

# How to check the desktop environment you are using on Linux

As you probably know, Linux-based operating systems are heavily focused on the command line to perform operations. A minimal distro like Arch Linux will give you a dark terminal installation.

What makes Linux distributions interactive and user-friendly often goes unnoticed - it's the desktop environment.

Most beginner Linux users don't know about the desktop environment and don't even know which one they are using. This is how you can check which desktop environment is currently installed on your Linux system.

## Check current desktop environment on Linux

With so many desktop environments (DEs) available for free, it becomes really difficult for users to choose what suits their tastes. And not knowing which DE I'm currently using doesn't make the situation any better.

There are many ways to check which DE is installed on a Linux distribution, both by command line and graphically.

### Using environment variables

On Linux, environment variables store system-related data required by processes and applications to function properly. You can view the value of some specific environment variables that store information about the system's desktop environment.

Run the following command:

```
echo $XDG_CURRENT_DESKTOP
```

The output will show the name of the desktop environment.

```
(kali@kali)-[~]
└─$ echo $XDG_CURRENT_DESKTOP
XFCE

(kali@kali)-[~]
└─$
```

You can also look at the \*-session binary file commonly found in the /usr/bin directory to achieve the same result.

```
ls /usr/bin/*-session
```

A quick look at the displayed items will give you an idea of the system's desktop environment. As you can see, the file xfce4-session indicates that the system is using Xfce.

```
(kali@kali)-[~]
└─$ ls /usr/bin/*-session
/usr/bin/dbus-run-session /usr/bin/xfce4-session

(kali@kali)-[~]
└─$
```

## Using Neofetch

Neofetch is a command line tool that displays system related information in a human readable format. Neofetch is not part of standard Linux packages, so you will have to manually install it on your system.

Once installed, run the following command to launch Neofetch:

```
neofetch
```

Output:

```
(kali@kali)-[~]
└─$ neofetch

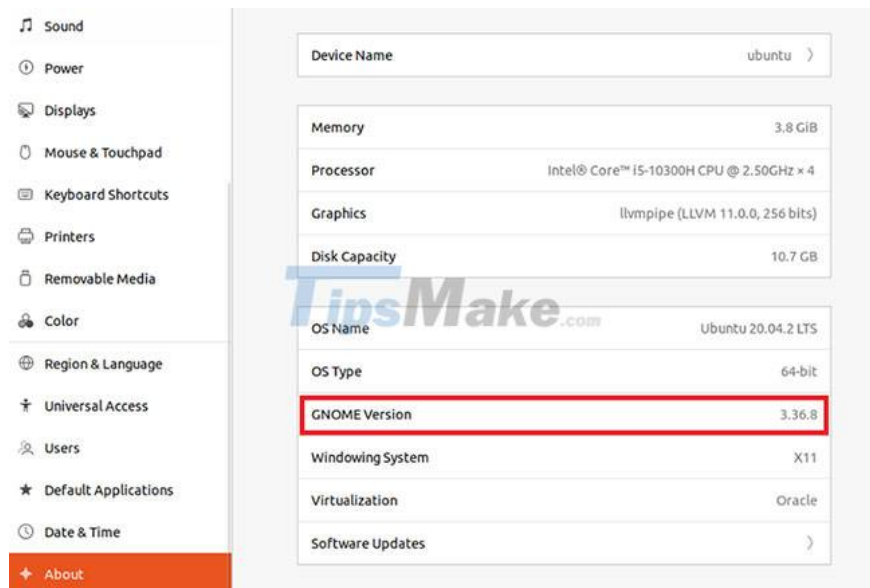
             kali@kali
-----
OS: Kali GNU/Linux Rolling x86_64
Host: VirtualBox 1.2
Kernel: 5.10.0-kali7-amd64
Uptime: 3 hours, 6 mins
Packages: 2434 (dpkg)
Shell: zsh 5.8
Resolution: 1920x950
DE: Xfce 4.16
WM: Xfwm4
WM Theme: Kali-Dark
Theme: Kali-Dark [GTK2/3]
Icons: Flat-Remix-Blue-Dark [GTK2/3]
Terminal: qterminal
Terminal Font: FiraCode 10
CPU: Intel i5-10300H (4) @ 2.496GHz
GPU: 00:02.0 VMware SVGA II Adapter
Memory: 533MiB / 3930MiB
```

In addition to the desktop environment, Xfce 4.16, in this case, Neofetch also displays the operating system name, kernel version, hostname, display resolution, shell name, etc.

## Using GUI

Not surprisingly, you can also check the name of the desktop environment using the desktop environment itself. You can go to your system settings and see the About section for detailed information about your operating system. While not all desktops have this option, most of them are available.

For example, on the GNOME desktop, you can quickly check system details using the About section in Settings.



More simply, you just need to Google which desktop environment comes with your Linux distribution by default. Because in most cases you will still have the default DE installed, unless of course you change it manually.

Above are some ways to find out the Linux desktop environment you are using on the system that Tipsmake wants to share with readers!

Hope you are successful.

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