5.4.2 Configuring Accessibility Settings

Click one of the buttons to take you to that part of the video.

Configure Accessibility Settings 0:00-0:19

In this demonstration we're going to look at configuring accessibility settings on Linux. Accessibility settings are designed to allow those who have some type of physical disability to still be able to use the Linux system. The way you do this will vary from distribution to distribution.

Universal Access Display 0:20-1:09

On this fedora distribution, I can go up to Activities and then I can just search for access, and I see an option here called Universal Access Display, which is actually within my system settings. Another way to get there would have been to open up my system settings and then found Universal Access under System--either way works. As you can see, within Universal Access my accessibility settings are categorized based upon different types of disabilities. For example, if you have someone who is visually impaired; then we can use the Seeing settings here to make things a little bit easier to see. Likewise, if we have someone who has a hearing impairment, we can use these settings. For someone who has a tactile impairment, we can configure Typing and Pointing and Clicking settings.

Visual Impairment 1:10-2:21

Let's take a look at what some these do. First of all, we have the High Contrast setting. If we turn this on, it gets rid of a lot of the shading and makes things basically just black and white so it's easier to see. Another option is Large Text, and the older I get the more and more I think that this is a great idea. I'm starting to have a hard time seeing the screen. We can turn this option on and that will cause larger text to be displayed on the screen, as opposed to the normal size when you turn that back off. We can also use the Zoom option. We configure this option; we can specify how much magnification we want to see. We could crank this to maybe 1.25 and we can specify the magnifier position. Let's have it follow the mouse cursor. Turn this option on. When you do, you can see that the screen is magnified, and as I move the mouse around, I navigate around the screen. Another useful feature is the Screen Reader. As it notes here, the Screen Reader reads the displayed text as you move the focus around the screen. If you have a hard time seeing the screen well enough to read the text, it will just read it out loud to you.

Auditory Impairment 2:22-3:00

Another option is Sound Keys. This will emit an auditory beep if you have your Num Lock or your Caps Lock key turned on.

If somebody has an auditory impairment, we can turn on Visual Alerts. This way if an alert sound is played on the computer, a visual indicator will be displayed to let the person know that an alert has occurred. You can turn this on and you can specify that we either flash the window title or we can flash the entire screen. We can click test flash here to see. That just is a quick little reminder that something needs your attention. I'm going to turn that back off.

Tactile Impairment 3:01-5:17

If we have someone who has a tactile impairment, we can use the features under Typing and Pointing and Clicking to make the system a little bit easier to use. One of these is the Screen Keyboard. If I turn this option on, notice as soon as I click in a field where I can type, the onscreen keyboard is displayed. Then I can come down here and type out what it is--using the mouse--that I'm searching for, such as terminal. Let's go ahead and go back to where we were. Turn that back off. We can also enable Typing Assist. There are several different features we can enable here. For example, we can turn on Sticky Keys. As you know, when working with a Linux system, there are many different tasks you perform by holding down some type of modifier key and another key at the same time, such as CTRL + C, or CTRL + Z, and so on. Well, if you have a tactile impairment, that might be very difficult to do. If you turn on sticky keys, then you can press those keys--that you would normally have to press together--one at a time. For example, if I needed to press CTRL + C, with sticky keys on I could press CTRL and then press C, and it would be treated as if it were a key combination being pressed at the same time.

Another option is Slow Keys. This puts a delay between when a key is pressed and then when that key press is accepted. You can also enable Bounce Keys, which ignores fast duplicate key presses. We can also come down and enable Mouse Keys. This enables key sequences to be used to move the mouse cursor around the screen and also to send mouse clicks. This is designed for those who can use a keyboard just fine but are not able to use a mouse for some reason. Finally, we have the Click Assist option down here. We have two options we can configure.

First of all, Simulated Secondary Click. This is designed for someone who has difficulty performing a double-click with the mouse. What this does is allow you to just press and hold the mouse button down, and that will send essentially a double-click to the system for you.

Also, Hover Click. With Hover Click, all I have to do is move the mouse and then hover over something-- over a button like this--and it will send a click for me, instead of having to press the mouse button to accomplish that.

Universal Access Menu 5:18-5:41

Before we end this demonstration there is one other thing I wanted to show you, and that is this option right here--Always Show Universal Access Menu. Currently, it's turned off and it's off by default. If I turn this option on, you'll see that my Universal Access button is displayed up here and I can click on it, and then I can see a summary list of most of my accessibility settings up here. I can enable them or disable them very easily. It's a good idea to turn this option on.

Summary 5:42-5:44

That's it for this demonstration. In this demo, we talked about configuring accessibility settings.
