

Font use within Ubuntu

Version: 1.0

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Matthew Paul Thomas

Supporting information. Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae.

Change history

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0			

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Lorem ipsum	2
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OBSERVATIONS

Examination of how fonts and text are used within the various elements of Ubuntu 12.04 reveals many opportunities for improved legibility and communication.

Conducted through a wide reaching collection of screenshots exploring the many avenues of Ubuntu, a map of the desktop was created and thereby brought together often unrelated elements together.

Through observations from the created map, inconsistencies, curiosities and anomalies were catalogued and broken down into three distinct categories:

- individual issues relating to a specific screen, tab or panel
- issues relating to the theme
- instances where a pattern of font or text use could be applied

In conjunction with the map of Ubuntu 12.04, the following document raises the issues outlined above, categorised using the above three key areas, labeled using the below tags:

- 1 Individual
- 1 Pattern
- 1 Theme

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Inconsistent use of basic font principles can lead to a decrease in legibility and hinder effective communication of a given message. Moving through Ubuntu 12.04, multiple instances of inconsistent use of fundamental structural aspects, even on occasion within the same element, can be identified. These general areas which include:

Font variations

A large number of font variations are often in use within the same element. For example, within the Dash, nine variations are present with up to six used at any one time, weakening a possible hierarchy of information.

Hierarchy

The structure of hierarchy for information inconsistent between elements, using a change in size of text, boldness, italics or a mix of these to denote importance.

Presently, italic text is used for multiple purposes, including as:

- placeholder text
- secondary or supporting information
- emphasis
- currently selected state
- inactive state
- unselectable menu item
- notes

Similarly, there are also often inconsistencies in the use of bold text to emphasise and small text to de-emphasise throughout Ubuntu.

Padding within elements

Padding around text within on-screen elements is arbitrary, differing from element to element. This is particularly noticeable within buttons and tabs, leading to inconstant sizing and therefore, placement.

Positioning and spacing of elements

Positioning, sizing and spacing of items within an element differs for each individual element and on occasion, within the same element.

Label alignment

Inconsistent alignment of element labels can be seen throughout system settings with some aligning to the left, some to the right.

PATTERNS

The conducted observations identified a wide number of instances where inconsistent treatment of elements occur.

Implementation of a number of distinct patterns throughout the catalogued map would aid not only legibility but clarity of construction.

These identified potential patterns are listed below by number and are labelled such on the following screenshots.

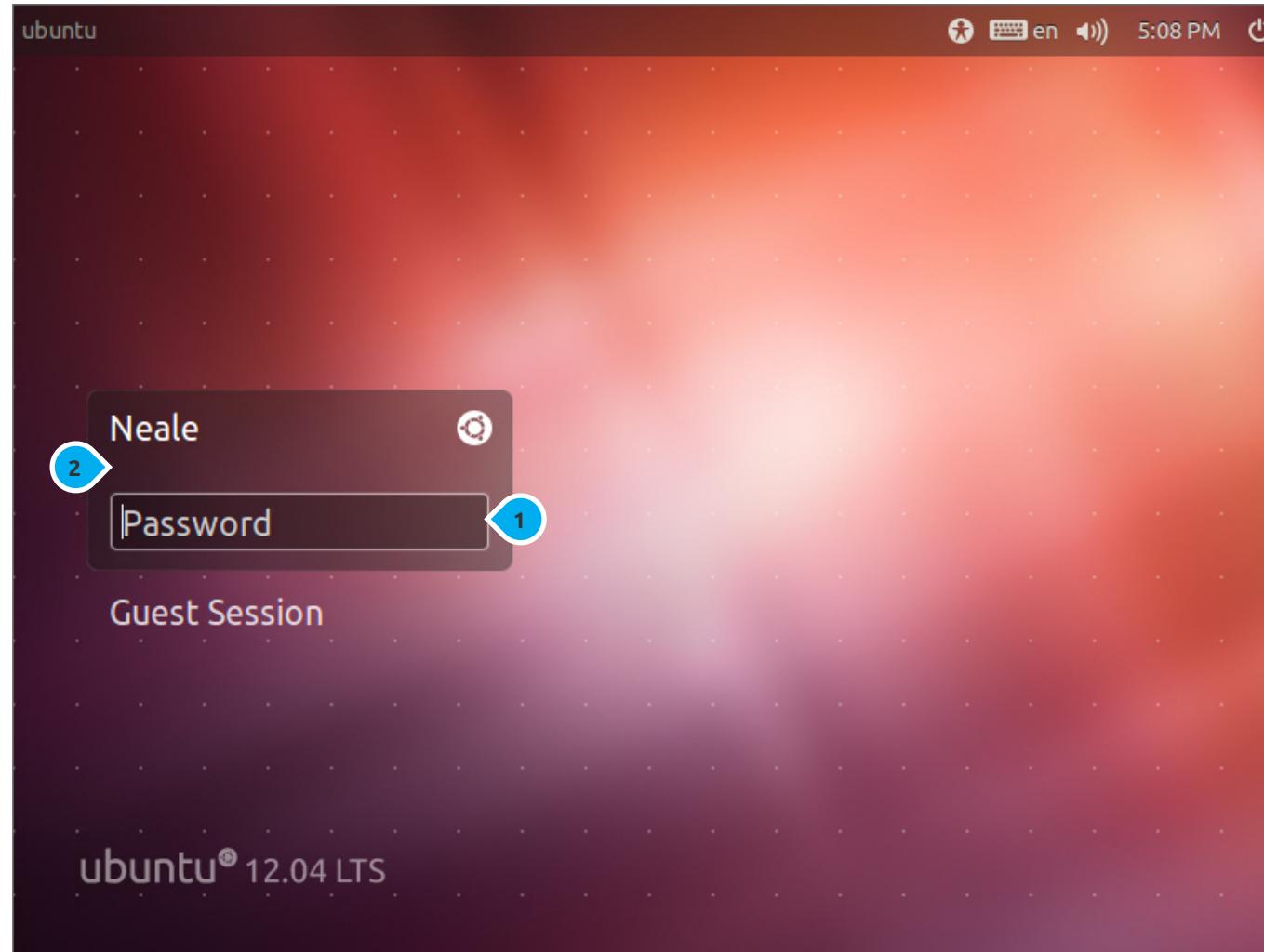
1. Count lozenge
2. Use of search icon in search fields
3. Labelled icons
4. Link vs. button
5. 'More' link
6. Placeholder text
7. Category headings
8. Use of italics
9. Vertical spacing of elements
10. Use of small text size
11. Slider and text alignment
12. Padding around text in buttons
13. Selected state of inactive list item
14. Minimum button widths
15. Key value list
16. Line spacing
17. Selected state of inactive list item
18. Colour choice
19. Spacing of icons and text in list items
20. Left vs. right alignment of labels
21. Heading size
22. Non-selectable, expandable items in lists
23. Supporting information
24. Line length
25. Overall layout alignment
26. Non-expandable list subheading
27. Text highlight selection
28. Editable selected text
29. Select column colour
30. Spacing between columns

Login

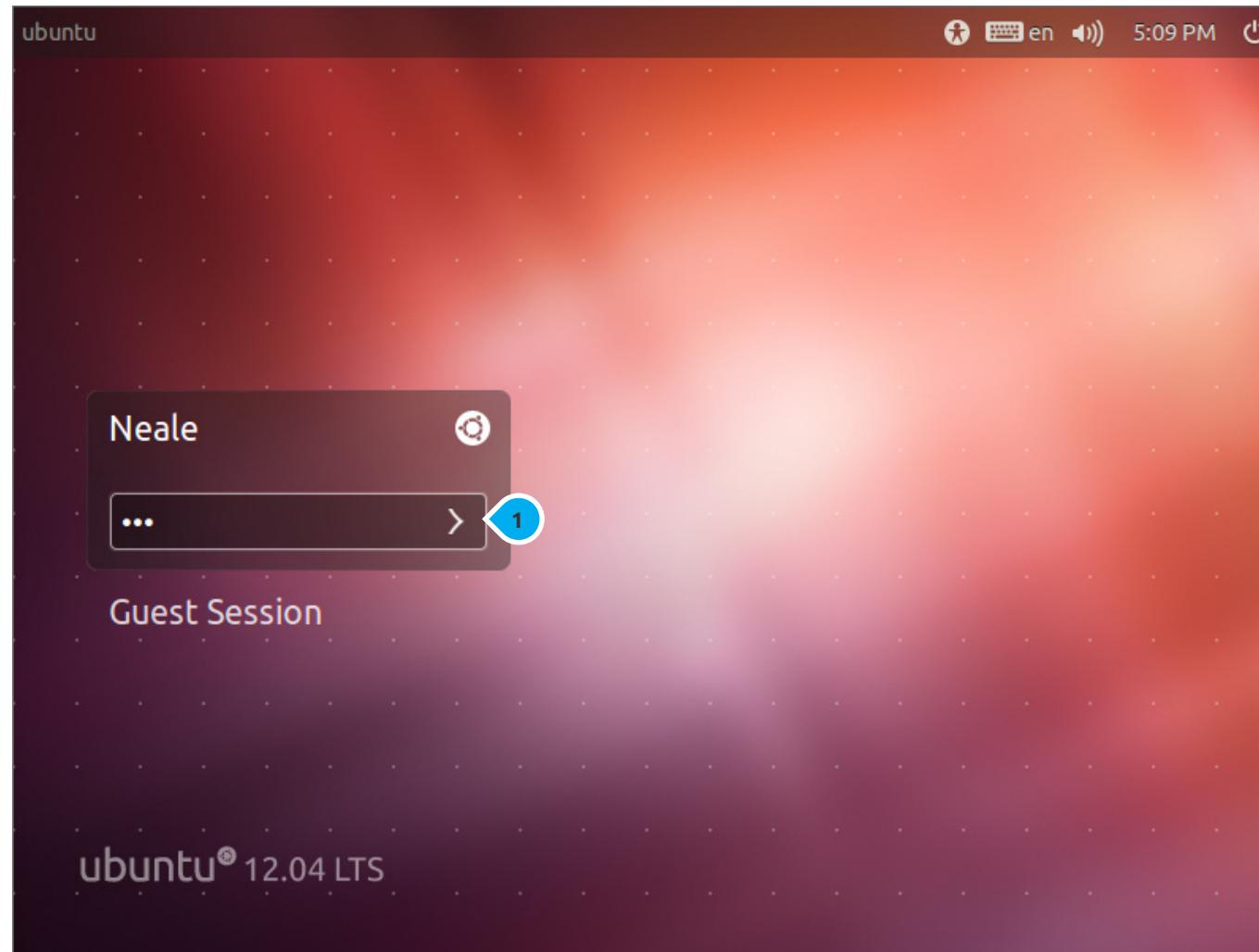
NOTE:

Font variations

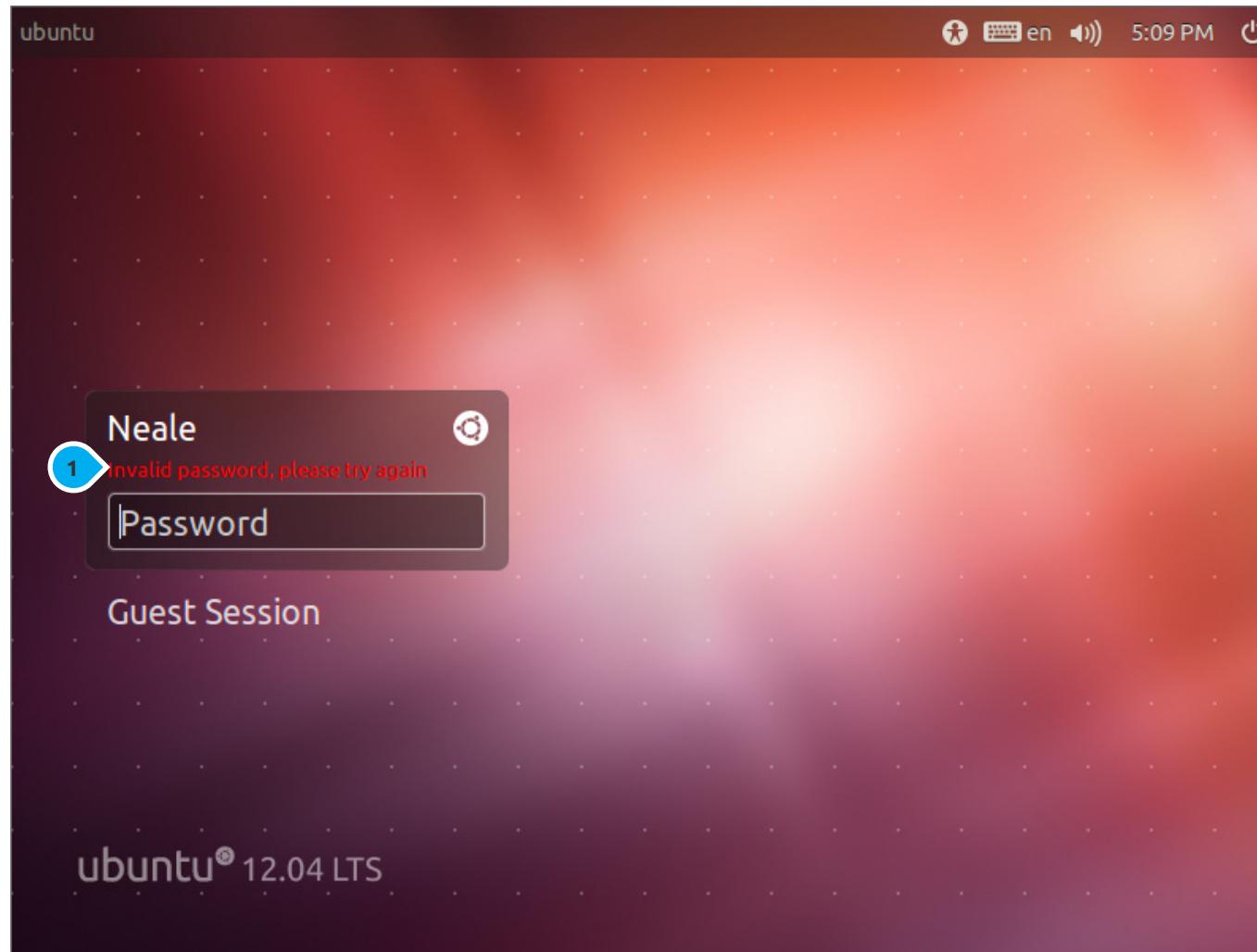
Within the Log In screens, a large number of font variations are often in use at the same time .

**Individual**

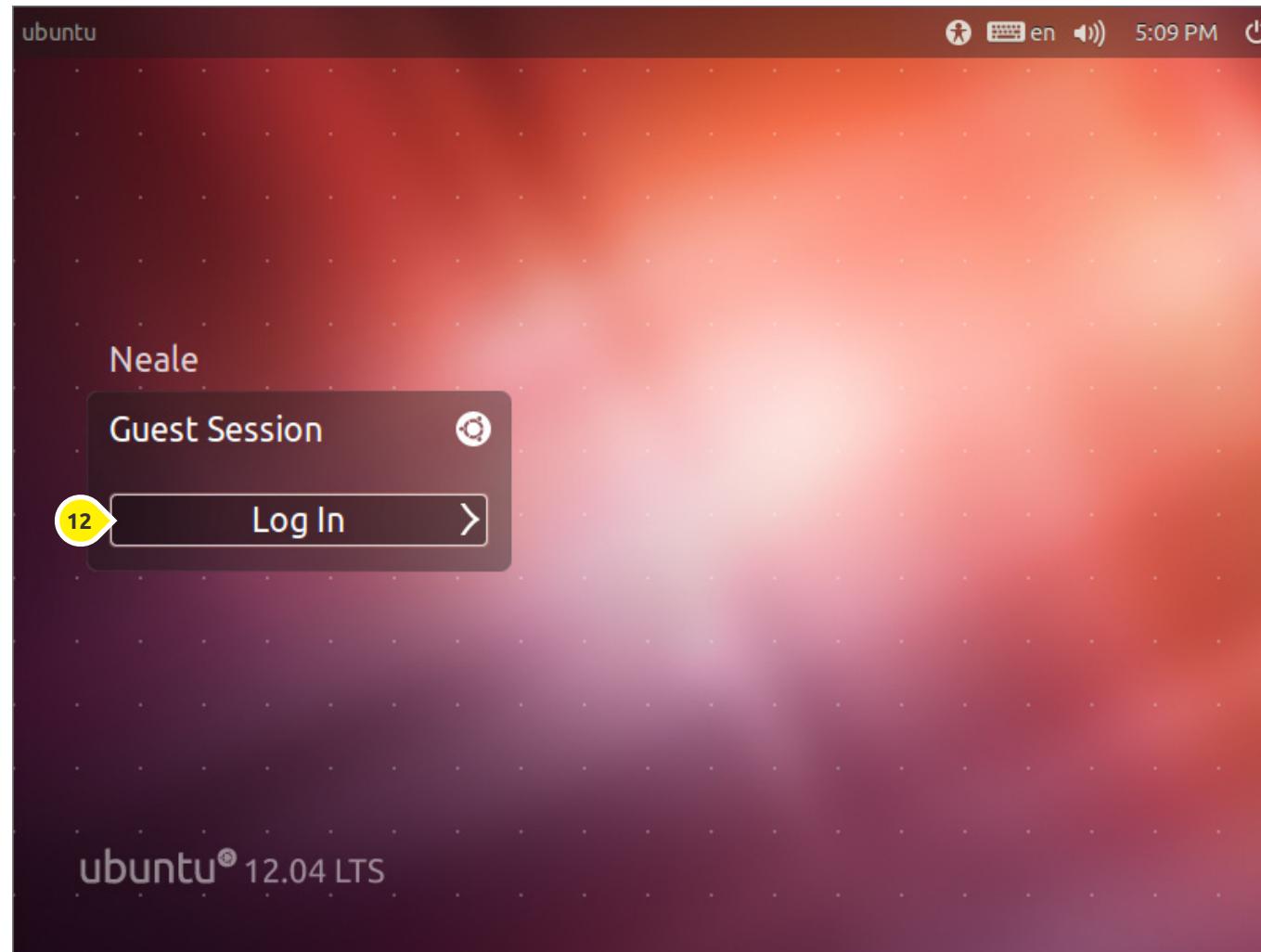
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

**Individual**

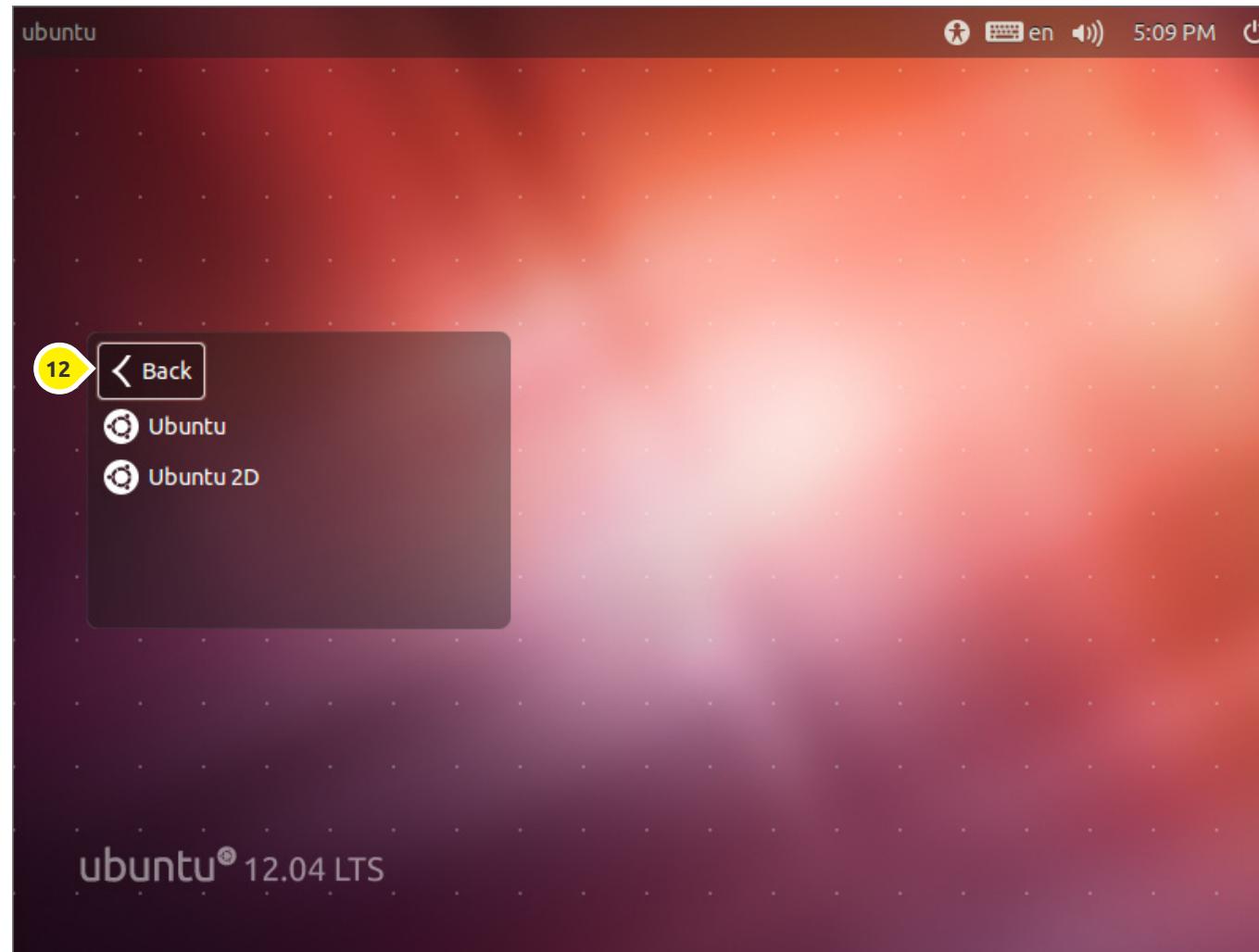
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields

**Individual**

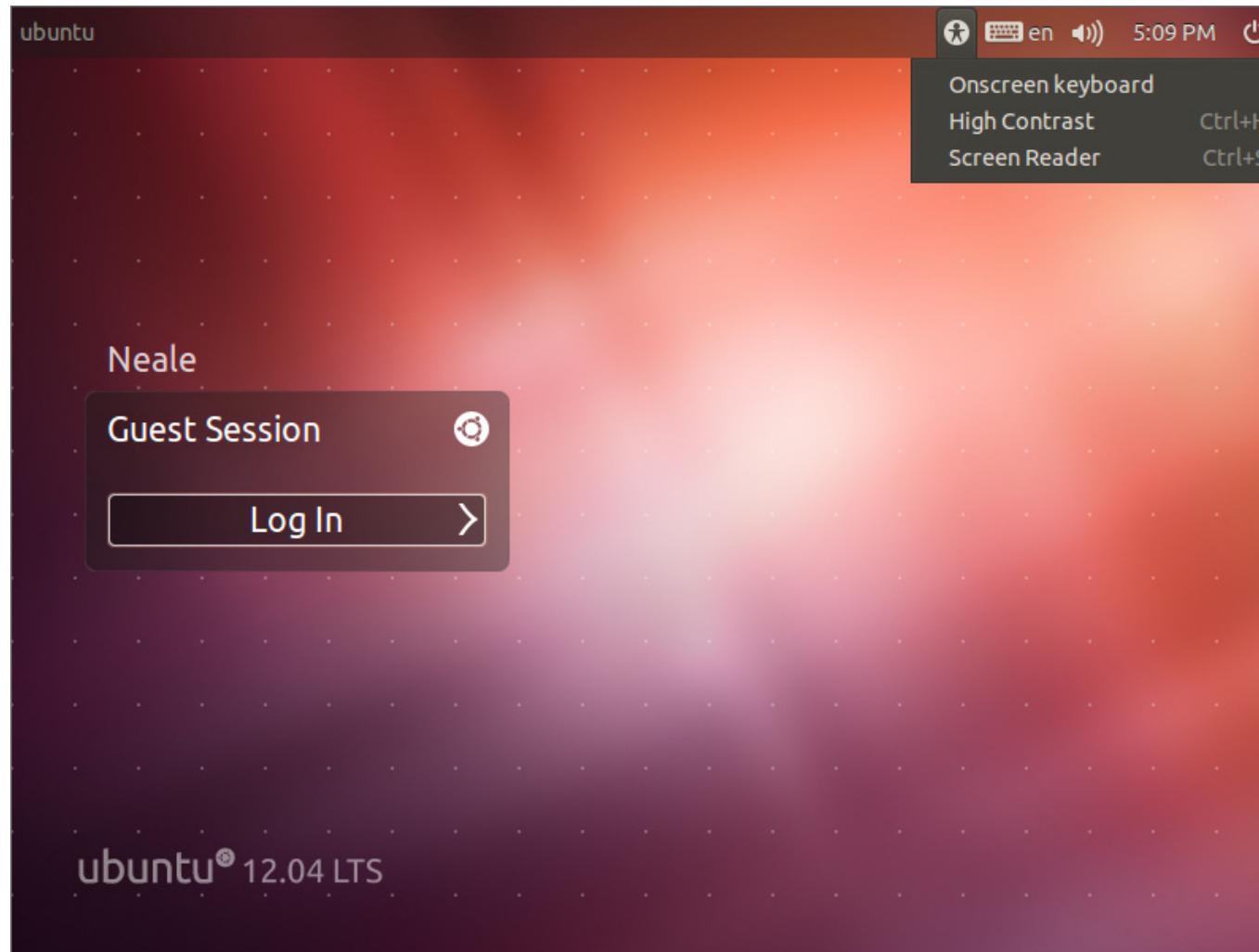
1. Red is error text not found elsewhere

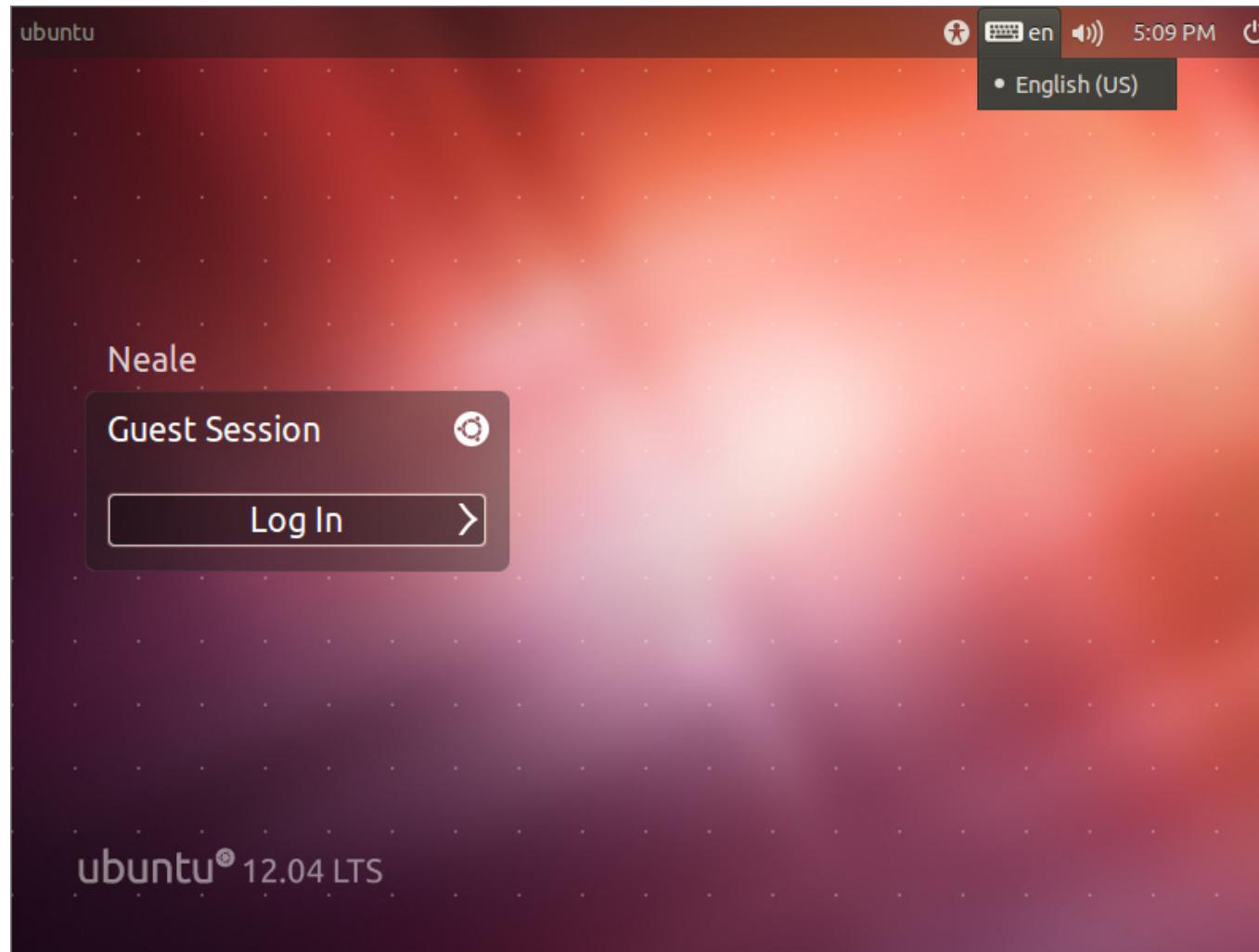
**Pattern**

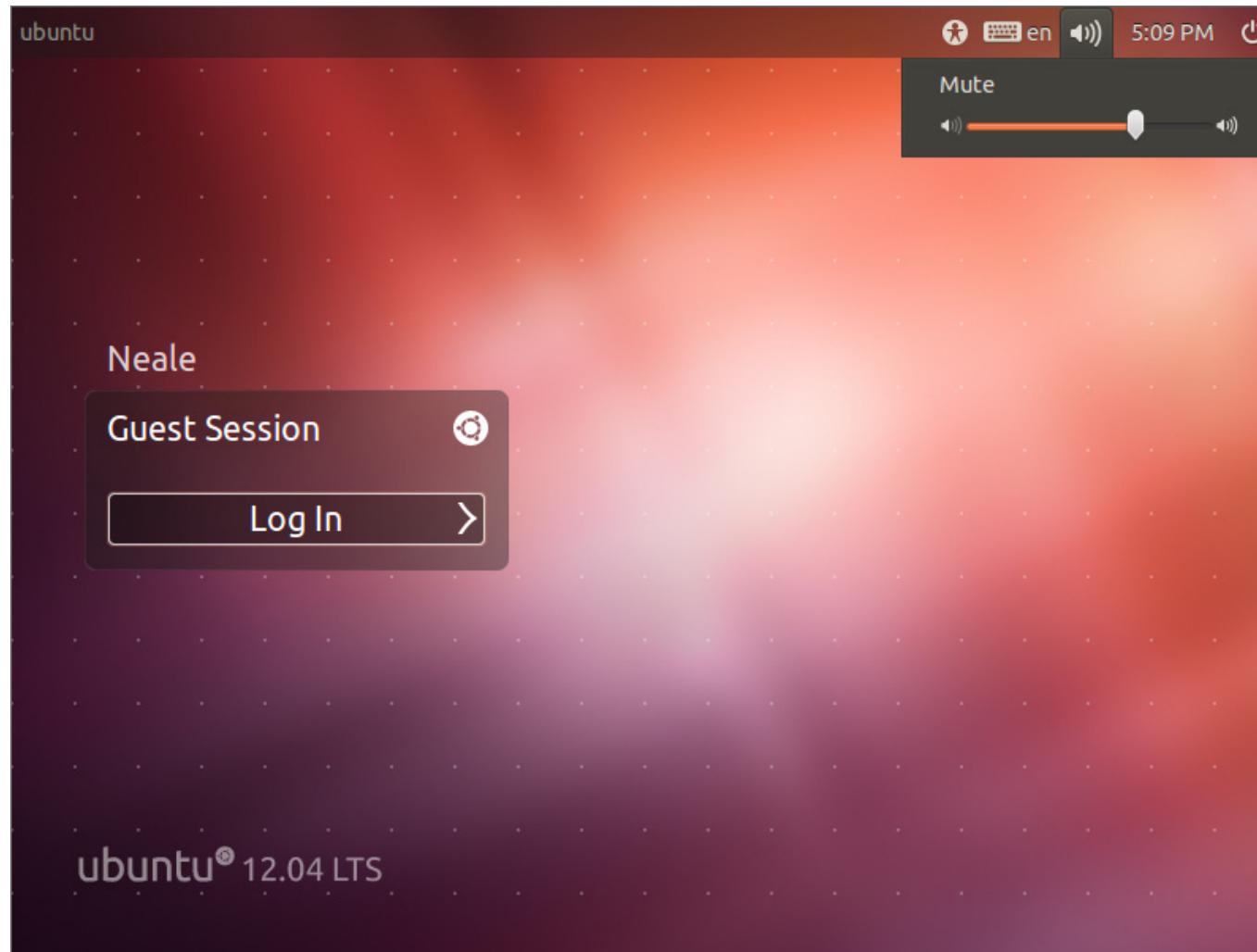
1. Button width: "Log In" is weirdly wide.

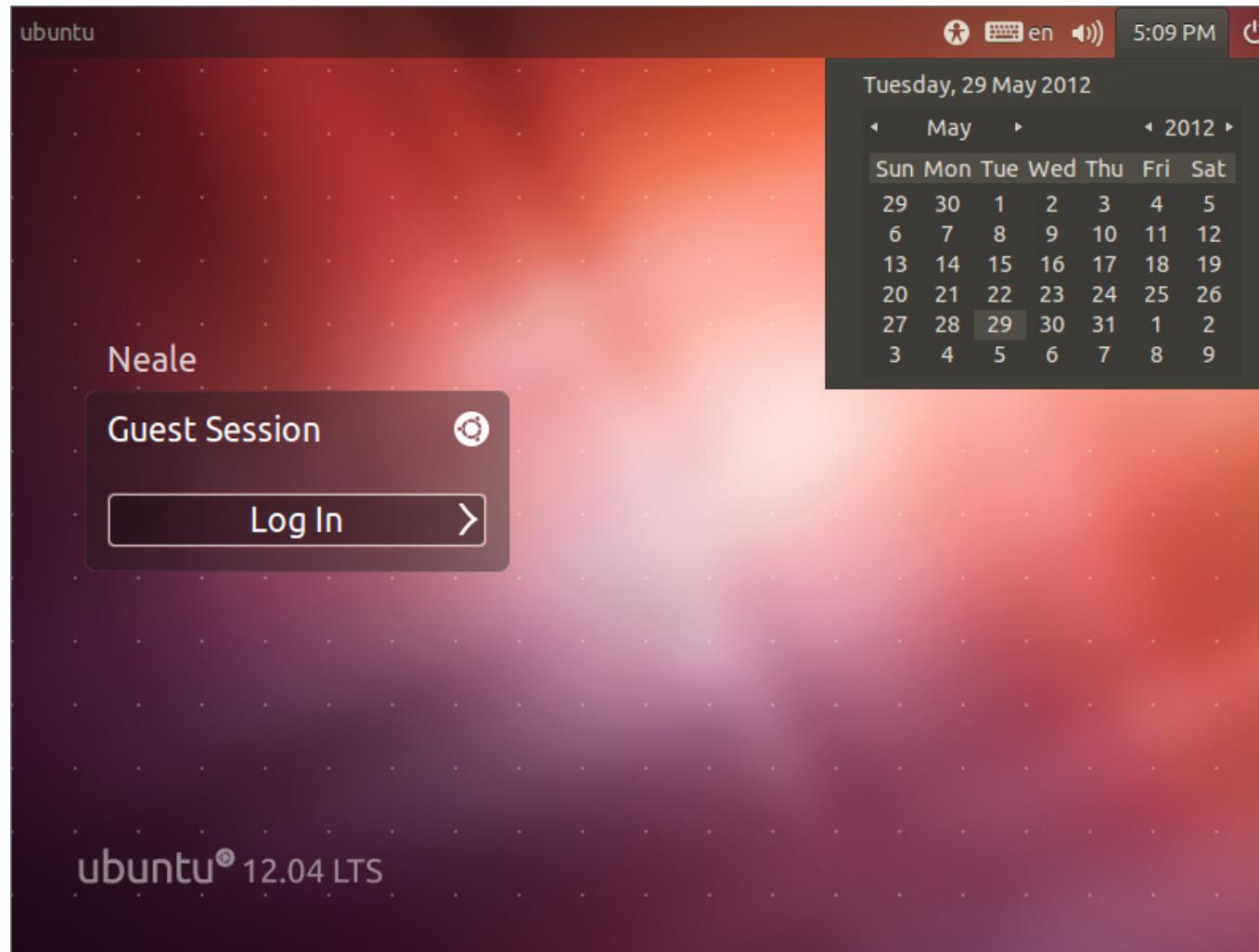
**Pattern**

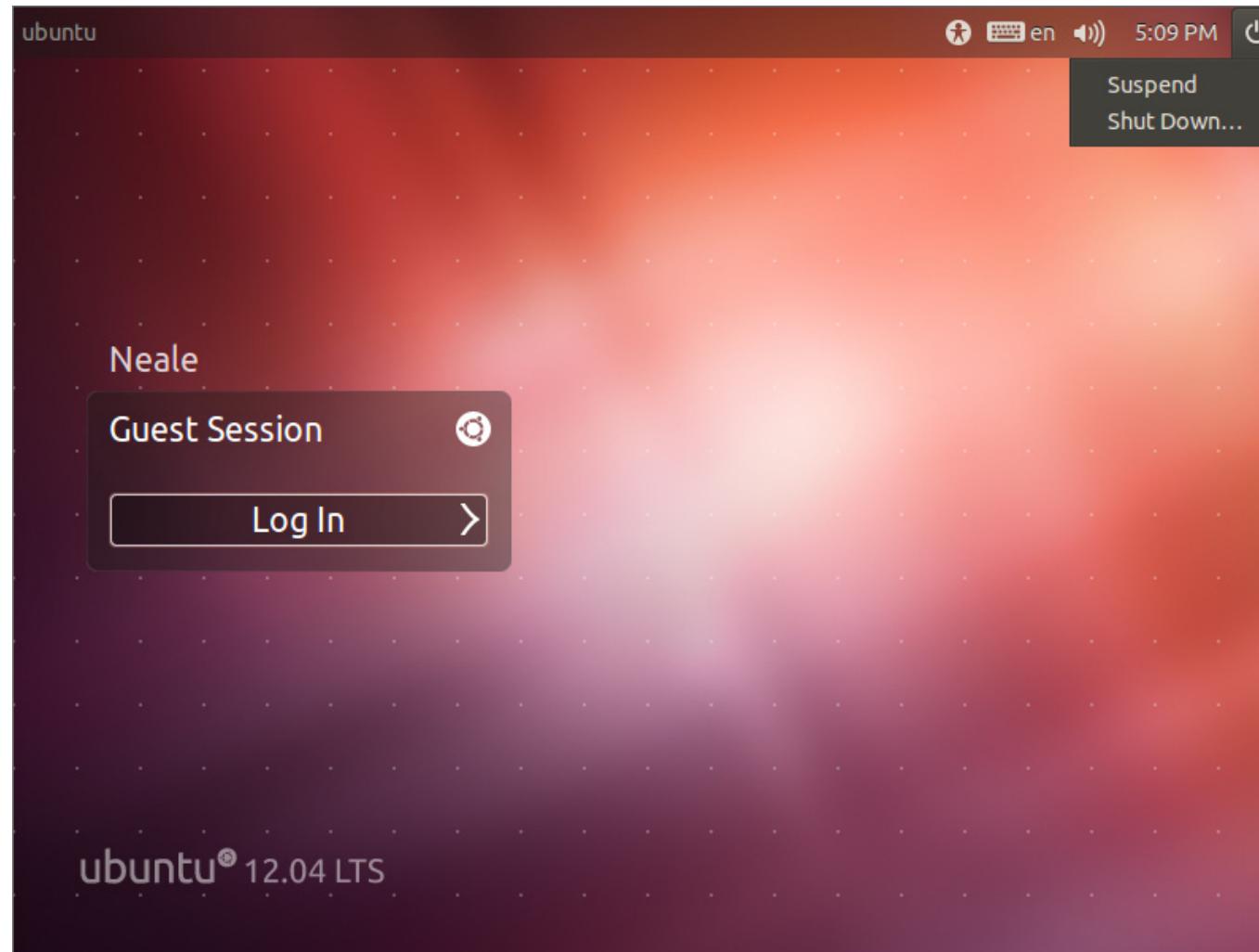
1. Padding around text in buttons



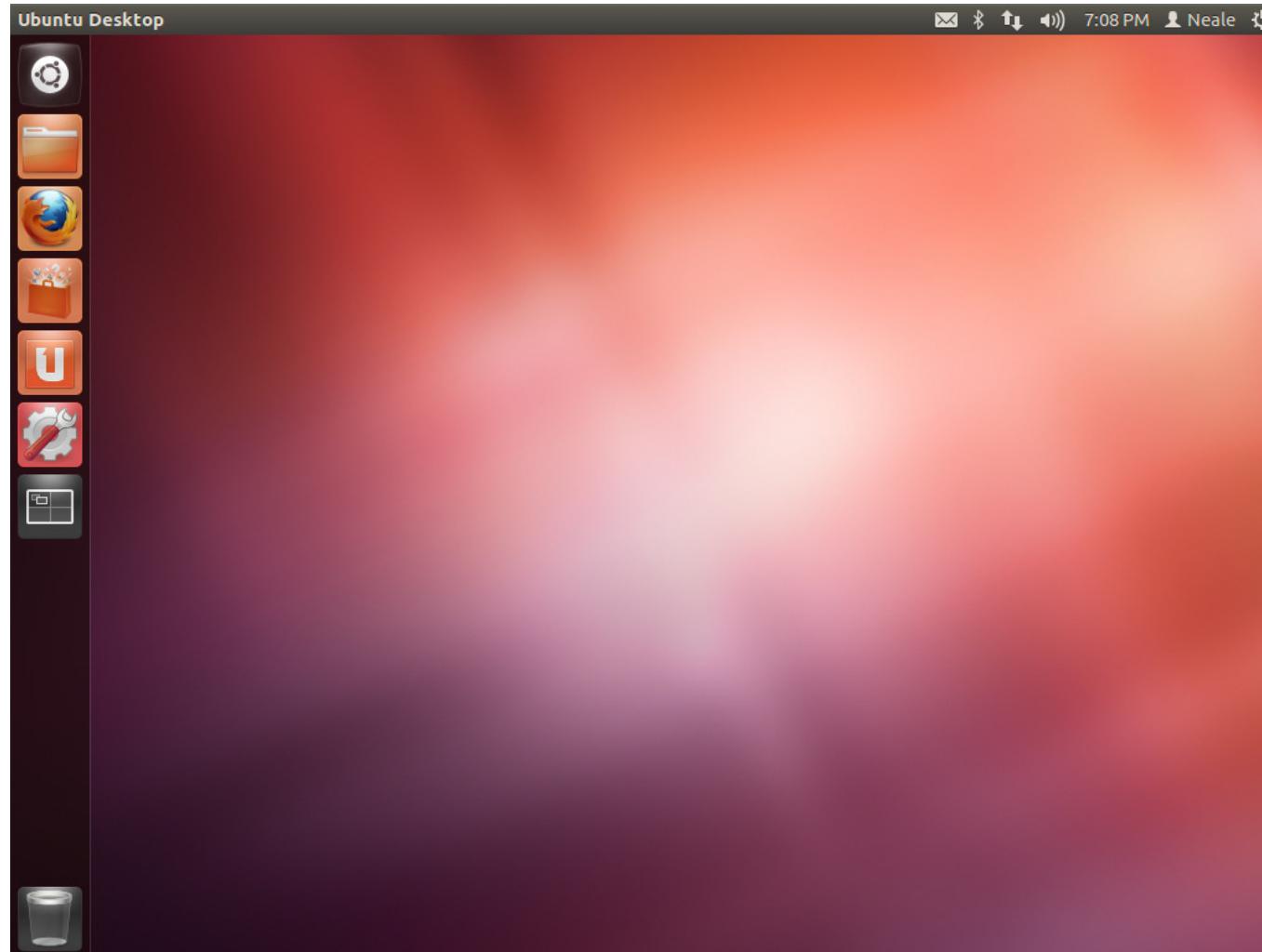




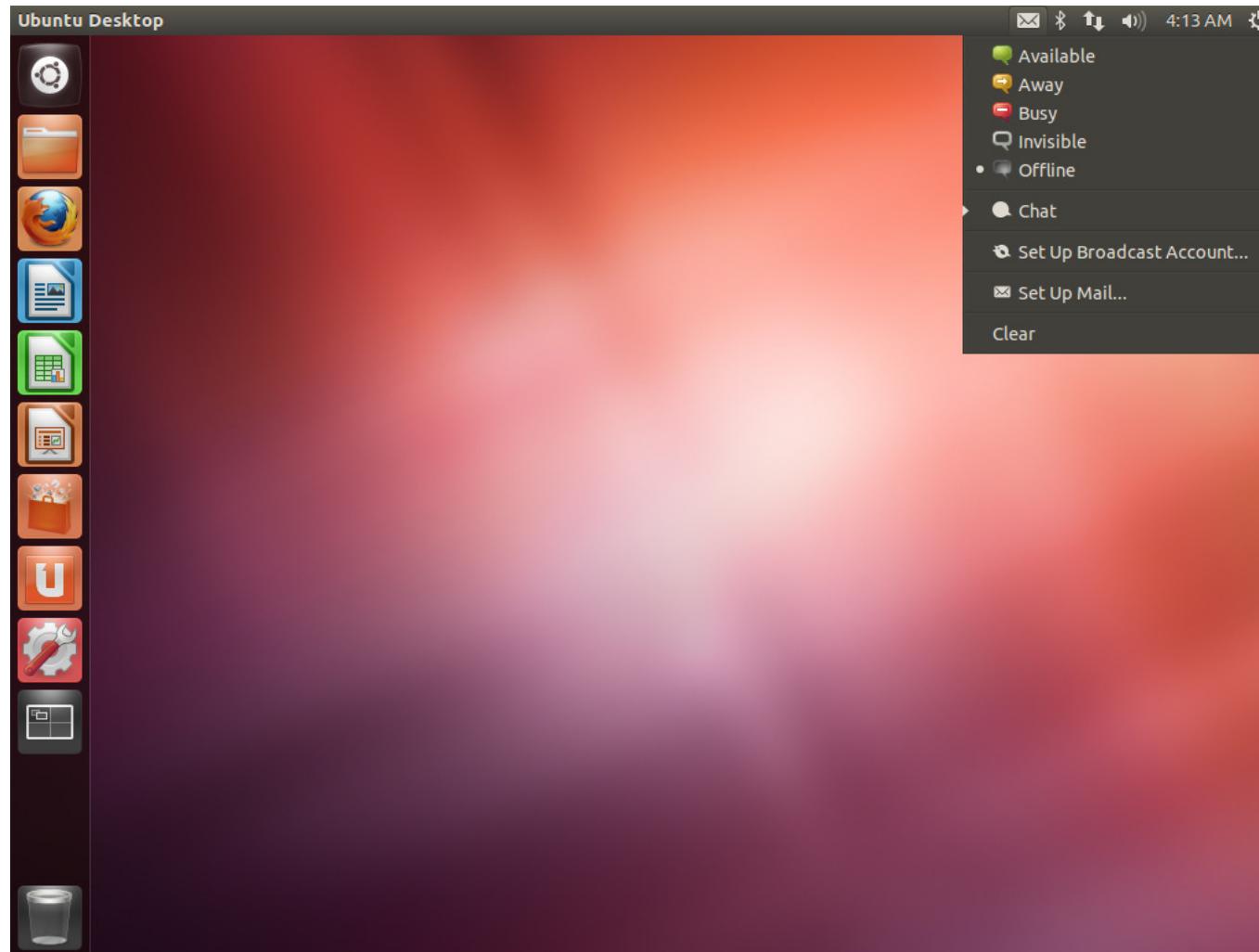




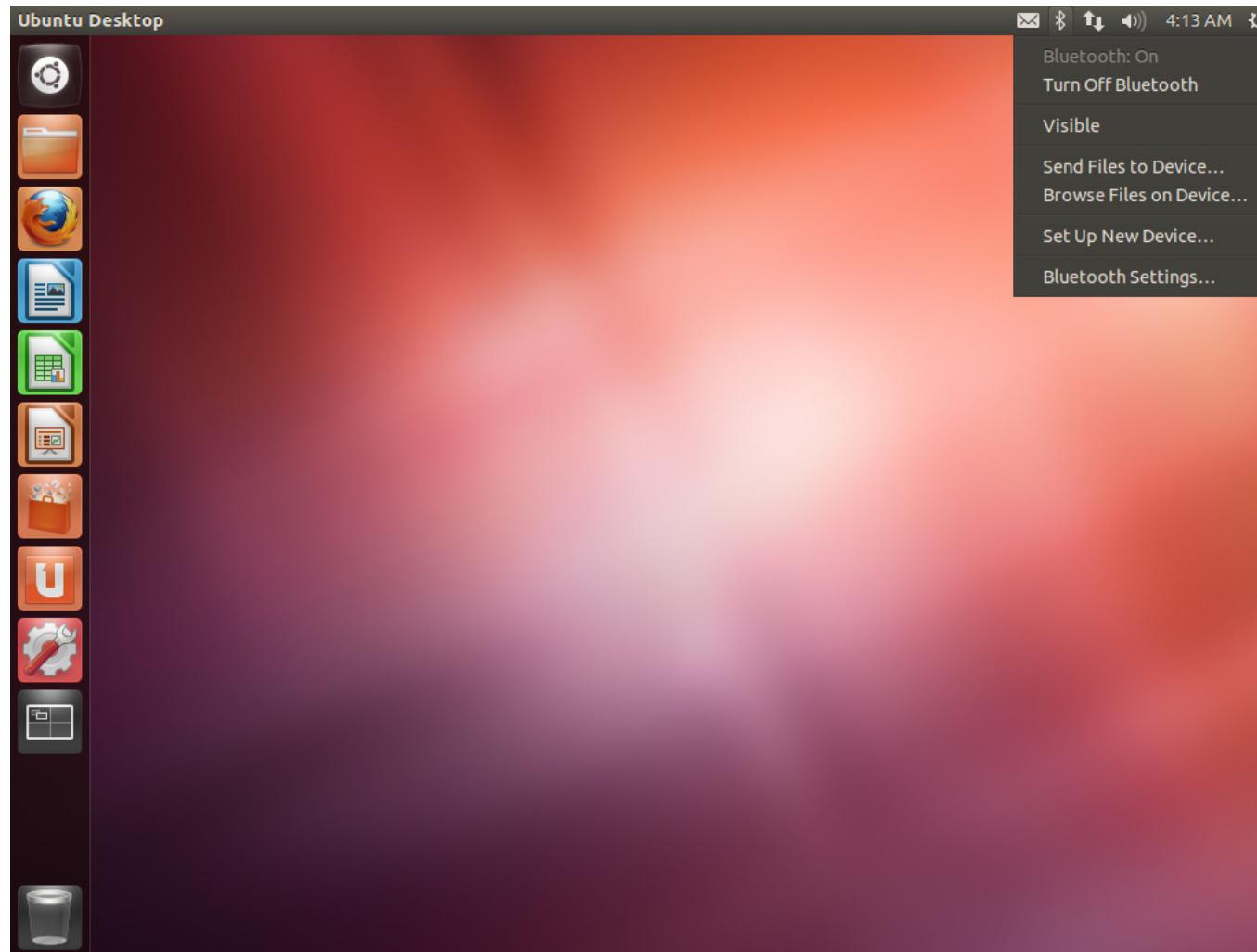
Desktop

**Individual**

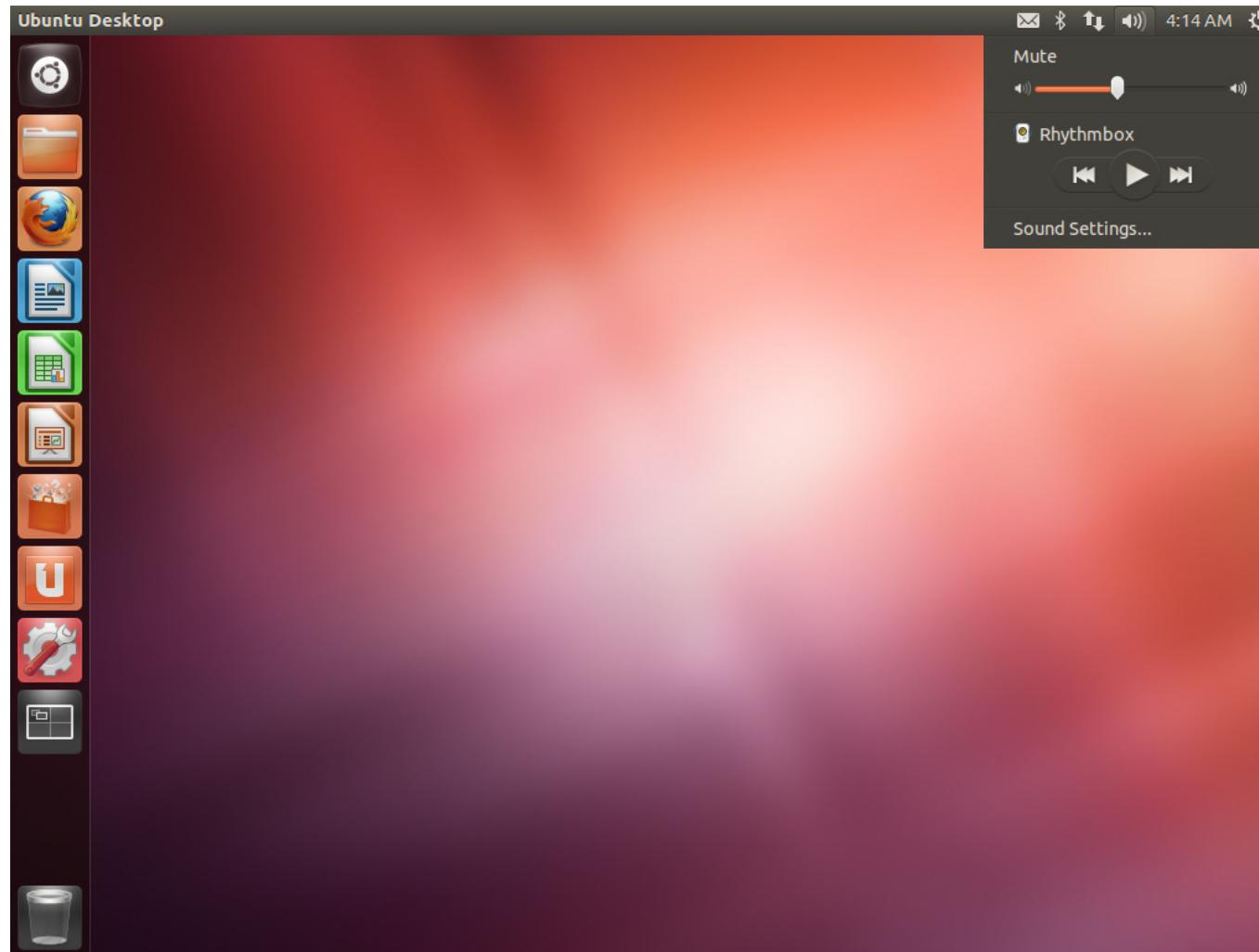
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

**Individual**

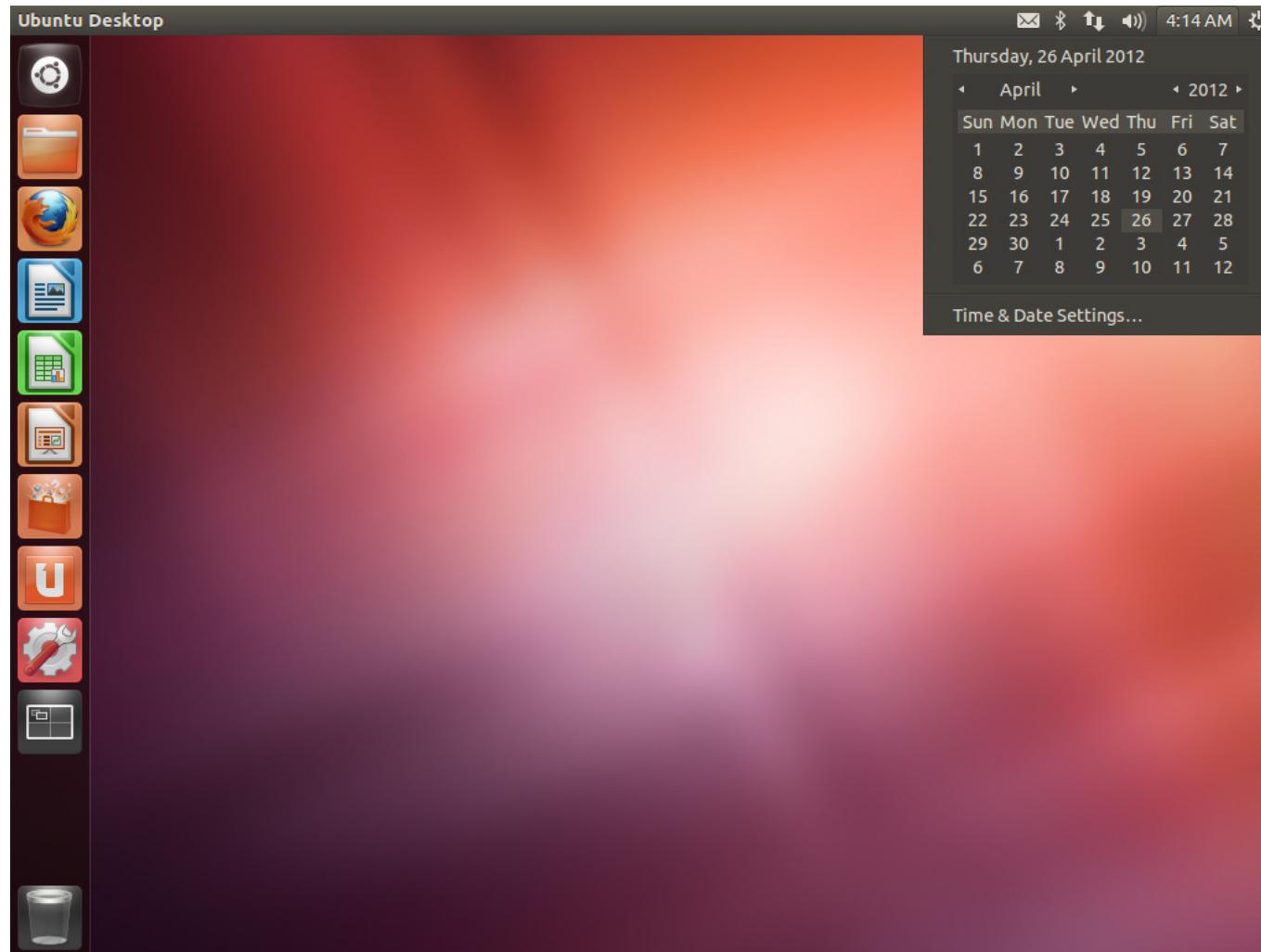
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

**Individual**

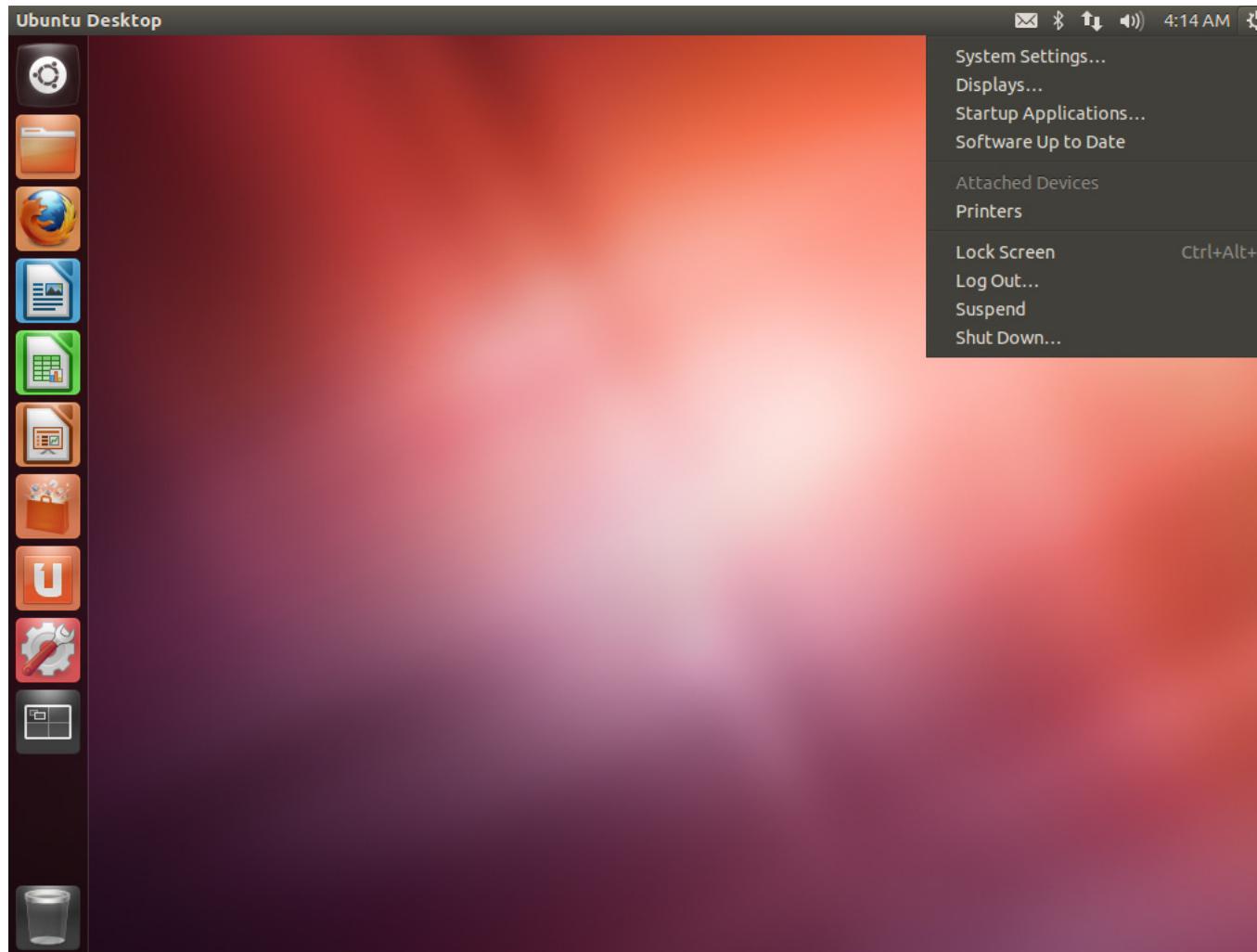
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

**Individual**

1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

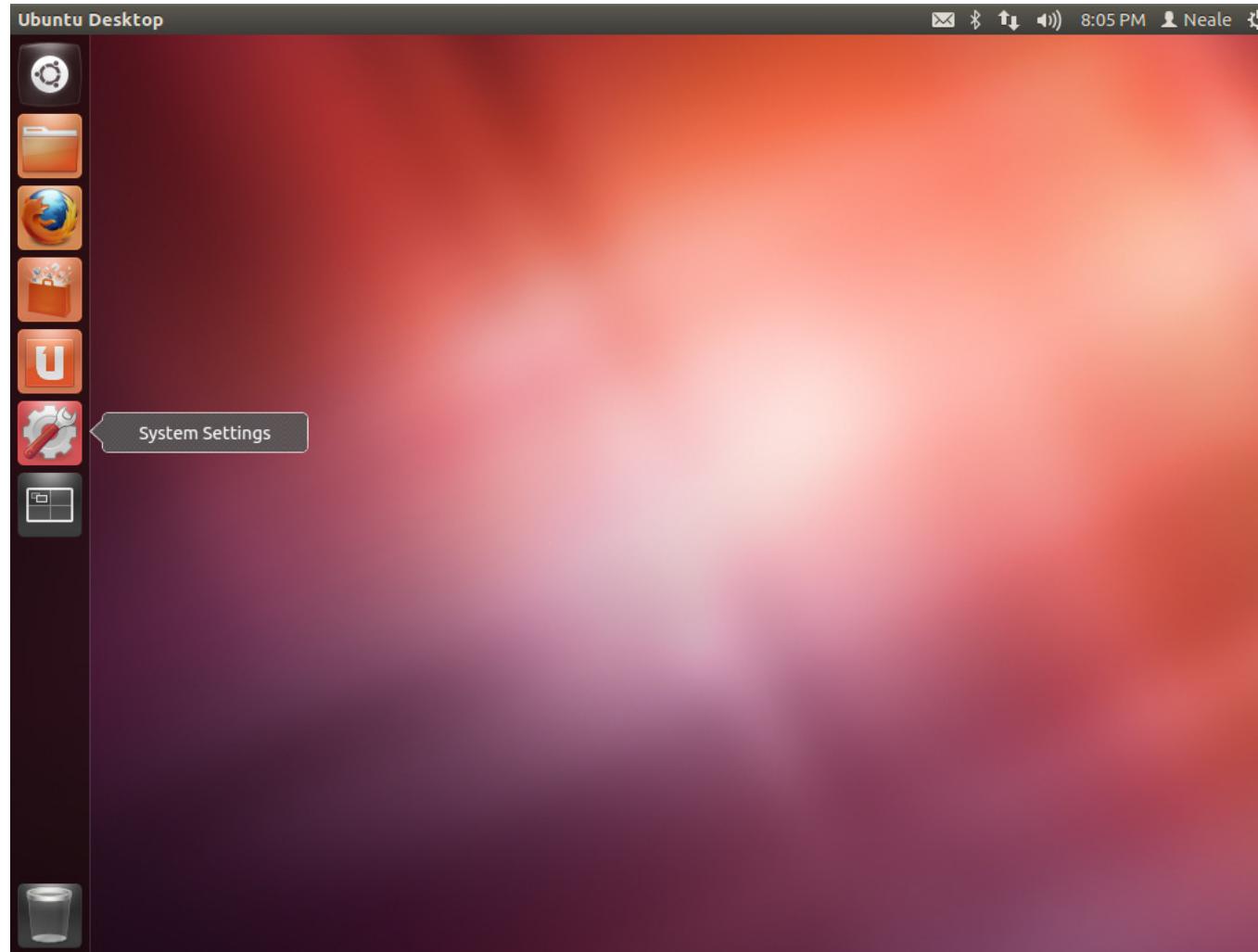
**Individual**

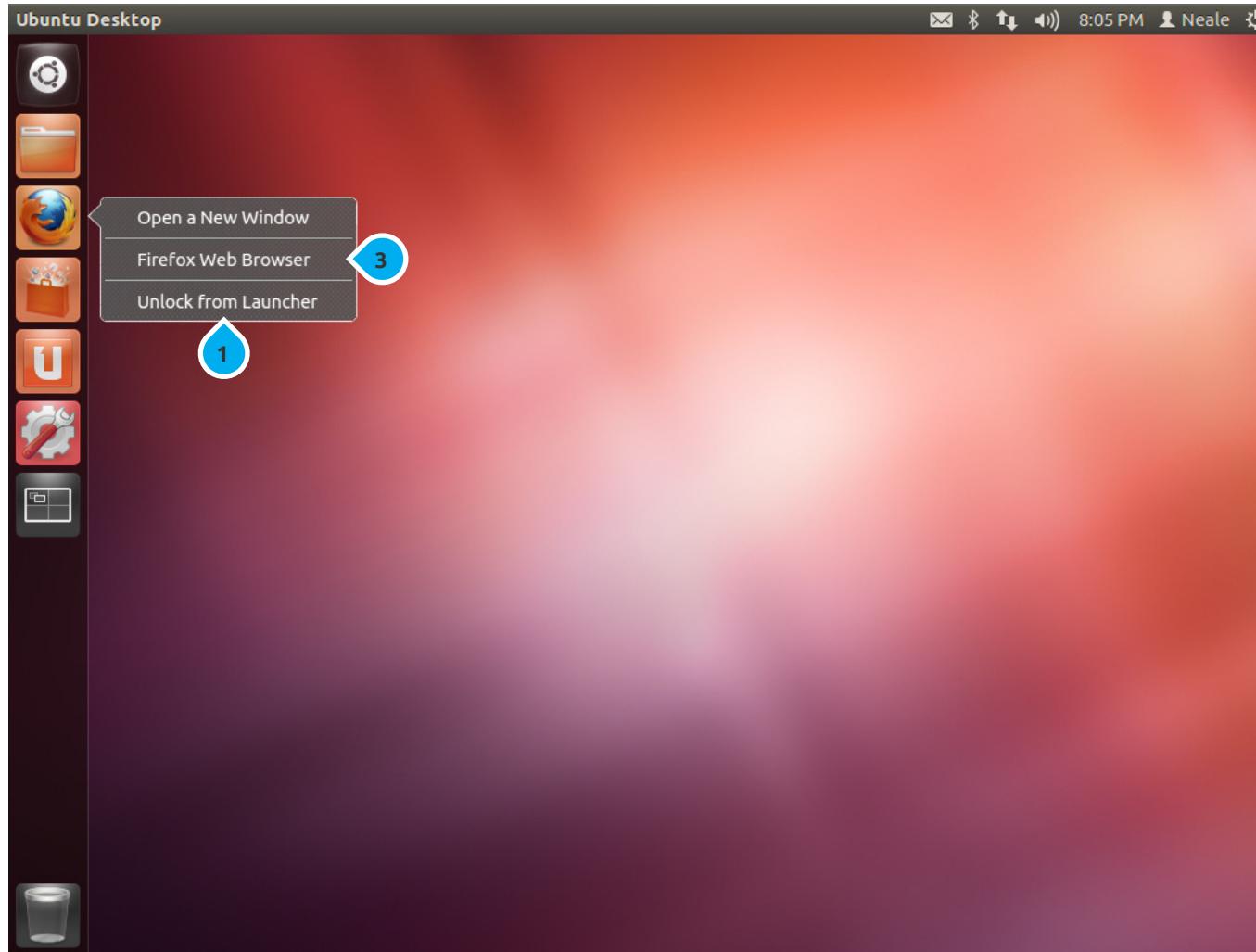
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

**Individual**

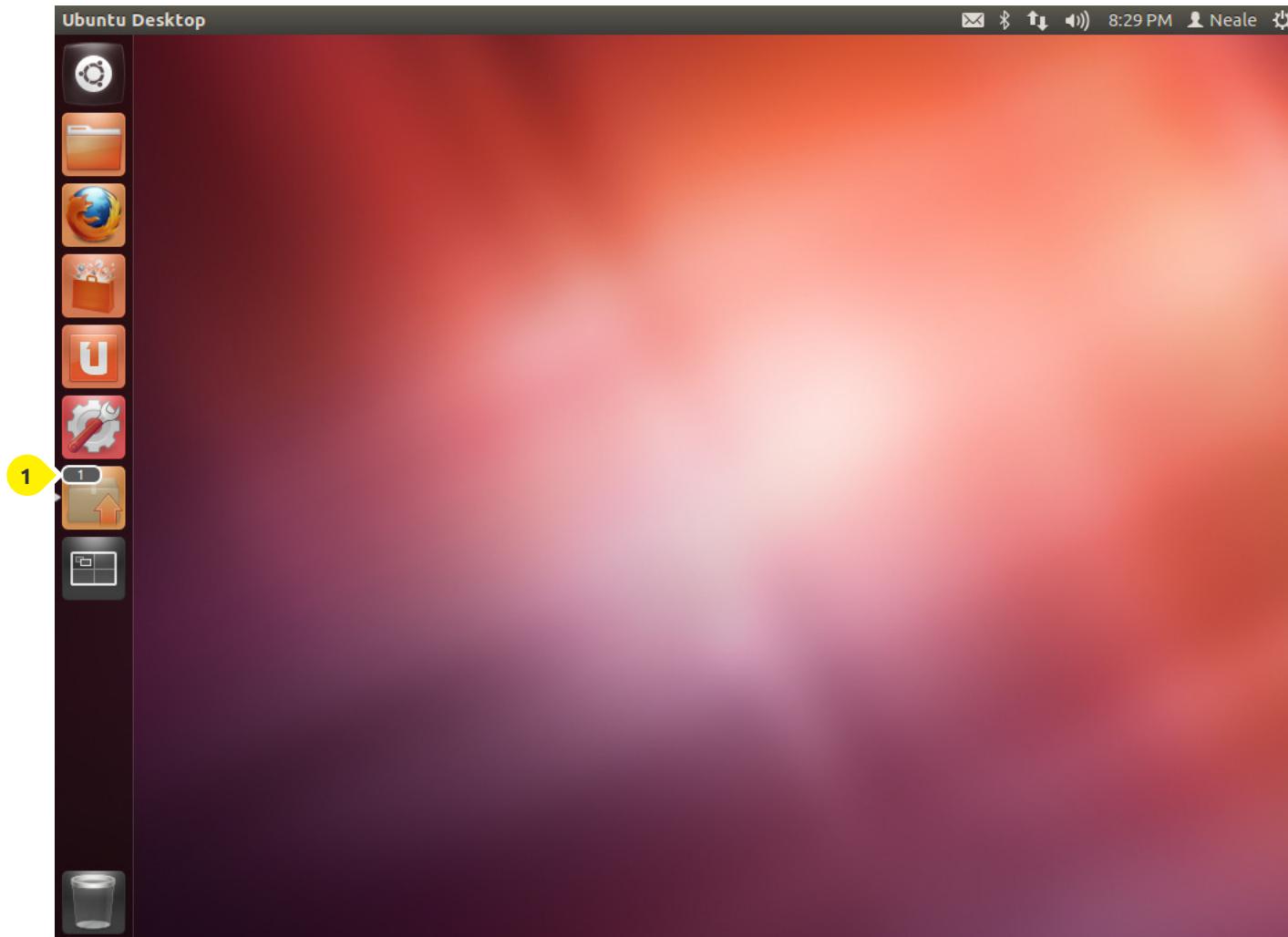
1. Password field has inconsistent padding with normal fields
2. Line spacing between login name and "Password:"

Unity – Launcher



**Individual**

1. Quicklist menus have much larger line spacing (and theme) than normal menus
2. Launcher items tooltips look like menus (and vice-versa)

**Pattern**

1. Count lozenge

Unity – Dash

NOTE:

Font variations

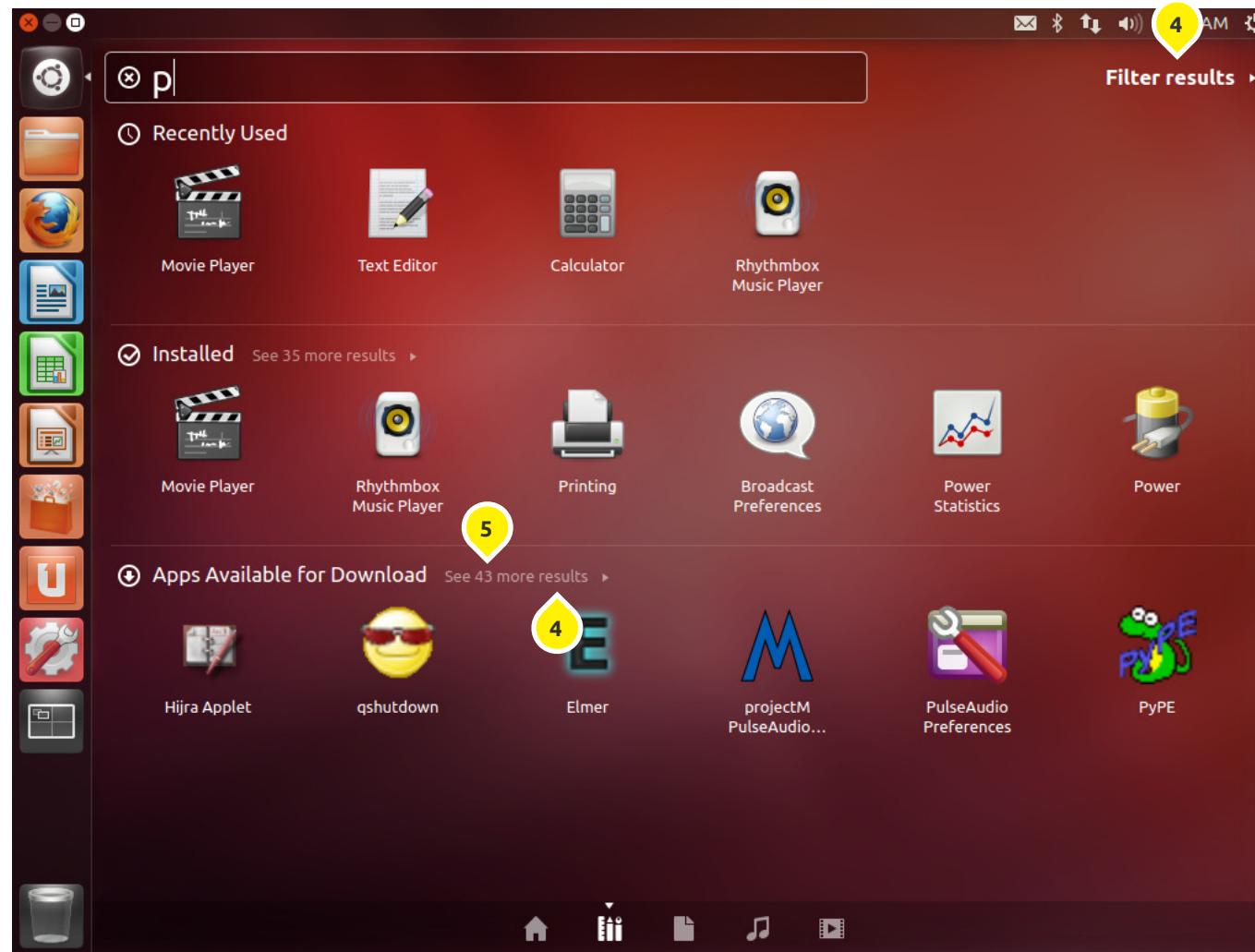
Within the Dash, a large number of font variations are often in use at the same time with nine variations present and up to six used at any one time.

These variations include:

- Search field “Search” placeholder
- Search field text
- “Sorry, there is nothing that matches your search.”
- Search results headings
- Search “more results” navigation
- Search result items
- “Filter results” and “Sources”
- “Decade” buttons
- “Sources” and “Genre” buttons

**Pattern**

2. Search icon in search field

**Pattern**

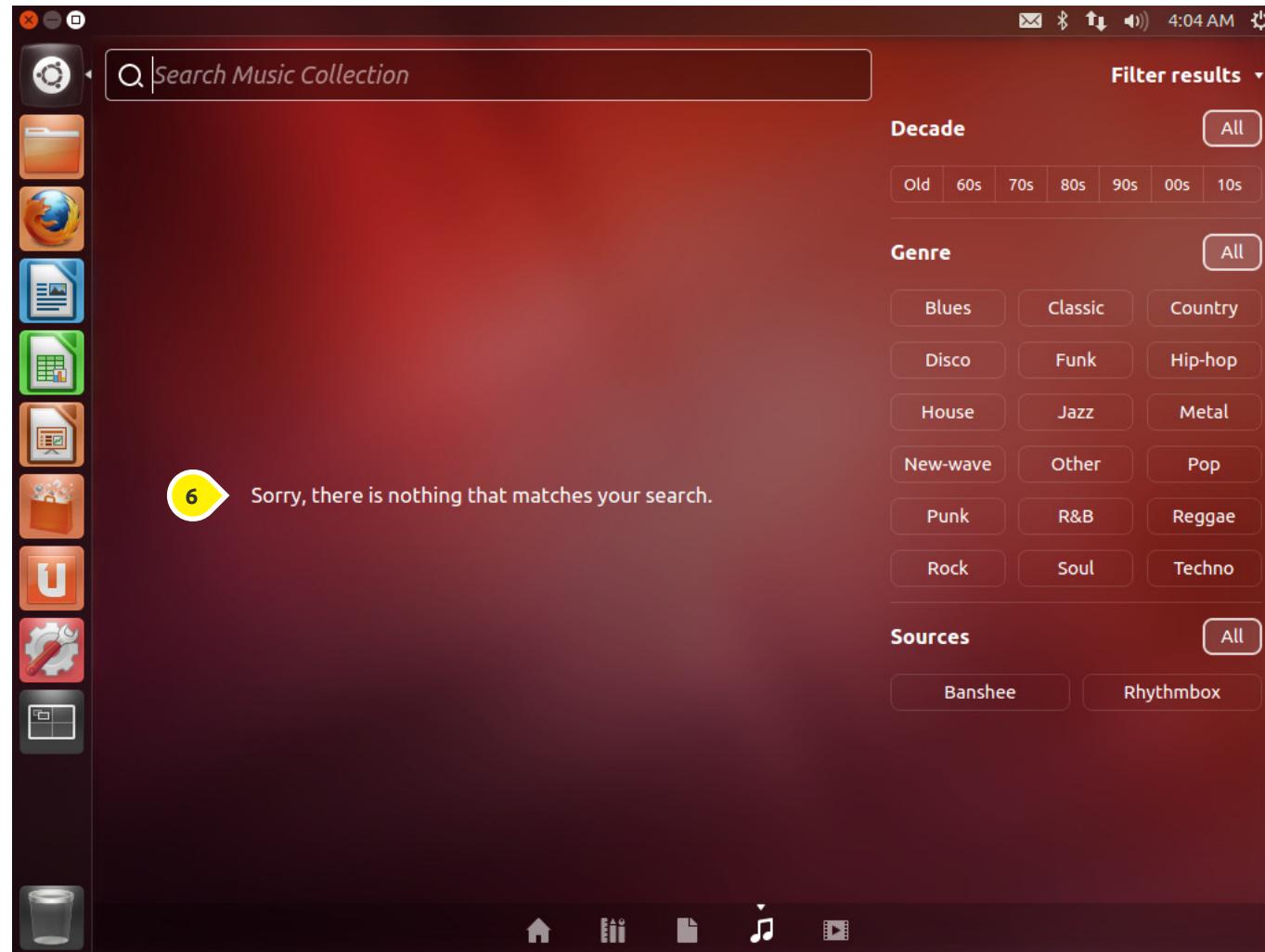
- 4. Link vs. button
- 5. More link



Pattern
1.

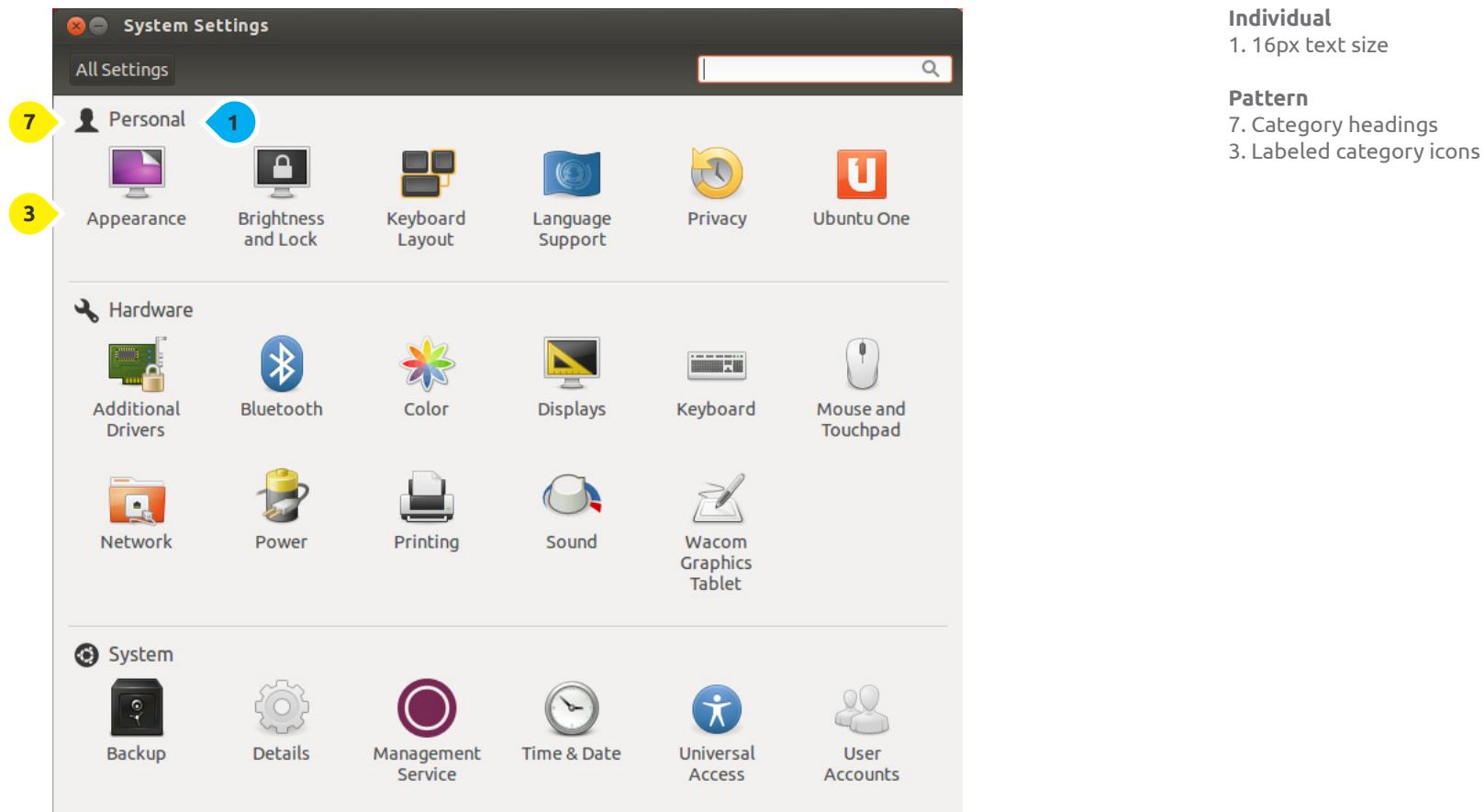


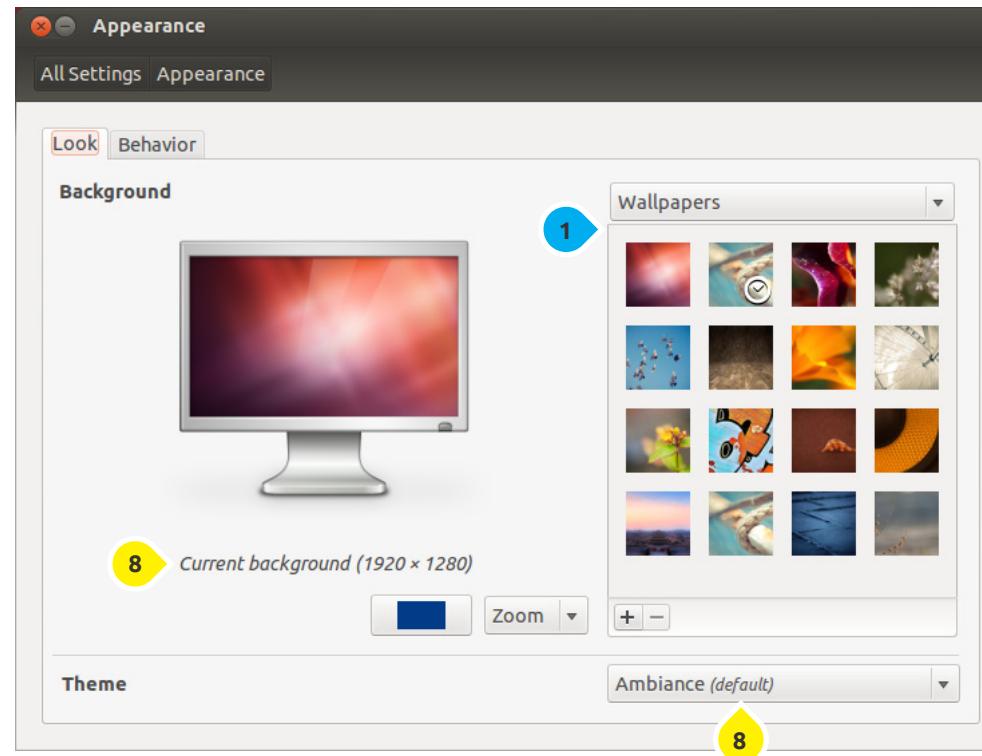
Pattern
1.



Pattern
1. Placeholder text

System Settings

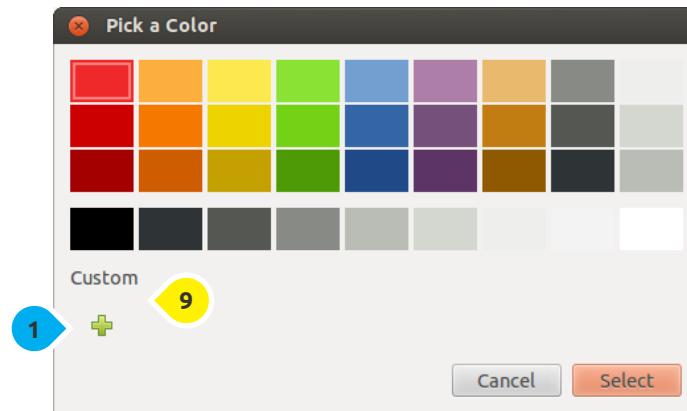


**Individual**

1. The “Wallpaper” menu doesn’t line up with the list below it.

Pattern

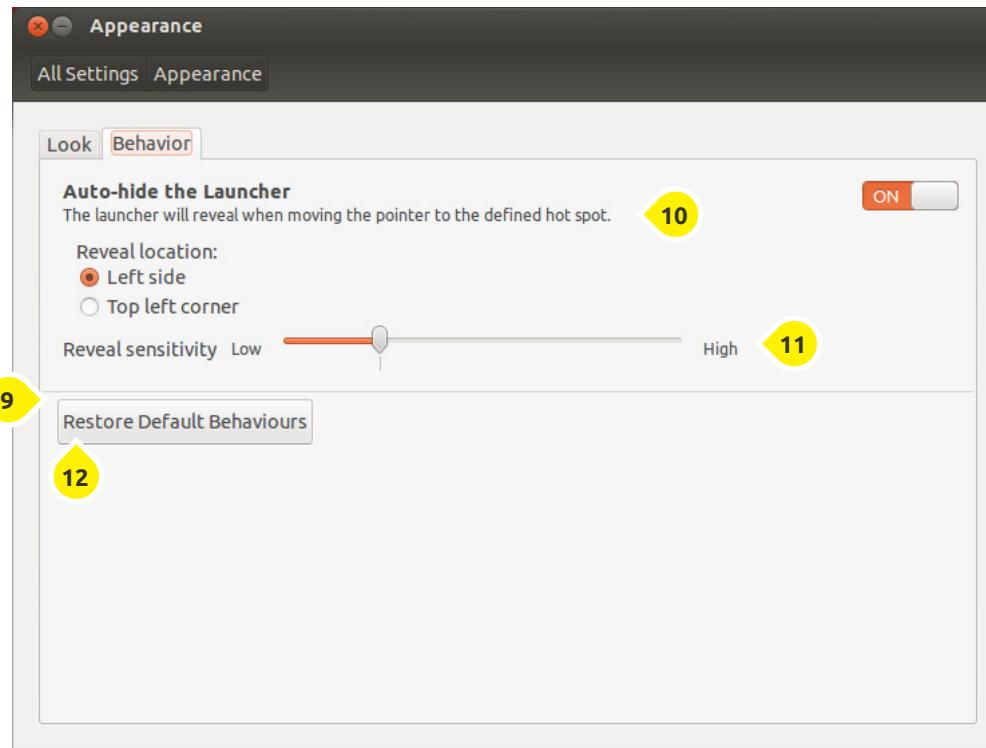
8. Use of italics

**Individual**

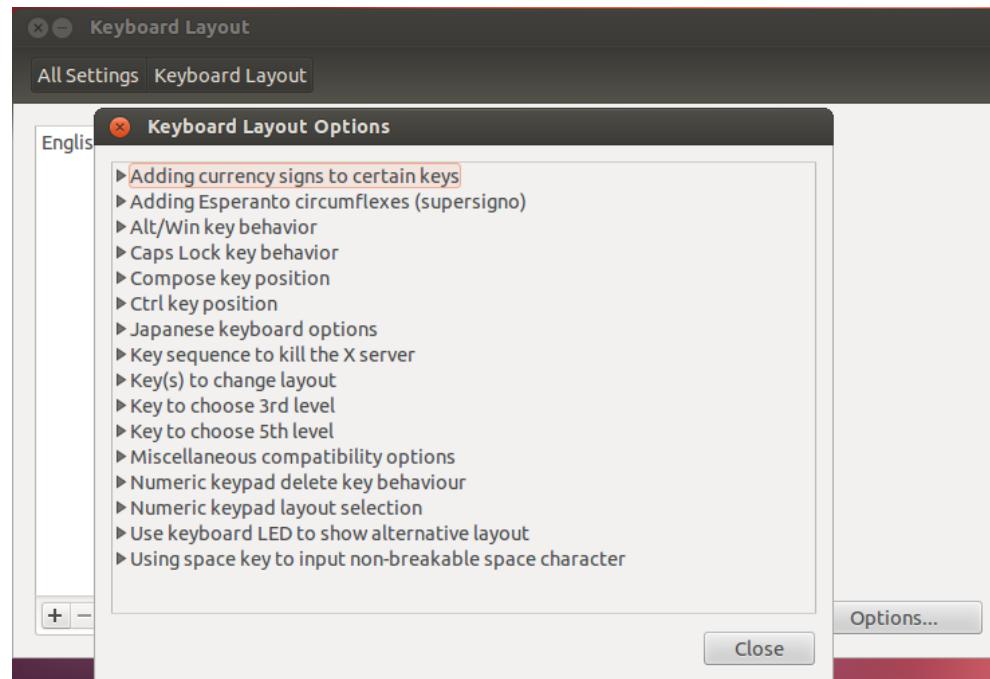
1. Unlabeled icon

Pattern

9. Vertical spacing of elements

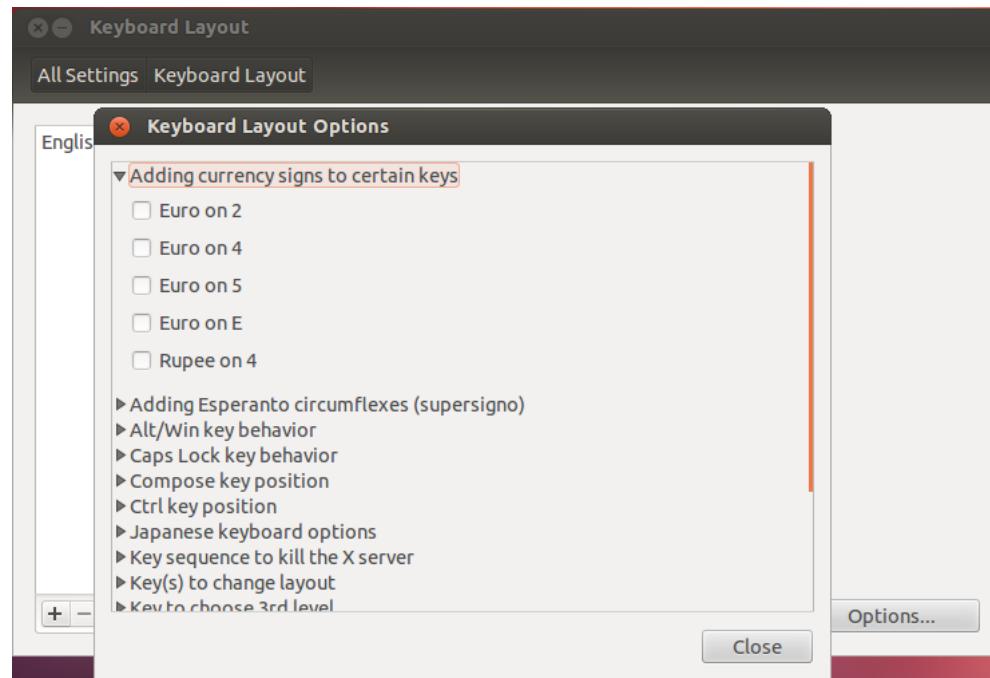
**Individual**

- 10. Use of small text size
- 11. Slider and text alignment
- 9. Vertical spacing of elements
- 12. Padding in buttons



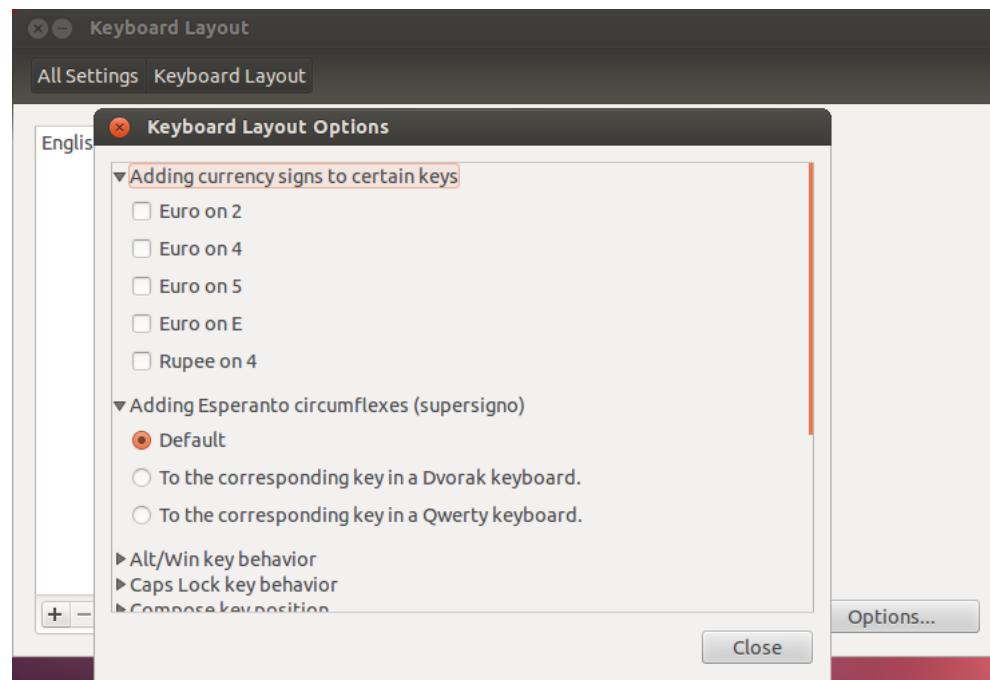
Lorem ipsum

1. Lorem



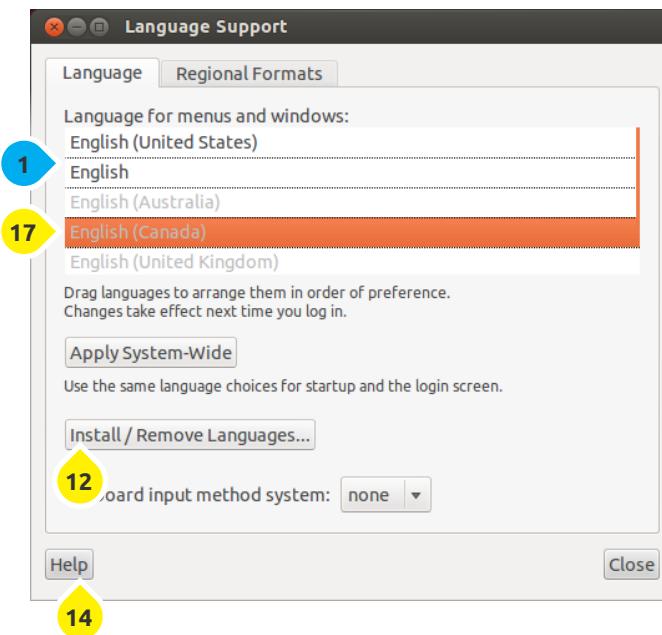
Lorem ipsum

1. Lorem



Lorem ipsum

1. Lorem

**Individual**

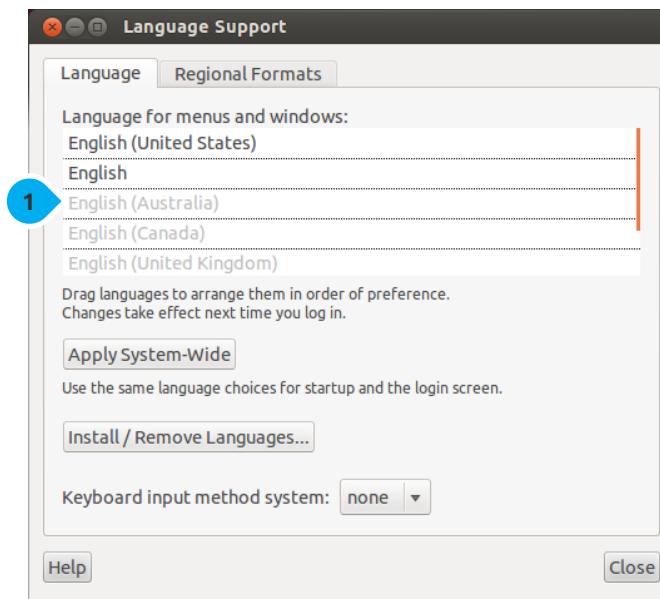
1. List of languages is missing a border

Pattern

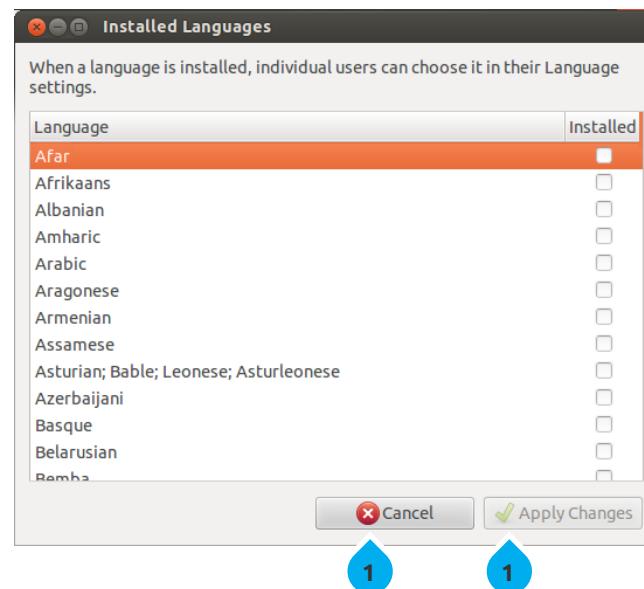
17. Selected state of inactive list item

12. Padding around text in buttons

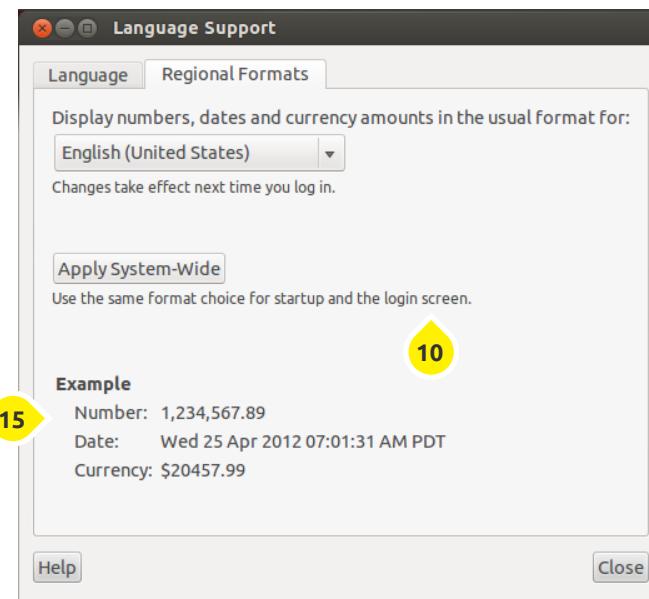
14. Minimum button widths

**Individual**

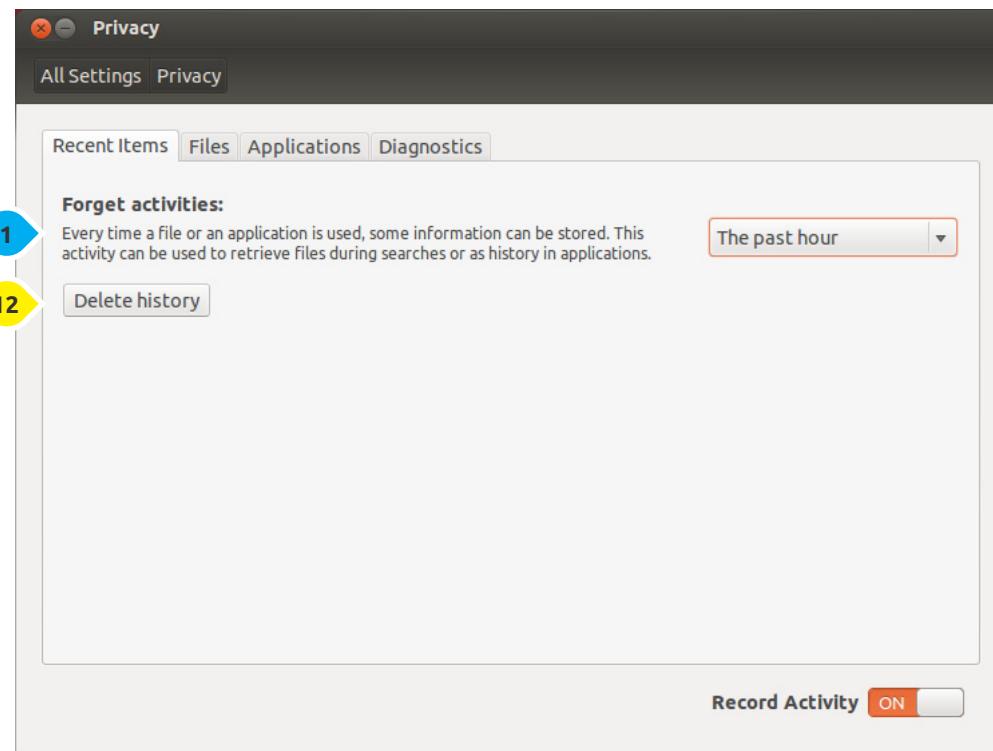
1. List of languages is missing a border

**Individual**

1. "Installed languages" buttons have icons, and shouldn't

**Pattern**

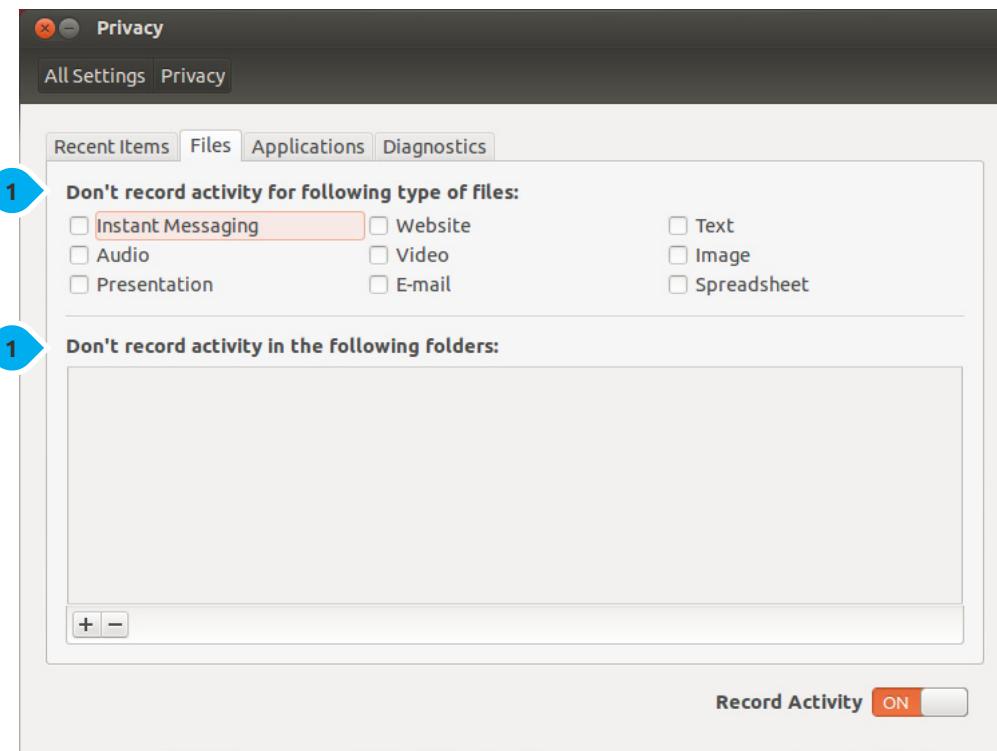
- 10. Key value list
- 15. Supporting/supplementary text

**Individual**

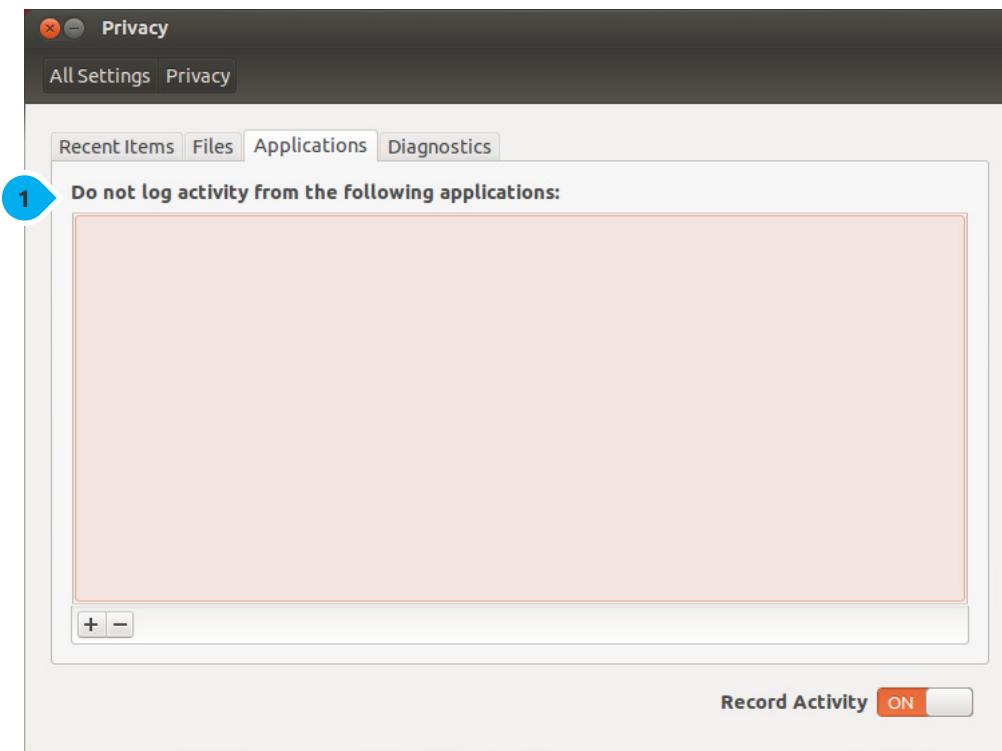
1. "Forget activities" is confused whether it is heading or label

Pattern

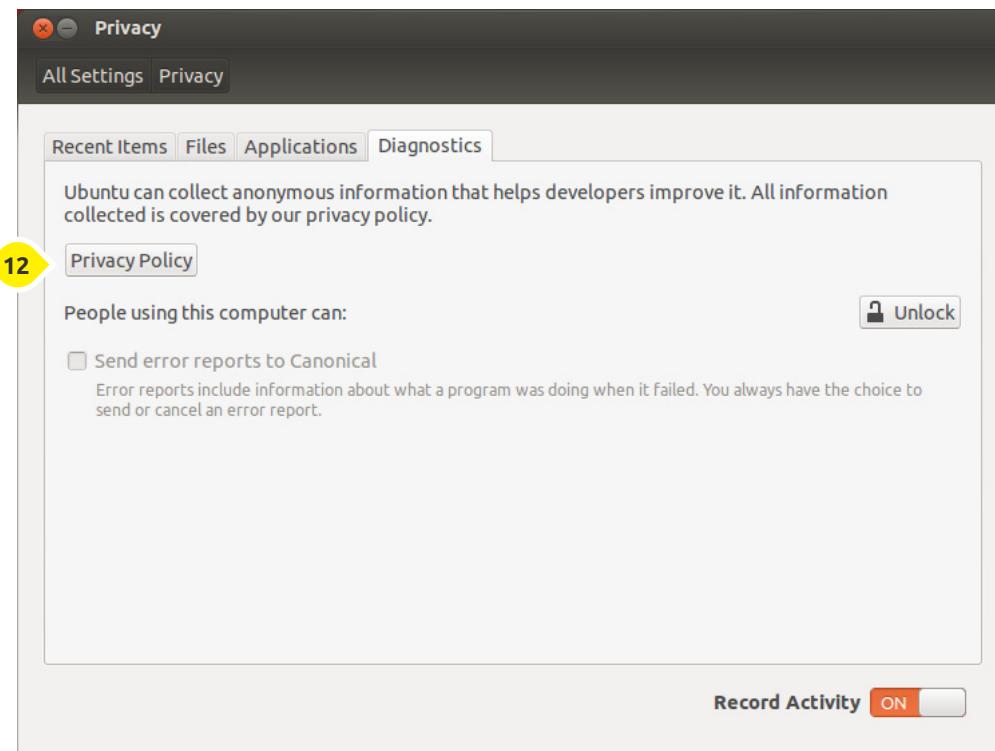
12. Padding around text in button

**Individual**

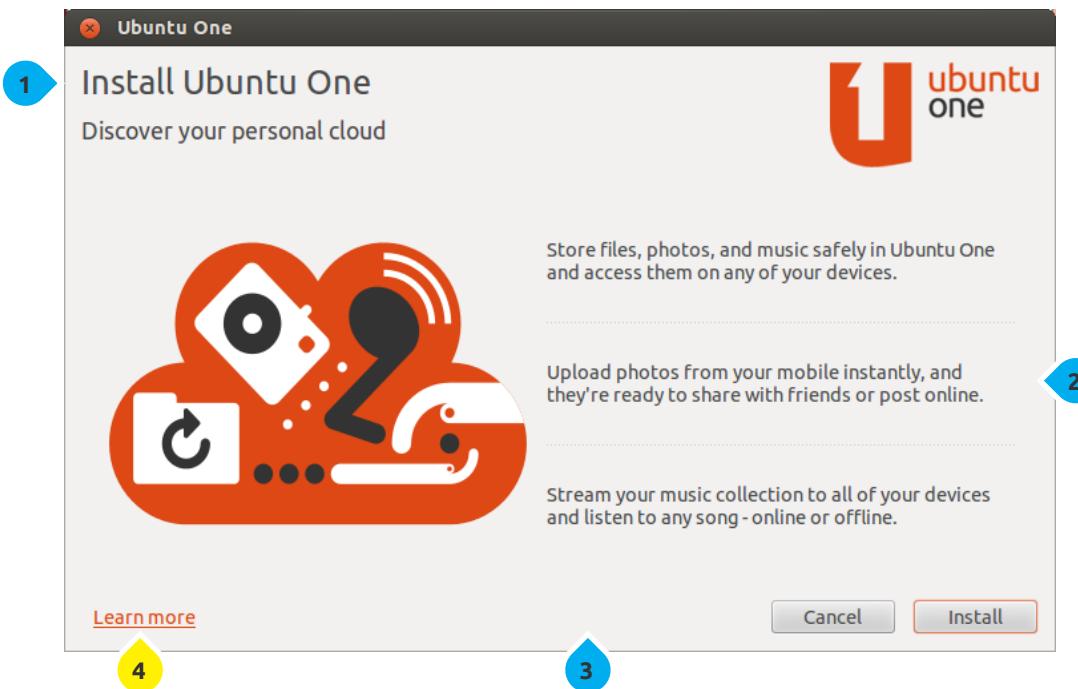
1. Confused use of heading or label

**Individual**

1. Confused use of heading or label

**Pattern**

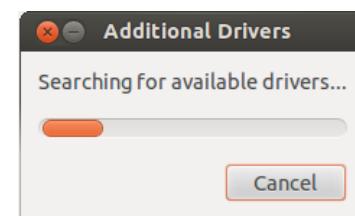
12. Padding around text in button

**Individual**

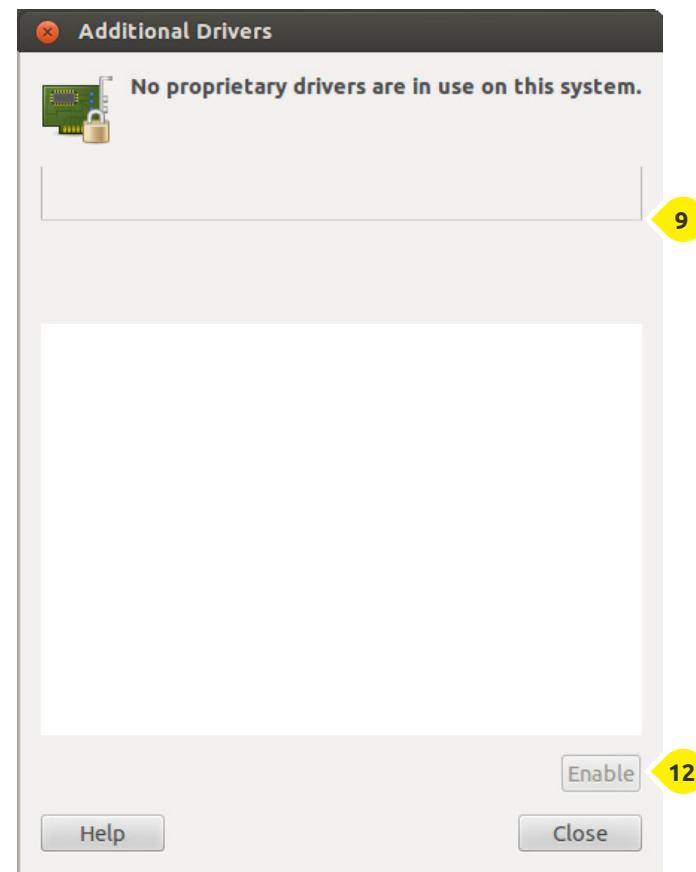
1. Header and subheader unique
2. Alignment and spacing
3. Overall layout alignment

Pattern

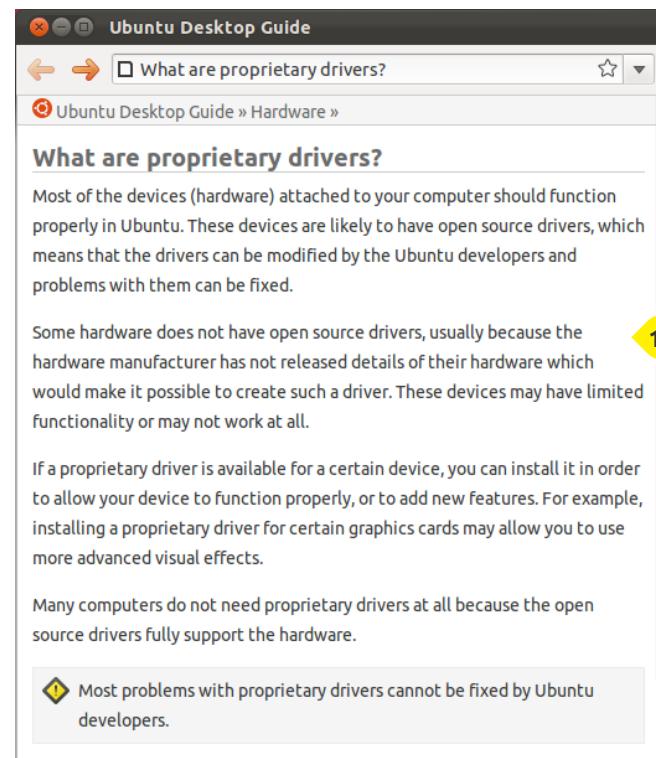
4. Link vs. button



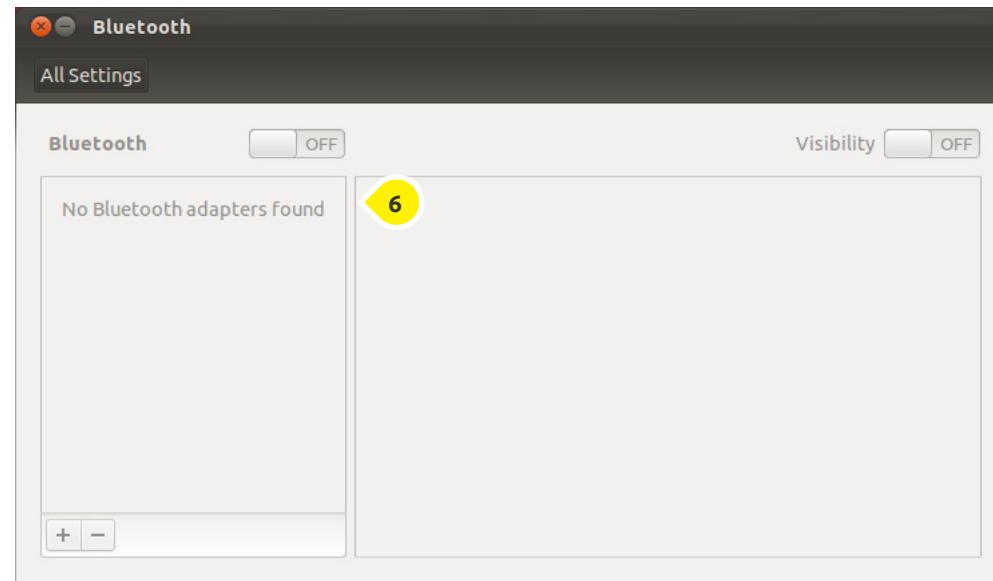
Pattern
1.

**Pattern**

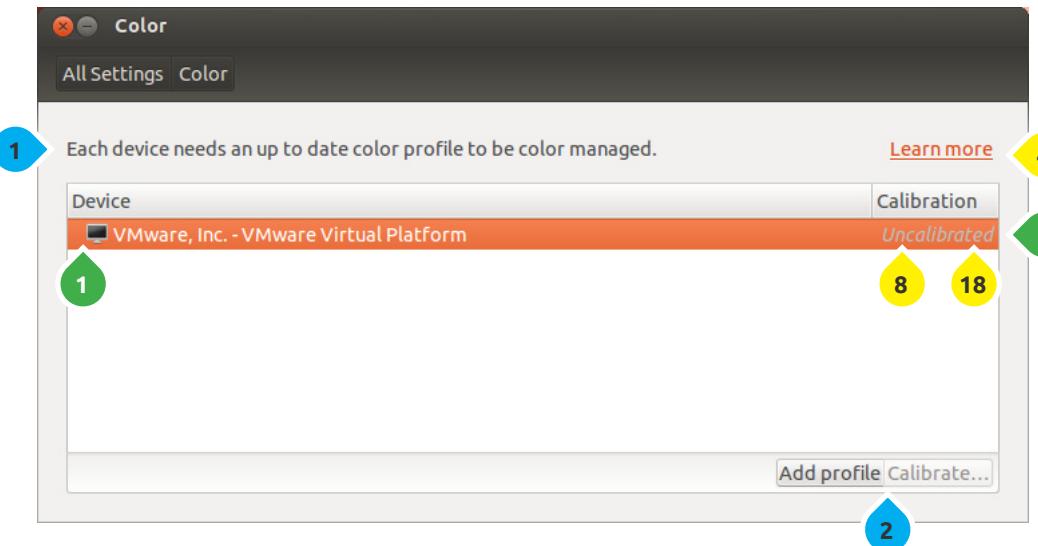
- 9. Vertical spacing
- 12. Padding around text in buttons



Pattern
16. Line spacing



Pattern
6. Place holder text

**Individual**

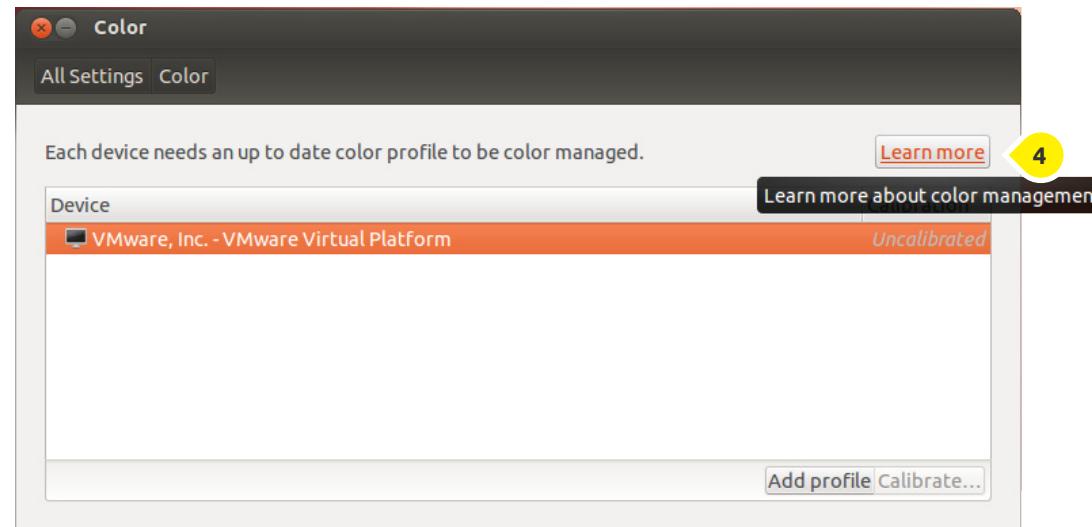
1. An explanation is taking the place of a label
2. Spacing of "Add profile" and "Calibrate" buttons is wonky

Theme

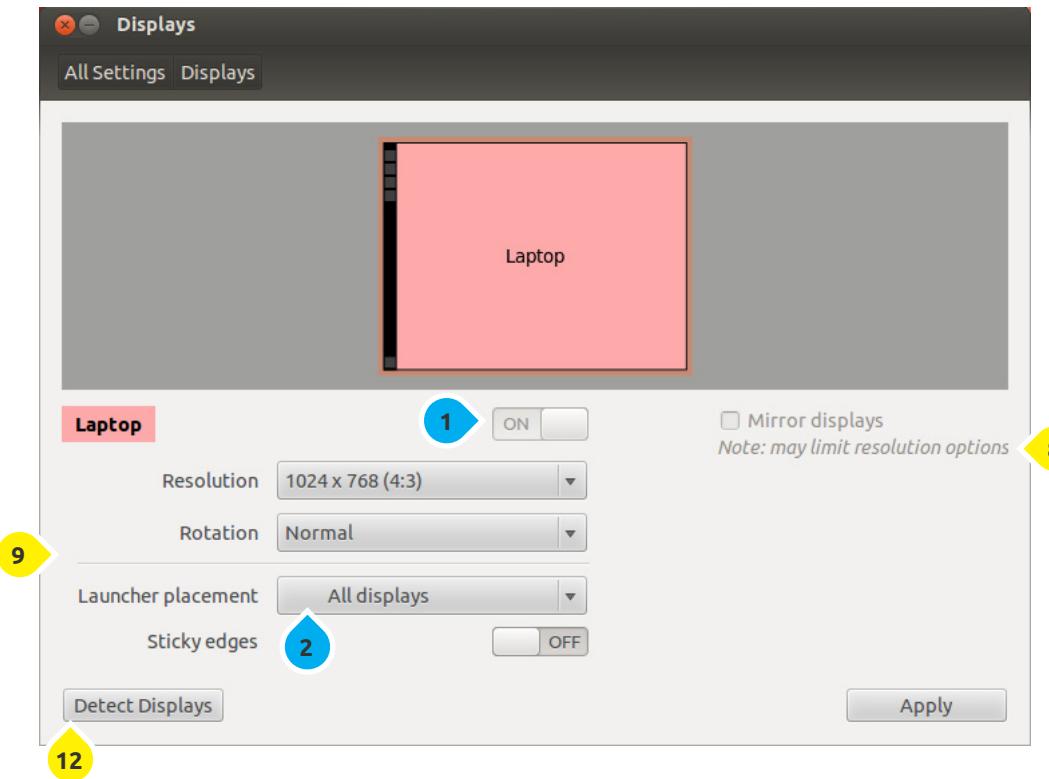
1. Selected greyed-out item is near-unreadable
2. Inconsistent horizontal padding for list headers vs. list cells

Pattern

4. Link vs. button
8. Use of italics
18. Colour selection



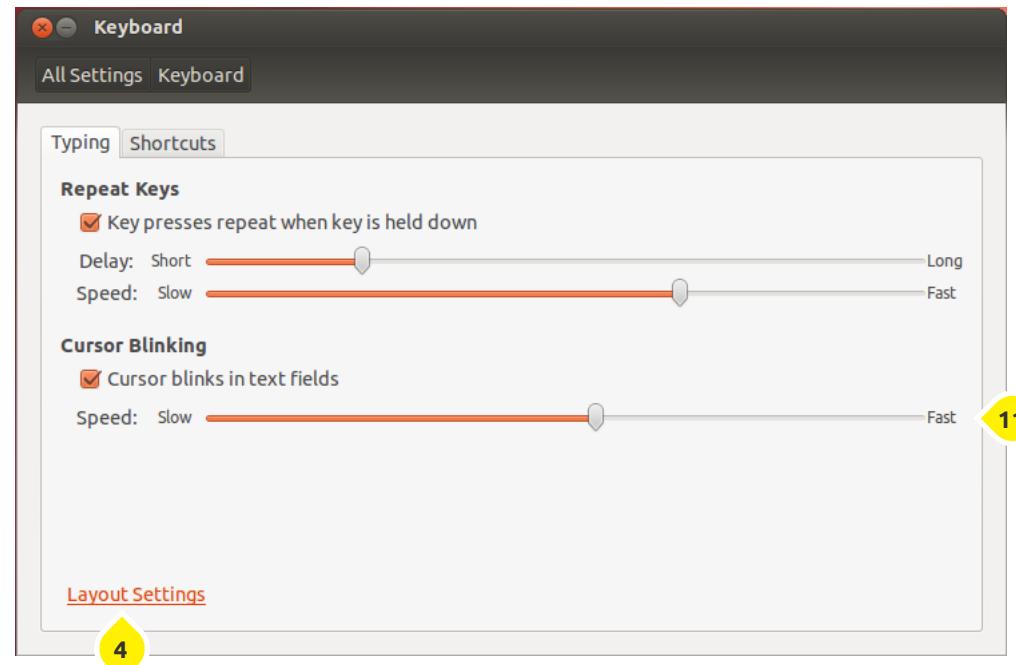
Pattern
4. Link vs. button

**Individual**

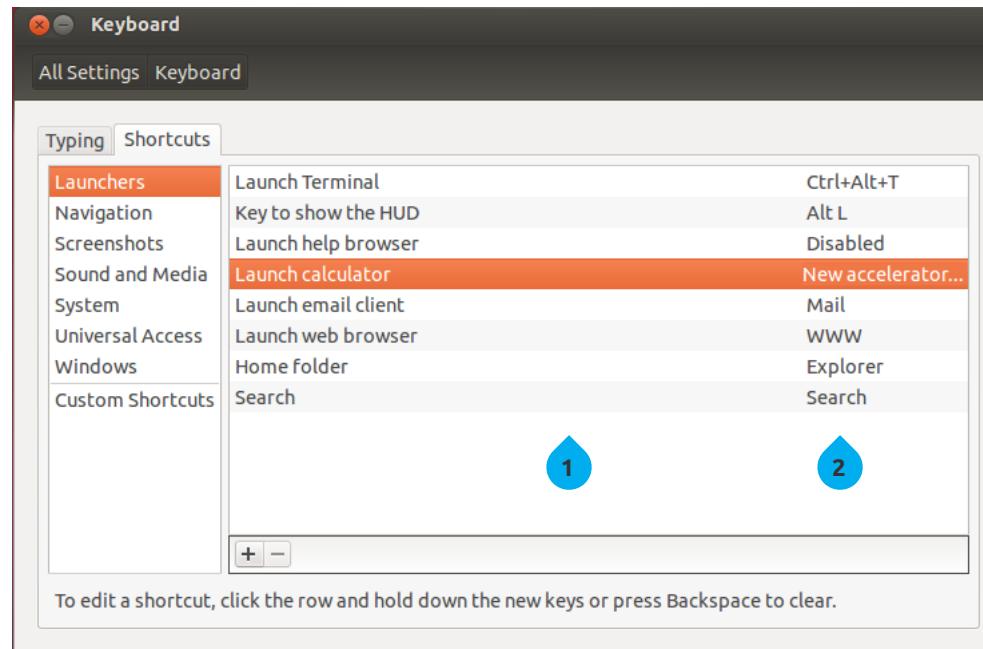
1. Switch without a label
2. Icon missing from "All displays" menu item

Pattern

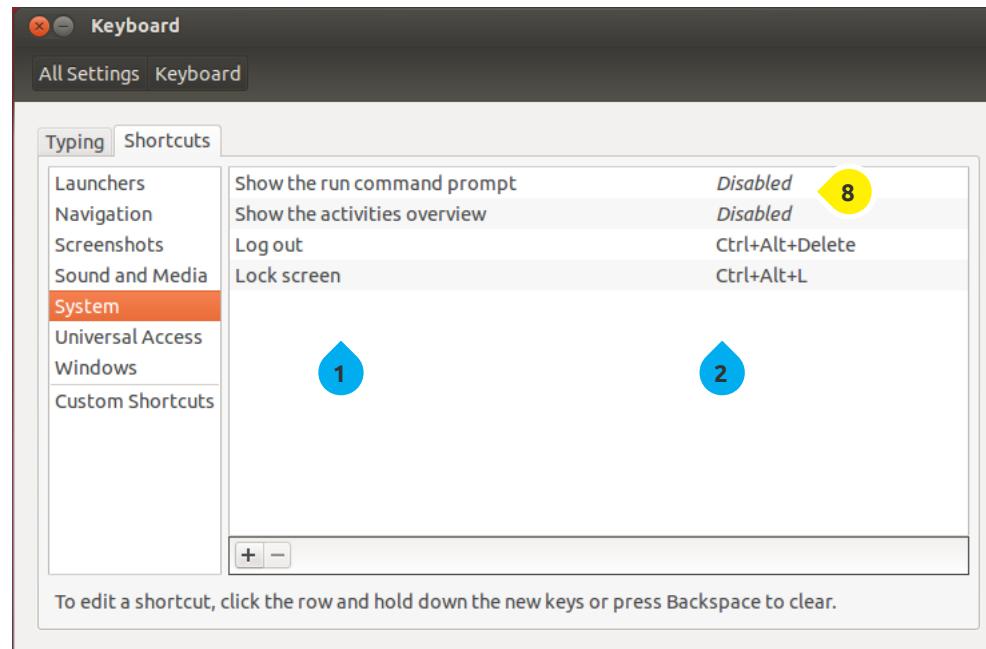
8. Use of italics
9. Vertical spacing of elements
12. Padding around text in buttons

**Pattern**

- 11. Slider and text alignment
- 4. Link vs buttons

**Individual**

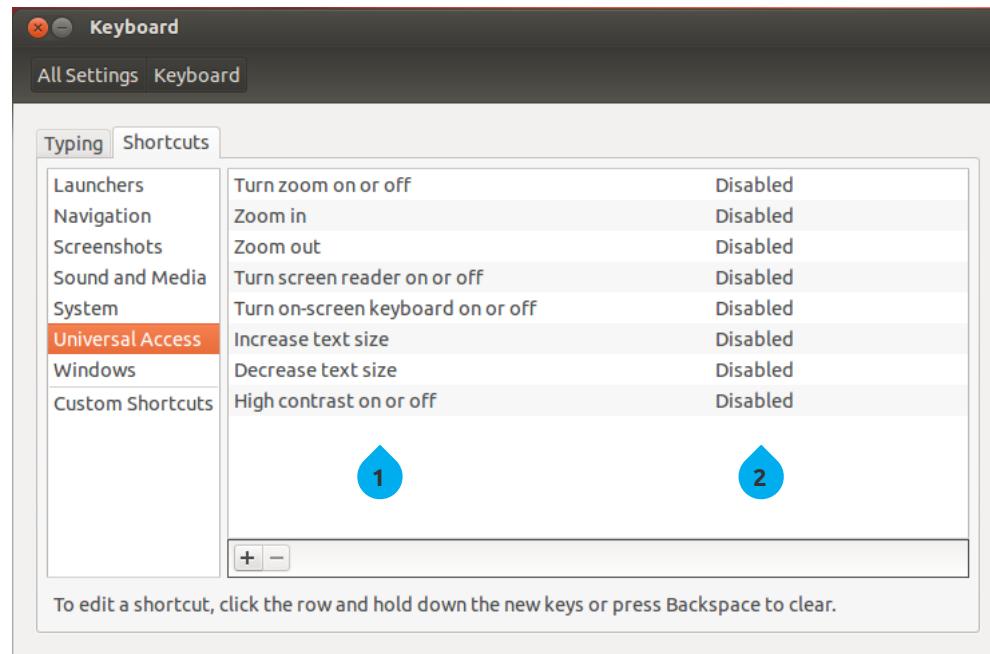
1. Suboptimal column widths
2. Mysteriously changing column widths

**Individual**

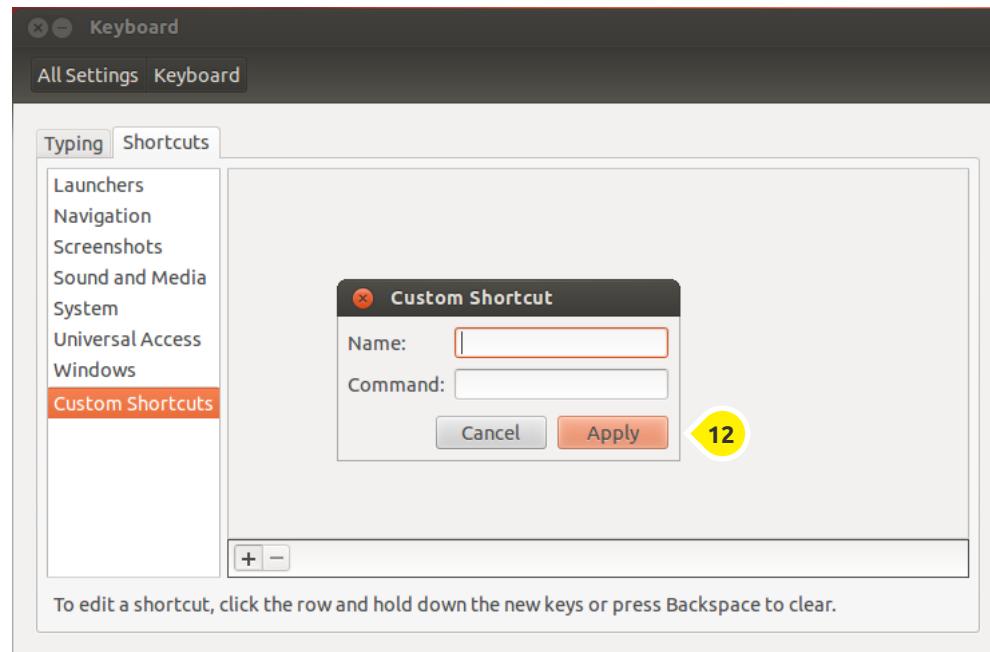
1. Suboptimal column widths
2. Mysteriously changing column widths

Pattern

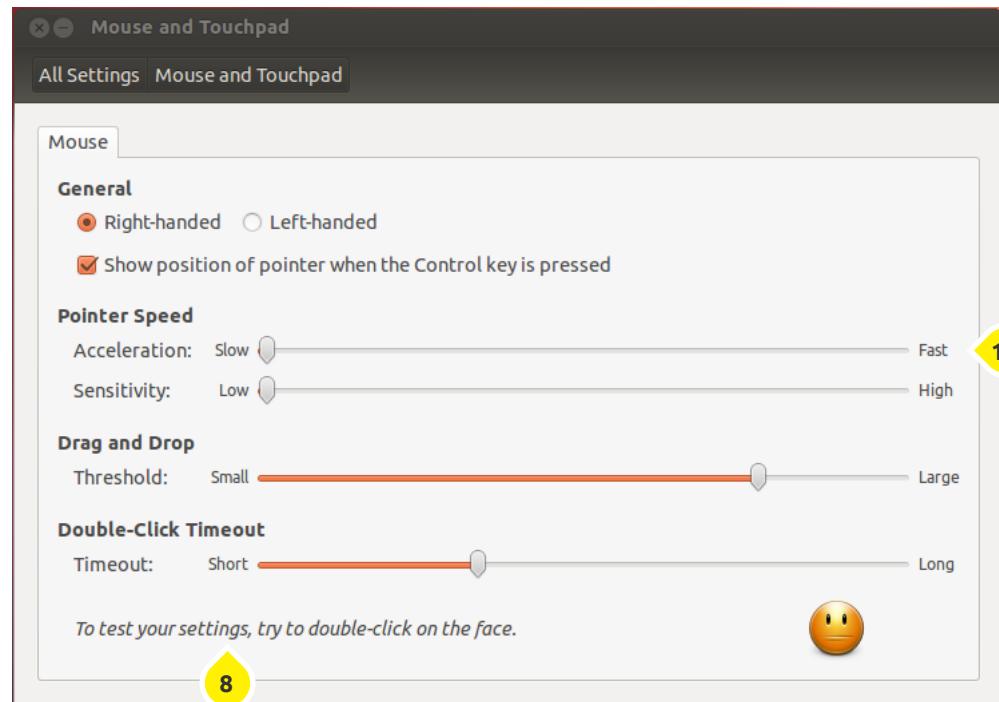
8. Use of italics

**Individual**

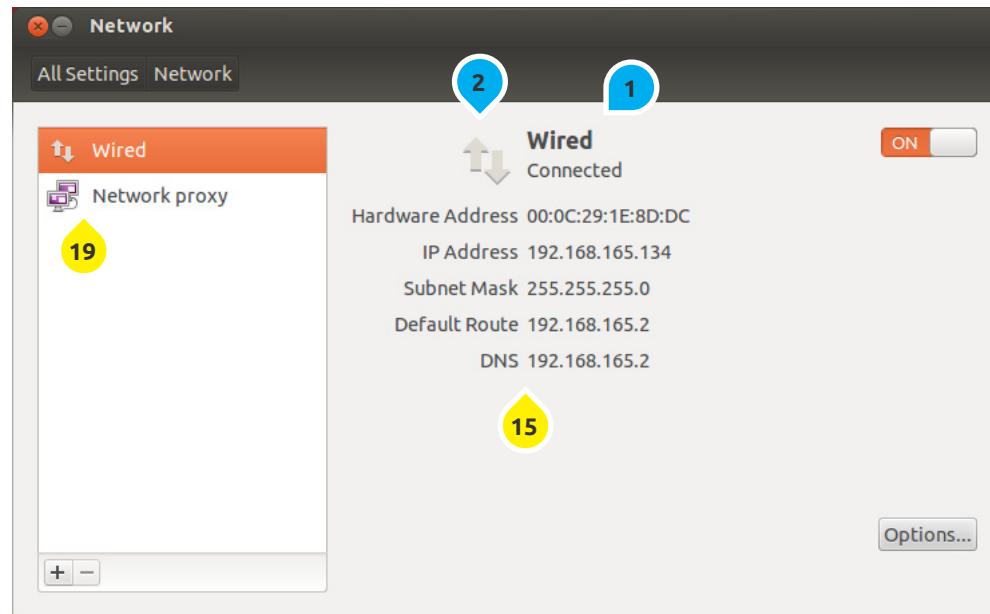
1. Suboptimal column widths
2. Mysteriously changing column widths

**Pattern**

12. Padding around text in buttons

**Pattern**

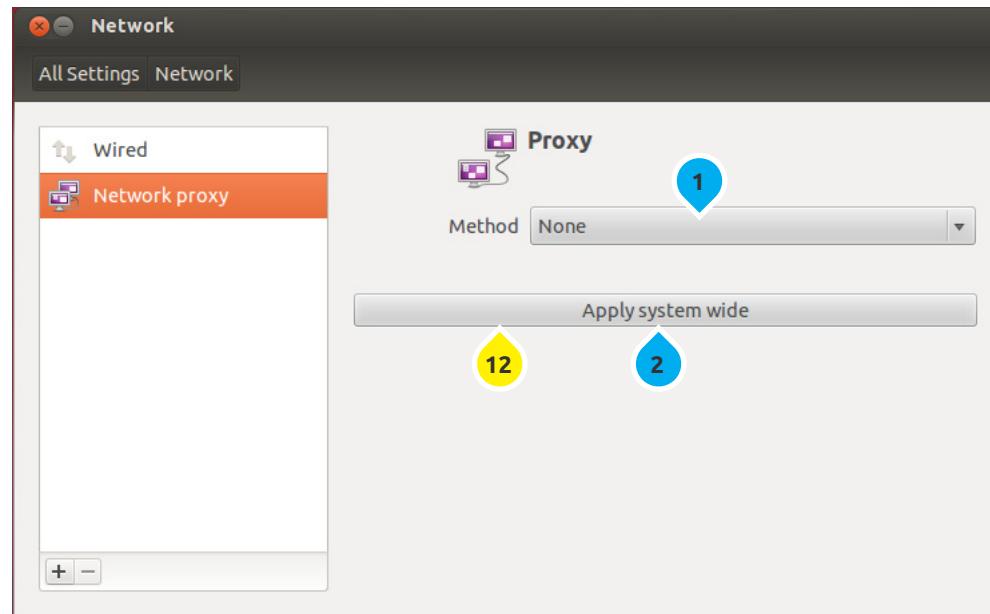
8. Use of italics
11. Slider and text alignment

**Individual**

1. Unusually large headings
2. Alignment of headings vs. icons

Pattern

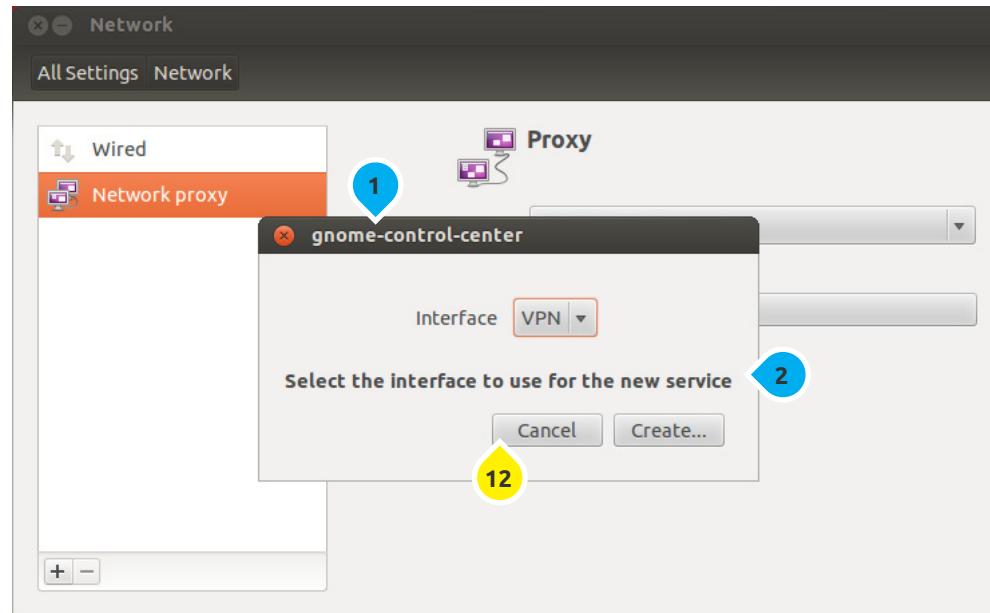
15. Key list value
19. Spacing of icons and text in list items

**Individual**

1. Overly wide "method" menu
2. Overly wide "Apply System Wide" button

Pattern

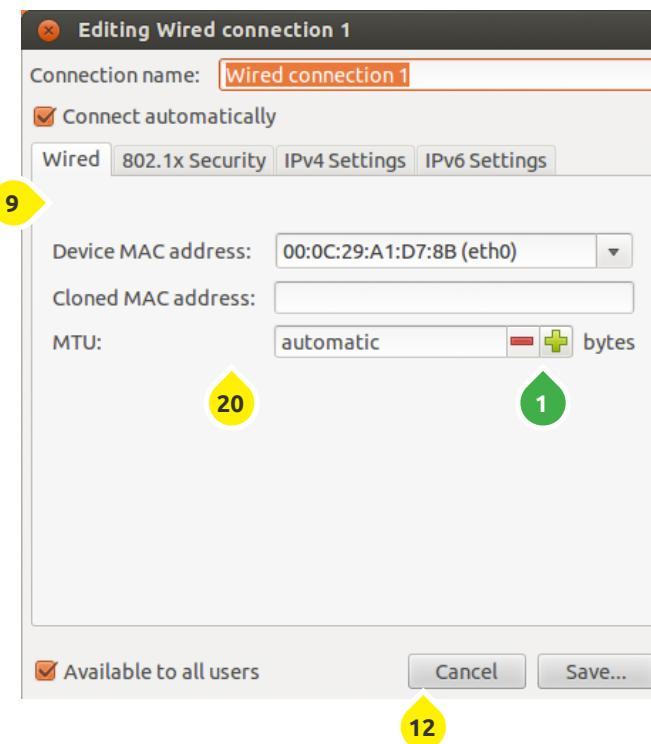
12. Padding around text in buttons

**Individual**

1. Default panel title
2. Inversed title/content

Pattern

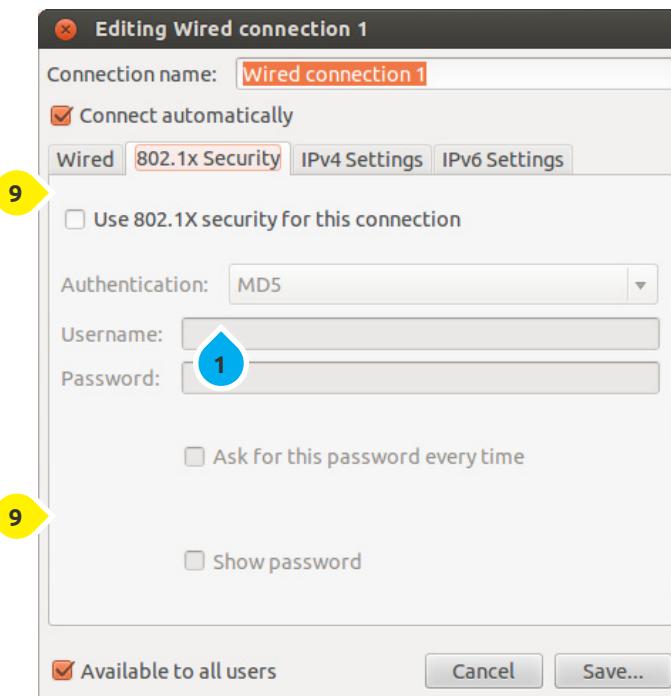
12. Padding around text in buttons

**Theme**

1. “-” and “+” icons in spin buttons

Pattern

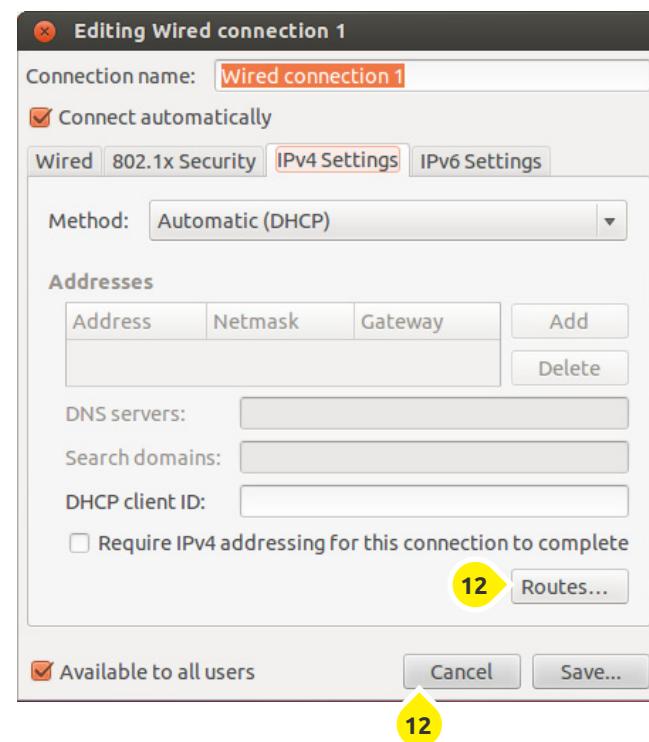
- 9. Vertical spacing of elements
- 12. Padding around text in buttons
- 20. Left vs. right alignment of labels

**Individual**

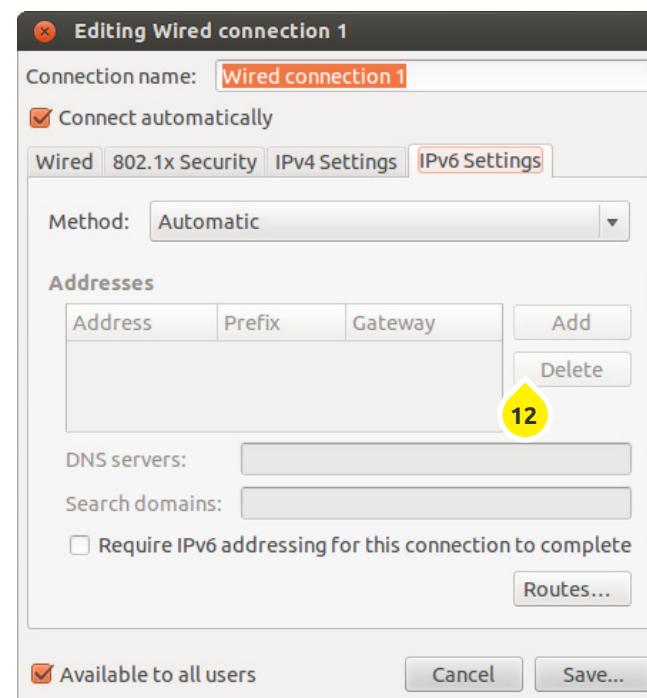
1. Alignment of elements

Pattern

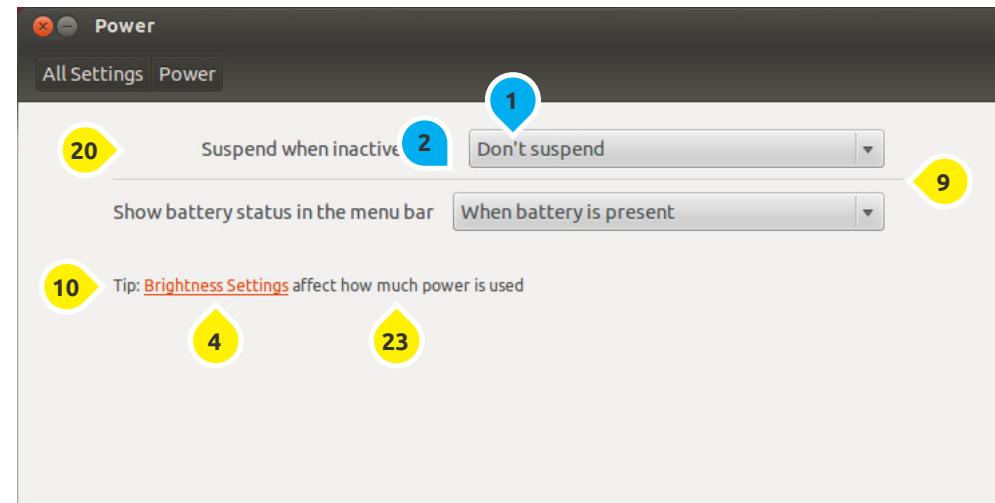
9. Vertical alignment of elements

**Pattern**

12. Padding around text in buttons

**Pattern**

12. Padding around text in buttons

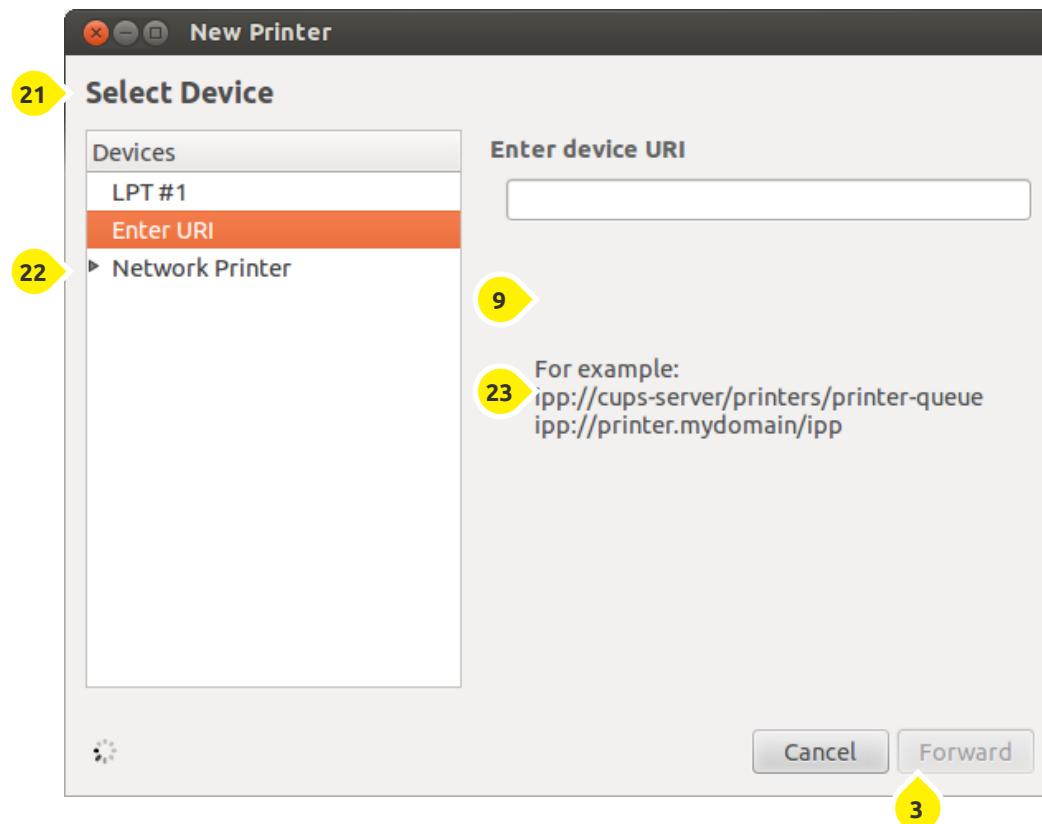
**Individual**

1. Non-typographical apostrophe in "Don't"
2. Menus are differing widths

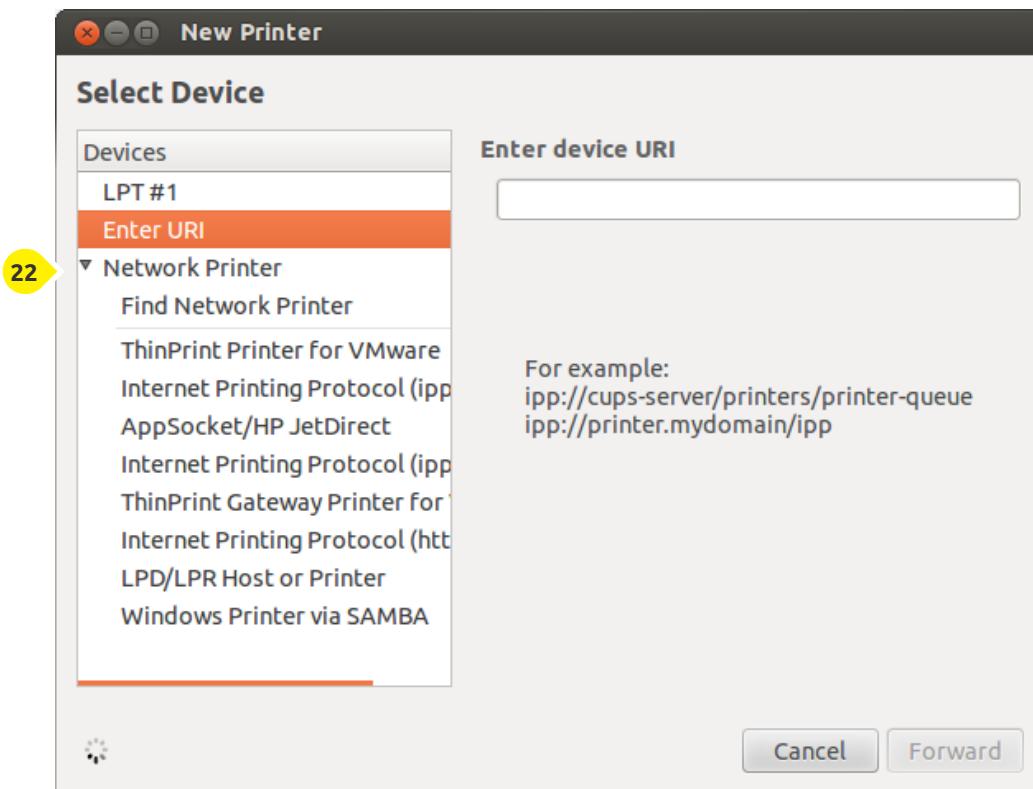
Pattern

4. Link vs. button
9. Vertical spacing of elements
10. Use of small text size
20. Left-aligned vs right-aligned menu items
23. Supporting text

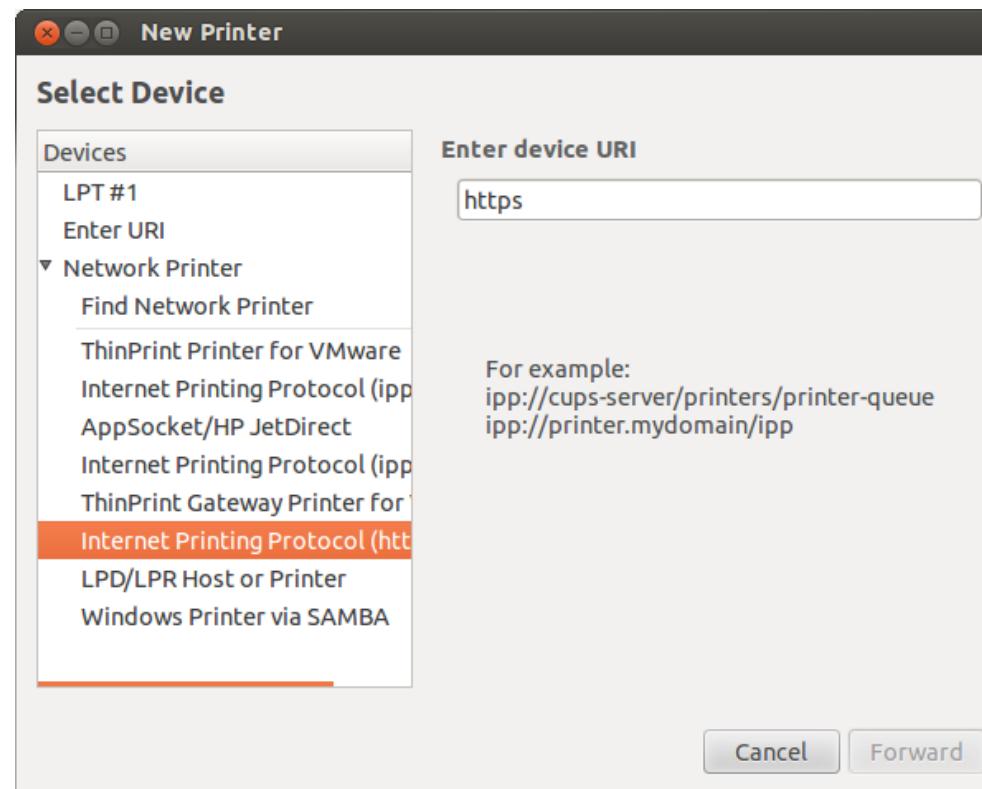


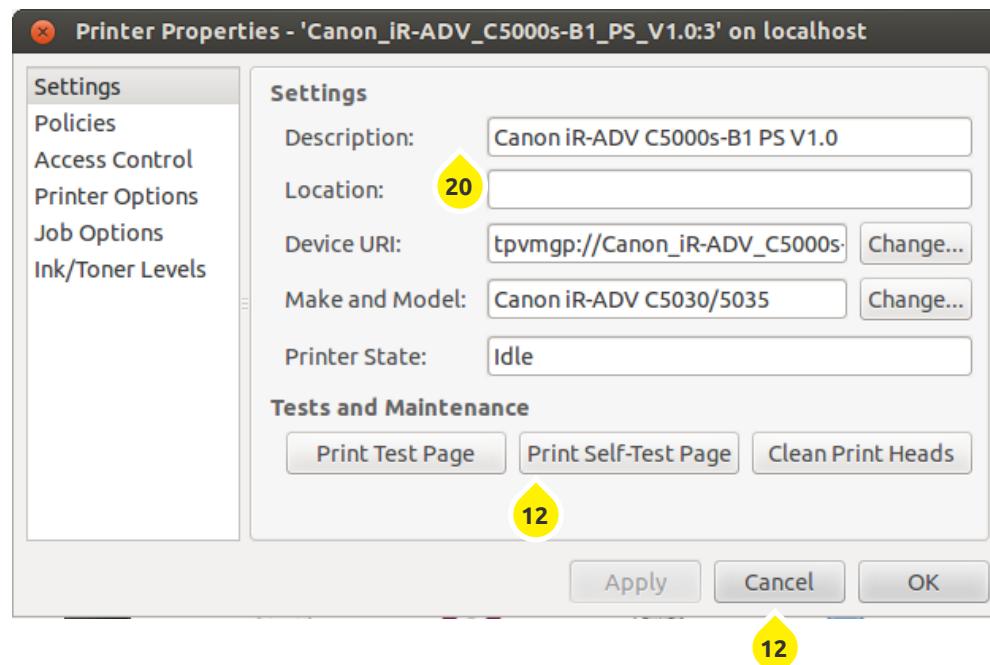
**Pattern**

- 9. Vertical alignment
- 12. Padding around text in buttons
- 21. Heading size
- 22. Non-selectable, expandable items in lists
- 23. Supporting information

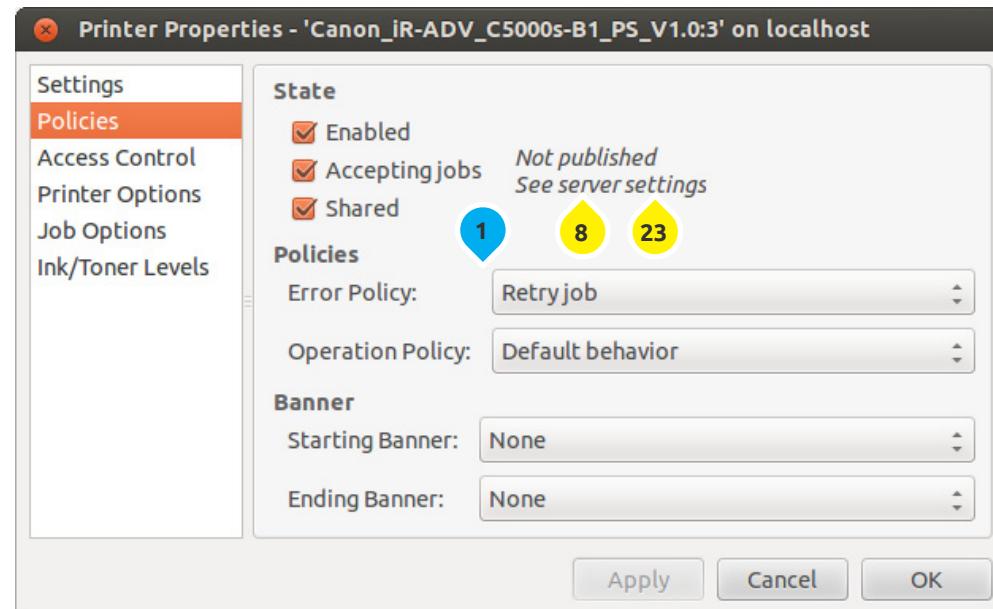
**Pattern**

22. Non-selectable, expandable items in lists



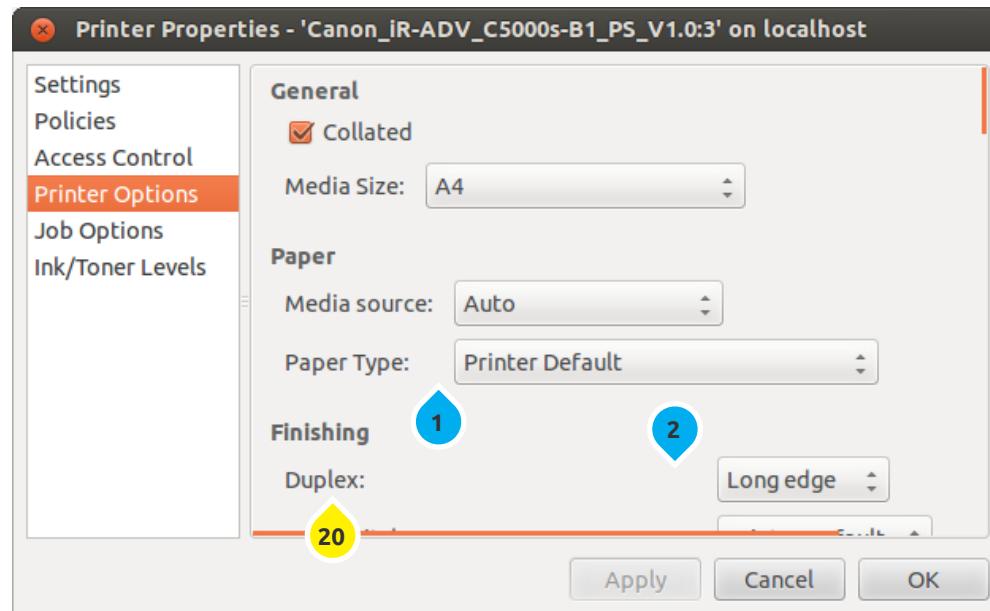
**Pattern**

- 12. Padding around text in buttons
- 20. Left vs. right alignment of labels

**Individual**

1. Alignment of elements

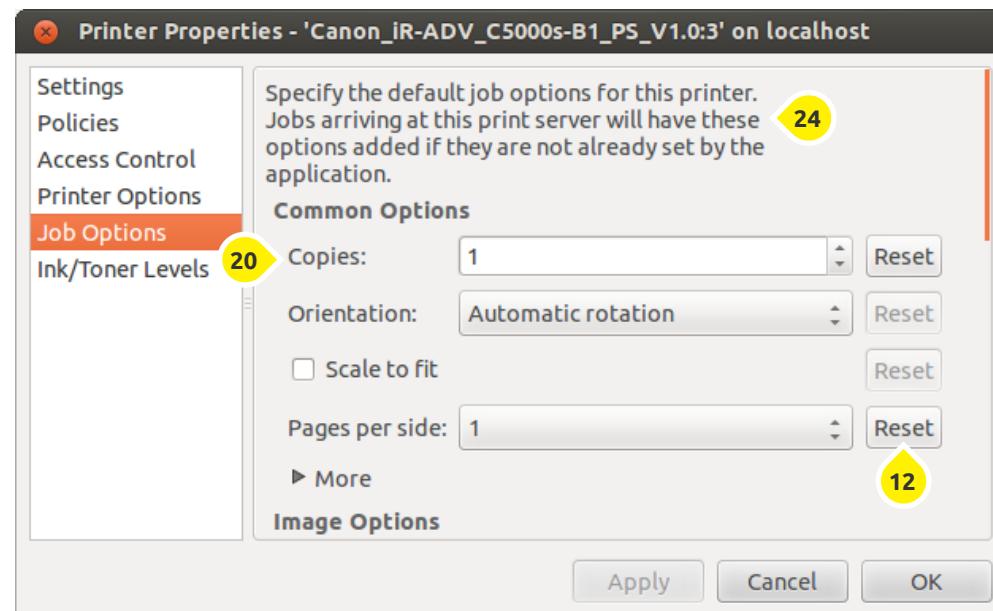
Pattern8. Use of italics
23. Supporting information

**Individual**

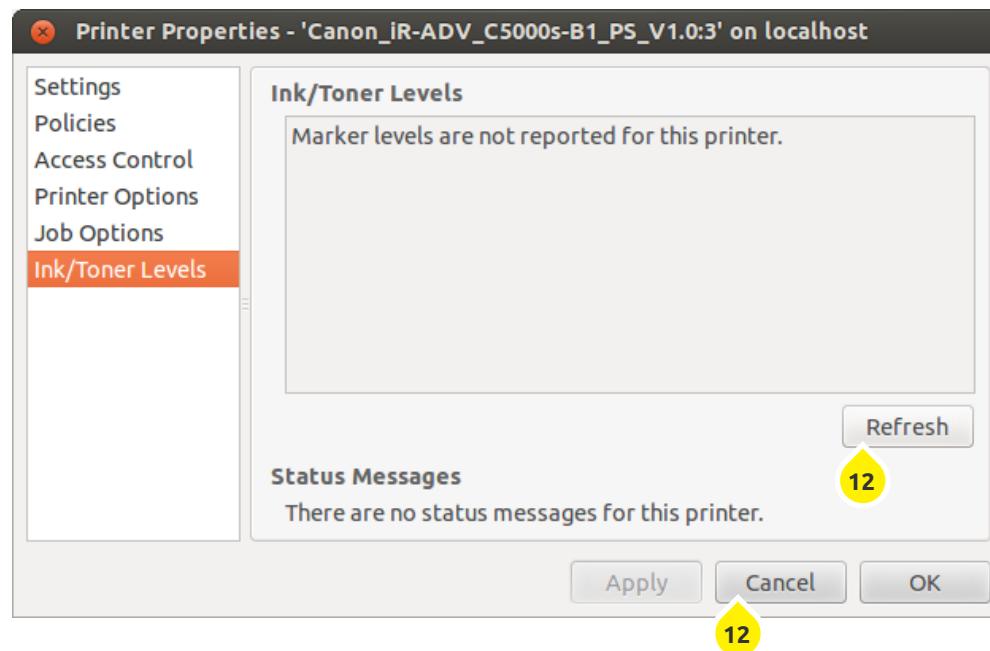
1. Alignment of elements
2. Horizontal positioning of elements

Pattern

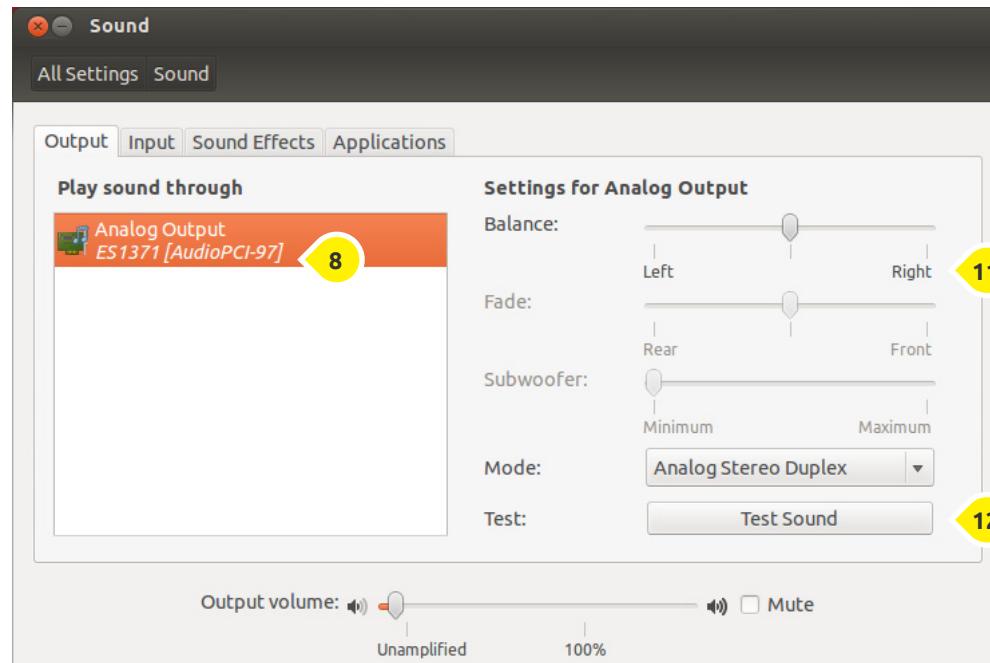
20. Left vs. right alignment of labels

**Pattern**

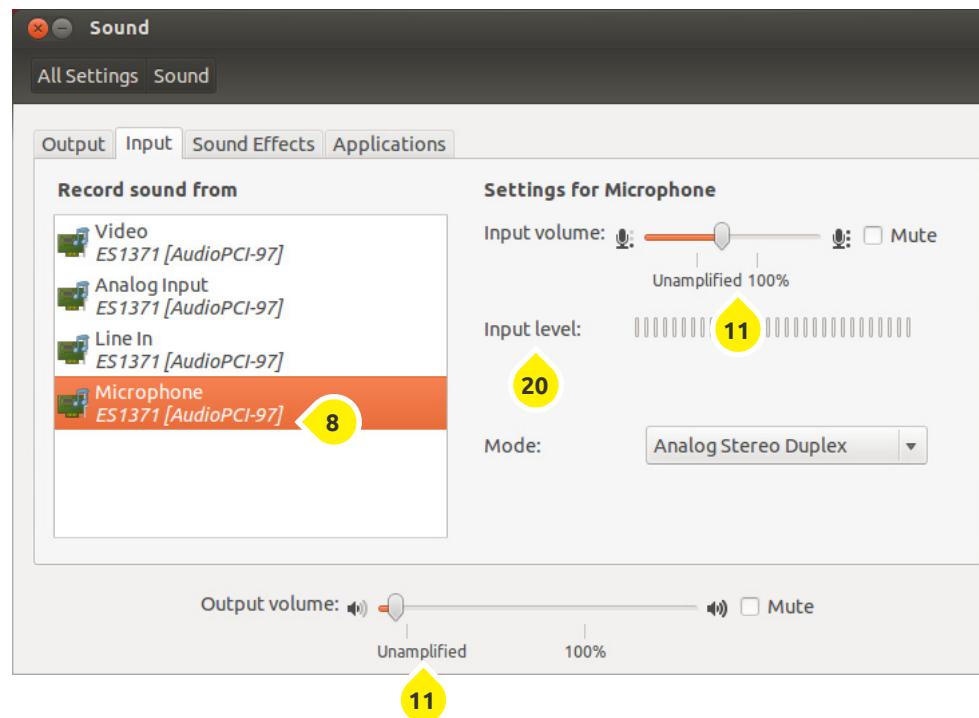
- 12. Padding around text in buttons
- 20. Left vs. right alignment of labels
- 24. Line length

**Pattern**

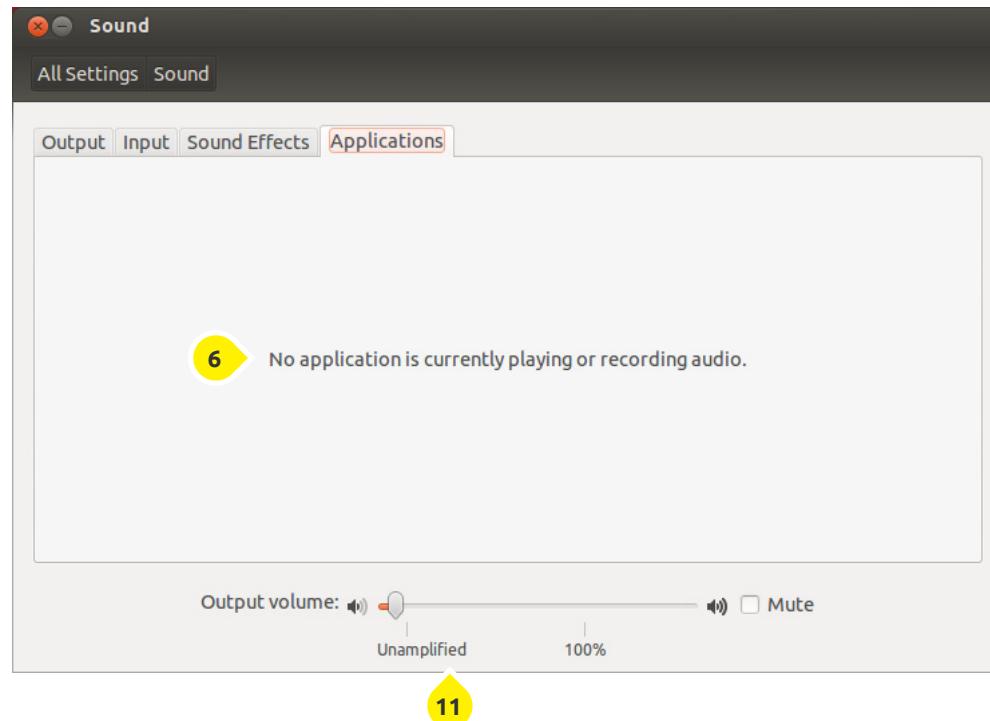
12. Padding around text in buttons

**Pattern**

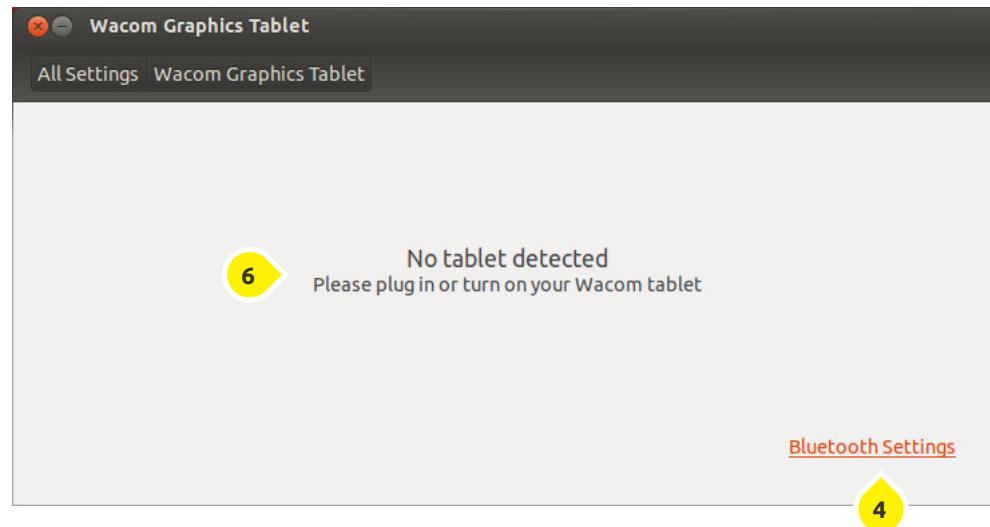
- 8. Use of italics
- 11. Slider tickmarks
- 12. Button width

**Pattern**

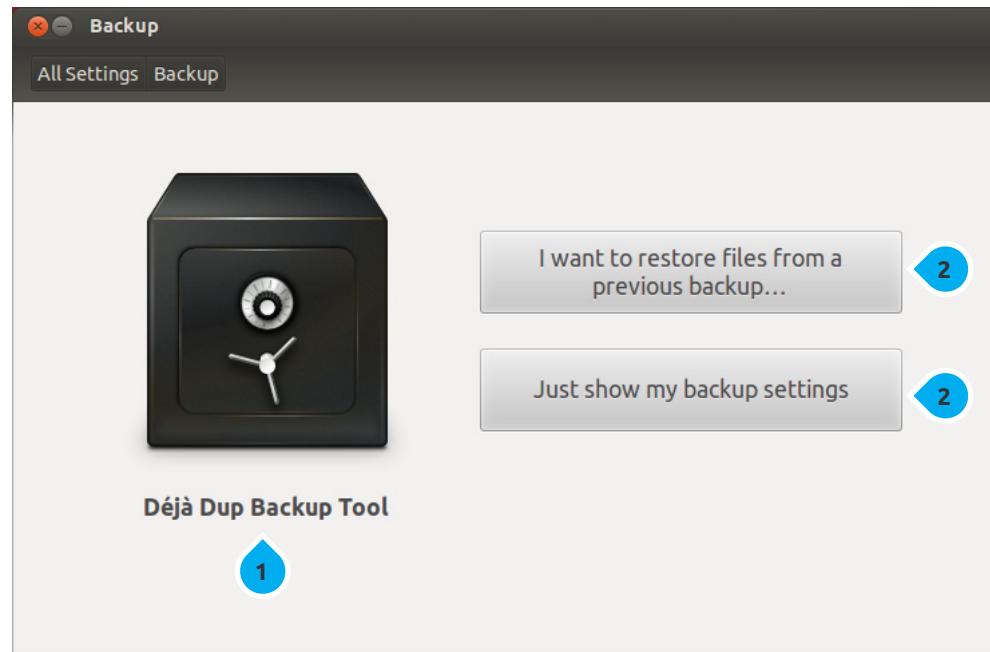
- 8. Use of italics
- 11. Slider and text alignment
- 20. Left-aligned vs. right-aligned labels

**Pattern**

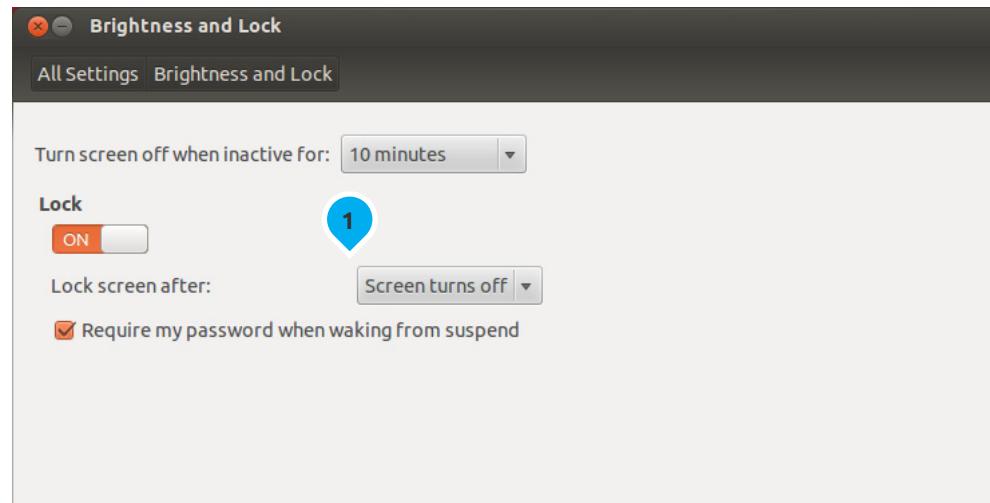
- 6. Placeholder text
- 11. Slider and text alignment

**Pattern**

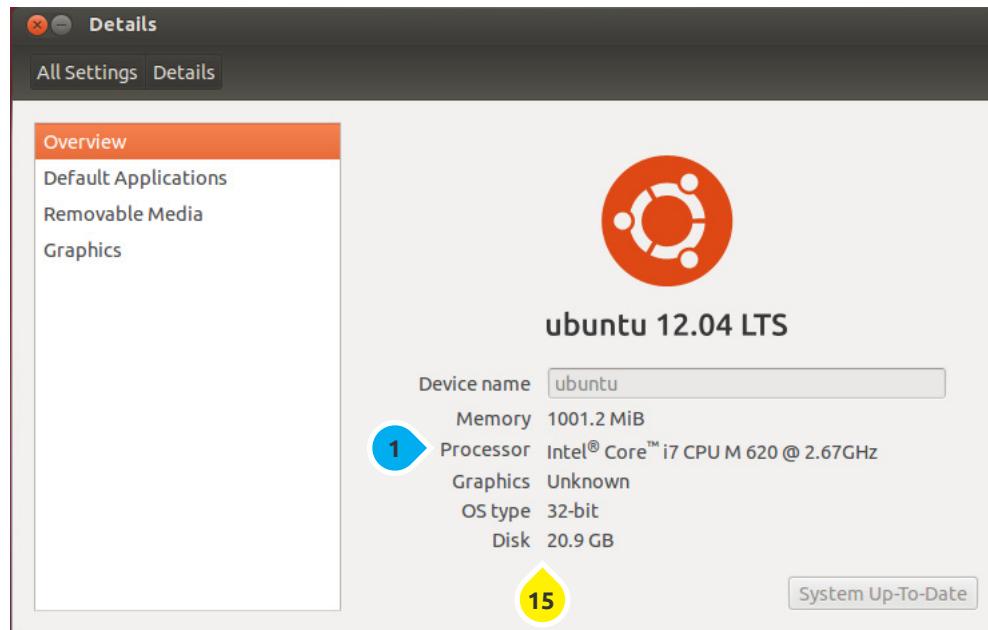
- 6. Placeholder text
- 2. Link vs. button

**Individual**

1. Heading for nothing
2. Sentances inside buttons

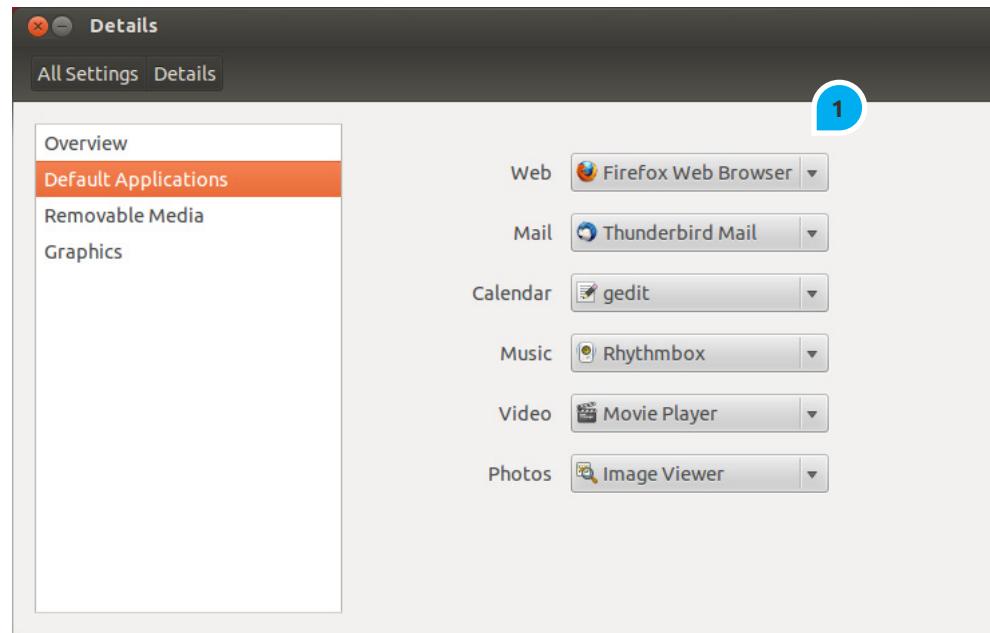
**Individual**

1. The menus don't line up with each other.

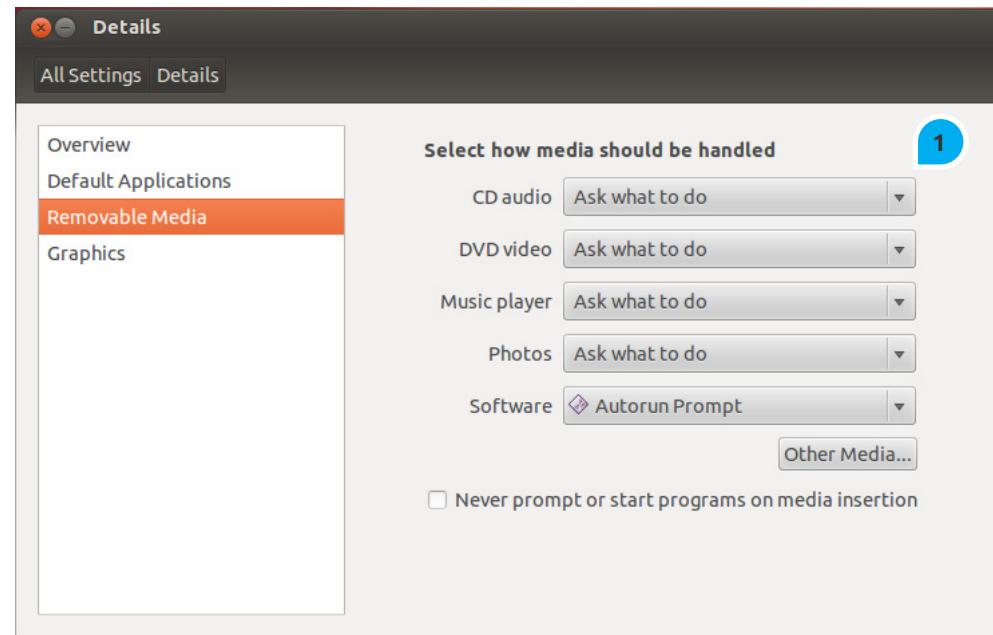


Individual
1. Label alignment

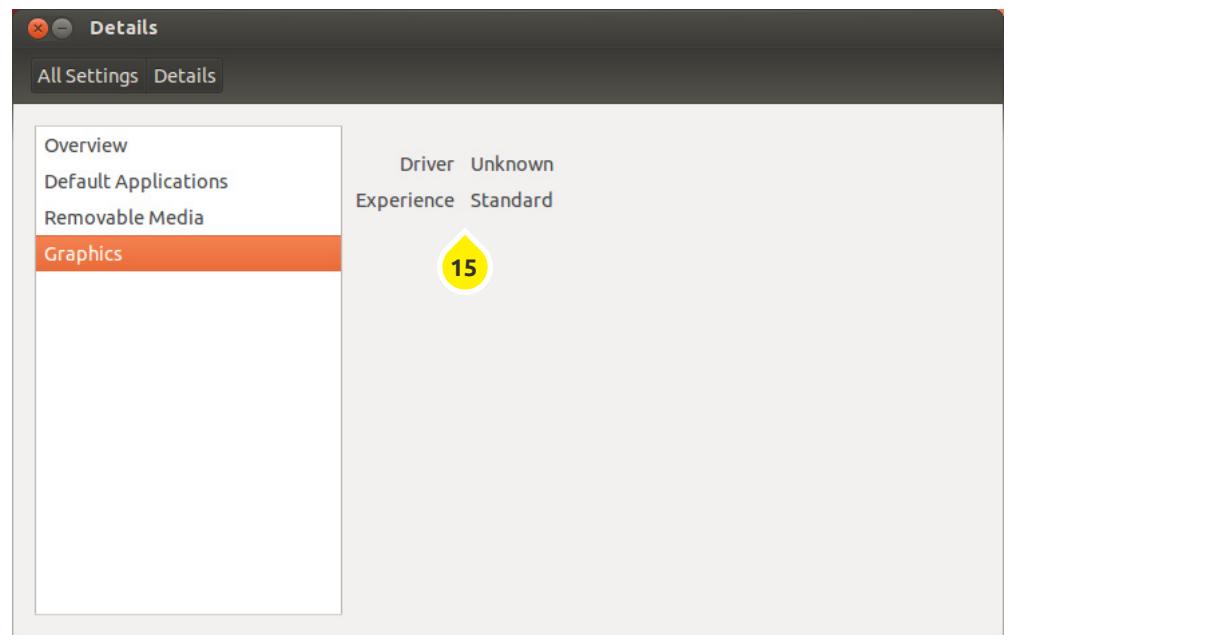
Pattern
15. Key value pattern

**Individual**

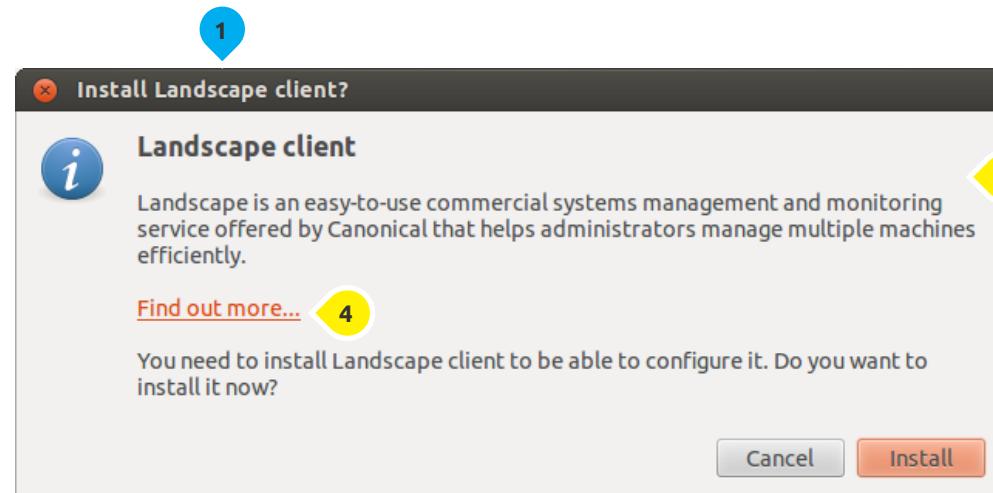
1. Differing layout of dropdown menus within same panel (see Removable Media)

**Individual**

1. Differing layout of dropdown menus within same panel (see Default Applications)



Pattern
15. Key value list

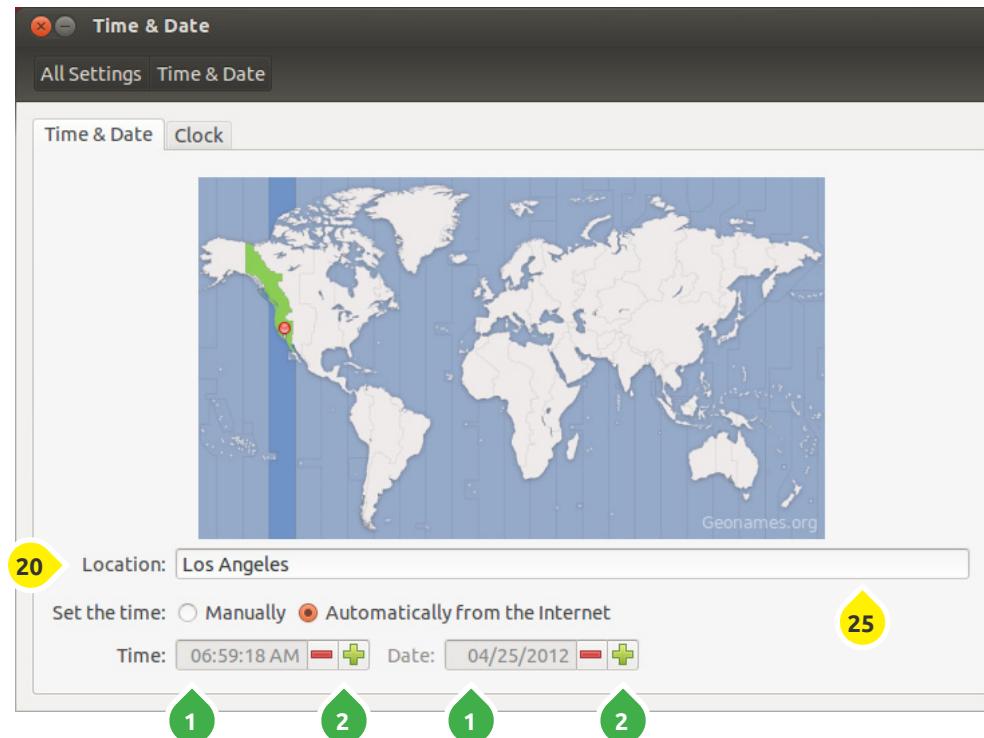
**Individual**

1. Alert has two headings

Pattern

4. Links vs. buttons

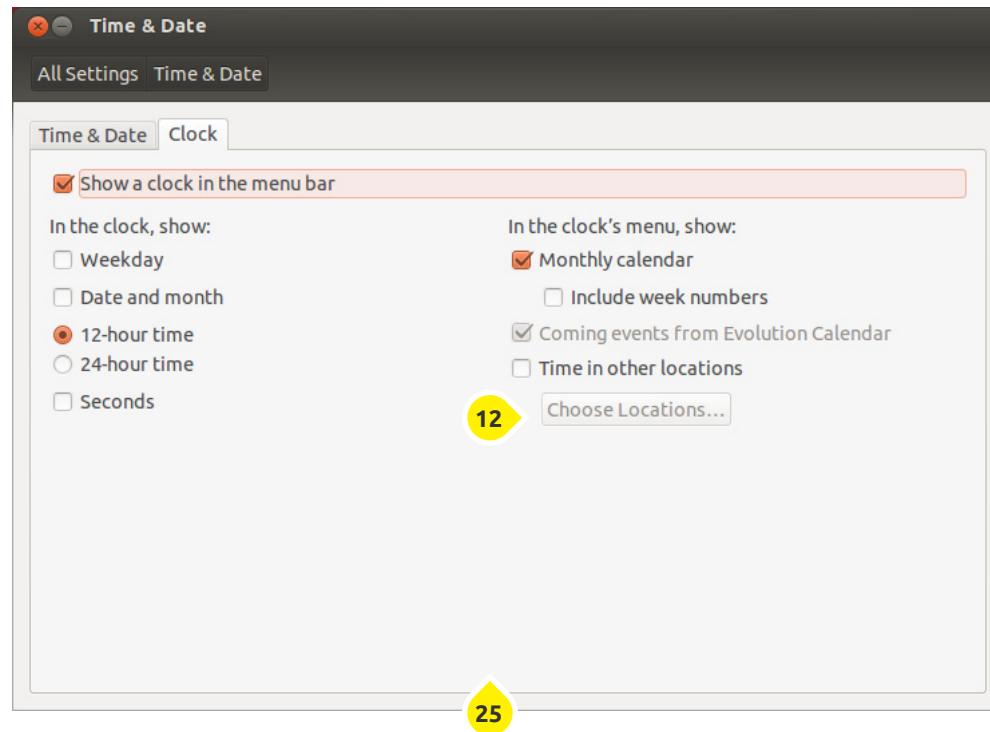
9. Vertical spacing of elements

**Theme**

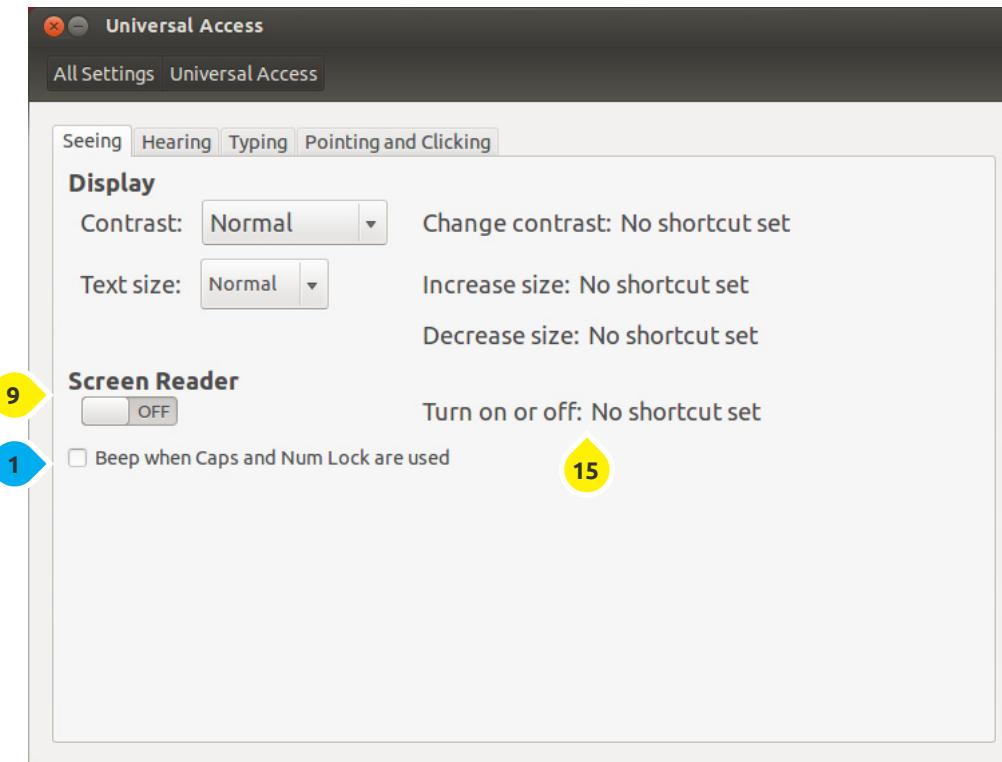
1. Left padding in time and date widgets.
2. “-” and “+” icons in spin buttons

Pattern

20. Left-align vs. right-align labels
25. Overall layout alignment

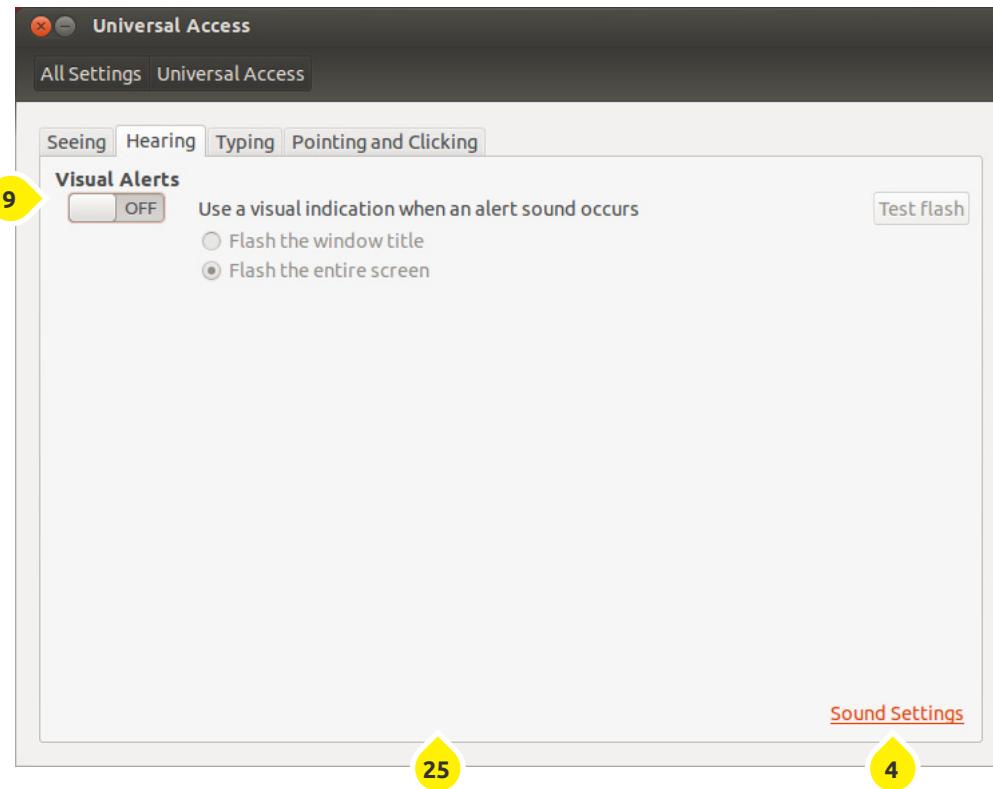
**Pattern**

- 12. Padding around text in buttons
- 25. Overall layout alignment

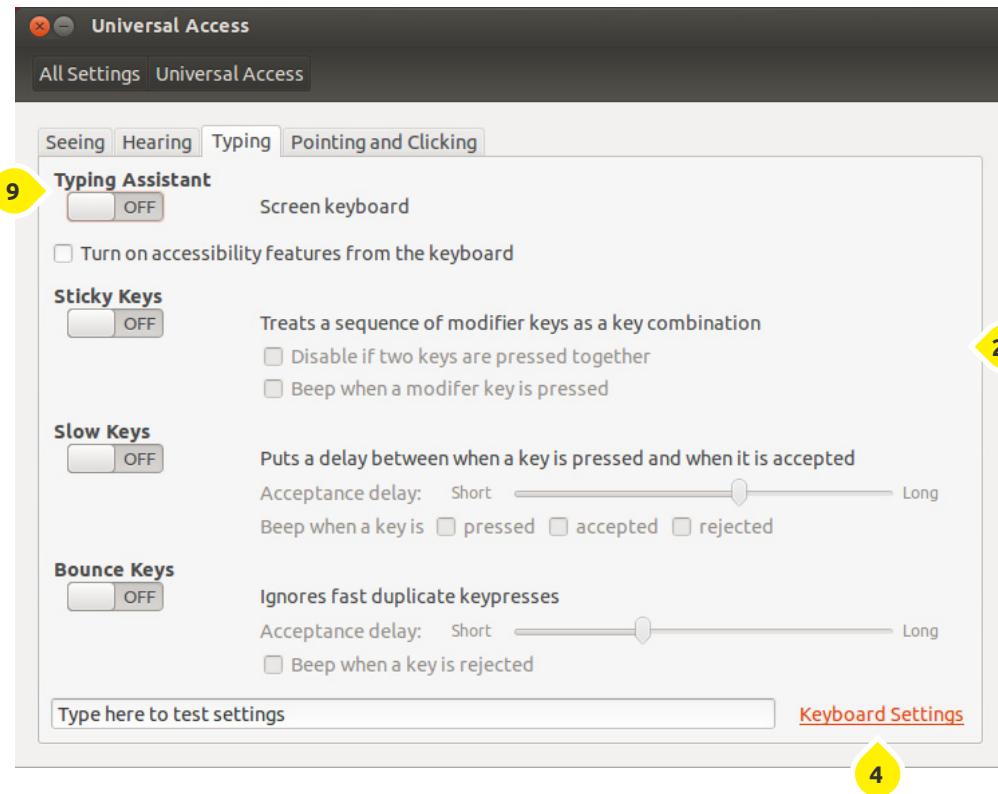
**Individual**

1. "looks lonely"

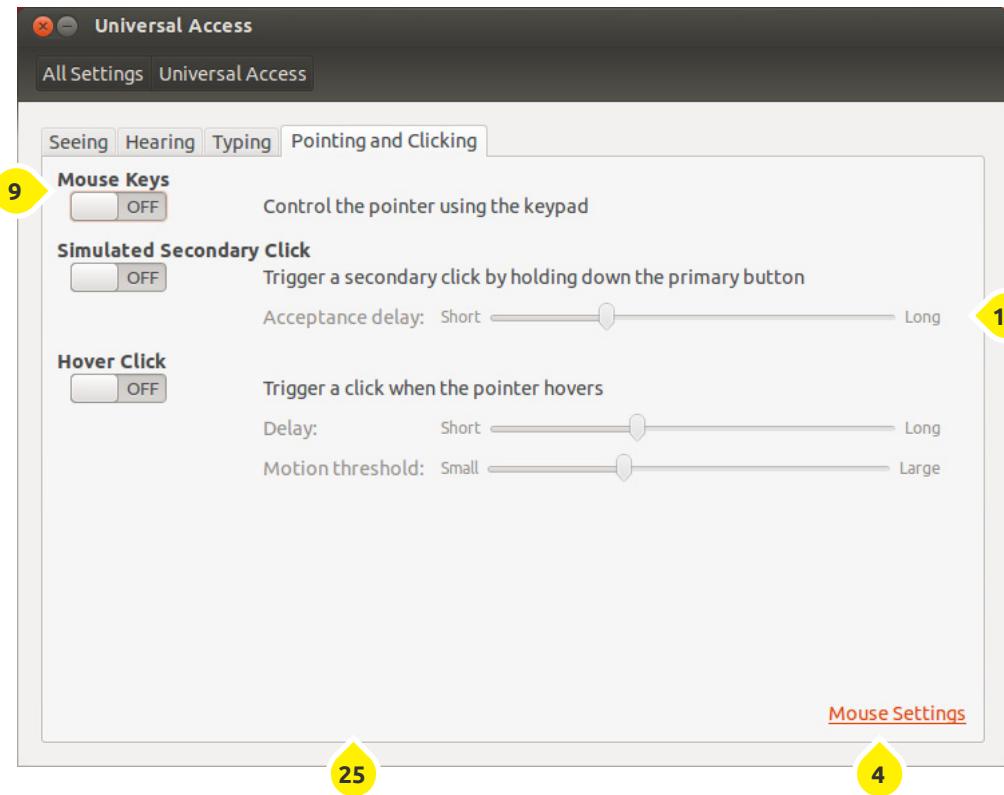
Pattern9. Vertical spacing of elements
15. Key value pattern

**Pattern**

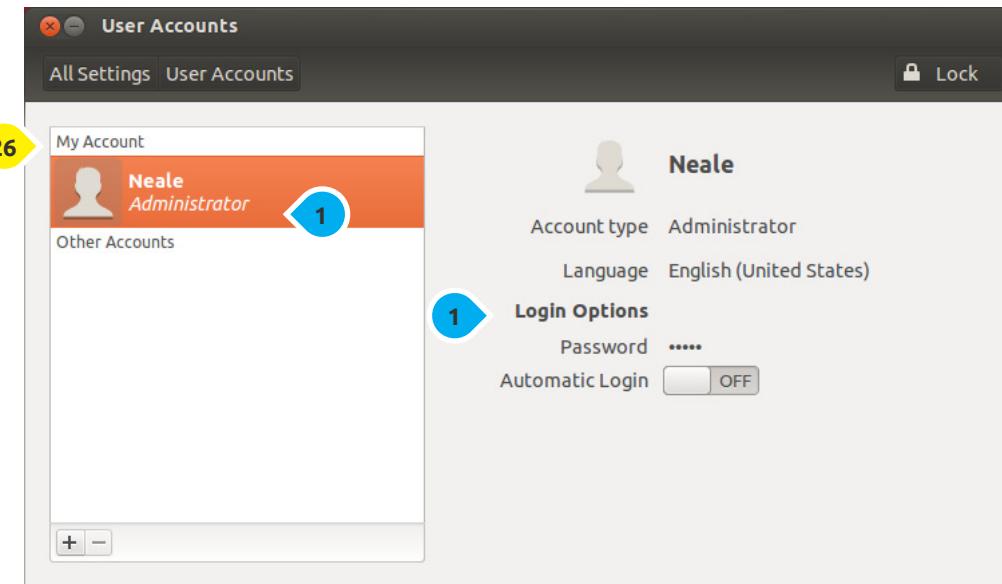
- 4. Link vs. button
- 9. Vertical spacing of elements
- 25. Overall layout alignment

**Pattern**

- 4. Link vs. button
- 9. Vertical spacing of elements
- 25. Overall layout alignment

**Pattern**

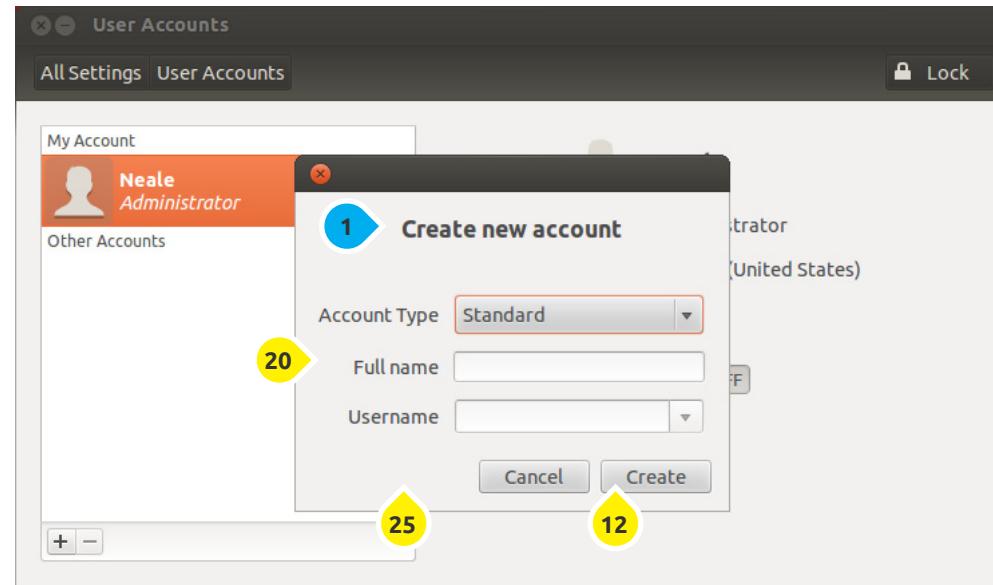
- 4. Link vs. button
- 9. Vertical spacing of elements
- 11. Slider alignment
- 25. Overall layout alignment

**Individual**

1. Italics for Account type
2. Oddly indented "Login options"

Pattern

26. Non-expandable list subheading

**Individual**

1. "Create new account" is out of title bar

Pattern

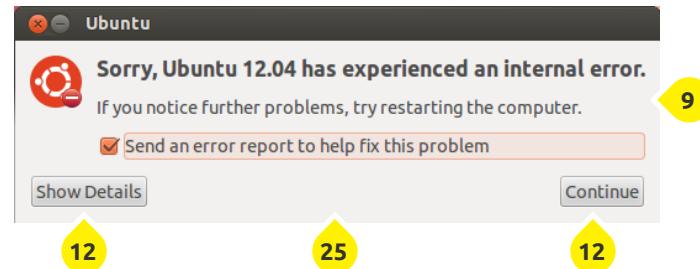
12. Padding around text in buttons

20. Left vs. right-aligned labels

25. Overall alignment and spacing

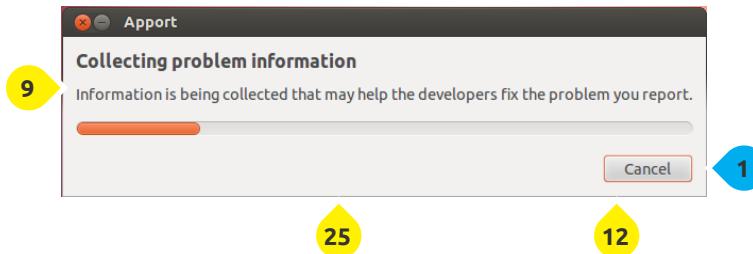
Alert Dialogue

Text



Pattern

- 9. Vertical spacing of elements
- 12. Padding around text in buttons
- 25. Overall alignment



Individual

1. "Cancel" button misaligned with progress bar

Pattern

9. Spacing between header and text
12. Padding around text in buttons
25. Overall alignment

Nautilus

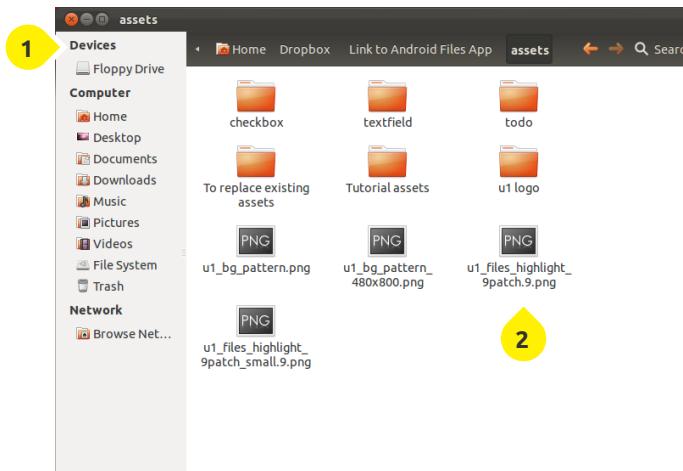
File management windows

List

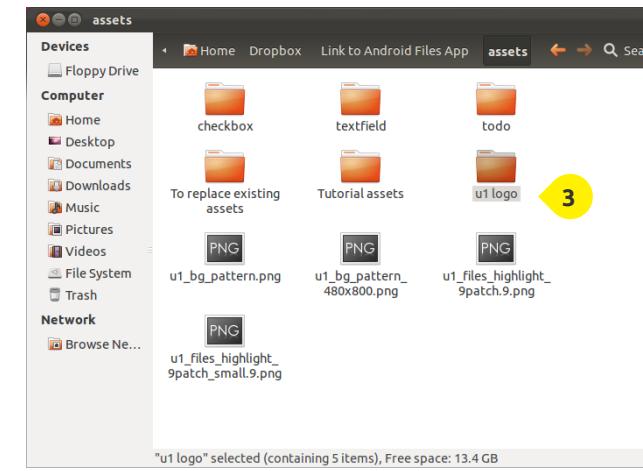
Icon

Compact

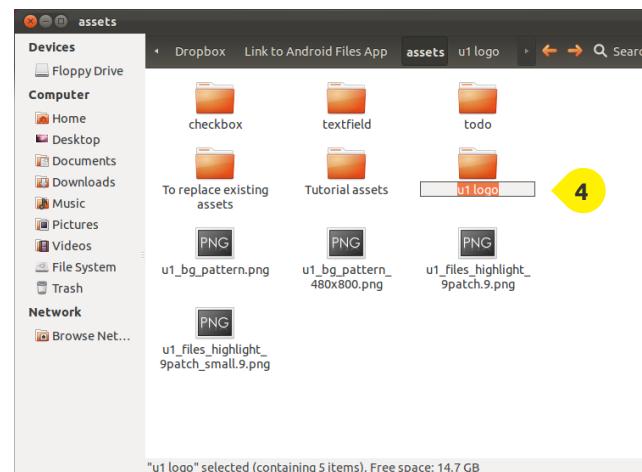
6.1.1 - Icon view



6.1.2 - Icon view - Selected icon

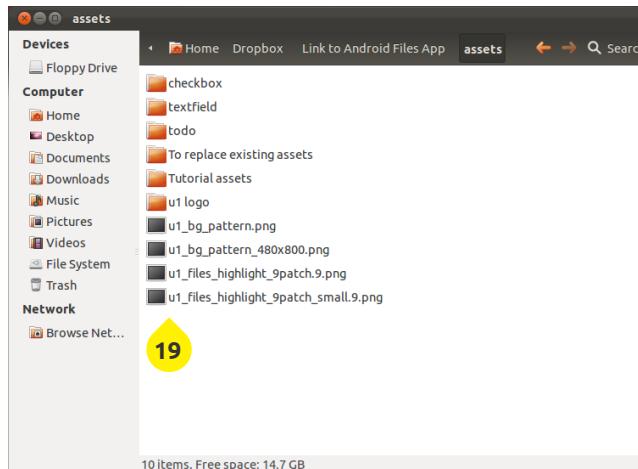


6.1.3 - Icon view - Selected icon name

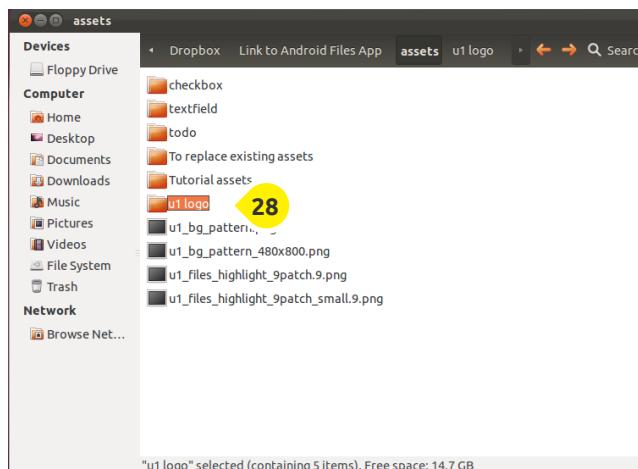
**Pattern**

1. Unexpndable list subheadings
2. Labelled icons
3. Text selection
4. Text edit highlight

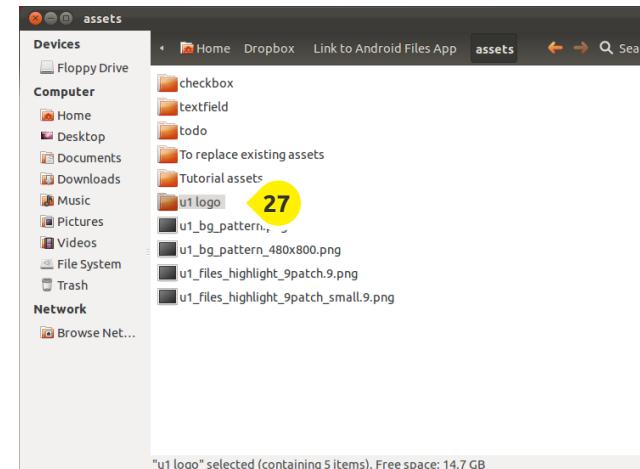
6.2.1 - Compact view - Selected icon name



6.2.3 - Compact view - Selected icon name

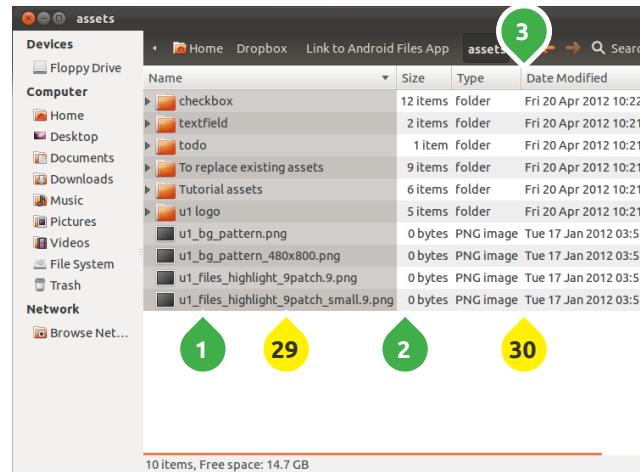


6.2.2 - Compact view - Selected icon name

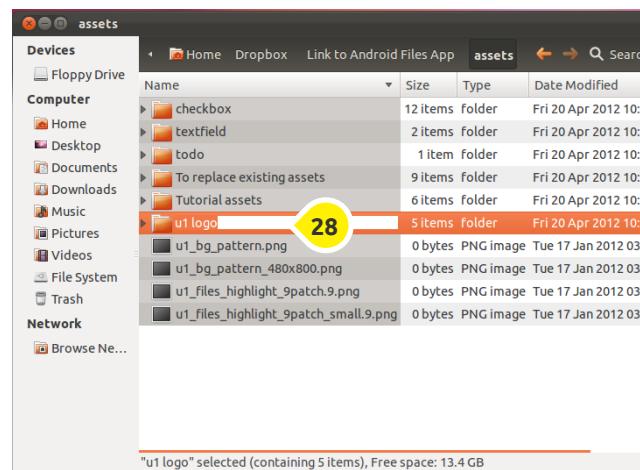
**Pattern**

- 19. Spacing between icon and text
- 27. Text highlight selection
- 28. Text edit highlight

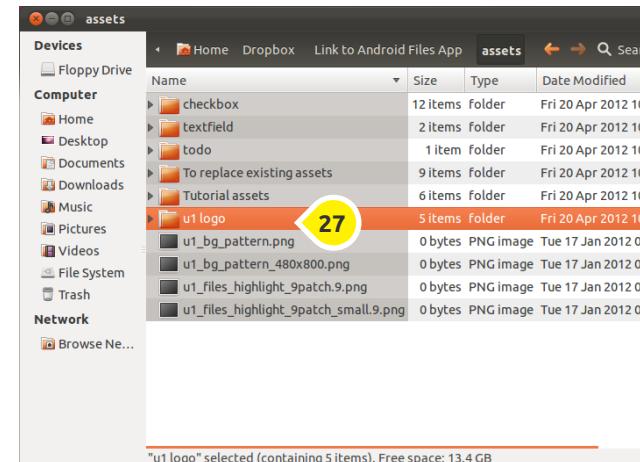
6.3.1 - List view



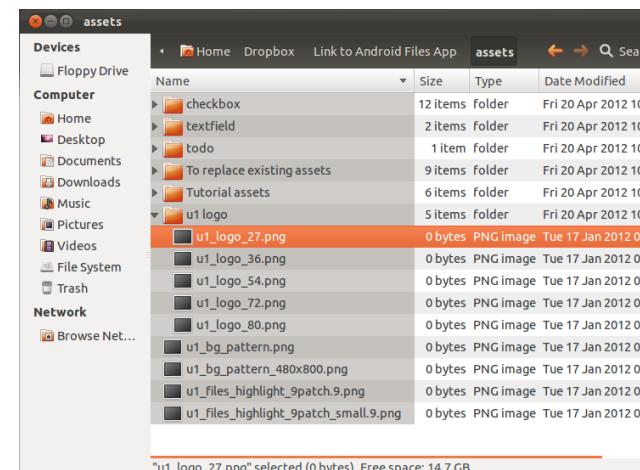
6.3.3 - Compact view - Selected row, rename



6.3.2 - List view - Selected row



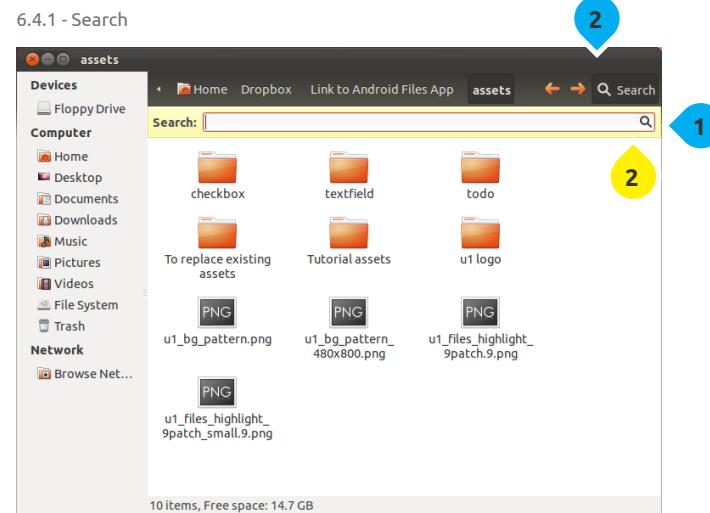
6.3.4 - Compact view - Tree view

**Theme**

1. Suboptimal colour for sorting column
2. Not enough space between data and adjacent columns
3. Column data and header aren't aligned

Pattern

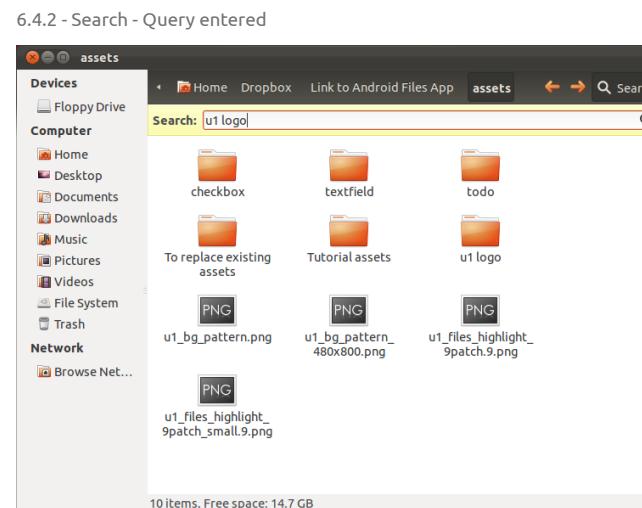
27. Text highlight selection
28. Editable selected text
29. Selected column colour
30. Spacing between columns

**Individual**

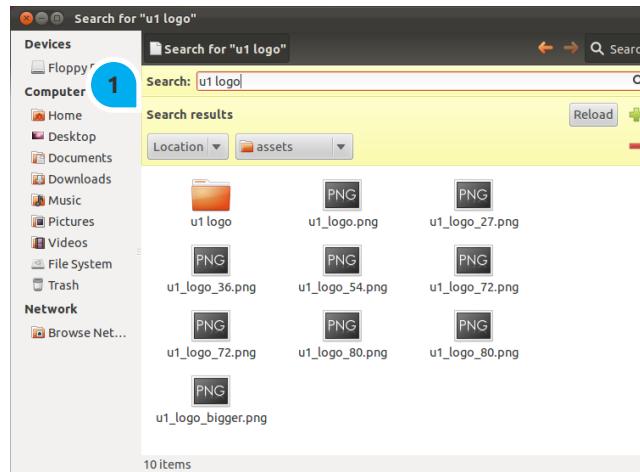
1. Yellow
2. Search icon repeated twice in quick succession

Pattern

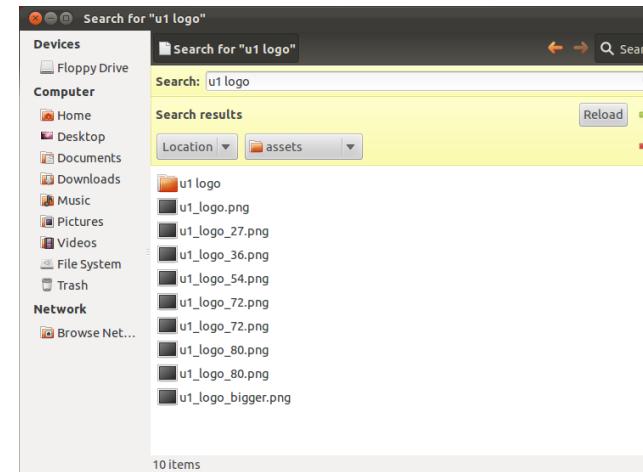
2. Search icon in search fields



6.4.3.1 - Search results - Icon view



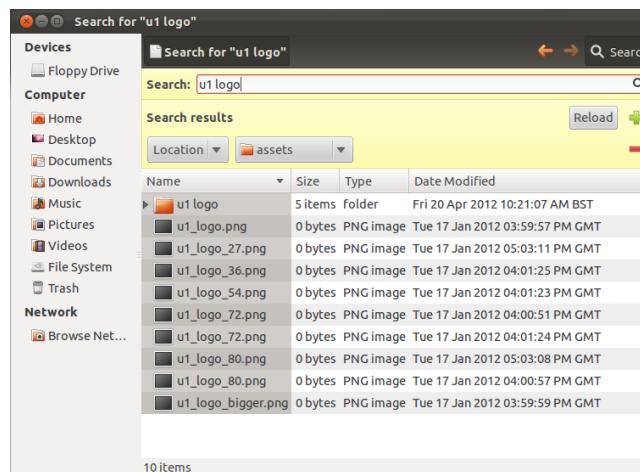
6.4.3.1 - Search results - Compact view



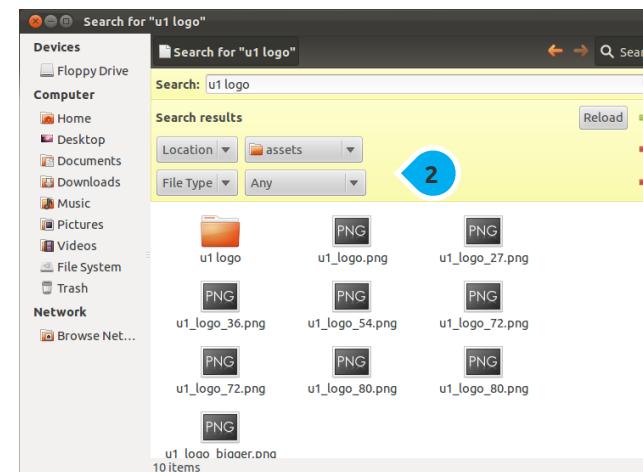
Individual

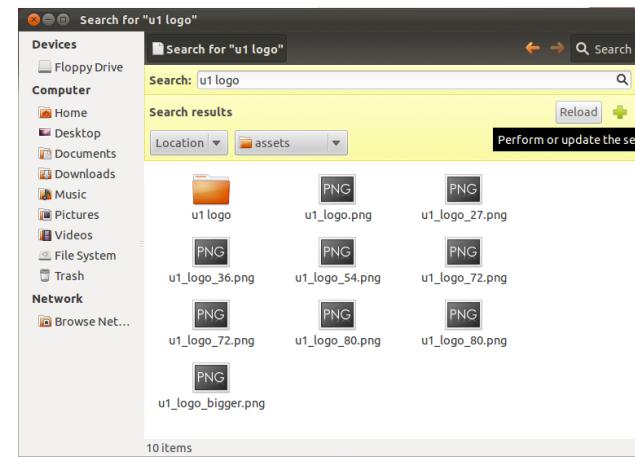
1. "Search" displayed five times
2. Inconsistent spacing of menus

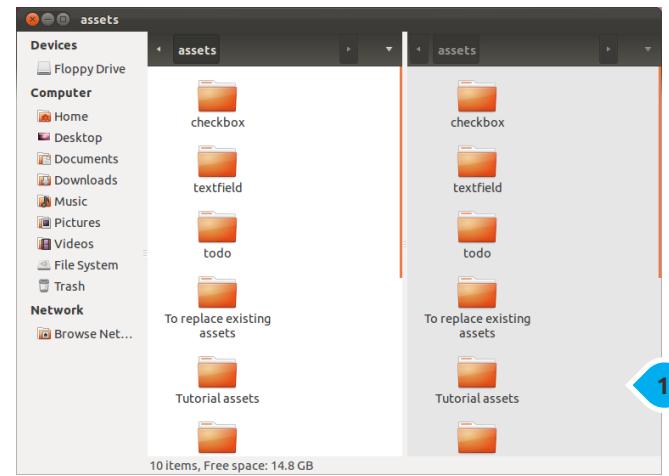
6.4.3.3 - Search results - List view



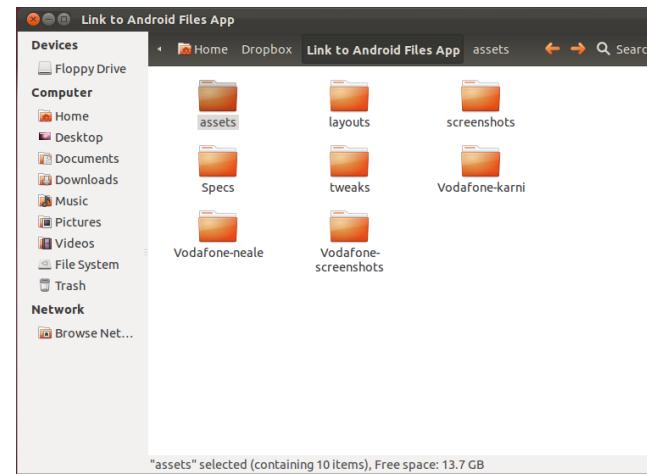
6.4.3.4 - Search results - Multiple conditions

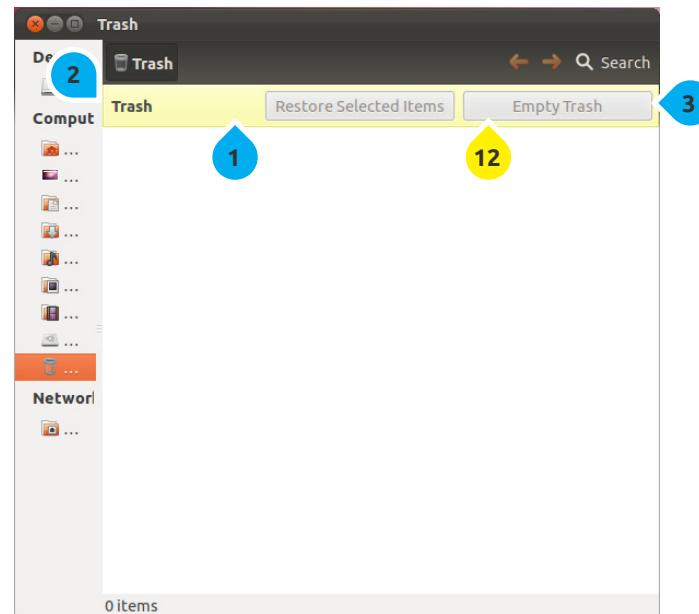




**Individual**

1. Sidebar is warm grey, inactive pan is grey



**Individual**

1. Yellow is "an odd choice"
2. "Trash" repeated 3 times in quick succession
3. Button width: "Empty Trash"

Pattern

12. Padding around text in buttons