

How to use multiple external monitors on Ubuntu

Like on any operating system, using a second screen on Linux can help you work more efficiently or immerse yourself deeper into the virtual world when gaming.

Adding a second monitor may sound complicated, but in reality, setting up multiple external monitors on Ubuntu is easier than you think.

Prerequisites: Select screen

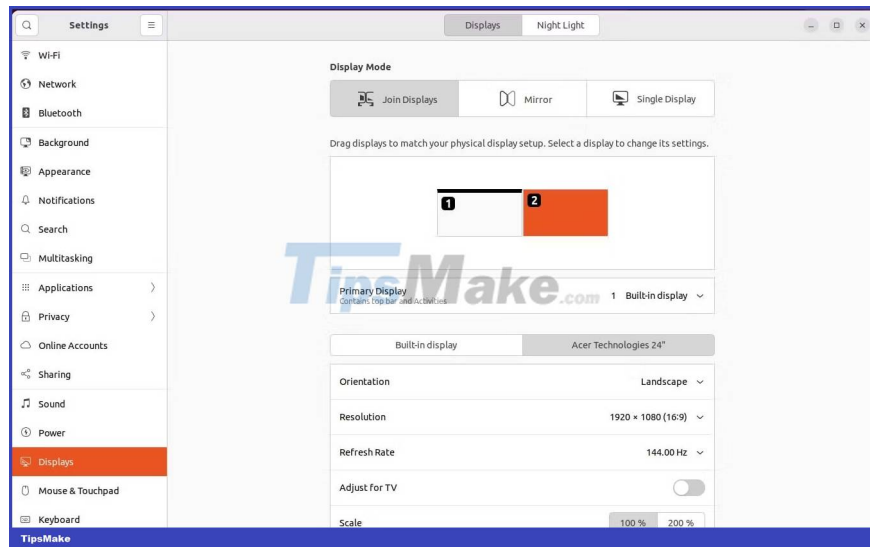
First, you need to have at least one external monitor available to use. If you have an older monitor that can only use VGA and your system only has an HDMI port, you will need an adapter to connect it.

If you're using an external display and want a better experience, try buying a second external display that's the same size as the other display. Ideally, consider buying the same model. That way, when you place them next to each other, the mouse won't "jump" as you move the cursor from one screen to the other, and the image quality and clarity will be much more consistent.

Configuring External Monitors on Ubuntu

Once the hardware is ready, turn on your system. Once the computer is started, connect your additional monitor(s). Ubuntu will attempt to automatically configure new monitors.

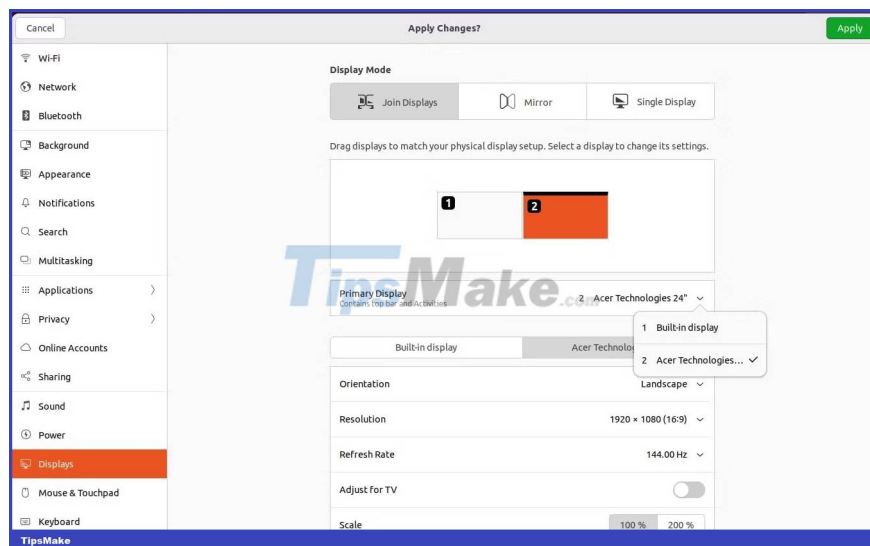
Even though Ubuntu can detect the best resolution, it probably won't be able to detect which monitor is on the left and which is on the right. To change this, you can go to **Settings** and click **Displays**. Or, you can right-click anywhere on the desktop and click **Display Settings** .



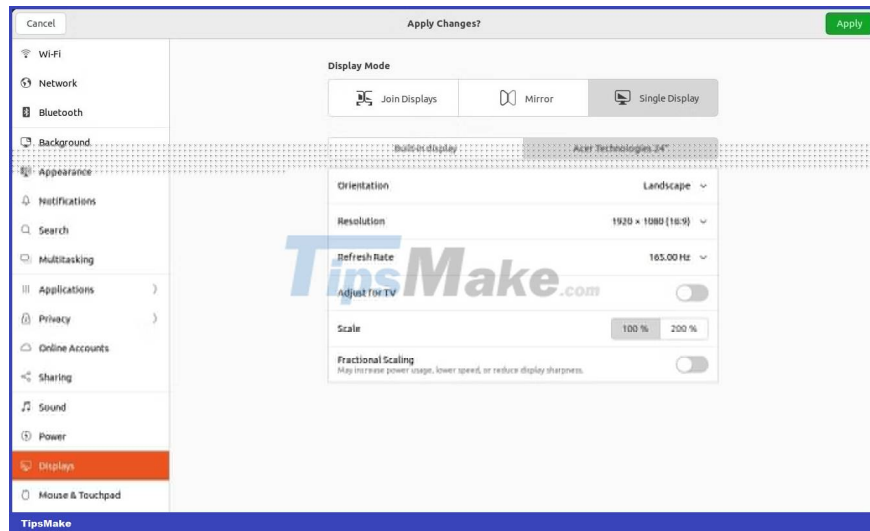
Here, you can modify your monitor's settings. The area in the top half of this window allows you to rearrange the desktops so Ubuntu knows which one is where. Clicking on each screen displays a small information box in the corner or bottom of the selected screen.

If you click on a monitor that Ubuntu thinks is on the right, but a small information box appears on the left monitor, then you need to drag it to the left of the unselected monitor.

Click **Apply** and now Ubuntu will know which monitor is located where. To select one of them as the primary display, click on **Primary Display** and from the drop-down menu, select the display you want to set as the primary display and click **Apply**.



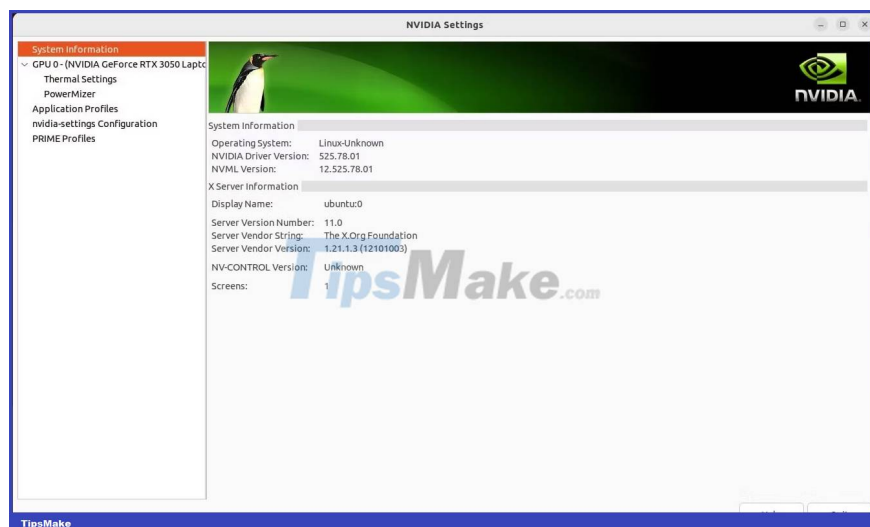
If you have such a setup, you can also set the monitors to use portrait orientation instead of the standard landscape orientation, and you can also place the monitors top and bottom instead of just left and right.



If you're using a laptop and want to use an additional display for the one that comes with the laptop, you can easily select the internal display and turn it off so the graphics chip doesn't have to waste resources while pushing pixels to your internal display.

Click **Single Display** and from the list of displays, select the display you want to run as the only display and press **Apply**.

Steps to follow if you have a proprietary driver



If you're not using Intel graphics or open source versions of NVIDIA or AMD graphics drivers, you may (or not if you're lucky!) have problems using Ubuntu's desktop management tools. If that's the case then you need to go into your proprietary graphics driver configuration utility and make the necessary changes there.

The concept is essentially the same, but the implementation changes depending on how the utility provides you with options. However, Ubuntu-specific options like launcher bar placement will still need to be done in Ubuntu's configuration tool. You will have to avoid tinkering with any other screen settings while using it.

Possible problems and how to solve them

In most cases, you don't need to deal with any issues configuring additional displays. The only problem you may encounter is the incomplete HiDPI support. This means that if you're using a system with HiDPI settings enabled (such as on a MacBook Pro Retina), any additional displays will have the same settings applied. This means everything on that screen will appear very large.

Other worst-case scenarios you might face are blurry text or blank screen. An easy fix for the blurry text problem on Linux is to tinker with the HiDPI scaling settings and find what works for you.

To deal with blank screens or refresh rate issues, deleting and reinstalling the graphics card driver will be the solution. If you encounter screen tearing, you can also fix it in many ways.

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