

Adventures with IceWM

John R Hudson

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1 Introduction

In 2019 I bought a second hand 2007 Dell Latitude d430 with just 2GB of RAM but a 64-bit processor which had originally had Vista on it; for five years the LXQt desktop served me well. Apart from taking three minutes to start up, it worked fine, including making video recordings when at special events. However, when I installed openSUSE Leap 15.6 on it, I immediately noticed that it was not running as well as it had been previously. So I decided to try running it with IceWM instead. That solved the problem.

2 IceWM

IceWM is a window manager for the X Window System first developed in 1997 with the aims of speed and simplicity.

Apart from the theme, all configuration is undertaken by editing configuration files. Rather than editing the global configuration files, copies of the global files edited by the user are held in the `.icewm` folder in the user's `home` folder. These override the global configuration files; theme (the `zpak` theme chosen from the menu), background image, number of virtual desktops, toolbar and system tray have all been modified in figure 1.

3 Preferences

Preferences are set globally in `/etc/icewm/preferences` but each user can override any of the settings in this file by copying the `/etc/icewm/prefoverride` file to `.icewm` and editing it. Only two lines of the `prefoverride` file have been edited to create the configuration in figure 1:

```
WorkspaceNames=" 1 ", " 2 ", " 3 ", " 4 ", " 5 ", " 6 ", " 7 ", " 8 "
```

has increased the number of virtual desktops to eight and

```
DesktopBackgroundImage="/home/john/.local/share/wallpapers/Mezzavalle_2.jpeg"
```

has changed the background image.

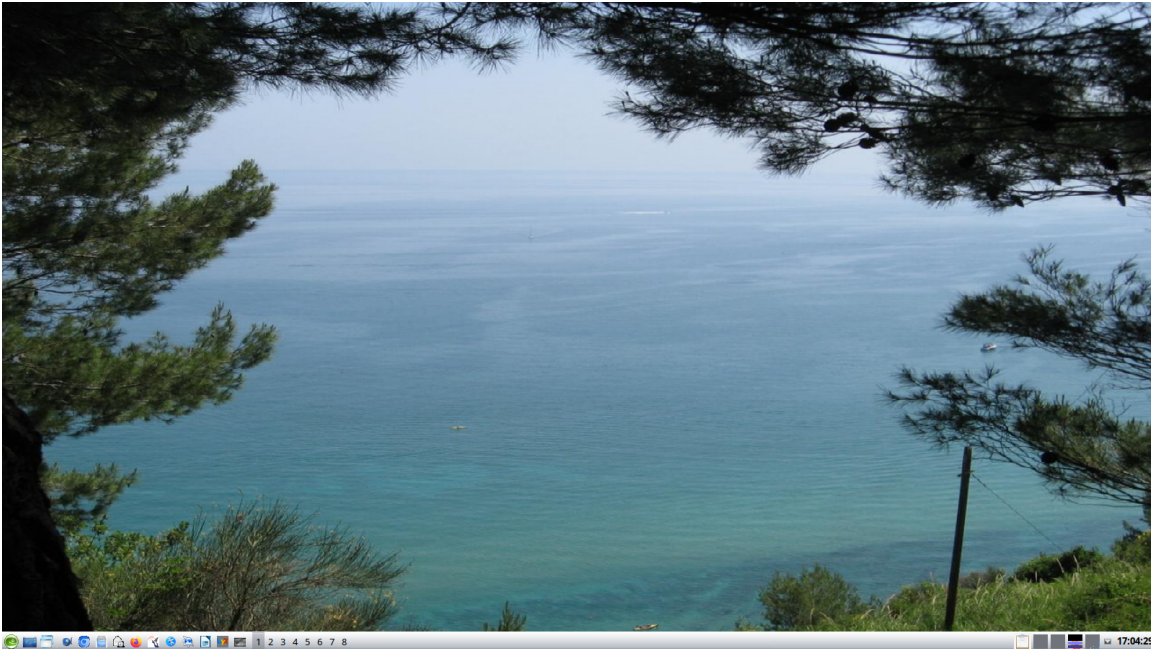


Figure 1: IceWM in action

4 Toolbar

IceWM supplies a limited number of icons in `.xpm` format held in `/usr/share/icewm/icons/` but you will probably need to add the ones you want to use to this folder. I created most of the icons in figure 1 by copying logos and then creating one 32×32 and one 16×16 pixel icon for each program. The icons are all named `<program>_32x32.xpm` or `<program>_16x16.xpm`.

Copy `/etc/icewm/toolbar` to your `.icewm` folder and edit it. Each line begins with `prog` followed by three space separated entries: a tooltip in inverted commas, the name of the icon without the size element and the command to activate the program. As you can see from the `ImageMagick` example, you can follow one command with a command to the first command.

```
prog "Bluefish" bluefish bluefish
prog "Chromium" chromium chromium
prog "File manager" dolphin dolphin
prog "Email client" evolution evolution
prog "Firefox" firefox firefox
prog "ImageMagick" imagemagick xterm display
prog "Editor" kate kate
prog "Web browser" konqueror konqueror
prog "Wordprocessor" loffice loffice
prog "Typesetter" lyx lyx
prog "Console" xterm qterminal
```

5 Startup

If you want to start a program whenever you start IceWM, you can copy `/etc/icewm/startup` to `.icewm` and edit it. I edited it to start Klipper (KDE's clipboard application). However, Klipper will only work if you edit:

```
OnlyShowIn=KDE;
```

in `/etc/xdg/autostart/klipper.desktop` to read

```
OnlyShowIn=KDE;icewm; 1
```

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International



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