

NAME

startx - initialize an X session

SYNOPSIS

startx [[*client*] *options* ...] [-- [*server*] [*display*] *options* ...]

DESCRIPTION

The **startx** script is a front end to [xinit\(1\)](#) that provides a somewhat nicer user interface for running a single session of the X Window System. It is often run with no arguments.

Arguments immediately following the *startx* command are used to start a client in the same manner as [xinit\(1\)](#). The special argument '--' marks the end of client arguments and the beginning of server options. It may be convenient to specify server options with *startx* to change on a per-session basis the default color depth, the server's notion of the number of dots-per-inch the display device presents, or take advantage of a different server layout, as permitted by the [Xorg\(1\)](#) server and specified in the [xorg.conf\(5\)](#) configuration. Some examples of specifying server arguments follow; consult the manual page for your X server to determine which arguments are legal.

```
startx -- -depth 16
```

```
startx -- -dpi 100
```

```
startx -- -layout Multihead
```

Note that in the Debian system, what many people traditionally put in the *.xinitrc* file should go in *.xsession* instead; this permits the same X environment to be presented whether *startx*, *xdm*, or *xinit* is used to start the X session. All discussion of the *.xinitrc* file in the [xinit\(1\)](#) manual page applies equally well to *.xsession*. Keep in mind that *.xinitrc* is used only by [xinit\(1\)](#) and completely ignored by *xdm(1)*.

To determine the client to run, **startx** first looks for a file called *.xinitrc* in the user's home directory. If that is not found, it uses the file *xinitrc* in the *xinit* library directory. If command line client options are given, they override this behavior and revert to the [xinit\(1\)](#) behavior. To determine the server to run, **startx** first looks for a file called *.xserverrc* in the user's home directory. If that is not found, it uses the file *xserverrc* in the *xinit* library directory. If command line server options are given, they override this behavior and revert to the [xinit\(1\)](#) behavior. Users rarely need to provide a *.xserverrc* file. See the [xinit\(1\)](#) manual page for more details on the arguments.

The system-wide *xinitrc* and *xserverrc* files are found in the */etc/X11/xinit* directory.

ENVIRONMENT VARIABLES

DISPLAY	This variable gets set to the name of the display to which clients should connect. Note that this gets <i>set</i> , not read.
XAUTHORITY	This variable, if not already defined, gets set to $\$(HOME)/.Xauthority$. This is to prevent the X server, if not given the <i>-auth</i> argument, from automatically setting up insecure host-based authentication for the local host. See the Xserver(1) and Xsecurity(7) manual pages for more information on X client/server authentication.

FILES

$\$(HOME)/.xinitrc$	Client to run. Typically a shell script which runs many programs in the background.
$\$(HOME)/.xserverrc$	Server to run. The default is <i>X</i> .
<i>/etc/X11/xinit/xinitrc</i>	Client to run if the user has no <i>.xinitrc</i> file.
<i>/etc/X11/xinit/xserverrc</i>	Server to run if the user has no <i>.xserverrc</i> file.

SEE ALSO

[xinit\(1\)](#), [X\(7\)](#), [Xserver\(1\)](#), [Xorg\(1\)](#), [xorg.conf\(5\)](#)