

## How to connect a bluetooth keyboard in Ubuntu 9.04 Jaunty and 9.10 Karmic (workaround)

by Benny Bottema - Thursday, January 28, 2010

<http://www.bennybottema.com/2010/01/28/how-to-connect-a-bluetooth-keyboard-in-ubuntu-9-04-jaunty-and-9-10-karmic-workaround/>

Here's a quick workaround for connecting and reconnecting a bluetooth keyboard (or any bluetooth device for that matter) in Ubuntu Jaunty and Karmic, even after rebooting. In short it's a shell script that keeps connecting to your device in the background on a regular interval. Dirty? Absolutely. Does it work? Absolutely, no bluetooth configuration required at all.

Originally, this whole workaround came from a [post on ubuntuforums.org](#) by Unkie, which I modified only slightly (I'm plantface there). This workaround revolves around [hidd](#), which was removed in Ubuntu 9.04 which you can get back as follows:

```
sudo apt-get install bluez-compat
```

Hidd is a tool that works like a charm for scanning and connecting to bluetooth devices. It's still used these days because the Ubuntu dev team somehow manages to kill bluetooth support every new version. There are so many tutorials and flavors floating around to get a bluetooth device working and apparently with so little success that hidd remains popular. With 9.04 they gave bluetooth an [overhaul](#) and deprecated hidd.

Anyway, here's the shell script that keeps connecting your keyboard. There's one catch though: I haven't figured out how to let the keyboard sleep, awake and reconnect itself, so you'll need to hit the reset button on the keyboard to reveal itself to the bluetooth adapter looking for it. Reconnecting this way requires thus one extra manual action before it reconnects (same thing goes for when you rebooted). But it reconnects when you want it to, which is what I'm content with for the moment, considering the alternative.

1. First create a new file for the script:

```
sudo nano /etc/keyboard.sh
```

Add the following script:

```
while (sleep 10)
do
```

```
sudo hidd --connect AA:BB:CC:DD:EE:FF > /dev/null 2>&1
done
```

Close and save.

**Note:** that AA:BB address should be the MAC address of your keyboard. You can find it using the new bluetooth tool *hcitool scan* (make sure your keyboard is findable by hitting its reset switch) or with *hidd -search*, which coincidentally will automatically attempt to connect your device while scanning it.

**EDIT: August 8th, 2010**

I updated the above script to react much more quickly and avoid unnecessary connect attempts:

```
#!/bin/bash

address="AA:BB:CC:DD:EE:FF"

while (sleep 1)
do
connected=`sudo hidd --show` > /dev/null
if [[ ! $connected =~ .*${address}.* ]] ; then
sudo hidd --connect ${address} > /dev/null 2>&1
fi
done
```

2. Next we'll make sure it'll run in the background when booted. Create a new boot entry:

```
sudo nano /etc/init.d/keyboard
```

Add the following script:

```
#!/bin/sh

/etc/keyboard.sh &

exit 0
```

Close and save.

3. Give both files execution rights with *chmod +x {filename}*
4. Now run the following command to get the script executing during boot:

```
sudo update-rc.d keyboard defaults
```

Reboot and check if it works. Remember to hit your keyboard's reset switch when you want Ubuntu to connect your keyboard.

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