



MX-flux FAQs

The fluxbox implementation on MX Linux

Available FAQ translations can be found in `/doc/tr/`

What is Fluxbox?

Fluxbox is a [Window Manager](#) (unlike Xfce, which is a Display Environment) that controls the placement and appearance of windows. For history and overview, consult the [Wikipedia](#).

How do I start?

Right-click anywhere on the desktop to get a menu.

- The menu is set by `~/.fluxbox/menu-mx`. Alternative menus in `~/.fluxbox/menus_other/`
- For further menus, do a web search on "fluxbox menu example"



What is that dock across the top?

That is called the toolbar, and it's not really a dock (see Docks, below). Its width and placement can be set with the options available by right-clicking an empty space (or the workspace arrow icon) on the toolbar—if that doesn't work for some reason, click the middle or scroll button if you have one or work in the init file. Height is set in `~/.fluxbox/init/` :

```
session.screen0.toolbar.height: 0
```

If a zero is there, it means that the selected style will set the height. Otherwise, a value of 20 to 25 is often comfortable.

The toolbar contains the following default components (L-R):

clock

- To adjust the clock to 12h or 24h, right-click and click 12h or 24h, whichever shows. If that doesn't work, select "Edit clock format."
- 24h: `%H:%M`, 12h: `%I:%M`.
- The default is 12h time and date in day/short month format: `%I:%M %b %d`. Many other time/date options are available: <https://mxlinux.org/wiki/other/time-formats-in-scripts/>

pager

- Allows you to switch workspace; same as `Control + F1/F2/` etc., or using the scroll wheel over an empty section of the desktop. Number and name are set in the `~/.fluxbox/init`. "W" stands for "Workspace."

iconbar

- Here open apps will show an icon, with various window options available by right-clicking the relevant icon (including the toolbar itself) > iconbar mode. Default for MX-Fluxbox is All Windows.



Window options available with a right click

systemtray AKA systray

- Equivalent of Notification Area in Xfce. Default components set in `~/.fluxbox/init`; apps that have a systemtray option will show there when launched.

You can move or delete any of the toolbar components in `~/.fluxbox/init/`, which by default are set up in this way:

`clock, prevworkspace, workspacename, nextworkspace, iconbar, systemtray`

How can I make it look like other legacy systems such as Windows?

Click Menu > Toolbar > Legacy

How can I get rid of desktop items I don't want?

Menu > Out of sight

The FAQ icon can be restored by clicking Menu > Settings > Configure > Startup and removing the comment sign (= the "#") at the beginning of the line `idesk &`. For the conky or monitors, click Menu > System > Conky or Monitors and select the one you want.

How can I change or add a menu entry?

Menu > Settings > Configure > Menu. The syntax is: `[category] (name) {command}` – be sure to use brackets, parentheses and braces correctly.

Example 1: change “Browser” to open Opera instead of Firefox

- Find the line with the word Browser (use Ctrl+F if necessary)

```
[exec] (Browser) {firefox}
```

- Double-click the word “firefox” in the command part so it is highlighted, then type “opera” and save, producing this result:

```
[exec] (Browser) {opera}
```

Example 2: add Skype to the menu

- Decide where you want it to show up; for this example, let’s assume you want to put it under “Communicate” and that you want to label it as “video”
- Introduce a new line and follow the pattern: [exec] (menu entry) {command}
- The result will look something like this:

```
[submenu] (Communicate)
    [exec] (Email) {thunderbird}
    [exec] (Chat) {hexchat}
    [exec] (Video) {skypeforlinux}

[end]
```

NOTE: as the second example shows, the command to use may not always be obvious, so if necessary open All apps (F6), right-click the entry you are interested in > Edit and copy the correct full command for the menu.

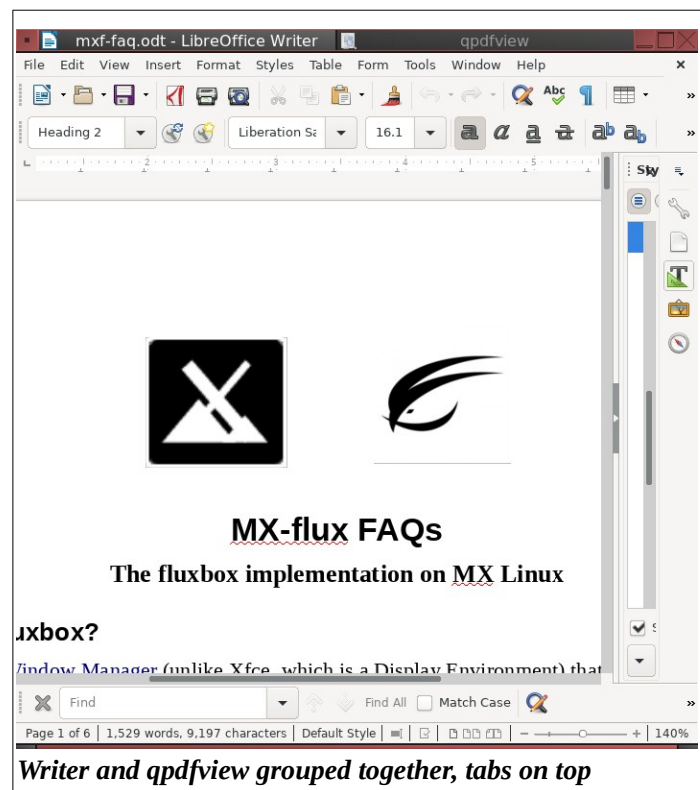
What else should I know about the windows?

Properties

- Resize: Alt + right click near the corner you want to change and drag.
- Move: Alt + left click and drag.

You can combine multiple windows into one window with tabs across the top by simply Ctrl-Clicking and holding the titlebar of one window and dragging and dropping it on another window. Reverse the procedure to separate them again.

More: <http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/chap-tabs.html>



I see styles in the menu, what are those?

Styles are simple text files that tell fluxbox how to generate the appearance of different components of the window manager. Fluxbox ships with a large number in `/usr/share/fluxbox/styles/` that show in Menu > Look > Style, and many more can be found online with a web search on "fluxbox styles."

Styles can include a background image, but that is blocked in MX-flux by default with the top lines in Menu > Settings > Configure > Overlay. To allow the style to determine the background, place a hash mark in front to the line so that it looks like this:

```
! The following line will prevent styles from setting the background.  
#background: none
```

If you like a style but want to change certain traits, copy it to Menu > Settings > Configure > Styles, rename it, and make your changes (consult Ubuntu style guide under Links, below). One of the default styles for MX-flux in that folder, for instance, is a modified form of "Twice" copied and renamed "MX-Twice," then modified to center the window titles.

I can't read some of the texts, can I do something about that?

You can adjust the font being used within the `~/.fluxbox/overlay` file. For instance, this set of commands will make the text generally larger:

```
# fonts-----  
menu.frame.font: PT Sans-12:regular  
menu.title.font: PT Sans-12:regular  
toolbar.clock.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.workspace.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.iconbar.focused.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.iconbar.unfocused.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
window.font: Lato-9
```

For other font options, consult the Links at the end of this document.

Can I change the background?

First make sure the overlay file is blocking the style from determining the background. Then click Menu > Look > Backgrounds to see the available choices. The list that pops up from the menu entry includes any user backgrounds (`~/.fluxbox/backgrounds`) and system backgrounds (`/usr/share/backgrounds`), separated by a horizontal line. This setup allows you to put your preferred backgrounds in the user folder and be able to select among the group with a simple click.

Conky

MX-flux users can make use of the default conky set for MX Linux by clicking Menu > Look > Conky to bring up a selection box for MX-Conky. **NOTE:** using MX-Conky while in fluxbox instead of Conky Manager prevents the fluxbox settings from overriding the Xfce ones—and vice versa.

For more complicated conkies, you may need to make use of a compositor. Click Menu > Settings > Config > Startup, and uncomment the line about a compositor so it looks like this: *compton &*

Users on MX-19 will likely need to change a setting to gain transparency, and that setting may unfortunately not be the same for all conkies. One that often works is this: after opening the conky in MX-Conky, click on the Edit button and search the text that pops up for the line:

```
own_window_transparent no
```

and replace it with:

```
own_window_transparent yes
```

Another that works sometimes is to change (if present) *own_window yes* instead of *own_window yes*.

Save any changed text with the ending “_fb” so that you will not override that conky for Xfce users.

To autostart a specific conky, open Menu > Settings > Configure > Startup, look for the line that starts with **conky -p 5** (it may be commented out), change the conky location to the one you want and uncomment if necessary.

What terminals are available?

- F4 (or Menu > Terminal) = Drop-down Xfce4-terminal
- F2 (or: Menu > Run...) = little command terminal (fbrun)
- F2, and enter *xfce4-terminal* to get a movable Xfce terminal.

Can I use my own keystroke combinations?

Yes. Many are listed by default in Menu > Settings > Configure > Keys, though not clear that [all of them work. The names of a couple of the keys are a bit obscure:

- Mod1 = Alt
- Mod4 = Logo key (Windows, Apple)

More: <http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/c296.html>

There are 6 dedicated function keys in MX-flux (see top of *keys* file to change):

- F1: fluxbox FAQs
- F2: Run command
- F3: File manager
- F4: Drop-down terminal
- F5: MX Tools
- F6: All apps

Are there options available for apps that I launch?

When an app is open, you can right-click the title bar and set any of the options available. For instance, you can select to remember workspace, size, location, etc. Your choices are recorded in *~/fluxbox/apps* and allow you to control many window specifics.

What screen options exist?

- Brightness: right-click the battery icon in the systray
- Capture: if you have a Print Screen (AKA Print, PrtSc, etc.) key, try using that; if that doesn't work or exist, click Menu > Accessories > Capture
- Screensaver: Menu > Accessories > Screensaver

I have read about the slit: what is that?

The slit is a container for dockapps that can be located at various locations on the desktop:

- TopLeft, TopCenter, TopRight
- LeftCenter, RightCenter
- BottomLeft, BottomCenter, BottomRight

Dockapps are small applications coming originally from Window Maker that can fit into those areas. You can search the default repo for dockapps with this terminal command:

```
apt-cache search dockapp
```

Many available in the repos may not work well, but it's worth taking a look.

One very interesting and useful dockapp not found with that apt-cache search is the monitor stack **gkrellm**, installed by default in MX-flux. It is available by clicking Menu > System > Monitors and has many configuration options (right-click on the top label or on one of the charts), [many skins](#) and [many plugins](#).



Gkrellm monitors

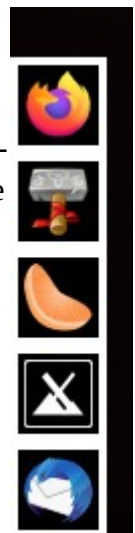
A handy plugin can be installed from the repos **gkrellweather**, which works well when the version in the MX repos is installed (the Debian one is broken at the moment).

A new and powerful command-line app for creating desktop launchers in the slit called **wmalauncher** is available. For details consult the Help file: Menu > Look > Slit lanuchers > Doc.

Are docks possible?

External docks such as plank often do not work easily with fluxbox. But three ready-made docks created with wmalauncher are available by default: Menu > Look > Docks. Those ready-made docks come in small (3 launchers), medium (5) and large (7)--you can just right-click the ones you don't want to remove them. Furthermore, you can easily make your own using the Dock Template: Menu > Look > Slit launchers > Create. This template exploits the ability to use simple application names (pointing to the desktop files in /usr/share/applications).

There are other ways to use wmalauncher to make a dock and many possible options—consult the wmalauncher Help file: Look > Slit launchers > Doc.



Dock5

Can I make use of bluetooth devices?(7

Yes. It is disabled by default, but to set it up click menu > Settings > Bluetooth. An icon will appear in the systray that you can right click to see a menu with many options, including Exit.

Do you have useful links to recommend?

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/pdf/fluxbook.pdf>

Basic handbook, somewhat dated but still useful

<https://bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=77729>

Some good general explanations with examples

<https://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Fluxbox>

Some commands are Arch-specific

<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/HowToFluxboxStyles>

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxBox>

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxboxIcon>

v. 20200128