



TailsOS – A Basic User Guide

Welcome to Tails! This guide will help you explore the basics of TailsOS and show you how to use the internet, email, create documents, and connect peripherals like printers.

Getting Started with the TailsOS Desktop

Once Tails has loaded, you'll see a desktop environment that looks similar to other operating systems:

1. The Desktop: A clean workspace with the Tails logo as the background
2. Top Toolbar: Contains system menus, network settings, and the clock
3. Applications Menu: Located in the top-left corner (similar to a "Start" menu)

Connecting to the Internet

Tails routes all internet connections through the Tor network for privacy:

1. Click the network icon in the top-right corner of the screen
2. Select a Wi-Fi network from the list
3. Enter the password if required
4. Wait for Tor to connect (you'll see a notification when ready)

Important: The first connection may take a few minutes as Tor establishes secure circuits.

Web Browsing with Tor Browser

Tails comes with Tor Browser, a privacy-focused web browser:

1. Click the "Applications" menu in the top-left corner
2. Select "Internet" > "Tor Browser"
3. Wait for Tor Browser to connect to the Tor network
4. Browse the internet as you normally would

Tips for Secure Browsing:

- Tor Browser may be slower than regular browsers due to traffic routing
- Avoid downloading files unless necessary
- Don't log into personal accounts unless absolutely needed
- The security level can be adjusted by clicking the shield icon next to the address bar

Using Email with Thunderbird

Tails includes Thunderbird for secure email communication:

1. Click the "Applications" menu
2. Select "Internet" > "Thunderbird Mail and News"
3. When first launched, you'll need to set up your email account:
 - Select "Set up an existing email account"
 - Enter your email address and password
 - Thunderbird will attempt to auto-configure your settings
 - For enhanced privacy, consider using a temporary email service

For Maximum Security: Use the built-in OpenPGP encryption for sensitive emails.

Creating and Editing Documents

Tails comes with LibreOffice, a full-featured office suite similar to Microsoft Office:

Word Processing with LibreOffice Writer

1. Click "Applications" > "Office" > "LibreOffice Writer"
2. The interface is similar to other word processors with formatting tools at the top
3. Create your document as normal
4. To save your work:
 - Click "File" > "Save" or press Ctrl+S
 - **IMPORTANT:** By default, documents will only be saved temporarily unless you've set up persistence
 - Save to the "Persistent" folder if you've enabled persistence, otherwise save to "Tor Browser" folder to download it

Spreadsheets with LibreOffice Calc

1. Click "Applications" > "Office" > "LibreOffice Calc"
2. Create spreadsheets with formulas and formatting as needed

Text Editor for Simple Notes

For quick notes or code editing:

1. Click "Applications" > "Accessories" > "Text Editor"
2. This simple text editor works well for plain text notes

Document Security Tips

- Use the PDF format when sharing documents to reduce metadata
- Use "Applications" > "Accessories" > "Metadata Cleaner" before sharing any files

- Consider encrypting important documents with "Applications" > "Utilities" > "Encryption" tools

Adding and Using a Printer

Tails supports printing, though for maximum privacy, avoid printing sensitive documents when possible.

Adding a Printer

1. Connect your printer via USB or ensure it's available on the network
2. Click "Applications" > "System Tools" > "Settings"
3. Select "Devices" > "Printers"
4. Click the "Add" button (+ symbol)
5. Tails will search for available printers:
 - For USB printers: They should appear automatically
 - For network printers: Select "Network Printer" > "Find Network Printer"
 - Enter the IP address if you know it, or search for the printer on the network

Example: Adding a USB Printer

1. Connect the printer and turn it on
2. Open "Printers" settings as described above
3. Wait for the printer to appear in the list (may take a few moments)
4. Click on the detected printer
5. Click "Add"
6. Tails will install the necessary drivers if available
7. Test the printer by clicking "Print Test Page"

Example: Adding a Network Printer

1. Ensure your printer is connected to the same network as your computer
2. Open "Printers" settings
3. Click "Add" > "Network Printer"
4. Select "Find Network Printer"
5. Enter the IP address (e.g., 192.168.1.100) or hostname of your printer
6. Select the appropriate driver when prompted
7. Give your printer a name and description
8. Click "Apply"

Printing Documents

1. Open the document you want to print
2. Click "File" > "Print" or press Ctrl+P
3. Select your printer from the list
4. Adjust print settings as needed
5. Click "Print"

Privacy Note: Be aware that many printers store copies of printed documents in their internal memory. For sensitive documents, consider using a printer you trust or own personally.

Using the Persistence Feature (Optional)

By default, Tails forgets everything when you shut down. If you need to save files:

1. Click "Applications" > "Tails" > "Configure persistent volume"
2. Follow the wizard to create an encrypted storage space on your USB stick
3. Select which types of data you want to persist
4. Remember your passphrase—there's no way to recover it if forgotten!

Essential Privacy Tools

Tails includes several privacy tools you should be familiar with:

- OnionShare: For securely sharing files (Applications > Internet > OnionShare)
- KeePassXC: For secure password management (Applications > Accessories > KeePassXC)
- Metadata Cleaner: Removes metadata from files (Applications > Accessories > Metadata Cleaner)

Important Safety Tips

- The Unsafe Browser: Only use in specific cases where Tor is blocked
- Minimize Personal Information: Don't enter real personal details online
- Check Tor Status: Always ensure the Tor connection is active (icon in top-right)
- Use HTTPS: Ensure websites use HTTPS when possible (look for the lock icon)

Shutting Down Safely

Always shut down Tails properly to ensure all traces are removed:

1. Click the power icon in the top-right corner
2. Select "Shut Down"
3. Wait for the computer to completely power off before removing the USB stick

Getting Help

If you need assistance while using Tails:

- Click "Applications" > "Help" to access offline documentation

- Visit <https://tails.net/support/> from another computer if you can't get online

Remember that Tails is designed for privacy, not convenience. Some actions may take longer or require extra steps to maintain security.