

Desktops vs. Servers

Let's discuss Ubuntu Desktop and Ubuntu Server.

Why are there two versions? What's the difference between a Desktop and a Server?

Time to learn.

The Desktop operating system is geared toward individuals, end users, or family members. It has a full Graphical User Interface or GUI, and all of the features you'd expect of a home or work computer. It has word processors, spread sheet software, web browsers, ways to play music and videos, and much more.

The Server operating system is for providing services to many people. It could be a web server that presents web pages to visitors. Or, a database server that stores bank account information, or a file server that stores your files in a networked, multi-user environment.

The hardware for a desktop is designed for a person to use. When we say Desktop Operating System here, we also include laptops.

You'll have a monitor with great resolution, a keyboard, a mouse or touchpad, speakers, a camera, a microphone, and all of the things you'd expect to find on a system you use every day.

There isn't, however, much redundancy, in the form of redundant hard drives or power supplies. If your hard drive dies on your laptop or desktop, it could be catastrophic, unless you regularly back up to the cloud or an external drive.

Servers don't provide any bells and whistles you'd be interested in as an end user. They do, however, have redundancy built in. You can get Servers with multiple hard drives configured so that, if one drive dies, the others will pick up the slack, until you can get a replacement installed. They also come with the option of multiple power supplies. If one power supply dies, it will run on the other, until it is replaced.

Desktops are designed for individuals, or at least one person at a time, and servers provide for the needs of many.

The primary difference between Ubuntu Desktop and Ubuntu Server, is that Desktop comes with the features end users want, and Server is stripped of those, but provides features Server Administrators want.

We'll be covering both, but understand that anything that can be done at the command line on a Server, can generally can also be done on a Desktop, once you reach the Terminal window.

The converse is not true. I don't know anyone who would recommend installing a GUI on an Ubuntu Server, unless you have a very good reason to do so.

Let's install some Operating Systems!