



Linux Ubuntu 26.04 Manual Pages on command 'xdg-terminal-exec.1'

\$ man xdg-terminal-exec.1

XDG-TERMINAL-EXEC(1)

General Commands Manual

XDG-TERMINAL-EXEC(1)

NAME

xdg-terminal-exec - Default Terminal Execution Utility

SYNOPSIS

xdg-terminal-exec [options] [--] [command [arguments ...]]

DESCRIPTION

Shell-based implementation of the proposed Default Terminal Execution Specification.

Launches preferred terminal emulator, with or without optionally supplied command.

Terminal emulators are selected among Desktop Entries that are installed on the system, or added by user according to XDG Desktop Entry Spec. Only valid Entries with TerminalEmulator category and X-TerminalArgExec= key set are considered (X-TerminalArgExec= key is not required in compat mode).

Command execution argument is determined by Entry's X-TerminalArgExec= key, (assumed to be -e by default in compat mode). If an actual -e or matching execution argument is given on the command line, it will be silently discarded along with any unsupported dashed option given before unambiguous command.

It is assumed that the emulator handles command line after the execution argument as is (preserved separate arguments).

OPTIONS

Monolithic options starting with "--" are used to modify behavior of terminal (if supported by terminal and its entry):

? --app-id=app_id: set app-id (Wayland) or class (X11).

? --title=title: set title of terminal.

? --dir=workdir: set workdir of terminal.

? --hold: instruct terminal to hold after command ends.

Options for printing data instead of executing terminal:

? --print-id: print selected Desktop Entry ID. Action is appended delimited by ":".

? --print-path: print path to selected Desktop Entry. Action is appended delimited by ":".

? --print-content: print content of selected Desktop Entry. Conflicts with --print-cmd.

? --print-cmd[=printf_sequence]: print resulting command line, delimited by given printf sequence, "\n" by default. If sequence is "\n", output is also terminated with a new line.

? --print-delimiter=printf_sequence: printf sequence to be used as the delimiter between multiple requested statements, "\n" by default. If sequence is "\n", overall output is also terminated with a newline (without duplication in case command output already terminated on a newline).

Selected data is printed in order:

? id

? path

? content

? cmd

CONFIGURATION

Preferred terminals are configured by listing them in config files named `${desktop}-xdg-terminals.list` or `xdg-terminals.list` placed in XDG Config hierarchy.

`${desktop}` here is a lowercased string that is matched (case-insensitively) against items of `${XDG_CURRENT_DESKTOP}` (a colon-separated list of names for the current DE) in order of decreasing priority.

The file is a simple newline-separated list. Empty lines and lines starting with "#" are ignored, dangling whitespaces are trimmed.

Terminals are listed by their Desktop Entry ID:

```
terminal.desktop
```

Optionally with Action ID suffixed via ":":

```
terminal.desktop:action
```

Files are searched in XDG Config directories in the order of decreasing priority. In each directory, prefixed files are parsed first, in the order listed in `${XDG_CURRENT_DESKTOP}`.

Unprefixed files parsed last in each dir.

The first listed, found, and valid Desktop Entry is used.

Otherwise fallback to the first found and valid Desktop Entry is performed.

Entries can be excluded from fallback by listing their ID prefixed with "-":

```
-terminal.desktop
```

Prefixing entry with "+" will prevent it from later exclusion (first encountered directive wins):

```
+terminal.desktop
```

Special directives understood by this implementation (the first encountered directive is used):

```
/enable_cache, /disable_cache
```

The cache feature allows storing selected terminal command line in `${XDG_CACHE_HOME}` to bypass reading and parsing of configuration and Desktop Entries until changes are detected in the listing of Desktop Entry files or config files (enabled by default).

```
/execarg_compat, /execarg_strict
```

Compat mode (currently enabled by default) allows support for legacy [X-]ExecArg key and allows entries without execution argument, providing -e default.

```
/execarg_default:entry.desktop:arg
```

Customize defaults for execution arguments of specific terminal entries (only in compat mode).

FILES

Default paths for configuration files (in order of decreasing priority):

In `${XDG_CONFIG_HOME}`:

? `${HOME}/.config/${desktop}-xdg-terminals.list`

? `${HOME}/.config/xdg-terminals.list`

In `${XDG_CONFIG_DIRS}`:

? `/etc/xdg/${desktop}-xdg-terminals.list`

? `/etc/xdg/xdg-terminals.list`

In `${XDG_DATA_DIRS}`:

? `/usr/share/xdg-terminal-exec/${desktop}-xdg-terminals.list`

? `/usr/share/xdg-terminal-exec/xdg-terminals.list`

Default directories for Desktop Entries (in order of decreasing priority):

in `${XDG_DATA_HOME}`:

? `${HOME}/.local/share/applications/`

in \${XDG_DATA_DIRS}:

? /usr/local/share/applications/

? /usr/share/applications/

Cache file:

? \${XDG_CACHE_HOME}/xdg-terminal-exec

ENVIRONMENT

XTE_CACHE_ENABLED (truthy or falsy value)

Enable or disable cache feature.

XTE_DEBUG, DEBUG (truthy or falsy value)

Print debug info to stderr.

EXTERNAL LINKS

Proposal PR:

https://gitlab.freedesktop.org/terminal-wg/specifications/-/merge_requests/3/diffs

XDG Base Directory Spec:

<https://specifications.freedesktop.org/basedir-spec/latest/>

XDG Desktop Entry Spec:

<https://specifications.freedesktop.org/desktop-entry-spec/latest/>

Desktop Entry ID:

<https://specifications.freedesktop.org/desktop-entry-spec/latest/ar01s02.html#desktop-file-id>

Desktop Entry Action ID:

<https://specifications.freedesktop.org/desktop-entry-spec/latest/ar01s11.html>

AUTHORS

Vladimir-csp (<https://github.com/Vladimir-csp>, <https://gitlab.freedesktop.org/Vladimir-csp>)

Thanks to Nathan Teodosio (<https://github.com/nteodosio>) for jump-starting the creation of this manpage.

2025-12-08

XDG-TERMINAL-EXEC(1)