



# Ubuntu Replacements for Windows Programs

**U**buntu is a thoroughly modern operating system and, as such, includes a comprehensive selection of software for just about every day-to-day task. Regardless of whether you want to write letters, edit images, or listen to music, Ubuntu offers something for you.

This chapter introduces the software under Ubuntu that performs the tasks you might be used to under Windows. It's not a detailed guide to each piece of software. Instead, this chapter aims to get you up and running with the Ubuntu replacement as quickly as possible. The chapter will tell you the name of the software, where you can find it on Ubuntu's menus, and a few basic facts about how to use it. In many cases, these applications are covered in far more depth later in the book.

## Available Software

Table 11-1 lists various popular Windows programs alongside their Ubuntu counterparts. You'll find most of the programs listed on the Applications menu. Table 11-1 also includes a number of other mainstream alternatives, most of which aren't installed by default under Ubuntu, but are available from the Ubuntu online software repositories. You might want to try these later on. As you might expect, they're all free of charge, so you have nothing to lose.

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**Note** Table 11-1 lists only a fraction of the programs available under Linux. There are quite literally thousands of others. The programs listed here are those that work like their Windows equivalents and therefore provide an easy transition.

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**Table 11-1.** *Ubuntu Alternatives to Windows Software*

Type of Program	Windows	Ubuntu	Alternative Choices
Word processor	Microsoft Word	OpenOffice.org Writer	AbiWord ( <a href="http://www.abisource.com">www.abisource.com</a> ), KOffice KWord ( <a href="http://www.koffice.org/kword">www.koffice.org/kword</a> )
Spreadsheet	Microsoft Excel	OpenOffice.org Calc	Gnumeric ( <a href="http://www.gnome.org/projects/gnumeric">www.gnome.org/projects/gnumeric</a> ), KOffice KSpread ( <a href="http://www.koffice.org/kspread">www.koffice.org/kspread</a> )
Presentations	Microsoft PowerPoint	OpenOffice.org Impress	KOffice KPresenter ( <a href="http://www.koffice.org/kpresenter">www.koffice.org/kpresenter</a> )
Drawing (vector art)	Adobe Illustrator	OpenOffice.org Draw	Inkscape ( <a href="http://www.inkscape.org">www.inkscape.org</a> ), KOffice Karbon 14 ( <a href="http://www.koffice.org/karbon">www.koffice.org/karbon</a> )
Database	Microsoft Access	OpenOffice.org Base <sup>1</sup>	Knoda ( <a href="http://www.knoda.org">www.knoda.org</a> )
Web page creation	Microsoft FrontPage	OpenOffice.org Writer	SeaMonkey ( <a href="http://www.mozilla.org/projects/seamoney">www.mozilla.org/projects/seamoney</a> ), Amaya ( <a href="http://www.w3.org/Amaya">www.w3.org/Amaya</a> )
E-mail	Microsoft Outlook	Evolution	Mozilla Thunderbird ( <a href="http://www.mozilla.com">www.mozilla.com</a> ), KMail ( <a href="http://kontakt.kde.org/kmail">http://kontakt.kde.org/kmail</a> )
Contacts manager/calendar	Microsoft Outlook	Evolution	Kontakt ( <a href="http://www.kontakt.kde.org">www.kontakt.kde.org</a> )
Web browser	Microsoft Internet Explorer	Mozilla Firefox	Konqueror ( <a href="http://www.konqueror.org">www.konqueror.org</a> ), Opera ( <a href="http://www.opera.com">www.opera.com</a> ) <sup>2</sup>
CD/DVD burning	Nero	Nautilus <sup>3</sup>	K3b ( <a href="http://www.k3b.org">www.k3b.org</a> ), Brasero ( <a href="http://www.gnome.org/projects/brasero">www.gnome.org/projects/brasero</a> )
MP3 player	Winamp	Rhythmbox	Aqualung ( <a href="http://aqualung.factorial.hu">http://aqualung.factorial.hu</a> ), Banshee ( <a href="http://banshee-project.org">http://banshee-project.org</a> )
CD player/ripper	Windows Media Player	Sound Juicer	Grip ( <a href="http://nostatic.org/grip">http://nostatic.org/grip</a> )
Movie/DVD player	Windows Media Player	Totem Media Player	VLC ( <a href="http://www.videolan.org">www.videolan.org</a> ) MPlayer ( <a href="http://www.mplayerhq.hu/homepage">www.mplayerhq.hu/homepage</a> )
Image editor	Adobe Photoshop	The GIMP	KOffice Krita ( <a href="http://www.koffice.org/krita">www.koffice.org/krita</a> )
Zip files	WinZip	Archive Manager	KArchiver ( <a href="http://pagesperso-orange.fr/coquelle/karchiver">http://pagesperso-orange.fr/coquelle/karchiver</a> )
MS-DOS prompt	cmd.exe/command.exe	GNOME Terminal	Xterm ( <a href="http://www.x.org">www.x.org</a> ) <sup>4</sup>
Calculator	Calc	Calculator	Too many to mention!

**Table 11-1.** *Ubuntu Alternatives to Windows Software (Continued)*

Type of Program	Windows	Ubuntu	Alternative Choices
Text editor/viewer	Notepad	Gedit	Kate ( <a href="http://www.kate-editor.org">www.kate-editor.org</a> )
Desktop games	Minesweeper/Solitaire	Mines/AisleRiot Solitaire	Too many to mention!

<sup>1</sup> *Base isn't installed by default, but it is easily installed via the [openoffice.org-base](http://openoffice.org-base) package. This database tool is tightly integrated with the rest of the OpenOffice.org suite.*

<sup>2</sup> *Opera is a proprietary product, rather than open source; however, it is free of charge.*

<sup>3</sup> *Nautilus is the file manager within Ubuntu; to activate its CD/DVD burning mode, click Go ► CD/DVD Creator.*

<sup>4</sup> *Xterm is part of the X.org package, so it is installed by default under Ubuntu. To use it, type `xterm` in a GNOME Terminal window. See Chapter 10 to learn how to create a permanent desktop launcher for Xterm.*

## LINUX HAS IT ALL

The Ubuntu software archives contain thousands of programs to cover just about every task you might wish to do on your computer. Diversity is vitally important within the Linux world. For example, rather than offering just one e-mail program, you'll find many available. They compete with each other in a gentle way, and it's up to you which one you settle down with and use.

Part of the fun of using Linux is exploring what's available. Of course, the added bonus is that virtually all this software is free of charge, so you can simply download, install, and play around. If you don't like a program, just remove it from your system. However, don't forget to revisit the program's home page after a few months; chances are the program will have been expanded and improved in that short period, and it might be better at meeting your needs.

## A Quick Start with Common Linux Programs

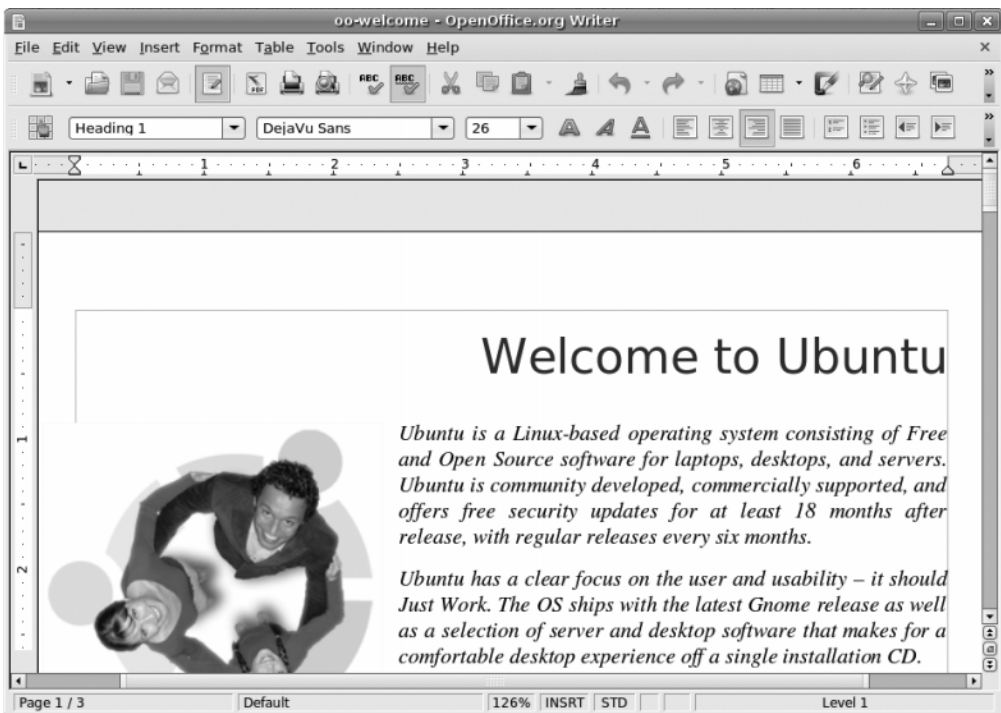
The remainder of this chapter outlines a handful of the programs listed in Table 11-1. Our goal is to give you a head start in using each program, pointing out where most of the main functions can be found. You'll find more details about the The GIMP image editor, multimedia tools, and office applications in Parts 5 and 6 of this book.

Keep in mind that Linux doesn't aim to be an exact clone of other operating systems. Some of the programs will work in a similar way to what you're used to, but that's not true of all of them. Because of this, it's very easy to get frustrated early on when programs don't seem to work quite how you want or respond in strange ways. Some programs might hide functions in what seem like illogical places compared with their counterparts on other operating systems. Some patience is required, but it will eventually pay off as you get used to Linux.

## Word Processing: OpenOffice.org Writer

OpenOffice.org is an entire office suite for Linux that was built from the ground up to compete with Microsoft Office. Because of this, you'll find much of the functionality of Microsoft Office is replicated in OpenOffice.org, and the look and feel are also similar. The major difference is that OpenOffice.org is open source and therefore free of charge.

OpenOffice.org Writer (Applications ► Office ► OpenOffice.org Word Processor), shown in Figure 11-1, is the word processor component. As with Microsoft Word, it's fully WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get), so you can quickly format text and paragraphs. This means the program can be used for elementary desktop publishing, and pictures can be easily inserted (using the Insert menu).



**Figure 11-1.** *OpenOffice.org Writer*

Writer's toolbars provide quick access to the formatting tools, as well as to other common functions. The vast majority of menu options match those found in Word. Right-clicking the text itself also offers quick access to text-formatting tools.

A number of higher-level functions are provided, such as mail merge and spell-checking, (found on the Tools menu). You can perform spell-checking on the fly, with incorrect words underlined in red as you type.

As with all OpenOffice.org packages, Writer is fully compatible with Microsoft Office files, so you can save and open .doc files. Just click File ► Save As, and click the arrow alongside File Type to choose a document format. The only exception is password-protected Word files, which cannot be opened. You can also export documents as PDF files (using File ► Export As PDF), so they can be read on any computer that has Adobe Acrobat Reader installed.

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**Note** Although compatible with Microsoft Office 2003 (and below) file formats, OpenOffice.org isn't compatible with Office 2007's Open XML file format at the time of writing. However, this will almost certainly change, which is another reason to regularly update your Ubuntu system.

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OpenOffice.org Writer is covered in more detail in Chapter 23.

## Spreadsheet: OpenOffice.org Calc

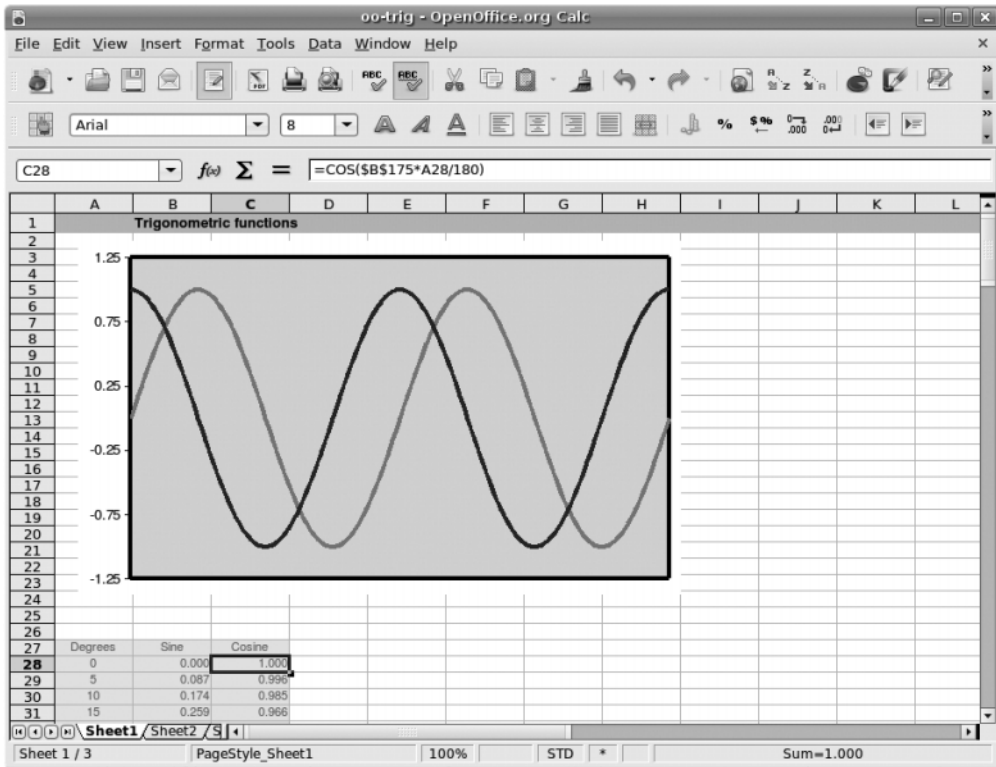
As with most of the packages that form the OpenOffice.org suite, Calc (Applications ► Office ► OpenOffice.org Spreadsheet) does a good impersonation of its proprietary counterpart, Microsoft Excel, both in terms of powerful features and the look and feel, as you can see in Figure 11-2. However, it has only limited support for Excel's Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) macros at present. Instead, Calc and other OpenOffice.org programs use their own macro language, called OpenOffice.org Basic (for more information, see <http://development.openoffice.org>).

Calc has a vast number of mathematical functions. To see a list, choose Insert ► Function. The list on the left side of the dialog box includes a brief explanation of each function to help you get started. Just as with Excel, you can access the functions via the toolbar (by clicking the Function Wizard button), or you can enter them directly into cells by typing an equal sign and then the formula code. Calc is intelligent enough to realize when formula cells have been moved and to recalculate accordingly. It will even attempt to calculate formulas automatically and can work out what you mean if you type something like sales + expenses as a formula.

As you would expect, Calc also provides automated charting and graphing tools (under Insert ► Chart). In Figure 11-2, you can see an example of a simple chart created automatically by the charting tool.

You can format cells using the main toolbar buttons, or automatically apply user-defined styles (choose Format ► Styles and Formatting).

**Tip** In all the OpenOffice.org applications, you can hover the mouse cursor over each button for one second to see a tooltip showing what it does.



**Figure 11-2.** OpenOffice.org Calc

If you're a business user, you'll be pleased to hear that you can import databases to perform serious number-crunching. Use Insert ► Link to External Data to get the data, and then employ the tools on the Data and Tools menu to manipulate it.

As with all OpenOffice.org programs, compatibility with its Microsoft counterpart—Excel files in this case—is pretty good. You can also open other common data file formats, such as comma-separated values (CSV) and Lotus 1-2-3 files.

OpenOffice.org Calc is covered in more detail in Chapter 24.

## Presentations: OpenOffice.org Impress

Anyone who has used PowerPoint will immediately feel at home with Impress, OpenOffice.org's presentation package (Applications ► Office ► OpenOffice.org Presentation), shown in Figure 11-3. Impress duplicates most of the common features found in PowerPoint, with a helping of OpenOffice.org-specific extras.

The program works via templates into which you enter your data. Starting the program causes the Presentation Wizard to appear. This wizard guides you through selecting a style of presentation fitting the job you have in mind. At this point, you can even select the type of transition effects you want between the various slides.

Once the wizard has finished, you can choose from the usual normal and outline view modes (available from the View menu). Outline mode lets you enter your thoughts quickly, while normal mode lets you type straight onto presentation slides.

You can format text by highlighting it and right-clicking it, by using the Text Formatting toolbar that appears whenever you click inside a text box, or by selecting an entry on the Format menu. Impress also features a healthy selection of drawing tools, so you can create quite complex diagrams. These are available on the Drawing toolbar along the bottom of the screen. You can also easily insert pictures, other graphics, and sound effects.



Figure 11-3. OpenOffice.org Impress

You can open and edit existing PowerPoint (PPT) files and, as with all OpenOffice.org packages, save your presentation as a PDF file. Impress also lets you export your presentation as a Macromedia Flash file (SWF). This means that anyone with a browser and Macromedia's Flash plug-in can view the file, either online or via e-mail. Simply click File ► Export, and then choose Macromedia Flash from the File Format drop-down list.

Along with slide presentations, Impress also lets you produce handouts to support your work.

OpenOffice.org Impress is covered in more detail in Chapter 25.

## Database: OpenOffice.org Base

Base, shown in Figure 11-4, allows you to create relational databases using a built-in database engine, as well as interface with external databases. Base is not installed by default, so you will need to install the `openoffice.org-base` package using System ► Administration ► Synaptic Package Manager. Then you can access it by clicking Applications ► Office ► OpenOffice.org Database.

Base is very similar to Microsoft Access in look and feel, although it lacks some of Access's high-end functions. For most database uses, it should prove perfectly adequate.

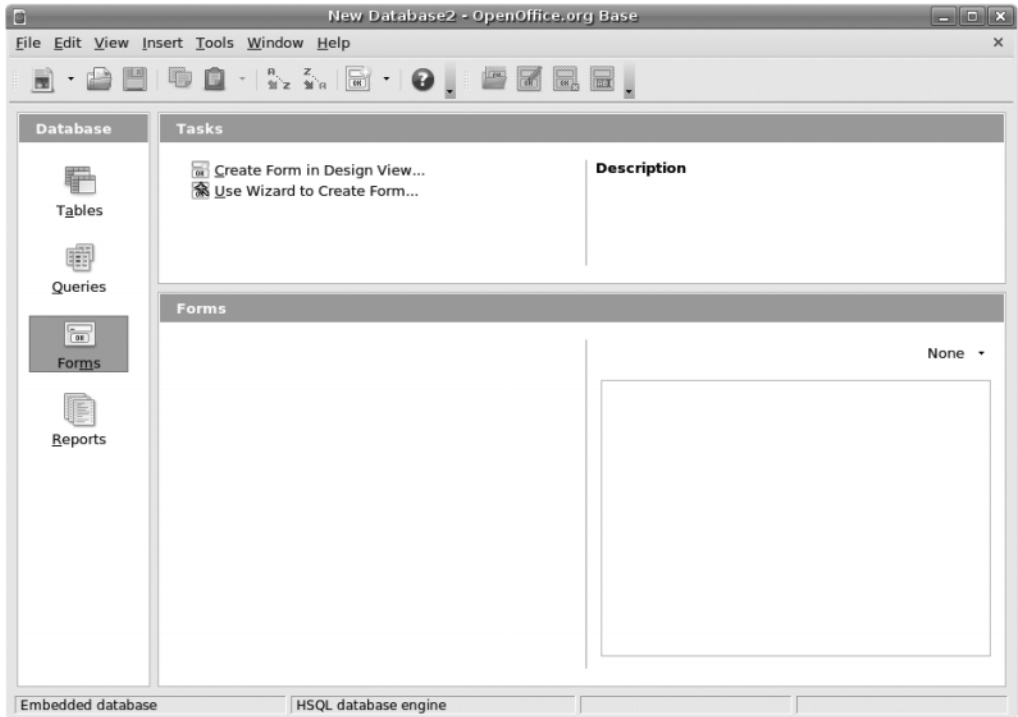
If you know the fundamentals of database technology, you shouldn't have any trouble getting started with Base immediately. This is made even easier than you might expect, because when the program starts, a wizard guides you through the creation of a simple database.

As with Access, Base is designed on the principles of tables of data, forms by which the data is input or accessed, and queries and reports by which the data can be examined and outputted. Once again, wizards are available to walk you through the creation of each of these, or you can dive straight in and edit each by hand, by selecting the relevant option.

Each field in the table can be of various types, including several different integer and text types, as well as binary and Boolean values. Forms can contain a variety of controls, ranging from simple text boxes to radio buttons and scrolling lists, all of which can make data entry easier. Reports can feature a variety of text formatting and can also rely on queries to manipulate the data. The queries themselves can feature a variety of functions and filters in order to sort data down to the finest detail.

You'll learn more about Base in Chapter 26.





**Figure 11-4.** *OpenOffice.org Base*

## E-Mail/Personal Information Manager: Evolution

Evolution is a little like Microsoft Outlook in that, in addition to being an e-mail client, it can also keep track of your appointments and contacts. You can start Evolution by clicking Applications ► Office ► Evolution Mail and Calendar.

Before using the program, you'll need to set it up with your mail server settings, as detailed in Chapter 8. Evolution is compatible with POP/SMTP, IMAP, Novell GroupWise, Hula, Microsoft Exchange, and a handful of Unix mail formats rarely used nowadays.

Once the program is up and running, as shown in Figure 11-5, you can create a new message by clicking the New button on the toolbar. To reply to any e-mail, simply select it in the list, and then click the Reply or Reply To All button, depending on whether you want to reply to the sender or to all the recipients of the message.

To switch to Contacts view, click the relevant button on the bottom left. If you reply to anyone via e-mail, they're automatically added to this Contacts list. You can also add entries manually by either right-clicking someone's address in an open e-mail or right-clicking in a blank space in the Contacts view.

Clicking the Calendar view shows a day-and-month diary. To add an appointment, simply select the day, and then double-click the time you want the appointment to start. You can opt to set an alarm when creating the appointment, so that you're reminded of it when it's scheduled.

Finally, by clicking the Tasks and Memos buttons, you can create a to-do list and jot down quick notes, respectively. To add a task, click the bar at the top of the list. Once an entry has been created, you can put a check in its box to mark it as completed. Completed tasks are marked with strike-through, so you can see at a glance what you still need to do. To add a memo, click the bar at the top of the memo list, and simply type what you want to remember.

In addition to the setup guide in Chapter 8, you'll find a full explanation of Evolution's features in Chapter 27.

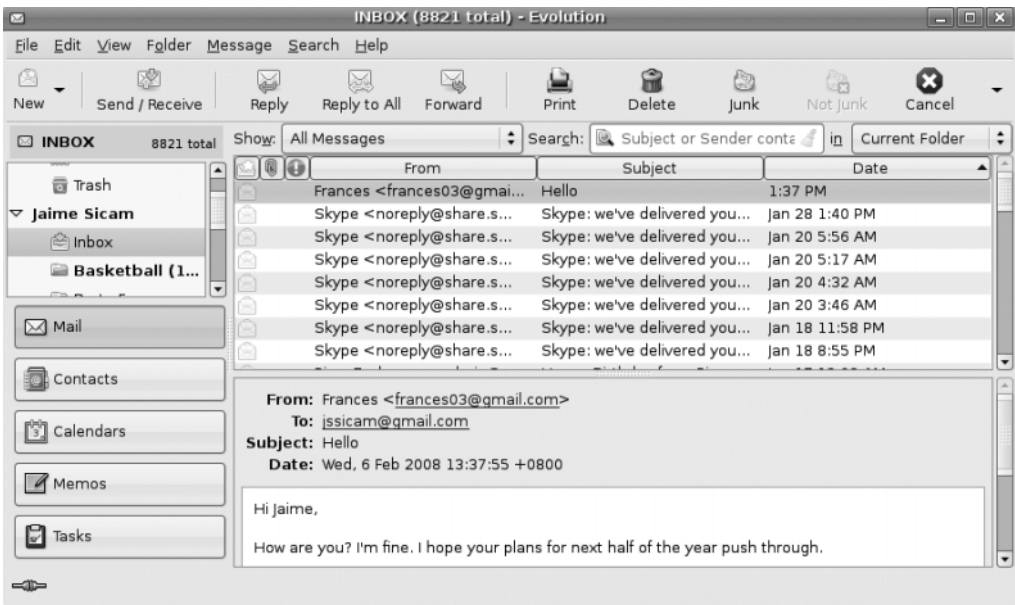


Figure 11-5. *Evolution*

## Web Browser: Firefox

You might already know of Mozilla Firefox under Windows, where it has firmly established itself as the alternative browser of choice. The good news is that the Linux version of Firefox is nearly identical to its Windows counterpart. Start it by selecting Applications ► Internet ► Firefox Web Browser.

When the program starts, as shown in Figure 11-6, you can type an address into the URL bar to visit a web site. If you wish to add a site to your bookmarks list, click Bookmarks ► Bookmark This Page. Alternatively, you can press Ctrl+D.

Searching is very easy within Firefox, using its search bar at the top right of the window. By default, Firefox uses Google for searches. To choose from other search engines, click the small down arrow on the left side of the search box. You can even enter your own choice of site if your favorite isn't already in the list—click Manage Search Engines, and then click the Get More Search Engines link in the dialog box that appears.

Firefox popularized the principle of tabbed browsing, which means you can have more than one site open at once. To open a new tab, press Ctrl+T. You can move between the tabs by clicking them.

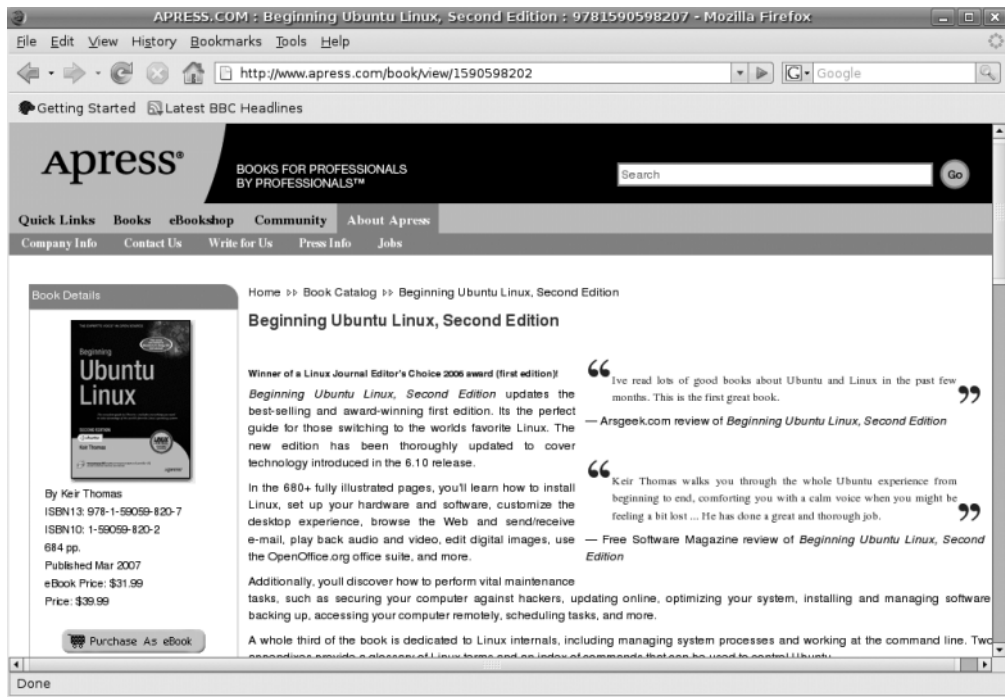


Figure 11-6. Mozilla Firefox

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**Tip** When Firefox starts, tabs aren't activated. If you would like to keep tabs in view all the time, click Edit ► Preferences, and then click the Tabs button. Then put a check alongside Always Show the Tab Bar.

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Firefox is compatible with most of the same add-ons (extensions) you might have used under the Windows version of the browser. You can download new add-ons from <https://addons.mozilla.org>. In addition, Firefox under Ubuntu can work with Flash animations,

although you'll need to download the Flash Player software first. See the instructions in Chapter 19 to learn more.

## Audio Playback: Rhythmbox and Sound Juicer

Ubuntu's multimedia software is basic but effective. It can play back the majority of audio files, as long as it's properly configured, which is to say after additional software has been installed. We'll describe how to set up this software in Chapter 18, and if you're thinking of playing audio files on your computer, you may want to read that chapter immediately.

Rhythmbox is the audio file player, which can be started by clicking Applications ► Sound & Video ► Rhythmbox Music Player. Sound Juicer is primarily designed to rip CD tracks to disk, but it also serves as Ubuntu's CD player (simply click the Play button in the program window to listen to tracks). Figure 11-7 shows both of these applications.



**Figure 11-7.** *Rhythmbox and Sound Juicer*

When you run Rhythmbox for the first time, it will attempt to find and then catalog your music collection. You might be used to this kind of functionality with Windows applications like iTunes. After the initial file search has taken place, whenever Rhythmbox runs, you will find your tracks listed by artist or name, providing they have the relevant tag information embedded in them (such as ID3 tags in MP3 music).

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**Note** Unlike iTunes, Rhythmbox can't play Digital Rights Management (DRM)-protected files.

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To start playing a music track, double-click it in the list. To make the player smaller so that it doesn't dominate the screen, click View ► Small Display.

Sound Juicer is very simple to operate. It will open automatically once a CD has been inserted. To start playing the CD, select a track from the list and click the Play button, just click Play to play the CD starting from track 1. While Sound Juicer is playing, you can switch to any other tracks by double-clicking them in the list. One nice feature of Sound Juicer is that it will automatically look up the artist and track information about most CDs online, and then save the information for future reference.

You can control the volume within Rhythmbox or Sound Juicer, or use the volume control applet, which is located at the top-right side of the Ubuntu desktop, near the clock. Simply click and then drag the slider to adjust the volume.

## Movie Playback: Totem Movie Player

Totem Movie Player, which can be started by clicking Applications ► Sound & Video ► Movie Player, is able to handle the majority of video files you might own, as long as some additional software is installed. Totem can also play back DVD movies, which, again, requires the installation of software. We'll cover setting up this software in Chapters 18 and 19; if you intend to play back videos and DVDs, these chapters should be your first port of call.

Like Rhythmbox and Sound Juicer, Totem is an uncomplicated application. As shown in Figure 11-8, the video will play on the left side of the window. A playlist detailing movies you have queued appears on the right side. You can remove this, to give the video more room, by clicking the Sidebar button.

You can control video playback using the play/pause, fast forward, and rewind buttons at the bottom left. In addition, provided a compatible video format is being played, you can use the Time bar to move backward and forward within the video file. You can switch to full-screen playback by clicking View ► Fullscreen. To switch back, simply press the Esc key. If you're watching a program that has been ripped from TV, you might want to use the Deinterlace feature on the View menu to remove any interference patterns.

Provided the software described in Chapter 19 is installed, DVD playback will start automatically as soon as a disc is inserted, and you should be able to use the mouse with any on-screen menus. In addition, you can skip between chapters on the disc using the Go menu, and also return to the DVD's main or submenu systems. To switch between the various languages on a DVD (if applicable), click Sound ► Languages and choose from the list.



**Figure 11-8.** *Totem Movie Player*

## CD/DVD Burning: Nautilus and Brasero

As soon as you insert a blank writable disc, whether it's a CD or DVD, Ubuntu will detect it and offer you two choices. You can then create a data or audio disc. If you choose to create an audio CD, the Brasero application will open. If you choose to create a data or photo CD/DVD, a Nautilus file browser window will open in CD/DVD Creator mode. Both programs are shown in Figure 11-9.

To use Brasero to create an audio CD, drag-and-drop your music files onto the program window, and then click the Burn button. Keep an eye on the meter at the bottom right. This is like a progress bar; when the green portion is full, the disc is full. Note that you won't be able to write certain audio files, like MP3s, to CDs unless you have the relevant codecs installed. See Chapter 18 to learn more.

Using the Nautilus CD/DVD Creator is similar to using Brasero. Just drag-and-drop files onto the window to create shortcuts to the files. When it comes time to burn, Nautilus will copy the files from their original locations. When you've finished choosing files, click the Write to Disc button. Unfortunately, you won't see a warning if the disc's capacity has been exceeded until you try to write to the disc. However, by right-clicking an empty space in the Nautilus window and selecting Properties, you can discover the total size of the files. Remember that most CDs hold 700MB, and most DVD+/-R discs hold around 4.7GB (some dual-layer discs hold twice this amount; see the DVD disc packaging for details).

**Tip** Most modern CD/DVD recorders utilize burn-proof technology, which helps ensure error-free disc creation. To activate this, open a terminal window (Applications ► Accessories ► Terminal), and type `gconf-editor`. When the program starts, click Edit ► Find, and then type `burnproof`. Make sure there's a check in Search Also in Key Names. In the search results at the bottom of the window, click the first result (`/apps/nautilus-cd-burner/burnproof`) and make sure there's a check in `burnproof` at the top right of the window. Then close the configuration editor.



**Figure 11-9.** *Nautilus CD/DVD Creator and Brasero*

## Photo Editing: The GIMP

While many of the other programs introduced so far mirror the Windows look and feel in some way, The GIMP walks a different path. It has its own unique way of working, which takes a little getting used to. But it's very much worth the effort, because The GIMP offers photo-editing tools on par with professional products like Adobe Photoshop. It's certainly more than powerful enough for tweaking digital camera snapshots.

To start The GIMP, select Applications ► Graphics ► GNU Image Manipulation Program. Once the program is running, you'll notice that it's actually little more than a large toolbar on the left side of the screen. Everything else that runs within The GIMP—whether it's a

window containing the image you're editing or an additional configuration dialog box—uses its own program window. This also means that each program item that you activate gets its own button on the panel at the bottom of the screen.

To open a picture, select **File** ► **Open** and select your image from the hard disk. Once an image file is opened, you can manipulate it using the tools on the toolbar (which are similar to those found in other image editors). On the bottom half of the main program window, you'll find the settings for each tool, which can be altered, usually via click-and-drag sliders.

To apply filters or other corrective changes, right-click anywhere on the image to bring up a context menu with a variety of options. For example, simple tools to improve brightness and contrast can be found on the **Colors** submenu, as shown in Figure 11-10.

For an in-depth look at The GIMP package, see Chapter 20.

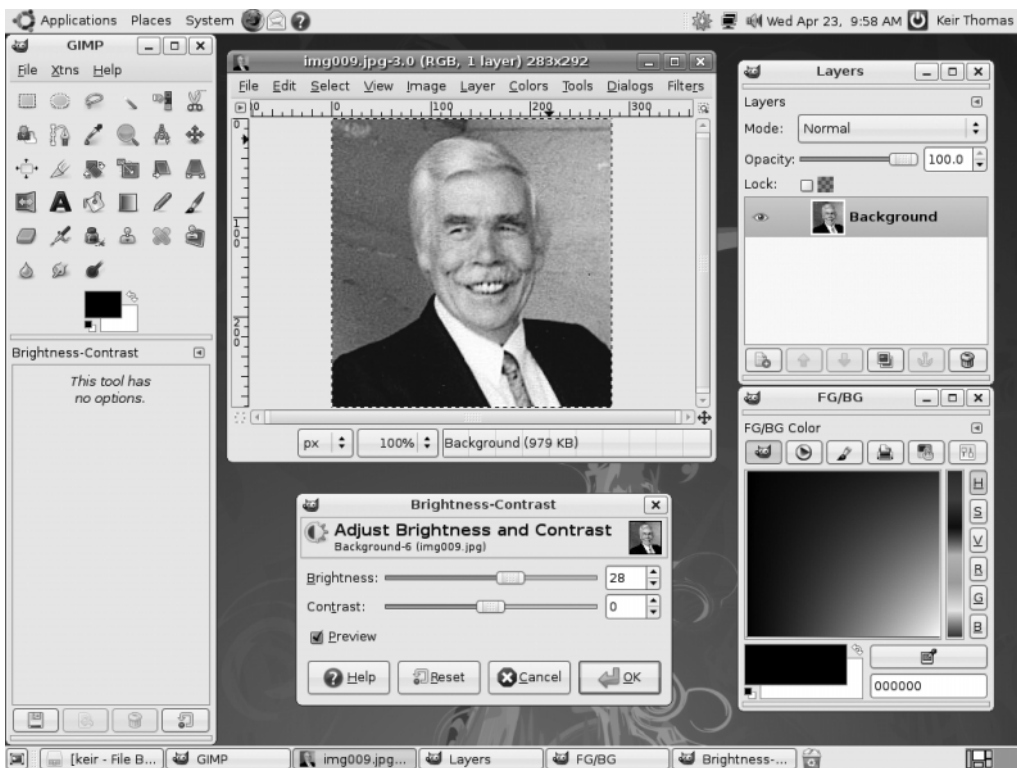


Figure 11-10. *The GIMP*



## Other Handy Applications

Many additional applications might prove useful on a day-to-day basis. Here, we'll review some of the more common ones.

### Calculator

The GNOME Calculator (also known as Gcalctool) can be found on the Applications ► Accessories menu. In its default mode, shown in Figure 11-11, it shouldn't present any challenges to anyone who has ever used a real-life calculator, although the Bksp key might be new. This simply deletes the last number you typed (handy if you miskey during a calculation).



**Figure 11-11.** *GNOME Calculator*

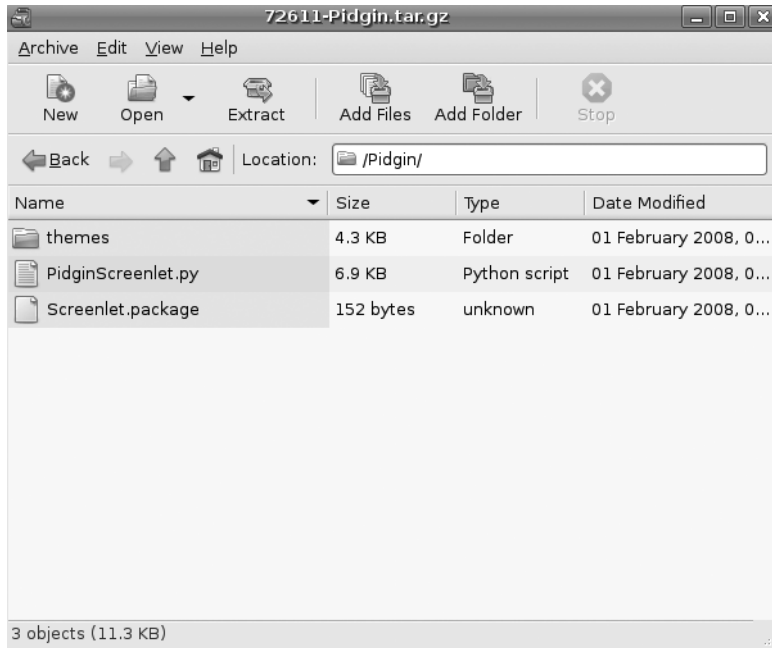
Calculator also has three other modes that you can switch into using the View menu: Advanced, Financial, and Scientific. All offer calculator functions relevant to their settings. The Advanced mode is simply a more complicated version of the basic Calculator. It can store numbers in several memory locations, for example, and can also carry out less common calculations, such as square roots and reciprocals.

### Archive Manager

Archive Manager (also known as File Roller), shown in Figure 11-12, is Ubuntu's archive tool. It's the default program that opens whenever you double-click .zip files (or .tar, .gz, or .bz2 files, which are the native archive file formats under Linux).

To extract files from an archive, select them (hold down the Ctrl key to select more than one file), and then click the Extract button on the toolbar.

To create an archive on the fly, select files or folders in a Nautilus file browser window, right-click the selection, and select Create Archive. Give the archive a name, and the archive will be created. To add new files to an existing archive, double-click an archive file, and then drag-and-drop files into the Archive Manager window. When you've finished, simply close the Archive Manager window.

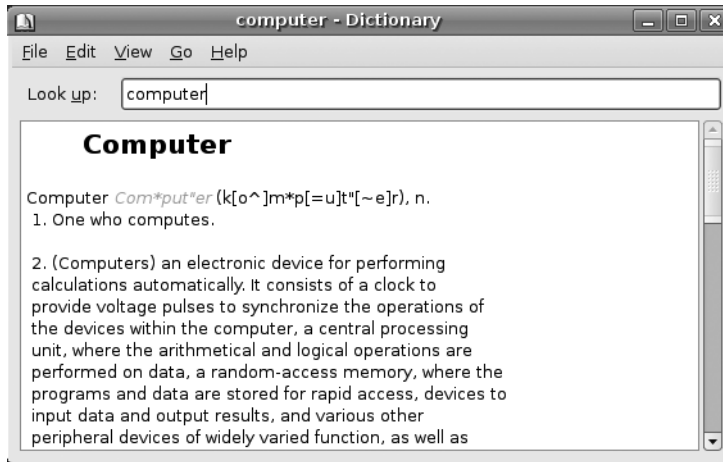


**Figure 11-12.** Archive Manager

## Dictionary

You can use the Dictionary tool to look up the definitions of words using the *Collaborative International Dictionary of English*. This dictionary is based on a 1913 edition of *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, but with some additional modern definitions. The Dictionary tool is useful for quick lookups, although if you want a precise and modern definition of a word, you might consider using a more contemporary source.

You'll find the Dictionary program on the Applications ► Accessories menu. Type the word in the Look Up text box at the top of the window, and its definition will appear in the area below, as shown in Figure 11-13. As soon as you start typing, the program will begin to look up the word in the dictionary, and this can cause a momentary delay before the letters appear on your screen.



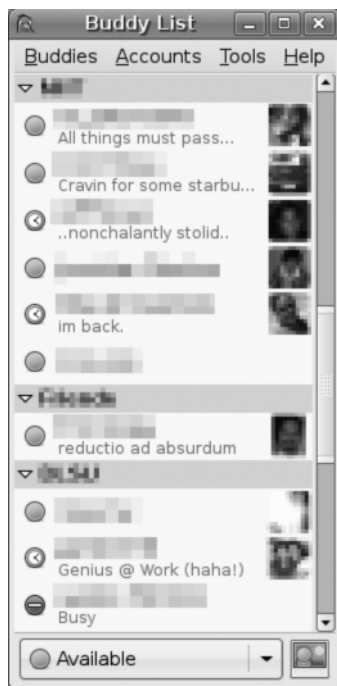
**Figure 11-13.** *Dictionary*

## Pidgin Internet Messenger

Pidgin is the instant messaging software provided with Ubuntu. Unlike most other messaging programs, Pidgin isn't exclusive to one chat protocol. You can use it to connect to MSN, AOL/ICQ, Yahoo!, and many other services. The program can be found on the Applications ► Internet menu.

Details for setting up Pidgin are in Chapter 8. Once the program is up and running, you can chat with any of your buddies by double-clicking their icon, as shown in Figure 11-14.

The rest of the program can be administered by right-clicking the notification area icon that appears when the program starts. For example, you can change your status or sign off from there.

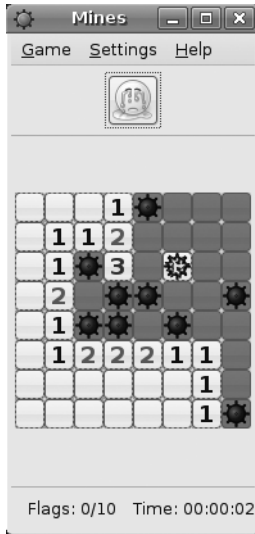


**Figure 11-14.** *Pidgin*

## Mines

Mines is the Ubuntu equivalent of Minesweeper, and is almost exactly the same as the Windows program, as you can see in Figure 11-15. The rules are identical, too: on each grid are several hidden mines, and it's your job to locate them. After you've clicked one square at random, you'll see a series of empty squares and several with numbers in them. Those with numbers indicate that a bomb is near. Your job is to deduce where the bombs are, and then mark them by right-clicking them. You have to do this as quickly as possible, because you're being timed.

To change the grid size, click Settings ► Preferences. Your choices are Small, Medium, Large, and Custom.



**Figure 11-15.** *Mines*

## Ekiga

Ekiga provides Internet telephony (known as Voice over IP, or VoIP), via the SIP and H.323 protocols. It also provides video conferencing, and is compatible with all major features specified within SIP and H.323, such as holding, forwarding, and transferring calls. Ekiga can be found on the Applications ► Internet menu.

To activate the camera mode for a video conference, click the webcam icon on the left side of the window. To text chat, click the top icon on the left side of the window.

When the program starts, it will walk you through setup via a wizard. Simply answer the questions with your details. Once the program is up and running, as shown in Figure 11-16, type the URL of the person you would like to call into the address bar and click Call ► Call.

Note that Ekiga is not compatible with proprietary VoIP software, such as Skype. To learn how to install Skype under Ubuntu, see Chapter 18.



**Figure 11-16.** *Ekiga*

## Summary

In this chapter, we've taken a look at some Ubuntu programs that provide vital functions that you might have used daily under Windows. The aim was to get you started with this software as quickly as possible by pointing out key features. You've seen how some programs mirror the look and feel of their Windows counterparts almost to the letter, while others resolutely strike out on their own path. It takes just a little time to become familiar with Ubuntu software, and then using these programs will become second nature.

In the next chapter, we'll move on to more fundamental Ubuntu tasks: manipulating files. However, once again, this is not too dissimilar from the Windows experience, which makes getting used to the system very easy.