



Mint Management

This would be a very long book if we were to include the nuances of all the Mint Desktop Environments. Therefore, from this point on, unless otherwise stated, we'll be looking at managing Linux Mint using the flagship Cinnamon edition.

However, if you opt for MATE, KDE, Xfce or even LMDE2 you'll find that the same features and programs exist across all the different Mint Desktop Environments. The only major difference will be how you get to a particular program or a slight change in its user interface.

One of the great benefits of Mint is its presentation and customisation. You can chop and change nearly every aspect of this malleable operating system; and add, remove and adopt your own imagery, menus and desktop look and feel.

Over the coming pages we'll look at how to get the best from Linux Mint, and make it your own.



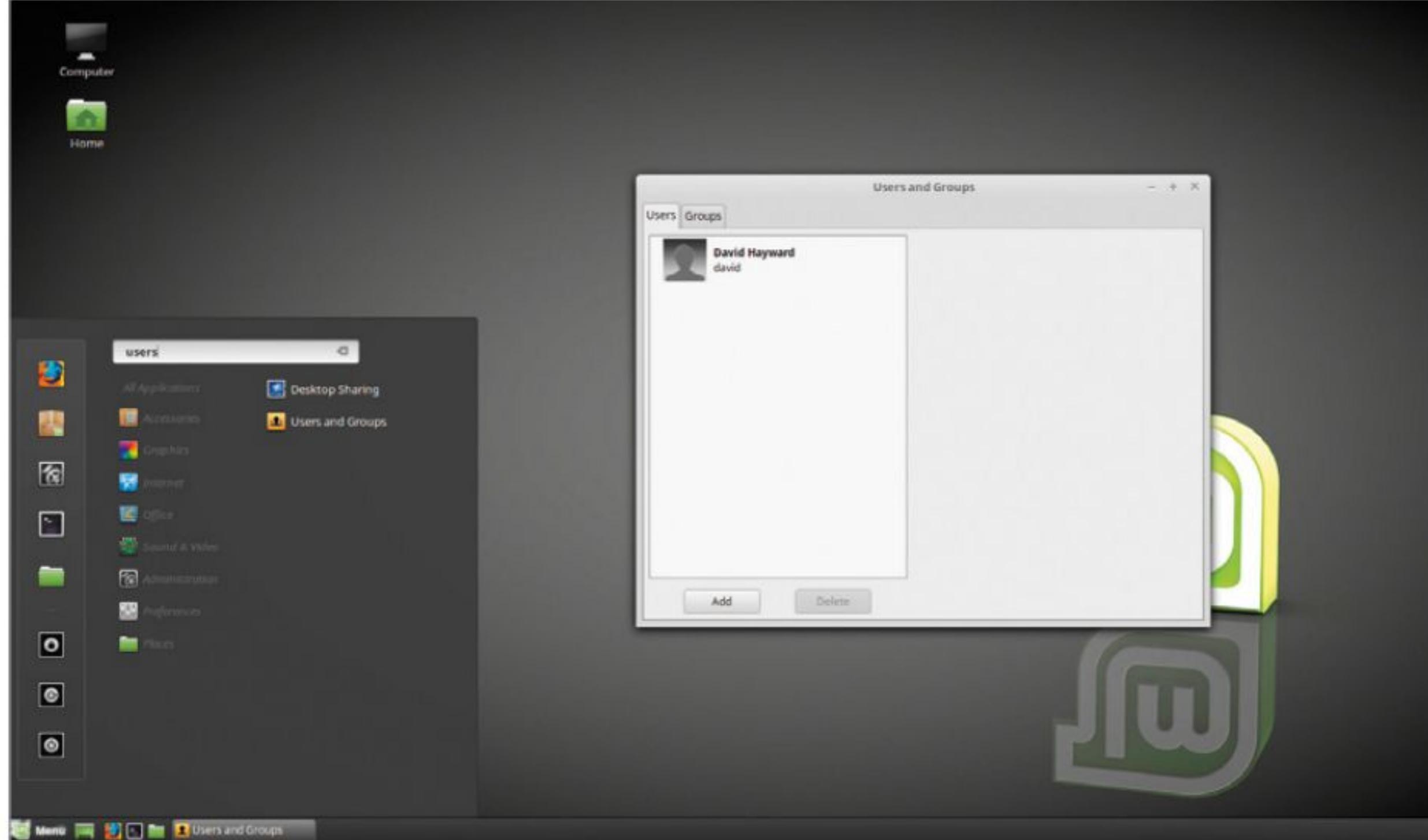
Creating Users in Linux Mint

When you first install Linux Mint it's configured for use with a single user. Whilst sharing a user account with the entire family is fine, there may come a time when you need to create separate users with their own unique Home folders.

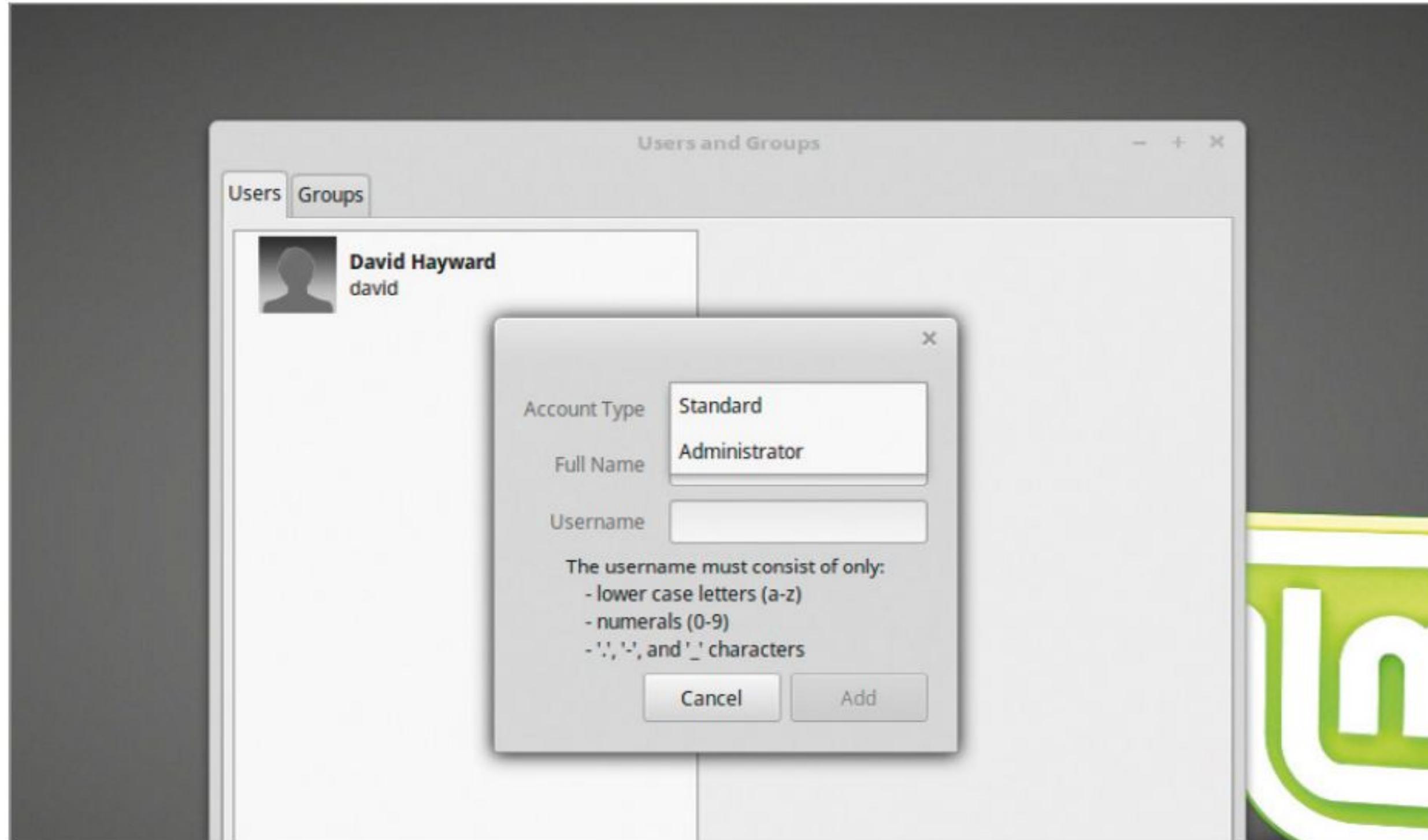
NEW USERS

Having different users means each user will have access to his or her own areas on the system. Documents, pictures, videos and so on will be separate, as with multiple users on other operating systems.

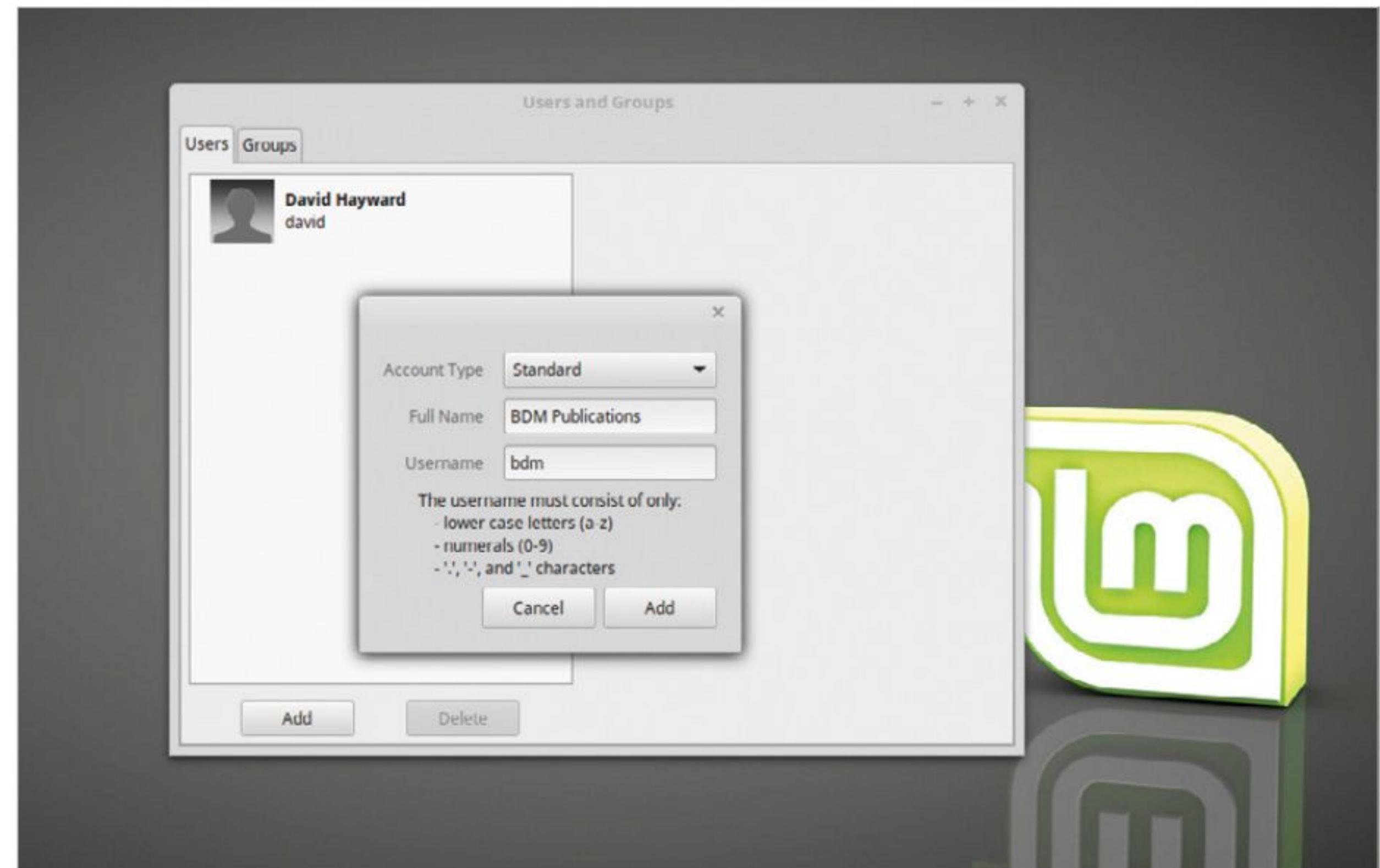
STEP 1 Click on the Linux Mint Menu and type users to begin searching for the relevant console. From the search results, choose Users and Groups and enter your password. The Users and Groups console is quite basic looking and thankfully easy to use. At first, you just see your own username from when you installed Linux Mint.



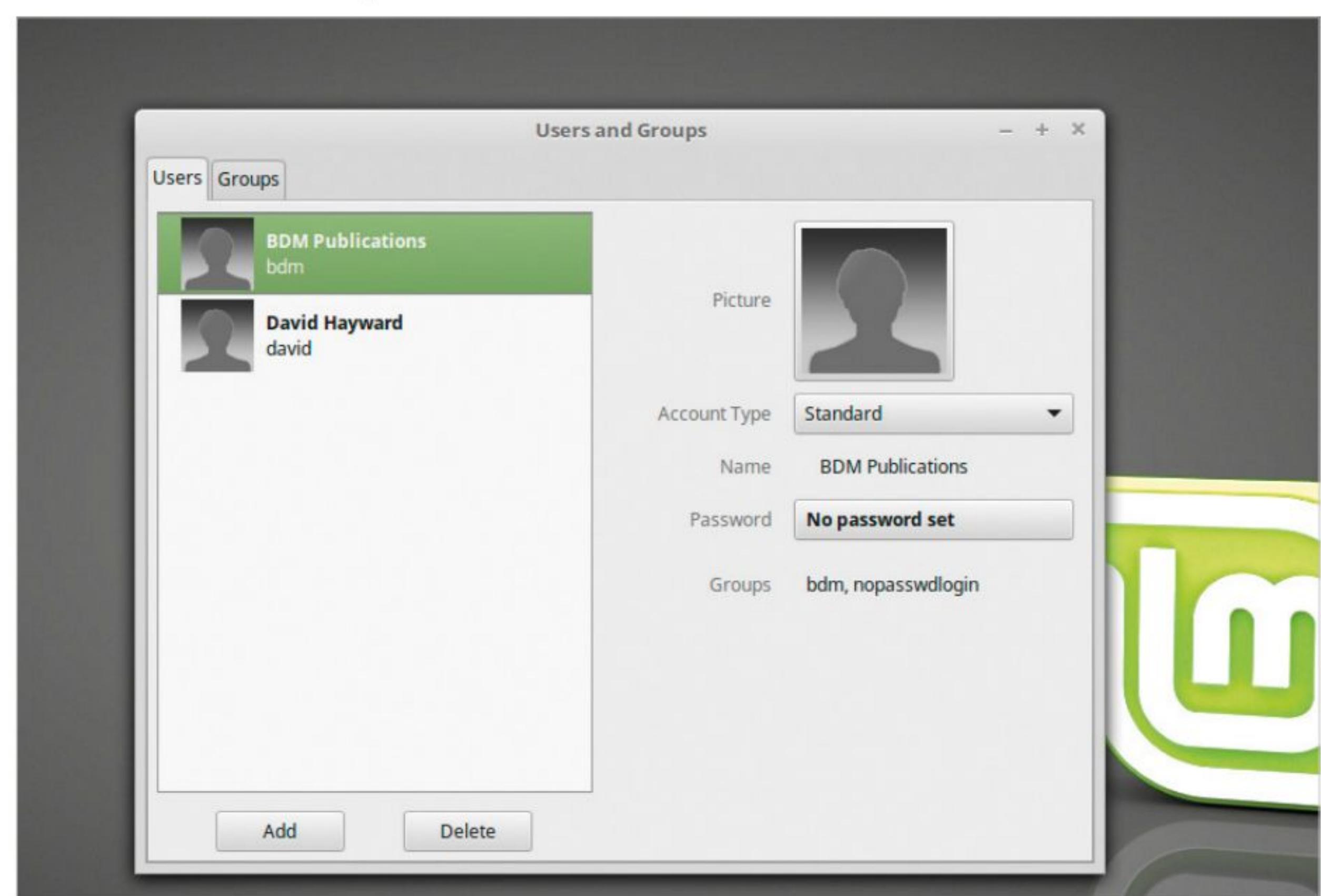
STEP 2 To add a new user, click the Add button at the bottom of the console. There are two types of user you can create: Standard and Administrator. Unless the new user has need to install new apps or access parts of the file system beyond their Home folder, then opt for the Standard account type. Otherwise, use the Administrator account type.



STEP 3 Enter the new user's Full Name, followed by the Username they'll have when logging into Linux Mint. Make sure the username is all in lower case, a-z and 0-9 characters only. You can have full-stops, underscores or hyphens if you wish. Click the Add button when you're ready to continue.

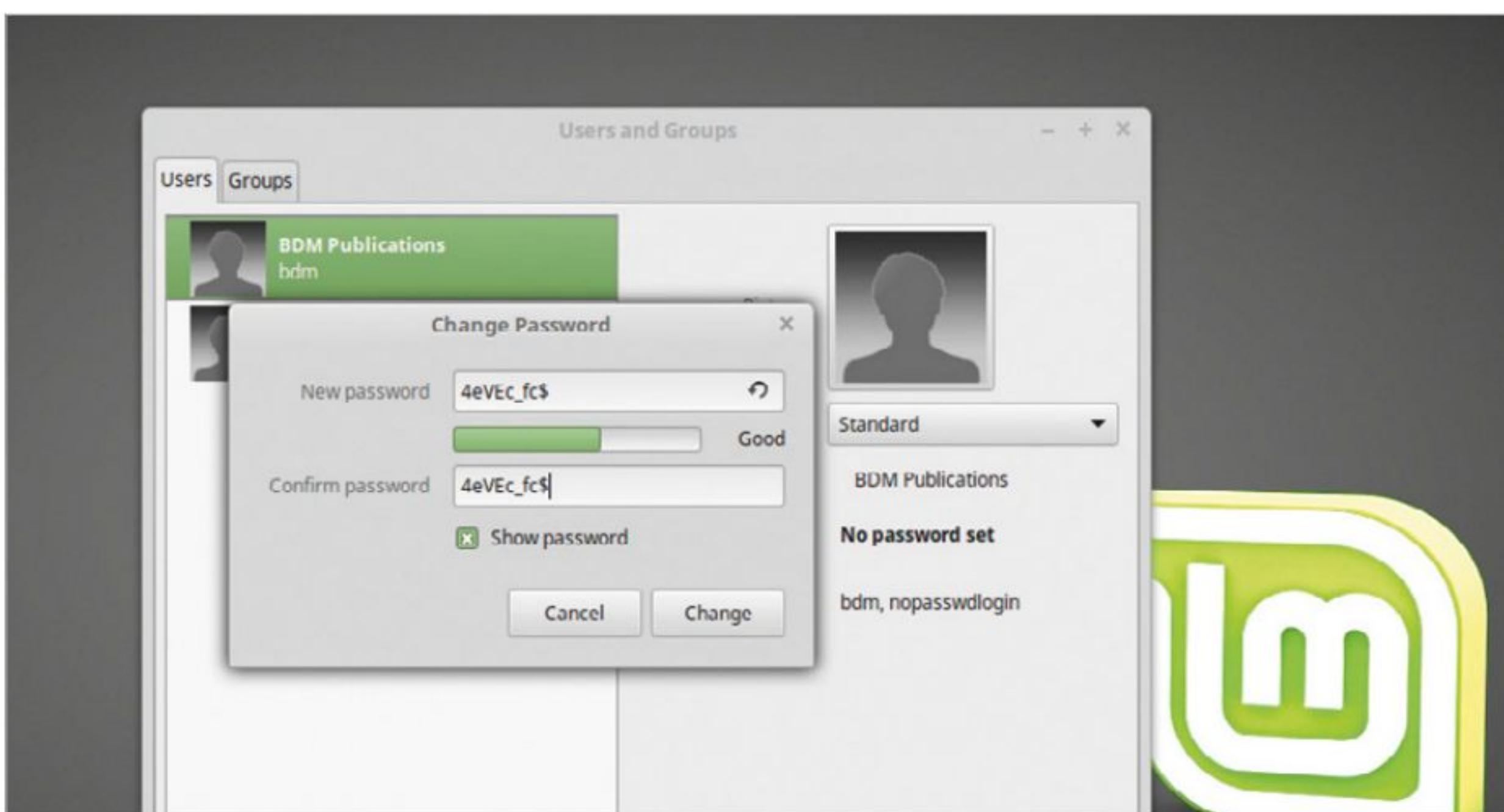


STEP 4 The new user will appear in the list of current Linux Mint users, in alphabetical order. At present, there's no password set so click the user in the list of current users, then click the No Password Set option under the user's username.

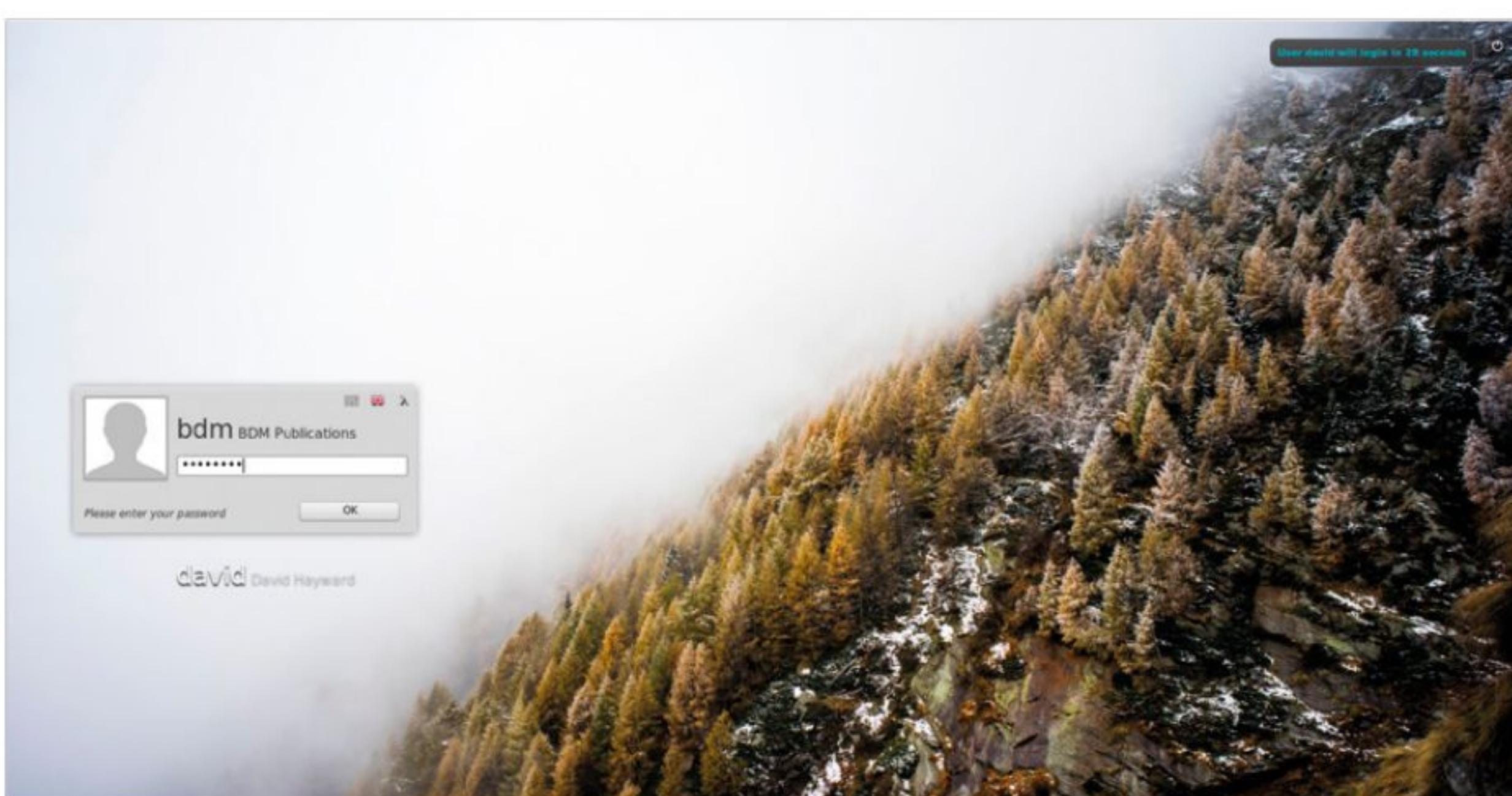


**STEP 5**

You can now enter a password for the new user, or you can click the curled arrow at the end of the New Password text box to generate a password for you, as well as displaying it. Naturally, it's a good idea to come up with as strong a password as possible. When you're done, click the Change button.

**STEP 6**

You can close the Users and Groups console window now, as the new user has been created. If you click the Mint Menu, followed by Logout, you are presented with the Mint Login Manager. The new user will be present in the list of currently available users. Click on him or her to log them in.

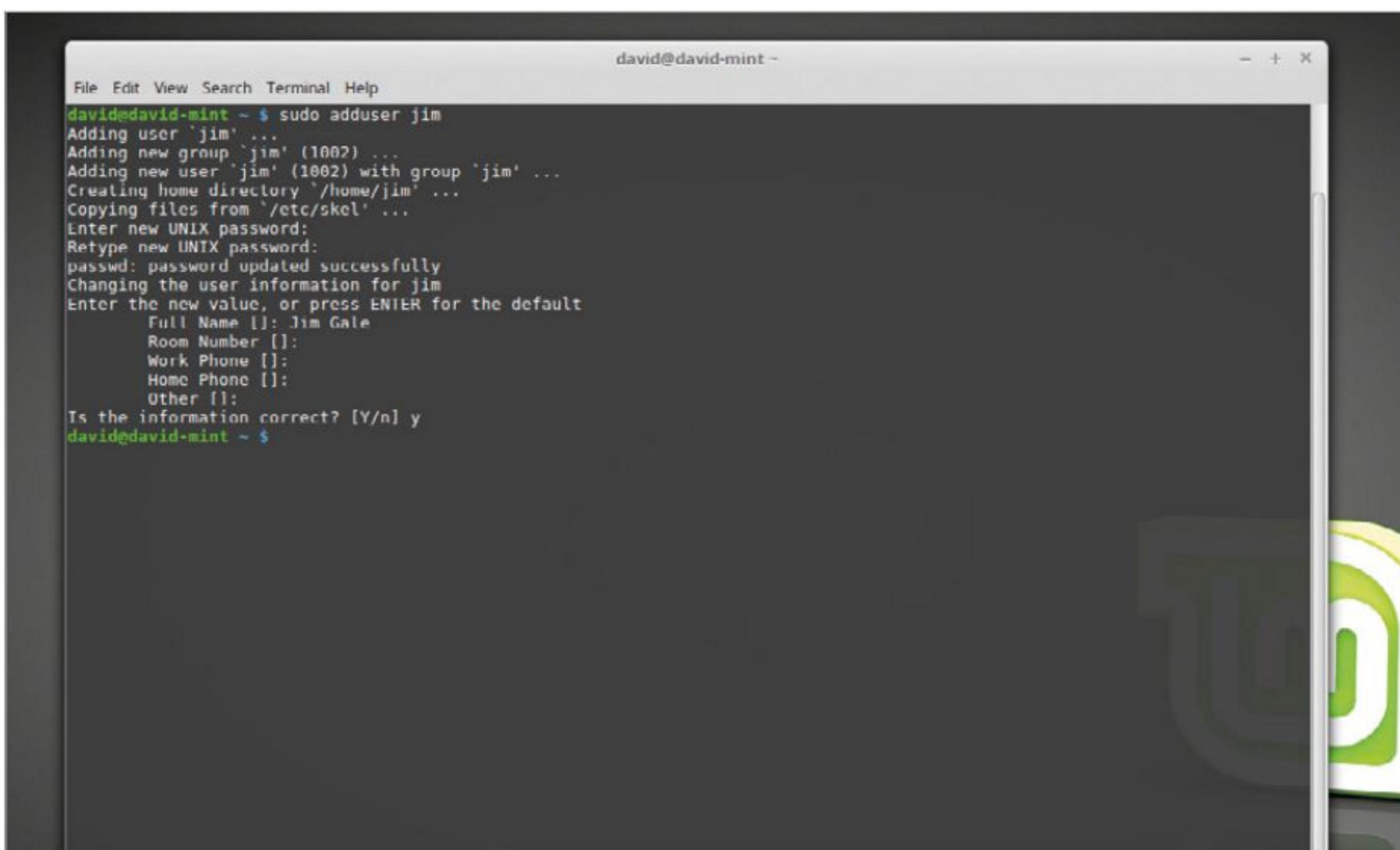


COMMAND LINE ACCOUNTS

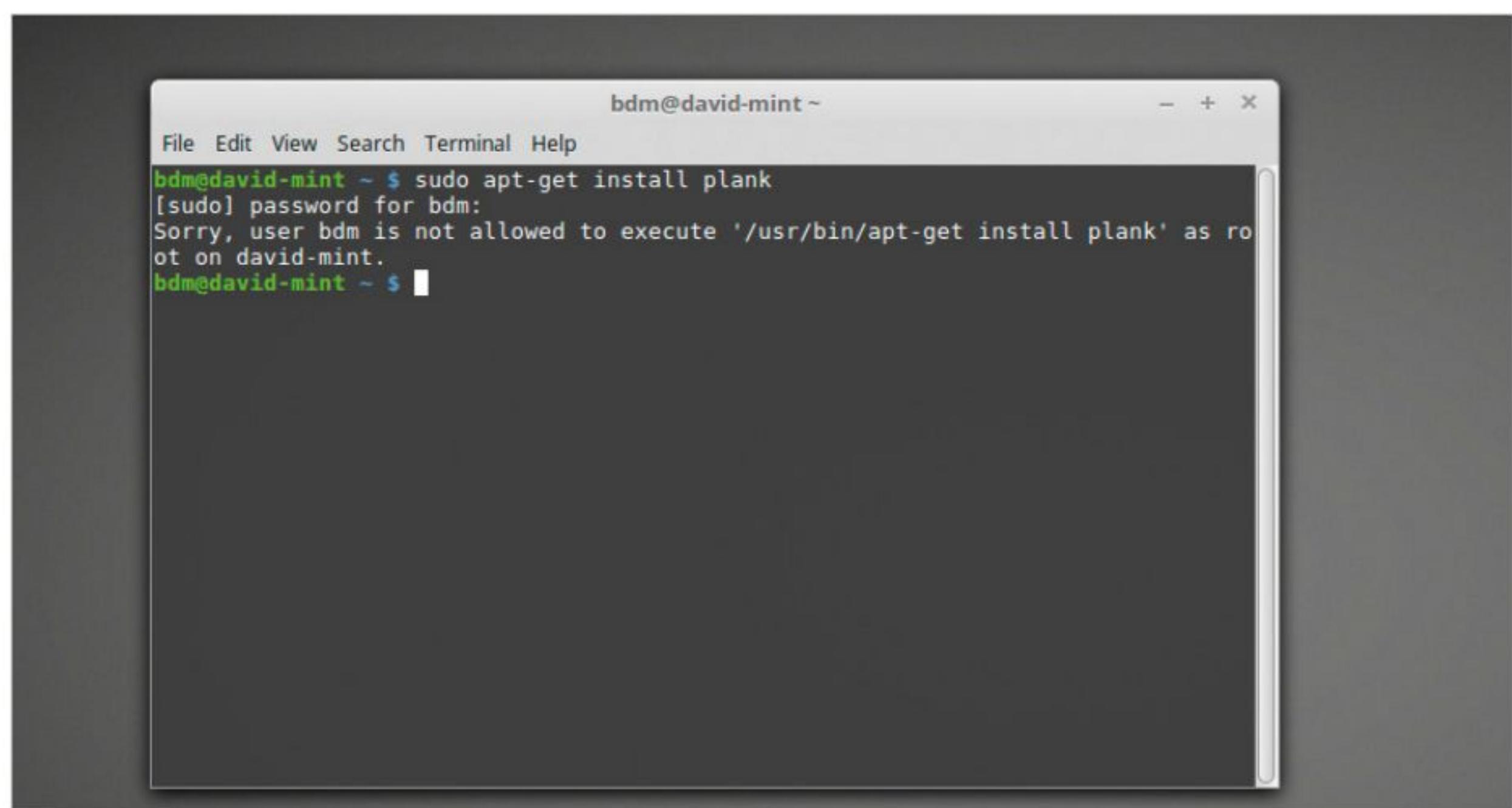
As you'd expect, you can also create a new user from within the command Line. Open up a Terminal session under the main (yours), Administrator account.

STEP 1

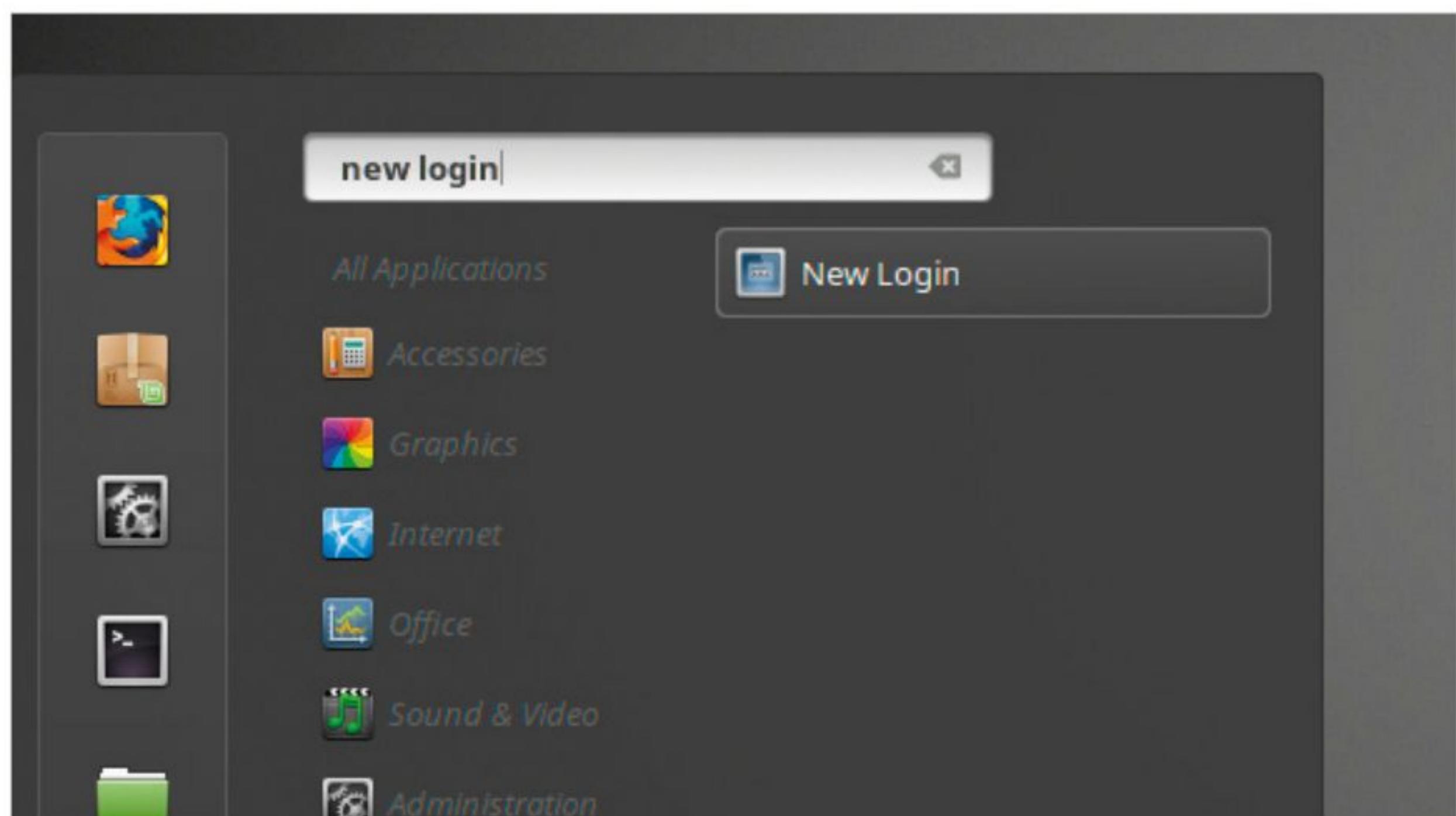
The process for adding a new user from the command line is relatively simple. To begin with, type: `sudo adduser <username>`, where `<username>` is the new user's login name. You are then be asked to create a new password for the user, along with their full name and other details. Click `y` to confirm the details and create the user account.

**STEP 7**

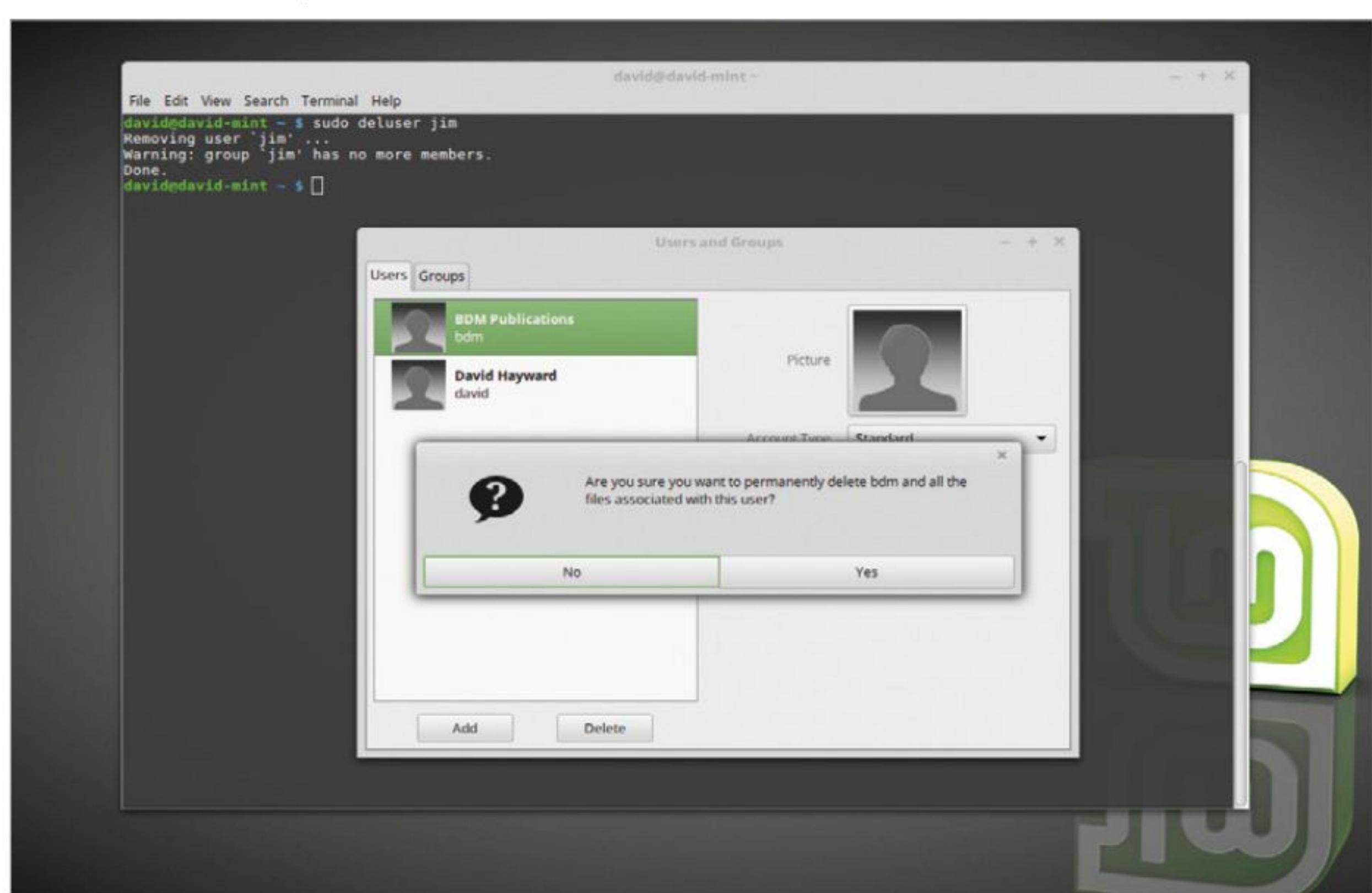
Once logged in the new user will be required to set up their own desktop wallpaper, icons, Panel, Menu and so on. Depending on what Account Type you set up them as: Standard or Administrator, they won't be able to install any new apps. This screenshot is from a Standard user account type.

**STEP 8**

If needs be, you can quickly switch and login as an Administrator account by clicking on the Mint Menu and searching for new login. Click the New Login app and you are able to login as the admin without logging the first user out.

**STEP 2**

You can check the details and account type for the new user from within the Users and Groups console. If you want to delete a user from Mint, you can either enter: `sudo deluser <username>` in the Terminal or click the Delete button in Users and Groups.





Customising the Desktop

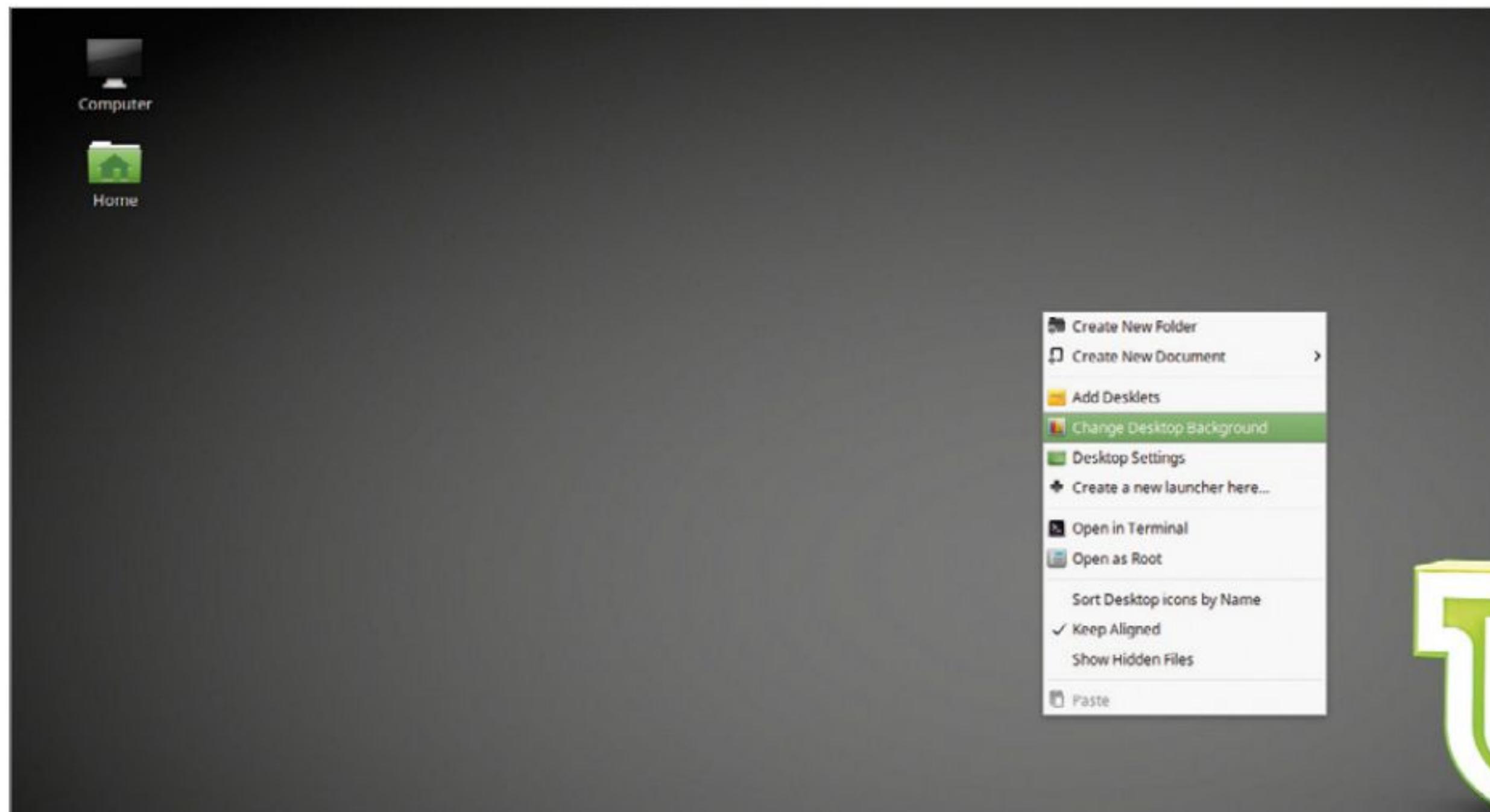
Customising the operating system desktop is one element to making it your own, a personalised workspace that is there to help you work, inspire you or feature the company logo. Whatever your reasons for having your own desktop, here's how it's done.

YOUR DESKTOP

The available desktop environments for Linux Mint offer a slightly different approach to customising and personalisation. As we mentioned at the beginning of this section, we're using Cinnamon in this example.

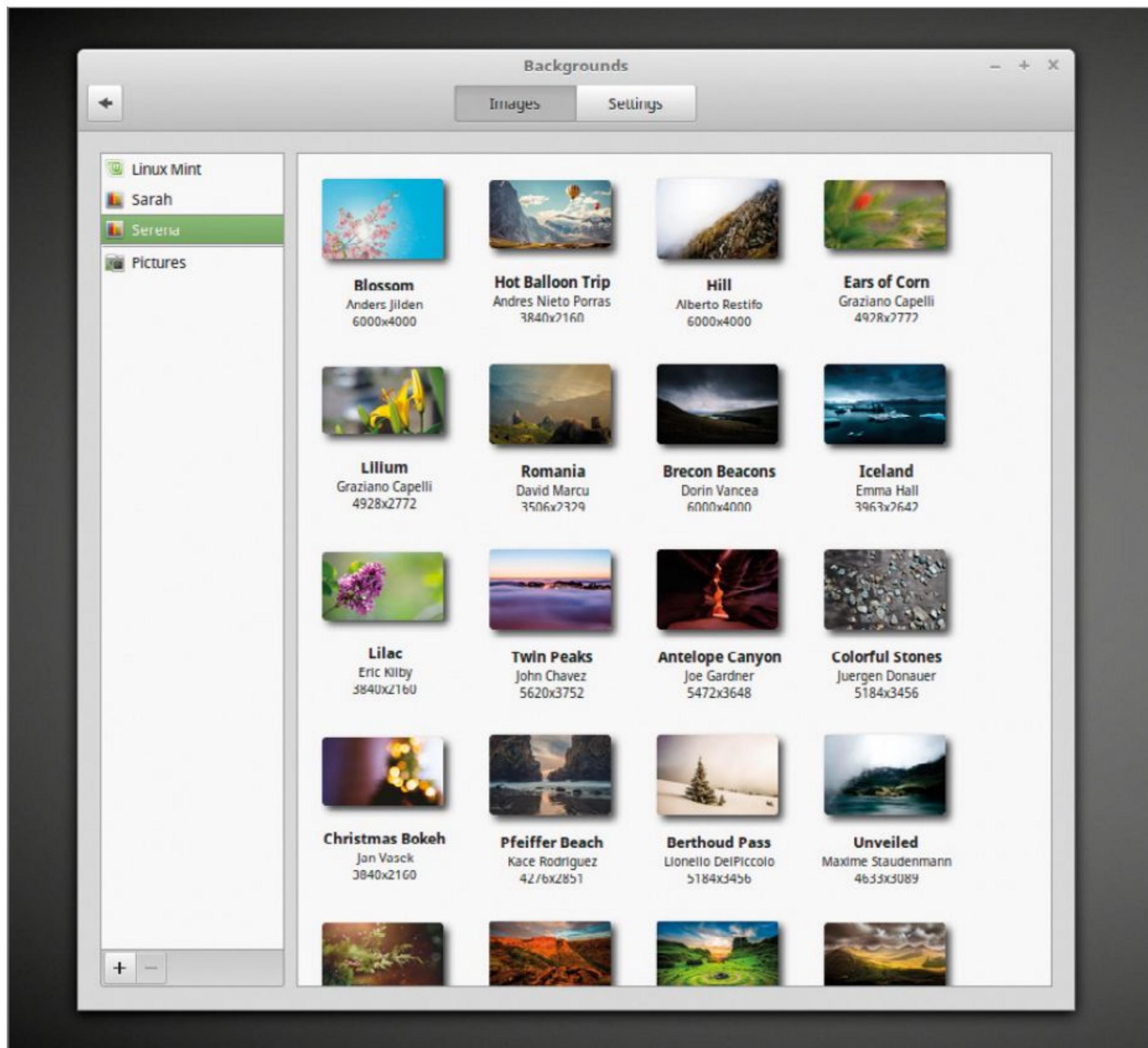
STEP 1

The first aspect of desktop customisation is to change the wallpaper. Right-click the desktop and choose Change Desktop Background; we covered how to do this with the other DEs in the previous sections.



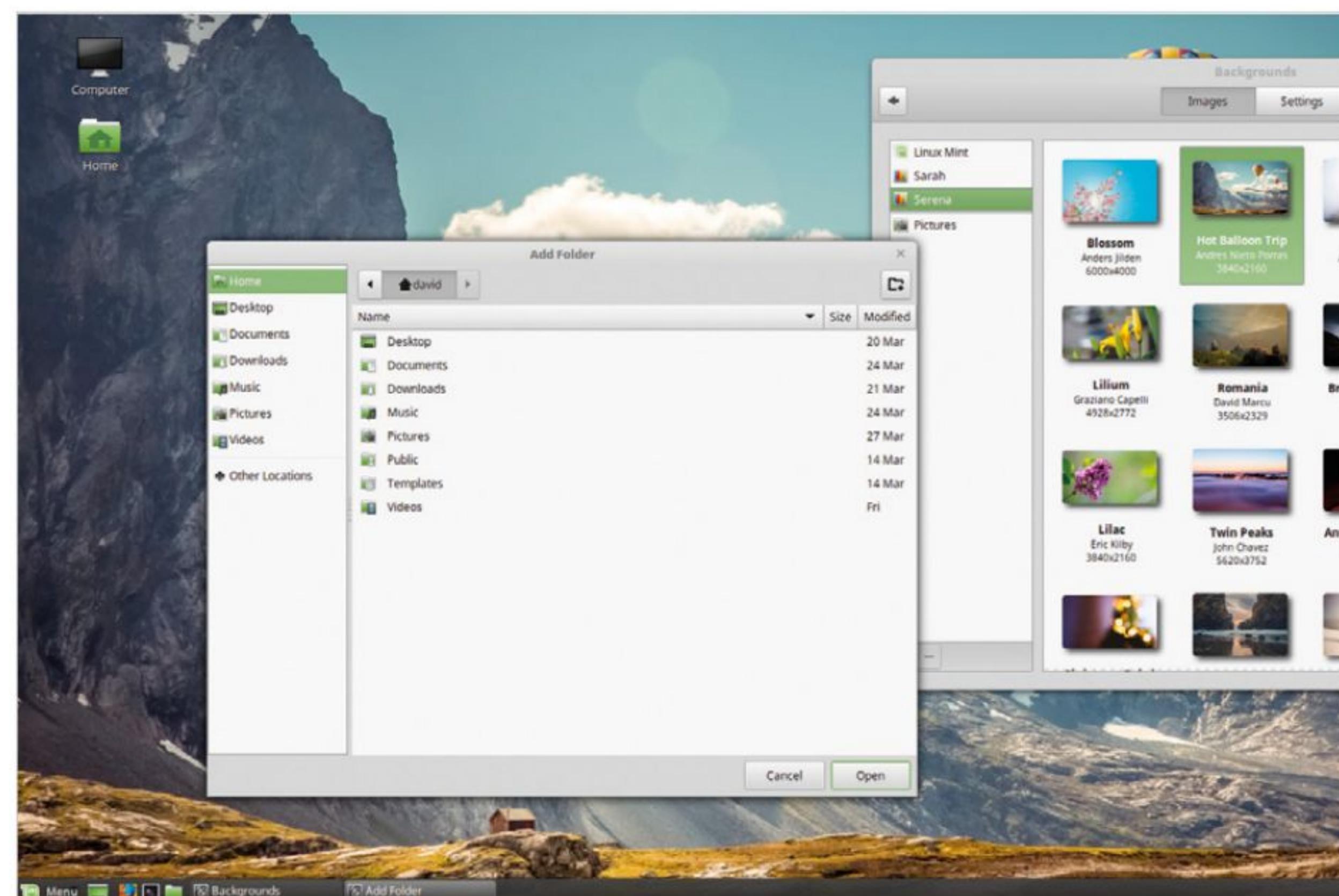
STEP 2

For Cinnamon you have four choices: Linux Mint, Sarah, Serena and Pictures. The Linux Mint option has just three Mint logo themed wallpapers available: Sarah, the previous version of Mint, version 18, has twenty-two wallpapers, as does Serena, the latest version, 18.1. Pictures will read the image content from the Pictures folder in your Home area.



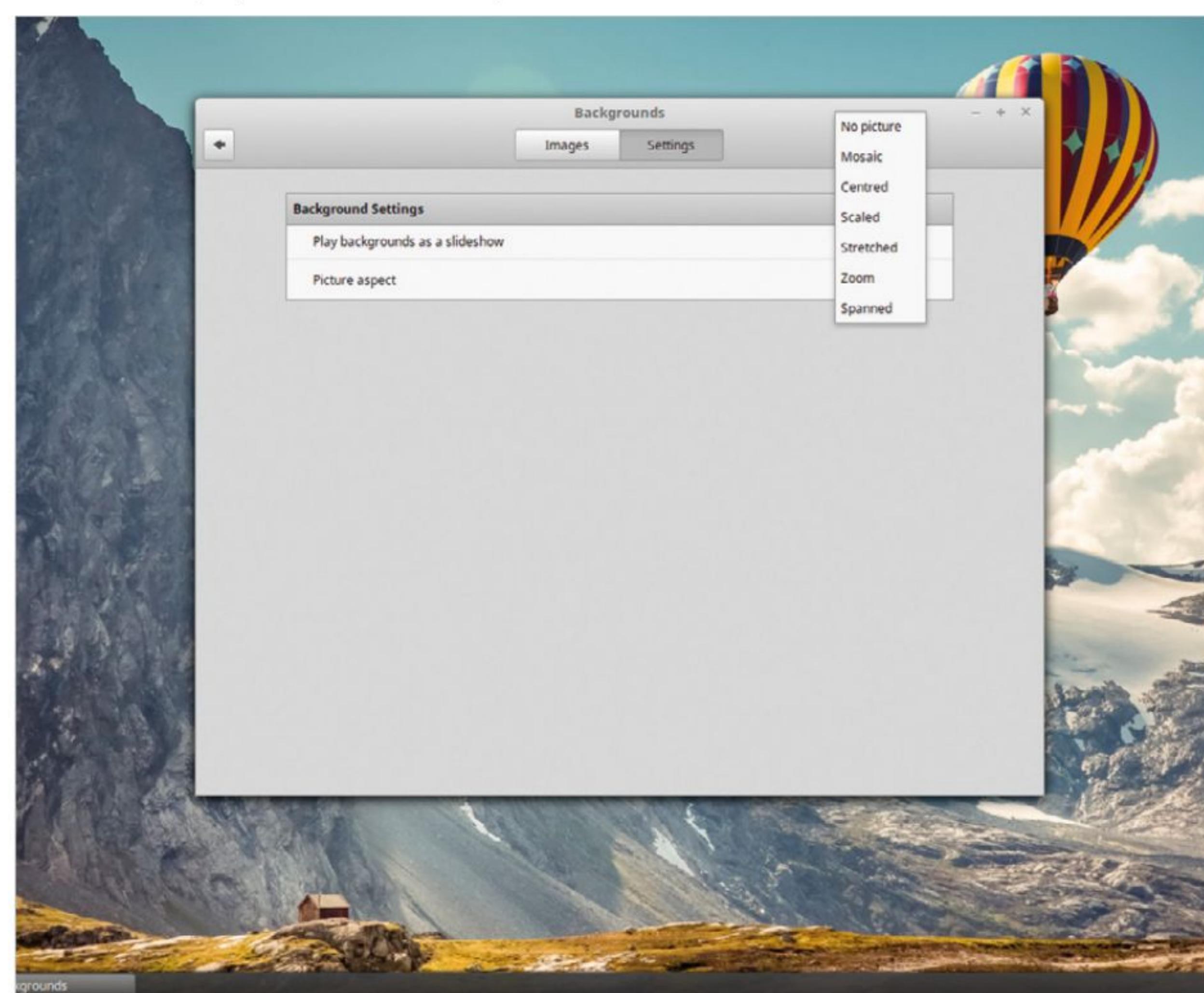
STEP 3

You just need to click the available images, from any of the locations provided to have them as the wallpaper. Incidentally, if you have images stored in another location on your system or network, you can add them by clicking on the Plus symbol at the bottom of the Backgrounds console and using the file manager to locate them.



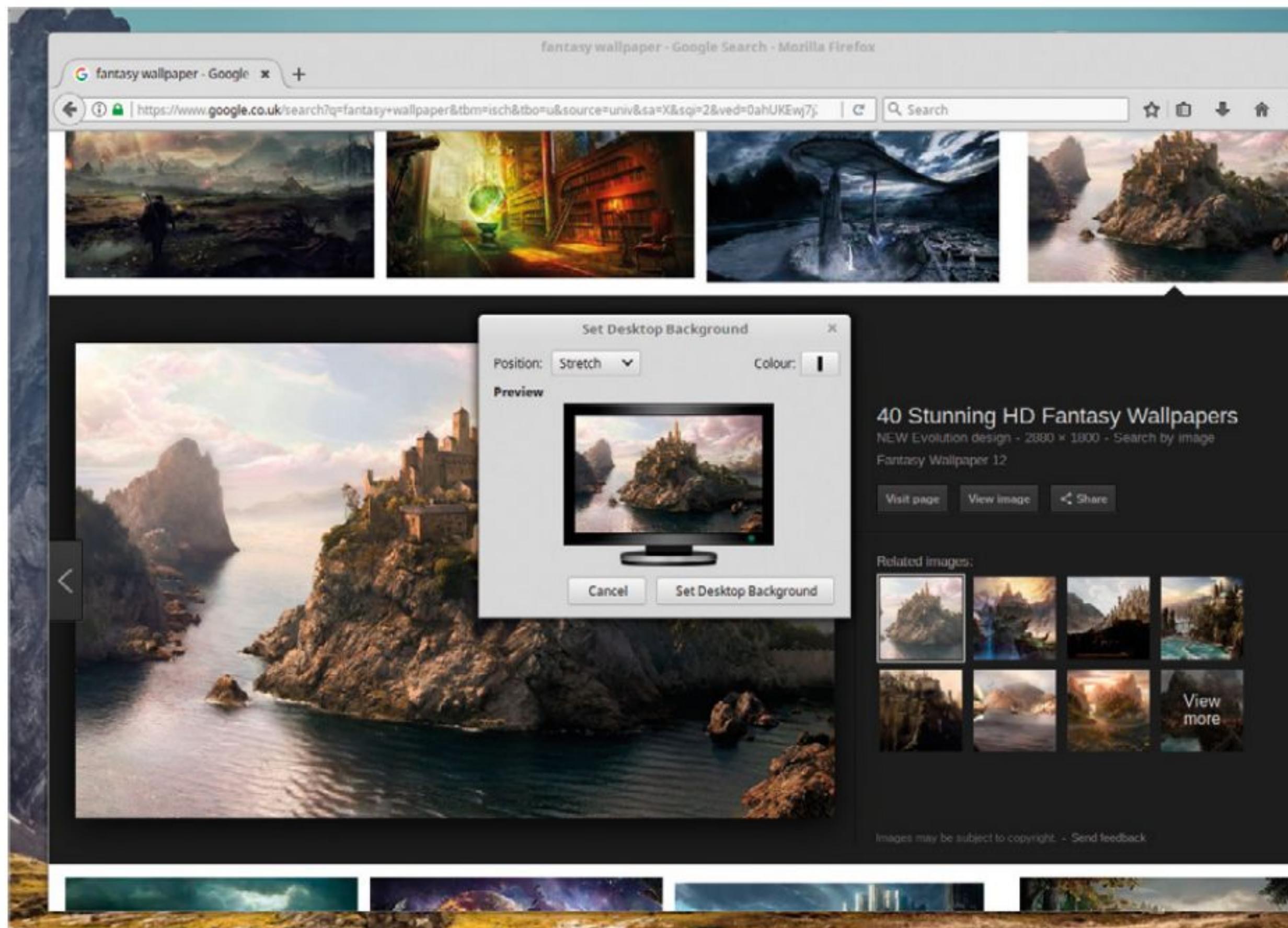
STEP 4

By clicking on the Settings tab you can, instead, play numerous images as a slideshow or change the aspect of the wallpapers to a variety of choices.

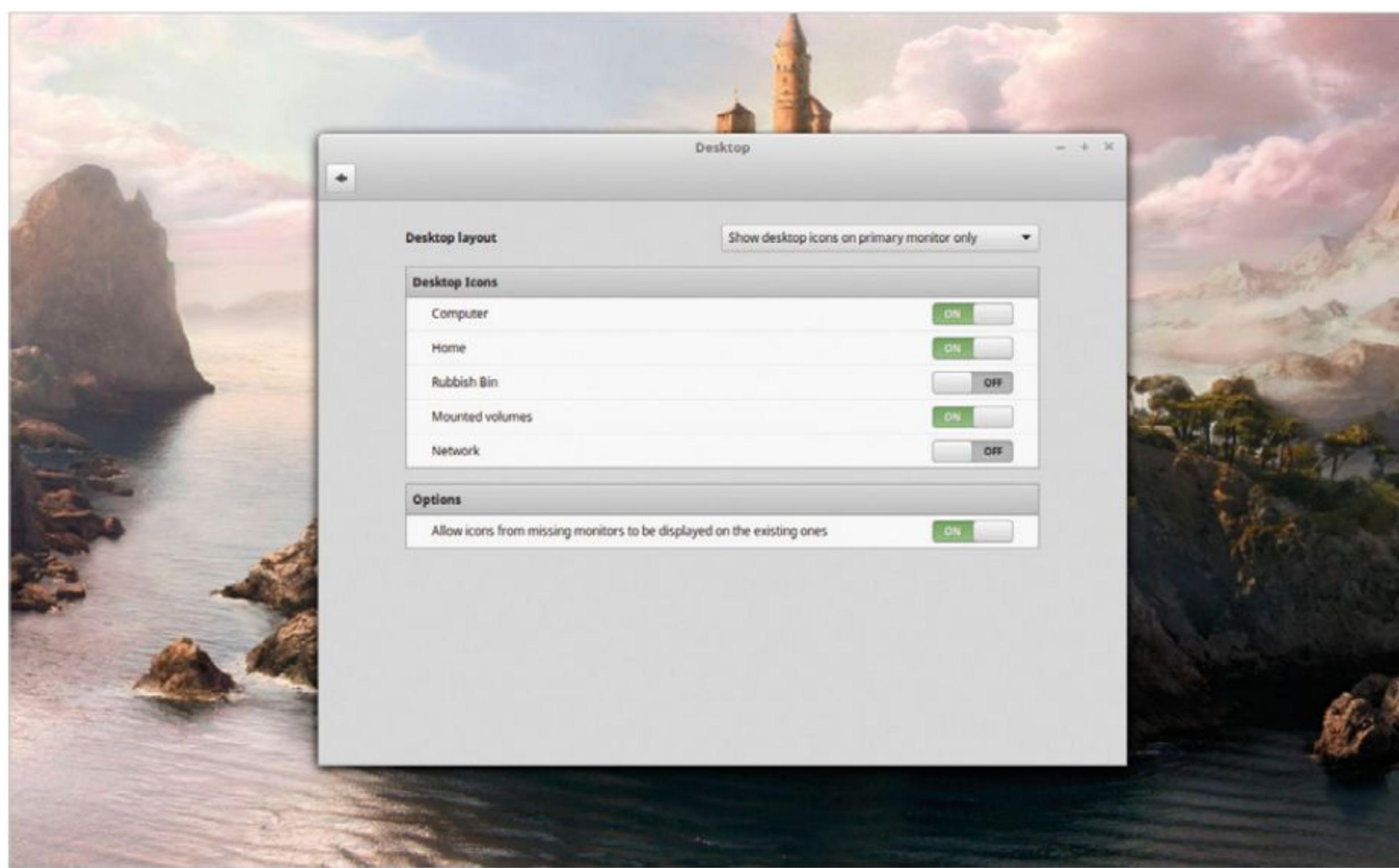


**STEP 5**

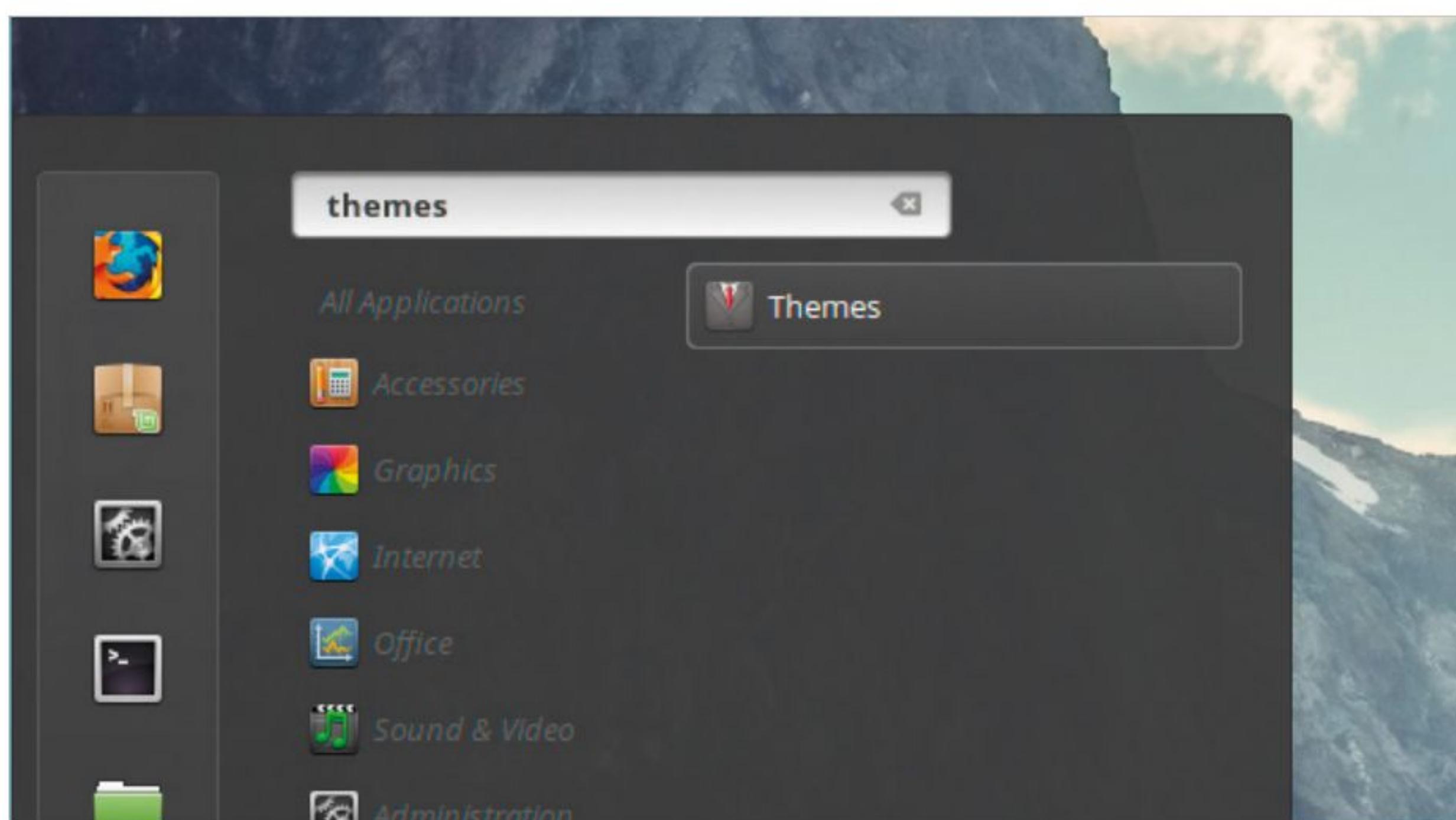
If none of the available wallpapers take your fancy, open a browser and search for the type of background image you prefer. When you find the image you want as the desktop wallpaper, right-click it and choose Set As Desktop Background from the list of options. When the Set Desktop Background console open, click the Set Desktop Background button.

**STEP 6**

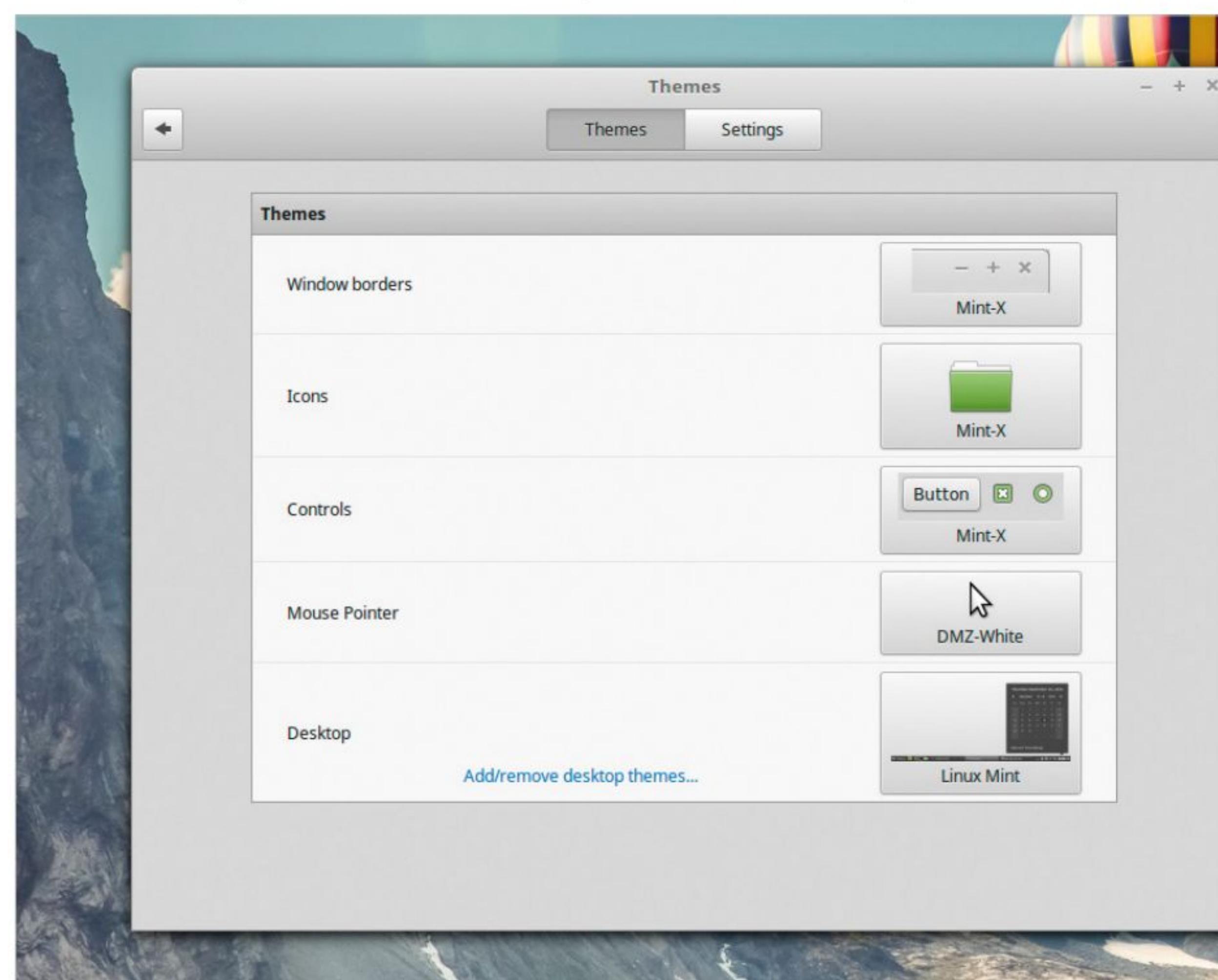
Right-click the desktop again, this time choose Desktop Settings from the menu. The Desktop console will allow you to pick which layout, desktop icons and options for multi-monitor support you want. You can experiment with the options for the best setup, according to your personal tastes.

**STEP 7**

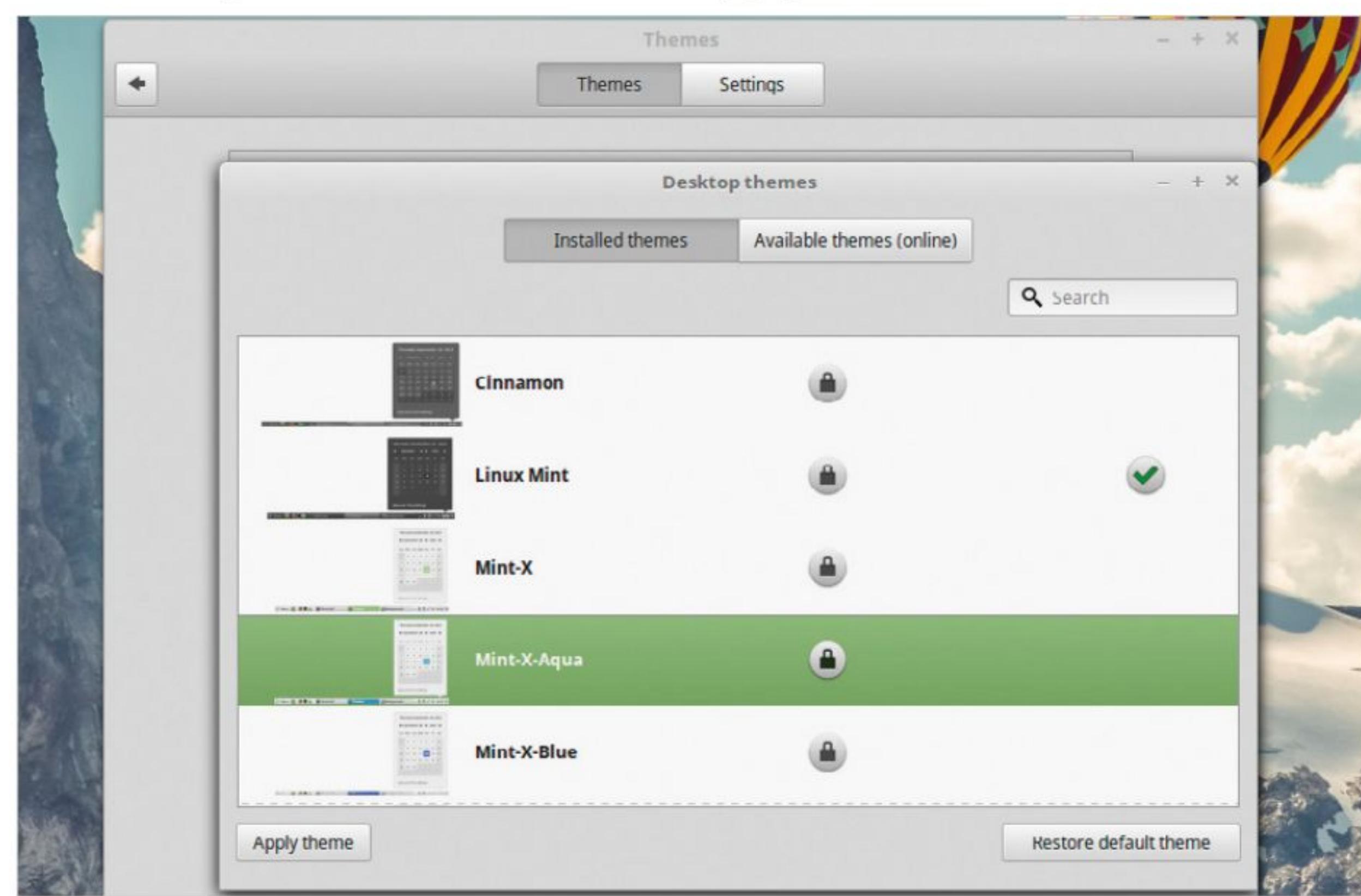
As well as changing the desktop wallpaper, and how the icons are displayed, you can also alter the overall theme for Linux Mint. From the Mint Menu, search for themes and click the Themes app as it appears in the search results.

**STEP 8**

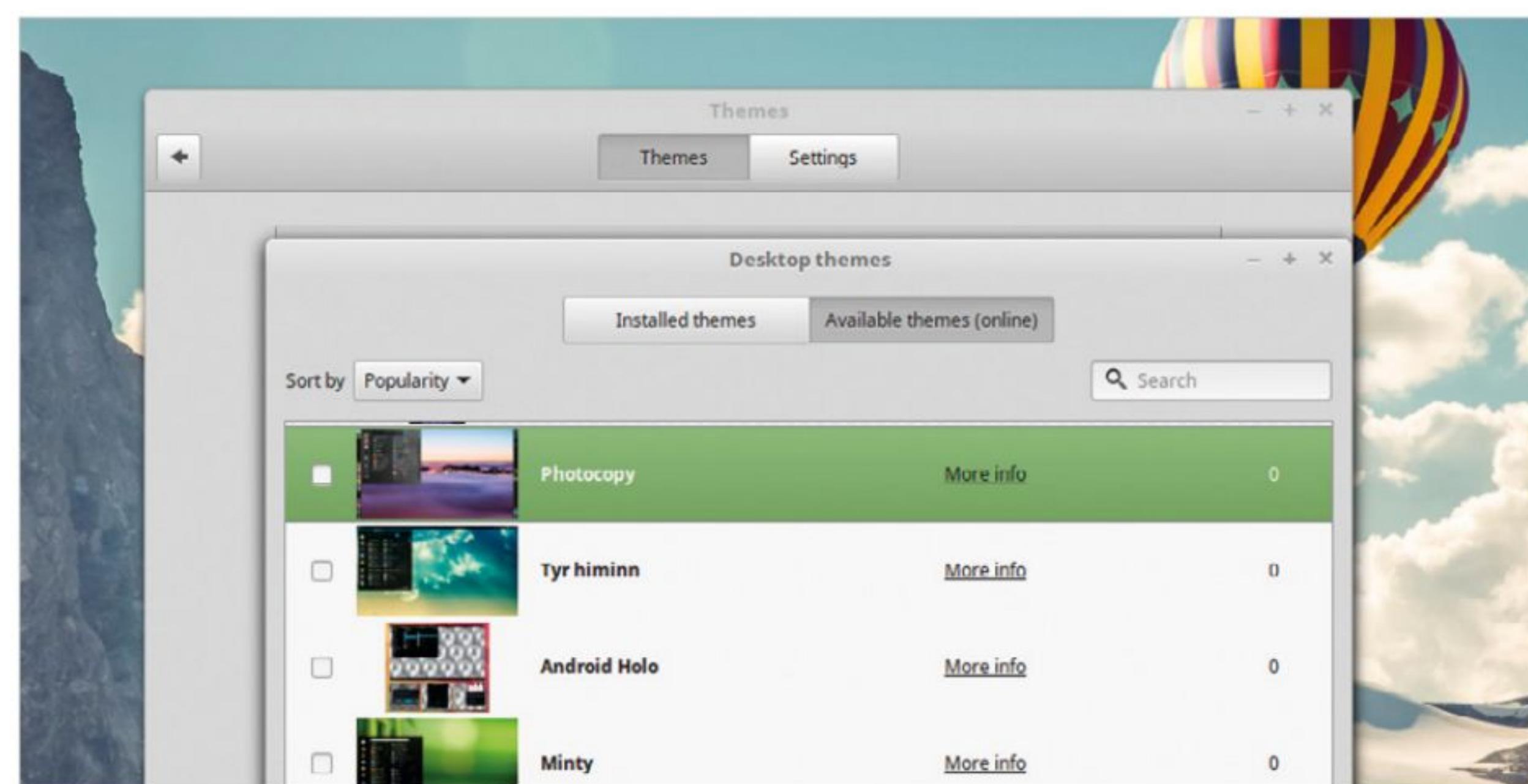
Themes allows you to change the way certain aspects of the Mint desktop look: Window Borders, Icons, Controls, Mouse Pointer and Desktop. In the Settings tab you can extend the options with a few on/off slider buttons, too.

**STEP 9**

If you click on the Add/remove desktop themes link at the bottom of the Themes console window, you can choose the default view from a number of preinstalled themes. Click the theme you want, then click the Apply Theme button to enable it.

**STEP 10**

Finally, if you click the Available Theme (Online) tab, you can download and install a huge range of community created themes. Have a look through them, click the More Info links to read about them and click the Install or update selected items button to enable them for your Linux Mint desktop.





Adding to the Desktop

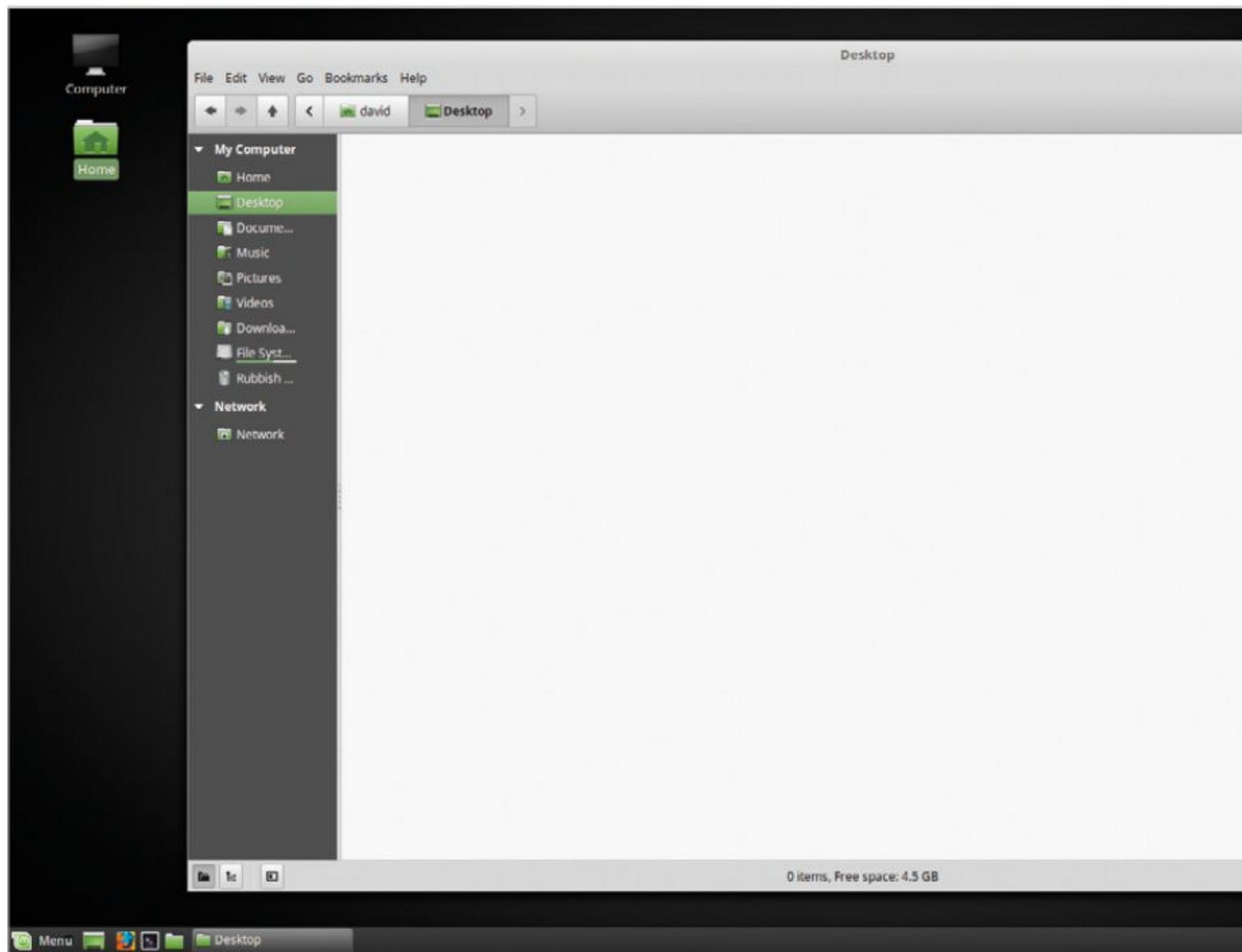
Whilst it's all fine and well accessing the installed apps and console functions within Linux Mint from the Mint Menu, it's not always practical or efficient. Sometimes, like the desktop customisations, having icons and consoles available via the desktop is down to personal taste.

POWER TO THE DESKTOP

We've looked at adding one or two elements to the Linux Mint desktop in previous sections. Let's take a couple of pages and see how to make the desktop a more effective environment.

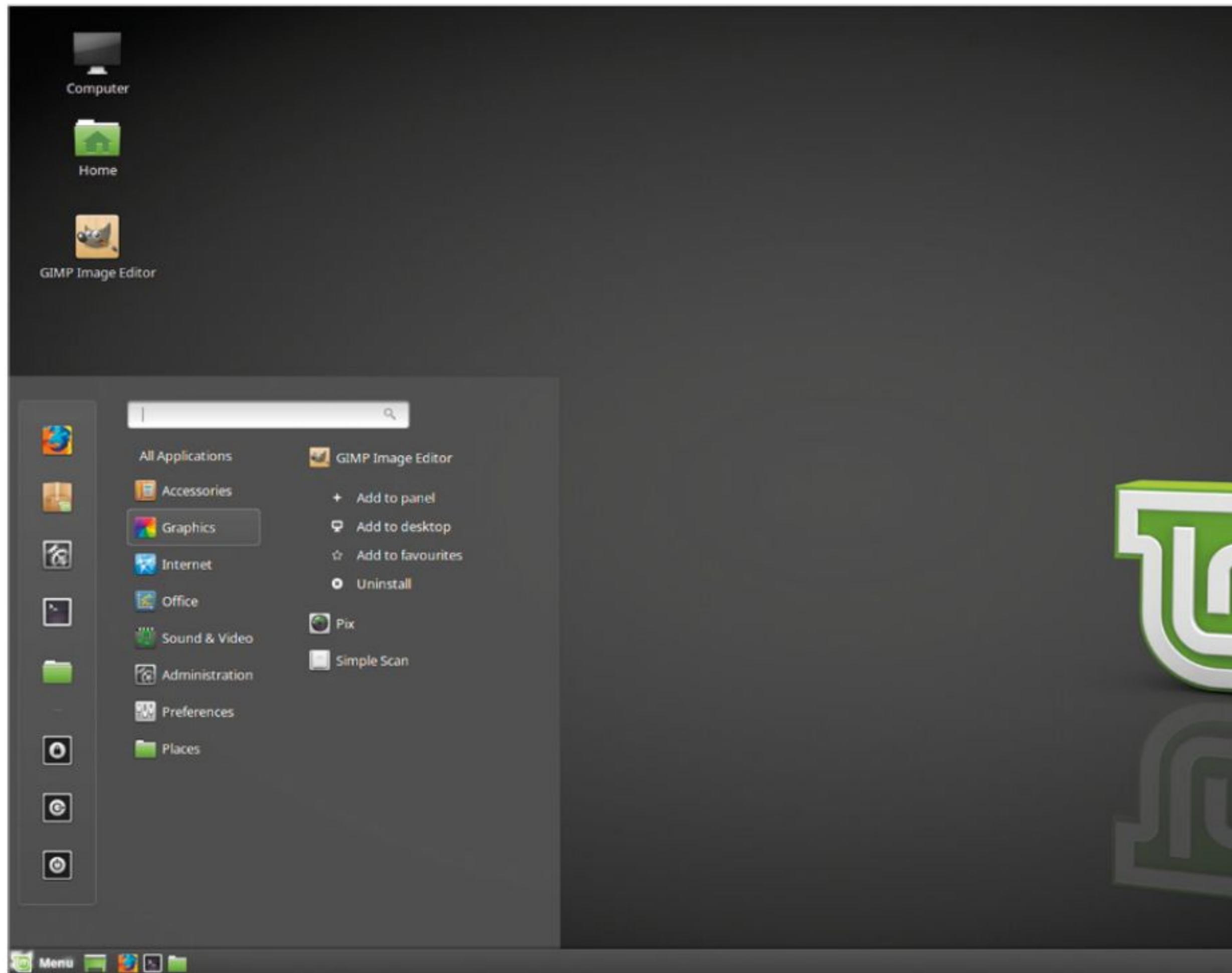
STEP 1

You can easily add a New Folder or Create New Document from the right-click, context menu on the desktop. This will add a new place or document and will be physically stored within the Home/Desktop folder in the file system.



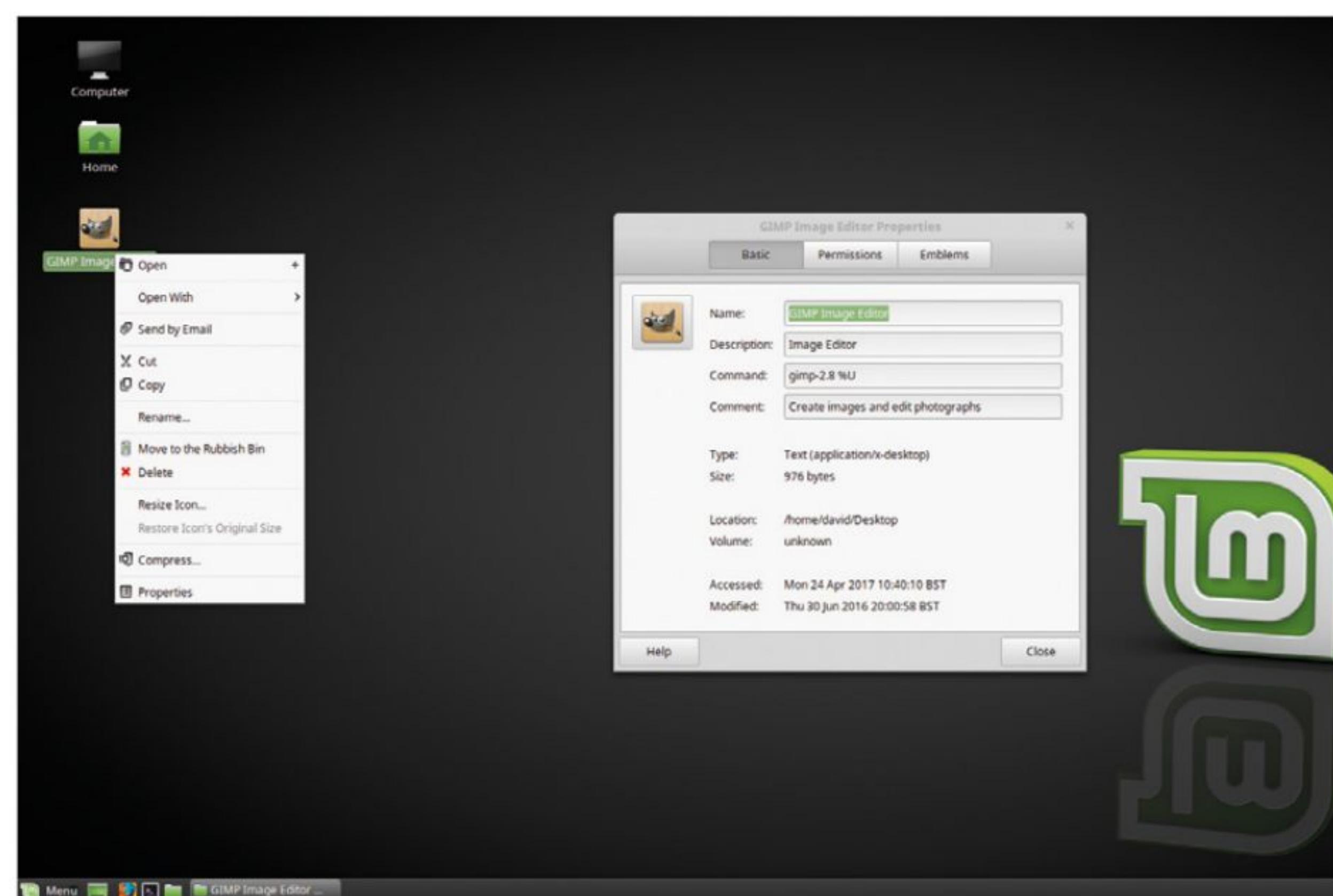
STEP 2

If you want to add one of the preinstalled apps from the Mint Menu to the desktop, simply locate the app from the Menu, right-click it and choose Add to Desktop from the list of available options.



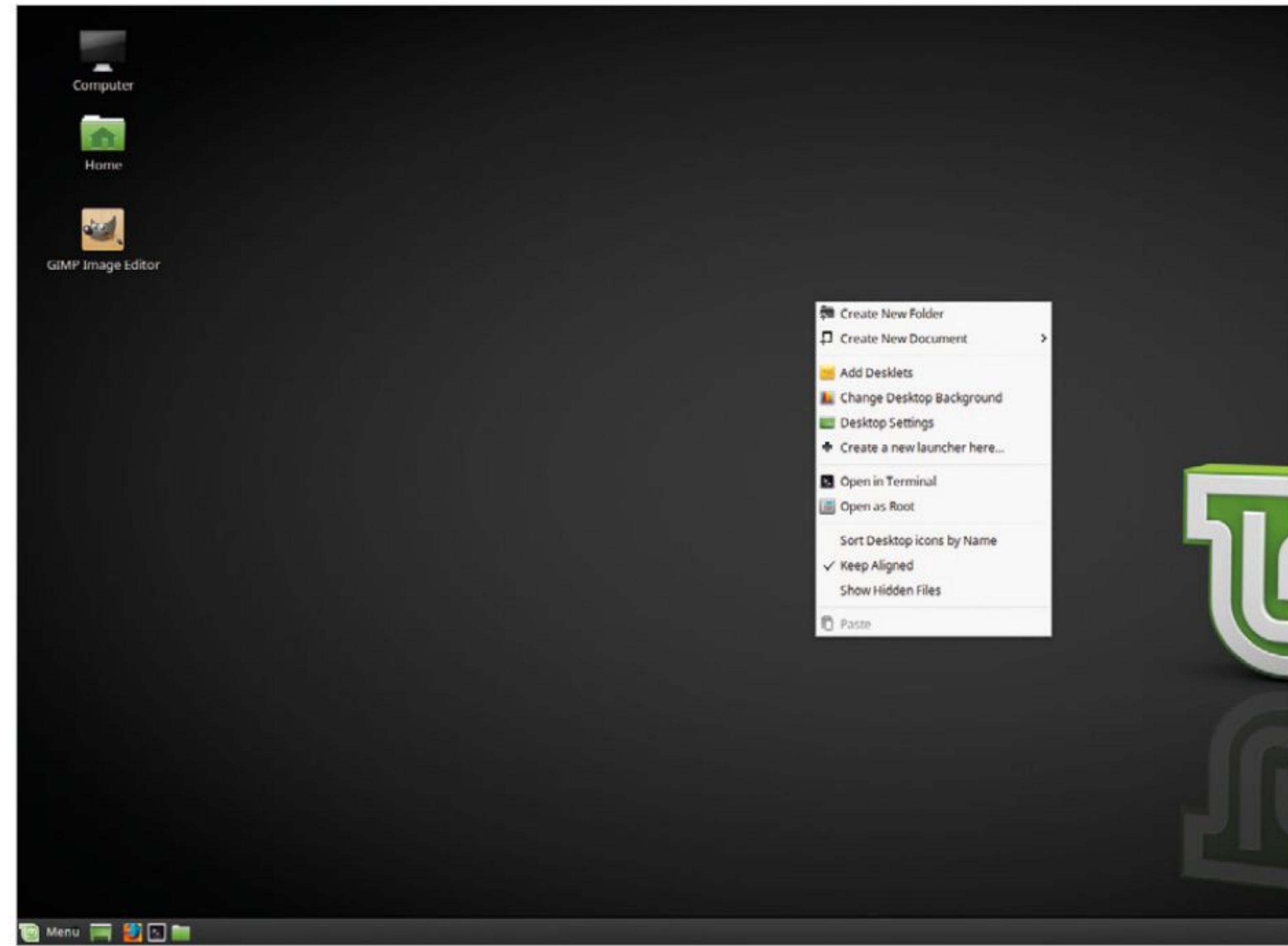
STEP 3

Any of the apps you add to the desktop can be edited. Right-click the new app desktop icon, and choose Properties. From the icon's property console you can change its name, description and even alter the command to launch it. The latter is used when you want to include something that's not added when the app loads by default, for example.



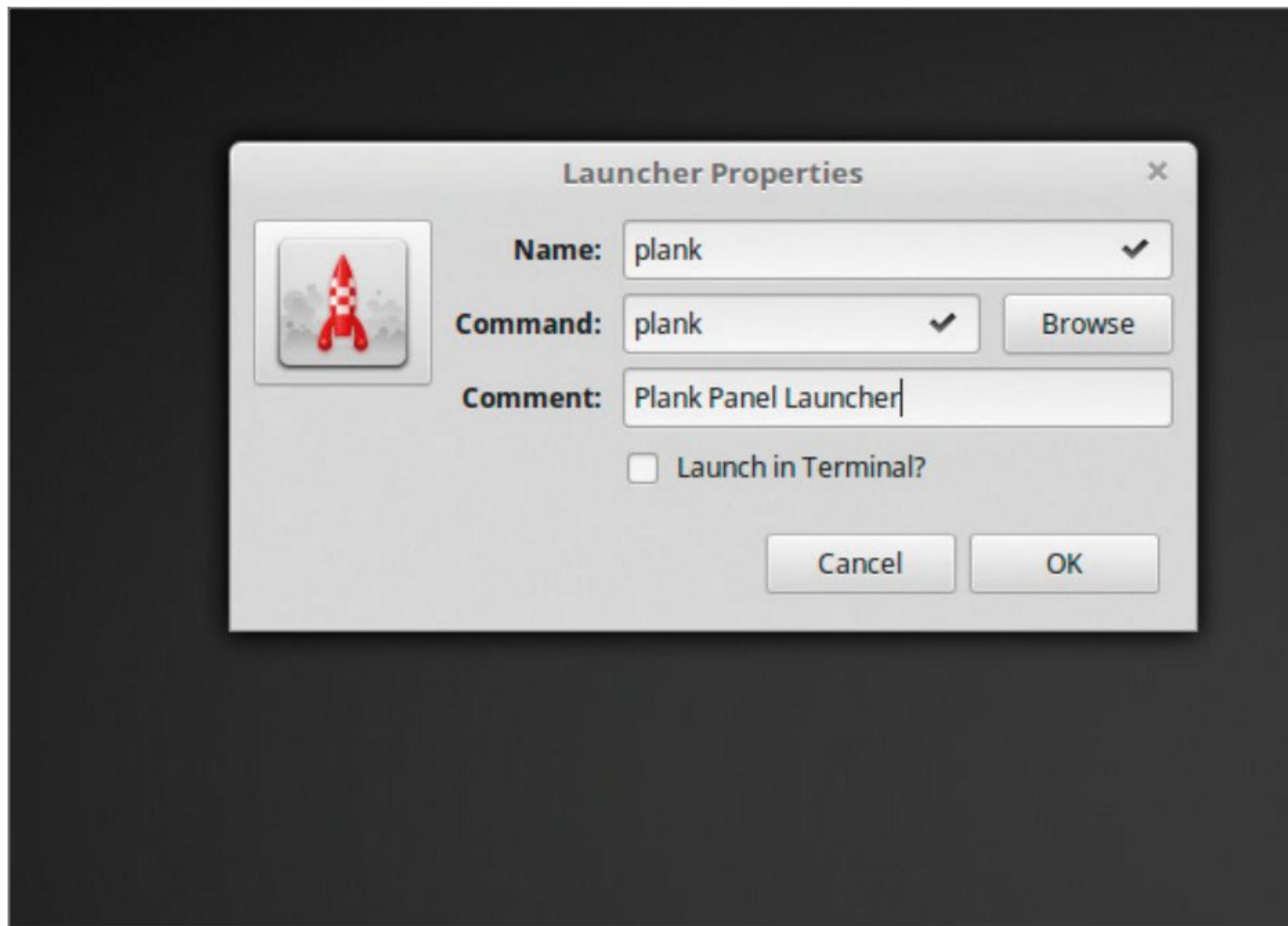
STEP 4

If you've installed an app and its icon or launcher doesn't appear in the Mint Menu, which can sometimes happen, depending on the app installed, you can easily create its own launcher from the desktop. Start by right-clicking the desktop and choosing 'Create a new launcher here...' from the available options.

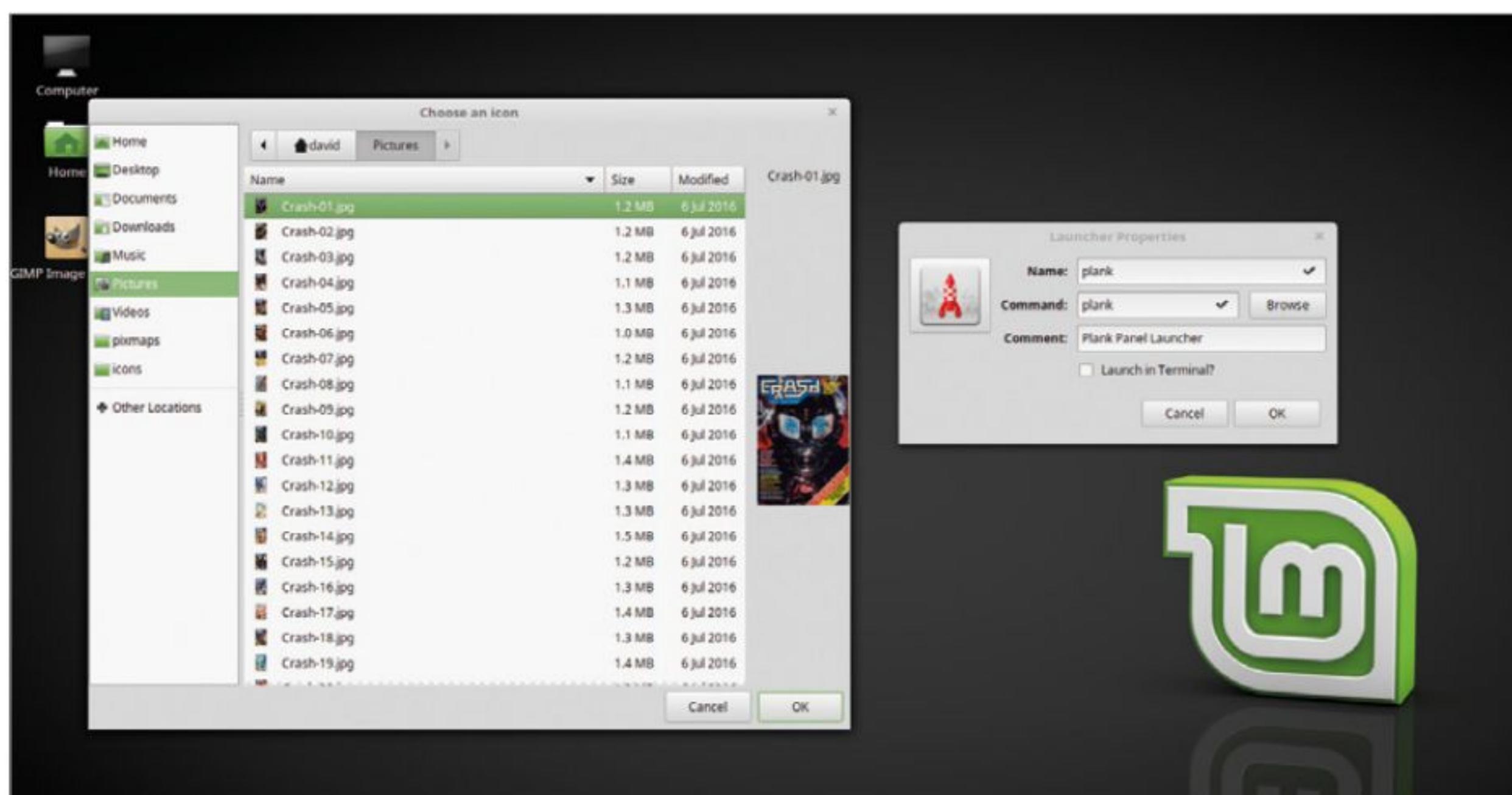


**STEP 5**

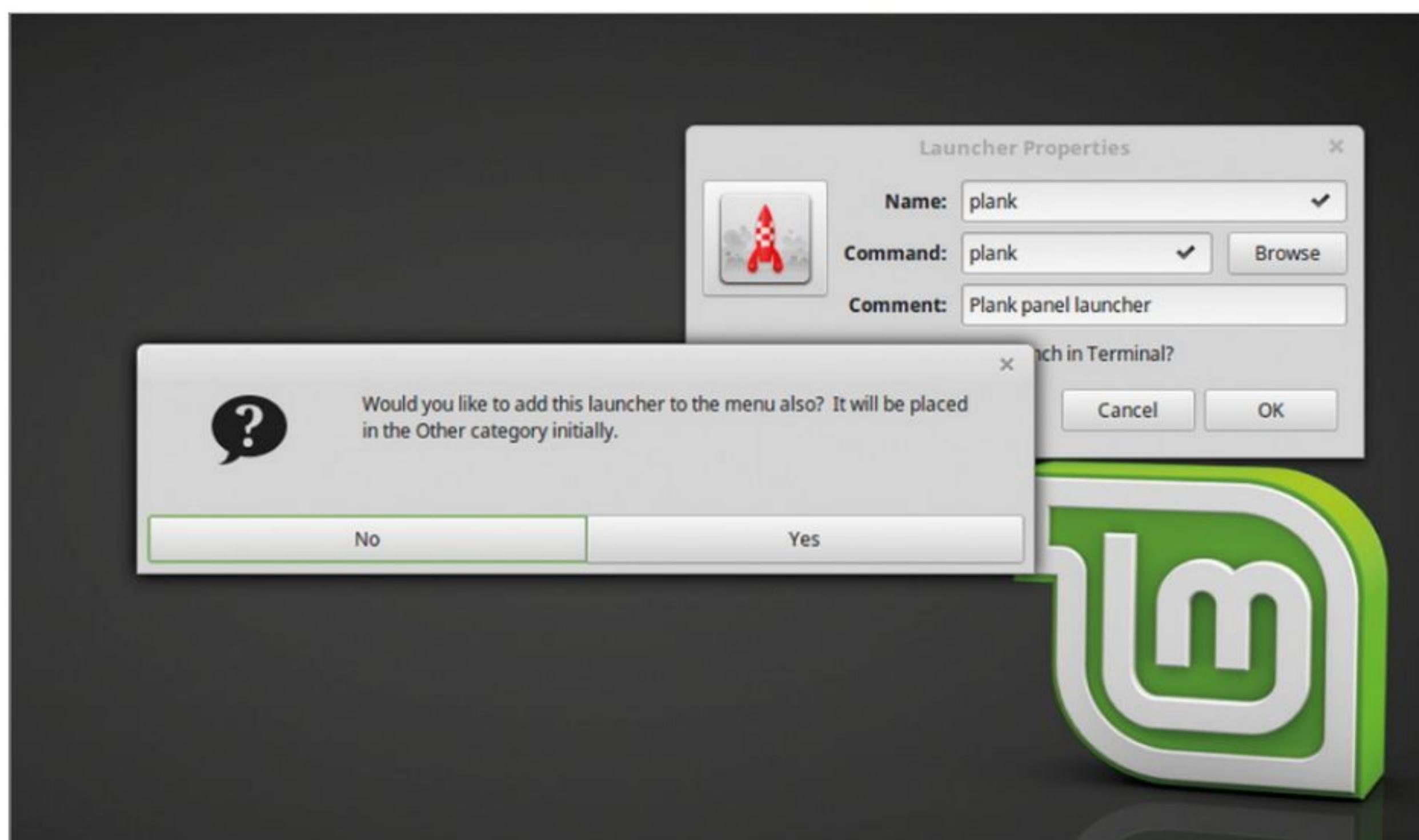
In the New Launcher Properties window, enter the Name of the app and at the bottom enter a Comment or description. The Command text box can be a bit tricky, again depending on the app. Some apps run simply by entering their name into a Terminal, others require special options before the app runs the way you want.

**STEP 6**

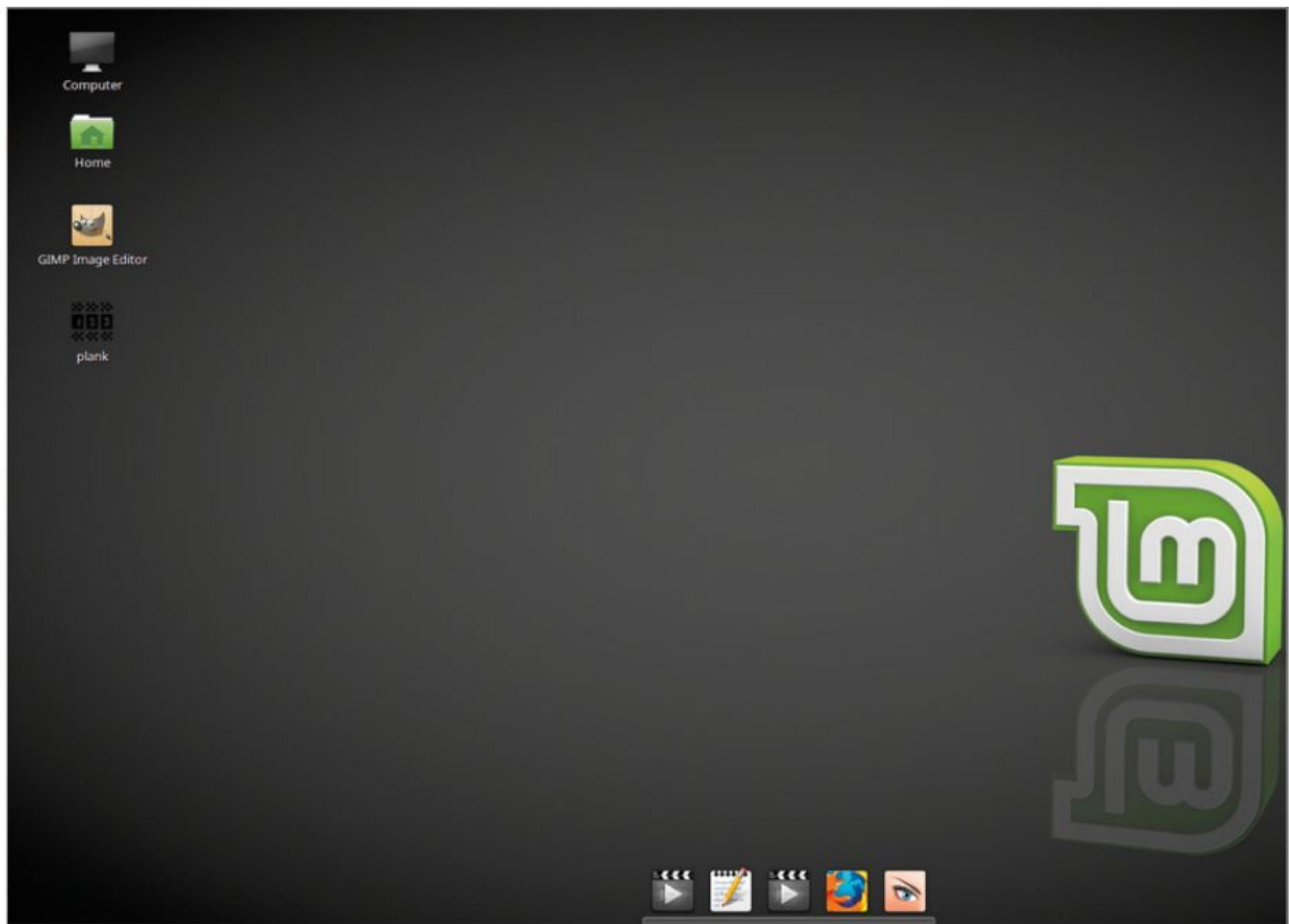
If you have a particular icon image you want to use, click the default rocket ship icon, and use the file manager window to locate the new icon. If the app is one that's run from within the Terminal, such as a Terminal text editor, then make sure the Launch In Terminal option is ticked.

**STEP 7**

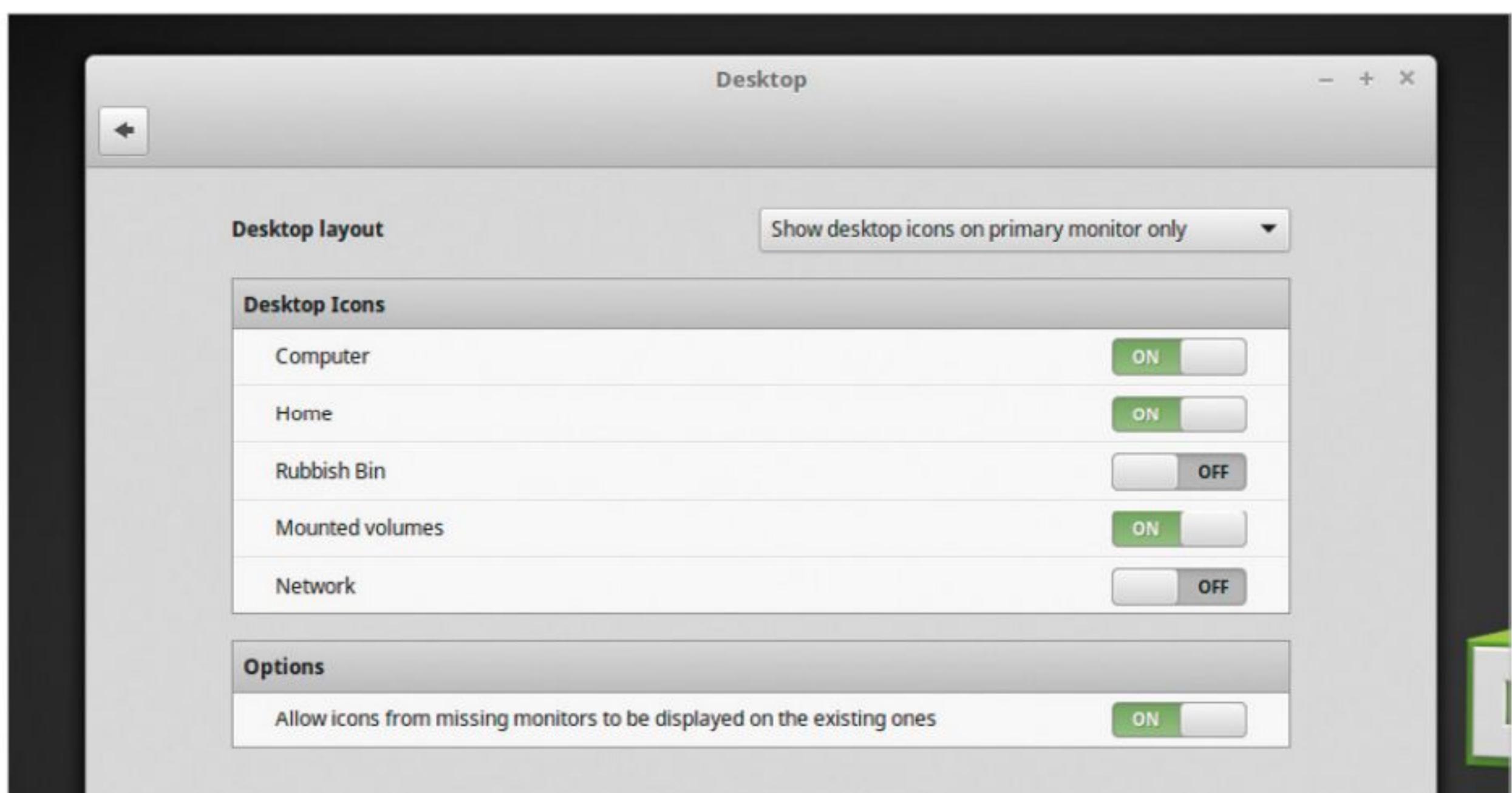
When you've completed the new app launcher settings, click the OK button to save everything and create the app on the desktop. You are then asked if you also want to add the launcher to the Menu, placing it under the Other category by default. Click either Yes or No to continue.

**STEP 8**

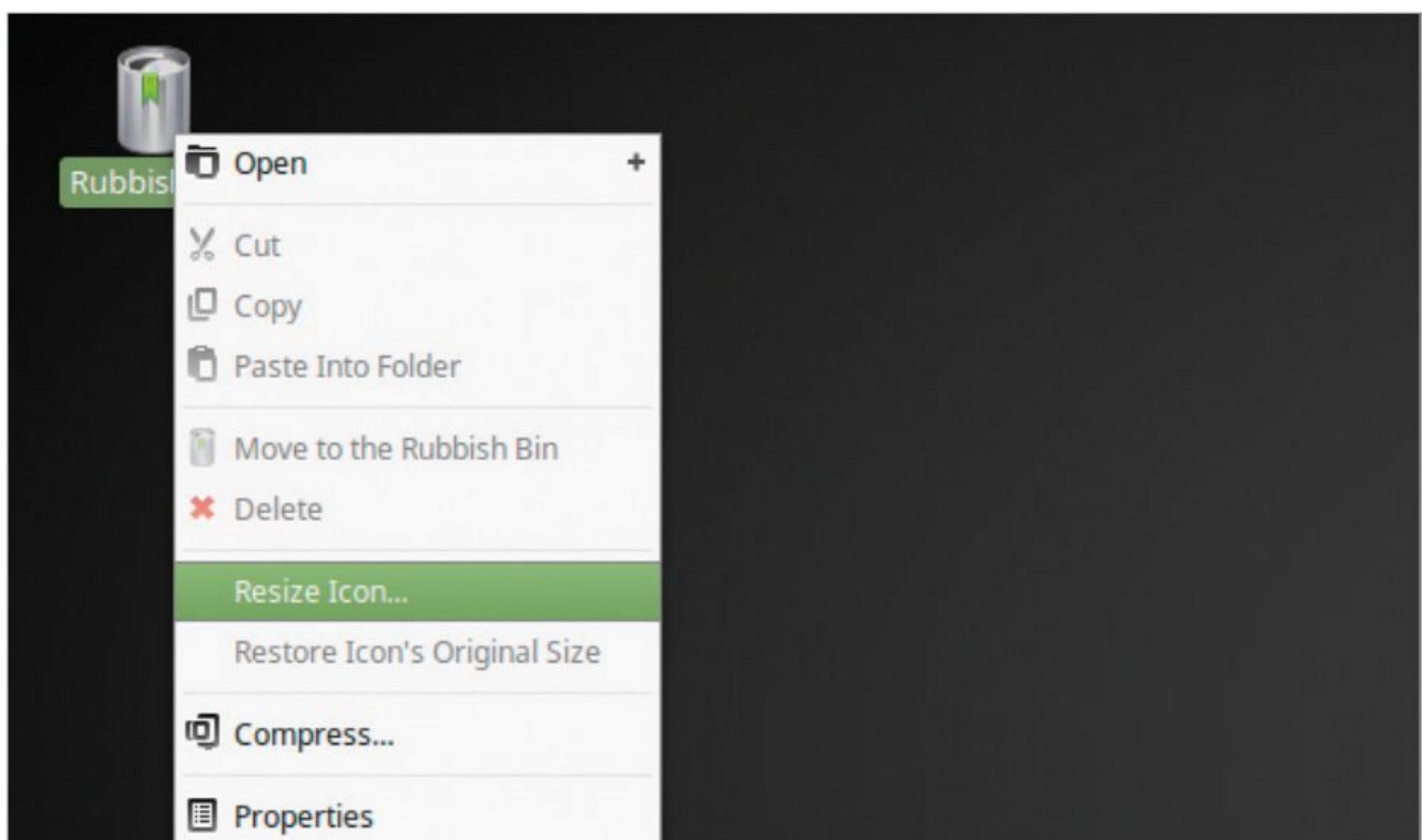
When you double-click the new icon on the desktop, the app will launch as it should do; as long as you've entered the command correctly with any extras required. If something does go wrong, and it doesn't launch, the chances are the command you entered is incorrect; in which case you need to research the correct command.

**STEP 9**

Another method of adding, or removing, icons to or from the desktop is via the Desktop Settings option done by right-clicking the desktop itself. We looked at this console in the previous Customising the Desktop section. Here you can add various icons, even to different monitors if you have more than one set up.

**STEP 10**

It's also worth mentioning that you can Resize the icons on the desktop. Right-click an icon and choose Resize Icon from the menu. This will set a square overlay on the icon, where you can click and hold the corners and drag them to the desired size.





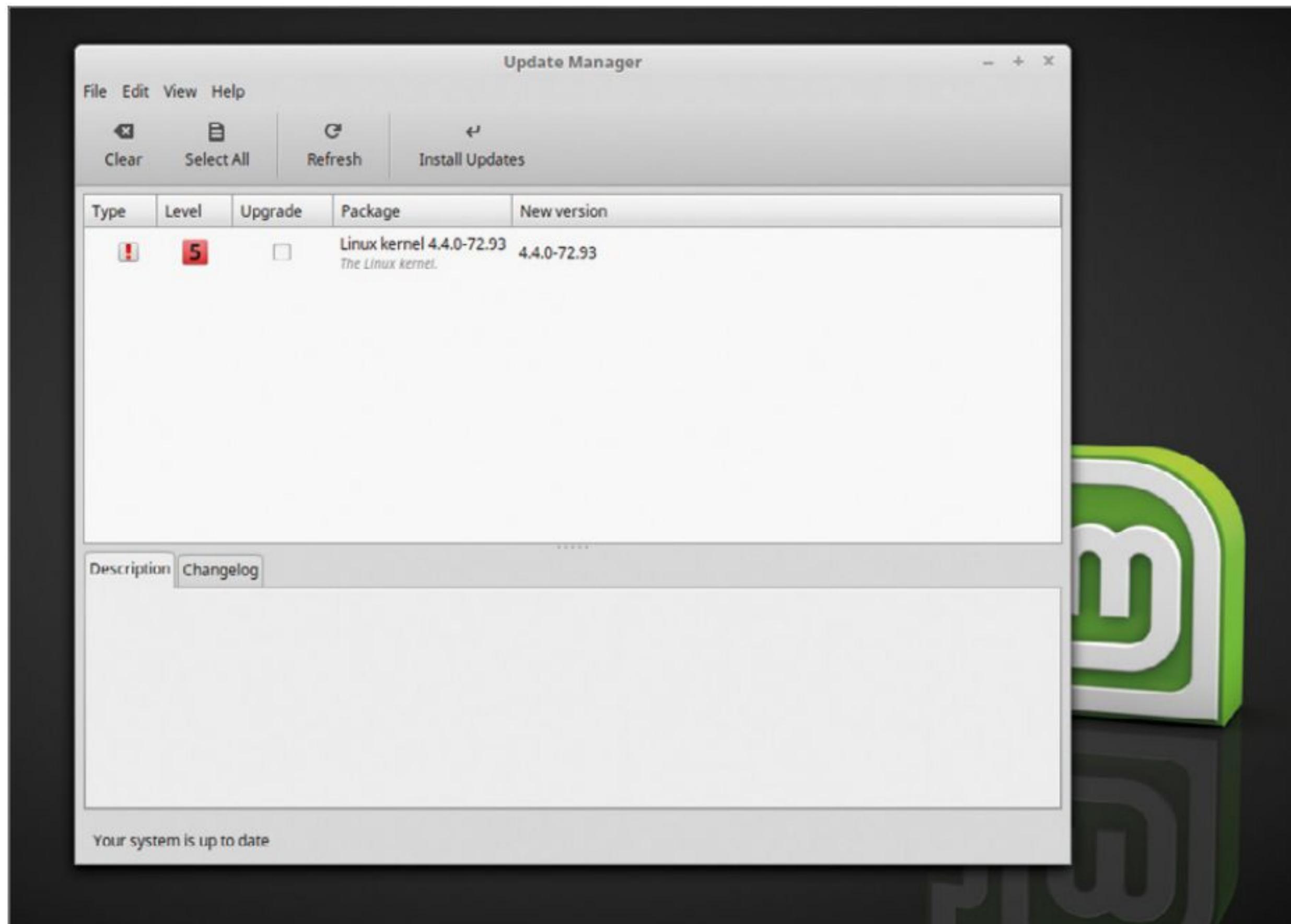
Using Desklets

One part of the Cinnamon Spices theme, an arm of the Cinnamon project that aims to create added extras for the user to enjoy, Desklets are JavaScript-based apps that sit on the desktop and provide some kind of function.

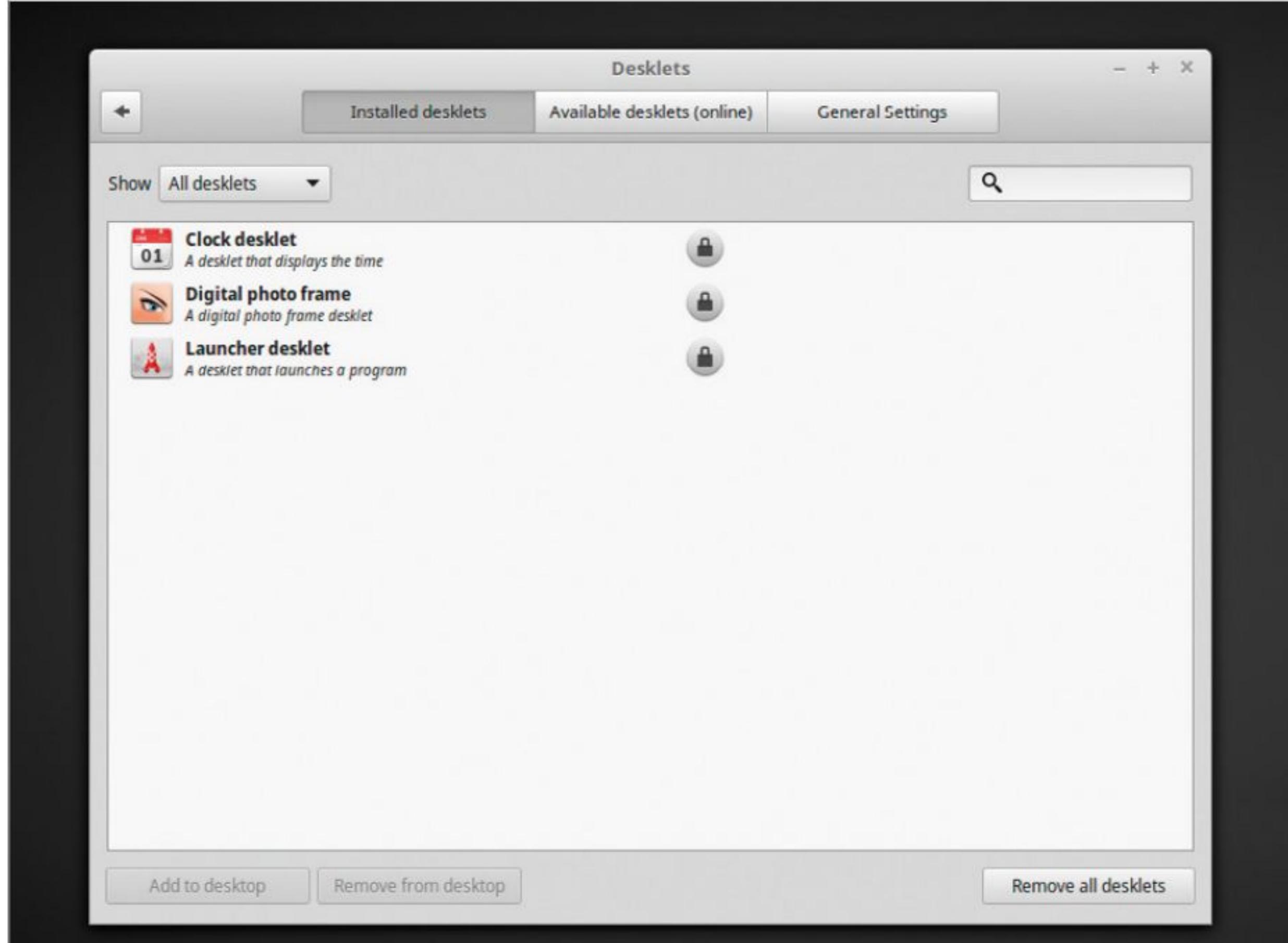
EXTRA SPICE

Let's take a few moments to look at how Desklets work, where to get them, how to add or remove them and even where to find info on how to make your own unique Desklet.

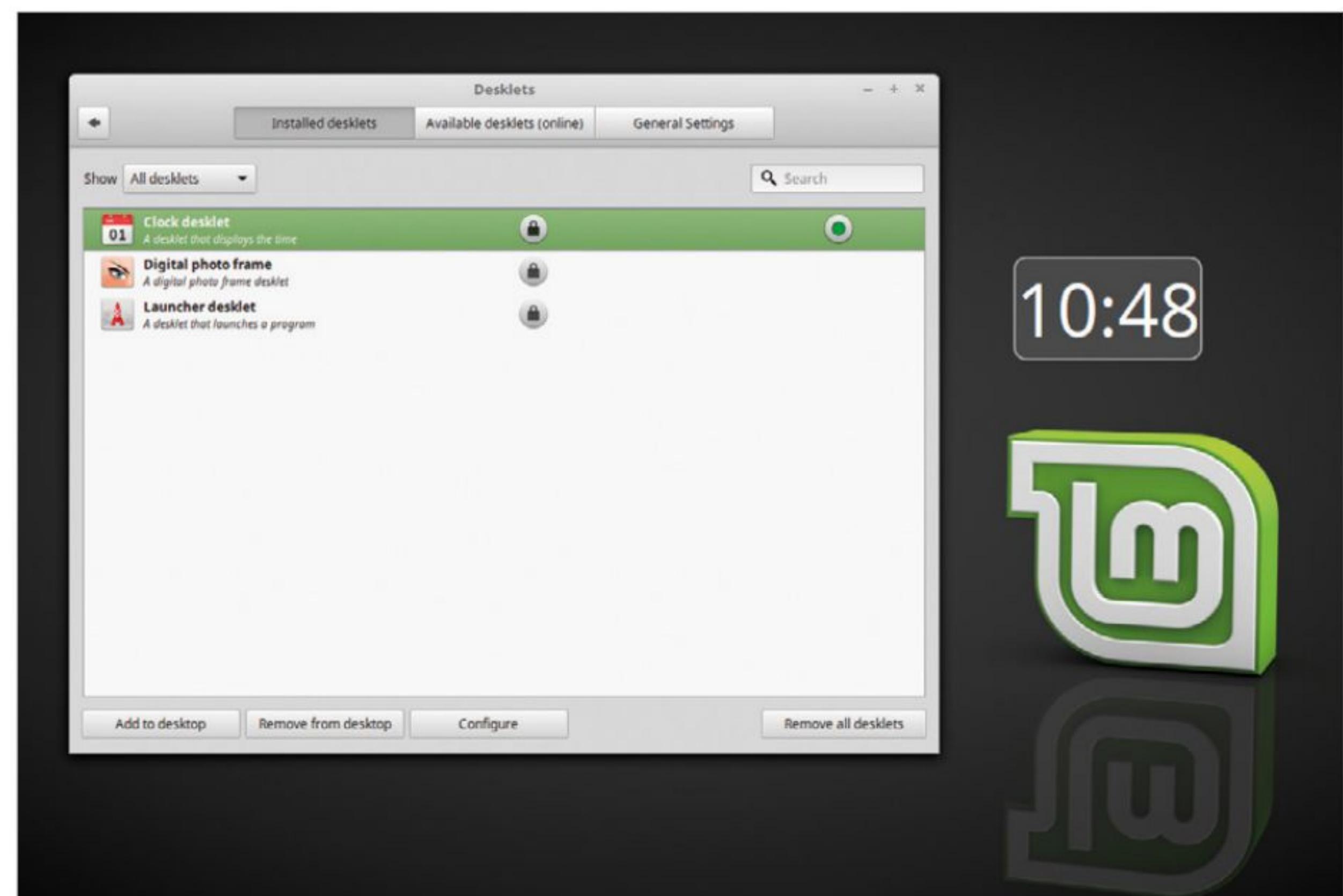
STEP 1 The first step is make sure that you're up to date. Click the Update Manager shield and check to see if there are any level-3 or less updates that need applying. It's always handy to check, as there may have been an important update regarding the functions you are going to use next.



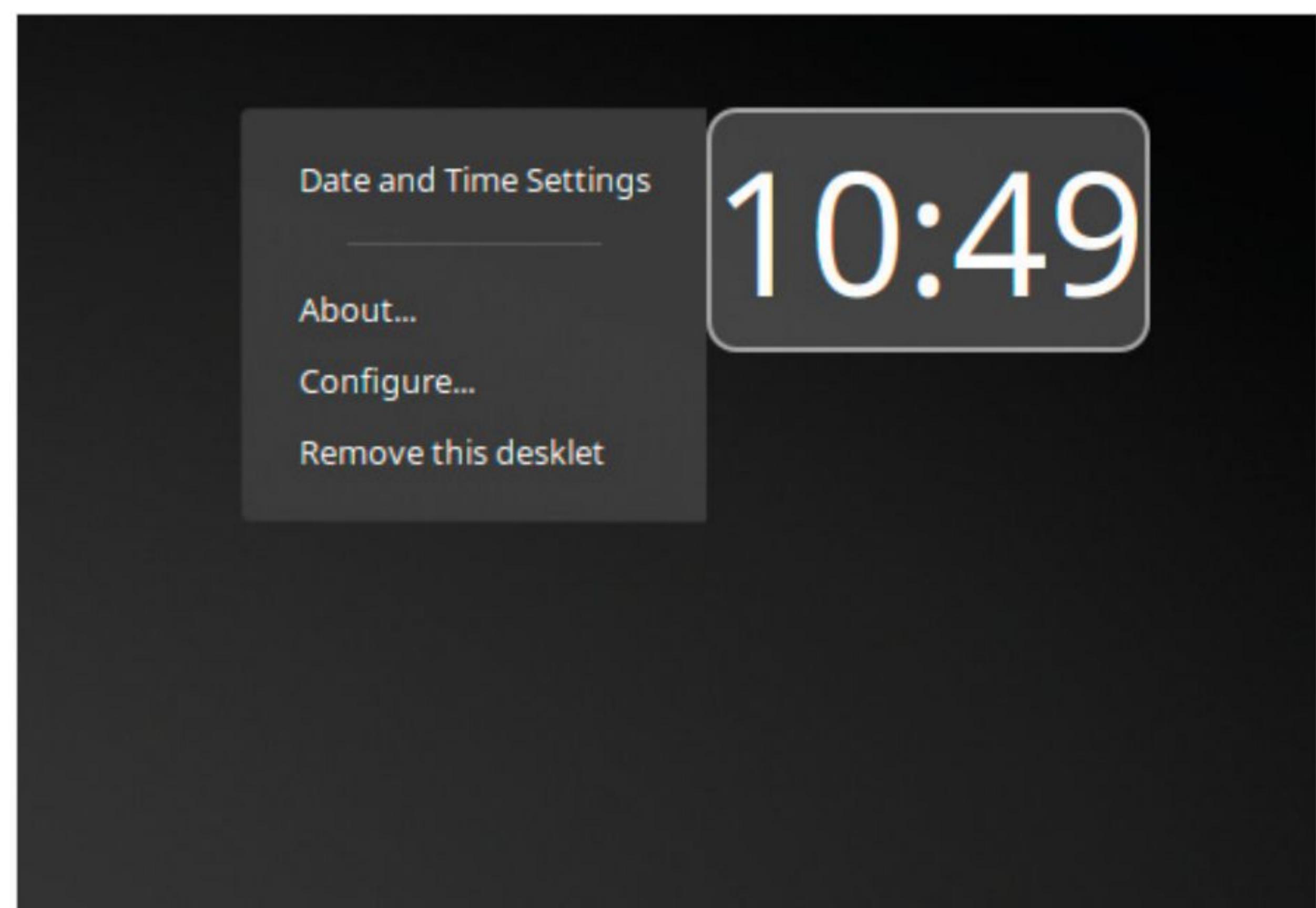
STEP 2 Once the system is up to date, right-click anywhere on the desktop and choose Add Desklets from the menu. This will launch the Desklets console, first detailing the currently Installed Desklets, as well as tabs for Available Desklets (Online) and General Settings.



STEP 3 Taking a glance back to the Introduction to the Cinnamon Desktop pages, and depending on what you may have already looked at in the Desklets console, you may have three or more Desklets already available to add. In this case, we have Clock, Digital Photo Frame and a Launcher. Highlight the Clock and click the Add to Desktop button.



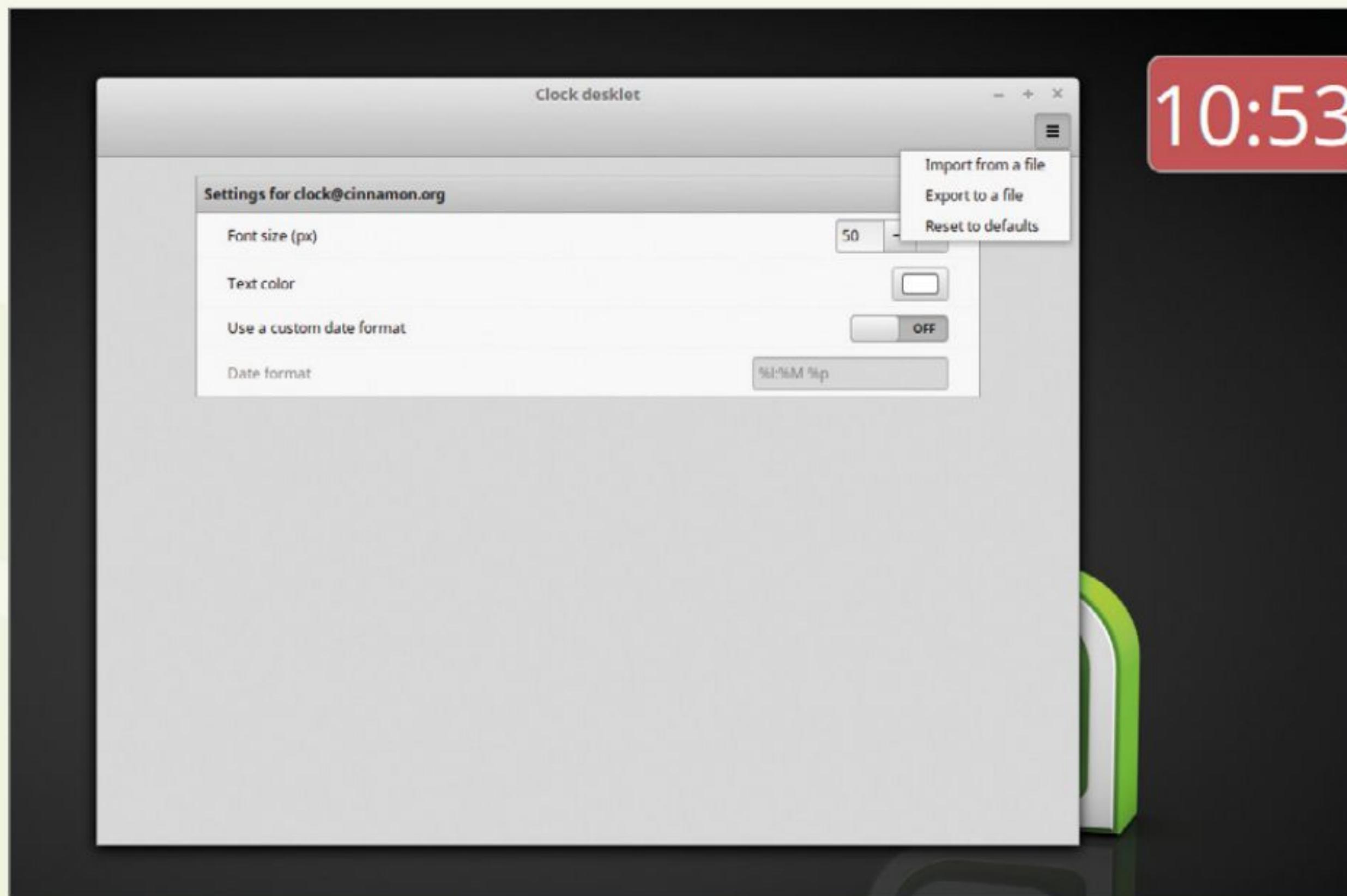
STEP 4 As you can see, this has added a digital clock to the desktop. You can left-click and hold the mouse button on the clock to move it around the desktop to a desired location and if you right-click it, you get a separate menu to configure, remove and about information regarding who developed it. This is usual for most Desklets.





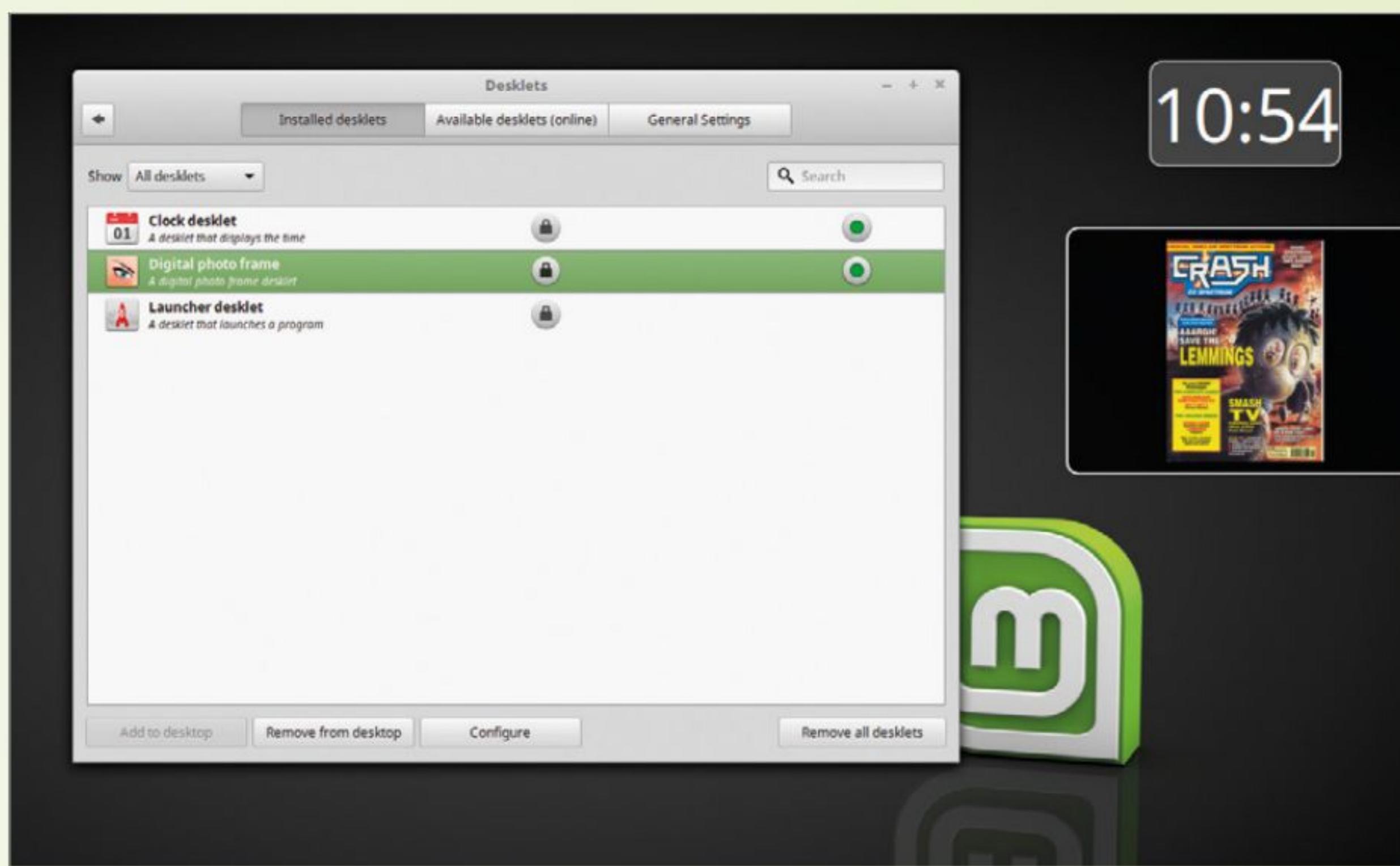
STEP 5

Clicking on the Configure option, for example, brings up the Clock Desklet settings console. In this particular case you can alter the font size, colour of the text and set your own date format. The three horizontal bars in the top right corner allow you to export, import or reset to the default values of the configuration.



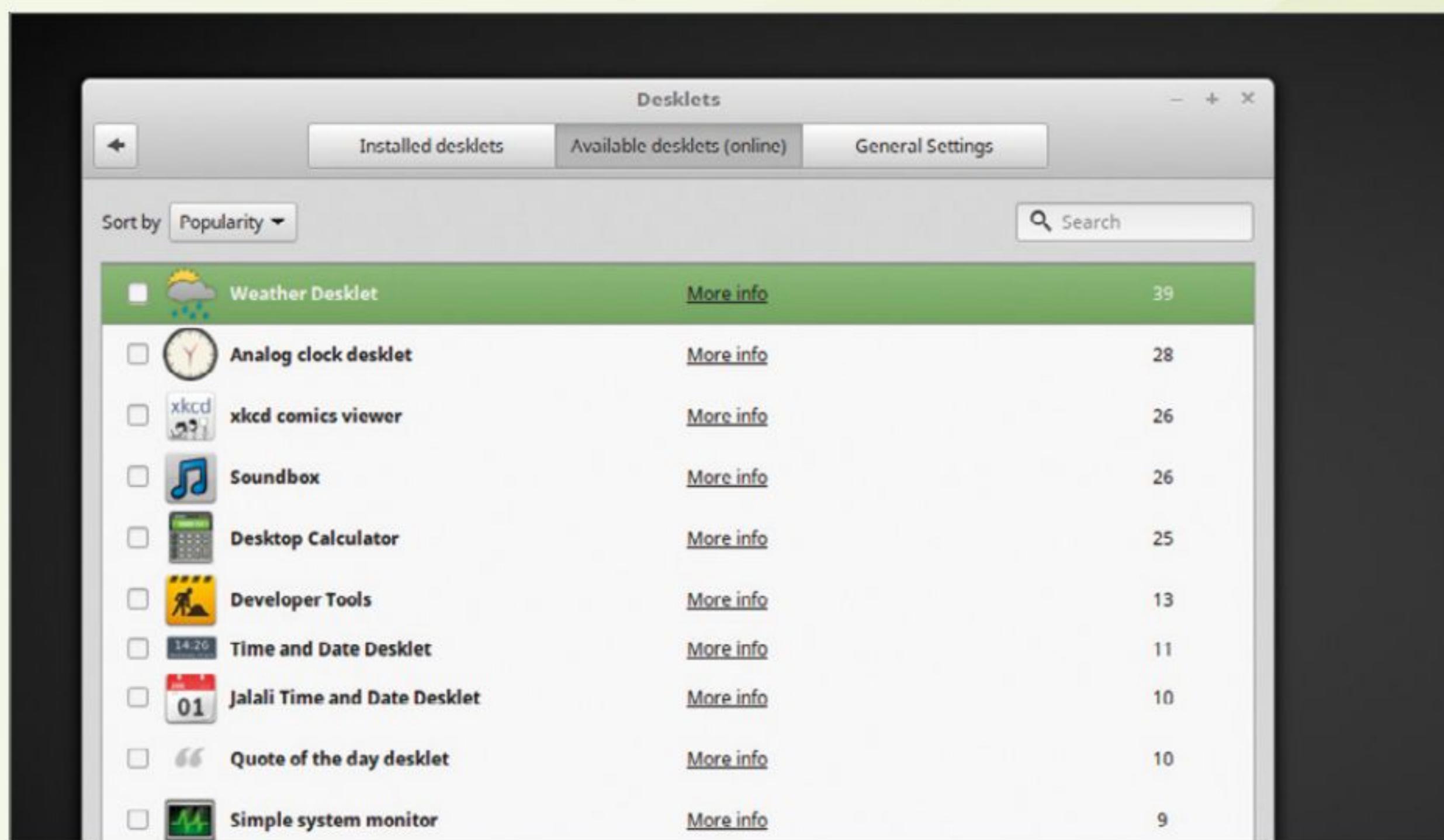
STEP 6

Return to the Desklets console again: right-click the desktop, choose Add Desklets. This time, try the Digital Photo Frame Desklet; highlight it and click Add to Desktop. You can see that it immediately looks to the Home/Pictures folder to pull its content. You can of course alter these settings if you wish.



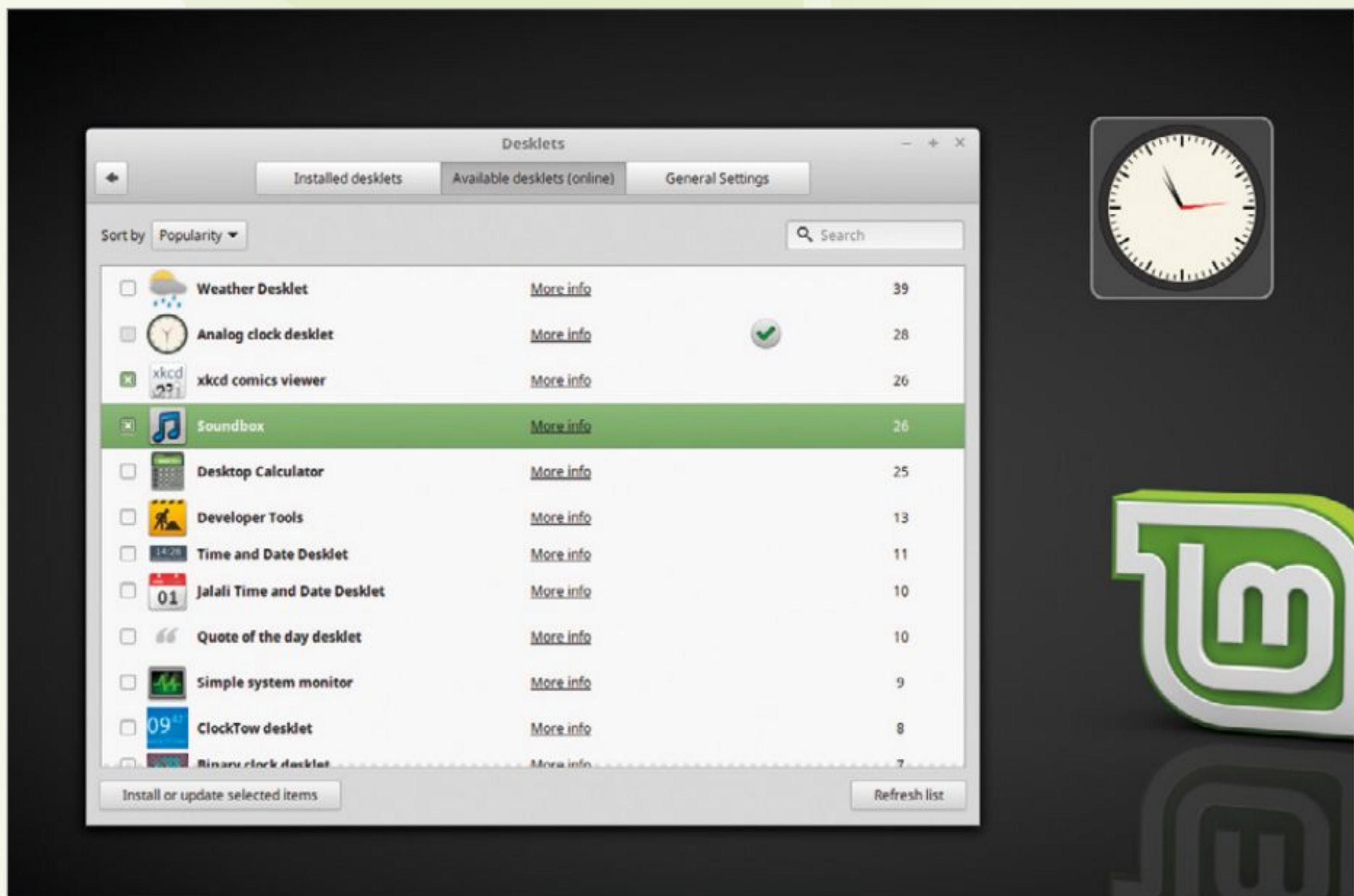
STEP 7

Next, click on the Available Desklets (Online) tab within the Desklets console window. In here there are numerous examples of Desklets ranging from weather forecasting, system monitoring and quote of the day, to the latest stocks, power usage and even a Desklet sandbox where you can develop your own Desklets.



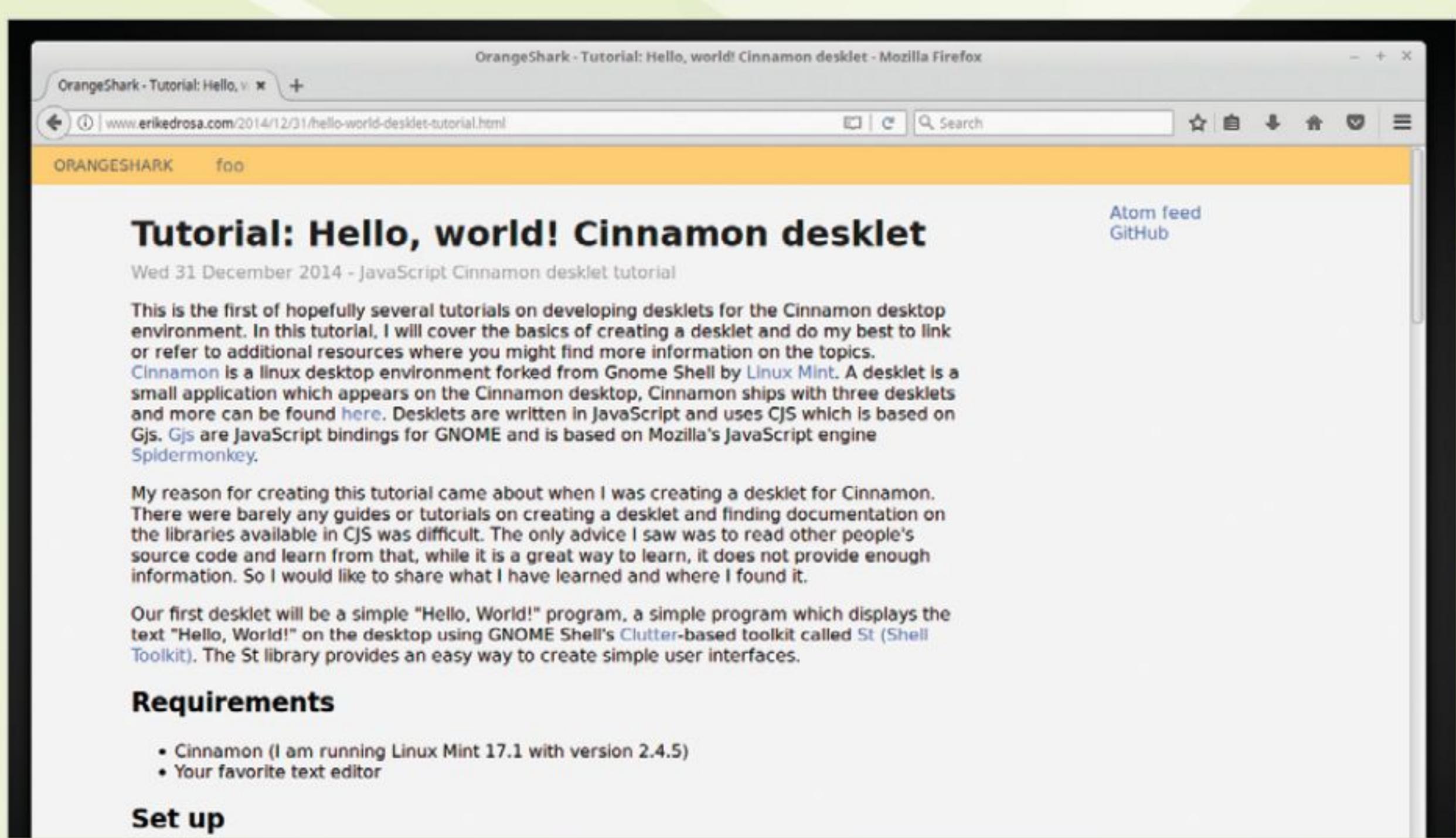
STEP 8

To add a Desklet, simply tick the box next to it, click the Install or Update Selected Items box, return to Installed Desklets and add the Desklet to the desktop. Alternatively, visit: www.cinnamon-spices.linuxmint.com/desklets, and download the Desklets directly from the Cinnamon project website.



STEP 9

We don't have the time to get into the programming side of how to create your own Desklet here. However, Erik Edrosa has created a tutorial to help you get your first 'Hello World' Desklet up and running. Open a browser and navigate to [www.erikedrosa.com/2014/12/31/hello-world-desklet-tutorial.html](http://erikedrosa.com/2014/12/31/hello-world-desklet-tutorial.html), and follow the instructions.



STEP 10

Any downloaded Desklets need to be unpacked and copied into the `~/.local/share/cinnamon/desklets` folder. This is a hidden folder, so you need to right-click Nemo file manager and choose Show Hidden Files from the menu. Once copied over, open the Desklets console and then you can add them to the desktop.

