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New to Ubuntu - Firewalls, Backup, and the Command Line, EEK!

? Hi Mike: I picked up *Ubuntu User* magazine by sheer luck after installing Ubuntu after having used Windows all my life. When I finally walked out on Windows Vista, Ubuntu 9.10 shone a beautiful alternative path.

I love this system, but I need to make a couple of points – Karmic is being promoted as the “Human” system and the easiest Ubuntu to use. It may be the easiest so far; I have NO background in it and no programming knowledge. I also don’t know anyone at all who uses Ubuntu, so I have been by myself in set-

Q&A with Ubuntu Forums admin Mike Basinger

ANSWERBUNTU

ting up this system. I use the Ubuntu Forums a lot, but I think there are some serious issues that need to be addressed.

- The firewalls I have tried to install don’t make sense. Which rules do I apply? I don’t know what I’m doing, and my home network is inaccessible. How do I know which rule to put in?
- The System Restore also makes no sense to an inexperienced person. So I store the folders where? And they are encrypted? And, hey, where do I find the “sticky notes” I accidentally deleted yesterday? How do I restore (if I even configured it correctly? I did do a backup through Deja of the Home Folder, but damned if I know where to look).
- Command Terminal ... eek! I have had to resort to using it (well, “using it” doesn’t justify; it’s more like “nervously-pressing-each-button-expecting-the-thing-to-blow-up”). And why does it not copy and paste like everyone says it does?
- Installing software that isn’t available through Synaptic/Software Center (hello, “deb”). I tried sometimes but was not always successful, but at least most stuff is available through Synaptic. (I amazingly enough managed to install the b-side package through “PPA” – whatever that is.)

Having said all of this, I received a free Windows 7 Upgrade, but I won’t use it. Karmic and I have been through pain and exhilaration together, and it would be like saying good-bye to a friend.

So, the object of this story is that while Karmic is great, it isn’t for everyone, and it’s not quite there for the general public – ALMOST but not yet. They need to get some of the above more user-friendly before claiming to be fully “Human.” Good work though – I’m sure it has taken a long time to get where it is now – and it is a beautiful system (I LOVE the Nautilus resizing features, the mouse auto-click feature, etc.).

Also, THANKS so much for the magazine. I have issue 2 (even though it was

for Jaunty, it didn’t matter), and it has been a lifesaver. The pages are well crumpled because of use; it has been better than any other book I’ve tried to use.

Are you going to have digital subscriptions? (The next one doesn’t come till January!!) Thanks for listening. Tash (from Australia)



Tash, I am glad you are enjoying Ubuntu Linux and finding the experience superior to Windows Vista. The questions you are asking are very common with new users.

Firewall: Ubuntu uses the Uncomplicated Firewall (UFW) [1], which is a simple command-line interface to the Unix firewall program iptables [2]. On an Ubuntu Desktop, UFW is inactive by default. You can turn on UFW by using the *enable* command-line parameter:

```
sudo ufw enable
```

To allow or deny a service though the firewall, use the *allow* and *deny* command-line parameters with either the port number or service name.

```
sudo ufw allow 22
sudo ufw deny 22
```

or

```
sudo ufw allow ssh
sudo ufw deny ssh
```

To detect whether UFW is enabled and to reveal which firewall rules are being enforced, use the *status* command-line parameter:

```
sudo ufw status
```

Backup/Restore: Many backup and restore programs work with Ubuntu. I like Déjà Dup [3]. It is a good backup tool with a simple GUI interface (Figure 1). It also allows you to back up your home directory to a USB drive, an SSH server,

or Amazon S3. Use the following command to install:

```
sudo apt-get install deja-dup
```

The command-line program *tar* is a commonly used tool for creating quick backups. Run the following *tar* command in the root of your home directory to make a tarball (copy) of your home directory.

```
tar cvf home-backup.tar .
```

A specific breakdown of the command-line parameters, shown in Table 1, might explain the tarball process more clearly.

To restore the tar file, use the *x* (extract) command-line parameter.

```
tar xvf home-backup.tar
```

For more information on *tar*, type *man tar* at a command prompt or visit the Ubuntu man web page for *tar* [4].

You might not want to back up your entire home directory, but I suggest that you at least include the directories listed in Table 2 in your backup.

In regard to the Sticky Notes function, the note-taking application Tomboy can sync notes with Ubuntu One [5] in Ubuntu 9.10, and there are plans for other programs to sync with Ubuntu One in the future. As for encryption, Ubuntu 9.10 has the ability to encrypt your home directory, but it is an option during installation and is not configured by default.

The Command Line: The command line can be intimidating for new users. Although it *is* possible to delete your entire hard drive with one simple command, you should not be able to do so by accident. Two things to remember when using the command line are: (1)

double-check the command before executing it, and (2) use caution if you are copying a command you found online or from another source. Exercise even more caution if the command you are copying uses the *sudo* command.

I suggest visiting CommandLineFu [6]. I find this website great for learning new command-line tricks and seeing examples of what you safely can do with the Unix command line.

Copy and paste should work similarly to Windows by using Ctrl + C/Ctrl + V to copy/paste between programs. You can also select text to copy and hit the third mouse button to paste in most Ubuntu programs.

Installing debs: You can install a deb file by double-clicking on it in the Nautilus file manager or using *dpkg* from the command line:

```
sudo dpkg -i SomeProgram.deb
```

Be careful installing deb files from unknown third-party sources. They will be of unknown quality and could contain malicious code.

I have not heard any plans for an electronic copy of *Ubuntu User*, but keeping checking the website [7] for new services.

A Real(tek) Problem

? Hi, I have the cursed Lenovo N100 series, which has Realtek drivers. I have tried things unknown to man to get this to work. I know the next step is to edit the kernel, because the patch file is *realtek.c*. But I

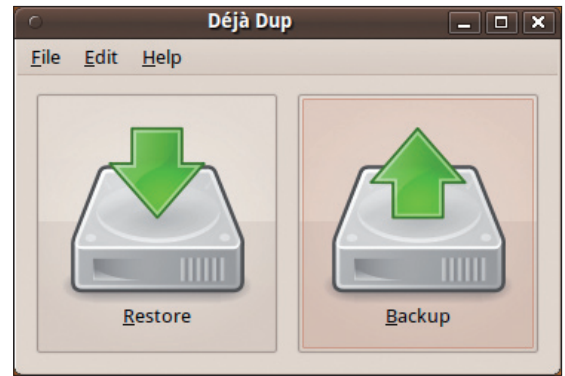


Figure 1: The backup and restore application Déjà Dup has an uncomplicated user interface

am a newbie at applying patches directly. Could you give some guidance?



I found different specs for this laptop that either have a Realtek audio card or Realtek Ethernet adapter, so I'm not sure which Realtek device you are having trouble with. If it is the Ethernet adapter, it should work out of the box with Ubuntu – make sure the r8169 module is loaded:

```
lsmod | grep r8169
```

If it is the sound card, try disabling the built-in modem in the BIOS.

A Burning Question

? I currently have Ubuntu 7.04 on my Dell PC with 1GB RAM. This version is no longer supported; therefore, I cannot upgrade to 7.10 or later from the System Administration tool. I did burn all subsequent Ubuntu versions, but none of them seem to be working. I am trying to boot from my burned CD and then install. It keeps saying, Press F1 to retry and F2 to set up. It never boots with any of the CDs that I burned with ISO image.

Table 1: tar Command Line Examined

<i>tar c</i>	Create an archive
<i>v</i>	Verbose mode, to display output on screen
<i>f</i>	Create a file with the name that follows
<i>home-backup.tar</i>	The name you give the tarball
<i>.</i>	Back up current directory (dot)

Table 2: Backup Directories

Name	Content
<i>Documents</i>	Default save location for files created in OpenOffice and other programs
<i>Pictures</i>	Default save location for pictures
<i>Music</i>	Default save location for music
<i>.mozilla</i>	Configuration for Firefox
<i>.ssh</i>	Keys for SSH
<i>.gnupg</i>	GPG keys
<i>.evolution</i>	Evolution, or you can use the built-in utility in Evolution to back up and restore configuration setting, account information, and contacts

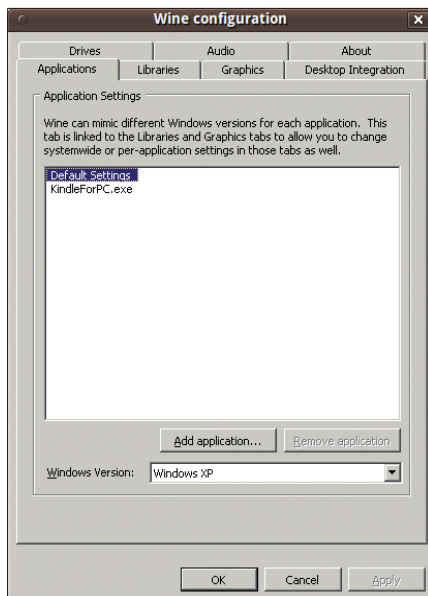


Figure 2: Configuring Windows applications in Wine.

Is there anything wrong with what I am doing? Any help would be appreciated. Kumar R



To address this, you should check a couple of things. First, make sure you burned the ISO properly to a CD. The Ubuntu Help website [8] has a great writeup on how to burn an Ubuntu CD from an ISO file. Second, make sure your BIOS is set to boot from a CD. If you cannot get a CD to work, try installing from a USB key. Finally, you can always order a free CD from Ubuntu Shipit [9].

Using Windows App in Ubuntu



I have a simple program I use on Windows. I transferred it to Ubuntu Desktop in its own folder, and when I open the folder and double-click on the app, it works OK. But, if I make a link to the app, move the link to the Desktop, and click on the link, it tries to start up but cannot find a file that's in the folder. I suspect that I have to define an alias so that it can find the file. I have Wine installed on my computer.



To make a link to the Wine program, right-click on the desktop, select *Create Launcher*, and enter one of the following two commands (with your username and program location changed).

If it is just a Windows executable, enter:

```
wine /path/to/app.exe
```

If the program is installed with Wine, enter:

```
env WINEPREFIX=~/  
"/home/username/.wine" wine   
"C:\Program Files\path\to\app.exe"
```

I suggest installing Windows programs within Wine for the best experience (Figure 2), and you can do this two ways. You can either double-click the Windows installer application or run Wine from the command line with the installer program as an option.

```
wine /mnt/cdrom/setup.exe
```

Check out the Wine HQ AppDB [10] for specific information on installing Windows applications in Wine.

Installing Vim



I just purchased, yesterday, issue 3 of *Ubuntu User* and obtained Ubuntu 9.10, which I installed today. I was surprised at the ease of the installation. I have been a Linux user since Red Hat 8.0 and still have it installed on one of my computers. Additionally, I have Fedora 5 and Fedora 11 installed on other computers. I am fairly new to Ubuntu – started with Ubuntu 9.04 several weeks ago – so I know my way around Ubuntu a little by now.

Most configuration files are the same as Red Hat – for example, *etc/cups/printers.conf*. I am able to add an *lp* options file and change the printing to my requirements. Also, I can add lines to file *etc/fstab* for my floppy drives: internal and external (USB), CD-RW, and DVD-ROM. I am still mounting some devices from the *mnt* directory and others from the *media* directory.

I am very impressed with Ubuntu. I'm happy to have Perl, which I use to do most of my programming because I only have Fortran installed on Red Hat 8.0. I have tried many different Linux OSes over the years. Because I only have three computers, I have recently installed OSes on external HDD with USB input. This allows me to change OSes with ease; I wonder if anyone else has tried this!

I am NOT connected to the Internet; therefore, I purchase magazines such as yours to obtain CDs or DVDs – not interested in the latest updates.

My only problem with Ubuntu is the text editor, vi. I used vi more than 20 years ago writing Fortran programs on the VAX computer and didn't like it then, and I don't like the current vi either.

Because I spend most of my time writing programs, I just can't do without Vim. I can't understand why Vim is not installed on Ubuntu! All the Red Hats and Fedoras have Vim installed. Why doesn't someone just throw vi in the circular trash can that sits on the floor and replace it with Vim?

So, at last my problem: uninstall vi and install Vim on Ubuntu 9.10. I have tried several things on 9.04 – none have worked. I'm unable to uninstall vi. I have a Microsoft OS, which is connected to the Internet, so I can download a Vim package or packages onto a CD or DVD disk to later install on my computer. I usually work from the command line – don't use the mouse very often – only to play FreeCell and other games.

INFO

- [1] Uncomplicated Firewall: <https://help.ubuntu.com/community/UFW>
- [2] Unix iptables: <http://www.netfilter.org/>
- [3] Déjà Dup PPA: <https://www.launchpad.net/~deja-dup-team/+archive/ppa>
- [4] Ubuntu man pages: <http://manpages.ubuntu.com/manpages/karmic/en/man1/tar.1.html>
- [5] Ubuntu One: <http://one.ubuntu.com>
- [6] CommandLineFu: <http://www.commandlinefu.com>
- [7] *Ubuntu User* magazine: <http://www.ubuntu-user.com/>
- [8] Ubuntu help website: <https://help.ubuntu.com/community/BurningIsoHowto>
- [9] Ubuntu Shipit: <http://shipit.ubuntu.com>
- [10] Wine HQ AppDB: <http://appdb.winehq.org/>
- [11] Ubuntu package website: <http://packages.ubuntu.com/>
- [12] Ubuntu wiki: <http://wiki.ubuntu.com>
- [13] Ubuntu forums: <http://ubuntuforums.org>

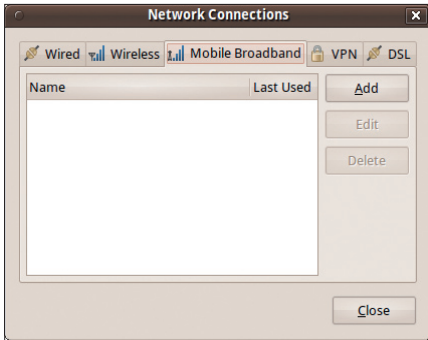


Figure 3: The Network Connections dialog is available from System | Preferences.

1. Need help uninstalling the vi commands!
2. Don't know where to obtain the Vim package or packages.
3. Don't know which package or packages to download.
4. Don't know the commands to install Vim.
5. Supposing the information is obtained from you – I will install Vim.
6. To obtain text highlighting with Vim, will it be necessary to create a `.vimrc` file with the following line: `syntax on`?

Any information from you will be greatly appreciated. Sam



To save space on the Ubuntu CD, Ubuntu comes with the basic vi editor instead of the full version of Vim. You don't need to uninstall vi, because installing the full version of Vim will link vi to Vim. You will need to download the vim and vim-runtime packages from the Ubuntu Package website [11] to install the full version of Vim. Install these packages with the `dpkg` command.

```
sudo dpkg -i vim vim-runtime
```

Yes, to turn on text highlighting in Vim, you will have to put the `syntax on` command in your `.vimrc`.

Vodafone with Ubuntu



Hi. I just installed Ubuntu on my PC; the problem I have is setting up Internet. Could you please advise me how I can get the Internet using a Vodafone USB device?



The Vodafone USB dongle should be supported in any version of Ubuntu 9.04 or newer.

To check, go to the *Mobile Broadband* tab in the Network Connections manager (see Figure 3) and see whether your modem is listed there when it is plugged in.

When the 3G modem is selected, a setup dialog should appear. Check the Ubuntu wiki [12] and Forums [13] for more information. ■

THE AUTHOR

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