

CHAPTER 6

Using Your Desktop

Linux provides two basic types of interface for you to use when working with your computer: GUI (graphical user interface) and CLI (command-line interface). An overview of the interface types is provided in Chapter 5. In this chapter, the most common type of interface, a GUI called a desktop, is discussed in detail. The CLI is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Linux can start without a desktop, but most users prefer to have Linux start with a desktop. The installation instructions provided in Chapter 4 result in a desktop opening at startup. A desktop interface functions as the top of your desk, supplying an empty working surface and a set of tools.

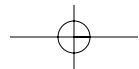
Different distributions provide different desktops, but most provide KDE (K Desktop Environment) and/or GNOME (Gnu Network Object Model Environment)—the Big Two of Linux desktops. The default desktop differs by distribution. For instance, Fedora defaults to GNOME, and Mandrake/SuSE defaults to KDE. However, you can change the default once you decide which desktop you prefer.

KDE and GNOME are open source software, each developed in a project of its own. New versions are released independently of Linux releases or the release of any specific Linux distribution. As a result, different distributions include different KDE and/or GNOME versions. In addition, KDE and GNOME are very configurable. Almost everything about them can be changed. Consequently, KDE and GNOME don't look exactly the same in different distributions or versions of distributions.

When using this book, remember that your KDE or GNOME may not look exactly like the book. Most of the figures in the book are Fedora Core 2 (KDE 3.2/GNOME 2.6) or Mandrake 10 (KDE 3.2/GNOME 2.4). Your version may be older or newer. Because your KDE and GNOME may not always look and behave exactly as shown in the book, it's best to consider the instructions in this chapter as suggestions, rather than an exact map. It provides clues to the most likely places to find configuration tools, but not necessarily a detailed route.

This chapter describes the contents of your desktop and how to use them. Then, when you are comfortable with the default appearance and behavior of your Linux, you find out how to change everything.





Logging In

To access your desktop, you must log in using a Linux account. When you power on your computer, the process goes as follows:

1. The computer boots up.

```
Booting 'Fedora Core (2.6.5-1.358)'

root (hd0,0)
Filesystem type is ext2fs, partition type 0x83
kernel /vmlinuz-2.6.5-1.358 ro root=LABEL=/ rhgb quiet
    [Linux-bzImage, setup=0x1400, size=0x1235b7]
initrd /initrd-2.6.5-1.358.img
    [Linux-initrd @ 0xfe9b000, 0x449a8 bytes]

Uncompressing Linux... Ok, booting the kernel.
PCI: Cannot allocate resource region 4 of device 0000:00:07.1
audit(1093546896.190:8): initialized
```

2. The computer prompts you to log in.
3. You log in to an account, typing your password.
4. The desktop displays.

After the computer boots (Step 1), you see a login screen. The login screens for Fedora Core, Mandrake, and SuSE are shown in Figure 6-1.

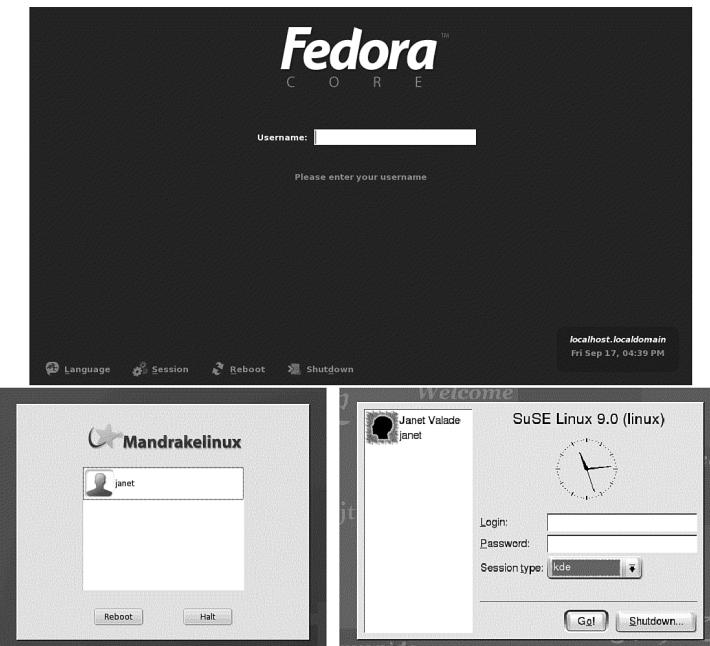
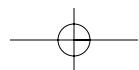
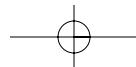


FIGURE 6-1 Login screens.





Notice that Mandrake and SuSE give you a choice of accounts. In this case, only one account (janet) is available. If more accounts were installed, they would also be on the login screen. Accounts are discussed in Chapter 8.

Select an account by clicking it. In SuSE, the account name appears in the Login field. Type the password in the Password field and click Go! to log in. In Mandrake, a second screen appears, as shown in Figure 6-2.

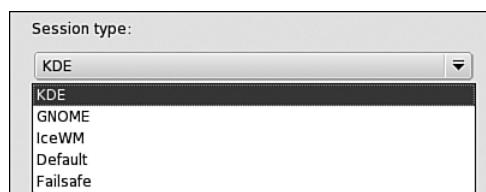


FIGURE 6-2 Second login screen for Mandrake.

Type in the password and click Login to log in.

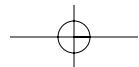
Fedora requires you to type the name of the account. When you type the account name and press <Enter>, the username field changes to the password field, asking for the password. Type the password and press <Enter> to log in.

Many Linux distributions allow you to select which desktop to use when you log in. Of course, you can only select among the desktops that you installed. KDE and GNOME are discussed in this book, but other desktops are available and were possibly installed by default during installation. For instance, notice in Figure 6-2 that the Mandrake login screen has a button to select Session type. If you click the button, a drop-down list appears, shown on the right. The default desktop is KDE, but you can change it. GNOME is shown in the list because it was specifically added during the installation, as shown in Chapter 4. Failsafe starts Linux without a desktop, just with the CLI, discussed in Chapter 7.



Notice that all three login screens in Figure 6-1 provide a button (Shutdown, Halt) that allows you to stop the login if you want.





Your First Login

The first time you log in to your system after installation, Linux may require some post-installation setup. For example, Fedora creates a user account when you first log in to your new system. Mandrake and SuSE create user accounts during installation, but Fedora only creates a root account, waiting until now to create a user account.

The first time you log in to Mandrake, it runs a procedure called Mandrakefirsttime Wizard. The first screen introduces the wizard, stating that it will help you:

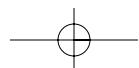
- Configure the basic setup of your desktop in a very few steps.
- Register your product in order to easily open a Mandrakeclub account and to benefit rapidly from all its products and services.

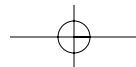
The next screen in the wizard displays a *Choose Desktop* button. When you click it, a list of possible desktops drops down. KDE is the default, but you can select another. After you select a desktop, a screen allows you to select one of several themes. A theme is a unified set of colors and images that integrate all parts of the desktop into a single look and feel, including the window borders, fonts, icons, etc. A demo screen shows the appearance of the default Galaxy 2 theme. If you check a different theme, the appearance of the demo screen will change, showing the new theme. When the demo shows the appearance you like best, click *Next*.

The Mandrakefirsttime Wizard also helps you set up and configure a Mandrakeclub account. Mandrakeclub offers software downloads, forums, special discounts, and other benefits for a small monthly fee. The first month is free so you can try it out.

When the wizard finishes, the desktop displays with a welcoming message. Click *Close* to close the welcome message without closing the desktop. Uncheck “Open this window on startup” at the bottom of the welcome message when you no longer want to see this screen every time your computer starts.

During your first login, SuSE also displays a welcome message with links to the SuSE home page.





Anatomy of a Desktop

Most desktops have common basic components, as shown in Figure 6-3. This desktop should look fairly familiar to Windows users.

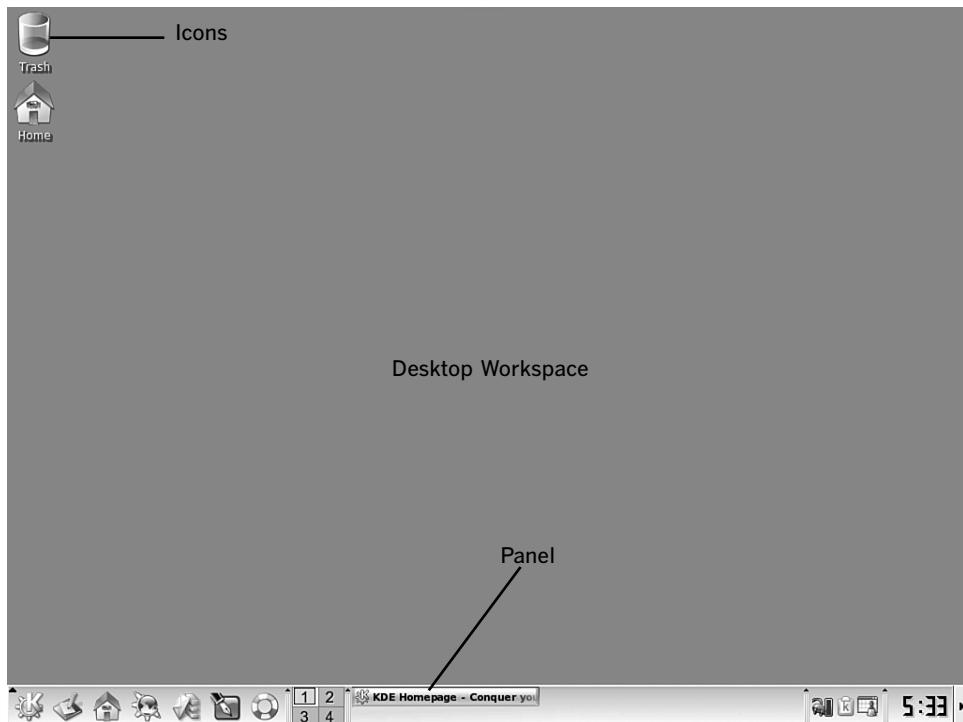
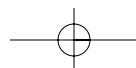


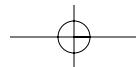
FIGURE 6-3 Desktop.

The desktop workspace contains icons, in this case two icons, that perform actions when clicked, just as Windows desktop icons do. You can customize the desktop—adding, removing, and rearranging icons. Handling icons is discussed later in this chapter.

The panel (also sometimes called kicker) is the bar across the bottom of your desktop. The panel can be moved to the left, right, or top. You can have more than one panel.

In Figure 6-3, the left side of the panel contains several icons. You can customize these icons—adding and removing them from the panel. To the right of the icons is a four-button pager—buttons that you can click to open alternative virtual desktops, explained later in this chapter. To the right of the pager is a section, called the taskbar, where application buttons appear when an application is running. To the right of the taskbar are icons for useful system tools. A clock displays on the far right of the panel. You can reorganize the panel—adding, removing, moving the objects on it.





KDE and GNOME Desktops

The two most popular desktops, KDE and GNOME, are discussed in this book. KDE and GNOME look very similar. Figure 6-4 shows the KDE and GNOME desktops provided by Fedora.

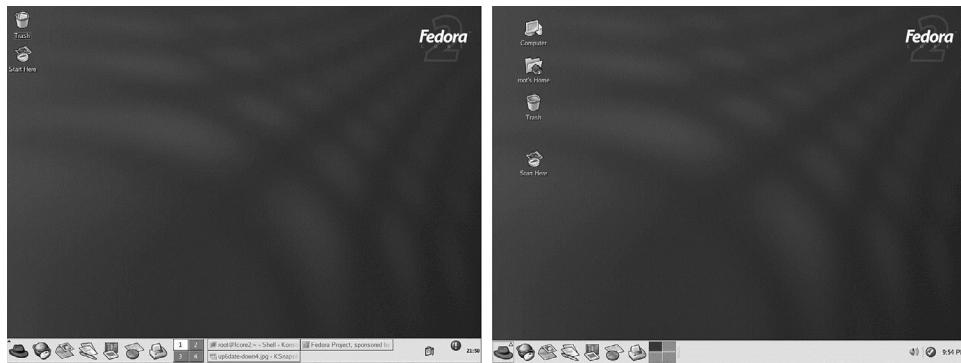


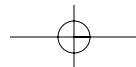
FIGURE 6-4 KDE and GNOME desktops for Fedora.

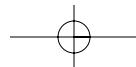
KDE and GNOME for Fedora are very similar. Both have “trash” and “home” icons, but GNOME has two additional icons. The panel has the same icons. One reason both look so similar is that both desktops are very customizable. Thus, the Fedora desktops are both configured in a manner deemed useful by the Fedora developers. Desktops configured for different distributions can be customized differently, but still are very similar. KDE desktops distributed with Fedora and Mandrake are shown in Figure 6-5.



FIGURE 6-5 KDE desktops for Fedora and Mandrake.

The two KDE desktops have different icons, with Mandrake providing several more. The panel is different. For instance, the leftmost panel icon for Fedora is a red fedora. Yet, the basic anatomy is the same.





The Panel

The panels for the desktops are shown in Figure 6-6. The KDE panel is the top panel; the GNOME panel is the bottom panel.

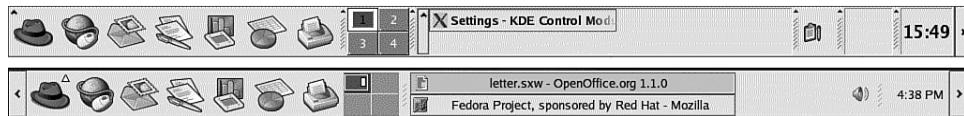


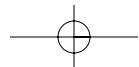
FIGURE 6-6 KDE and GNOME panels for Fedora.

The panels have the same five components, from left to right:

- **Icon bar:** The section on the left that contains application icons. It's also called the application launcher. Clicking an icon starts an application. Moving the mouse pointer over an icon displays the application name in a tool tip.
- **Pager:** The four-paned window that switches between virtual desktops.
- **Taskbar:** A section that contains items for any open applications. The KDE panel shows one application open—X Settings. The GNOME panel shows two open applications—OpenOffice and the Mozilla browser. Clicking an application on the panel opens it if it is minimized and brings it to the top of the open applications on the desktop.
- **System tray:** The section on the right that contains icons for useful system applications that you access directly on the panel, rather than open in a window. The clock is farthest on the right. If you move the mouse pointer over the clock, the date displays in a tool tip. If you click the clock, a one-month calendar displays. You can move forward or backward through the calendar in monthly or yearly jumps. If you right-click on the clock, a menu displays that allows you to perform tasks, such as adjusting the date and time and changing the way the time displays. This type of application is called an applet.
- **Panel-hiding button:** The little arrow on the end(s) of the panel. Clicking the arrow causes the panel to slide off the desktop, leaving only a little arrow that you can click to bring the panel back onto the desktop.

Notice that the leftmost icon is the red fedora that opens the main menu, discussed earlier in this chapter.





Working on the Desktop

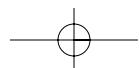
The desktop is a workspace with some tools sitting on it. When you want to perform a task, you start an application that opens in a window on the desktop. You can open many windows at once, each performing different tasks, using the same or different applications.

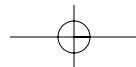
Your desktop offers many features to assist you. Many of the following features will be familiar to Windows users:

- **Icons:** You can click icons on the desktop or panel to start applications or go to locations. In most distributions, the desktop icons activate with a double-click and panel icons activate with a single-click. However, this is configurable and some distributions start desktop icons with a single-click. You can add, remove, or reorganize icons on the desktop or panel, discussed later in this chapter.
- **Menus:** Linux provides a main menu and many component-specific menus. You can add, remove, or edit menu items. When you install a new application, a menu item is usually added to the main menu.
 - **Main menu:** Contains available applications and utilities as main menu items or items on submenus, similar to the start menu on Windows. The main menu is opened by clicking an icon on the panel, usually the leftmost icon. The main menu icon is a large K for KDE and a foot for GNOME. However, distributions often use their own logo as the main menu icon, such as the red hat logo on the Fedora panel and the green dragon head on the SuSE panel.
 - **Component-specific menu:** Menus specific to a component open when you right-click the component. If you right-click on the desktop background, you see one menu; if you right-click on the panel, you see a different menu. If you right-click an icon, you see another menu still. And if you right-click inside an open window, you see still another menu. The menus contain selections that are specific to the object.

In many menus, one letter is underlined in the menu selection. You can type the letter, rather than highlight and click, to select the menu item. Some menus show shortcuts for their actions, such as <Alt+F9>. This means you can press <Alt+F9> without opening the menu and the action is performed.

- **Tool tips:** Information that displays when you move the mouse pointer over an object and hold it a for a short time, called hovering. You can turn tool tips on and off.





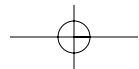
- **Windows manipulation:** Windows can be moved, minimized, maximized, resized, moved out of the way, or closed.
 - **Move:** Click the top bar of the window and drag the window around the desktop using the mouse. Or click the button in the upper-left corner and select move.
 - **Resize:** Drag the sides or the corners of the window using the mouse. To maximize the window to full-screen size, click the middle button in the upper-right corner.
 - **Move out of the way:** Double-click the title bar of the window. The window rolls up like a window shade. To unroll it, double-click the rolled up window. Click the - button in the upper-right corner to minimize the window. If your panel has the Show desktop icon, click it to minimize all open windows at once. If the Show desktop icon isn't present, you can add it to the panel, as described later in this chapter.
 - **Close:** Click the x button in the upper-right corner or select close from the upper-left drop-down menu.
- **Look and feel:** The look and feel of the Linux desktop is very configurable. For instance, the desktop background displays a default appearance provided by the distribution. The background for Fedora, Mandrake, and SuSE is blue. Fedora and Mandrake include logos on the background. However, you can change this background to any color, pattern, design, or picture that you want.

You can change the appearance of all elements of the desktop, such as the window borders and title bar and the panel. Linux users often configure their desktop with a theme—a unified set of colors and images, even sounds, that integrate all parts of the desktop into a single look and feel. Some themes are included with your distribution that you can use. Others are available for download from the Web. Some people develop their own theme.

Some behavior of desktop components can also be changed. For instance, icons can be configured to activate with a single-click or a double-click. Windows can become active when clicked or when the mouse pointer passes over them. Tool tips—information that displays when the mouse pointer passes over a component—can be turned on or off.

Remember that almost everything is configurable. This section describes the usual behavior of desktop components. However, most appearance and behavior is configurable. Any distribution might decide to configure their desktop differently. A previous user of your system might have changed some features. If the behavior of your system is different from the description in this chapter, you can change it to your preferred appearance or behavior. Configuring Linux is described later in this chapter.





Configuring the Desktop

You can change many settings for both the desktop and the panel. In fact, many people go to great lengths to express their creativity with their desktops. Some creative desktops can be seen at www.lynucs.org/index.php?p=featured.

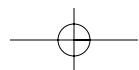
Almost everything about your desktop is configurable. Some changes are made in desktop and panel menus and some on the main menu. In some cases, a setting can be changed by more than one method. In general, KDE and GNOME provide different, although often similar, procedures for configuring your desktop.

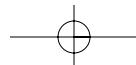
Specific instructions for the most frequently changed settings are provided in this chapter. However, space is not available to provide instructions for all possible desktop configurations. If you want to make a change to your desktop and don't find instructions in this book, it doesn't mean the change isn't possible. It probably is.

In KDE, many changes can be made in the KDE Control Center, accessed from the main menu, either directly or through the Preferences submenu. When you start the KDE Control Center, you see a screen similar to the screen shown in Figure 6-7.



FIGURE 6-7 KDE Control Center.





Most of the configuration for your desktop appearance and behavior is found by clicking Look and Feel in the left pane above.

GNOME doesn't have a single application like the KDE Control Center. Instead, it provides separate menu items. The menu items are usually in a single menu category, such as Preferences in Fedora or System Configuration in Mandrake. The GNOME configuration menu items for SuSE are shown in Figure 6-8.



FIGURE 6-8 GNOME desktop preferences.

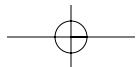
In this figure, the Desktop Preferences main menu item displays the submenu of configuration tools.

The remainder of this chapter describes how to change some settings for your desktop. The following settings are discussed:

- **Background:** Desktop background and background of the panel. Change the color or use a picture as a background.
- **Icons:** Add or remove desktop icons and panel icons.
- **FONTS:** Change the font style and size.
- **Screen saver:** Set the screen saver and the time delay.
- **Panel:** Change length, width, and location. Reorganize objects on the panel.

Both KDE and GNOME desktop configuration are covered.





Changing the KDE Background

You can change the background of the desktop and the panel. The backgrounds can be a solid color, a pattern, or a picture stored in a file. Files are discussed in Chapter 9, graphics in Chapter 13.

To change the desktop background, right-click the desktop and select **Configure desktop**. A screen displays with choices in the left panel. Click **Background**. Figure 6-9 shows the configuration window that displays.

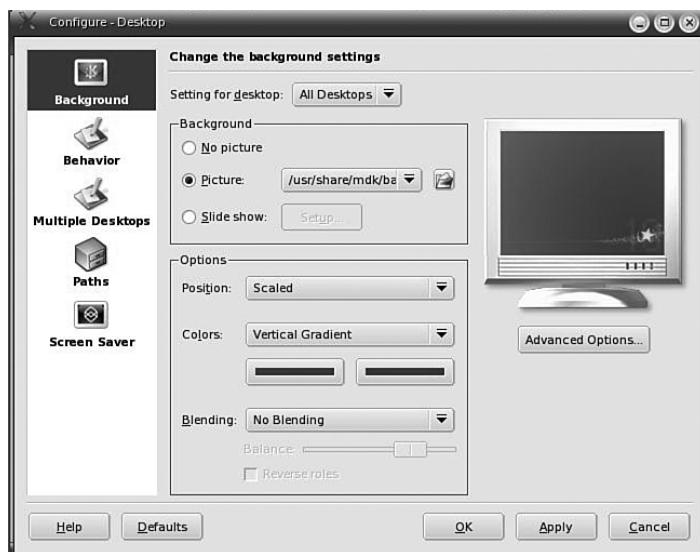
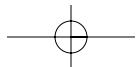


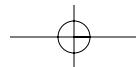
FIGURE 6-9 Background configuration window.

When you make changes, the picture of a screen shows what your selection will look like. The **Apply** button in the lower-right corner changes your desktop to its new appearance before you leave the configuration window, so you can try different looks.

To use a picture for your background, check **Picture**, as shown in Figure 6-9. Use the drop-down list to select from a list of available pictures. Or use the **Browse** button to the right of the drop-down list to navigate to a picture file.

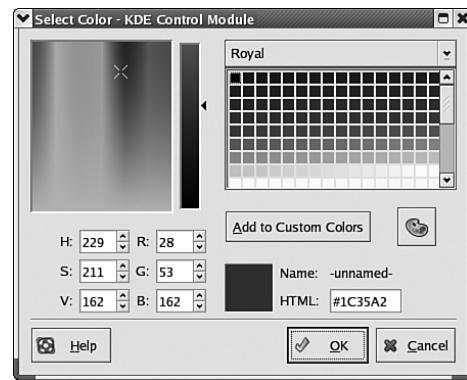
To use colors, rather than a picture, for the background, check **No picture**. If you click the **Colors** button, a drop-down list of color options appears, such as horizontal gradient. If you click the **Pattern** option, a **Setup** button appears that, when clicked, displays a screen with a list of patterns you can select. The screen includes an **Add** button that lets you enter a path to a graphics file containing a pattern.





You can select one or two colors for your background. If you select two different colors, they serve as the endpoints for a vertical or horizontal background gradient.

To select a color, double-click a color button. In the color selection screen, shown on the right, you can select a color by clicking it or by setting the values specifically, such as setting the numbers for R, G, and B. The color you have selected displays in the lower box, so you can see when you get a color you like.



To change the panel background, right-click the panel (an empty space on the panel, not a button) and select **Configure Panel**. Click **Appearance** in the list of icons in the left pane. If the **Appearance** icon doesn't appear in the list, an **Appearance** tab should be available if you click **Layout**. A screen similar to Figure 6-10 displays.

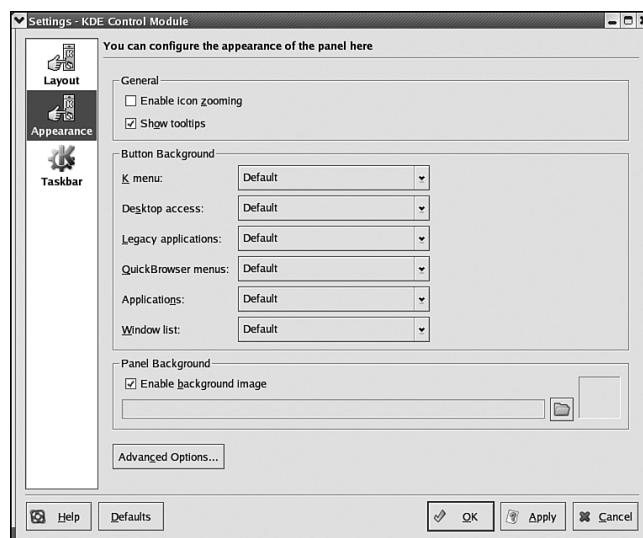
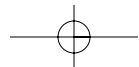


FIGURE 6-10 Panel background window.

You can configure the background of each component separately, such as the main menu (K menu) or the application icons, by choosing a background from the drop-down list for the specific item.

You can add a background to the entire panel by checking “Enable background image.” You can type a path to the picture or use the folder button on the right to browse to the picture file. Any graphic file can provide the background for your panel. Files are discussed in Chapter 9. Graphics are discussed in Chapter 13.





Changing the GNOME Background

You can change the background of the desktop and the panel. The backgrounds can be a color or a picture stored in a file. Chapter 9 discusses files, Chapter 13 graphics.

The desktop background can be set to any solid color or color style, such as a vertical or horizontal gradient, or to use a picture as a background. To change the background, right-click the desktop and select `Change desktop background`. The screen in Figure 6-11 displays, showing two background choices—no wallpaper and a picture.

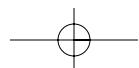


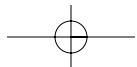
FIGURE 6-11 Background configuration screen.

In the figure, a picture in a file named `default.png` is selected for the desktop background. To use a different picture for your background, you need to add it to the selections shown on the screen. Some pictures are usually available for you to choose or you can add your own pictures.

To add a picture, click `Add wallpaper`, which displays a file selection window similar to file selection screens in Windows (Windows Explorer)—directories highlighted in the left pane and files listed in the right pane. The files listed contain any graphic files made available in the Linux distribution. You can select one of these files or use your own file. To use a file of your own, add it to the directory shown or navigate to a file in a different location. Saving and finding files are discussed in Chapter 9.

When the file you want is selected, click `OK` to return to the main background configuration screen. The picture you selected is added to the list of background choices in the window.





For a color background, highlight No Wallpaper in the window, which shows the current color—blue. Use the drop-down list and the color button in the Desktop Colors section to set the color background.

The drop-down list offers three background styles: solid color, vertical gradient, and horizontal gradient. Clicking the color button displays the color selection screen in Figure 6-12.

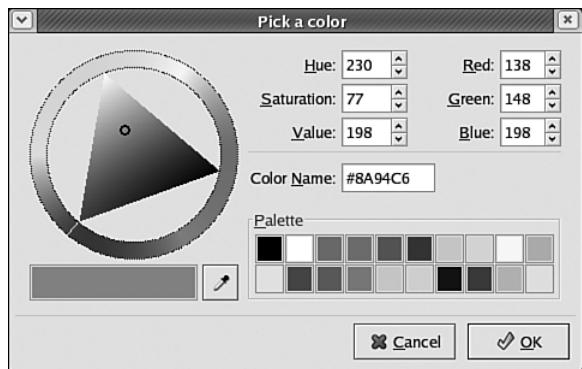


FIGURE 6-12 Color selection screen for GNOME.

To select a color, click the color you want. Or type in the color values, such as a number for Red, Green, and Blue. The lower-left color bar previews the color currently selected. When you are satisfied with the color selected, click OK to return to the main background configuration window.

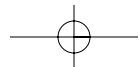
When you are satisfied with your background selections, click Close in the main configuration window.

To change the panel background, click the panel and select Properties. In the Properties window, click the Background tab to display the three background choices.

- **None:** The panel uses the same color as other elements of the desktop. This is the default.
- **Solid Color:** Sets the panel to a solid color. Click the color bar to select a color. Use the slider to make the panel more or less transparent.
- **Background Image:** Uses a picture for the background of the panel. The text box requires the path to the file that contains the picture to use for the background. Type the path or use the Browse button to navigate to the file.

When you are satisfied with the settings, click Close.





Setting Fonts

You can change the size and style of the fonts used on your desktop. In the main menu, select KDE Control Center. In the index, click LookNFeel->Font. The window in Figure 6-13 opens. Click Choose to select the font size and style.

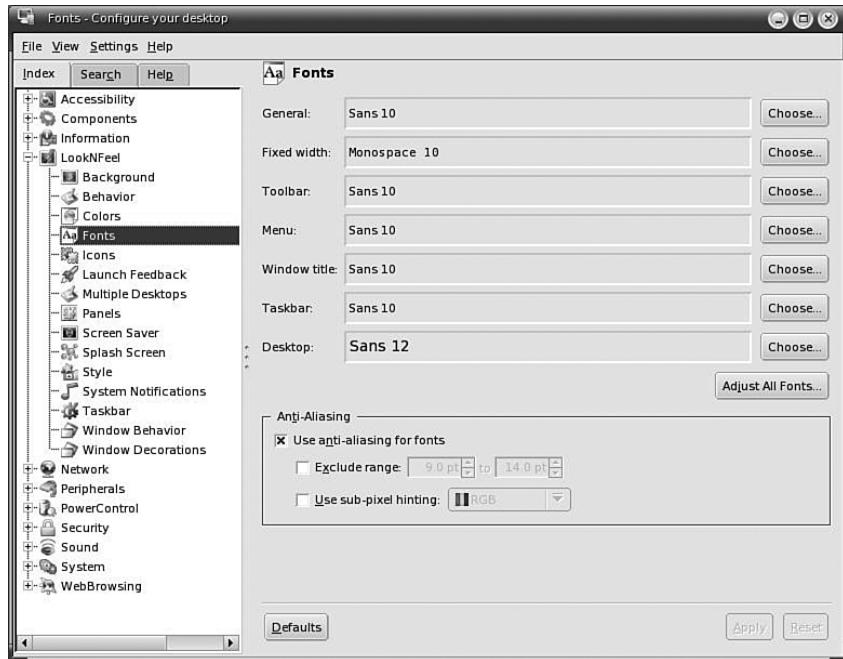
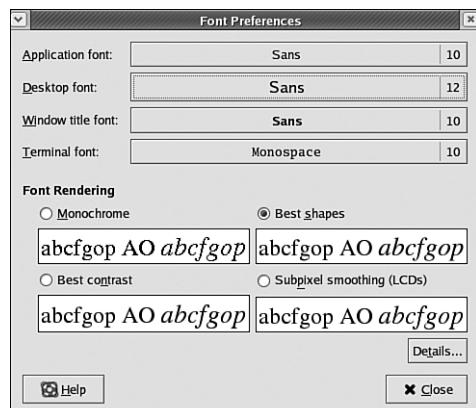
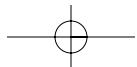


FIGURE 6-13 Font selection screen.

In GNOME, click the main menu icon. Select Preferences->Font. The screen on the right opens, showing the current fonts. To change one of the fonts, such as the Desktop font, click the name of the font. A screen will display that allows you to select the font, size, and style, such as bold or italic. When you select font settings in this screen, a preview of the font is shown, so you can see what your selections look like before pressing OK to save them.

When you are satisfied with your settings, click Close.





Setting the Screen Saver

Linux includes a screen saver—a screen that replaces your work screen when you don't type anything or move the mouse for a period of time. Pressing a key or moving a mouse returns your work screen. You can set the look of the screen saver and the length of no-activity time that must occur before the screen saver starts running.

On KDE, right-click the desktop and select **Configure Desktop**, which displays a screen with a list of icons in the left panel. Click **Screen Saver**, which displays the screen shown in Figure 6-14.

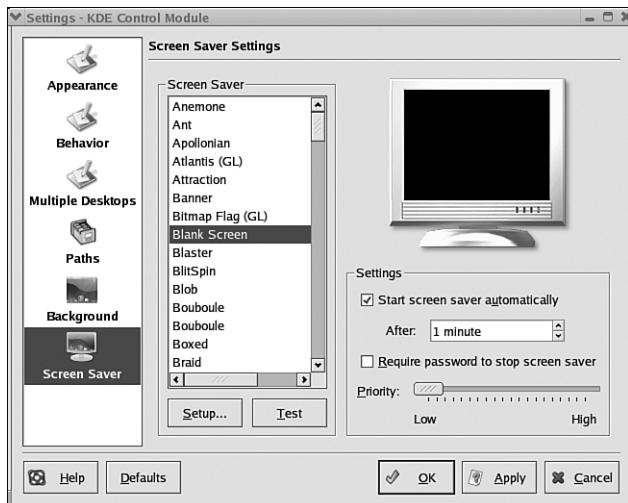


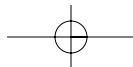
FIGURE 6-14 Screen saver selection.

Select a screen saver from the list, which previews on the image of a computer terminal. Some screen savers can be changed, such as changing the color of “Blank Screen.” To configure the specific screen saver you have selected, click **Setup**. Click **Test** to test the screen saver before clicking **OK** to save the settings.

Using a screen saver is optional. On the right, the **Settings** panel allows you to check or uncheck “Start screen saver automatically.” You can change the amount of time before the screen saver starts running.

For GNOME, click the main menu icon. Select **Preferences**. Select **Screen Saver** from the submenu. A similar screen displays that allows you to select a screen saver or to select several screen savers that run consecutively. You can select the amount of time before the screen saver starts and, if more than one is chosen, select the amount of time each is run before the next is started.





Organizing the Desktop

Your desktop can be organized to suit your individual work style. Quick access to applications is provided through icons on the desktop. Application icons on the panel provide access when the desktop is covered by open windows. Many useful utilities can reside on the panel, such as the clock and an icon that minimizes all windows at once. Icons for locations, such as Home, or files, such as todo, are also handy.

You can drag applications and locations onto the desktop or panel. Find the application and highlight it on the menu. Or open the directory. Then use the mouse to drag the application or directory to the desired location.

In addition, a menu of items specifically for use on the panel is available. Right-click directly on the panel and select Add or Add to panel to see items such as Accessories or Amusements. Highlight the desired item on the menu or submenu and drag it onto the panel.

You can drag the icons on your desktop wherever you want them. You can also arrange all icons at once from the desktop menu. In GNOME, right-click the desktop and select Clean Up by Name to arrange the icons in alphabetic order starting from the upper-left corner. From the KDE desktop menu, select Icons to line them up vertically or horizontally or to sort them by name, size, or type.

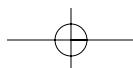
To move objects on the panel, right-click the icon and select Move. Drag the object to its new panel location using the mouse. On the KDE panel, some objects, such as the taskbar and the pager, are moved using menus specific to the object.

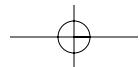


FIGURE 6-15 Section of KDE panel.

If you click the small arrow to the left of the taskbar, a menu specific to the entire taskbar opens with items that you can select, including Move Taskbar.

In Figure 6-15, a side pointing arrow is located on the end of the panel—the Panel-hiding button. Clicking the button hides the menu; clicking again brings it back. This button is not always included on the panel. To add the Panel-hiding button in KDE, right-click the panel and select Configure Panel. Click the Hiding tab. Check “Show left panel-hiding button” and/or “Show right panel-hiding button.” To add the buttons in GNOME, right-click the panel and select Properties. Check “Show hide buttons” and “Arrows on hide buttons.”





Changing the Panel Location and Size

The size and location of the panel can be changed. In KDE, right-click the panel and select Configure Panel, which displays the screen in Figure 6-16.

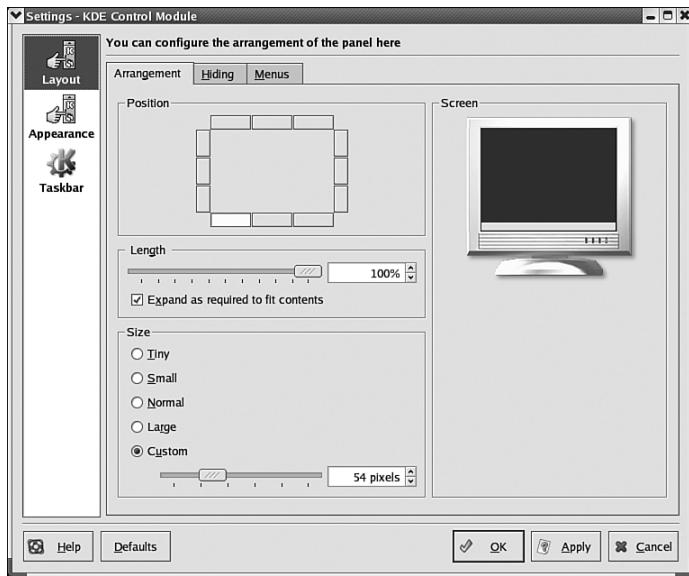
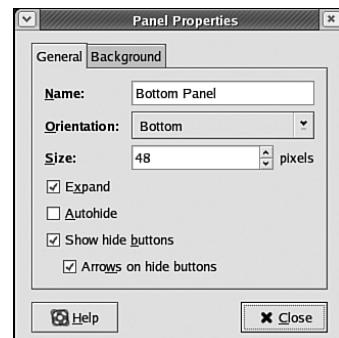


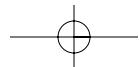
FIGURE 6-16 Panel configuration screen for KDE.

The computer terminal in the Screen section previews the current settings. Any setting change is shown immediately in the preview screen. The panel in this figure is shown across the entire bottom. In the Position section, the lower-left square is selected. Click a different square to move the panel. Move the slider to change the length of the panel. The current setting for Size is a Custom size of 54 pixels. The size refers to the height or width of the panel. Use the slider to change the custom size or check a different size (e.g., Small or Tiny). Click OK to keep the new settings.

For GNOME, right-click the panel and select Properties. The screen shown on the right displays. The Orientation button allows you to select Top, Bottom, Left, or Right. You can select or type the number of pixels for the size.

Click Close when you are satisfied with the settings.





Configuring Multiple Virtual Desktops

Not only does Linux allow you to configure almost everything about your desktop, it also allows you to have multiple desktops, each configured differently. You can have one desktop that you use for your financial work and another configured for use on your art projects. The desktops can have different applications available, with any other configuration changes that are appropriate for the desktop functionality.

Multiple desktops are also called virtual desktops. The section of the panel related to virtual desktops is shown in Figure 6-17.



FIGURE 6-17 Section of KDE panel.

The object with four squares, called the pager, represents the virtual windows available. Square 1, representing desktop 1, is white, meaning that desktop 1 is currently in use. Notice that desktop 2 and desktop 4 show open applications, whereas desktop 1 and desktop 3 do not. The taskbar shows two open applications, which represents the applications on all windows. Click a numbered square to go to a specific desktop. Click an application button on the taskbar to go to the application wherever it's open. If it's open on a different desktop, the desktop opens.

Applications can be moved easily from one desktop to another. When you click the upper-left corner arrow in an open application, you see a menu that includes the items shown in Figure 6-18.

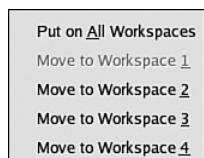
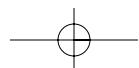
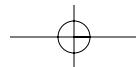


FIGURE 6-18 Section of KDE panel.

Select the appropriate item to move the application from desktop 1 to another desktop or all desktops.





Although the pager shows four desktops, you can actually have more if you need them. To set up more desktops, right-click on the desktop and select *Configure Desktop*. Select *Multiple Windows* from the left pane. The window in Figure 6-19 opens.

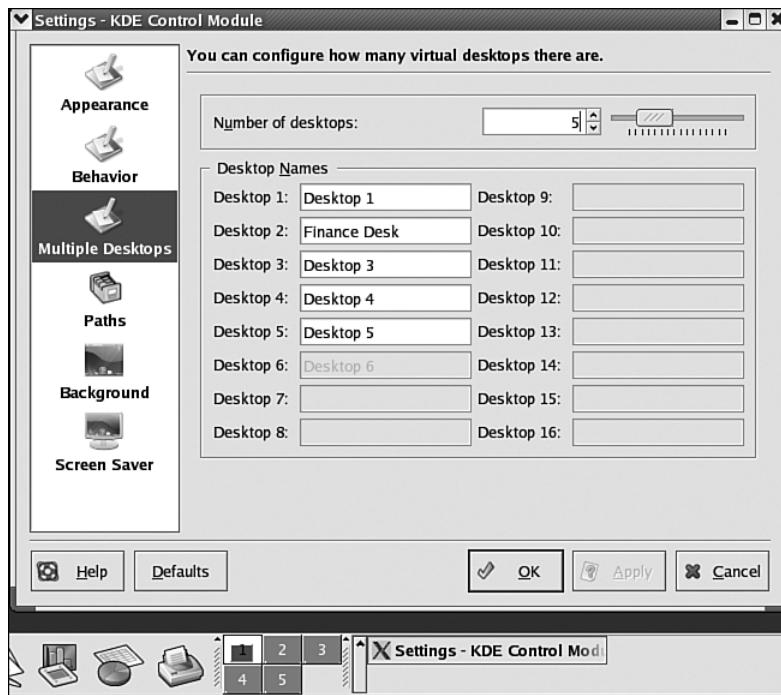
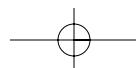
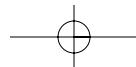


FIGURE 6-19 Section of KDE panel.

In this figure, five desktops are available. Notice that the pager shows five desktop squares—window 1 active with an application open.

Use the *Number of desktops* field at the top of the screen to change the number of desktops available. You can type a name for a desktop if you want, to help organize your desktops. The name will display in a tool tip when you move the mouse pointer over the pager square.





Logging Out

Powering off your machine without logging out and shutting down properly can cause problems. Linux may be in the middle of some background activities necessary to run your computer and may not be able to finish its tasks.

To log out, select Log Out on the main menu or on the desktop menu displayed when you right-click on the desktop. In most cases, a window with at least three choices displays, similar to the SuSE window shown in Figure 6-20.

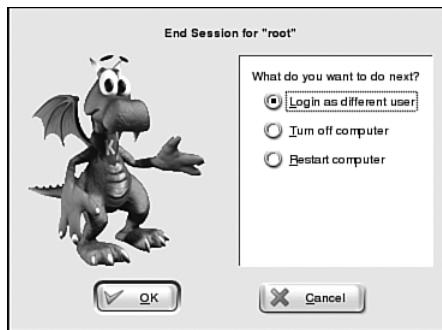
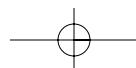


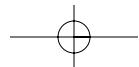
FIGURE 6-20 SuSE logout window.

One choice is usually Log Out, or in this case Login as different user. Selecting this choice logs out this session, but displays a login screen so you can log in as a different user (or with a different desktop). Linux is not shut down. A second choice restarts (reboots) the computer. Linux is shut down but restarts itself without your assistance.

A third choice is Shut Down, or Turn off computer. This closes down everything. The computer may power itself off or display a message that it is ready to be powered off.

Power down is not necessary. Linux can run indefinitely without problems. It saves you the trouble of the shutdown/boot process between uses. Saves time and some say it is better for the computer. If you are reluctant to leave the computer on because it's possible for someone else to access it, you can lock the screen so that no one can use it without the password. To lock the screen, select Lock screen from the main menu. If anyone tries to use the computer with a locked screen, a password prompt displays and the computer can't be used until the password is entered.





Summary

Linux provides two basic types of interface for you to use when working with your computer: GUI (graphical user interface) and CLI (command-line interface). This chapter describes how to use the GUI. The following information is available in this chapter:

- How to log in
- What is on your desktop
- The similarities and differences between the two major desktops—KDE and GNOME
- The organization and components of the panel at the bottom of your desktop
- How to use your desktop features
- How to configure your desktop
- How to log out

This chapter describes how to work on your desktop. The next chapter (Chapter 7) explains how to work at the CLI.



