

A Friendly Guide to LARBS!

by
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Use vim keys (`h/j/k/l`) to navigate this document. Pressing `s` will fit it to window width (`a` to revert). `K` and `J` zoom in and out. `Super+f` to toggle fullscreen. `f` will highlight links to follow which are selectable by typing the number that appears plus `Enter`. `q` to quit. (These are general binds set for **zathura**, the pdf reader.)

- `Mod+F1` will show this document at any time.
- By `Mod I` mean the Super Key, usually known as “the Windows Key.”

FAQs are at the end of this document.

Welcome!

Basic goals and principles of this system:

- **Naturalness** – Remove the border between mind and matter: everything important should be as few keypresses as possible away from you, and you shouldn’t have to think about what you’re doing. Immersion.
- **Economy** – Programs should be simple and light on system resources and highly extensible. Because of this, many are terminal or small ncurses programs that have all the magic inside of them.
- **Keyboard/vim-centrality** – All terminal programs (and other programs) use vim keys when possible. Your hands never need leave the home row or thereabout.
- **Decentralization** – This system is a web of small, modifiable and replaceable programs that users can easily customize.

General keyboard changes

- Capslock is a useless key in high quality space. It’s now remapped. If you press it alone, it will function as escape, making vimcraft much more natural, but you can also hold it down and it will act as another Windows/super/mod key.
- The menu button (usually between the right Alt and Ctrl) is an alternative Super/Mod button. This is to make one-handing on laptops easier.

If you’d like to change any of these keyboard changes, you need only open and change the `remaps` script. All custom scripts in LARBS are located in `~/ .local/bin/`. Actually, this should go without saying, but *everything* here can easily be changed. Below in this document, there is information about where to change programs/components.

Additionally, while this isn’t a part of the desktop environment, the default editing mode in the shell is using vi bindings. If you want to learn more of this, run `Mod+Shift+E` and type and select the option for “vi mode in shell”. This setting can be changed if you don’t like it by

deleting or commenting out the contents of `~/ .config/inputrc`.

The Status Bar

To the left, you'll see the numbers of your current workspace/tag(s). On the right, you'll see various system status notifiers, the date, volume, even music and local weather if possible, etc. Each module on the right of the status bar is a script located in `~/ .local/bin/statusbar/`. You can see what they do and modify them from there. I'm sure you can figure it out.

In i3, the program `i3blocks` controls what modules appear in the statusbar; its config file is in `~/ .config/i3blocks/config`.

Deeper Tutorials

Press `mod+shift+e` at any time to get a menu of programs to watch videos about streaming directly from YouTube. You can also check the config files for programs which detail a lot of the specific bindings.

Key Bindings

Window basics

Notice the case sensitivity of the shortcuts*, Be sure you play around with these. Be flexible with the basic commands and the system will grow on you quick.

- `Mod+Enter` – Spawn terminal (the default terminal is `st`; run `man st` for more.)
- `Mod+q` – Close window (Hold down shift to force kill.)
- `Mod+d` – `dmenu` (For running commands or programs without shortcuts)
- `Mod+h/j/k/l` – Move to different windows
- `Mod+H/J/K/L` – Move a window around
- `Mod+Y/U/I/O` – Resize windows
- `Mod+s/S` – Increase/decrease inner gaps
- `Mod+z/Z` – Increase/decrease outer gaps
- `Mod+D` – Toggle gaps
- `Mod+T` – Restore gaps to default
- `Mod+Shift+Space` – Make a window float (it will still be resizable)
- `Mod+Space` – Switch focus from a floating window to a non-floating one (or vice versa)
- `Mod+b` – Toggle status bar
- `Mod+B` – Toggle window float in bottom left corner (good for video watched intermittently)
- `Mod+N` – Same as above, but for the bottom right corner.

*To type capital letters, hold down the `Shift` key—that might sound like an obvious and condescending thing to tell you, but there have literally been multiple people (Boomers) who have emailed me asking how to type a capital letter since caps lock isn't enabled.

Basic Programs

Note: LARBS will install nearly all of these programs by default, but some only come if you chose an extra option. Naturally, you can use `yay` to look for and install any you want to add.

- `Mod+r` – `lf` (file browser/manager)
- `Mod+e` – `neomutt` (email) – Must be first configured by running `mw add`.
- `Mod+m` – `ncmpcpp` (music player)
- `Mod+a` – Dropdown calculator (hide with `mod+a`)
- `Mod+i` – `htop` (system info)
- `Mod+n` – `newsboat` (RSS feed reader)
- `Mod+A` – `pulsemixer` (audio system control)
- `Mod+w` – Web Browser (Brave)
- `Mod+W` – `nmtui` (for connecting to wireless internet)
- `Mod+G` – `GIMP` (for general image manipulation) – Not installed by default.

System

- `Mod+x` – lock screen (Enter password to return)
- `Mod+X` – shutdown (will ask to confirm)
- `Mod+Shift+Backspace` – reboot (will ask to confirm)
- `Mod+Shift+Escape` – log out of the graphical environment (will ask to confirm)
- `Mod+F1` – Shows this document
- `Mod+Shift+F1` – Toggle the LARBS welcome message
- `Mod+F2` – Refresh/reload `i3`
- `Mod+F3` – Select screen/display to use
- `Mod+F4` – Hibernate (will ask to confirm)
- `Mod+F5` – Reset Network Manager, search for new networks
- `Mod+F6` – `transmission` torrent client (cli)
- `Mod+F7` – Toggle on/off `transmission` client via `dmenu`
- `Mod+F8` – Check mail, if [mutt-wizard](#) is installed.
- `Mod+F9` – Mount a USB drive/hard drive or Android
- `Mod+F10` – Unmount a non-essential drive or Android
- `Mod+`` – Select an emoji to copy to clipboard
- `Mod+Insert` – Show contents of clipboard/primary selection

Audio

I use `ncmpcpp` as a music player, which is a front end for `mpd`.

- `Mod+m` – `ncmpcpp` music player
- `Mod+.` – Next track
- `Mod+,` – Previous track
- `Mod+<` – Restart track
- `Mod+p` – Pause

- `Mod+M` – Mute all audio
- `Mod+-` – Decrease volume (holding shift increases amount)
- `Mod++` – Increase volume (holding shift increases amount)
- `Mod+[` – Back 10 seconds (holding shift increases amount)
- `Mod+]` – Forward 10 seconds (holding shift increases amount)
- `Mod+A` – pulsemixer (general volume sink/source control)

Workspaces

There are ten workspaces, active workspaces are highlighted in the top left.

- `Mod+(Number)` – Go to that number workspace
- `Mod+Shift+(Number)` – Send window to that workspace
- `Mod+Tab` – Go to previous workspace (may also use `\` for Tab)
- `Mod+g` – Go to left workspace
- `Mod+i` – Go to right workspace

Recording

I use maim and ffmpeg to make different recordings of the desktop and audio. All of these recording shortcuts will output into `~`, and will not overwrite previous recordings as their names are based on their exact times.

- `PrintScreen` – Take a screenshot
- `Shift+PrintScreen` – Select area to screenshot
- `Mod+PrintScreen` – Opens dmenu menu to select kind of audio/video recording
- `Mod+Delete` – Kills any recording started in the above way.
- `Mod+F11` – Opens up a webcam window for screencasting.
- `Mod+ScrollLock` – Toggle screenkey (if installed) to show keypresses

Other buttons

I've mapped those extra buttons that some keyboards have (play and pause buttons, screen brightness, email, web browsing buttons, etc.) to what you would expect.

Configuration

Dotfiles/settings files are located in `~/.config/`, note that dotfiles to programs not included in LARBS are there as well by requests of users. I do not necessarily maintain all these dotfiles, but they remain as legacy.

Suckless programs, st (the terminal) and dmenu among others do not have traditional config files, but have their source code location in `~/.local/src/`. There you can modify their `config.h` files, then `sudo make install` to reinstall. (You'll have to restart the program to see its effects obviously.)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

My keyboard isn't working as expected!

LARBS runs some custom keyboard settings in `~/.xinitrc`. These settings may override your preferred settings, so you should open this file and comment out troublesome lines if you have issues.

My audio isn't working!

On fresh install, the Linux audio system (ALSA) often mutes outputs. You may want to unbind. You may also need to set your preferred default output sink which you can do by the command `alsamixer`, or by selecting one with `pulsemixer (mod+A)`.

How do I copy and paste?

Copying and pasting is always program-specific on any system. In most graphical programs, copy and paste will be the same as they are on Windows: `ctrl-c` and `ctrl-v`. In the Linux terminal, those binds have other more important purposes, so you can run `man st` to see how to copy and paste in my terminal build.

Additionally, I've set vim to use the clipboard as the default buffer, which means when you copy or delete something in vim, it will be in your system clipboard as well, so you can `ctrl-v` it into your browser instance, etc. You can also paste material copied from other programs into vim with the typical vim bindings.

How do I change the background/wallpaper?

The system will always read the link `~/.local/share/bg` as the wallpaper. The script `setbg`, if run on an image will set it as the persistent background. When using the file manager, you can simply hover over an image name and type `bg` and this will run `setbg`.

How I change the colorscheme?

LARBS no longer deploys Xresource by default, but you can still add an `~/.Xdefaults` file and add color settings to change the theme of numerous programs, including the terminal. See [the Arch Wiki's article](#) for more information.

How do I set up my email?

LARBS is automatically set up to be compatible with `mutt-wizard`, which is now in the AUR and can be installed by running `yay -S mutt-wizard-git`. You can then add email accounts by running `mw add`.

Once you have successfully added your email address(es), you can open your mail with `neomutt` which is also bound to `Mod+e`. You can sync your mail by pressing `Mod+F8` and you

can set a cronjob to sync mail every several minutes by running `mw cron`.

How do I set up my music?

By default, `mpd`, the music daemon assumes that `~/Music` is your music directory. This can be changed in `~/.config/mpd/mpd.conf`. When you add music to your music folder, you may have to run `mpc up` in the terminal to update the database. `mpd` is controlled by `ncmpcpp`, which is accessible by `Mod+m`.

How do I update LARBS?

LARBS is deployed as a git repository in your home directory. You can use it as such to fetch, diff and merge changes from the remote repository. If you don't want to do that or don't know how to use git, you can actually just rerun the script (as root) and reinstall LARBS and it will automatically update an existing install if you select the same username. This will overwrite the original config files though, including changes you made for them, but this is an easier brute force approach that will also install any new dependencies.

Contact

- luke@lukesmith.xyz – For questions!
- <https://lukesmith.xyz> – For stalking!
- <https://lukesmith.xyz/donate> – To incentivize more development of LARBS!
- [My Github Page](#) – For the code behind it!
- [RSS](#) – For updates!