Configuring Element Desktop

Element Desktop is a Matrix client for desktop platforms with Element Web at its core.

You can download Element Desktop for Mac, Linux or Windows from the Element downloads page.

See https://web-docs.element.dev/ for the Element Web and Desktop documentation.

Aligning Element Desktop with your ESS deployed Element Web

By default, Element Desktop will be configured to point to the Matrix.org homeserver, however this is configurable by supplying a User Specified `config.json`.

As Element Desktop is mainly Element Web, but packaged as a Desktop application, this `config.json` is identical to the `config.json` ESS will configure and deploy for you at `https://<element_web_fqdn>/config.json`, so it is recommended to setup Element Desktop using that file directly.

How you do this will depend on your specific environment, but you will need to ensure the `config.json` is placed in the correct location to be used by Element Desktop.

- `%APPDATA%\$NAME\config.json` on Windows
- `$XDG_CONFIG_HOME/$NAME/config.json` or `~/.config/$NAME/config.json` on Linux
- `~/Library/Application Support/$NAME/config.json` on macOS

In the paths above, `$NAME` is typically Element, unless you use `--profile $PROFILE` in which case it becomes `Element-$PROFILE`.

As Microsoft Windows File Explorer by default hides file extensions, please double check to ensure the `config.json` does indeed have the `.json` file extension, not `.txt`.

Customising your desktop configuration

You may wish to further customise Element Desktop, if the changes you wish to make should not also apply to your ESS deployed Element Web, you will need to add them in addition to your existing `config.json`.

You can find Desktop specific configuration options, or just customise using any options from the Element Web Config docs.

The Element Desktop MSI

Where to download

Customers who have a subscription to the Enterprise edition of the Element Server Suite (ESS) can download a MSI version of Element Desktop. This version of Element Desktop is by default installed into Program Files (instead of per user) and can be used to deploy into enterprise environments. To download, login to your EMS Account and access from the same download page you'd find the enterprise installer, https://ems.element.io/on-premise/download.

Using the Element Desktop MSI

The Element Desktop MSI can be used to install Element Desktop to all desired machines in your environment, unlike the usual installer, you can customise it's install directory (which now defaults to `Program Files`).

You can customise the installation directory by installing the MSI using, or just generally configuring the `APPLICATIONFOLDER`:

```
msiexec /i "Element 1.11.66.msi" APPLICATIONFOLDER="C:\Element"
```

MSI and `config.json`

Once users run Element for the first time, an Element folder will be created in their `AppData` profile specific to that user. By using Group Policy, Logon Scripts, SCCM or whatever other method you like, ensure the desired `config.json` is present within `%APPDATA%\Element`. (The `config.json` can be present prior to the directories creation.)

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