

## 5.2.1 Comparing Linux Desktops

---

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

Introduction 0:00-0:16

Most Linux distributions have a default desktop environment, or configuration of menus, icons, files, and folders. However, there are dozens of environments to choose from. In this video, we'll briefly look at a few of the most common.

---

GNOME 0:17-1:26

The first GUI we'll look at is GNOME [pronounced like the pointy-hat dude], one of the most popular desktop environments. Chances are, you've already used GNOME, as it's the default GUI for current Fedora and Ubuntu distributions.

The GNOME environment is minimalistic – as you can see, most of this space is blank. The only interactive elements are in this panel, at the top of the screen. At the far right is the user menu. Here, you can view information about your volume, network connection, and battery level. You can also open the Settings menu to configure your system settings.

The most important part of the top panel is the Activities menu. This is where you can launch applications. There are three ways to do this. The easiest way is to click one of these icons in the quick launch bar. If you know the name of the application you want to run, you can type it into this search bar. Or you can click Show Applications to see all the applications installed on the system. With applications open, you can use the Activities menu to choose which one to bring to the front. You can also use this menu to close applications.

At the right of the screen, you can see your available workspaces. To create a new workspace, drag an application to the blank icon at the bottom of the list. Now, you can use this menu to switch between workspaces.

---

Unity 1:27-2:03

Next, we'll look at Unity, which is primarily available on Ubuntu distributions. In fact, it was the default GUI for Ubuntu until 2017, when they switched to GNOME. At the top right are menu buttons for network, volume, and other system settings. Along the left is a quick launch bar. This icon, at the top, opens a search bar, where you can search for files and applications on your computer.

You can switch between open applications by using their icons in the quick launch bar. One thing to be aware of is that application menus are hidden until you hover over the bar at the top of the screen. To close an application, click the X at the top left corner.

---

MATE 2:04-2:24

The next GUI is MATE [pronounced MA-teh], which is based on an early version of GNOME. Like the other environments we've seen, the top-right corner has menus for network, volume, and system settings. The Menu button in the top-left corner opens a drop-down where we can view the installed applications, grouped by category. These icons in the bottom-right corner are for switching between workspaces.

---

Cinnamon 2:25-2:46

Now let's look at the Cinnamon environment, which was designed to resemble Microsoft Windows. At the bottom-right corner, we find our familiar network and system settings. At the bottom left is the Menu button, which is similar to the Start button on Windows. From here, you can search the computer, launch applications, or browse the file system. You can switch between open applications by clicking their icons on the taskbar.

---

KDE Plasma 2:47-3:11

Finally, we have KDE Plasma. Down here, in the bottom-right corner, we have our network and system settings. On the left, we have the main menu, where we can launch applications or browse the file system. As you can see, KDE has a thing for words that start with K. At the top right, we have a menu with options for customizing the display. For example, we can open a panel with a variety of widgets, or small applications that run on the desktop.

**Summary 3:12-3:23**

We've just taken a brief look at five common Linux desktop environments: GNOME, Unity, MATE, Cinnamon, and KDE Plasma. As you probably noticed, these environments have more similarities than differences, and the best one for you comes down to personal preference.

---

**Copyright © 2022 TestOut Corporation All rights reserved.**