BEGINNERS

News from the GNOME garden GNOMOG

GNOME and GTK have been attracting more and more followers in recent years.

There are now programs for almost every task and new ones are being added daily. Our monthly Gnomogram column is the place to find all the latest rumours and information on the pearls among the GNOME tools.

Red Flag joins the **GNOME Foundation**

Red Flag Software, known for its distribution Red Flag Linux, which is also used by the Chinese government, has joined the GNOME Advisory Board and will be contributing to the translation of GNOME into simplified Chinese. But there will be no support from Red Flag for traditional Chinese, which is common in some Chinese cities and Taiwan.

Red Hat and Eazel co-operate

Since Nautilus is becoming part of GNOME 1.4, nobody is surprised that Red Hat is also supplying it. Eazel and Red Hat have, however, agreed to include additional official Red Hat packets in the Nautilus software catalogue and to integrate the Red Hat

Network into Eazel Services. This will mean it is possible to update one's Red Hat system easily via Nautilus

Ximian and KDE

Anyone searching for 'KDE' does not usually expect to find Ximian, but thanks to Google's Adwords, a text-based advertisement, that's exactly what did happen. Ximian had in fact registered this and similar keywords such as Kongueror for itself. After an open letter from some KDE supporters Ximian withdrew the Adwords and itself published a reply. A similar, now cleared case also occurred in 1999, when Martin Konold took control of gnome-support.de and referred all visitors to KDE. Fortunately, Ximian displayed somewhat more sensitivity when dealing with Hewlett-Packard, which, as announced in San Jose, will replace CDE at the end of 2001 with Ximian GNOME as the standard desktop.

New GNOME versions

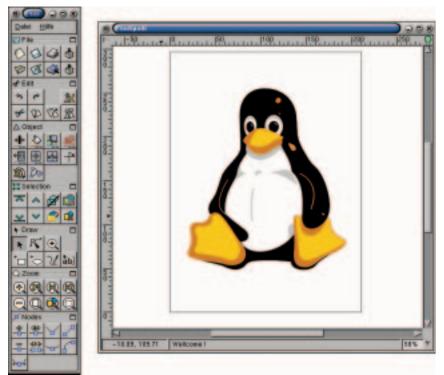
After a bit of a delay, on 3 April GNOME 1.4 was finished at last. One of the reasons for the waiting period is the file manager Nautilus, which is the greatest innovation in GNOME 1.4. The rest of GNOME has also changed somewhat, but we don't anticipate too much here.

The next big version leap is GNOME 2.0, about which Miguel de Icaza has already expressed some concerns. But these concerns are by no means damning - the timing of the GNOME 2.0 release and what's new about it remains to be seen.

Sodipodi

Sodipodi can be used to create vector graphics in the SVG format (Scalable Vector Graphics). In vector graphics it is not the individual pixels and their colour information, but forms themselves which are stored, which has the advantage that images can be enlarged as much as you like without any loss of

Figure 1: Tux. reduced to vectors



quality. Of course, this process is not suitable for all types of image, but graphics with clear forms and simple colour gradients can be compressed very well in this way.

SVG is XML-based, which is no great surprise, as the format was developed from W3C. Since SVG files are, when all's said and done, nothing more than text files, they can easily be created dynamically, and it is possible to change them interactively via Javascript. Unfortunately the standard is still at a very early stage and is not supported by most browsers.

As well as rectangles, ellipses and free forms, Sodipodi also supports embedded graphics that do not exist in a vector format. All objects can be scaled and rotated as desired, although this rapidly makes imported graphics look pixelly. Free forms can be changed at so-called 'node points', or the line delimited by the node points can be automatically straightened, rounded off or otherwise edited. To simplify working with large documents, Sodipodi can combine several objects into a group, which can then be edited as an object. Apart from the normal colour information, it is also possible to alter the transparency of an object using fill style and in the same dialog the object can be provided with a border. With the aid of Gnomeprint, the graphics created can be printed very easily, and thanks to Bonobo it is possible to view the whole thing from other programs.

Red Carpet

After a long wait and many promising screenshots, Ximian has finally released a Beta of the new packet management tool Red Carpet. Version number 0.9 is in itself unusual for the first version, but since poor packet management can lead to serious damage, Red Carpet has been very thoroughly tested in advance and hopefully cleared of any serious faults.

Software is combined in Red Carpet into socalled 'channels', to which the user can subscribe and which function similarly to an entry in Debian's sources.list. So for example Red Carpet offers a channel for the installed distribution, where it does not matter whether the system is based on RPM or dpkg. Of course it is also possible to install or remove new packets working from Red Carpet. Unlike the old Ximian Updater, though, Red Carpet is able to resolve conflicts created thereby or, with the aid of GnuPG to check packet signatures. Like Evolution, Red Carpet can download the latest news from the Net, which is probably the prelude to Ximian's future source of money, services. It is hoped that these will not lead to conflict with Eazel, as they also offer services and update software via Nautilus. Since Red Carpet, with the aid of GtkHTML, uses a lot of HTML, it would in any case have what it takes to become a sort of Internet portal. Whether this would make sense is another matter.

URLs

www.redflag-linux.com
news.gnome.org/gnome-news/980366651
www.redhat.com/about/presscenter/2001/press_eazel.html
www.granroth.org/ximian.html
www.ximian.com/google.php3
www.ximian.com/newsitems/hp-partnership.php3
primates.ximian.com/~miguel/gnome-2.0
sodipodi.sourceforge.net
www.ximian.com/apps/redcarpet.php3
www.gnupg.org

Session management under GNOME

GNOME uses a session manager so that you can pick

up your work where you left off and so that certain

programs are called up directly on start-up. A session can be stored at any time under Configuration/Session/Save current session or in the log off dialog, where only GNOME programs are included in the session. Other programs can be entered in the control centre under Session/Start sequence. To edit the GNOME session, you should not touch ~/.gnome/session directly, but call up Configuration/Session/Session manager properties. The program then shows the session with all currently active programs. From here, you can change the sequence of the programs to be started and the start style. Most programs use the normal start style, which starts a program at each new session, but allows the program to be closed within the session. The new start style on the other hand also starts a program that has been closed or crashed during the session again immediately. Programs with the recycle style are not restarted at all, but merely given the opportunity to save their data. Last of all, there is a

style for settings and thus programs that restore

specified preferences at the beginning.

The author

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Figure 2: Red Carpet in the Ximian Channel

