Ubuntu   Community   Ask!   Developer   Design   Discourse   Hardware   Insights   Juju   Shop   More ˅

1   help

How to setup x11vnc to access with graphical login screen?

I have a server running Ubuntu 12.10 and need to be able to remote to this server without being logged-in.

I have found many solutions, but none seem to work with 12.10.

Can anyone give me step-by-step instructions on how to configure `x11vnc` to start as a service (prior to user login) so that when connecting with VNC I will be presented with a graphical login screen?

I'm new to Linux so please give as much detail as possible in your responses/comments.

Thanks

server   vnc

edited Dec 17 '12 at 19:00   asked Dec 17 '12 at 18:27

Salem   user115250
11.7k   3   35   71   **86**   1   1   3

5 Answers

Install x11vnc:

```
sudo apt-get install x11vnc
```

Create a password for your user:

```
x11vnc -storepasswd
```

If you have ssh setup you can use it to start x11vnc assuming you are logged in already, but remember to tell it to use your password file:

```
x11vnc -usepw
```

If you are not logged in you will get an error with the explanation:

```
If NO ONE is logged into an X session yet, but there is a greeter login
program like "gdm", "kdm", "xdm", or "dtlogin" running, you will need
to find and use the raw display manager MIT-MAGIC-COOKIE file.
Some examples for various display managers:

  gdm:     -auth /var/gdm/:0.Xauth
           -auth /var/lib/gdm/:0.Xauth
  kdm:     -auth /var/lib/kdm/A:0-crWk72
           -auth /var/run/xauth/A:0-crWk72
  xdm:     -auth /var/lib/xdm/authdir/authfiles/A:0-XQvaJk
  dtlogin: -auth /var/dt/A:0-UgaaXa
```

Assuming you are using lightdm for the login you can fix this problem you can start x11vnc with the command:

```
sudo x11vnc -xkb -noxrecord -noxfixes -noxdamage -display :0 -auth /var/run/lightdm
/root/:0 -usepw
```

I am not sure this is the best idea to run x11vnc as root. Maybe someone could edit with a way to access the login without using sudo.

Once this is running you should be able to connect using a vnc client such as krdc (for KDE). You might want to use GNU Screen to keep x11vnc running without needing the ssh session open

I was able to figure this out using http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=2039022.

Here is a sample upstart job you can use to make it run at startup. It needs to be put in /etc/init /x11vnc.conf:

```
# description "start and stop x11vnc"

description "x11vnc"

start on runlevel [2345]
stop on runlevel [^2345]
```

```
console log
#chdir /home/
#setuid 1000
#setgid 1000

respawn
respawn limit 20 5

exec x11vnc -xkb -noxrecord -noxfixes -noxdamage -display :0 -auth /var/run/lightdm
/root/:0 -usepw
```

Once you have made this file you can start it by running: sudo start x11vnc You can check the log at: /var/log/upstart/x11vnc.log

edited Feb 26 '15 at 4:24   answered Mar 28 '13 at 15:42

Allen
149   1   8

You can run `x11vnc` as a normal user, no problem. For example: ssh to the host and run `x11vnc -safer -forever -display :0 2>&1 &` in a tmux session (good practice), it'll run under `$USER`. – Terry Wang Jul 17 '13 at 5:43

Also, just for reference, in order to change the viewport: superuser.com/questions/270608/... – Wtower Dec 19 '14 at 9:25

1   This doesn't explain how to have it auto start as requested (and is a common requirement for such a feature) – LovesTha Feb 25 '15 at 21:39

@LovesTha I second that. I've been trying to get `x11vnc` to autostart, but nothing I've tried works. Have you had any luck with this? – linuxgringo Jun 21 '15 at 14:09

I did, but I can't remember how and I've blown away the config I had it working on. – LovesTha Jul 14 '15 at 4:58
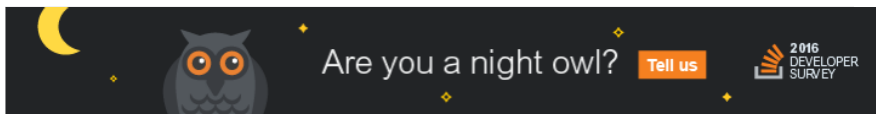
Here's how:

1. Install the X11VNC server (or through Ubuntu Software Center -> X11VNC Server)

   ```
   sudo apt-get x11vnc
   ```

2. Create a VNC password file.

   ```
   sudo x11vnc -storepasswd yourVNCpasswordHERE /etc/x11vnc.pass
   ```

3. Create a job file in the editor nano (or gedit, leafpad etc.).

   ```
   sudo nano /etc/init/x11vnc.conf
   ```

4. Paste this into the file:

   ```
   start on login-session-start

   script

   /usr/bin/x11vnc -xkb -forever -auth /var/run/lightdm/root/:0 -display :0 -rfbauth
   /etc/x11vnc.pass -rfbport 5900 -bg -o /var/log/x11vnc.log

   end script
   ```

5. Save the file. You created a job for the Upstart event *login-session-start*.

6. Restart Ubuntu.

That's it! You should now be able to connect with any VNC client even before login.

edited Apr 8 '15 at 10:04   answered Sep 25 '14 at 18:33

Hb-
5   2

Didier A.
166   1   4

But how do you get it to work when lightdm doesn't create the auth file till a monitor is connected?
– LovesTha Feb 25 '15 at 21:37

@didibus I've been trying to do this in Lubuntu, but `x11vnc` fails to autostart every time. It won't even start as a service, for that matter. File syntax is correct and I can start `x11vnc` from the shell just fine. What am I missing? – linuxgringo Jun 21 '15 at 14:10

The above answers solve the problem, though a couple of amendments for versions of Ubuntu with systemd (15.04+), as follows:

- Take advantage of new `-auth guess` functionality in x11vnc - which helps!
- Update for systemd (not upstart)

Run the following to install:

```
sudo apt-get install x11vnc
sudo x11vnc -storepasswd yourVNCpasswordHERE /etc/x11vnc.pass
sudo nano /lib/systemd/system/x11vnc.service
```

Insert this into the file:

```
[Unit]
Description="x11vnc"
Requires=display-manager.service
After=display-manager.service

[Service]
ExecStart=/usr/bin/x11vnc -xkb -noxrecord -noxfixes -noxdamage -display :0 -auth
guess -rfbauth /etc/x11vnc.pass
ExecStop=/usr/bin/killall x11vnc

[Install]
WantedBy=multi-user.target
```

Then, start with:

```
sudo systemctl daemon-reload
sudo systemctl start x11vnc
```

And ensure the service starts on boot:

```
sudo systemctl enable x11vnc
```

edited Sep 22 '15 at 9:44   answered Sep 22 '15 at 9:17

babelmonk
41   4

Referenced bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=168756 for some advice on Requires/Afters params
– babelmonk Sep 22 '15 at 9:48

---

babelmonks answer as a bash script, copy and save as x11vnc.sh & run with sudo bash /path/to /file/x11vnc.sh (sorry dont have enough rep to post a comment)

```
#!/bin/bash
#install x11vnc & set password
apt-get install x11vnc -y
x11vnc -storepasswd 123456 /etc/x11vnc.pass
#create config file for  system service
cat > /lib/systemd/system/x11vnc.service <<-EOF
[Unit]
Description="x11vnc"
Requires=display-manager.service
After=display-manager.service

[Service]
 ExecStart=/usr/bin/x11vnc -xkb -noxrecord -noxfixes -noxdamage -display :0 -auth
guess -rfbauth /etc/x11vnc.pass
ExecStop=/usr/bin/killall x11vnc

[Install]
WantedBy=multi-user.target
EOF
#restart new services &  enable on boot
systemctl daemon-reload
systemctl start x11vnc
systemctl enable x11vnc
```

answered Jan 2 at 23:26

Nix Badweasel
1   1

If you want to improve another answer, please suggest an edit to it and don't create a new answer.
– David Foerster Jan 3 at 9:31

Please have a look at this, it is already asked. http://ubuntuforums.org
/showthread.php?t=45565

answered Dec 17 '12 at 18:42

tas
1

---

2 This is a link only answer. It is better to answer the question properly, and then give the link as a
reference or accreditation. – fabricator4 Dec 17 '12 at 19:02

The link above only configures VNC to be started at the time a user logs-in, which is a problem since you
have to be logged-in before you can login with VNC. I want VNC to start prior to this so that onces I'm
connected, I can login as any user. – user115250 Dec 17 '12 at 19:22