'xdg-open' does not open the default browser

Asked 6 years, 1 month ago   Modified 3 months ago   Viewed 45k times

27

I have the following scenario:

Ubuntu 16.04 (Xenial Xerus) machine with Firefox and Google Chrome installed, Chrome being my default browser.

I check these actions in the shell:

```
cat /usr/share/applications/defaults.list
cat /etc/mailcap
cat /.config/mimeapps.list
cat /.local/share/applications/mimeinfo.cache

x-www-browser-> chrome is launch
xdg-mime query default text/html
response:
google-chrome.desktop
```

And it does not appear Firefox by any side, always Chrome. This is fine. Also check:

Click on a desktop file *file.html* → Chrome is launched.

And now comes the strange behaviour. Say I run:

```
xdg-open "http://www.example.com"
```

For some strange reason, it always opens Firefox. What should I do?

default-browser

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edited Oct 9, 2022 at 20:15

Peter Mortensen
30.9k 21 104 125

asked Dec 15, 2016 at 20:19

mike
385 1 3 6

What is meant by *"it does not appear Firefox by any side"*? A machine translation masterpiece? – Peter Mortensen Oct 9, 2022 at 20:16

3 Answers

Sorted by:

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43

To set a default browser, make sure that a `.desktop` file exists for your preferred browser. I'll be setting Mozilla Iceweasel for this example:

```
ls /usr/share/applications/iceweasel.desktop
```

Output:

```
iceweasel.desktop
```

Assured you have the file, run:

```
xdg-settings set default-web-browser iceweasel.desktop

# Test that it works
xdg-open "http://example.com"
```

If you don't have a *.desktop* file:

I use the program `surf` , which doesn't have a .desktop file. To set this as your web browser, first create the file *~/.local/share/applications/surf.desktop* with this following content:

```
[Desktop Entry]
Type=Application
Name=surf
Comment=Surf minimal web browser
Terminal=false
Exec=surf
Categories=Network;WebBrowser
```

While not all of this content is required, it helps categorize the file for any future use.

Set the default browser like normal:

```
xdg-settings set default-web-browser surf.desktop
```

And now you're good to go!

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edited Oct 9, 2022 at 19:59   answered Jun 17, 2018 at 4:51

Peter Mortensen   Nolan Akash
30.9k 21 104 125   **919** 8 21

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2   For me "xdg-settings get default-web-browser" returned "firefox.desktop" already. But running "xdg-settings set default-web-browser firefox.desktop" fixed my problem anyway. – user2707671 Jan 27, 2019 at 22:47 ✏️

I faced with same problem after adding Postman **.desktop** file following their doc `xdg-settings get default-web-browser` returned proper value. Running @user2707671 advice to try to setup proper browser again fixed the problem – Pavlo Zhukov Apr 30, 2019 at 20:31

I use Luuntu and still cannot fix this. `xdg-open` always open Firefox. – Minh Nghĩa Feb 18, 2020 at 8:24

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1   on kde, if set fails, try: askubuntu.com/questions/62182/... – geekley Sep 1, 2020 at 6:34

Also if you're on Ubuntu and your browser is packaged using a Snap, your application's desktop is *not* named like `firefox.desktop` (as you see under `/snap/`), it's like `firefox_firefox.desktop` or

6

text/html is for HTML files, i.e., if you open an HTML file then it would open in Google Chrome. For opening URLs, you need to have the `x-scheme-handler/https` and `x-scheme-handler/http` entries.

You can set that either with *xdg-mime*. For example, to set Google Chrome as the default browser for *xdg-open*:

```
xdg-mime default google-chrome.desktop x-scheme-handler/https
xdg-mime default google-chrome.desktop x-scheme-handler/http
```

Or you can add the following lines in file *~/.config/mimeapps.list*:

```
x-scheme-handler/http=google-chrome.desktop
x-scheme-handler/https=google-chrome.desktop
```

The above commands basically insert these lines into that file.

Note: you should obviously have the *google-chrome.desktop* file under *~/.local/share/applications* or the system-wide alternative location - */usr/share/applications*.

For changing the default browser overall, you also have to use *xdg-settings* as shown by Nolan Akash. *xdg-settings* changes the value of $BROWSER, so another way to change it is to explicitly assign the program (not the *.desktop file*) to the $BROWSER environment variable and export it.

```
export BROWSER=google-chrome
```

You usually would want to keep this like in ~/.bashrc file (or the equivalent for the shell you use) or in the ~/.profile file and log out and log in to have the environment updated and available for other programs to see.

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edited Oct 9, 2022 at 20:08

answered Apr 20, 2021 at 19:56

Peter Mortensen
30.9k 21 104 125

Just Khaithang
899 1 11 22

Just open the Chrome browser and set as the default browser.

-7

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edited Oct 9, 2022 at 19:56

answered Dec 17, 2016 at 9:40

Peter Mortensen
30.9k 21 104 125

mike
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1 For some reason this never works for me. The above answer does work. — TauPan Jan 10, 2020 at 15:44