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Enable remote VNC from the commandline?

I have one computer running Ubuntu 10.04, and is running **Vino**, the default VNC server.

I have a second Windows box which is running a VNC client, but does not have any X11 capabilities. I am ssh'd into the Ubuntu host from the Windows host, but I forgot to enable VNC access on the Ubuntu host.

On the Ubuntu host, is there a way for me to enable VNC connections from the Ubuntu commandline?

Update:

As @koanhead says below, there is no man page for `vino` (e.g. `man -k vino` and `info vino` return nothing), and `vino --help` doesn't show any help).

`vnc` `vino`

edited Dec 11 '13 at 20:52



Braiam

36.4k

16

84

148

asked Sep 21 '10 at 3:29



Stefan Lasiewski

1,793

4

15

32

8 Answers

Just running

```
/usr/lib/vino/vino-server
```

should do the job.

Once you have access to your server, I would recommend that you add it to Autostarted Apps so it is always started.

You'll probably like change some settings with :

```
vino-preferences
```

be very careful when you run vino-preference on a remote machine, if you uncheck "Allow other users to control your desktop", you won't be able to check it back.

or to edit :

```
~/.gconf/desktop/gnome/remote_access/%gconf.xml
```

Here a sample file :

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<gconf>
  <entry name="vnc_password" mtime="1289267042" type="string">
    <stringvalue>cXdlcnR5</stringvalue>
  </entry>
  <entry name="view_only" mtime="1289262982" type="bool" value="false"/>
  <entry name="prompt_enabled" mtime="1254965869" type="bool" value="false"/>
  <entry name="authentication_methods" mtime="1289267034" type="list"
ltype="string">
    <li type="string">
      <stringvalue>vnc</stringvalue>
    </li>
  </entry>
  <entry name="enabled" mtime="1289263574" type="bool" value="true"/>
</gconf>
```

Be careful, the password is base64 encoded. For this file, the password is qwerty. I see on some forum that people have change it successfully, but I had issue with it.

Here an online base64 encoder :

<http://www.motobit.com/util/base64-decoder-encoder.asp>

edited Nov 9 '10 at 3:39

answered Nov 8 '10 at 22:49



Guillaume Coté

1,271

5

16

32

5 I got the following error when executing `/usr/lib/vino/vino-server` : No protocol specified **
(vino-server:2040): WARNING **: Could not open X display - [tuananh](#) Oct 22 '12 at 23:01

@hvtuananh Do you have a display you can share? Do you have the env variable DISPLAY set accordingly? My answer assume that you already have a display starting by default, but you don't have string and use the command line to make it available. - [Guillaume Coté](#) Dec 4 '12 at 1:30

This does not work in (at least) 13.10. See answer by ouzmoutous below instead. - [Emil Styrke](#) Jan 27 '14 at 11:26

Short Answer:

```
gconftool-2 --set --type=bool /desktop/gnome/remote_access/enabled true
```

as the accepted answer mentions, if vino isn't started on the remote machine, use

```
/usr/lib/vino/vino-server
```

Long Answer and more info:

A subset of the settings for the current built-in remote access server (vino) can be seen, as mentioned, from vino-preferences. A complete list of gconf flags can be seen with the `gconf-editor` command, listed under `/desktop/gnome/remote_access`. You can see also the other `remote_access` keys with this command (or a variation on it):

```
gconftool-2 -a /desktop/gnome/remote_access
```

(For whatever reason, `-R` will also work.)

You can also get the schema key documentation via the `--long-docs` arg.

E.g., for the `alternative_port` key :

```
gconftool-2 --long-docs /desktop/gnome/remote_access/alternative_port
```

```
The port which the server will listen to if the
'use_alternative_port' key is set to true.
Valid values are in the range from 5000 to 50000.
```

So, for example, here's how to change default port via command line:

```
gconftool-2 --set --type=bool /desktop/gnome/remote_access/use_alternative_port
true
gconftool-2 --set --type=int /desktop/gnome/remote_access/alternative_port 5999
```

`gconftool` will give you the keys under a given directory. Here is the 'remote_access' section:

```
gconftool-2 -a /desktop/gnome/remote_access
use_upnp = false
vnc_password =
authentication_methods = [vnc]
network_interface =
require_encryption = false
disable_background = false
enabled = true
use_alternative_port = false
mailto =
disable_xdamage = false
lock_screen_on_disconnect = false
icon_visibility = always
view_only = false
prompt_enabled = true
alternative_port = 5900
```

Here is how to list all the schema docs under `/desk/gnome/remote/access` (via command-line `/bin/bash`):

```
for key in `gconftool-2 -a /desktop/gnome/remote_access | awk '{print $1}'`; do
do echo $key; gconftool-2 --long-docs /desktop/gnome/remote_access/$key; done
```

edited Mar 15 '11 at 22:15

answered Jan 20 '11 at 1:08

 [belacqua](#)
12.5k 11 62 94

I also wanted to enable vino with the command line without going in vino-preferences.

When I started `/usr/lib/vino/vino-server`, it says that I didn't have desktop sharing service enabled.

With Unity `gconftool` isn't usable anymore. We have to do it via `gsettings`.

So, first, enable vino :

```
gsettings set org.gnome.Vino enabled true
```

Then start vino :

```
/usr/lib/vino/vino-server
```

Now you can access remotely to your computer.

If you want to see all configs available for Vino :

```
gsettings list-keys org.gnome.Vino
```

edited Mar 7 '13 at 8:24



BuZZ-dEE

6,027 9 39 62

answered Mar 7 '13 at 8:00



ouzmoutous

191 1 3

- 2 To do this over SSH or from a text-mode terminal where the DISPLAY environment variable isn't sett, you need to prepend DISPLAY=:0 to the set command, otherwise you will get "failed to commit changes to dconf". – **Emil Styrke** Jan 27 '14 at 11:25

So in addition to the above I had to `export DBUS_SESSION_BUS_ADDRESS=...` . To get this variable value I copied from a running process' environment (`pgrep -u myUserName -l` to get process list, pick a number, then `tr '\0' '\n' < /proc/NUMBER/environ | grep DBUS`). Then export DBUS_SESSION_BUS_ADDRESS with the value returned. Then the command ran. – **RJFalconer** Aug 23 '15 at 18:37

Why, for the love of all that is good in this hard world, is there no man entry for vino or vino-server or for any of the commands listed in `dpkg -L vino` 's output? For that matter, why should *any package at all* be installed on an Ubuntu system, ever, which omits a man page at least for the relevant commands? Ok, rant over. The best answer I've found so far is here: <http://ubuntuforums.org/archive/index.php/t-266981.html>

I really hope this helps, and I hope that in future the Ubuntu community documents all these orphaned commands. "Ease of use" does not mean abandoning the command line, and it certainly does not mean abandoning easily accessible documentation. </grumble>

answered Sep 21 '10 at 4:08



koanhead

1,582 2 8 17

Try running `/usr/lib/vino/vino-server`. For what little help and docs is available, use `vino-server --help-all`. – **koanhead** Sep 22 '10 at 3:19

- 2 Linking to another source is bad, that source could go offline in the future and your answer would no longer be valid. – **Phil Hannent** Nov 9 '10 at 13:32

One extra point for the rant. – **Marnix A. van Ammers** Mar 19 '13 at 1:36

It's in `/usr/lib`, thus not a command the user would normally run, thus doesn't need a manpage ... at least that's the reasoning. FWIW, I agree with you. – **Matthias Urlichs** Nov 16 '15 at 7:42

This doesn't seem to work remotely via ssh due to errors about the display and so on. Here's what I did:

```
export DISPLAY=:0.0 && /usr/lib/vino/vino-server
```

Mostly works now!

edited Dec 11 '13 at 20:40



Rinzwind

126k 13 235 334

answered Oct 30 '13 at 22:14



Will Bradley

91 1 1

Yes - finally! Without `export DISPLAY=:0.0` , the "remote" desktop I was getting was actually my local desktop (I use `ssh -X`). Also, it is necessary to "Allow other users" via `vino - preferences` (or the shell commands suggested in other answers) *before* running `/usr/lib/vino/vino-server` . Note: Probably any VNC client works with this once it is set up correctly, but `vinagre` seemed to provide the most sensible UI. – **nobar** May 29 '15 at 0:54

On Ubuntu 14.04, I found the following variation worked for me:

```
export DISPLAY=:0
gsettings set org.gnome.Vino enabled true
gsettings set org.gnome.Vino prompt-enabled false
gsettings set org.gnome.Vino require-encryption false
/usr/lib/vino/vino-server
```

If this doesn't work, your X session might be running on something other than `:0` , so a quick `ps aux | grep X` should show a `:1` or `:2`

edited Apr 7 '15 at 18:17



Taeram

181 1 4

- 1 You should start with the `export DISPLAY=:0` as the gsettings commands will fail without: `failed to commit changes to dconf: Cannot autolaunch D-Bus without X11 $DISPLAY`. – **vaab** Oct 6 '14 at 2:37

Best answer by far. But how do you make Vino auto-start on reboot? – **pferrel** Mar 20 '15 at 17:09

For anyone using Linux Mint 15, I got this all to work on my MintBox2 by doing the following.

I can now run the MintBox 2 entirely headless with: ssh + vino + Tight VNC.

Type into putty via ssh connection to the LinuxMint MintBox2 machine:

```
sudo su
[enter your root password]
echo $DISPLAY
export DISPLAY=:0.0
startx & }This loads up LinuxMint on screen as "root" user
[press the return key again to get back to BASH prompt]
```

Now, if you like (this isn't necessary) on a LinuxMint terminal (i.e. not on putty) type:

```
echo $DISPLAY
```

=> **You get an output of :1** [i.e. this caused me a lot of trouble to figure out i.e this is not 0:0
!!!!!!!]

Now, go back to putty and type:

```
echo $DISPLAY
export DISPLAY=:1
/usr/lib/vino/vino-server
```

=> It now loads & you can use window 7 Tight VNC Viewer to access Linux Mint etc

I hope this helps some one out there...

edited Dec 11 '13 at 19:49

answered Dec 11 '13 at 19:43



```
gsettings reset-recursively org.gnome.Vino
```

answered Apr 17 '14 at 10:18

community wiki
Abdenmour TOUMI

-
- 4 It would be helpful if you could edit your answer to explain what this does and how it answers the question.
– David Edwards Apr 17 '14 at 10:44
-