



# The Mint Community

A Linux distro is only as good as the community that's behind it. Without the users offering ideas, their time, support and help to others, Linux as a whole wouldn't be where it is today. The Linux Mint community is a shining example of how a one should work.

## WORKING TOGETHER

There are many benefits to becoming a part of the Linux Mint community. Help is always at hand and if you're a keen developer or you have some great ideas, you can share them with others.



To start with, let's have a look at the Linux Mint community homepage. Open up a browser and navigate to [www.community.linuxmint.com](http://www.community.linuxmint.com); the landing page is where you can login and quickly view some interesting statistics regarding Linux Mint.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Linux Mint Community. It features a green header with the text "COMMUNITY.LINUXMINT.COM" and "THE WEBSITE FOR ALL LINUX MINT USERS". Below the header is a navigation bar with "HOME", "COMMUNITY", and "TESTING" tabs. A "LOGIN" form is on the left, prompting for "Username" (DavidHayward) and "Password". To the right, a "Welcome!" message is displayed, along with a note about using forums for support. Below the message, there's a section titled "This website provides:" listing various services like an idea pool, software database, hardware database, and tutorial database. Another section titled "General stats" shows user counts for website users, software reviews, hardware devices, ideas, and tutorials. At the bottom, there's a "Users by country" map.



If you click on the green Register button, you are taken to a page where you can enter your contact details. This will create an account within the Linux Mint community section where you're able to contribute ideas, reviews and tutorials, and view compatibility reports.

The screenshot shows the registration page. It has a "REGISTER" button at the top. A note states: "Note: This website is not designed to help or to support users. It is designed for users to contribute ideas, reviews, tutorials and hardware compatibility reports. If you are looking for help, please read the documentation and register on the forums instead." Below this, a note says: "Due to the huge amount of SPAM bots registering here. We now require a registration code." The registration form includes fields for "Username" (DavidHayward), "Password" (redacted), "Confirm Password" (redacted), "Email Address" (redacted), and "Registration Code" (redacted). A note at the bottom says: "To get a registration code connect to the chatroom (From within Linux Mint, launch Menu->Welcome Screen and click on Chat Room), introduce yourself and ask for a registration code." A "Register" button is at the bottom.



Once you're registered and logged in, you can browse the Community menu for Ideas, Tutorials, Hardware and Software, Users and Chat Room groups. You can even opt to download the current testing and bleeding edge ISOs for Linux Mint, where your feedback would be invaluable.

The screenshot shows the homepage again, but this time with the "COMMUNITY" tab selected. The main content area displays a "Welcome to the Linux Mint Community" message and a note about the website's purpose. It also shows a list of the top 10 countries with registered users: United States (3905), Germany (1174), United Kingdom (1146), India (892), France (78), Indonesia (775), Canada (771), Russia (720), Brazil (642), and Italy (604). Below this, a section titled "Here are the main modules on this website:" lists "Ideas", "Tutorials", "Hardware", "Software", "Countries", "Users", "Moderation", and "Chat room".



The ideas group, for example, contains countless suggestions for improvements to the core Linux Mint system, as well as suggestions for the various Desktop Environment versions. Ideas are based on votes and scores, with the top suggestions going under developer review.

The screenshot shows the "Ideas" page. It has a "Title" input field, a "Status" dropdown set to "All statuses", and a "Sort" dropdown set to "Top Rated". A "Search" button is below these. The main area is a table with columns: "Score", "Votes", "Comments", "Title", and "Status". The table lists several ideas, such as "Sketches" (Under dev. review), "Single Account for Everything" (Under dev. review), "Upload Hardware Info" (Selected), "Mint Control Center" (Selected), "Mintconky" (Under dev. review), "Base future Mints on Debian not Ubuntu" (Selected), "Grub Wizard" (Selected), "More Laptop-friendly" (Considered), "One click reinstall of grub / grub2 on live cd" (Selected), "Downloadable Mint4Win .exe" (Selected), "Network setup wizard" (Selected), "Sell Linux Mint Merchandise" (Selected), and "Improve the installation manual" (Under dev.).

## THE LINUX MINT FORUM

If you need to seek help with a particular aspect of Linux Mint, then the best place to start is with the Mint forums. In here you can find an active community of fellow users, ready to help out.



The Linux Mint Forum can be found at [www.forums.linuxmint.com](http://www.forums.linuxmint.com). If you look to the right of the screen there are Login and Register buttons. Click the Register button to create an account for the Mint forum, where you are able to start asking questions and help others.

This screenshot shows the main page of the Linux Mint Forum. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Quick Link' and 'Board Index'. Below that is a search bar and a login/register section. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Important Notices' (with 4 topics, 46 posts), 'Main Edition Support' (with 5028 topics, 302668 posts), 'Debian Edition Support' (with 20357 topics, 122314 posts), 'Software & Applications' (with 28118 topics, 144294 posts), 'Hardware Support' (with 18719 topics, 103501 posts), 'Networking' (with 6416 topics, 56829 posts), 'Desktops & Window Managers' (with 13384 topics, 84802 posts), 'Other topics' (with 4722 topics, 25540 posts), 'Non-technical Questions' (with 1099 topics, 14930 posts), and 'Sound, Multimedia, B-Codes' (with 2058 topics, 18488 posts). Each section has a brief description and a link to its category.



The forum is broken down into seven main categories: Important Notices, Main Edition Support, Debian Edition Support, Personalise and Customise Linux Mint, Chat, Development and Languages. Each of these categories are broken down further into sections, including Newbie Questions, Notices and Artwork.

This screenshot shows the 'Main Edition Support' section of the forum. Under 'Newbie Questions', it says 'All Gurus once were Newbies'. Below that are sections for 'Installation & Boot', 'Software & Applications', 'Hardware Support', 'Networking', 'Desktops & Window Managers', 'Other topics', 'Non-technical Questions', 'Sound, Multimedia, B-Codes', and 'Tutorials'. Each section has a brief description and a link to its category.



Looking at the Newbie Questions section, under the Main Edition Support, you can see the title 'All Gurus Once Were Newbies'; it's a great place to start on the Forum. In this section you can find hints and tips for new Linux Mint users, as well as questions regarding the OS and the forum itself.

This screenshot shows the 'Newbie Questions' board. It includes a 'Forum rules' section with a note about posting 'stupid' questions. Below that are threads: 'Linux Mint 13 reaches end of life in April' (20 replies), 'Linux Mint IRC Channel Rules & Guidelines' (0 replies), 'READ: How To Get Help!' (0 replies), 'Forum Rules, Guidelines, and Policy' (22 replies), 'Topic and Thread Icon Legend' (20 replies), 'What are your top tips for a Newbie?' (642 replies), 'How to add [SOLVED] - How to mark a thread as [SOLVED]' (13 replies), 'If you compile - remember buildroot and checkinstall' (6 replies), 'How to Install software on Linux Mint' (129 replies), 'Questions about Debugging or Antivirus? Look here first!' (319 replies), 'WiFi don't work on Lenovo S510' (4 replies), and 'which upgrade versions should i choose?' (7 replies).



Depending on the question asked or the particular thread of the section's topic, you come into contact with Linux Mint users from around the world. Don't be afraid to ask anything, as the Forum Rules state "There are no such things as 'stupid' questions". It's also generally accepted behaviour to thank someone for their contribution.

This screenshot shows two threads from the forum. The first thread is 'How to install software on Linux Mint' (44 posts) and the second is 'Re: How to install software on Linux Mint' (44 posts). Both threads have multiple posts from various users, with timestamps ranging from April 2012 to July 2013. The posts contain helpful tips and answers to common questions about installing software on Linux Mint.



However, before you start to post anything it's recommended that you view the Rules & Notices section under the Important Notices category. Within you can read the Forum Rules, Guidelines and Policy thread. Read through this to make sure you're sticking to the forum rules.

This screenshot shows the 'Forum Rules, Guidelines, and Policy' board. It includes a 'Section I - General Rules' section with 11 rules: 1) Respect the Forum Staff, 2) Do not be Offensive or Abusive, 3) No Spam or Advertising, 4) No Illegal Material, 5) Do not Troll, 6) No Dangerous Commands, 7) Welcome Ladies - post here!, 8) Help Wanted, 9) Hello Linux Mint community, 10) Bye Bye Windows 10 Forever, and 11) Konchikas. There are also sections for 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' and 'TOPICS'.



The Chat category has an Introduce Yourself section, which acts as a welcome to new users. You can say hello to the Linux Mint community world here and perhaps get to know some of the regular contributors who you may meet occasionally in the Linux Mint world.

This screenshot shows the 'Introduce yourself' board. It includes a 'Forum rules' section with a note about posting 'stupid' questions. Below that are threads: 'Linux Mint 13 reaches end of life in April' (20 replies), 'READ: How To Get Help!' (0 replies), 'Forum Rules, Guidelines, and Policy' (52 replies), 'Topic and Thread Icon Legend' (22 replies), 'Welcome Ladies - post here!' (103 replies), 'Help Wanted' (14 replies), 'Hello Linux Mint community' (9 replies), 'Bye Bye Windows 10 Forever' (15 replies), 'Konchikas' (7 replies), 'Hello' (6 replies), 'Hawker Man' (5 replies), and 'Hello' (6 replies).

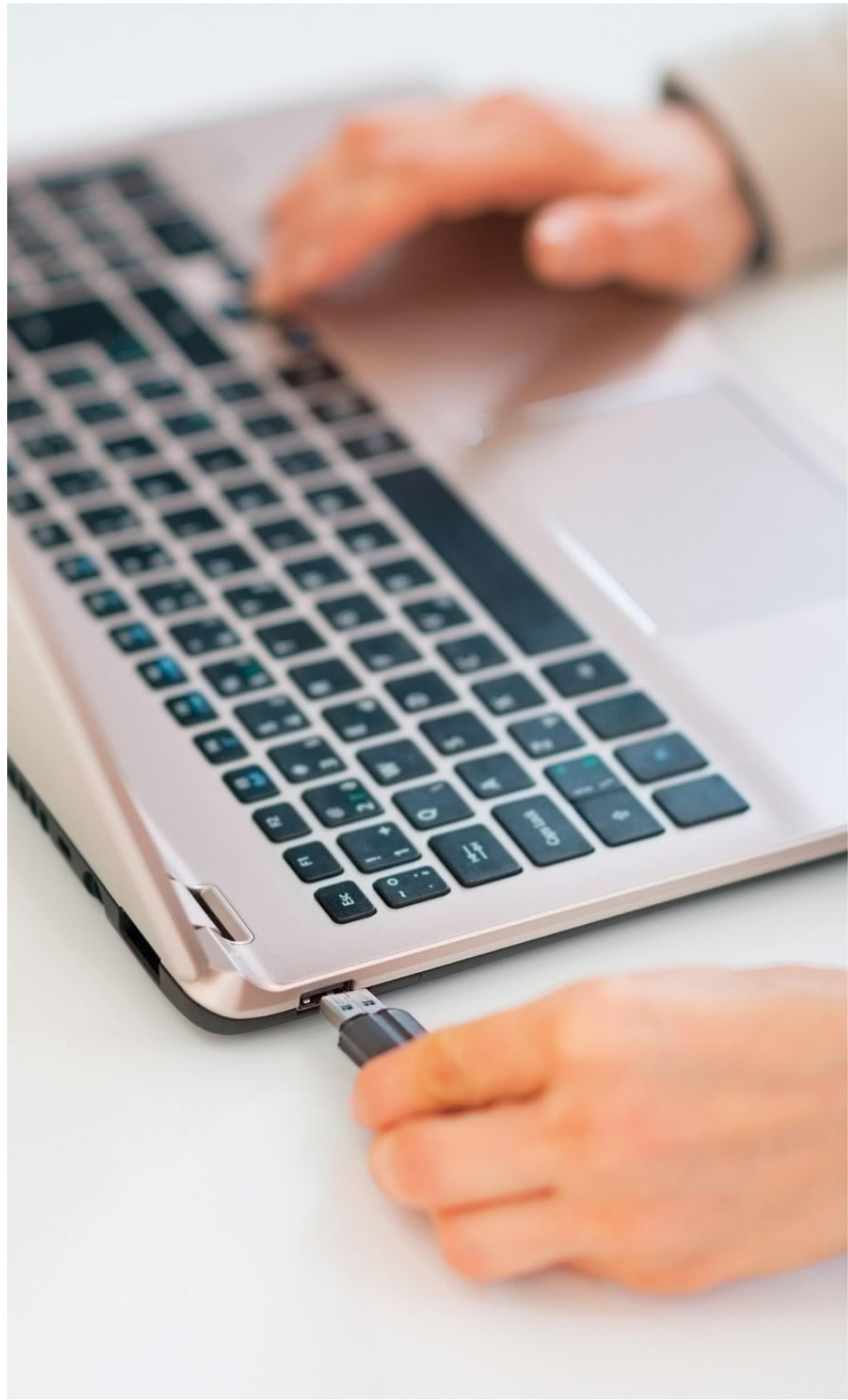
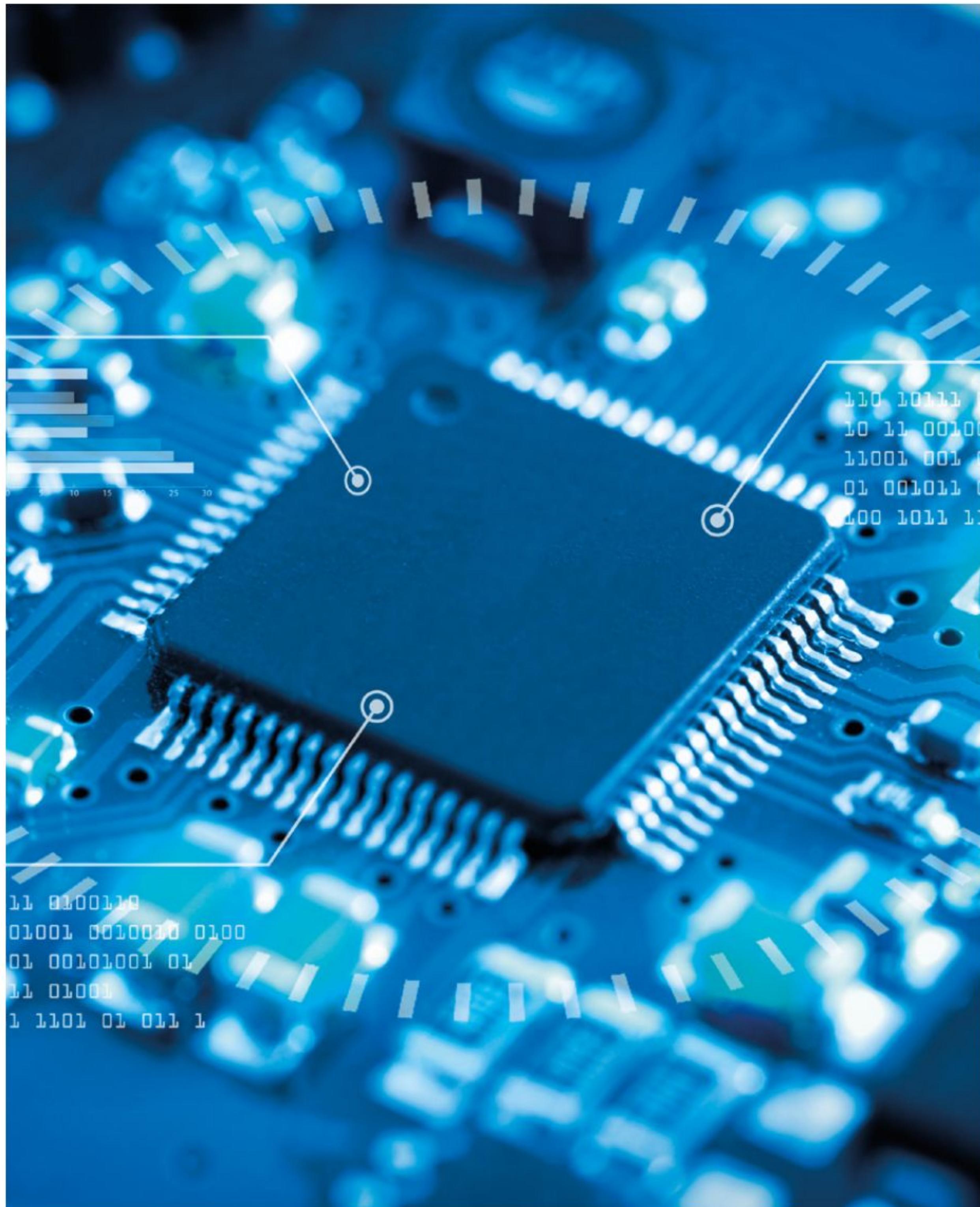


# What You Need

The system requirements for successfully installing Linux Mint on to a PC are surprisingly minimal, so even a computer that's several years old will happily run this distro. However, it's worth checking you have everything in place before proceeding.

## MINTY INGREDIENTS

This is what you need to install and run Linux Mint as you're working through this book. You have several choices available, so take your time and see which works best for you.



## SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

The minimum system requirements for Linux Mint 18.1 are as follows:

CPU	700MHz
RAM	512MB
Hard Drive Space	9GB (20GB recommended)
Monitor	1024 x 768 resolution

Obviously the better the system you have, the better the experience will be, and quicker too.

## USB INSTALLATION

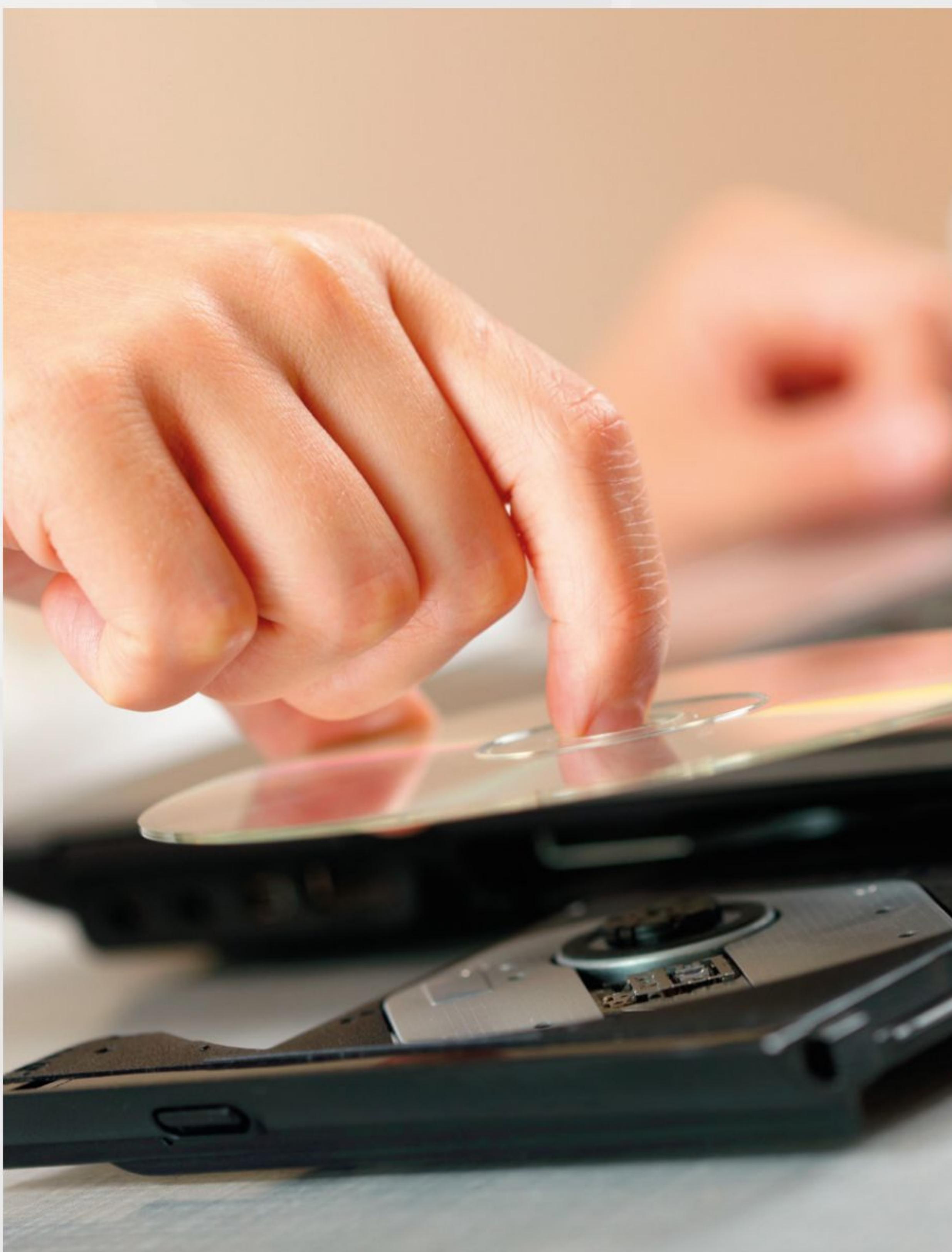
You can install Linux Mint onto your computer via USB or DVD. We'll look into each a little later on but if you're already familiar with the process or you're thinking of USB and just gathering the hardware you need, then you're going to need a minimum 4GB USB flash drive to contain the Linux Mint ISO.



## DVD INSTALLATION

DVD installation of Linux Mint simply requires a blank DVD-R disc.

Of course, you also need a DVD Writer drive before you can transfer or burn the ISO image to the disc.



## VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Installation to a virtual environment is a favourite

method of testing and using Linux distros. Linux Mint works exceedingly well when used in a virtual environment. More on that later. There are many different virtual environment apps available; however for this book we are using Virtualbox from Oracle. You can get the latest version from [www.virtualbox.org](http://www.virtualbox.org).

**Welcome to VirtualBox.org!**

VirtualBox is a powerful x86 and AMD64/Intel64 virtualization product for enterprise as well as home use. Not only is VirtualBox an extremely feature rich, high performance product for enterprise customers, it is also the only professional solution that is freely available as Open Source Software under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL) version 2. See "About VirtualBox" for an introduction.

Presently, VirtualBox runs on Windows, Linux, Macintosh, and Solaris hosts and supports a large number of guest operating systems including but not limited to Windows (NT 4.0, 2000, XP, Server 2003, Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10), DOS/Windows 3.x, Linux (2.4, 2.6, 3.x and 4.x), Solaris and OpenSolaris, OS/2, and OpenBSD.

VirtualBox is being actively developed with frequent releases and has an ever growing list of features, supported guest operating systems and platforms it runs on. VirtualBox is a community effort backed by a dedicated company; everyone is encouraged to contribute while Oracle ensures the product always meets professional quality criteria.

**Download VirtualBox 5.1**

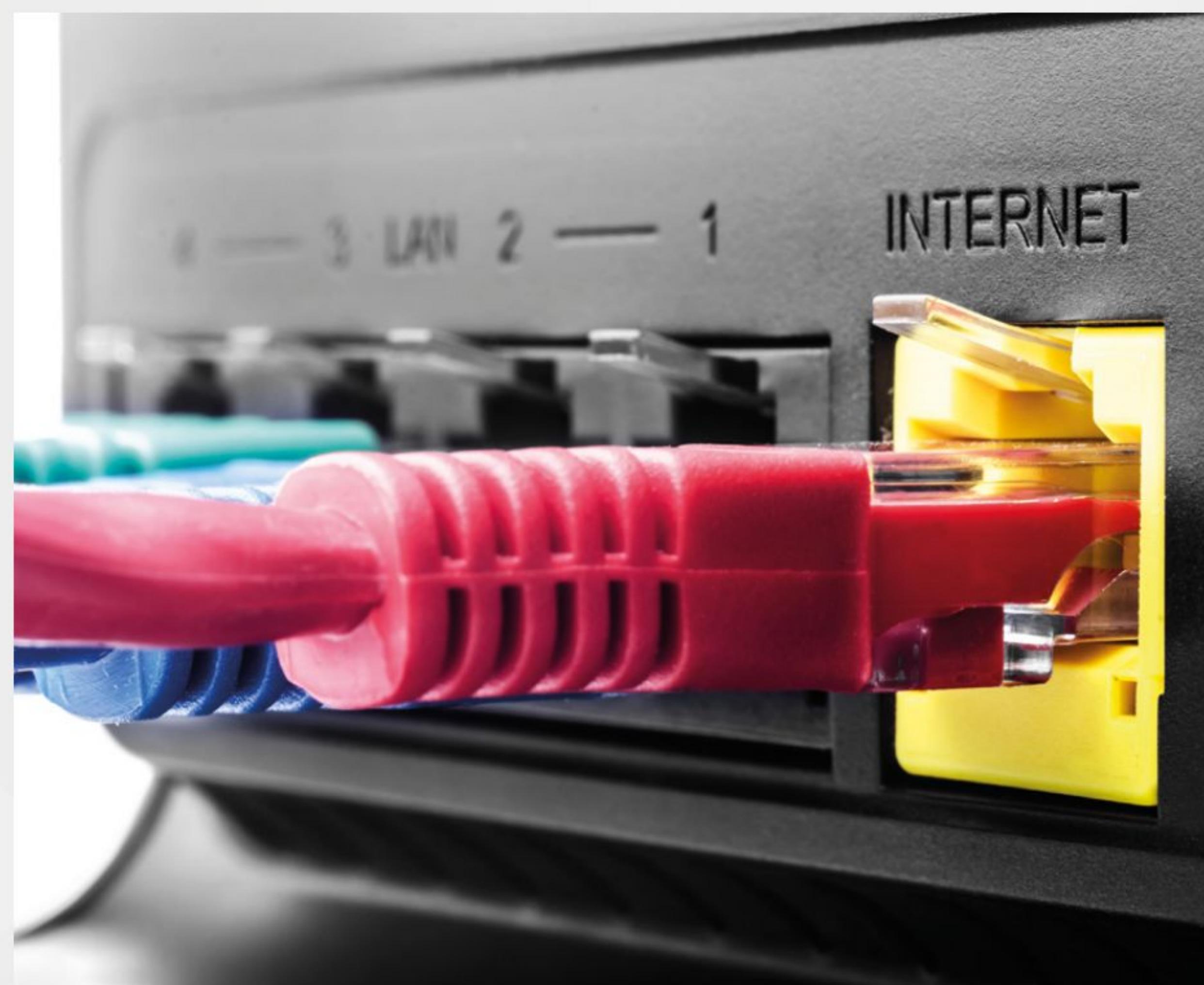
**Hot picks:**

- Pre-built virtual machines for developers at [Oracle Tech Network](#)
- [Hyperbox](#) Open-source Virtual Infrastructure Manager [project site](#)
- [phpVirtualBox](#) AJAX web interface [project site](#)
- [IQEmu](#) automated Windows VM creation, application integration <http://mirage335-site.member.hacdc.org:6>

ORACLE

## INTERNET CONNECTION

It goes without saying really, that an Internet connection is vital for making sure that Linux Mint is up to date with the latest updates and patches, as well as the installation of further software. Although you don't need an internet connection to use Linux Mint, you're sure to miss out on a world of free software available for this distro.



## MAC HARDWARE

Although Linux Mint can be installed onto a Mac, there's a school of thought that recommends Mac owners use a virtual environment, such as Virtualbox or Parallels; and why not, macOS is already a splendid operating system. If you're wanting to breathe new life into an older Mac, make sure it's an Intel CPU model and not the PowerPC models.





# Different Versions of Mint

Linux Mint comes in several different versions, or flavours: Cinnamon, MATE, Xfce, KDE, and LMDE 2; there are also 32-bit and 64-bit versions of these, too. What does it all mean though and which version should you choose for your installation?

## WHICH MINT?

Over the coming pages we look at each of the versions available. First here's a quick introduction and reasons for there being such a variety.

Linux Mint offers the user a choice of five versions of the distro: Cinnamon, MATE, Xfce, KDE and LMDE 2. Whilst that may sound a little confusing for the newcomer, essentially each of the versions available contains the same core Linux structure and kernel (the kernel is the core of the operating system), that handles all the instructions between the software and hardware.

Each of the versions are simply different desktop environments, the Graphical User Interface (GUI) than you use to interact with the operating system (with the exception of LMDE 2). Each of the desktop environments uses different apps for accessing or using the system, such as the file manager to browse the operating system's file structure or the way it launches other apps. Again though, the core available productivity, video and graphic suites are the same, and function in the same way.

Why bother then with a different desktop environment? Simply put, it's down to personal taste. Some users prefer MATE, as MATE is a fork of the classic GNOME 2 environment, is a little more menu-centric and performs well on older computers. Others prefer Cinnamon, because it's a more modern environment that works better on recent hardware and features some cutting edge desktop code. KDE is a little heavier on the system resources but looks magnificent and generally offers more effects and customisations. Xfce, on the other hand, is a lightweight desktop environment that works great on older hardware.

LMDE (Linux Mint Debian Edition) 2 is based on Debian instead of Ubuntu, that the other versions use. It's a cutting edge distro that's targeted at experienced Linux users who want to test and use the latest versions of the apps available. It can, therefore, be quite unstable at times and requires a lot more user administration to master. It's available with Cinnamon and MATE desktop environments.

In short, Cinnamon is the flagship desktop environment for Linux Mint. MATE is more compatible with a wider variety of hardware. KDE uses more system resources but looks fantastic. Xfce is a lightweight DE for low-resource systems. Finally, LMDE 2 is really for experts only.

Where Windows, for example, only offers one desktop environment to work in, Linux offers many. Linux Mint has therefore opted to give the user a wealth of choice, and we think that's pretty decent of them.





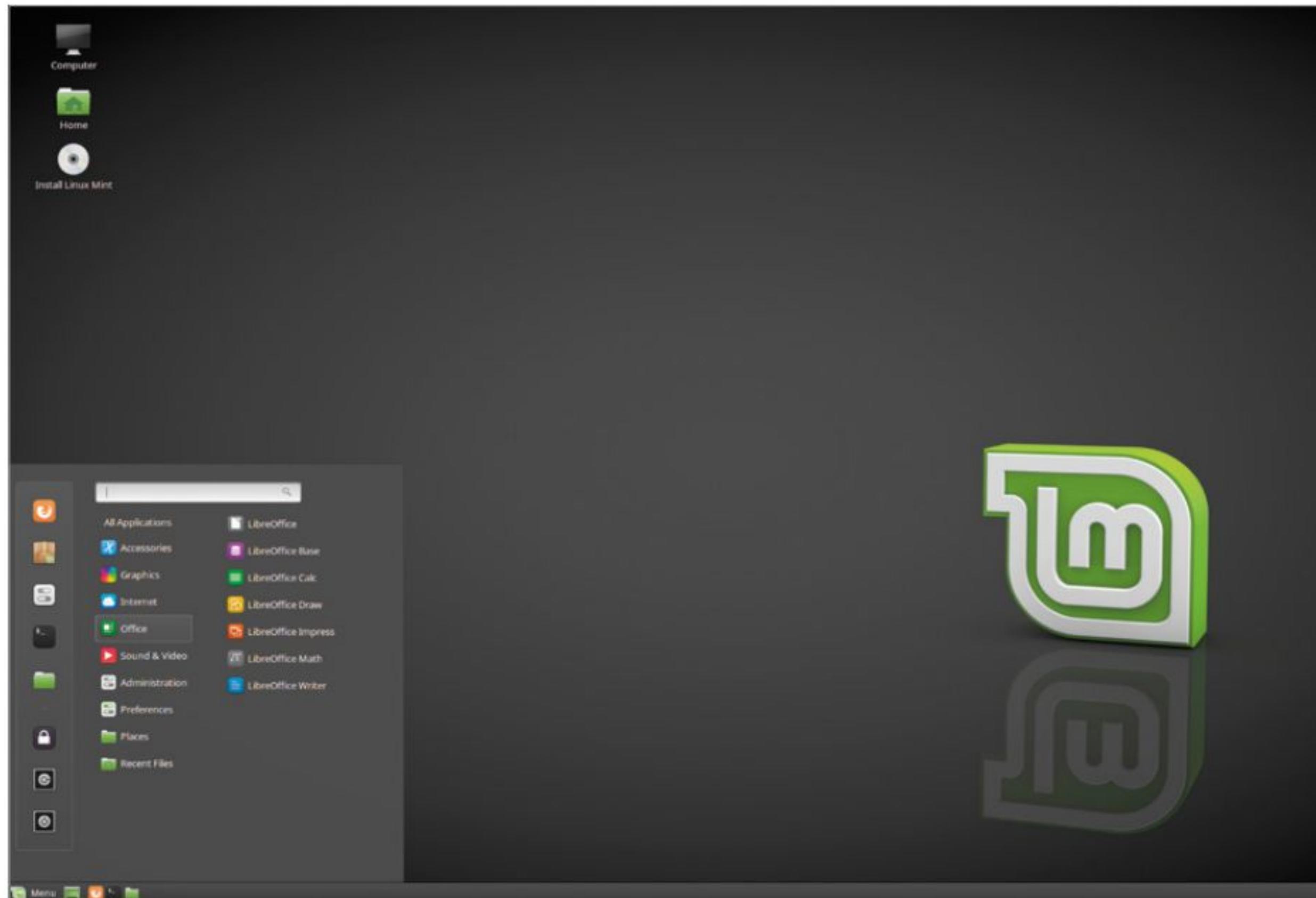
# Cinnamon Desktop Environment

Cinnamon is considered the flagship desktop environment for Linux Mint. Cinnamon was developed by the Linux Mint team and released about six years ago. It's an excellent DE, which looks great and performs magnificently on modern systems as well as in a virtual environment.

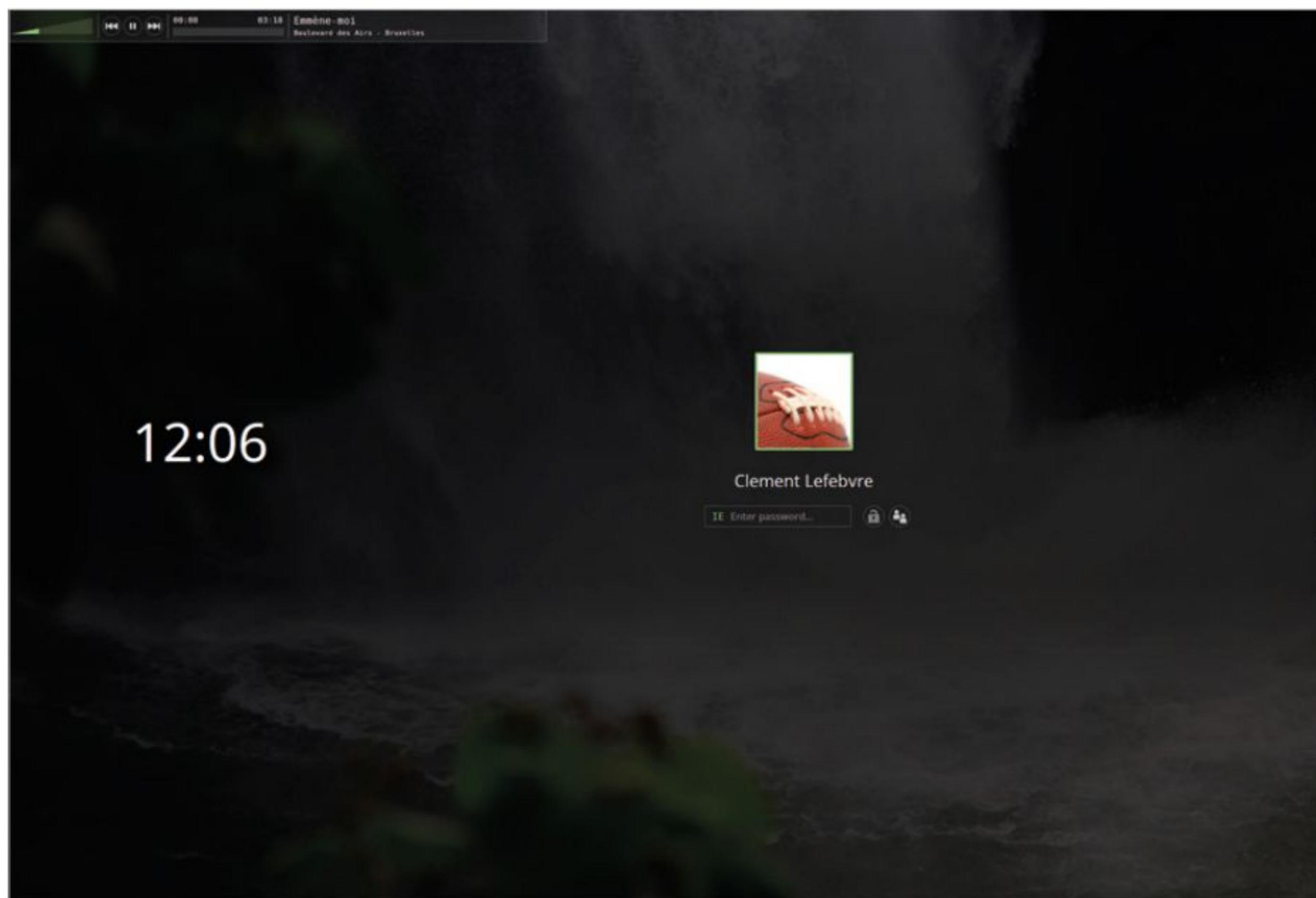
## A DASH OF CINNAMON

Cinnamon has many benefits beyond its look and feel, although they are important factors. We've outlined a few features to help you decide if it's the DE for you.

It performs excellently on more modern systems but it's a lot more stable than it used to be and not quite the resource hog it once was. Therefore, don't be put off Cinnamon if you're using an older computer to install and test Linux Mint on.



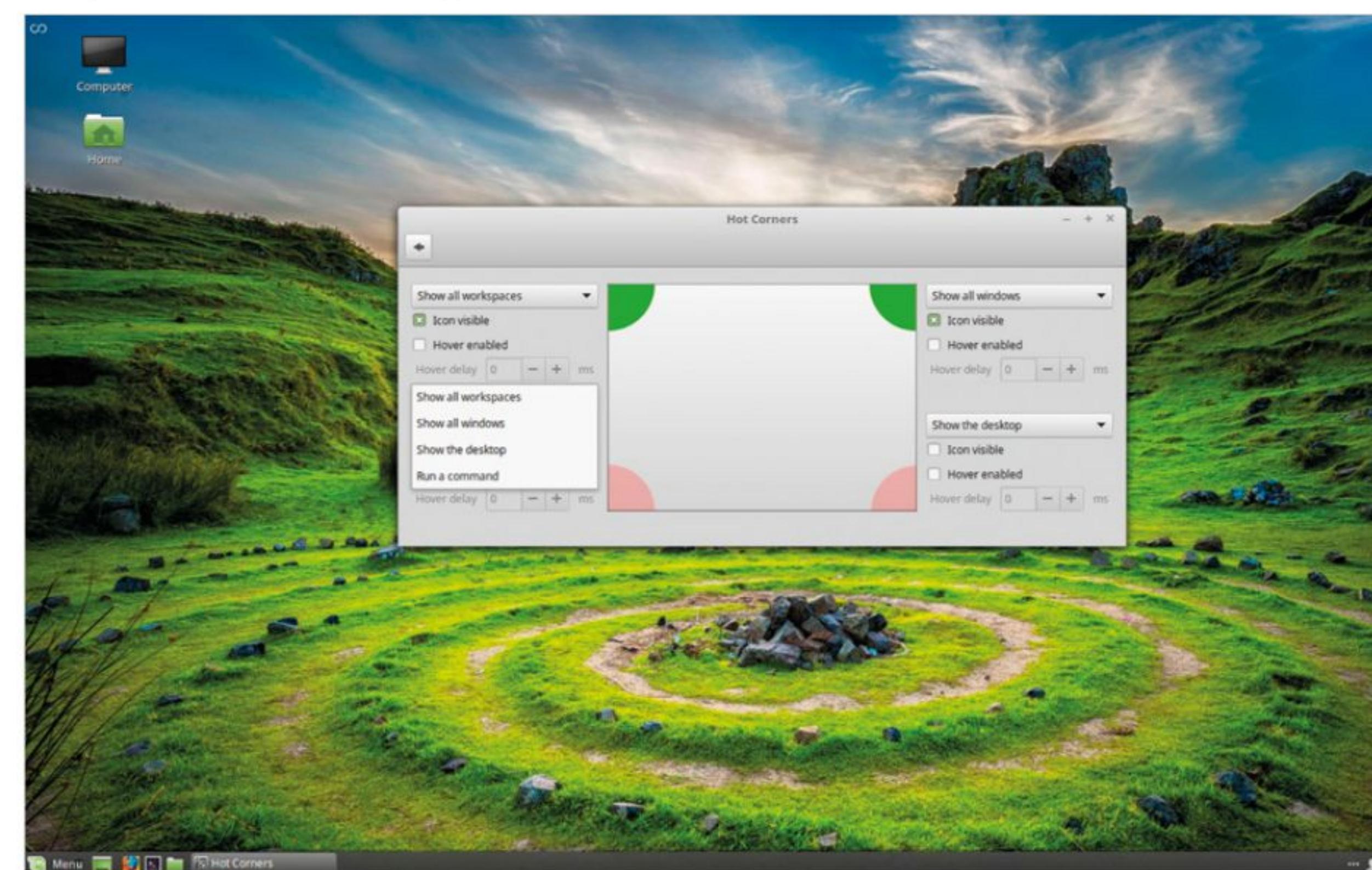
There's a new screensaver with the latest version of Cinnamon, on Linux Mint 18.1. Background slideshows are available and you're able to see the battery status without logging in; and there are media controls too, so you can use Linux Mint as a jukebox.



You're able to line up your Panels to the sides of the screen and the icons and Panel features will automatically orientate themselves to the vertical plane. This makes the desktop easier to customise, and more productive for some users.



Cinnamon features configurable Hot Corners, where each corner of the desktop can be clicked to perform a certain task, such as display the Workspaces, Show all Windows or Run a Command. The Hot Corners are an excellent way to switch between different views and help make the desktop a more efficient environment.





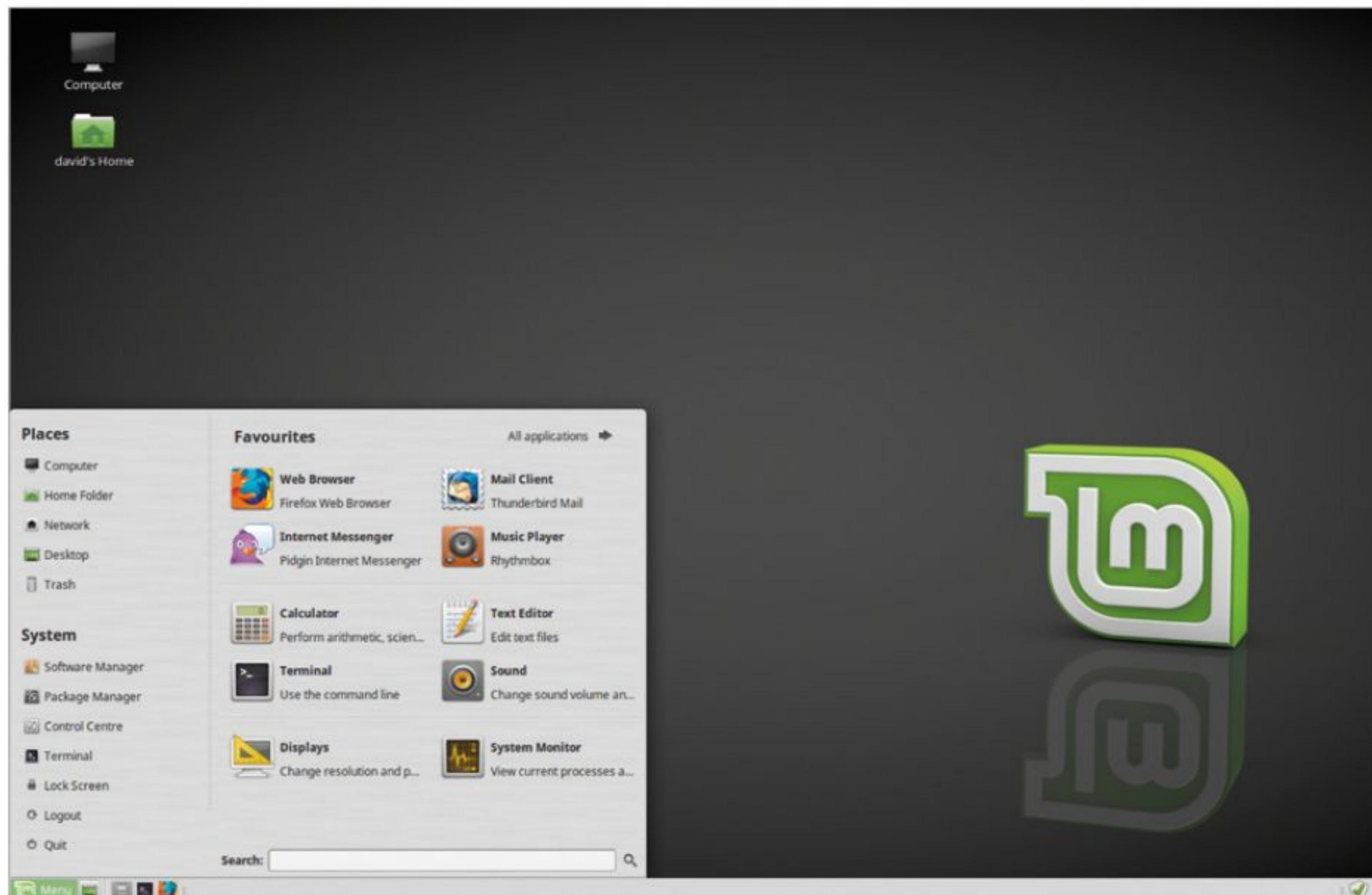
# MATE Desktop Environment

GNOME 2 was the default desktop environment for many different Linux distros in the past, until the team released GNOME 3. GNOME 3 was a very different environment and as such many users didn't like it. Building off GNOME 2, MATE is a development fork from the original project.

## BEST MATE

MATE is a simple to use and intuitive DE that's fast and stable. In comparison to Cinnamon it looks a little antiquated but that's only on the surface. There's plenty to like with MATE.

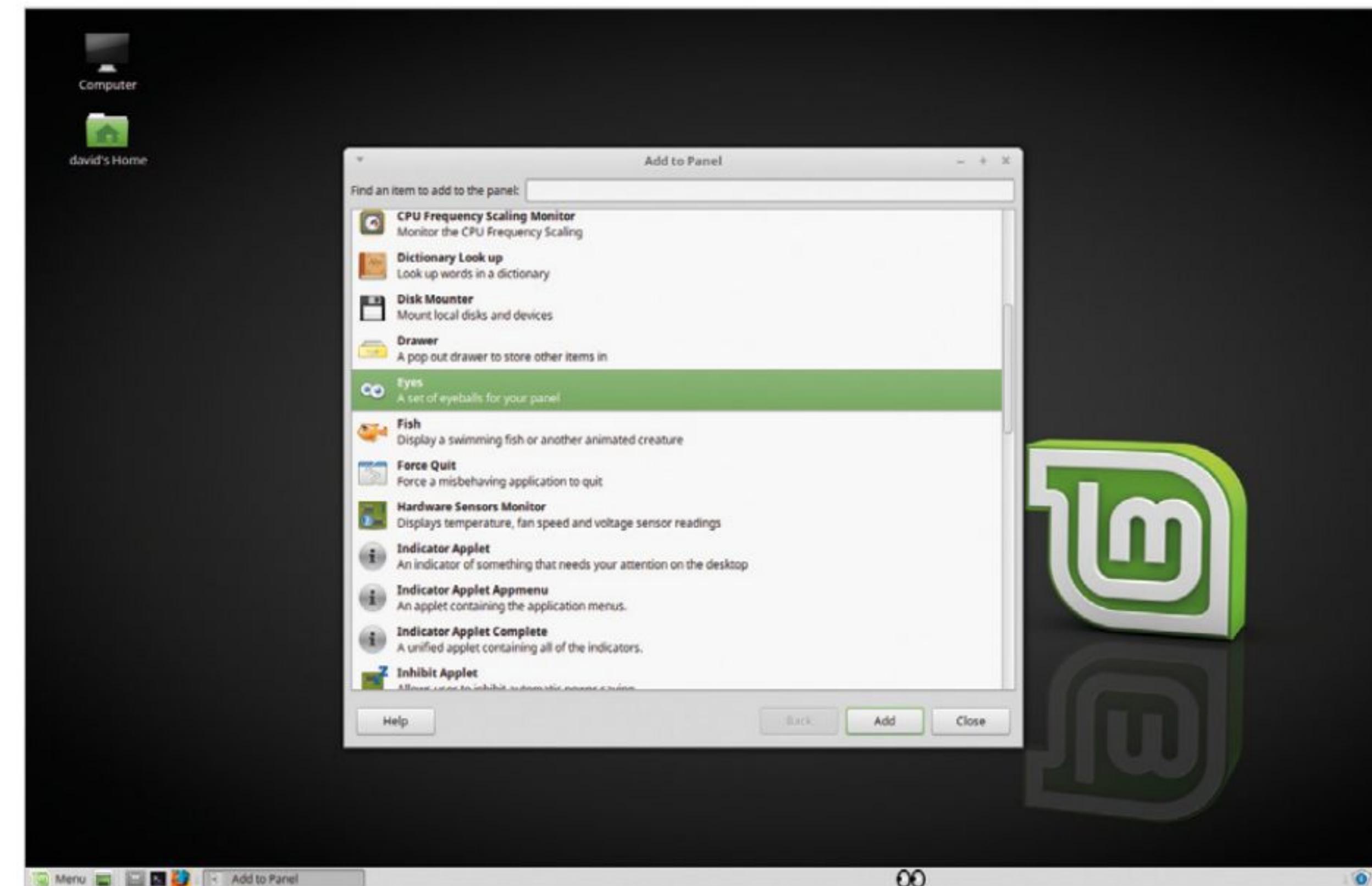
MATE is an excellent desktop environment for older computers. It works better with a larger number of hardware components than Cinnamon generally does and is also just as capable of delivering a great looking desktop along with advanced customisations.



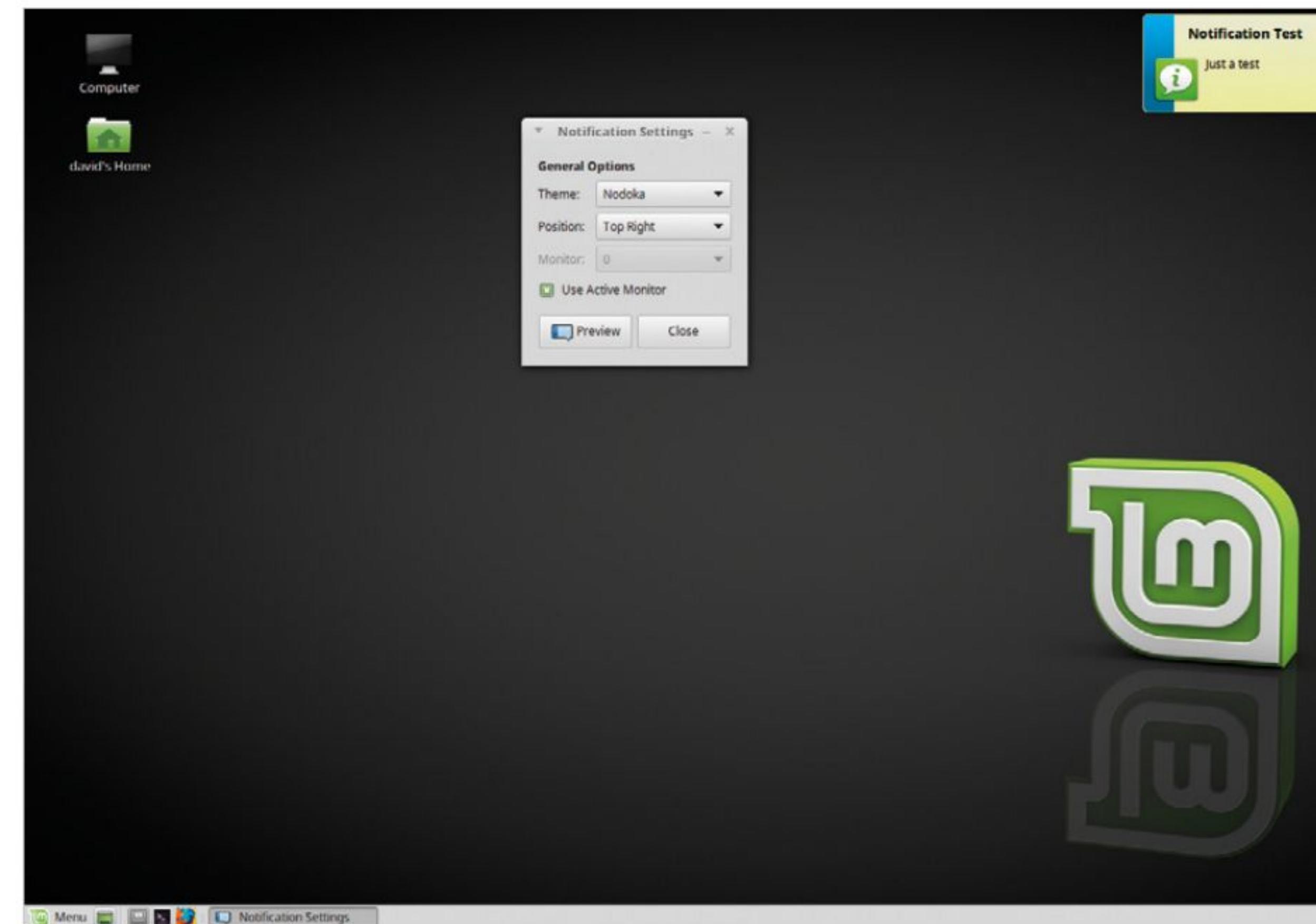
Due to its highly configurable nature, MATE can be customised to a fine degree. There are plenty of options available to users who demand a little more from their desktop environment, including Compiz Settings; here you're able to configure all manner of desktop effects, even a 3D desktop cube.



There are many different Panel options and apps you can add. Some are just for fun, like a pair of eye balls that follow your mouse cursor around; and others are more constructive, such as a weather app.



Although you don't have quite the graphical feature set of Cinnamon, you can still enjoy such features as customisable notifications, Xed the excellent text editor, Xplayer the media player and many other superb MATE specific apps.





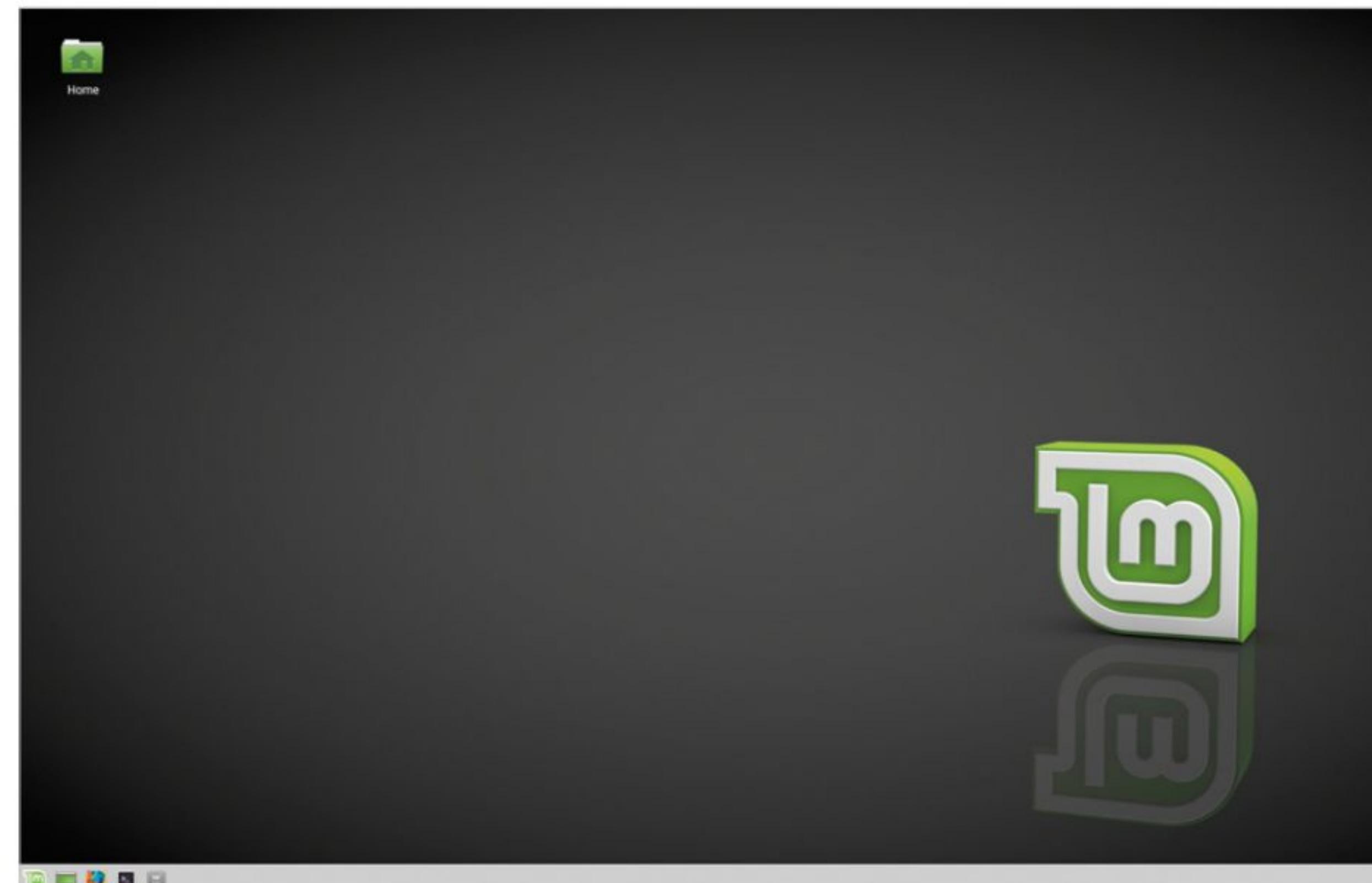
# Xfce Desktop Environment

Xfce is a lightweight desktop environment that's aimed at low resource computers. Due to its lightweight nature, Xfce is a remarkably quick and responsive desktop. It has undergone many improvements over its 21-year history and is today one of the top Des on offer for the Linux user.

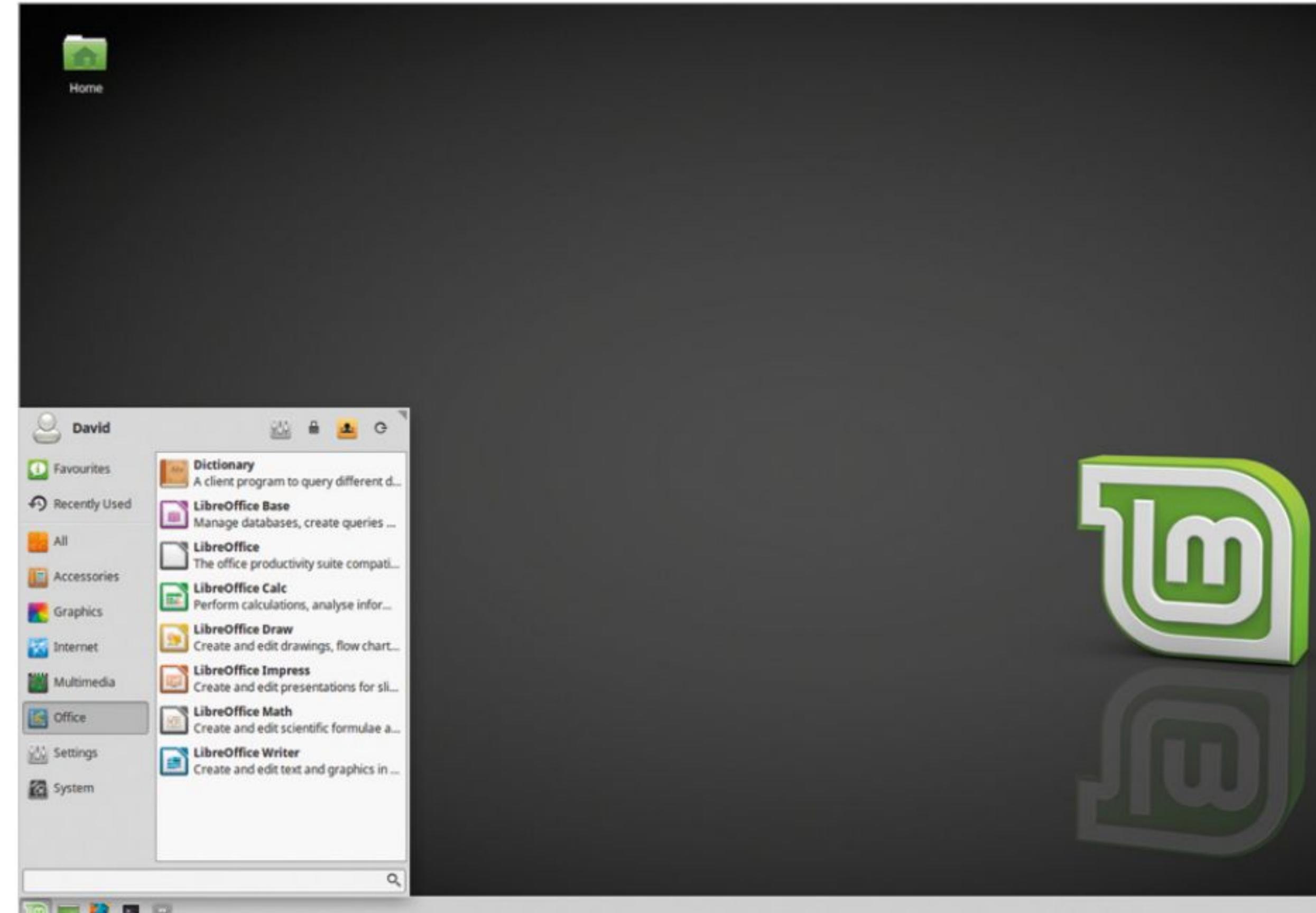
## CHOLESTEROL FREE DESKTOP

Xfce started life as the Common Desktop Environment (CDE) in 1996. Since then it's changed name a few times and is now simply Xfce with the nickname Cholesterol Free Desktop Environment.

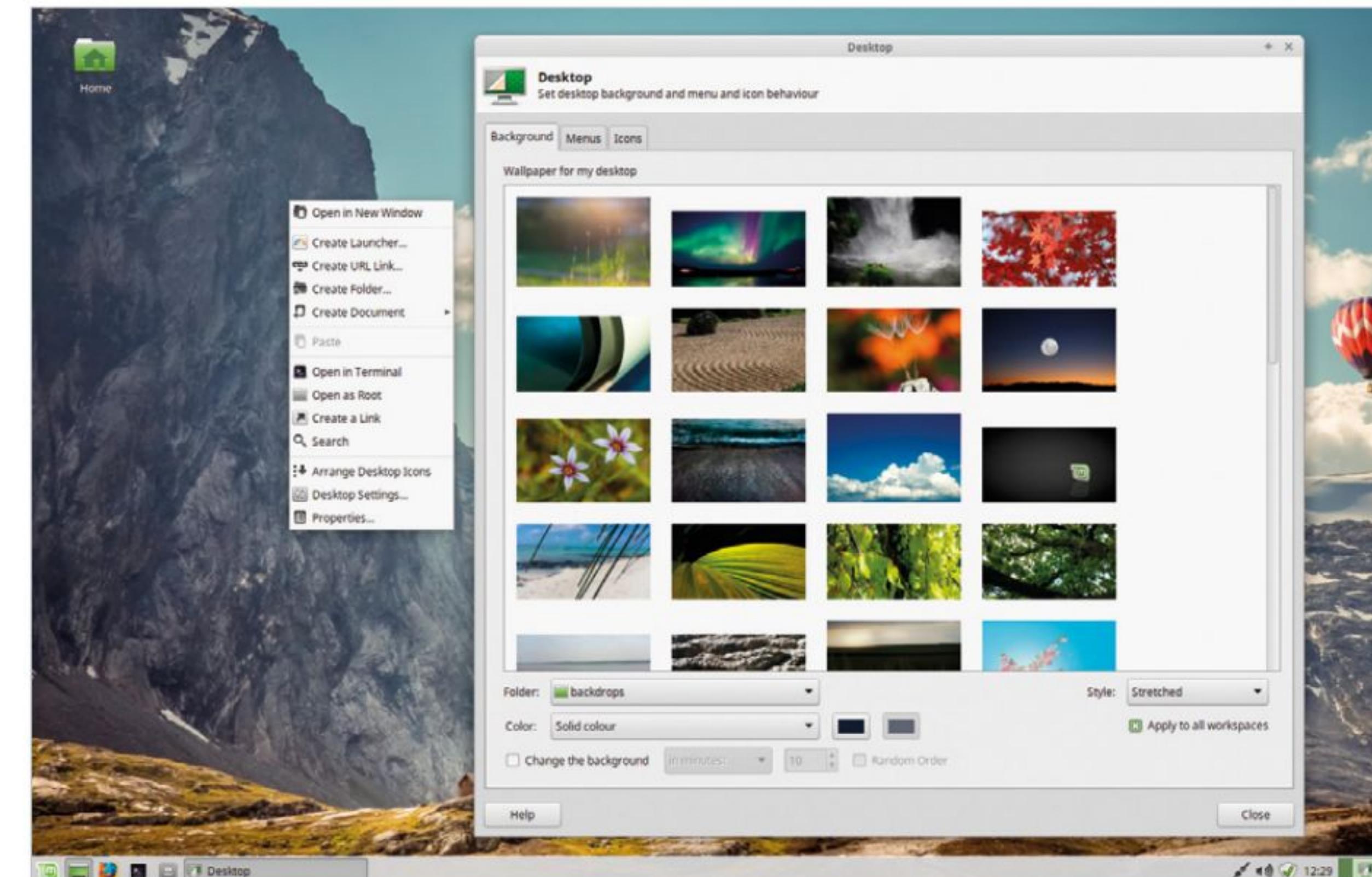
Xfce really is a quick desktop and brings out the best in Linux as a fast operating system. In fact, it's taken us to this point from the top of the page to install it onto a new computer; 120 words written and we're using a brand new OS. Not bad.



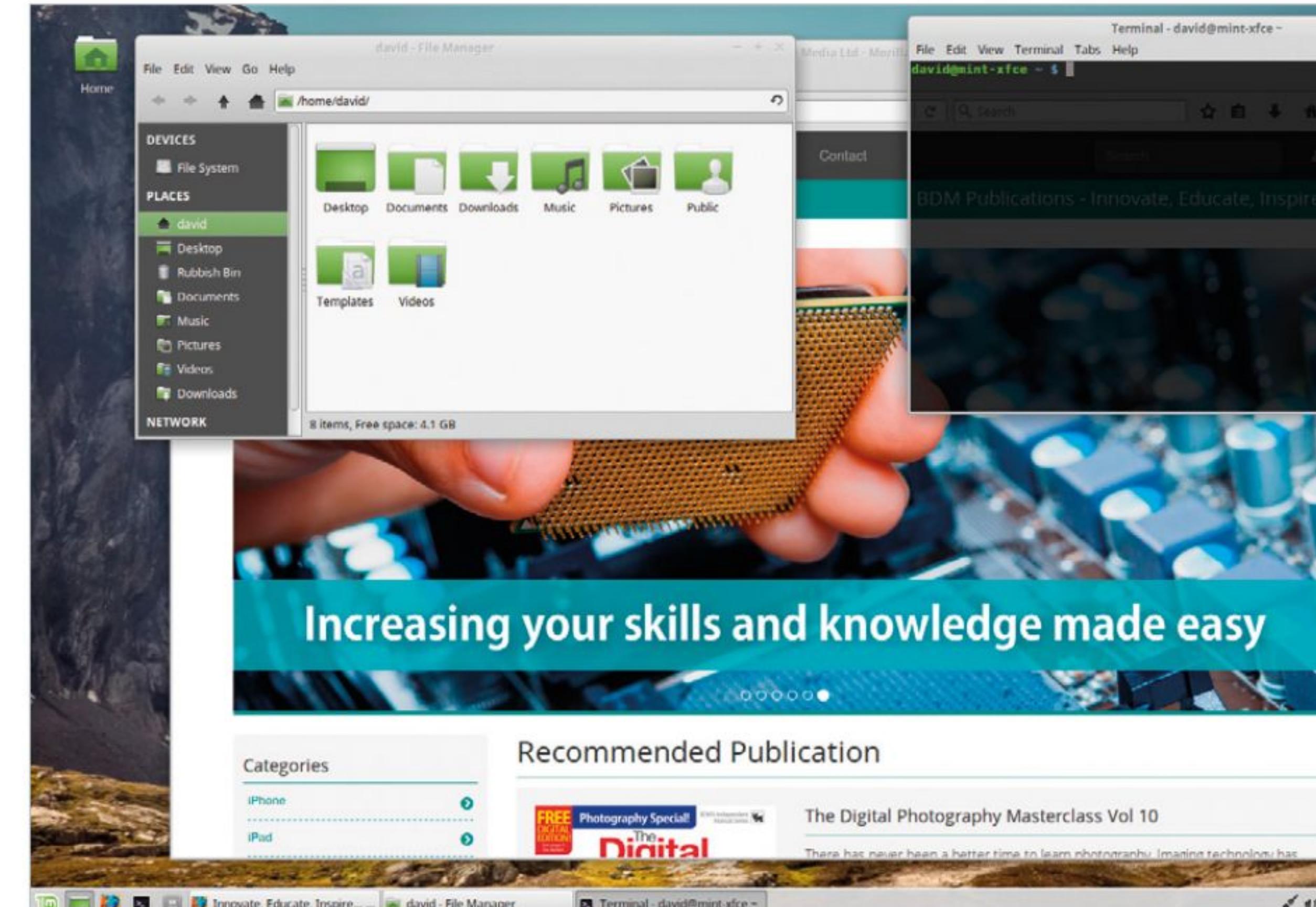
Just because it's quick and lightweight doesn't mean Linux Mint Xfce isn't a complete desktop operating system. As with the other environments on offer, you get the latest Firefox, Libreoffice, VLC, Gimp, chat apps and even a Bit torrent client.



There's also a wealth of desktop and environmental customisations available within Linux Mint Xfce. You can find the same excellent desktop backgrounds on offer, as well as the ability to use your own images; you can even personalise the setup further with extra options.



It's surprising how graphically powerful the desktop is, even though this is such a lightweight environment. The new Xfce Windows Manager (xfwm4) offers Window Switching, Window Thumbnails, Tiling, Zooming and active desktop corners to snap windows into position.





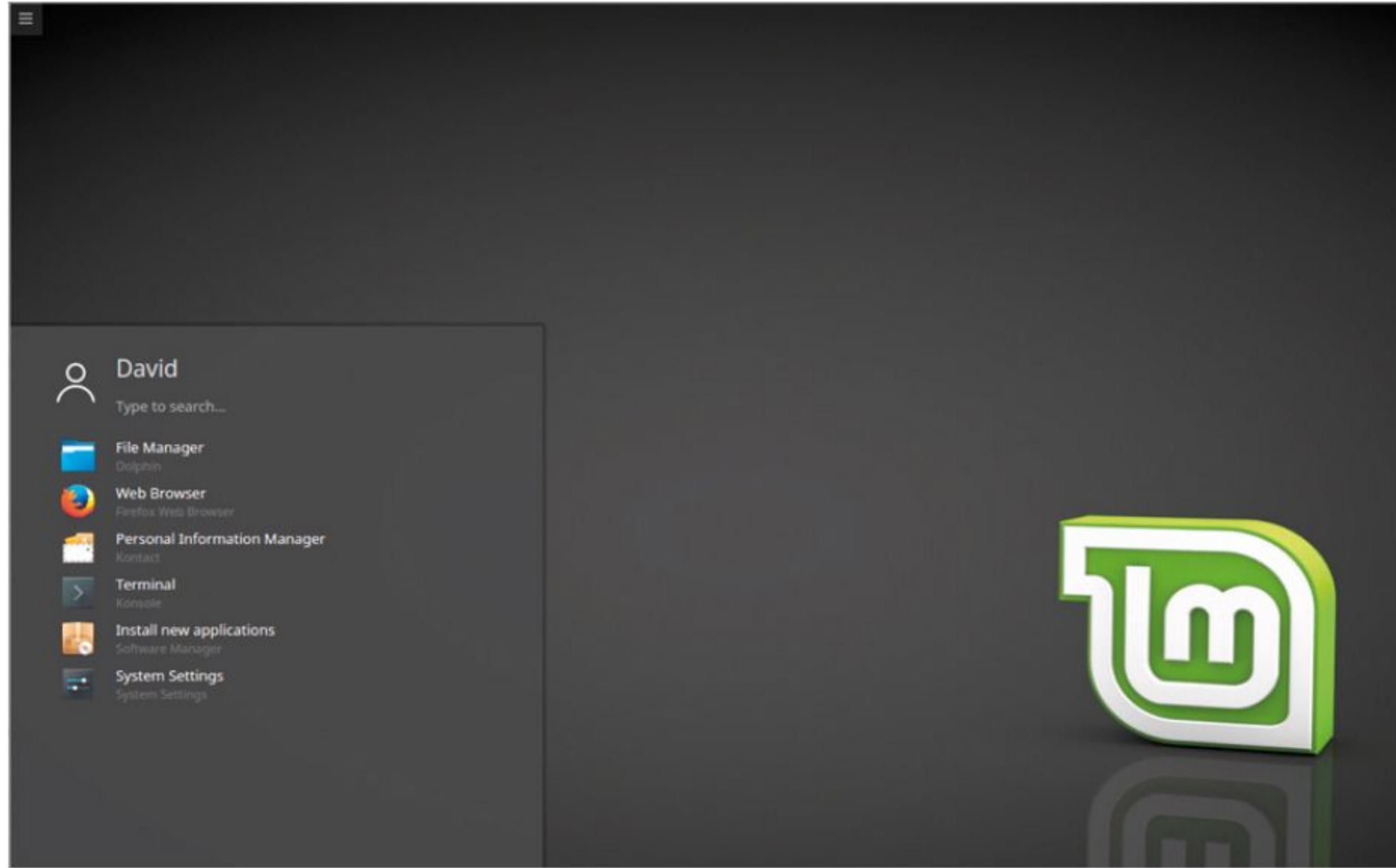
# KDE Desktop Environment

Strictly speaking we should refer to KDE as the K Desktop Environment, instead of KDE Desktop Environment as we'd be repeating Desktop Environment twice. KDE is a flashy, heavily graphical interface with countless configuration options. It's a superb environment to show off Linux Mint.

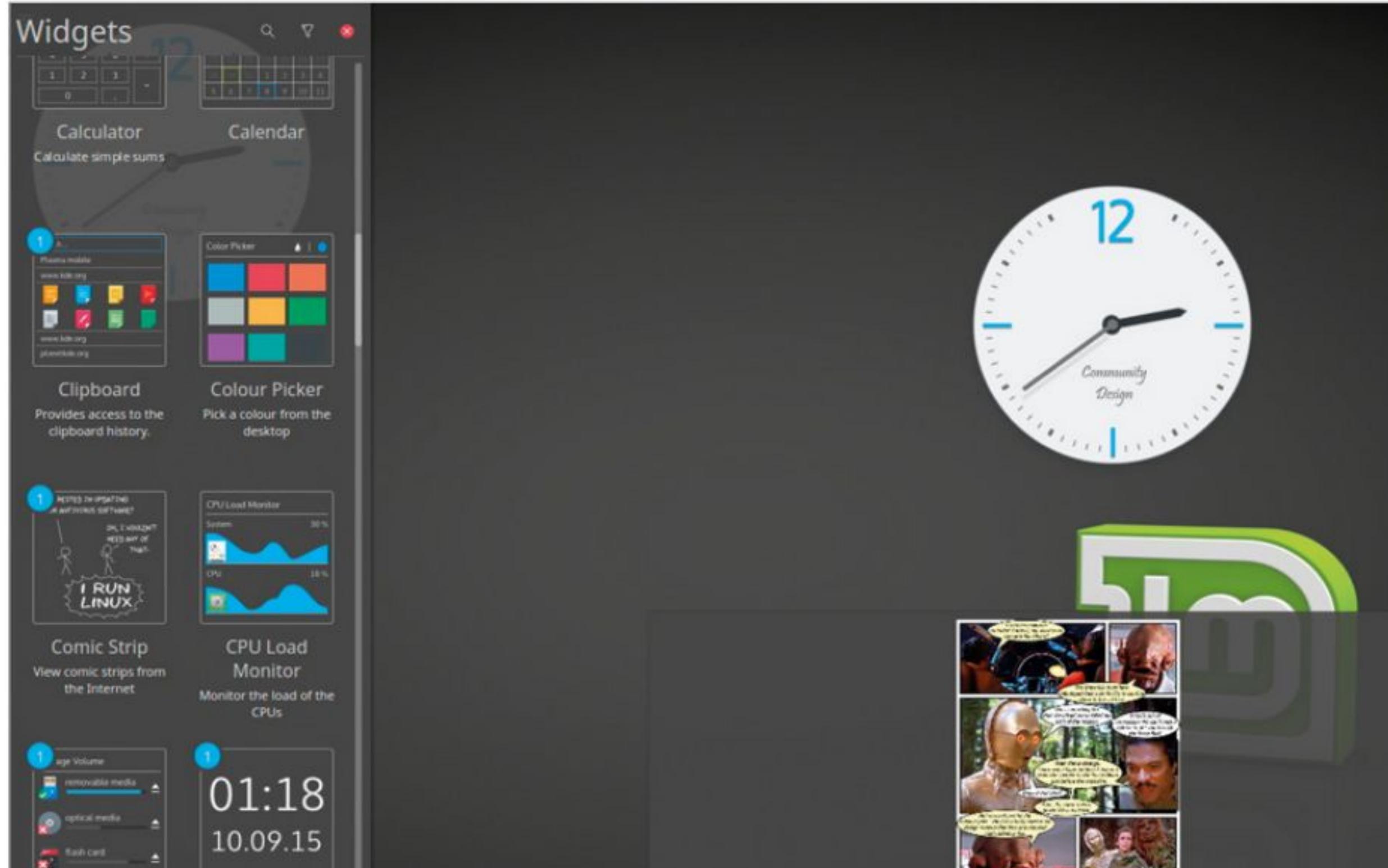
## KOOL DESKTOP

KDE was founded twenty years ago by Matthias Ettrich, a then student at Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen. It's an extraordinarily versatile environment and looks amazing when used on modern systems.

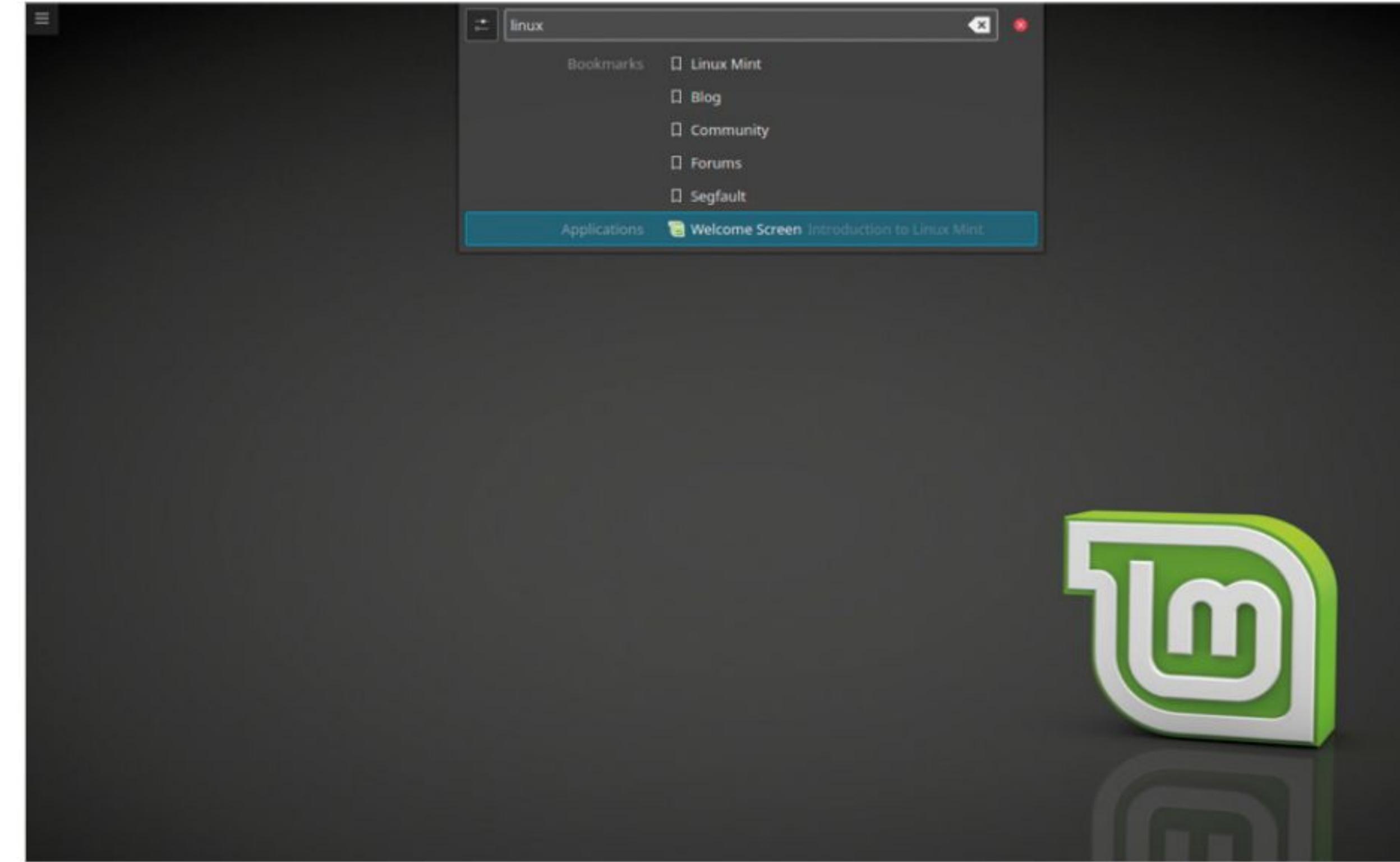
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Linux Mint 8.1 KDE uses Plasma 5.8, which is the latest version and consists of some great features. The desktop itself is quite demanding on system resources at times, depending on what's being run and how much customisation you're using, but it's very impressive.



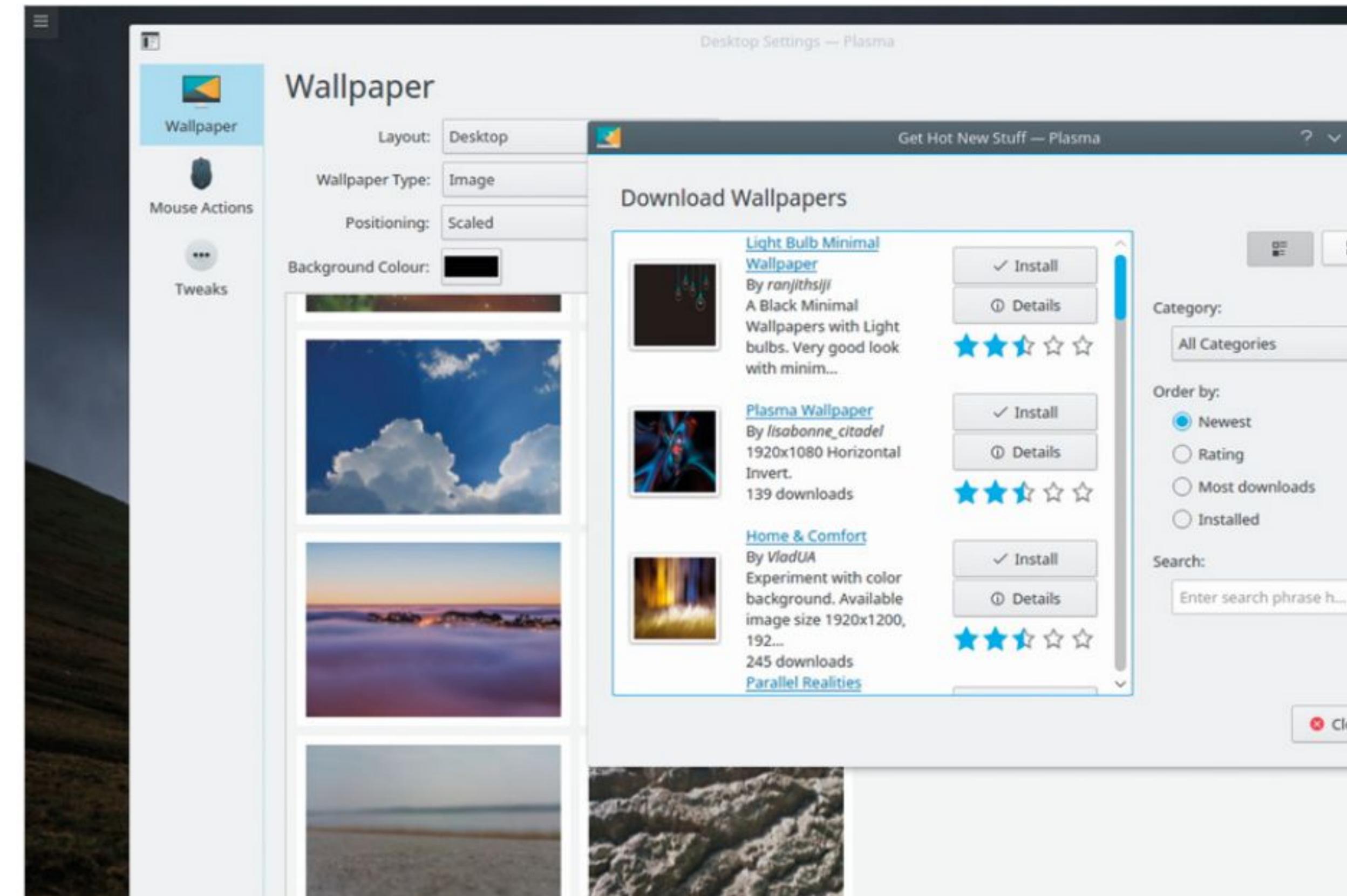
.....  
Widgets are one of KDE's most impressive additions. With them you're able to add a dynamic and active app directly to the desktop. Ever fancied having an analogue clock on the desktop or how about a customisable comic strip? These and countless more are available as Widgets. The only problem is running out of desktop space.



.....  
You're able to start typing to the desktop to launch the KDE search function. With it you can search for files, folders, apps and even websites. You can also customise the search options to cover everything from calculator use to defining dictionary words.



.....  
Due to KDE's configurable nature, there are a huge range of desktop wallpapers and options available. You can also download more wallpapers and other features directly from within the desktop configuration utility too.





# Downloading the Mint ISO

Now that you've had a little look at the different versions of Linux Mint available, it's time to actually get hold of the ISO for the particular flavour you're interested in. In case you're wondering what an ISO is, it's a file that's the perfect representation of the contents of an entire CD or DVD.

## GETTING MINTY

Your adventure with Linux Mint is just a few clicks away. First though you need to check whether you need the 32-bit or 64-bit version. Simply put, if your PC was built after 2010, then opt for the 64-bit version.

- STEP 1** Start by opening a browser and navigating to [www.linuxmint.com/download.php](http://www.linuxmint.com/download.php). This is the download area for the mainstream versions of Linux Mint (32-bit and 64-bit) covering Cinnamon, MATE, Xfce and KDE. If you want LMDE 2, then you need to go to [www.linuxmint.com/download\\_lmde.php](http://www.linuxmint.com/download_lmde.php), where there are 32 and 64-bit versions of Cinnamon and MATE available.

The screenshot shows the 'Download Linux Mint 18.1 Serena' page. It features a large image of the Cinnamon desktop environment. Below it are links to the User Guide and Release Notes. A section titled 'Information' states: 'Our latest release is Linux Mint 18.1, codename "Serena".'. A 'Download links' table provides links for Cinnamon, MATE, Xfce, and KDE editions in both 32-bit and 64-bit formats. The table includes descriptions for each edition.

	EDITION		
Cinnamon	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the Cinnamon desktop
MATE	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the MATE desktop
Xfce	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the Xfce desktop
KDE	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the KDE desktop

- STEP 2** The hardest part of this section is deciding which version to opt for. We'll look a little deeper into the different desktops later on but for ease of use, we're going to use the Cinnamon 64-bit version of the mainstream Linux Mint. Click the 32 or 64-bit version links to be taken to the mirror download page.

This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the 'Download Linux Mint 18.1 Serena' page with the Cinnamon desktop image and the same 'Download links' table for Cinnamon, MATE, Xfce, and KDE editions.

	EDITION		
Cinnamon	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the Cinnamon desktop
MATE	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the MATE desktop
Xfce	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the Xfce desktop
KDE	<a href="#">32-bit</a>	<a href="#">64-bit</a>	An edition featuring the KDE desktop

- STEP 3** In the download section you can see some information regarding the version, how big the ISO is and release notes (worth reading). Below is a long list of regional servers or mirrors that contain the ISO. Locate one nearest to you and click the link to begin the download.

The screenshot shows the 'Linux Mint 18.1 "Serena" - Cinnamon (64-bit)' page. It displays 'Information about this edition' with details like Release (18.1), Size (1.7GB), Release Notes, Announcement, Torrent, and Authentication. Below this is a 'Download mirrors' table listing various mirrors around the world, such as EvoWise CDN, Manitoba Linux User Group, University of Waterloo Computer Science Club, advancedhosters.com, Clarkson University, Go-Parts, and James Madison University.

COUNTRY	MIRROR
World	EvoWise CDN
Canada	Manitoba Linux User Group
Canada	University of Waterloo Computer Science Club
USA	advancedhosters.com
USA	Clarkson University
USA	Go-Parts
USA	James Madison University

- STEP 4** The closer the mirror's location to you, the quicker it downloads. When you click one of the links you are asked to open or save the file. At this stage, make sure the Save File option is highlighted and click the OK button to initiate the download. When finished, the ISO will be in the Downloads folder of your computer.

The screenshot shows a Firefox download dialog box for the file 'linuxmint-18.1-cinnamon-64bit.iso'. The file size is 1.7 GB. The dialog asks 'What should Firefox do with this file?' with options for 'Open with' (radio button) and 'Save File' (radio button, which is selected). There is also a checkbox for 'Do this automatically for files like this from now on.' Both 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons are visible.



# LMDE 2

As we mentioned previously, LMDE is Linux Mint's Debian Edition. It's a bleeding-edge distro using either Cinnamon or MATE as the desktop environment and as such it can be a little unstable at times.

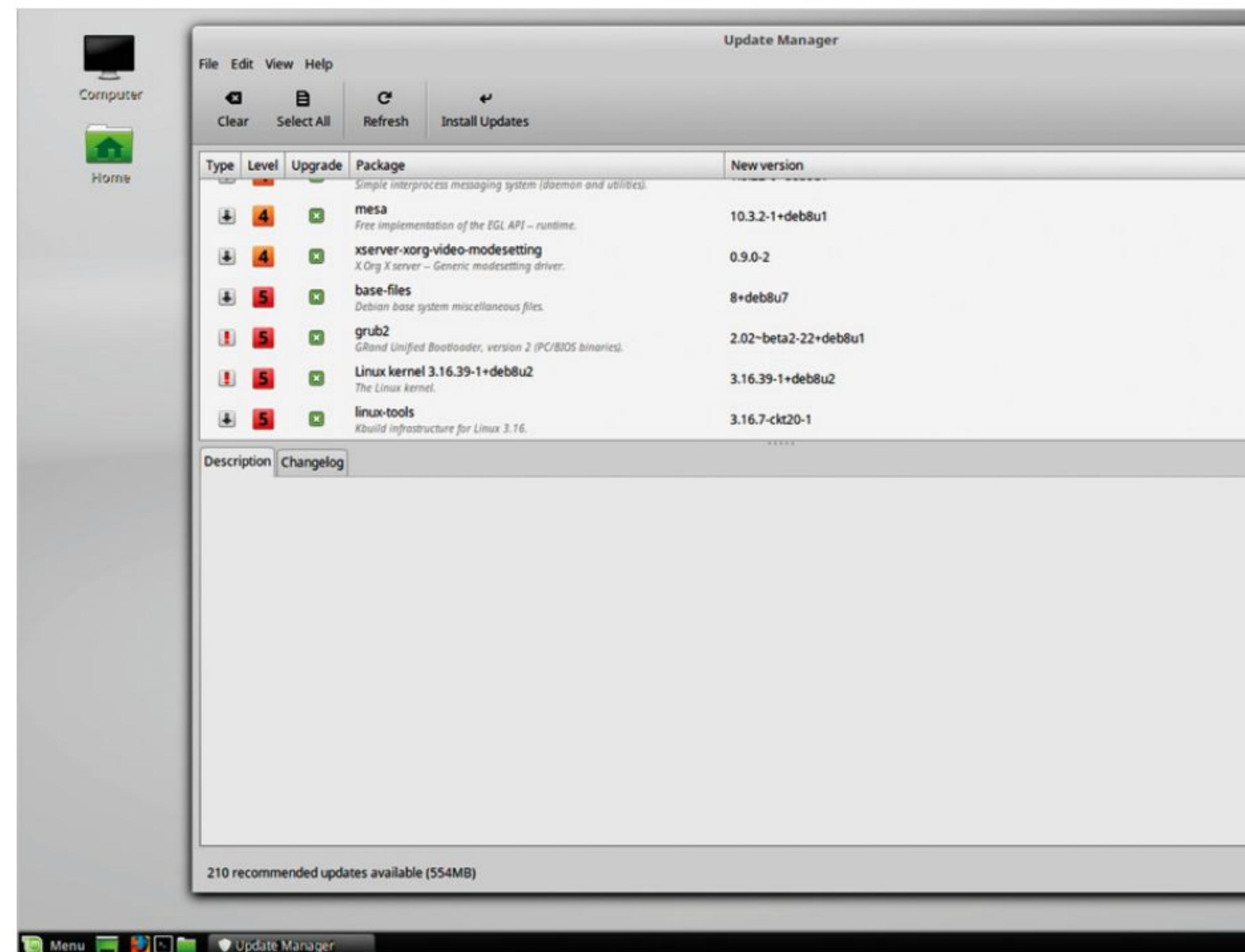
## HERE BE DRAGONS

Whilst it's certainly of interest running a cutting edge Linux distro, and the advantages of doing so are many, the main disadvantage is that you may end up with a very dead OS should a new update break it.

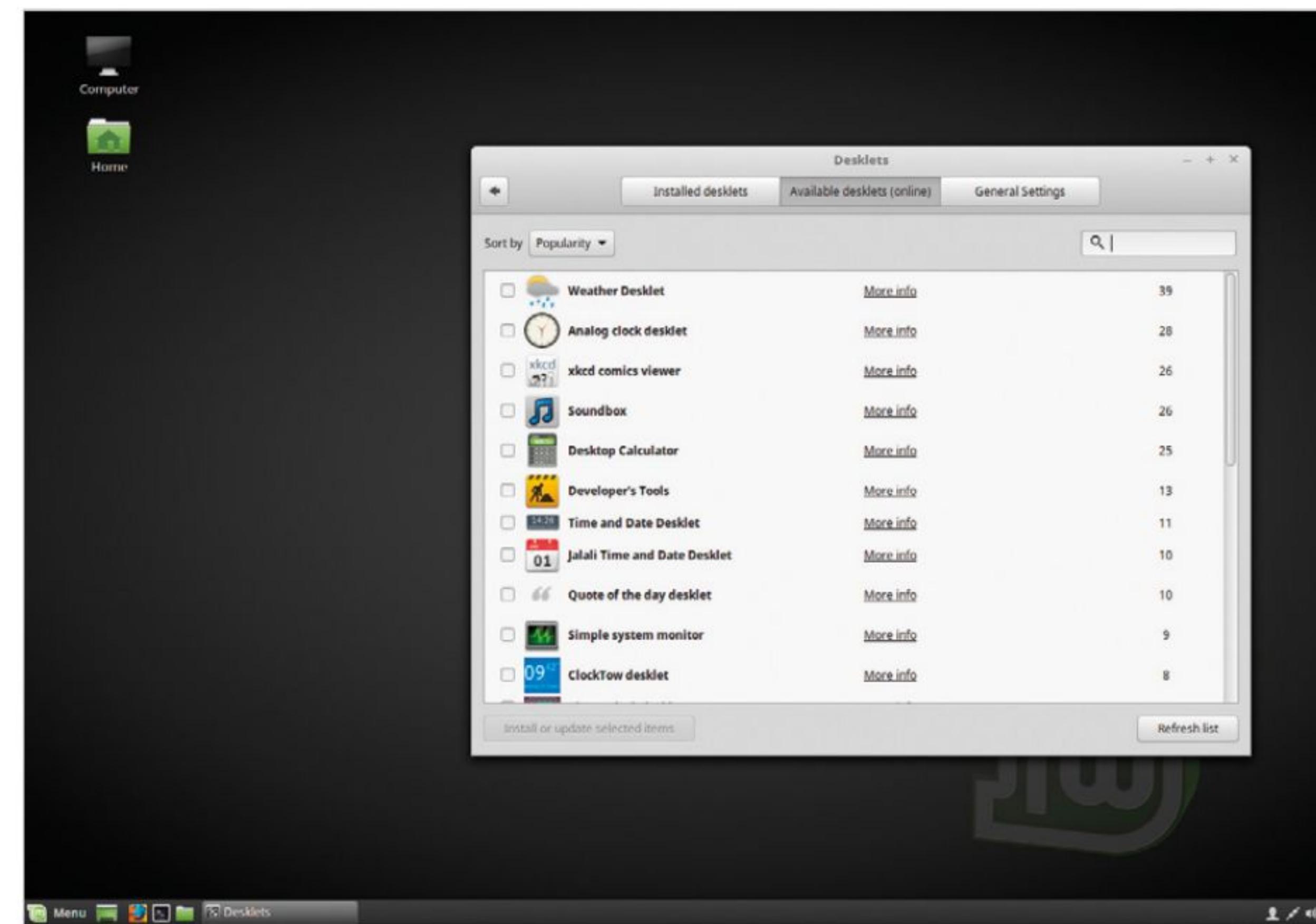
LMDE uses a Debian testing package base as opposed to the stable Ubuntu package base that the other versions of Linux Mint use. This means that the operating system is slightly faster and will have more recent versions of apps and code compared to the mainline Mint. This does mean, that things can go wrong from time to time though.



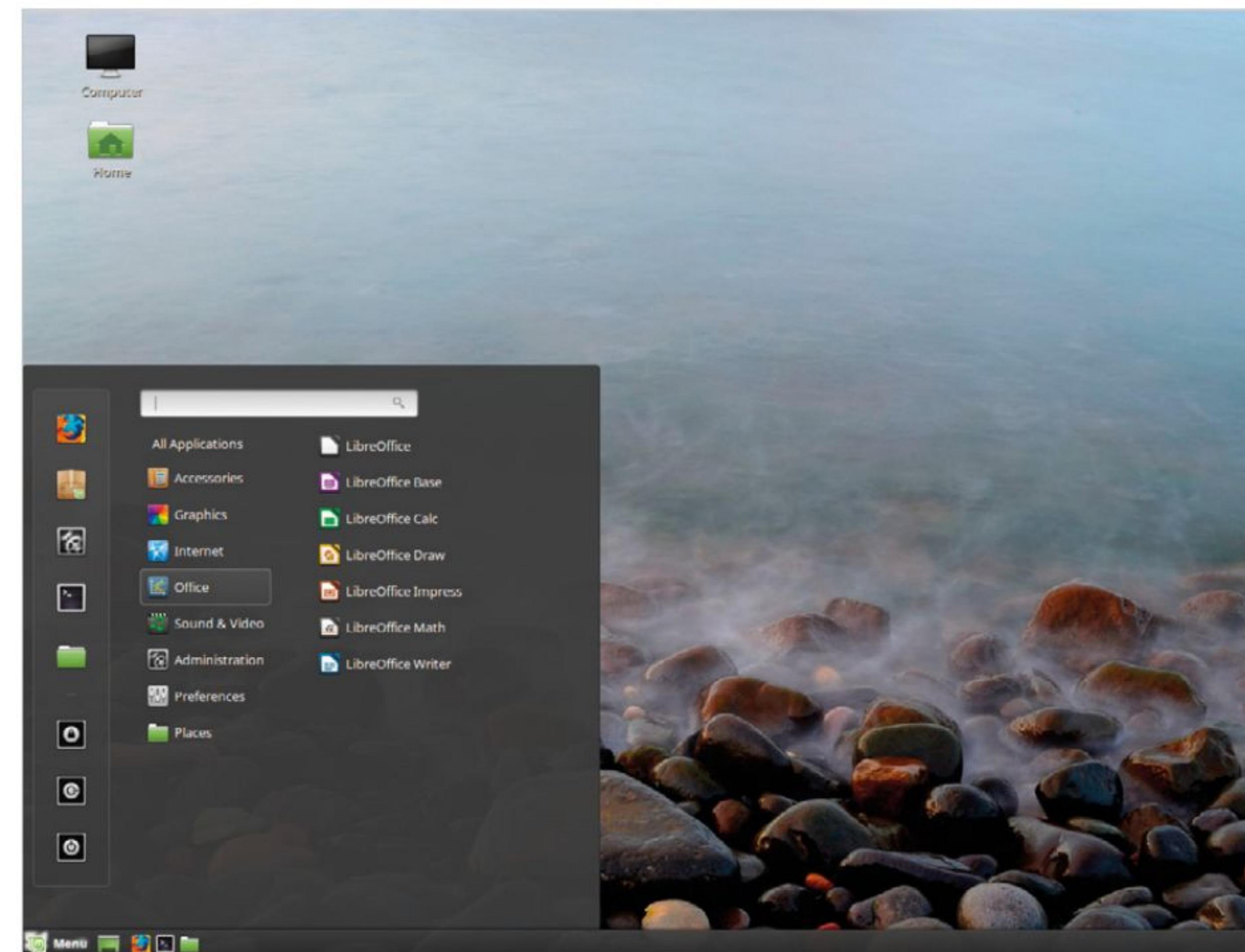
Of course, as we've already said, and it's needs to be clearly mentioned, that LMDE 2 is for experienced users only. When things do go wrong with it, and there's a good chance as it's using the testing package base, you need to be able to either fix it yourself or start again from scratch or a backup.



LMDE 2 has both Cinnamon and MATE desktop environments available, so you're still getting the same great benefits from both versions. You also get new features for either environment before they've made it into the stable editions of Mint. As the Mint state, "It's more risky, but more exciting".



As LMDE is a more streamlined desktop than that of the mainstream Linux Mint, it's blisteringly fast and measures up against the previous desktop versions we've looked at, LMDE is probably as quick as the Xfce version of Linux Mint, which is pretty quick; and you still have all the productivity and other core apps available.





## SHOULD YOU USE LMDE?

If it's cutting edge, and it's quick, then why not use LMDE 2 instead of the other versions of Linux Mint? It's a good question so let's try and answer it here.

LMDE 2 is, by the Linux Mint team's own words, "targeted at experienced users", which means that although you probably have the ability to successfully install it, update it and use it, should anything go wrong with it you'll find it extremely difficult to find any support or help on what may have gone wrong.

Whilst it's aimed at the more advanced user, there are plenty of users who have the opinion that LMDE 2 is a stable and perfect environment for the beginner to start their Linux journey with. In some respects we agree with them. We've found LMDE 2 to be stable, even under a virtual machine, and a great distro to use on

a daily basis. True, there may be rough edges to smooth out from time to time but even after using LMDE 2 for quite some time, we've never had a broken package cause a major systems issue.

However, for the sake of the beginner and those using Linux Mint for the first time, we'd suggest the mainstream Mint versions to start with. Once you've got the hang of Mint, where everything is and how it all works, and more importantly how you'd back yourself out of a hole should anything go wrong, we'd suggest you test LMDE 2 and see how it runs on your hardware.

From this point on though, we'll be using Linux Mint 18.1 Cinnamon edition; but feel free to use MATE, Xfce, KDE or even LMDE 2 instead. Linux is all about freedom of choice.

