Customizing Your Terminal's Appearance

AiCE Software Engineering Foundations — Setting Up Your Developer Environment

With Ubuntu installed and its essential packages in place, this short lesson covers a purely practical improvement: setting Ubuntu as your default terminal profile, so every new terminal window opens exactly the way you expect.

1. Why This Matters

Windows ships with its own built-in terminal application, which can host several different profiles — PowerShell, Command Prompt, and now Ubuntu, once WSL is installed. By default, opening "the terminal" may not open Ubuntu at all — it might open PowerShell or Command Prompt instead, depending on your settings. Configuring Ubuntu as the default fixes this permanently.

2. Setting Ubuntu as the Default Terminal Application

Open Ubuntu from your desktop shortcut, and let it fully load. Then:

1. Right-click along the top bar of the terminal window.

2. Click Properties.

3. Select the Terminal tab.

4. Find the section labeled Default Terminal Application.

5. Choose the option Let Windows Decide.

6. Save your changes.

Close the terminal window completely, then reopen Ubuntu. You should immediately notice the interface looks cleaner and more polished than before.

3. Confirming the Default Profile in Settings

There's one more place this same setting lives, and it's worth confirming it too, so the two stay in sync:

1. Right-click along the top bar of the terminal again.

2. Click Settings.

3. In the Startup section, find Default Profile, and make sure Ubuntu is selected.

4. Still within Startup, find Default Terminal Application, and confirm it's set to Let Windows Decide.

5. Click Save.

Close the Settings tab. From this point on, your terminal will consistently open as Ubuntu, styled the way you configured it.

Key Takeaways

Two settings control how your terminal looks and which profile opens by default — Properties (for the Terminal tab's appearance option) and Settings (for the Startup section's default profile) — and both are worth confirming so they agree with each other. This is a one-time setup: once configured, every new terminal window opens as a properly styled Ubuntu session without any further adjustment. With your environment installed, populated with essential packages, and looking the way you want it to, you're ready to begin working in it — starting with the very first unit of this course.