Linux Mint

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Desktop Introduction

What are icons and apps, using finder and search functions

Once you've logged in, you'll see what's known as the desktop. There are a number of small images called icons on the desktop . These show information about your computer's apps or applications. An app is a type of software that lets you carry out specific tasks.

The grey or black bar at the bottom of the screen is called the taskbar and you will see apps that you are likely to use regularly here.

At the far right of the taskbar you can see the time and date and by left clicking on this area a calendar will pop up. You will also see a volume control and information about the internet connection and the battery of your laptop.

If you left click on the icon File Manager will open. Clicking is usually done with the left button on the mouse.

File Manager

The list in the centre gives you access to your documents and pictures, as well as your storage devices. Click on the folder to open it.

Menu button

On the left hand side of the task bar you will see the Menu button: a white, or green and white circle with the initials "lm" in it. Click the Menu button , and then hold the cursor over "All" (under Applications in the middle column). In the right hand column you can see a list of all apps listed in alphabetical order. To open an app, quickly click twice on it with the mouse - this is called "double-clicking".

To search for an app, click on the Menu button and type what you're looking for in the white box with a magnifying glass next to it at the bottom of the screen. To search for a document, for example, a letter you have created within LibreOffice Writer, type doc here and then click on the Search Tool that is listed on the right hand side of the pop up.

You can also create shortcuts to your favourite apps on your computer. These will appear on the desktop as icons. You can create a shortcut by finding the app in the list you see when you click the start button - click and hold down the mouse button and then drag the icon onto your desktop.

The task bar will show any apps that you've opened. Every time you start a new app, an icon will appear in the task bar. When you click one of these icons, it will take you back to that app.

It is a good idea to close each app when you are finished using it. This is done by clicking on the small in the top right corner of the app screen.

If you are using an app where you might have created a document, such as Writer, a pop up will appear asking if you would like to save your work. Make sure to click yes! If it's a new document a box will appear where you can give your document a name, such as Rosie's CV.

Connecting to the Internet

Turning wifi on and off, connecting to different networks and using hotspot, using different browsers

Being online means being connected to the internet. If you are working on your computer without being connected to the internet, it is called being offline.

You can access the internet by wifi from your broadband router at home, with your smartphone, by using a dongle or mobile hotspot, or by using free internet access in public spaces such as libraries. Your broadband router might also be known as an internet box or hub, and will have been sent or given to you when you set up your internet.

To connect, click on the network and internet icon in the bottom right corner of the task bar. It will look either like a small dot with waves coming from it with a small cross ✖ (when you are not connected to the internet), or a small dot with waves coming from it 📶 (when you are connected to the internet).

Click on this icon to see a list of wifi network connections and look for the one that is yours (you will see others in the list that are nearby). A wifi network is a name that identifies the correct network when you try to connect. The one for your home internet will be printed on your home's broadband router.

Click on your Wifi connection, enter your password into the dialogue box, and click "Connect". If you click "Show password" then you can see exactly what you are typing to make sure the password is correct. You are now connected to the internet!

The "waves" or bars on the icon show the signal strength of your wifi connection. The more bars you have, the stronger the signal.

Hot spotting

If you have a smartphone that connects to the internet, you can use this to connect your computer as well. This is called tethering or hotspotting - it's like a mini wifi hub you can carry around with you!

In settings in your Apple smartphone, you should have a "mobile hotspot". In settings in your Android smartphone, you should have a "Network & Internet" section where you will find "Hotspot & tethering". Click this to turn it on. There may also be shortcuts to the hotspot on your smartphone.

Go back to your wifi network connections icon 📶 and click to find your mobile hotspot. You may need to look under "More networks" to find it. Your computer may ask you for a password, which you will find on your smartphone, enter your password into the dialogue box, and click "Connect".

When you have finished using your mobile hotspot, be sure to turn this off again on your smartphone as it can use up a lot of your phone's internet data.

Internet browsers

Once you are connected to the internet or "online", you can use a "browser" to access the internet. There are a number of internet browsers you might find on your computer, such as Google Chrome, FireFox, Safari, and Microsoft Edge.

When you open an internet browser you will see a search bar towards the top of the screen. This is where you can search for what you want on the internet. This could be a website that you already know, the name of something you want to look up or a question you might have. Whatever you want.

For example, if you want to find the "Community TechAid" website, you can type in either our full website or just "Community Techaid" and then press the Enter button on your keyboard. The search bar will sometimes make suggestions based on websites you have already visited or things that you might like. If you are using Google search you might be asked to agree to Google's search terms at the bottom of the pop up box.

If you want to search for multiple things on the internet then you can use tabs. This will keep websites open whilst visiting other websites.


At the very top of your internet page, you will see a plus button. If you click on this a new tab will open up where you can search for another website. If you want to close the tab, click the X button.

In the top left corner, next to the search bar, you will see an arrow pointing to the left, an arrow pointing to the right and a circular arrow . The arrow pointing left will take you back to the last web page that you visited in this session. The arrow pointing right will take you forward to a page that you have visited. The circular arrow will refresh the page to show you the latest version of the webpage that you are on.

Connecting Bluetooth and USB devices

You can connect items to your computer such as a keyboard, a mouse, a microphone, and speakers via a USB port. This can be found at the side of your laptop or at the back of your computer .
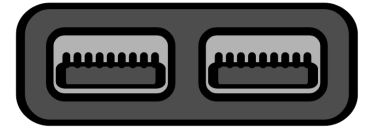
Bluetooth

Other devices such as headphones or wireless keyboards or mice can be connected using bluetooth. If your computer is able to use bluetooth you will see a Bluetooth icon near the bottom right of the screen.

Click on this to choose the device you want to connect from the list of Bluetooth devices nearby. If it is not in the list then make sure your Bluetooth device is turned on. You might have to click a Bluetooth button on the device you are trying to connect.

Once you have found your device in the list, click on it and then click connect. Your device is now ready to go!

Your computer will remember the devices you have connected to it previously.

Headphone jack

A headphone jack, also called audio jack, phone jack or jack plug, is a pin-shaped plug sometimes found on headphones or speakers. You can plug this into a socket (a circular hole) which can be found on the side of your laptop or at the back of your computer. The socket for your headphones will have a picture of headphones next to it . If you plug headphones in, you can listen to music, watch YouTube or video call people through headphones or speakers.

User Profiles

Creating new ones for family members, changing passwords and the importance of keeping them hidden

You may wish to create your own profile on your computer. This will be your own personal login with a secure password of your own. It is important to do this if you are planning on sharing your computer.

To do this click on Menu button in the bottom left corner of the screen, type "users and groups" in the search box and "Users and Groups" will pop up in the right hand column. Click on it.

This will open a new window called **Users Settings**. To create a new user, click the "Add" button. You'll be asked for your password - it's the same one you use to login normally. Click on the "Authenticate" button.

Once you've entered your password correctly, you'll see the Create New User window where you can type in the new user's Name. You will also need to complete the Username field - following the given requirements and click OK. Once you've done this you'll see the Change User Password window. You will then need to set a password. Make sure it's something you can remember! Then click on OK. You have now created a new user!

You will be taken back to the Users Settings screen you saw earlier, but your new user account should now be listed. You have now created a new user!

If the new user is an adult and one of the main users of your computer, we recommend setting the **Account Type** to **Administrator**. This means you will be able to download apps and change settings for other users. To do this, find the User name that you want to change and click "Account type". You can then choose between "Administrator" and "Desktop user". Then click OK.

If children or vulnerable adults are using the computer we recommend you set their account to **Desktop user**. For more information about using the computer safely read our **Staying Safe Online** document on the desktop.

To remove a user, click on the user profile that you want to remove and click on the button "Delete". A pop-up will ask you to confirm that you want to "Remove home folder for the new user?" ie the account and files. Once you are sure you no longer need the account and any of the folders - click "Delete Files".

Volume, Zoom and Brightness Controls

volume

In the bottom right hand corner of your screen there is a volume

icon that looks like a speaker ◁)) . When you click this icon, a box
will appear just above it. This is where you control the volume of
your computer. Moving the slider upwards will increase the
volume, and moving it downwards will lower the volume.

Moving the slider all the way down will mute your computer and
you will hear nothing from the computer. You will know if your
computer is muted as there will be an X symbol next to the

speaker icon ◁× .

Brightness and zoom

Your computer screen can be adjusted to suit your needs, such as making the screen brighter
or making the text larger.

You can use your keyboard to adjust the brightness. Somewhere on the top row you will

see two brightness keys. One looks like a big/bright sun ☼ and pressing this will turn your
brightness up. Next to this is a button with a slightly smaller sun and pressing this will turn
the brightness down. When you press these buttons, a sun symbol will appear on your
screen showing how high or low the brightness is.

To increase the size of the text on your computer click the menu button ⊕ then click
"Preferences" in the middle column. From here click "Appearance" in the column on the right
hand side. This will open the "Appearance Preferences" window. Click on the tab on the top row
that says "Fonts". There are options to change the font in different areas of your laptop. Click on
the one you would like to change, for example "Desktop font". You can increase the font size
and also change the font type here and then Close the window.

Experiment to see what settings work best for you!

Turning off your Device

When you have finished using an app or have finished using your computer, it is important to close them down properly.

Before you close an app, make sure you save anything you have been working on. If you forget to save your work, the computer will remind you to do so.

To shut your computer off, when all the apps are closed, click on the Menu button ⬚ at the left end of the Taskbar. You will see a list of options:

- Lock Screen 🔒 this will lock your computer and keep your apps open. Click on the enter button to get back to the login screen.
- Logout ↻ this will take you to a screen "Log out of this system now?" You can log out or switch user and any open apps will be closed. If you switch user - another user can then log in if there are other profiles on your computer.
- Quit ⏻ this will take you to a screen "Shut down this system now?" Click **Shut Down** from the list of options and your computer will turn off. Some computers will take a few minutes to do so. When all lights are out and you can no longer detect any faint vibration in the machine, you know your computer has been shut down properly.

From time to time you will be prompted to update the software on your computer. We recommend that you do this to ensure that you are on the most current version.