

Ubuntu Desktop Memory Comparison

Source: <https://l3net.wordpress.com/2013/05/07/ubuntu-desktop-memory-comparison/>

[Ubuntu](#) 13.04 comes in a number of different variants, covering a wide range of hardware platforms. I am particularly interested in these variants because my computer is a 6 years old dual-core AMD 64bit with 1GB of memory.

As the Internet stopped getting faster, two years ago I've decided not to buy another computer. I don't "read" flash heavy sites, I guess nobody likes them anyway. For games, movies, and music what I have is more than enough. I do need to keep an eye on memory however. Lately, some developers started to throw into their software everything but the kitchen sink.

Unity

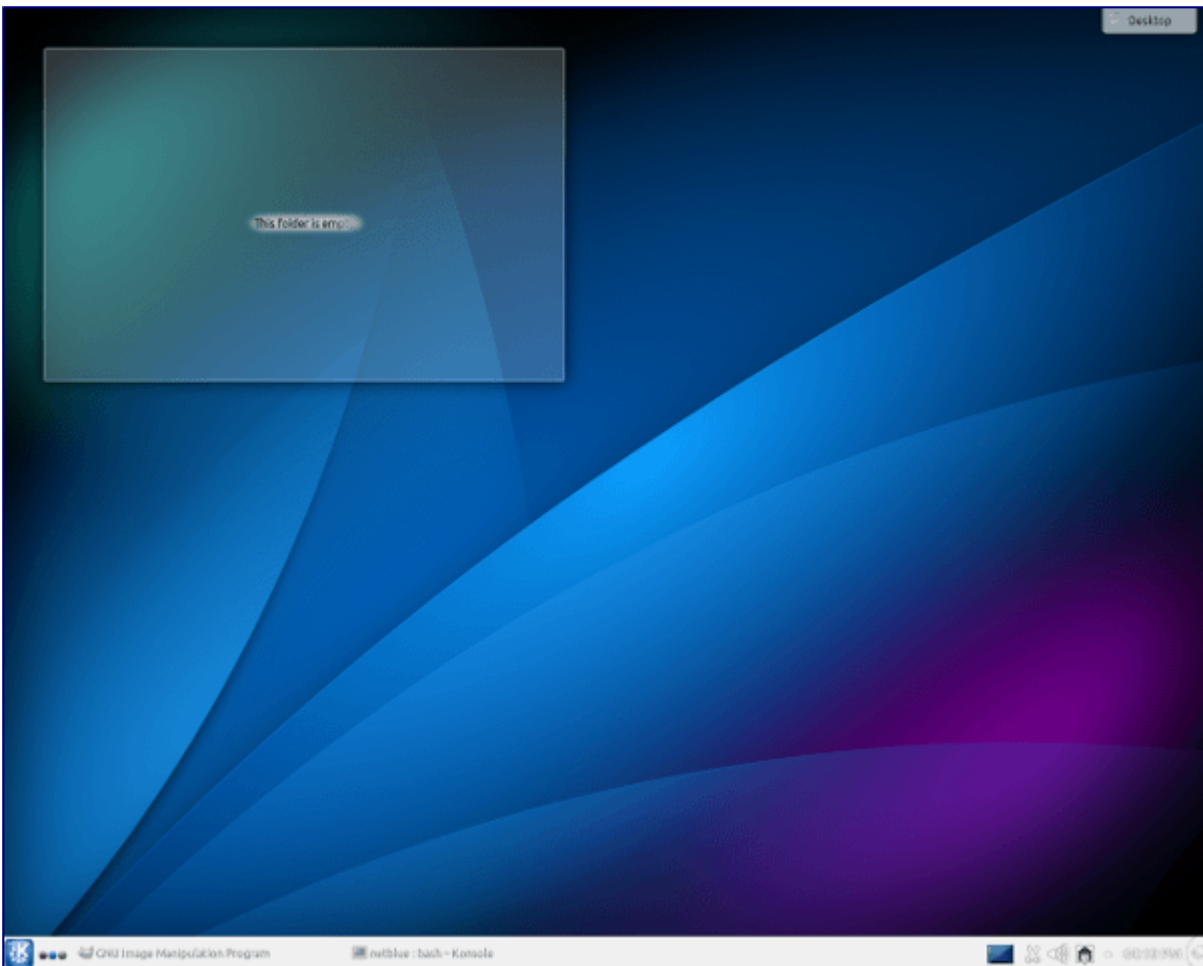
The main Ubuntu desktop environment is [Unity](#). Developed by Canonical Ltd., it is a great desktop for new users who aren't especially computer savvy, and it requires lots of memory to run. As measured using *free* command after boot up, Unity runs in 437MB and it is visibly slow – definitely not a good choice for an old Widows XP computer!

KDE

With Unity out of the game, I am moving to [KDE](#). It is packaged as an Ubuntu branch under the name [Kubuntu](#). A download image is available for installation, or you can install it using *apt-get* on an existing Ubuntu computer:

```
sudo apt-get install kubuntu-desktop
```

Nice, elegant, and slow, it starts in 435MB of memory.



Ubuntu 13.04 KDE

Gnome

Gnome joined the Ubuntu family earlier this year under the name Ubuntu GNOME. You can find more information [here](#). I have installed it as follows:

```
sudo apt-get install ubuntu-gnome-desktop ubuntu-gnome-default-  
settings
```

It loads in 304MB of memory and it runs fine even on my old machine. It is not a traditional desktop, it doesn't have a taskbar and a menu. For this reason many people don't like it. As for me, it is time to move to a series of desktop environments generally characterized as **lightweight**.



Ubuntu 13.04 Gnome

Razor-qt

[Razor-qt](#) is described as “an advanced, easy-to-use, and fast desktop environment based on Qt technologies. It has been tailored for users who value simplicity, speed, and an intuitive interface. Unlike most desktop environments, Razor-qt also works fine with weak machines.” On my computer it runs very well in 288MB of memory.

Razor-qt is not in this moment an official Ubuntu branch. It is however fully supported, all you have to do is

```
sudo apt-get install razorqt
```



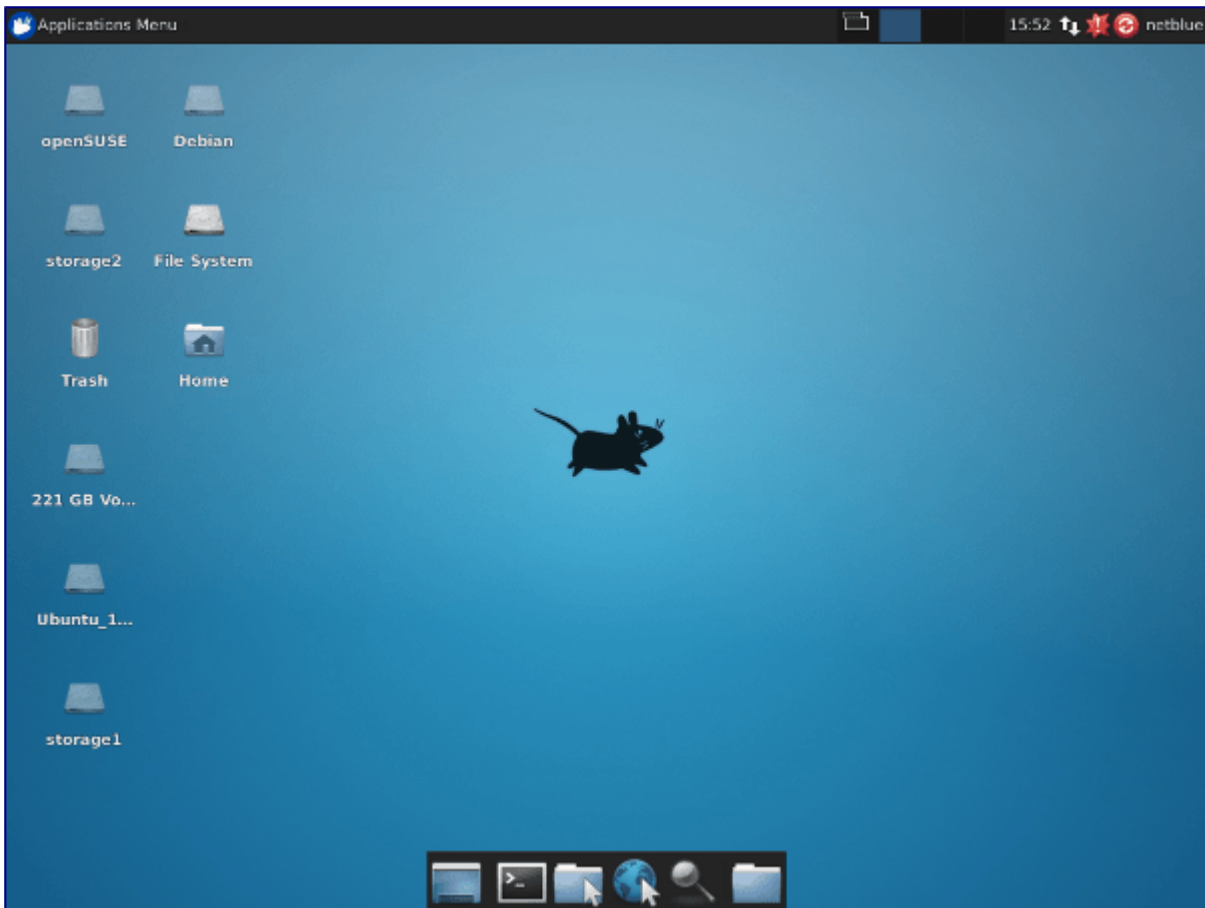
Razor-qt Desktop

Xfce

[Xfce](#) desktop environment has been packaged as an Ubuntu flavor since 2006 under the name [Xubuntu](#). It is low on resources and fast. On my computer it loads in 281MB. I have installed it as:

```
sudo apt-get install xubuntu-desktop
```

It is an excellent choice for an old computer. Arguably, most people going lightweigh end up with Xfce.



Ubuntu 13.04 XFCE

LXDE

Another popular lightweight Ubuntu flavor is [Lubuntu](#). It uses even less memory than Xubuntu, in my case 184MB. The desktop environment is [LXDE](#). This is what I usually run on my computers.

```
sudo apt-get install lubuntu-desktop
```



Ubuntu 13.04 LXDE

Enlightenment

[Enlightenment](#) is a lean, fast, modular and very extensible desktop environment for X11 and Linux. It is classed as a “desktop shell” providing the things you need to operate your desktop or laptop. On my computer it runs in 182MB of memory, very close to LXDE.

It is not an official Ubuntu flavor yet. Fully supported in Ubuntu 13.04, this is how you can install the latest version (E17):

```
sudo apt-get install e17
```




E17 Desktop

MATE and Cinnamon

[MATE](#) is supported in Ubuntu 13.04, and it runs in 264MB of memory. It is installed from developer's repository as follows:

```
sudo add-apt-repository "deb http://packages.mate-  
desktop.org/repo/ubuntu raring main"  
sudo add-apt-repository "deb http://repo.mate-desktop.org/ubuntu  
raring main"  
sudo add-apt-repository "deb http://mirror1.mate-desktop.org/ubuntu  
raring main"  
sudo apt-get update  
sudo apt-get install mate-archive-keyring  
sudo apt-get update  
sudo apt-get install mate-core
```

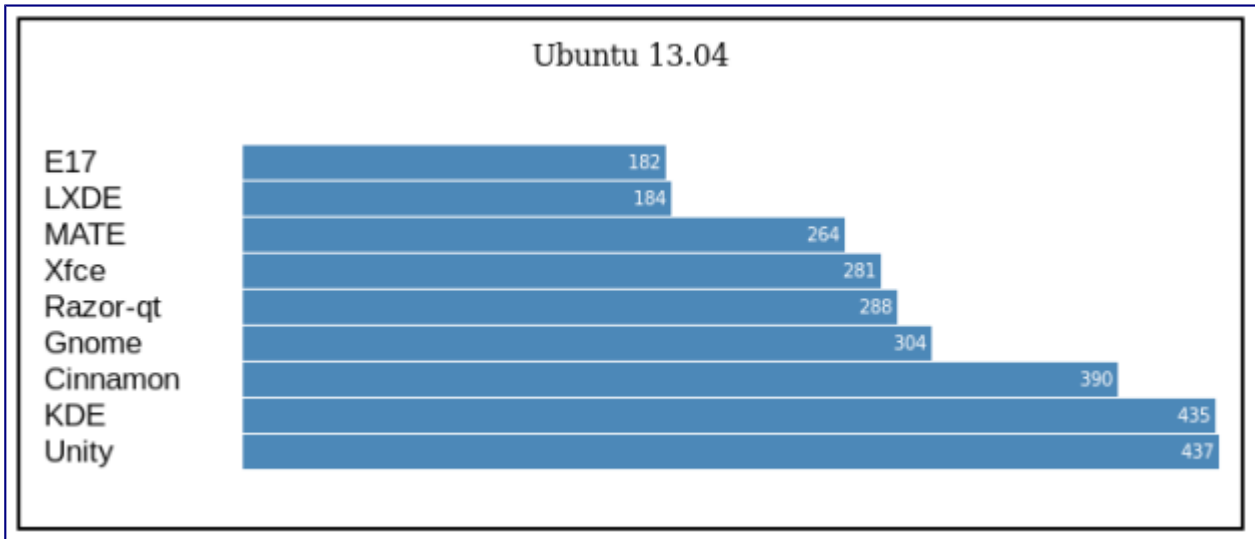
Starting with Ubuntu 13.04 release, Cinnamon is supported officially in Ubuntu repositories. It runs in 390MB. It is installed as follows:

```
sudo apt-get install cinnamon
```

Conclusion

Choice is the best Linux feature ever. Regardless of your circumstances, you can always find a Linux OS to fit that computer of yours. In this case I am looking at Ubuntu 13.04 and its flavors. Stable, mature, and free, Ubuntu is supported by a reputable software company and one of the best user and developer communities.

I have measured the memory using *free* command in a X terminal after boot up. The number includes everything running on the computer in that specific moment. This is the memory chart:



Ubuntu 13.04 Memory (MB)