

Xfce Goodies Tutorial

So, what can you get out of this tutorial?

- 1) you want to use the Xfce panel as a dock;
- 2) you want to use the Whisker Menu and other plugins;
- 3) you want to use the Xfce terminal as a dropdown terminal;
- 4) you want to maybe learn something new.

You can do all of this even if you are not using the Xfce DE. Of course if you are, they still work, but most of the job has been done for you.

These actions have been done in LM17.3 with the Cinnamon DE. So you know.

1) Xfce panel

a) Installation

```
sudo apt-get install -y xfce4-panel
```

Oh, I am only going to put here the apt-get commands. If you are using something else, well you should be able to just replace apt-get install with your command.

b) Use

In order to use the panel you have to start it. Issue this command in a terminal:

```
xfce4-panel
```

Don't close the terminal.

c) Making the dock

You will get a popup. Go with an empty panel for now.

Right click on the panel, go to Panel → Panel Preferences.

You can choose how to size it and if it is vertical or horizontal. To have a dock you should choose the panel to hide intelligently. Also in the Appearance tab make sure to have the alpha set to 0, so you won't get this very slim bar where the panel would be. (It makes the panel transparent)

The best way to add items is by adding the application menu. Then simply drag and drop items from the menu on the panel. (A red bar will indicate if you can let go)

If you want flexible separators, in the display tab make sure to have the length at 100%.

Also if you add a launcher, you can have more launchers inside it so they are nested. Right click on launcher → Properties → Add new items. You will get this arrow below the first icon in the launcher. You can theme where it appears in the Advanced tab of the launcher.

Also you can add a Directory Menu. This is a cascading menu of a folder. You can see its contents without opening a file manager.

You need to add what files to see in the File Pattern. If you don't care just add: *.*

If you do want more extensions, separate them with ; like this: *.mp4;*.mp3

d) Startup

You must add this at startup. In Cinnamon go to System Settings → Startup Applications and add custom command:

```
xfce4-panel
```

You could close the terminal now but the panel will disappear. You could log back in or restart.

2) Whisker Menu

a) Installation

```
sudo apt-get install -y xfce4-whiskermenu-plugin
```

If you want other plugins go here: https://www.archlinux.org/groups/x86_64/xfce4-goodies/

Now that you know their name just `sudo apt-get install NAME`

b) Using the meta key to dropdown the menu

What I recommend is to do this (c) is why). Create a txt file (I recommend to put it in your home in the bin directory) without an extension (or with .sh) and paste this in:

```
#!/bin/bash
xfce4-popup-whiskermenu
```

Make this file executable. You can right click on it and go to permissions or open a terminal and:

```
chmod +x yourfile
```

Now create your shortcut and give it the meta key as a shortcut. If you have the meta key set to show your other menu, then remove the menu, change it's shortcut, or have another shortcut for the Whisker Menu. In Cinnamon you should go to Settings → Keyboard → Shortcuts → Custom Shortcuts → Add.

c) The search doesn't focus

I have found a way to work around this bug. Here is what you need to do.

```
sudo apt-get install -y wmctrl
```

Go to your script (that file) and replace everything with this:

```
#!/bin/bash
xfce4-popup-whiskermenu && sleep 0.1 && wmctrl -a Whisker Menu
```

What this does is: it drops the menu and wmctrl will focus and raise it every time. The sleep is there because I noticed some times the menu opens later than the wmctrl command is issued.

e) More features

Right click on the Whisker Menu and go to properties. Now go to commands.

If you are using Cinnamon you can add this:

- All Settings: cinnamon-settings
- Lock Screen: gnome-screensaver-command -activate
- Log Out: /usr/bin/gnome-session-quit --no-prompt
- Edit Applications: cinnamon-menu-editor You may want to install menulibre if you want to edit the applications that appear in the menu because the cinnamon-menu-editor can add more items but in my case they appear only in the Other section of the menu.

In the Search Actions you can add stuff to search online. Go to that tab and click on the plus button.

A new entry is created. The name is not really that important (you will see it when searching so you know what you're searching). The pattern is what you need to type first to use that search (so it won't pick up an application instead). For example:

YouTube

yy

firefox https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%u

If you want another one you need to search on that website, copy the url and replace what you searched for with %u.

More:

firefox <https://www.google.ro/search?q=%u> Google

firefox <https://duckduckgo.com/?q=%u> DuckDuckGo

firefox <https://www.google.com/search?site=&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=&bih=&btnG=Search&q=%u>

Google images

You could also try out DuckDuckGo Bangs if you want <https://duckduckgo.com/bang>.

3) Drop Down Terminal

a) Installation

```
sudo apt-get install -y xfce4-terminal
```

b) Using the tilde key to dropdown the terminal

What I recommend is to do this (c) is why). Create a txt file (I recommend to put it in your home in the bin directory) without an extension (or with .sh) and paste this in:

```
#!/bin/bash
xfce4-terminal --drop-down
```

Make this file executable. You can right click on it and go to permissions or open a terminal in this folder and

```
chmod +x yourfile
```

Now create your shortcut and give it the tilde key as a shortcut. If you have the tilde key set to something else, then remove it from there or make another shortcut for the terminal. In Cinnamon you should go to Settings → Keyboard → Shortcuts → Custom Shortcuts → Add.

c) The terminal doesn't focus

I have found a way to work around this bug. Here is what you need to do.

```
sudo apt-get install -y wmctrl
```

Go to your script (that file) and replace everything with this:

```
#!/bin/bash
xfce4-terminal --drop-down -T DropDownTerminal && sleep 0.1 && wmctrl -a
DropDownTerminal
```

What this does is: it creates a terminal with the name DropDownTerminal and wmctrl will focus and raise it every time. I did rename the terminal so it will not conflict with other terminals. Not as important in the case of the Whisker Menu.

You can also add this to your startup applications if you want to. In Cinnamon: System Settings – Startup Applications. Add this file as the command. The thing is that even if you don't add it the

terminal will still open up regardless.

d) Theming the terminal

Now that you have the terminal you can also use it as a normal terminal too.

If you look at the right corner of the terminal you can see a button to keep the terminal above all windows and to access the settings. If the settings appear behind the terminal, right click on the borders of the settings window or on it's titlebar and choose to keep it above other windows.

To have fixed size for all terminals you can open up a terminal, go to preferences, go to appearance and then choose the geometry. Here you can also make the terminal transparent. Change the background colors and the text colors in the color tab. It's up to you.

e) PS1 color (or the color of your username in the terminal)

I found a really cool way to theme this one. In the terminal preferences go to colors. Make sure you have checked the bold text color. Choose something you like because this is what you will color your username and also the bold text in the man entries (anything that is in bold).

Go to your home. Find .bashrc (ctrl+h). If it is not there make the file. Here you can also add aliases, but for now if there is any PS1 in there add a # at the beginning. Now add this on another line:

```
PS1='${debian_chroot:+($debian_chroot)}\[\e[1m\]\u@\h \w \${\033[00m\} '
```

Save the file. Open up a terminal and you will see that all bold text including your name are now the color you choose for the bold text in the terminal preferences.

Keep in mind that if you do this, your other terminal(s) that are not xfce may not get colored.

f) Other cool xfce4-terminal commands

If you use `man xfce4-terminal` you can see more commands for the terminal. Here are some cool ones:

- `xfce4-terminal --fullscreen` - this will open the terminal in fullscreen and without borders and titlebar. Don't confuse with `--maximize` which will not remove the borders and titlebar
- `xfce4-terminal --hide-borders` – this will hide the titlebar and the borders in a newly created terminal. `--show-border` will show them back.

I hope you found something useful here. Thank you for reading.