Realtek RTL8192EU and Linux: It works!

Probably because I was scouring AskUbuntu and reading a number of complaints about getting their wireless device working, I decided to see exactly how difficult it was.

I have a computer that I use for testing and I mostly access it by VNC. It has an unused wireless dongle and I figured now was a good time to see if I can make it work.

The first step was to turn it on. Believe it or not, it worked. It had a very, very weak signal even though it's within a few feet of the router. So, I cracked open my terminal and entered:

inxi -Fc 0

Sure enough, I found this:

Device-2: Realtek RTL8192EU 802.11b/g/n WLAN Adapter type: USB

So, I turned to a search engine and entered:

  Realtek RTL8192EU +Linux driver

I scanned the results and noticed that there was fairly recent (mid-2018) GitHub page here. So, I headed there to read what the author had to say.

Rather than playing around, I made sure I'd followed their directions:

sudo apt -y install linux-headers-generic build-essential dkms git

Except that's not necessarily going to work, so I simply removed the -y.

```
sudo apt install linux-headers-generic build-essential dkms
git
```

There. That'll work. I mashed the enter button, entered my
password, and I downloaded the .zip file from the top of the
page while it installed. I didn't really see any need to build
it myself, nor did I want the git hurdles (even though I'd
just installed it). So, I just downloaded it to /Downloads and
then extracted it into its own folder.

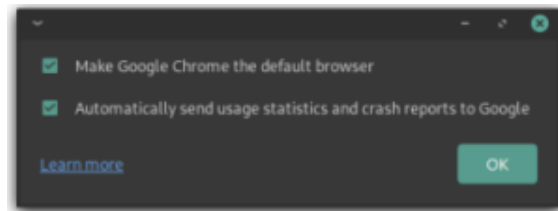Once that was all done, I entered the newly created directory
and ran:

```
sudo ./install_wifi.sh
```

The sudo elevates my permission, the ./ tells it that I want
the file in the directory I'm in, and the install_wifi.sh is
the name of the script that will install the drivers
automatically. It will take a few minutes, even on modern
hardware, but it's not a difficult task. If anything, it's
straightforward and intuitive.

I followed that up with a reboot and, sure enough, I was then
able to use the driver and my signal strength was
significantly higher. That't it. That's all it took. Does it
seem hard? Probably. Once you've done it a few times, you'll
be used to it. Working in the terminal is one of the greatest
things you can do with Linux. There's no reason to be afraid
of it. Just know what the commands are going to do before you
go ahead and do them.

A Short Rant…

I am not sure who I am ranting about. I am not sure who made this decision. Allow me to show you:

Look carefully. You'll see it.

I was playing with Manjaro (their Cinnamon edition is delightful) and was playing around with AUR software. After all, I wanted to install Google Chrome. Say what you will, but I actually like their browser. It suits my needs best and, trust me, I've tried all the other browsers.

It's not the packager's fault. It's probably not Manjaro's fault. It's almost certainly Google's fault.

Don't see it yet? Well, look at the choices. See, I'd like Google Chrome to be a good browser. By that, I mean that I'm willing to send them crash reports. I don't want to send them my usage statistics, even though I'm sure they're truly anonymized and I really don't have anything to hide. I just don't need them knowing that much information.

I get it Google, you're an information company. But, for the love of all that's holy, let us pick. Because I didn't want to send usage stats, I am not able to send you crash reports by the proper channels. Manjaro will get crash reports when something crashes. That's not going to make it upstream to Google. Google isn't going to be trawling through Manjaro's crash reports looking for data. They're going to expect it on their channels.

Why can't I pick one or the other, Google? You're not making more people send you usage statistics, you're making fewer people send you crash statistics! There's a bit more fidelity and more choices at chrome://settings/syncSetup but not that much. In there, you can can at least choose to send less data to them.

I know, bitching about data collection with a data collection company is kinda silly – but there is data that I'd happily give them. There is data I'd let them have in exchange for making a decent browser. I'm willing to make that trade, but they need to let me pick a more granular selection than they currently allow.

Installing NetSurf Browser on Ubuntu 18.04

The NetSurf Browser looked interesting to me. I was using a virtual machine with ArchBang Linux and I'm a sucker for a different browser. I have at least two dozen browsers installed at any one time, even though I regularly only use a few. Anyhow, ArchBang has a default of NetSurf and that piqued my interest.

NetSurf doesn't do anything special. It's just a light browser that claims to have CSS support. When I tried browsing with it, it was quite painful and it displayed sites rather poorly. Still, if you have a very old computer and want to have a browser, this may be the kind of browser you're stuck with. It is technically a browser that's lightweight and seems to have some basic CSS support.

As I said, I'm a sucker for browsers and have a bunch

installed. In this case, I downloaded the source code and decided I didn't really feel like building it. So, I did the ol' 'apt-cache search netsurf' and nothing popped up. So, I went online and looked for a .deb that'd make it easy to install. It turns out to be more of a pain in the butt than you might think.

No matter… I've got you covered. Like normal, crack open your terminal with CTRL + ALT + T. Then, enter the following:

```
cd Downloads
mkdir netsurf
cd netsurf
wget
http://archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu/pool/universe/n/netsurf/netsurf-common_3.6-3.2_all.deb
wget
http://archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu/pool/universe/n/netsurf/netsurf-gtk_3.6-3.2_amd64.deb
wget
http://archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu/pool/universe/n/netsurf/netsurf_3.6-3.2_all.deb
sudo apt install ./netsurf-common_3.6-3.2_all.deb
sudo apt install ./netsurf-gtk_3.6-3.2_amd64.deb
sudo apt install ./netsurf_3.6-3.2_all.deb
```

Then, assuming all goes well, you'll have a working NetSurf in your menu, under Internet if you use an Ubuntu flavor that uses menus like that.

As 18.04 is the last official 32 bit Ubuntu, and official flavors, odds are good that many people will be looking for a lightweight browser to go with it. ***This isn't a very good browser – but it's a working browser, and a browser that doesn't take a lot of resources to run.*** Don't expect too much from it and you won't be too let down.

You're probably better off taking the performance hit and running Vivaldi.

How To: See Installed Applications

Here's a nice and quick way to see what software you have installed — assuming you're using a distro with Aptitude.

Crack open your terminal. You can use CTRL + ALT + T. Enter this:

```
[code]dpkg -l[/code]
```

That doesn't do you a whole lot of good, but it works. So, let's make it more usable.

```
[code]dpkg -l > Documents/installed_apps.txt[/code]
```

Now, open your Documents directory and you'll have a handy list of your installed apps in a file with an intuitive name.
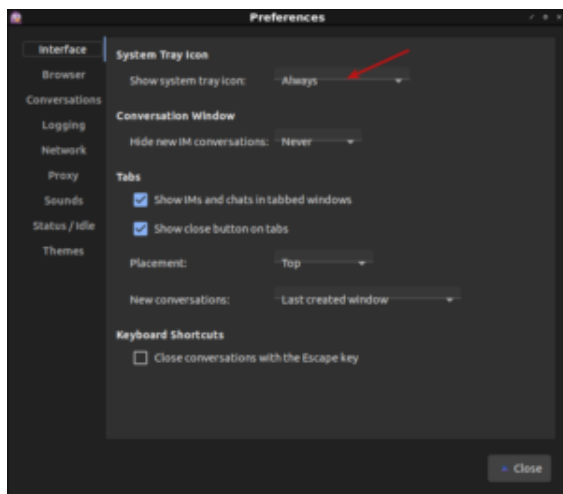

Minimize Pidgin to Tray

I'd been trying to figure out how to minimize Pidgin to the tray and finally figured it out. It turns out, it's easier than I'd expected.

Lately, I've been lurking a few of the Lubuntu IRC channels. This means leaving a chat client open and I figured I might as

well use the default and Pidgin used to be pretty good back when I still regularly used IRC. Seriously, IRC has been around for a long, long time – eons in Internet time.

It also turns out I should have used a search engine. That would have saved so much time.

Open Pidgin, click on Tools, click on Preferences, and set it to always show the system tray icon. That's all it takes.

Set Pidgin to minimize to tray.

And that's all it takes.