Ubuntu Desktop User Experience

An Essential Starting Point

The Beginner's Guide to the Ubuntu Desktop User Experience is crafted as a comprehensive resource for anyone embarking on their Linux journey. It offers clear, practical guidance tailored for beginners and hobbyists exploring Linux for the first time. This guide brings together collaborative knowledge and resources to help new users confidently set up Ubuntu virtual machines or desktop systems with ease. With its intuitive interface, robust community support, and reliable ecosystem, Ubuntu remains one of the most accessible and welcoming pathways into the world of Linux.

Ubuntu Releases

Ubuntu 25.10 "Questing Quokka" is the latest interim release and will be supported until July 2026. Interim release is ideal for users, who want cutting-edge technology and are comfortable upgrading every nine (9) months. These interim release offers newer software and drivers. Check out **Canonical press release** for more details.

For those seeking maximum stability and long-term reliability, **Ubuntu 24.04.3 LTS** continues to be a trusted choice. The LTS releases are supported for five (5) years (with optional 10-year extended support for enterprises). On April 23rd, 2025, Ubuntu 26.04 LTS, codenamed "Resolute Raccoon," Long Term Support (LTS) is scheduled to be released.

Ubuntu Official Desktop Guide: An Essential Starting Point

Linux has steadily gained prominence with significantly improved desktop. Learning Linux can be straightforward, especially with online tutorials, forums, and community support available.

The **Ubuntu Desktop Guide** serves as the fundamental resource for new users to familiarize themselves with the Ubuntu desktop environment. It provides essential support information, including resources, such as **Ubuntu Help** and **Ask Ubuntu** forum. For beginners learning Linux command lines on Ubuntu, a specific guide can be found **here**.

Install Ubuntu Desktop step-by-step guide provide a clear path for installing Ubuntu directly on a laptop or desktop computer as the primary operating system. (**Disclaimer:** It is highly recommended to back up your data prior to installation).

Virtualization: A Secure Learning Environment

Virtualization is an excellent way to become familiar with a Linux operating system in a safe and secure environment without affecting the host operating system. **VirtualBox** is an essential tool for building and managing multiple virtual environments, allowing users to experiment without risk. Snapshots enable easy recovery from failed configurations.

Ubuntu offers a walkthrough guide on creating **an Ubuntu desktop virtual machine using VirtualBox 7**. Check out VirtualBox **Documentation**, **Community Support**, and **Training**. For an alternative virtualization software, **VMware Workstation Pro and Fusion** is now free for all users. **VMware Workstation & Fusion 25H2** has just been released with features.

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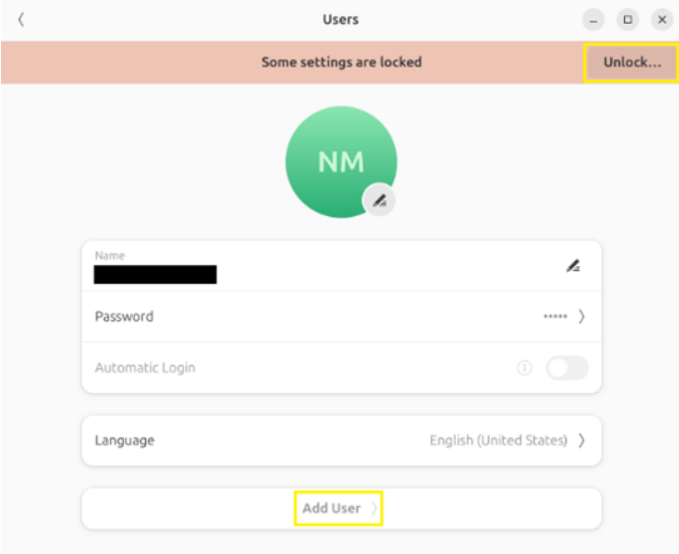
Users and Groups

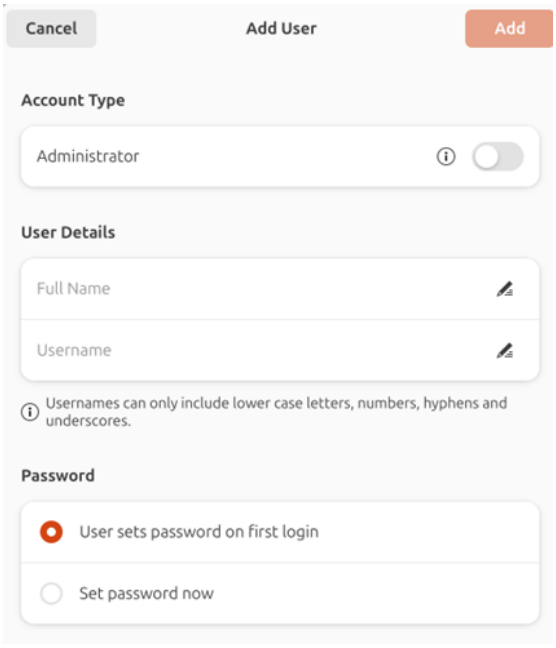
The Linux command line might be daunting for beginners. Luckily, Linux desktop environments do offer a graphical user interface (GUI). Proceed to open **Settings** via the Apps and proceed to type **users** in the search bar.

- Click on **Users** to proceed forward.

1. Click **Unlock** and type in the admin password. Then, click on **Add User**. For security reasons, be sure that **Automatic Login** is turned off.



The new user account default is standard user. Only create an administrator account when deemed appropriate. It is good practice to use a standard account for daily usages and one administrator account when elevated privileges are required.



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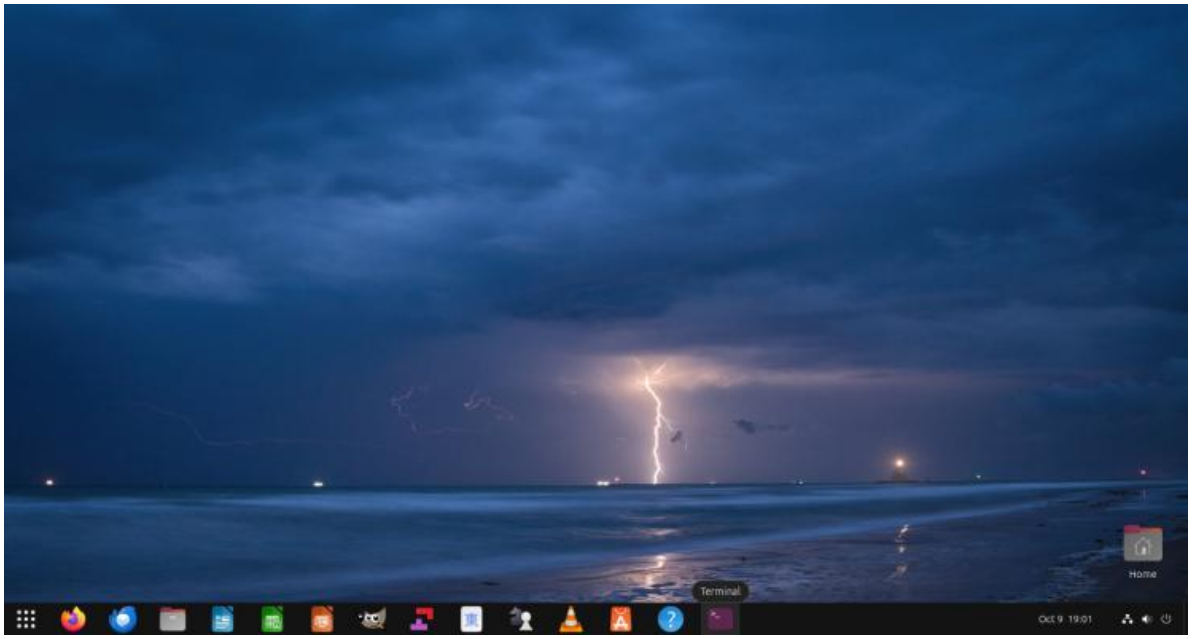


Customize Ubuntu with GNOME Tweaks and Extension Manager

Customizing Ubuntu Environment

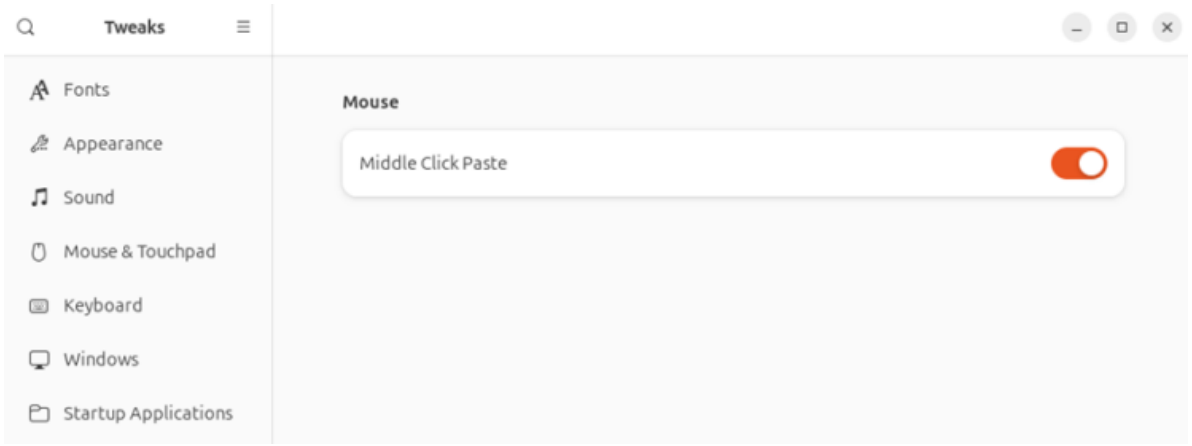
Enhance the look and feel of your Ubuntu desktop by utilizing the customization capabilities offered by **GNOME Tweaks** and **Extension Manager**.

GNOME Tweaks provides an intuitive, user-friendly interface for adjusting settings that go beyond the options available in the default GNOME Settings. Proceed to install GNOME Tweaks with the following command line:

sudo apt install gnome-tweaks

Begin to explore the GNOME Tweaks interface. Open Terminal and type in the following command line to run GNOME-Tweaks.

GNOME-Tweaks



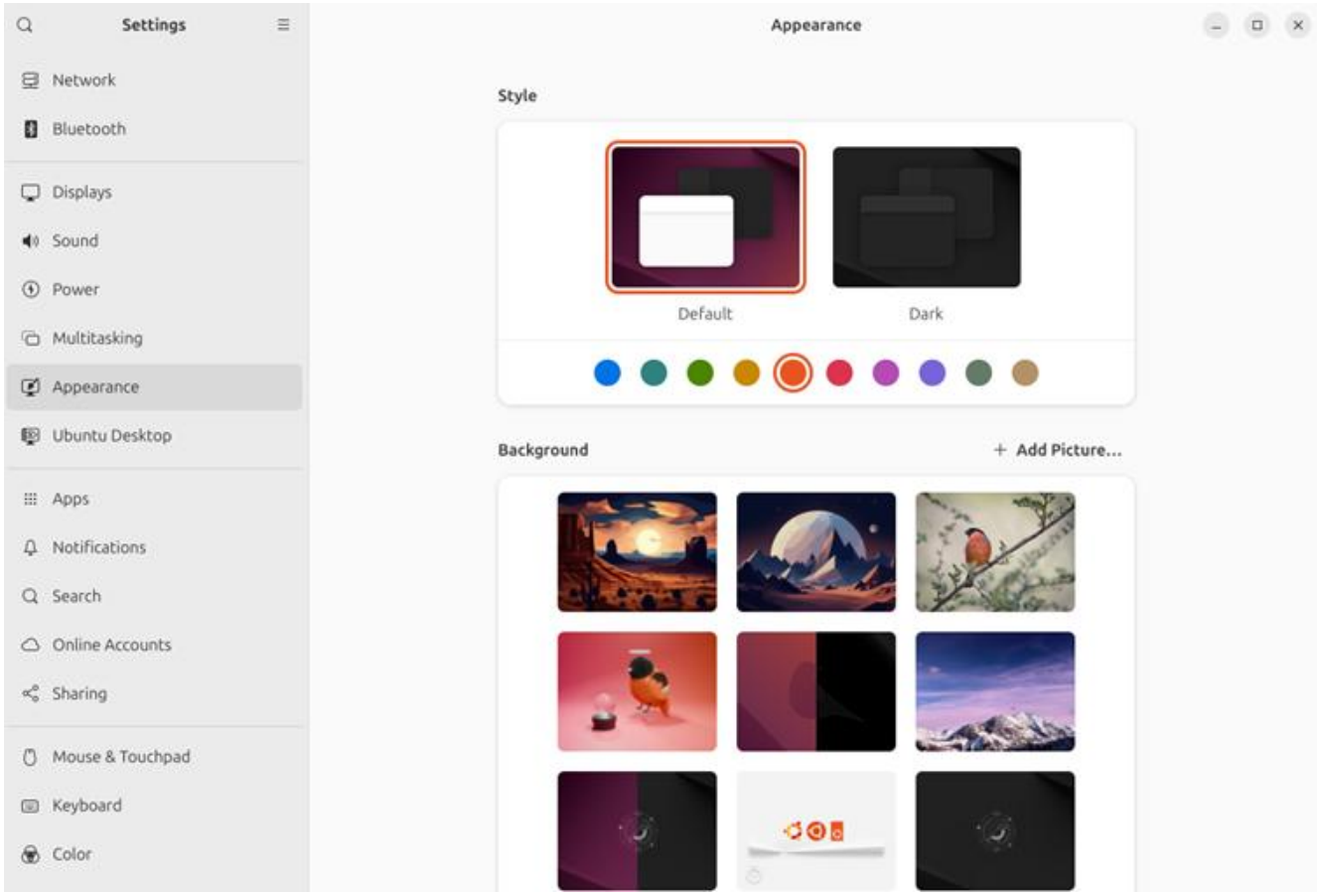
Extension Manager is a utility for browsing, installing, and managing GNOME Shell Extensions. This utility provides a convenient way to handle your extensions. Within the Ubuntu App Centre, proceed to search for **Extension Manager** and click on **install**.

Here are a few recommended GNOME Shell Extensions:

- **Blur My Shell** creates a more visually appealing desktop experience by adding a blue effect to different parts of the GNOME Shell, including the top panel, and dash.
- **Dash to Panel** provides a more traditional desktop experience by moving the dash to panel at the top of the screen.
- **Dash to Dock** transforms that dash into a dock at the bottom of the screen.
- **User Themes** allows users to easily change the GNOME Shell theme by applying different GTK themes.
- **Vitals** shows system resource information like CPU, memory, network usage, disk usage, and temperature in the top panel, giving an overview of the system's performance.

More information about GNOME Extensions can be found **here**. Additional themes can be seen at **gnome-look** and **pling**.

Under **Appearance** in the left pane, further customizations of the Linux desktop can be adjusted to personal preferences.



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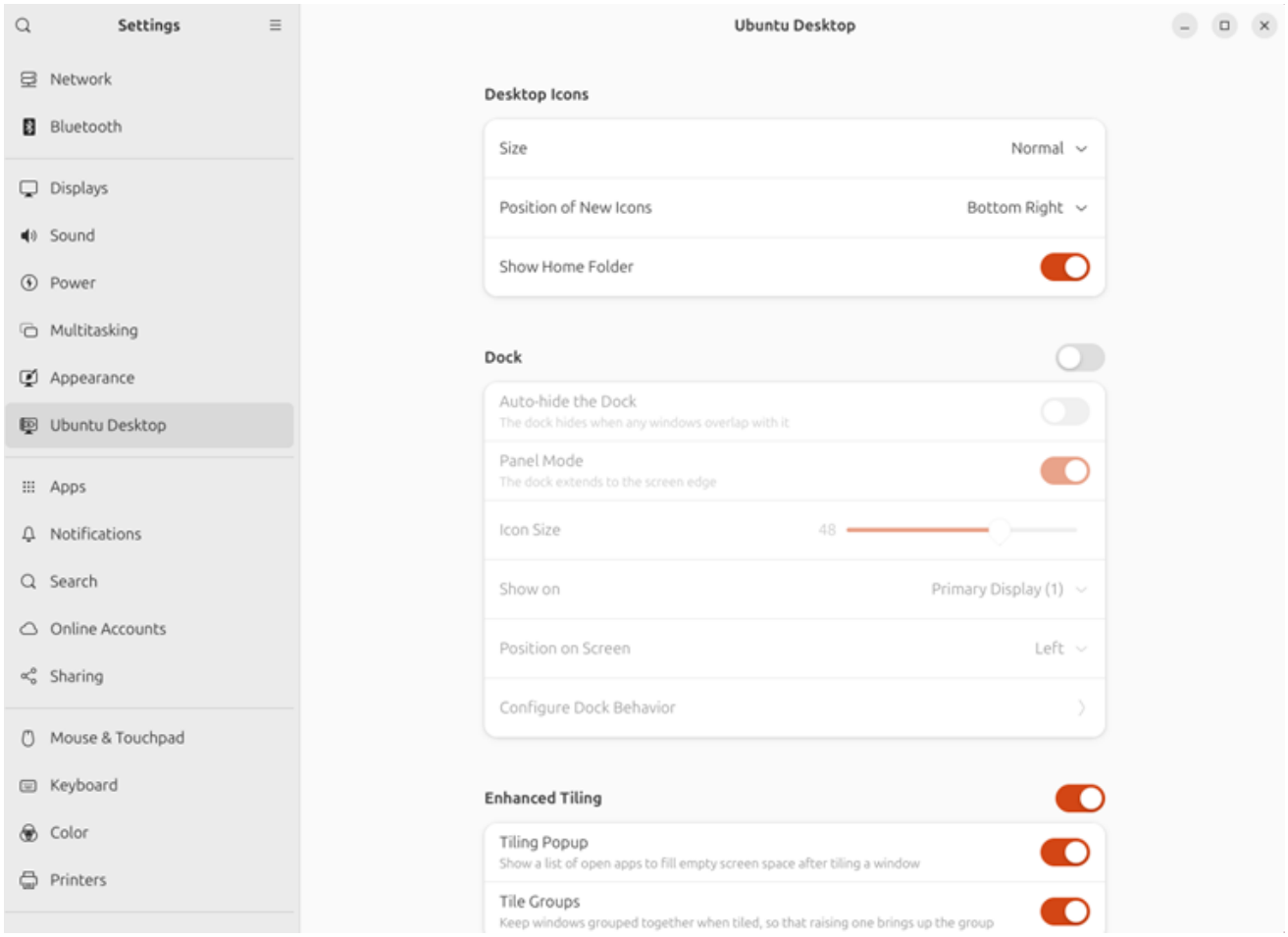
In the **Ubuntu Desktop** on the left pane, useful customization option includes the adjustment of desktop icon, dock, and enhancing tiling.



How to install ClamAV Antivirus

ClamAV is an antivirus software designed to detect trojans, viruses, malware, and other malicious threats. ClamAV can be installed by the Software Center or Synaptic Package Manager. Alternative antivirus programs for Ubuntu can be found here.

Configuring Firewall for Linux

The default firewall configuration tool for Ubuntu is **ufw (uncomplicated firewall)**. By default, UFW is turned off. An introduction is firewalls can be found **here**. **Gufw** is a graphical front-end to UFW and is recommended for beginners. Setting of a firewall for Ubuntu lies in three primary reasons:

Security: A firewall safeguards your device controlling incoming and outgoing network traffic based on predetermined security rules.

Access Control: It allows you to specify which services or applications can be access from outside your network. This process will reduce the risk of unauthorized access.

Network Segmentation: Firewalls can help segment your network and limit the potential threat of malware or attackers within your network.

Effective Backup Methods

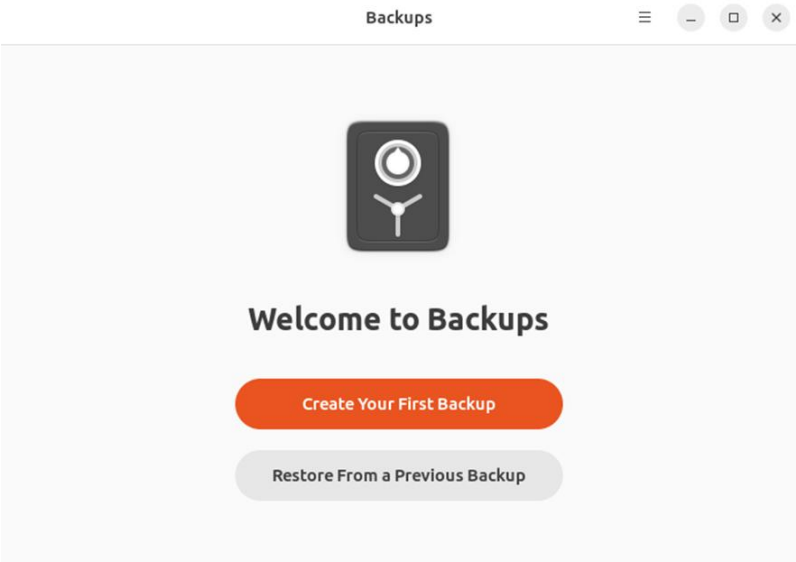
Data loss can have a significant impact on home and business environments. Backing up files is crucial for safeguarding your data against loss due to hardware failures, accidental deletions, and malware attacks. Regular maintenance is vital to ensure that backups are stored securely and in a timeline fashion.

Deja Dup is a built-in utility in Ubuntu that is designed to be a user-friendly and is suitable for users, who prefer a simple backup solution with a graphical interface.
Here is a quick guide on how to setup Deja Dup.

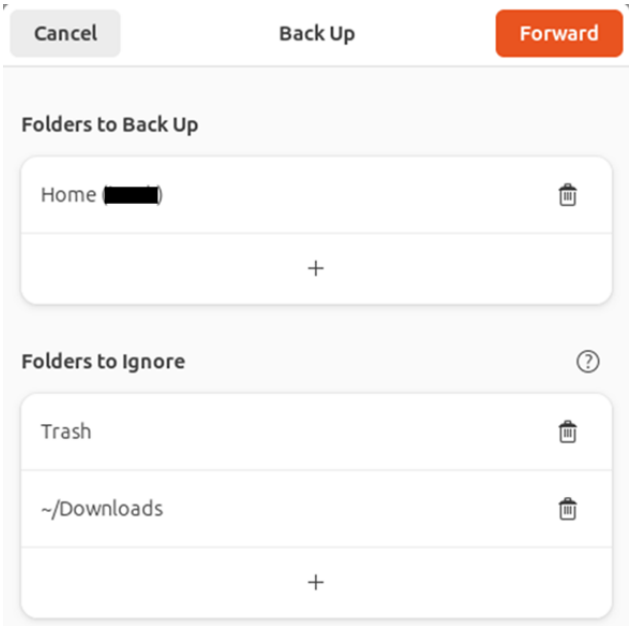
1. Even though Deja Dup is often installed on Ubuntu by default, the application can still be installed in Terminal via the following command line:

   sudo apt install deja-dup

2. In the Applications menu, proceed to open **Deja Dup**. Alternatively, search for “Backup” or Deja Dup” and open the application.

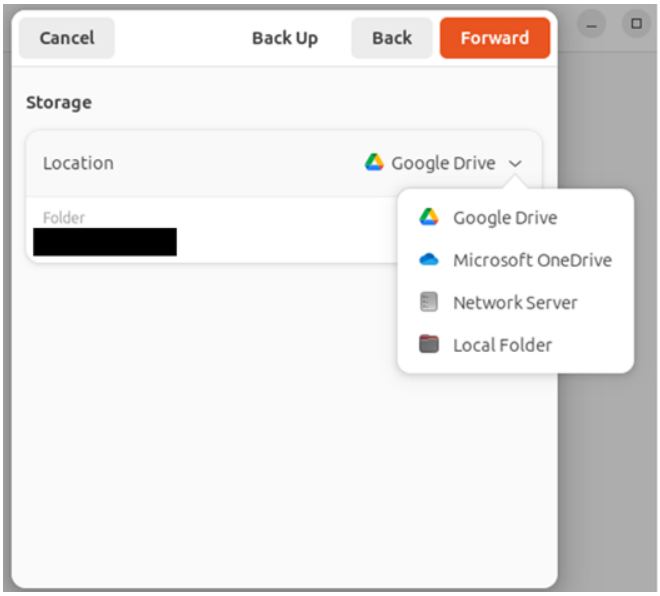


3. Once Deja Dup is opened, proceed to configure the backup settings. There are options for your backup location, schedule, and other preferences. The storage location can be local, network or cloud. Specify the desired folders to be included or excluded from backups.



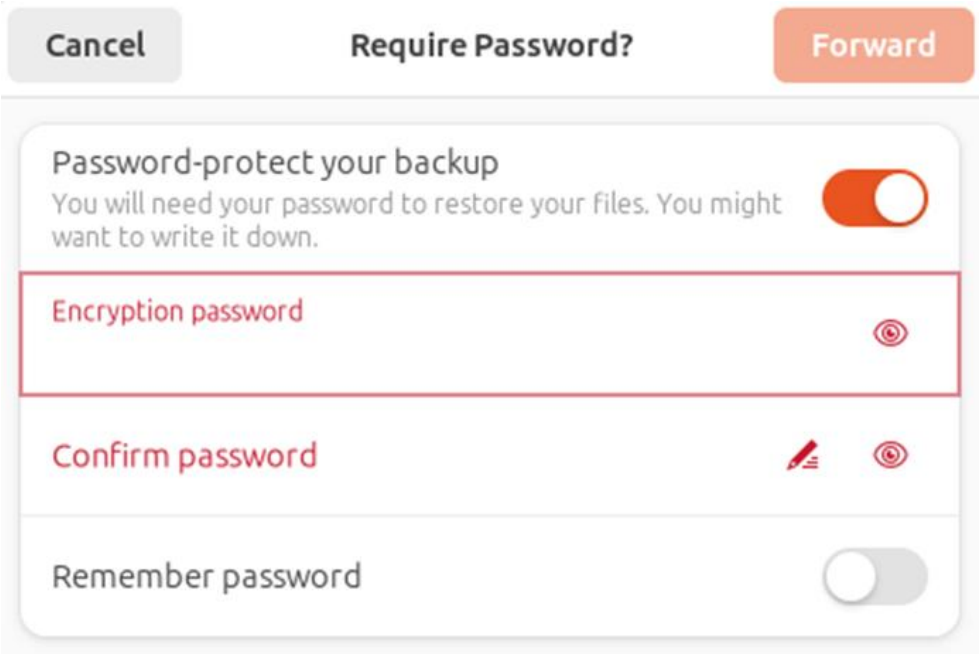
4. Select Backup Folders

   When selecting **Forward**, in Location, there are options to save files to Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Network Server and Local Folder. An external hard drive, USC Thumb Drive, or a WD My Cloud Home, Synology or Qnap NAS are also viable options for backup.



5. Select preferred location to store backup.

6. **Set Encryption** (Optional) -> for added security, you have the option to encrypt your backup for added security. Be sure to remember the password. Click on **Forward** to complete the process.



Backup Media
When selecting an encrypted USB drive, consider factors such as encryption strength, ease of use, durability, and the level of certification. Kingston, SanDisk, Verbatim, Lexar are a few popular brand names. External hard drives with password encryption are recommended. **Synology** and **Qnap** does offer excellent Network-Attached Storage (NAS) devices that are ideal for home and business uses.

Understanding File Management

File management is a fundamental skill for anyone working with Linux. In this guide, we'll introduce essential concepts, tools, and commands for managing files and directories, especially for users new to Ubuntu.

Graphical File Management with Nautilus

Ubuntu's default GNOME desktop environment includes **Nautilus**, a graphical file manager designed to make browsing and managing files intuitive. With Nautilus, users can:

- Create, rename, copy, and delete files or folders using right-click menus.
- Drag and drop files between directories.
- Use the sidebar for quick navigation.
- View file properties such as size, type, and permissions

Why Learn Terminal-Based File Management?

While GUI tools like Nautilus are useful, **the terminal offers more power, precision, and speed**. It also becomes essential when working with remote servers or performing advanced administrative tasks. Understanding how to manage file permissions from the terminal is especially important for securing files and controlling access.

Understanding Linux File Permissions

Linux file permissions are based on a simple model involving three types of users:

- **Owner**: The user who created the file
- **Group**: A set of users with shared access
- **Others**: Everyone else

Each of these can have **read (r)**, **write (w)**, and **execute (x)** permissions.

Example:

-rwxr-xr-- 1 user group 1234 Jul 27 10:15 script.sh

In this case:

- Owner has **rwx** (read, write, execute)
- Group has **r-x**
- Others have **r--**

Using the chmod Command

The chmod (change mode) command lets you modify these permissions. You can use **symbolic** or **numeric (octal)** notation.

Symbolic Mode Examples:
Add execute permission for everyone:

chmod +x filename

Remove write permission for group:

chmod g-w filename

Numeric Mode Examples:

Full access for owner, read and execute for group, and read-only for others:

chmod 754 filename

Simply add numbers together to get cumulative permissions.

Linux File Permissions		
Octal	**String Representation**	**Permissions**
0 (0 + 0 + 0)	---	No Permission
1 (0 + 0 + 1)	--x	Execute
2 (0 + 2 + 0)	-w-	Write
3 (0 + 2 + 1)	-wx	Write + Execute
4 (4 + 0 + 0)	r--	read
5 (4 + 0 + 1)	r-x	Read + Execute
6 (4 + 2 + 0)	rw-	Read + Write
7 (4 + 2 + 1)	rwx	Read + Write + Execute

Here is a quick reference on the Linux Numeric File Permissions.

- **777** = Owner, Members of Group Owner, Everyone have Full Control.
- **764** = Owner has Full Control, Group has Read and Write, Everyone has Read.
- **755** = Owner has full control, Group has read and write, Everyone has read permissions.
- **744** = Owner has full control, Group and Everyone has read permissions.
- **740** = Owner has Full Control, Group can Read, Everyone can do nothing.

Configuring Samba

A Samba file server provides seamless file sharing across different operating system platforms over a network. This beginner guide will cover the setup of Samba on Ubuntu. Ubuntu does offer an excellent installation and configuration guide for samba.

Popular Software Applications

Here is a list of popular software applications for Ubuntu.

- **LibreOffice**: Full-featured office suite (word processor, spreadsheet, presentation).
- **OnlyOffice:** Modern Microsoft Office-compatible suite.
- **Thunderbird**: Robust email client with calendar and RSS support.
- **GNOME Calendar**: Clean calendar app that syncs with Google, Nextcloud, and others.
- **Firefox**: Default browser on Ubuntu — privacy-focused and customizable.
- **Google Chrome:** Popular for syncing and extensions (not open source).
- **GIMP:** Advanced image editor — often compared to Photoshop.
- **VLC:** Universal media player.
- **Zoom:** a popular video conferencing and online communication platform.

Microsoft 365 web version does work well within Ubuntu. However, some advanced tools/features may be missing, such as macros, large datasets, and advanced Excel add-ins. Microsoft Teams will work better within a browser.

Zorin OS 18: An Easy Transition from Windows 10 or macOS

Zorin OS 18 Has Arrived. This latest version of Zorin OS is equipped with enhancements designed to boost the performance and offers several desktop themes and configuration, including one called "Windows-like" which closely resembles the layout of Windows 10. Zorin OS serves as an excellent Linux distribution for users transitioning from Windows or macOS. **Zorin** provides a comprehensive guide on **installing Zorin OS in VirtualBox 7**.

Final Thoughts

The growing Linux community highlights the increasing popularity and relevance of Linux in today's digital world. With extensive customization options, Linux accommodates various user preferences, including different desktop environments, window managers and software packages.

Ubuntu is an excellent starting point for beginner, who are interested in learning more about Linux distributions. Zorin is an excellent alternative for new users. **Fedora 43** (*new release*), **Linux Mint 22.2**, and **Manjaro** are among other popular Linux distros. Find out which one suits your best!!