
Open up System Settings.



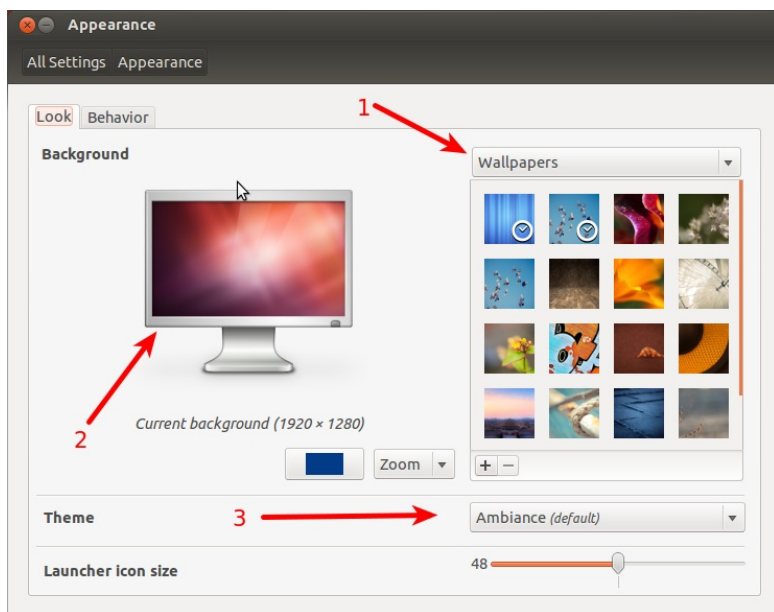
Now you should see this:



Click the appearance icon in the top left corner.

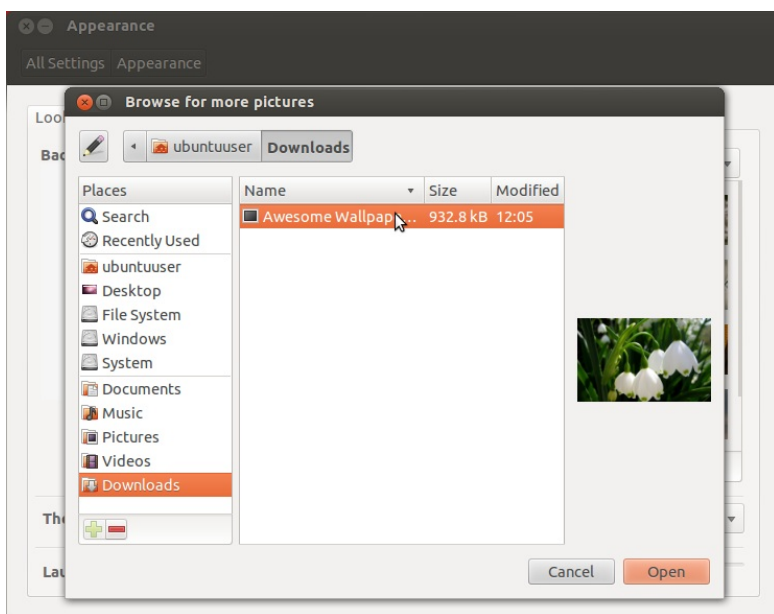


Now, lets take a look at what we have going on here.



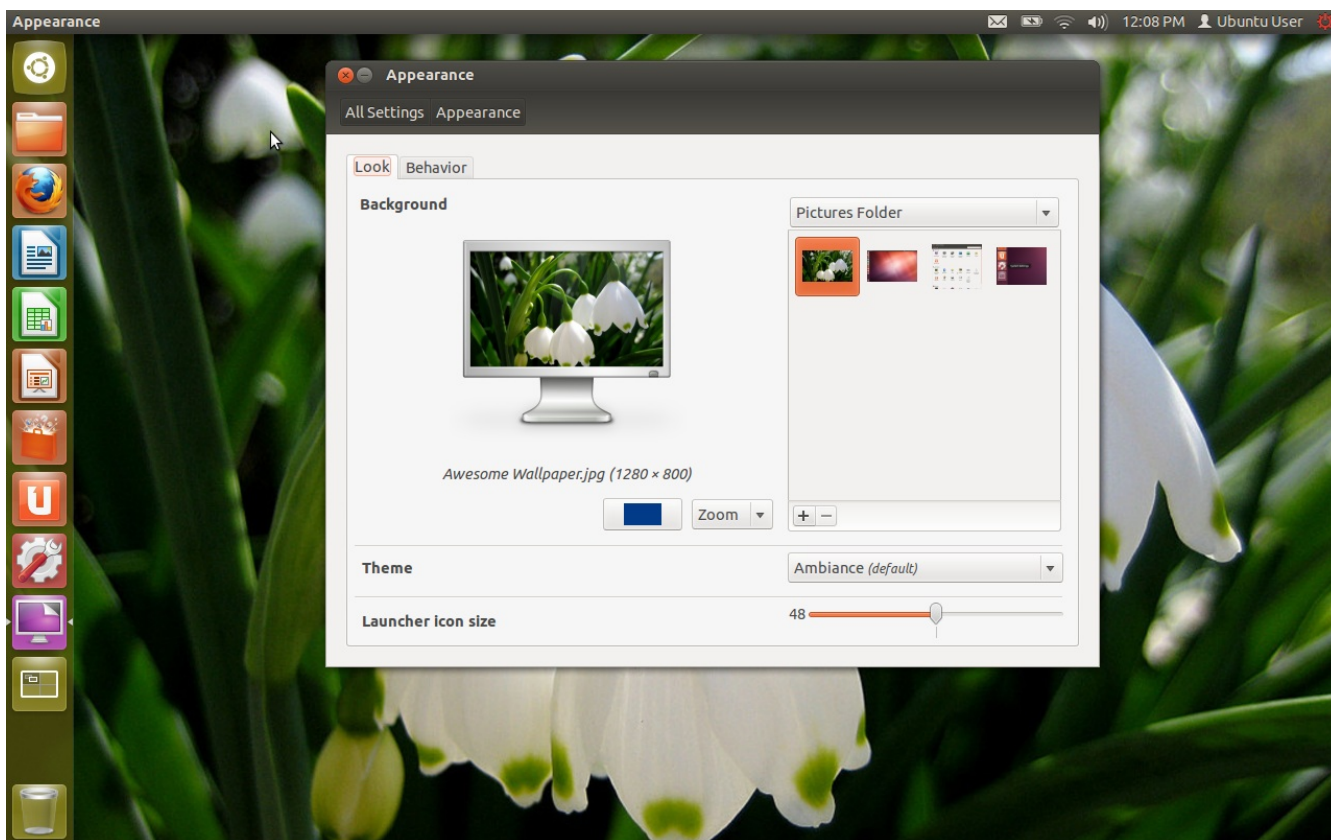
1. The default wallpaper list.
2. The current background - this is what your computer looks like
3. The options to select a theme.

Click the little "+" button to the bottom left of the wallpaper list.



Navigate to where your wallpaper is (mine is in the Download folder) and then click the "Open" button.

Now take a look!



Our shiny new wallpaper is set!

In a future chapter, we'll go through some more advanced options.

Half-completed, needs screenshots, and a walkthrough of Ubuntu One on 12.04.

Chapter 5: Ubuntu One and Cloudy Stuff.

So, you're in need of some file backup, right?

Time for..... (drum roll please?) UBUNTU ONE!

Ubuntu One comes with Ubuntu by default, and it is the only service that has everything included by default. So, what is Ubuntu One, and what can it do for me?

- File sync across platforms
- Give you 5 GB of Storage (free!)
- Share folders and files (Even with the public)
- Access on your mobile (with an app)
- Access music in the cloud from anywhere (paid service)
- Provides an API for integration with other applications

...and with the wonderful Application integration provided with Ubuntu One, you also get:

- The ability to sync any (and all) files in your home folder
- Firefox bookmark sync
- Have your Deja Dup backups go straight to "The Cloud"
- Have your Tomboy Notes sync with Ubuntu One

Do note that this is in need of screenshots. Will add soon.

Chapter 6: Getting Under The Hood of Ubuntu.

You have two options for tweaking your system past what is available in the default settings - Ubuntu Tweak, and Gnome Tweak Tool. Both are good, but I'll only be covering the Ubuntu Tweak side of things, just for simplicity, since Gnome Tweak Tool also brings in some extra software that is beyond the scope of this book, while Ubuntu Tweak is simple, and does it well.

Open up a terminal (Super/Windows key, then type in "Terminal") and run the following:

```
sudo add-apt-repository ppa:tualatrix/next
```

You'll see something like this:

```
sudo apt-get update
```

```
sudo apt-get install ubuntu-tweak -y
```

Once you've done that, you'll be able to launch Ubuntu Tweak by opening the dash (The Super/Windows key) and then typing in "Ubuntu Tweak".

Then, you'll be presented with this:

You'll notice that it tells you some basic information about your hardware, and it tells you some information about your actual computer - primarily your hostname (the computers name), your Ubuntu Version (in this case, Ubuntu 11.10 Oneiric) and your desktop environment - in the screenshot, I was running Unity 2D.

Click the "Tweaks" tab. You'll see something like this:

Lets go tweak the menubar a bit.

By default, it looks something like this:

We want to remove the "James Gifford" (of course substituting your name instead of mine) from the menubar - it gets somewhat annoying, particularly on a netbooks display.

Click the "Session Control" option in the "Tweaks" section.

You'll see this:

Uncheck the "Show user's real name on the panel" option that has the big red arrow next to it.

Logout, and then log back in.

To logout, click the little power cog in the top right hand corner, and select the logout option:

Now, your name will be gone from the menubar.

Now, lets tweak Unity itself.

If you're logged in using Ubuntu, or Unity 3D (they are the same thing, just the two different names they go under), you're going to have some options for the Unity launcher.

So, you can change the Icon size, the launcher opacity, the launcher hide mode and the launcher "reveal edge timeout".

Feel free to play around with this - if you press the little button on the far right, it will reset that option.

Oh hello.

Travel back with me to the year 2010. A young, brash teenager gets a netbook, and doesn't want to use Windows 7 Starter edition on it (there might have been a Dad saying "I won't help you when you have issues" somewhere in there).

So he downloads Ubuntu 10.04 LTS netbook remix, and is immediately lost in the sea of all the forums, noise and "Getting started with Ubuntu!" blog posts.

This is an attempt to prevent that from happening to another person.

Yeah, there are projects like the Ubuntu Manual - but the goal of this isn't to make "**The** Ubuntu Manual", but rather to create a short and sweet booklet about getting started with Ubuntu.

Another goal is to keep it up-to-date, and have the next release of Ubuntu covered before release day, something that most projects struggle with.

Contributing.

So, do you want to contribute? Here's how it works:

- File a bug report with a cool chapter idea. Keep in mind the following:
 - This is for beginners. We're not talking about "How to compile a Kernel 101" here, we're talking "How can I use my Ubuntu desktop".
 - Keep it short if you can.
- Once I've given you the go-ahead for the chapter on the bug report, then go ahead and write it.
- Once it's written, feel free to submit a pull request in git. Make sure of the following:
 - That the chapter is written in proper markdown.
 - That the chapter is added to the TableOfContents.md file.
 - That it is called `Chapter#{NUMBER}.md`.
 - That if required, it has screenshots.
 - Please use proper punctuation.

Translations.

Right now, translations are a no-no. In the future, perhaps we'll look into translations, but right now it's a no.

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