

## 8 Desktop Environment Configuration

### Overview

The interaction with GNOME almost entirely takes place in the top left corner. It serves as a start menu, application launcher and window picker at once. To get to it, either move your mouse to the very top left corner or press the Super key (“Windows key” or “Command Key”) on your keyboard.

In the center of the screen, all open windows are displayed and you can switch to them with a click. If you start typing, a search for the text you entered (e.g. Firefox) will be launched. Also, note the personalizable quick launch bar in the left. Finally, in the right edge, you find multiple workspaces. If you find that you have too many windows open, you can move them to a free workspace in that section. A new empty workspace is automatically created. When all windows are dragged out of a workspace, it is automatically deleted.

### Keyboard Shortcuts

Most keyboards shortcuts you know are also valid in GNOME. For example, use *Alt+F4* to close a window or *Alt+Tab* to switch between applications. Special in GNOME / Unity: *Alt+§* will change between windows of the same application. To quickly switch between workspaces, use *Ctrl+Alt+Up/Down*.

### Keyboard layout

If you don't have the correct keyboard layout set (which usually becomes evident when you press *z* and the laptop types *y* instead, or vice versa), you need to change it.

1. Open your launcher by clicking in the top left corner or pressing the *Windows* or *Command* key. Search for *Language*.
2. Click on *Region and Language* in the search results.
3. Under *input sources*, you can see the keyboard layout(s) you currently have in use. You can have more than one.
4. To add a layout, click on the plus icon, search for the correct layout (e.g. *German (Switzerland)*), select it and click on *Add*.
5. To remove a layout, select it and click on the minus icon.
6. If you have more than one active layout, you can switch between them by pressing *Super* (i.e. *Windows key* or *Command key*) and *Space*.

### Theming

If you dislike the rather bland default look, consider using a theme. There are plenty available on the internet, but one of the nicest is the Arc theme. On <https://github.com/horst3180/arc-theme> (under Installation) you will find instructions on how to install it.

There are also icon themes, that will exchange the icons to get a nice uniform look across the entire system. Nice examples are: Numix: <https://github.com/numixproject/numix-icon-theme> or Moka: <https://github.com/moka-project/moka-icon-theme>.

### Tweak Tool

Under GNOME and Unity there is a specialized application called the *GNOME tweak tool* that can be used to configure various settings, much like the Control Panel under Windows or the System Preferences under OS X. Unlike the GNOME / Unity settings center, the GNOME tweak tool focuses on slightly more specific settings that may be especially interesting for power users. The name of the tool is misleading as it can tweak both GNOME and Unity.

To use it, first install the package *gnome-tweak-tool* (refer to the previous pages to learn how to install software).

Once you have opened the program, you are greeted with various categories arranged in a list on the left-hand side of the application window. It's best to experiment with these settings yourself. To make it easier to find what you're looking for, here's a quick run-down of what can be configured in the different categories:

- **Appearance:** Choosing between themes and turning animations on/off.
- **Desktop:** Setting visibility of desktop icons and changing the background of both desktop and lock screen.
- **Extensions:** Turning on and off various GNOME Shell extensions that can be downloaded on the official GNOME website.

- **Fonts:** Setting font size and style.
- **Keyboard and Mouse:** In this category you can enable/disable rather specific mouse and keyboard settings such as keythemes. Note that more general settings for keyboard and mouse, like setting keyboard shortcuts or changing the mouse sensitivity, can be accessed in the GNOME settings center (for GNOME users) or in the System Settings (for Unity users).
- **Power:** Configure actions for when the power button is pressed or when the laptop lid is closed.
- **Startup Applications:** Add applications that are executed on login.
- **Top Bar:** Show/Hide elements on your top bar (the bar at the top of your screen that tells the time).
- **Typing:** This category contains a *lot* of settings for configuring what your mode keys (control, shift etc.) do. You can also add keyboard options for typing non-latin letters.
- **Windows:** For configuring the behaviour of window focus, and titlebar actions.
- **Workspaces:** Tuning workspace creation settings.