

# Fedora 23 announcement, news and known issues

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The disadvantage of the free Fedora Linux distribution is its short lifecycle. When we adopted this version, we knew we might have to upgrade all computers approximately once a year, which is actually a small price to pay for a free and up-to-date operating system. The advantage of this disadvantage is of course, that our software collection is always very up-to-date.



And now (December 2015) it is about time to start upgrading again. Actually, we have already started on student pcs and a few others, and 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. Therefore we think it is most efficient that we just execute the upgrades whenever a computer seems to be unused for part of the day, without wasting too much time on planning. Experience has shown that most plans fall apart due to changes in schedule anyway. However, if you know you desperately need your computer due to an upcoming deadline or so, please let us know. Otherwise, just log out whenever you don't need your computer for a while, and chances are, we will at some point detect this and perform the upgrade.

## General information

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- Fedora 23 release notes [html version, pdf and versions in various other languages available from the menu][http://docs.fedoraproject.org/en-US/Fedora/23/html/Release\\_Notes/](http://docs.fedoraproject.org/en-US/Fedora/23/html/Release_Notes/)
- Common Bugs and Known Issues [https://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Common\\_F23\\_bugs](https://fedoraproject.org/wiki/Common_F23_bugs)

Local links:

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

## New in F23, or in our Fedora setup:

- The KDE desktop in its latest version, calls itself P<sub>L</sub>asma so that is what you will have to select from the menu on the login screen if you want this desktop.
- Gnome 3.18 (see below for details)

- The current version has Google Drive integration in the file manager, and various online calendars can be integrated in the desktop calendar utility.
- TeX (TeX Live 2014) will now be installed with all available extras, so no need to ask us for specific packages any more, it should all be there already.
- New applications (new in Fedora 23 or newly added in our standard installation):
  - X2GO, a free Nomachine-like VNC interface. Also includes X2GODESKTOPSHARING, to take over your default desktop from another system.  
X2GO clients for Windows, MacOS X and Linux can be downloaded at <http://x2go.org/>.  
As an added bonus, it offers disk sharing, client side printing, and audio forwarding.
  - Mendely desktop, scientific paper/document management package
  - TexMaths: libreoffice latex plugin (we used to recommend a personal install of this plugin, now it is available for all)
- Python:
  - All python programs in the desktop and system utilities, are now using python 3.  
Command python will continue to invoke python2 so all your own scripts should not be affected.
  - Python local user directories: It is now possible, to have your own set of python modules, and uses tools like pip to maintain them. If .local/lib/python2.7 (or python3.4) exists, it will be treated as if it was added to your \$PYTHONPATH automatically, and then you will be able to use pip install -user packagename to install a package in that location, for your own use. This is actually better than including such a directory in your \$PYTHONPATH, since having python 2.7 modules in the path may break python 3.4, and vice versa.
  - When available, we have installed both the python 2.7 and the python 3.4 version of a package
- Significant updates:
  - Skype is now installed by default (and upgraded to 4.3). Audio hardware is not; bring your own headset (or have one ordered from your budget)!
  - LibreOffice 5, with many improvements and new features
  - Many other packages available on demand.
  - Fine-tuning of nvidia graphics drivers, depending on the hardware. Nvidia has split their drivers in a couple of “generations” and a system should get a driver from the right generation to work right. Unfortunately, the oldest computers in our institute don't work very well with even their intended driver. On these systems, please refrain from using the Gnome or Cinnamon desktops, or ask us to install the nouveau driver, which cannot do accelerated 3D graphics, but works fine otherwise (and who wants to do accelerated 3D on 7 year old hardware anyway?)
  - Nvidia CUDA version 7.5, on systems that can make use of this.
  - Some additional eye candy; such as graphical boot screens and logos.
- Removed obsolete packages:
  - ScientificPython: a rarely used alternative to the more common scientific packages, incompatible with python 3. Not in use by any astronomical software (mostly biophysics)
  - perl-PGPLOT. A package that hasn't been maintained for a very long time.
  - kate-pate: python scripting for the kate editor. Seems to require a separate license.
- Two annoying bugs in the postscript viewer evince are solved: files with an embedded “rotation matrix” display properly again, and also postscript files without a “showpage” command are now shown on screen (ignoring the exact postscript specifications, but mimicking the behaviour of most printers, which will also print such a file without a problem)

## Known issues in Fedora 23

- Cinnamon in Fedora 21 was becoming very slow on many systems. The version in Fedora 23 seems to fix that, so it should be ok to use Cinnamon again. Please report if you still encounter such problems after the upgrade
- VNC issues: Desktop environments that require hardware acceleration (3D desktop effects) are too heavy to be used inside a virtual desktop (VNC, NX, X2GO). See [VNC desktop issues](#) for details and workarounds.

## 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 starting with version 2, there are now 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](#)
- The KDE desktop in its latest version, calls itself PLaasma so that is what you will have to select from the menu on the login screen if you want this desktop.
- 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 24. The new emacs version 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)

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