

In Praise of Gnome Classic

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The current direction of "window systems" has been moving steadily in the direction of a more "hand-held" look and feel. The Icons are getting bigger, and even touch interfaces are becoming a common feature on desktop systems.

Now, for the ordinary user, this is generally a reasonable proposition. They, in most cases, have a small number of applications and sites that they visit regularly. These could include their bank, Facebook, Twitter, The Weather Channel, or creating a grocery list. They may also be Emailing friends frequently. For users in this category, these newer window options may be a good fit.

I have found that for "power users" -- and I hate that term -- these types of windowing systems are inadequate.

I am running Gnome Classic on Ubuntu 12.04 and have displayed across two screens approx 325 *Launchers*. In addition, I have another approx 40-50 main screen launchers and any given time. See the image below:



Figure: Dual Screen - Gnome Classic

The following is a partial category list and the approx number of items in each.

1. 6 unique IDE's covering C, C++, Python, Ruby, Rails, Go, and Glade.
2. 40+ unique directory locations.
3. 150+ unique reference documents.
4. 10 Reference Sites.
5. 10+ Political Sites.
6. Right Side is for Chess, Poker, Pinball, and Doom.
7. 5 Job Sites.
8. 50+ Utilities.
9. Everything else.

As can be seen, all the launchers are easily visible, selectable, and use a minimum of screen space.

The question I am often asked is, "where do you get all the icons".

First, I have downloaded a number icon sets from various locations.

Second, is to use **ksnapshot** to extract images from different sources.

Third, I use **kiconedit** to modify other icons. For example, I use the same C++ icons -- *see below* -- in twelve places, but with different background colors. This is the most common technique to group similar items with icons differentiated by background or foreground colors.

The following example is the top-left of Screen 1.



Figure: Dual Screen - Gnome Classic

While it appears daunting to remember all for the icons, you generate them slowly over time and I have found no problem remembering what mean. When creating launchers, fill in both the "Name" and "Comment" portions with good descriptions. They are both displayed when the user hovers over an icon.

In closing, while this solution is not for everyone, this is one way to support a major multi-tasker

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