



# MX-Fluxbox Documentation

MX-Fluxbox 2.2

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## I. Fluxbox

### What is Fluxbox?

Fluxbox is a [Window Manager](#) (unlike Xfce, which is a Desktop Environment) that controls the placement and appearance of windows. For history and overview, consult the [Wikipedia](#).

### How do I start?

- Use the desktop menu: right-click anywhere on the desktop. This menu is restricted to 1) common apps, 2) fluxbox settings and 3) session actions. It is set by `~/fluxbox/menu-mx`.
- Use the default toolbar at the top.

The user can see the entire MX-Xfce Application Finder by clicking “All apps” in the desktop menu, pressing F6, or clicking the MX Linux icon on the top of the dock on the left side of the screen.

## What is the toolbar across the top?

This fluxbox toolbar offers MX users information about workspaces, open applications, a system tray, and the current time. Its width and placement can be set with the options available by middle-clicking (=scroll wheel) the clock or pager on the toolbar—if that doesn't work for some reason, click Menu > Settings > Window, slit and toolbar > Toolbar. Height is set in `~/.fluxbox/init/` :

```
session.screen0.toolbar.height: 0
```

If a zero is there, it means that the selected style will set the height. Otherwise, a value of 20 to 25 is often comfortable.

The toolbar contains the following default components (L-R):

pager

- Allows you to switch workspace up (right click) or down (left click); same as Control + F1/F2/ etc., Ctrl-Alt + ←/→ or using the scroll wheel over an empty section of the desktop. Number and name are set in the `~/.fluxbox/init`. “W” stands for “Workspace.”

iconbar

- Here open apps will show an icon, with various window options available by right-clicking the relevant icon (including the toolbar itself) > iconbar mode. Default for MX-Fluxbox is All Windows.



**Window options available with a middle click**

systemtray AKA systray

- Equivalent of Notification Area in Xfce. Default components set in `~/.fluxbox/init`; apps that have a systemtray option will show there when launched.

clock

- To adjust the clock to 12h or 24h, right-click and click 12h or 24h, whichever shows. If that doesn't work, select "Edit clock format."
- 24h: `%H:%M`, 12h: `%I:%M`.
- The default is 12h time and date in day/short month format: `%I:%M %b %d`. Many other time/date options are available: <https://mxlinux.org/wiki/other/time-formats-in-scripts/>

You can move or delete any of the toolbar components in `~/fluxbox/init/`, which by default are set up in this way:

`workspacename, iconbar, systemtray, clock`

## How can I make the toolbar look more like legacy systems such as Windows?

Click Menu > Appearance > Toolbar > Traditional (using [tint2](#))

## How can I get rid of desktop items I don't want?

Menu > Out of sight > ...

This section includes:

- Actual kill entries that stop the entire program. The next time you log in anything enabled in the startup file will re-appear except the default dock, which will be disabled.
- A disable entry to remove the default dock.
- Toggle entries, which can kill or re-launch a program.

## How can I change or add a menu entry?

Menu > Settings > Configure > Menu. The syntax is: `[category] (name) {command}` – be sure to use brackets, parentheses and braces correctly.

Example 1: change “Browser” to open Opera instead of Firefox

- Find the line with the word Browser (use Ctrl+F if necessary)

```
[exec] (Browser) {firefox}
```

- Double-click the word “firefox” in the command part so it is highlighted, then type “opera” and save, producing this result:

```
[exec] (Browser) {opera}
```

Example 2: add Skype to the menu

- Decide where you want it to show up; for this example, let's assume you want to add a new category “Communicate” in the Common apps section and enter it there
- Create the category using the submenu commands (see below), introduce a new line and follow the pattern: `[exec] (menu entry) {command}`
- The result will look something like this:

[submenu] (Communicate)

[exec] (Skype) {skypeforlinux}

[end]

NOTE: as the second example shows, the command to use may not always be obvious, so if necessary open the Application Finder (F6), right-click the entry you are interested in > Edit and copy the correct full command for the menu.

## What else should I know about the windows?

Properties

- Resize: Alt + right click near the corner you want to change and drag.
- Move: Alt + left click and drag.
- Stick: use the little square in the top left corner to limit the window to the current desktop.

You can combine multiple windows into one window with tabs across the top by simply Ctrl-Clicking and holding the titlebar of one window and dragging and dropping it on another window. Reverse the procedure to separate them again.

More:

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/chap-tabs.html>

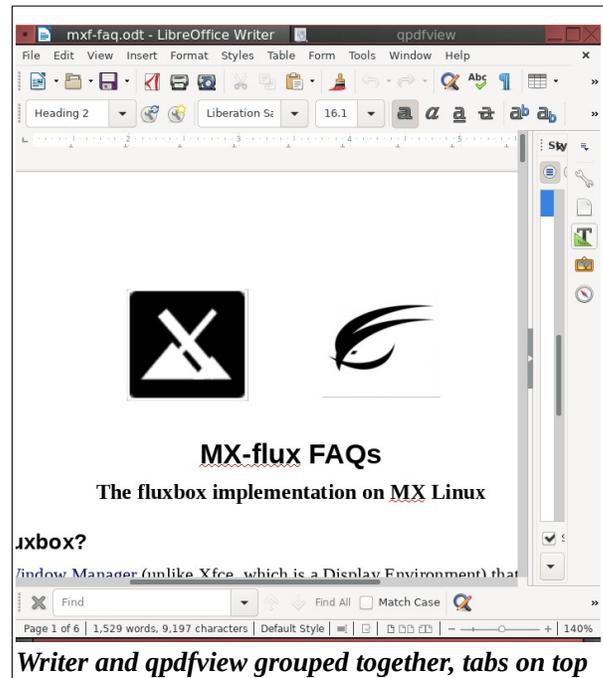
## I see styles in the menu, what are those?

Styles are simple text files that tell fluxbox how to generate the appearance of the window and toolbar components. Fluxbox ships with a large number in `/usr/share/fluxbox/styles/` that show in Menu > Look > Style, and many more can be found online with a web search on "fluxbox styles."

Styles can include a background image, but that is blocked in MX-Fluxbox by default with the top lines in Menu > Settings > Configure > Overlay. To allow the style to determine the background, place a hash mark in front to the line so that it looks like this:

*! The following line will prevent styles from setting the background.*  
`#background: none`

If you like a style but want to change certain traits, copy it to `~/.fluxbox/styles`, rename it, and make your changes (consult Ubuntu style guide under Links, below). You will find a few fluxbox styles that have been modified for use in MX in that folder.

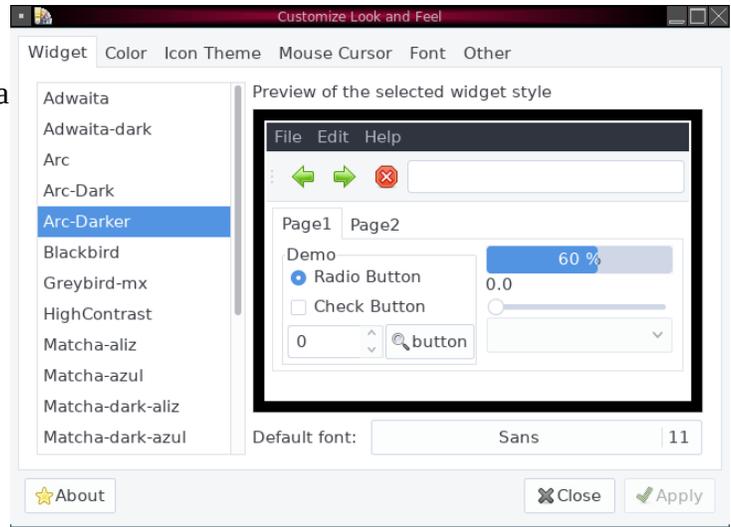


## What are themes and how do I manage them?

Themes in MX-Fluxbox are GTK 2.0 themes; a number are installed by default and others can be found with a web search. A GTK theme controls items such as the panel color, the backgrounds for windows and tabs, how an application will look when it is active vs. inactive, buttons, check-boxes, etc. They range from very dark to very light.

The default theme for MX-Fluxbox is Arc-Darker. It can be changed by right clicking on the desktop to bring up Menu > Appearance > Theme, bringing up a theme selector

(lxappearance) which makes it very easy to see and choose the other possibilities.



*The theme selector showing the selection of Arc-Darker*

## I can't read some of the texts, can I do something about that?

You can adjust the font being used by a theme using the theme selector; default for MX-Fluxbox is Sans 11. More detailed control is available by using the `~/fluxbox/overlay` file. For instance, this set of commands might be tried to make the text generally larger:

```
# fonts-----  
menu.frame.font: PT Sans-12:regular  
menu.title.font: PT Sans-12:regular  
toolbar.clock.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.workspace.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.iconbar.focused.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.iconbar.unfocused.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
window.font: Lato-9
```

For other font options, consult the Links at the end of this document.

## Can I change the wallpaper?

First make sure the overlay file is blocking the style from determining the background. Then click Menu > Appearance > Wallpapers to see the available choices. Wallpapers whose name begins with “mxfb-” carry the MX-Fluxbox logo. The list that pops up from the menu entry includes any user backgrounds (`~/fluxbox/backgrounds`) and system backgrounds (`/usr/share/backgrounds`), separated by a horizontal line. This setup allows you to add backgrounds in the user folder and then be able to select them from the menu.

## Conky

MX-Fluxbox users can make use of the default conky set for MX Linux by clicking Menu > Appearance > Conky to bring up [Conky Manager 2](#), which handles conky in both the old and new format.

For more complicated conky, you may need to make use of a compositor. Click Menu > Settings > Config > Startup, and uncomment the line about a compositor so it looks like this: *compton &*

To autostart a specific conky, open Menu > Settings > Configure > Startup, look for the line that starts with *conky -p 5* (it may be commented out), change the conky location to the one you want and uncomment if necessary.

## What terminals are available?

- F4 (or Menu > Terminal) = Drop-down Xfce4-terminal
- F2, and enter *xfce4-terminal* to get a movable Xfce terminal.

## Can I use my own keystroke combinations?

Yes. Many are listed by default in Menu > Settings > Configure > Keys, though some default keybindings may not work. The names of a couple of the keys are a bit obscure:

- Mod1 = Alt
- Mod4 = Logo key (Windows, Apple)

More: <http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/c296.html>

There are 6 dedicated function keys in MX-Fluxbox (see top of *keys* file to change):

- F1: MX-Fluxbox documentation
- F2: Run command using [rofi](#)
- F3: File manager
- F4: Drop-down terminal
- F5: MX Tools
- F6: All apps

## Are there options available for apps that I launch?

When an app is open, you can right-click on the entry you see for the app in the toolbar at the top of the window. For instance, you can select to remember size and location. Your choices are recorded in *~/.fluxbox/apps* and allow you to control many window specifics.

## What screen options exist?

- Brightness: right-click the battery icon in the systray.
- Capture: if you have a Print Screen (AKA Print, PrtSc, etc.) key, try using that.

## I have read about the slit: what is that?

The slit is a container for [dockapps](#) that can be located at various locations on the desktop:

- TopLeft, TopCenter, TopRight
- LeftCenter, RightCenter
- BottomLeft, BottomCenter, BottomRight

These small applications came originally from Window Maker and can fit into those areas. You can search the default repo for dockapps with this terminal command:

*apt-cache search dockapp*



Many available in the repos may not work well, but it's worth taking a look.

One very interesting and useful dockapp not found with that apt-cache search is the monitor stack [gkrellm](#), installed by default in MX-Fluxbox. It is available by clicking Menu > System > Monitors and has many configuration options (right-click on the top label or on one of the charts), [many skins](#) and [many plugins](#). A few skins are installed by default, and can be reviewed and selected by clicking Shift-PageUp. A handy plugin can be installed from the repos [gkrellweather](#), which works well when the version in the MX repos is installed (the Debian one is broken at the moment).

## Are docks possible?

External docks such as plank often do not work easily with fluxbox. But a new tool MX Dockmaker makes it easy for the user to create docks. A vertical dock appears on the desktop when the user logs in to MX-Fluxbox 2.1 for the first time. For details on using this app, consult [the Help file](#).



## II. iDesk

This document makes use of material in the **README** file in `/usr/share/idesk`.

Idesk is a program developed in 2005. It draws desktop icons for users of minimal window managers such as fluxbox. Each icon will execute a shell command on a configurable action. The icons can be moved on the desktop by dragging them, and the icons will remember their positions on start-up.

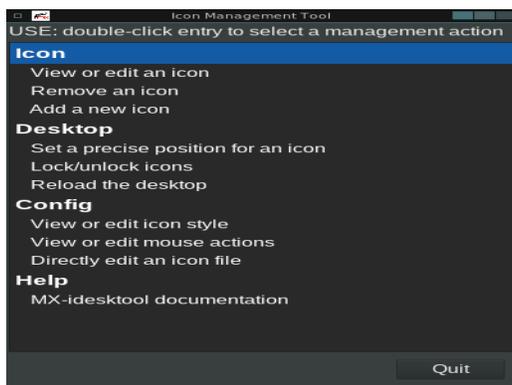
It is distinguished from **wmalauncher**, also installed by default, in that the icons can be located anywhere on the desktop, not just in a slit position, and moved at will.

### Usage

iDesk requires a configuration file `~/.ideskrc`, which is installed and configured by MX-Fluxbox. Many options are available, see details [in the Wiki](#) (from the README file).

Each icon created is defined in a `*.lnk` file located in `~/.idesktop`. There are many options available such as tooltips, colors, etc. (> Wiki). For the general format, consult the default Home link.

Though icons can be set up manually, MX Linux Devs and users have modernized and adapted an old tool to produce `mx-idesktool`.



*mx-idesktool dashboard*

Using this tool greatly facilitates the use of iDesk on MX-Fluxbox. It is very straightforward and should raise no questions about its use.

### Dragging

Basic use of a desktop icon (set up in `~.ideskrc`) is as follows.

Action	Mouse
Execute	Left single click
Execute alt	Right single click
Drag	Left click hold, release to stop

### III. Tint2

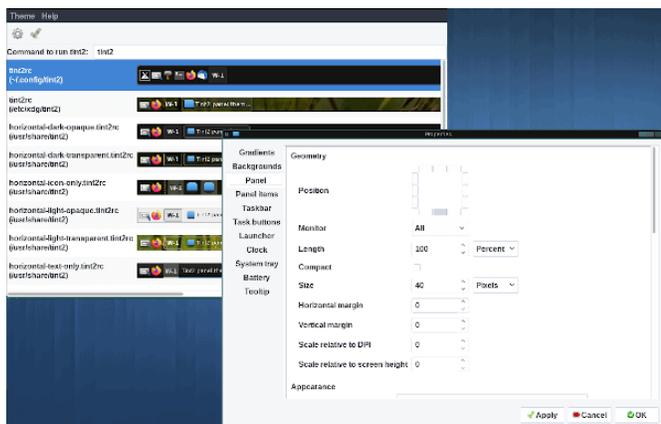
The default MX-Fluxbox toolbar is very different from a traditional panel: it is located at the top of the screen, lacks a start menu and does not allow adding quick launch icons to start applications. That's the reason MX-Fluxbox 2.2 includes an alternative toolbar that has all the functionality of the traditional toolbars using an app known as "tint2." For general orientation, consult [the Wiki article](#).

#### How can I switch between the default and the traditional toolbar?

Menu > Appearance > Toolbar > Fluxbox | Traditional

#### Can I reconfigure the traditional toolbar?

Sure: click the configuration icon that looks like a blue pencil pointing to a white rectangle next to the Start button. This launches two configuration applications ("Themes" and "Properties").



If the Properties window is not visible, click on the little gear icon in the upper left corner. NOTE: you can also manually edit Tint2 configuration file by opening `~/config/tint2/tint2rc` in featherpad.

#### How do I add or remove application "quick launchers"?

In the "Properties" window click the "Launcher" entry on the left side. The right panel has two columns: on the left a list of application icons currently displayed on the toolbar, while on the right a list of all desktop applications installed.

- **Add:** select the application you want from the list in the right column, click the "left arrow" icon on the middle and then click the "Apply" button, to instantly add it to the toolbar.
- **Remove:** reverse the procedure.

#### Can I move traditional toolbar or change its size?

In the "Properties" window click the "Panel" entry in the left panel and then choose its placement and size in the right one. Click the "Apply" button.

#### Is it hard to change the traditional toolbar's theme?

In the "Themes" window, select any theme from the list. It's advisable that you select a "Theme" you like before begin customizing your new toolbar.

**NOTE:** when you select a new theme you will lose any customization that you made to the previously used theme such as adding a quick launcher. It's better to first back up your current configuration so

you can then paste your customizations to the new theme: click on `~/.config/tint2/tint2rc` to open it in featherpad and then save it under a new name such as “tint2rc\_BAK.” You can then copy all your customized lines from your backup file to the correct place on your new tint2rc configuration.

## IV. Links

The man files (in terminal or <https://linux.die.net/man/>):

- fluxbox
- fluxbox-keys
- fbrun
- fluxstyle
- fluxbox-remote

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/pdf/fluxbook.pdf>

Basic handbook, somewhat dated but still useful

<https://bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=77729>

Some good general explanations with examples

<https://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Fluxbox>

Some commands are Arch-specific

<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/HowToFluxboxStyles>

<https://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=617812>

Excellent thread on fluxbox keys

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxBox>

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxboxIcon>

<https://github.com/jerry3904/mx-fluxbox>

The GitHub repo of MX-Fluxbox

<https://mxlinux.org/wiki/help-files/help-mx-fluxbox/>

The MX-Fluxbox Wiki entry

<https://bit.ly/2Sm1PJI>

YouTube: MX-Fluxbox

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