

Fedora 27 announcement, news and known issues

Once a year, we upgrade all the desktop systems to the latest version of Fedora, our Linux desktop operating system.



Upgrading

Now (November 2017) it is about time to start upgrading again. Over the next month or so, we will upgrade as many of the systems as possible. We have spent quite some time to streamline the upgrade process, so on most reasonably fast pcs an upgrade will take approximately 3 hours. If you have a preference for the moment of the upgrade, or a period in which you can absolutely not work without your computer, please let us know by [scheduling your upgrade here](#) (login required, only accessible from inside the institutes). Otherwise, we will just upgrade computers when they are not in use. We plan to complete all upgrades by January 15, 2018.

General information

- [Fedora 27 release notes](#)
- [Common Bugs and Known Issues](#)

Local links:

- [Linux desktop environments](#)
- [Fedora compatibility settings](#)
- [Fedora tips](#)

New in F27, or in our Fedora setup:

- Gnome 3.26 (see below for details)
 - Various Gnome shell extensions that you can load for yourself from <https://extensions.gnome.org/>

- Cloud integration: you can link your [Google Drive](#), [OwnCloud](#)/SurfDrive and some other cloud storage services the file manager (in addition to [Dropbox](#), which has been there for a couple of years).
Various online calendars can be integrated in the desktop calendar utility.
- Python is now available in version 2.7 and 3.6. If you had private packages or virtualenv installed for python 3.5, you may have to reinstall those for 3.6. Your python 2.7 packages should remain operational.
 - All python programs in the desktop and system utilities, are now using python 3.6. Command python will continue to invoke python2 so all your own scripts should not be affected. Command python3 will now invoke version 3.6 in stead of 3.5, so some differences may be present.
 - When available, we have installed both the python 2.7 and the python 3.6 version of a package. TODO work in progress!!
 - iPython has been upgraded to version 6.2.1 for python 3.6, and to version 5.5.0 for python 2.7
- Nvidia CUDA version 9.0, on systems that can make use of this.
- Wayland: the official Fedora release notes have a lot of information about Wayland, a replacement for the X11 graphics system. We don't use Wayland at this time, since it doesn't yet support many features that are needed in our type of work (remote graphics, various scientific programs, ...). So you can ignore all that is written about Wayland in the documentation.

Known issues in Fedora 27

- Gnome has become too demanding for our oldest computers. Gnome Classic usually works. Cinnamon suffers from the same problem, but is usually able to go into “fallback” mode when this situation occurs.
- VNC issues: Desktop environments that require hardware acceleration (3D desktop effects) are too heavy to be used inside a virtual desktop (VNC, X2GO). See [VNC desktop issues](#) for details and workarounds.
- If you have your own python modules (eg a virtualenv, or local installs in own directories), these may have to be reinstalled for the new python versions.
- ~~Python's matplotlib has a couple of issues: * Start by clearing its font cache, usually located in \$HOME/.cache/matplotlib and see if that makes the difference. Not all the font information is compatible with leftovers from previous versions. Solved at re-test 2017-11-29~~
- TeX package psfig, which has been obsolete for a long time, has now almost completely stopped working. Converting documents to newer packages such as graphics or graphicx is recommended, and is usually easy.
- When selecting a desktop from the login screen, the GNOME desktop is listed multiple times. Choosing any one of them should work.
- ICAclient (Citrix receiver) is not working, since it depends on a much older version of the webkitgtk library, incompatible with the current version.

Some general observations and tips

- Gnome 3. Gnome 3 is a completely different desktop design, which makes the desktop look and behave a bit like a Tablet PC. Some people may like it, but if you don't, “Mate” is available as an alternative, to give you the experience of good old Gnome 2, or “Cinnamon”, for a more desktop-like version of the new Gnome, or try “Gnome Classic”.

[More on Gnome 3](#)

- Gnome applications: in every new release, more Gnome applications are rewritten in the style of the Gnome 3 desktop. This means: a separate application menu, displayed Mac-style in the top bar on the Gnome desktop, or under the application icon in other desktops, the most important actions displayed as buttons, and everything else in a menu at the top right in the application window.

See [desktop applications](#) for a table listing alternatives, in case you cannot get used to the new look.

- Cinnamon desktop tweaks: In general, Cinnamon looks like ordinary desktops, but it is Gnome 3 at the core. But there are separate tools for Cinnamon, eg, if you want to modify the programs that start in each session, use cinnamon-session-properties for that (also available from the settings overview).

[More on Cinnamon](#) or see the list of available [desktop applications](#)

- Programs that start with each session: A lot of programs are started by default in each desktop session. many of them are unnecessary; some of them are annoying or can cause problems. users can disable everything they don't need.

[More on session tweaking](#)

- The command `pmount` can be used to mount removable media (cdrom,dvd,usb-disks) from the commandline. E.g.: `pmount /dev/cdrom` mounts the cd/dvd as `/media/cdrom`.
- Emacs. Stating with Emacs version 24, the program contains quite a number of changes. For the most part: it tries to work nicer with current desktop systems, since the way people expect an X application to behave, have changed a lot over the years. Best to enable the KDE or Gnome clipboard manager, and enjoy the new feature of emacs and of your desktop the way they were programmed to be.

But emacs being emacs, all of this behaviour can be configured and fine-tuned. Read the news, available from the help menu (C-h n).

If you really, really, really want the old selection, cut and paste behaviour back, add this in your `.emacs`:

```
(setq select-active-regions nil)
(setq mouse-drag-copy-region t)
(setq x-select-enable-primary t)
(setq x-select-enable-clipboard nil)
(global-set-key [mouse-2] 'mouse-yank-at-click)
```

- Intel compilers: The Intel compilers (ifort,icc) are not enabled by default. The latest freely available version is 10.1, which can be loaded using `module load intel`. However, for most code, the GNU compilers are better than these slightly older Intel compiler versions. (if you read that the Intel compiler has speed benefits, this probably refers to the very expensive current version, which we cannot install on a system-wide basis, or you are reading an obsolete webpage; the GNU compilers have gained significant speed of the last couple of years). If you really need the current Intel compilers, find funding, and be prepared to have a license locked to a single computer.

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