Accessing the CLC Linux Cluster with VNC

Penn State’s Classroom and Lab Computing maintains a Linux cluster available for students, faculty, and staff to use. Located in University Park, the Linux cluster allow users to remotely access their own personalized Linux desktop and utilize many useful Linux applications.

These instructions are written from the viewpoint of a student accessing the cluster from a computer lab. You may install the same or similar tools to access the cluster from a personal computer, though off campus access will require the Cisco VPN Client, available on downloads.its.psu.edu, and a connection to “ISP to PSU.”

**Step 1** – From a lab computer, navigate to **Start -> All Programs -> Internet Applications -> Communications -> SSH Secure Shell [Current Version]** and launch the **Secure Shell Client**.
Step 2 – In the Secure Shell Client, go to File -> Connect and log into lxcluster.tlt.psu.edu with your Penn State Access Account userid. You may be prompted to save the public key of the server to your local database. This is a personal preference. Select Yes or No. Enter your password when prompted.

Step 3 – At the prompt, type lxclustervnc and press <Enter>.
Important Note: If at any time hereafter you are prompted to create a password for your VNC session, you must create one. Usually you only need create a password the first time you start a VNC session. Use a password you can remember or store it securely as you must enter this password every time you launch a VNC session on the Linux cluster. This password should be different from your Access Account password and does not expire.

Step 4 – Change the default resolution for your VNC session if desired and press <Enter>. Copy the server address and then minimize, DO NOT EXIT, the Secure Shell Client.

Step 5 – Open the VNC Viewer program, navigate to Start -> All Programs -> Internet Applications -> Communications -> RealVNC VNC Viewer, and launch VNC Viewer. Paste the server address into the blank field and then click Connect.
Step 6 – You may receive an “Unencrypted Connection” warning dialogue box. Your credentials will be transmitted securely; however subsequent session data will not be secured. Select Continue.

Step 7 - At the prompt, enter your VNC password, the password you configured between steps 3 and 4 above, not your Access Account password, and select OK.
**Step 8** - Your Linux desktop will now appear.

**Other Notes:**

If you close the Secure Shell Client prematurely, any active VNC sessions will terminate and any unsaved changes may be lost. Close the VNC Viewer, and then terminate the VNC session from the Secure Shell Client.

If you have forgotten or wish to change your VNC password (the password used to launch the VNC session), in the Secure Shell Client type `vncpasswd` and press `<Enter>`. You will be asked to enter and verify a new VNC password.