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Home   How Tails works   Get Tails   Documentation   Support   Contribute   News

🏠   doc   first steps   Installing additional software

English DE ES FR IT PT RU

Installing additional software

Which additional software can I install in Tails?

Tails includes a limited set of applications but you can install more software.

This software is distributed in packages that are made available from the Debian repositories, which are similar to an app store.

To know which packages are available in Debian:

- Browse locally with the *Synaptic Package Manager*:

  1. Set up an administration password when you start Tails.

  2. Choose **Applications ▸ System Tools ▸ Synaptic Package Manager**.

  3. Wait until *Synaptic* finishes downloading new package information from the Debian servers.

  4. You can:

     - Browse the packages by sections from the left sidebar.

     - Search on titles and descriptions of packages with the **Search** button.

- Search the Internet for alternatives to other software.

  For example: "*debian alternatives to photoshop*".

- Ask a friend who is knowledgeable about Linux.

- Search the Debian website .

Being careful about what you install

> The packages included in Tails are carefully tested for security. Installing additional packages might break the security built in Tails. For example, installing OpenVPN might modify the firewall rules that Tails uses to force network traffic to go through Tor. So, be careful with what you install.

If you are unsure:

- Packages that use the network need to be configured to go through Tor. They are otherwise blocked from accessing the network.

- Some software might, for example, modify the firewall and break the security built in Tails. But other software like games or office tools are probably fine.

- Software not officially included in Tails might have not been tested for security. We also cannot provide support or documentation for it.

- Only applications that are packaged for Debian can be installed and they are under public scrutiny.

Examples of additional useful software

- *VLC*, a multimedia player with advanced features.

- *Pitivi*, a video editor.

- *Scribus*, a page layout application.

- *Kazam*, an application to record screencasts.

- *Cheese*, an application to take pictures and videos from your webcam.

- *Mumble* is a voice chat application.

Language packs

- for *LibreOffice*: `libreoffice-l10n-`*lang*
- for *Thunderbird*: `thunderbird-l10n-`*lang*

Replace **lang** with the code for your language. For example, `es` for Spanish or `de` for German.

Spell-checking dictionaries

- `hunspell-`*lang*

The `hunspell` dictionaries are used for spell-checking by *Tor Browser*, *LibreOffice*, *Thunderbird*, and many other applications.

Replace **lang** with the code for your language. For example, `es` for Spanish or `de` for German.

Installing additional software

To install a package using *Synaptic*:

1. Set up an administration password when you start Tails.

2. Choose **Applications ▸ System Tools ▸ Synaptic Package Manager**.

3. Click **Search** and search for the name of the package.

4. Right-click (on Mac, click with two fingers) on the name of the package in the search results and choose **Mark for Installation**.

5. *Synaptic* calculates the additional changes for your package to work. Click **Mark** to confirm those changes.

6. Click **Apply** to download, install, and configure the package.

> If you are comfortable with the command line, you can use the `apt` command instead.

Installing additional software automatically when starting Tails

To install an additional package automatically when starting Tails:

1. Turn on the Additional Software feature of the Persistent Storage.

2. Install the package using *Synaptic* or the `apt` command.

3. After the package is installed, a notification appears to ask if you want to install this package every time you start Tails in the future.
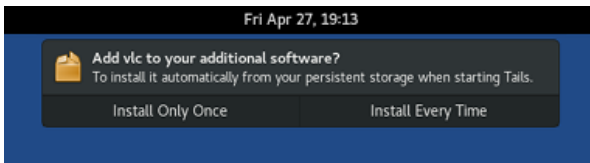
- If you choose **Install Every Time**, the package is saved in the Persistent Storage and will be reinstalled automatically every time you start Tails.

  The package will also be updated automatically when you connect to the Internet.

- If you choose **Install Only Once**, the package is also saved in the Persistent Storage but won't be reinstalled automatically every time you start Tails.

The same package can be reinstalled faster for some time because you won't have to download it again.

Additional configuration

Some packages require additional configuration to work. To keep their configuration across Tails sessions, advanced users can use the Dotfiles feature of the Persistent Storage.
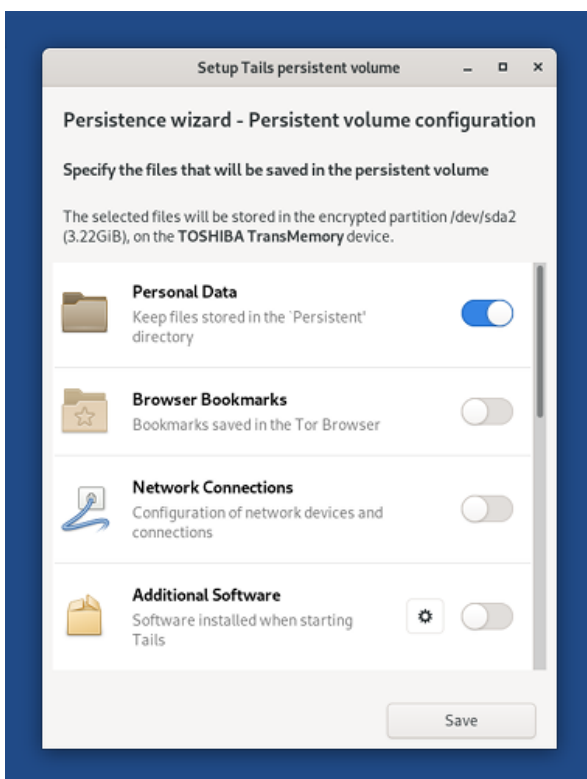
Checking your list of additional software

To see which packages are installed automatically every time you start Tails, choose **Applications ▸ System Tools ▸ Additional Software**.
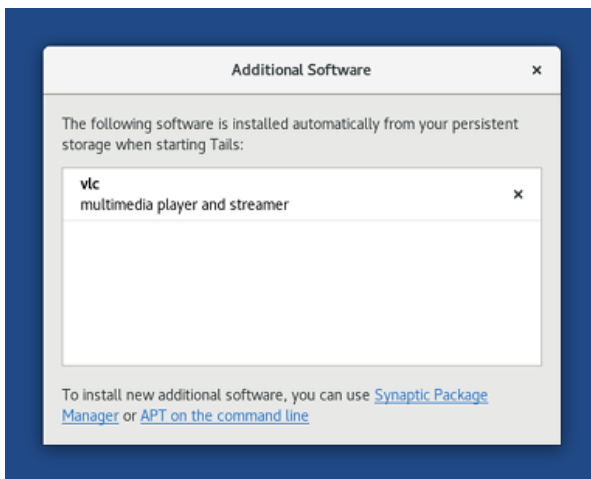
Click the ✕ button to remove a package from the list.

The same list is also available from the Persistent Storage settings, by clicking on the ⚙ button of the **Additional Software** feature.

## Removing additional software

When you installed the package, if you chose:

- **Install Only Once**, you can remove it by restarting Tails.

- **Install Every Time**, you can remove it:

  - Using *Additional Software*:

    1. Choose **Applications ▸ System Tools ▸ Additional Software**.

    2. Click the ✕ to the right of the name of the package.
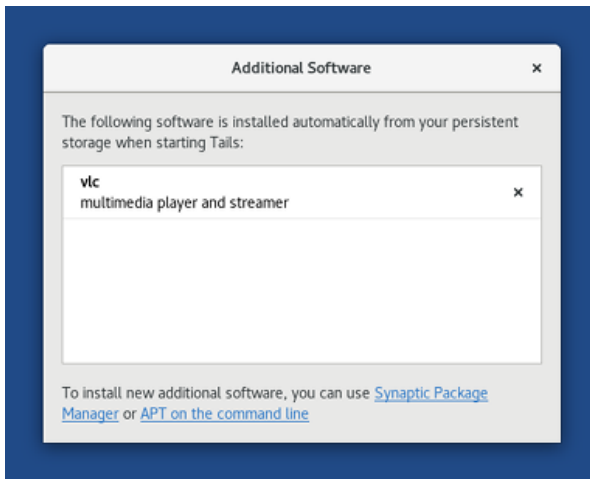
- Using *Synaptic*:

    1. Set up an administration password when you start Tails.

    2. Choose **Applications ▸ System Tools ▸ Synaptic Package Manager**.

    3. Click **Search** and search for the name of the package.

    4. Right-click (on Mac, click with two fingers) on the name of the package in the search results and choose **Mark for Removal**.

    5. Click **Apply** to remove the package.

- From the command line using *apt*.

After the package is removed, a notification appears to ask if you want to remove this package from your list of additional software.
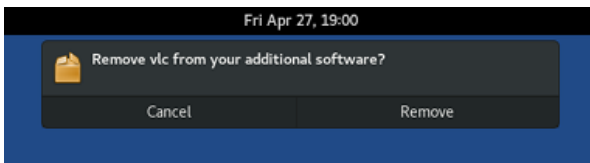
Freeing space in your Persistent Storage

After you installed many packages that you are not using anymore, you can free some space in your Persistent Storage:

1. Set up an administration password when you start Tails.

2. Choose **Applications ▸ System Tools ▸ Root Terminal** to open a *Root Terminal*.

3. Execute the following command:

```
apt clean
```

Configuring additional APT repositories (for advanced users)

> The packages available in Debian are submitted to public scrutiny.
>
> Configuring additional APT repositories might break the security built in Tails and might install software that has not even been approved by Debian. Be even more careful with what you install.
>
> This step is usually not needed to install additional software and might be necessary only in very rare occasions.

Sometimes, you might need to configure additional APT repositories. For example, to install packages from the `non-free` section of Debian. To do so:

1. [Set up an administration password](#) when you start Tails.

2. Create an *apt-sources.list.d* folder in your Persistent Storage:

   ```
   sudo install -d -m 755 /live/persistence/TailsData_unlocked/apt-sources.list.d
   ```

3. As root, edit */live/persistence/TailsData_unlocked/persistence.conf*, the configuration of the Persistent Storage, and add the *apt-sources.list.d* folder as a feature of type `link`:

   ```
   /etc/apt/sources.list.d  source=apt-sources.list.d,link
   ```

4. Write your additional `sources.list` files in the *apt-sources.list.d* folder. For example, to add the `non-free` sections of Debian 10 (Buster), backports, and security updates, you can create a file named */live/persistence/TailsData_unlocked/apt-sources.list.d/non-free.list* with the following content:

   ```
   deb tor+http://ftp.us.debian.org/debian/ buster non-free
   deb tor+http://ftp.us.debian.org/debian/ buster-backports non-free
   deb tor+http://security.debian.org/ buster/updates non-free
   ```

   File names must end with *.list* and must only contain the following characters: letters, digits, underscore, hyphen, and period.

5. Correct the ownership and permissions of your additional `sources.list` files to be owned by `root` and only readable by others. For example:

   ```
   chown root:root /live/persistence/TailsData_unlocked/apt-sources.list.d/non-free.list
   chmod 644 /live/persistence/TailsData_unlocked/apt-sources.list.d/non-free.list
   ```

6. Restart Tails to apply the changes.

Tails
Home
How Tails works
Get Tails
Documentation
Support
Contribute
News

Support
FAQs
Known issues
Warnings
Accessibility
Upgrade

Contribute
Report an error
Translate
Source code
GitLab
Roadmap
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