How to enable Control Alt Backspace to Kill X server on Debian / Ubuntu Linux

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Being a long time *GNU / Linux user*, I've been quite dissatisfied for the fact that in latest Debian and Ubuntu Linux, the *default Key combination to Kill X (CTRL + ALT + BACKSPACE) is no longer working.*

  Though nowdays *Xorg (XServer)* is pretty stable it still happens from time to time for some application to overload the PC badly and make Gnome or KDE environment little or no responsive at all and here comes the goody *CTRL + ALT + BACKSPACE* it is pretty much like *(CTRL + ALT + DEL)* did restarted the computer in DOS and earlier Windows OS-es once the environment became unusable with the only difference that just Xorg server is restarted and the other using programs that are in background work just like they used to.

  CTRL + ALT + Backspace is a great thing to use especially if you're running some homebrew server and you use it both as a Server with some few little websites and as a Desktop environment to browse the net and do basic stuff.

  So here comes the question how to make the *CTRL + ALT + BACKSPACE* keyboard combination be killing Xserver like in the good old days?

The easiest way to do it interactively in ncurses interface is by running:

```
root@noah:~# dpkg-reconfigure keyboard-configuration
```

If somehow on the machine you don't have **dpkg-reconfigure** or you prefer to do set CTRL + ALT + BACKSPACE Kill Switch manually edit **/etc/default/keyboard**

inside change value of

```
XKBOPTIONS="terminate:ctrl_alt_bksp"
```

like shown below file:

```
root@noah:/home/hipo# cat  /etc/default/keyboard

# KEYBOARD CONFIGURATION FILE

# Consult the keyboard(5) manual page.

XKBMODEL="pc105"
XKBLAYOUT="us"
XKBVARIANT=""

XKBOPTIONS="terminate:ctrl_alt_bksp"

BACKSPACE="guess"
```

The configuration should be working across **Debian 7, 8, 9** as well as **Ubuntu 12 ..14 .. 16** and hopefully in future releases too, just as many other Linux distributions like Mint etc. the Xserver Kill Switch setting should be located in same file.
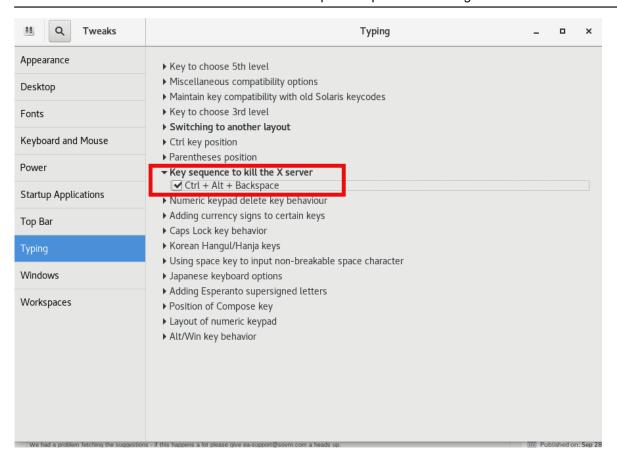
Finally if even after that change the Control Alt BackSpace Kill Switch sequence refuses to work in GNOME Desktop environment, it might be due to a local setting typical for GNOME and this should be fixed via the good known **gnome-tweak-tool**

So GNOME users should run it from command line and check the setting there, e.g.:

$ **gnome-tweak-tool**

You should check:

Typing -> Kill Sequence to Kill the X Server

it should look like shown in below screenshot:

| | | Tweaks | Typing | | _ | □ | ✕ |

Appearance

Desktop

Fonts

Keyboard and Mouse

Power

Startup Applications

Top Bar

Typing

Windows

Workspaces

▸ Key to choose 5th level
▸ Miscellaneous compatibility options
▸ Maintain key compatibility with old Solaris keycodes
▸ Key to choose 3rd level
▾ **Switching to another layout**
▸ Ctrl key position
▸ Parentheses position
▾ **Key sequence to kill the X server**
  ☑ Ctrl + Alt + Backspace
▸ Numeric keypad delete key behaviour
▸ Adding currency signs to certain keys
▸ Caps Lock key behavior
▸ Korean Hangul/Hanja keys
▸ Using space key to input non-breakable space character
▸ Japanese keyboard options
▸ Adding Esperanto supersigned letters
▸ Position of Compose key
▸ Layout of numeric keypad
▸ Alt/Win key behavior