Customising Ubuntu

Desktop wallpaper

Right-click desktop and choose 'Change Desktop Background' or run the System Settings app and choose 'Appearance'. Choose any pre-set, or click the $\boxed{+}$ button to select any picture on your computer.

The Launcher

Remove any buttons you don't need: Right-click and choose 'Unlock from Launcher'

Re-order buttons as required: Press an hold briefly, then drag to new position.

Add new buttons: Start the program using the Dash. Once running, find its button in the launcher and right-click and choose 'Lock to Launcher'. Reposition button as required.

Customise launch right-click options as required – see below

File manager

Change the defaults for how a folder is displayed: Edit → Preferences [Views tab]

Add a Delete option to context menu: Edit → Preferences [Behaviour tab]

Add Bookmarks for folders you frequently use (which can include connections to other computers)

Changing file associations

In the file manager, double-clicking a file opens it with the default application associated with the type of file. You can change this to a different application.

In the file manager, right-click on a file of the type you want to alter and choose 'Properties'.

On the 'Open With' tab, choose the file you would prefer to be the default application to work with these types of file, and then click 'Set as Default'.

Multiple Workspaces (virtual desktops)

Run the System Settings app and choose 'Appearance' and tick 'Enable Workspaces' on the Behaviour tab.

To change workspace, either press and hold $\boxed{Ctrl}$ + $\boxed{Alt}$ and use the arrow keys, or use the Workspace Switcher application.

To move the active window to a different workspace, either right-click the title bar and choose the destination, or use the Workspace Switcher application. (You can also hold down the keyboard combination $\boxed{Ctrl}$ + $\boxed{Alt}$ + $\boxed{Shift}$ and use the arrow keys.)

Scroll bar appearance

To save screen space, Ubuntu uses compact "overlay" scroll bars. You can switch to full size visible scroll bars by opening a terminal and typing a command.

For Ubuntu 12.04:

```
gsettings set org.gnome.desktop.interface ubuntu-overlay-scrollbars false
```

To revert to Ubuntu's default overlay scrollbars, open a terminal and type the command

```
gsettings reset org.gnome.desktop.interface ubuntu-overlay-scrollbars
```
For Ubuntu 12.10 and later
```
gsettings set com.canonical.desktop.interface scrollbar-mode normal
```
To revert to Ubuntu's default overlay scrollbars, open a terminal and type the command
```
gsettings reset com.canonical.desktop.interface scrollbar-mode
```
(For 12.04, applies only to applications launched after the change. For 12.10 and later, the change is immediate.)

Customising Launcher right-click options

For more experienced users.

The right-click menus are defined in special .desktop files in /usr/share/applications

To customise the options, start a text editor and open the required desktop file. Before continuing editing, save the file to your home directory in .local/share/applications/ Create the folder if it does not exist.

First, find the line in the [Desktop Entry] block that starts
```
Actions=
```
Add a name for your new action (which must be a single word followed by a semi-colon).

Now go to the bottom of the file and look for blocks titled Desktop Action …

For each new action you want to add, add a block of text using the format:
```
[Desktop Action ActionName]
Name=The title of the action to go in the menu
Exec=thefullcommand with parameters
OnlyShowIn=Unity;
```
Replace the text in italics with your own choice of action name (which must match what you entered in the Actions= line) title and command. Maintain a single blank line between this new block and other definition blocks. Save when finished.

Optionally, to check your typing, run the command
```
desktop-file-validate yourNewFile.desktop
```
If it does not report any errors, all is well.

Example – customising Firefox launch options (file: firefox.desktop)
```
Actions=NewWindow;NewPrivateWindow;BBCWebsite;

...

[Desktop Action BBCWebsite]
Name=Go to BBC website
Exec=firefox http://www.bbc.co.uk/
OnlyShowIn=Unity;
```

You will need to log out and log back in again to see the changes, as the Launcher configuration is read during startup.

See https://help.ubuntu.com/community/UnityLaunchersAndDesktopFiles for more details.