GNOME News GNOMOGRAM

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GNOME and GTK as the basic programs for GNOME 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. Each month in the Gnomogram column, we present the pearls among the GNOME tools and report on the latest GNOME rumours. This month, we cover GUADEC 2001, Eazel Reef, Progeny 1.0, Etherape, Gnoetry and Adapting Sawfish.

Figure 1: GUADEC 2001 (photo: http://canvas.gnome.org/~gman/guadec/)

GUADEC 2001

GUADEC (the GNOME User And Developer European Conference) took place in Copenhagen this year and gave GNOME developers the opportunity to discuss the future of GNOME and to sign posters and each other. Since GNOME 1.4 was completed shortly before GUADEC, one of the main points of discussion was GNOME 2.0. And it was not only GNOME followers who got a word in – there were also several KDE developers present, with whom better interoperability between GNOME and KDE was being worked on. There were even strenuous efforts being made to replace GNOME's antiquated sound daemon ESD by KDE's aRts. It remains to be seen whether this solution will ever become a reality, since aRts takes over too many tasks, according to some GNOME developers, which a multimedia framework like Gstreamer ought to handle. Presented for the first time was the GUADEC DirectFB, which allows GTK applications direct access to the framebuffer, thus an abstraction of the graphics hardware. DirectFB also offers features such as window management and an alpha-channel for transparent windows. To make it easier for new developers to get on board GNOME, it was decided to expand the existing technical documentation considerably. Of course, working with GNOME is also to be made easier for users, especially those who are disabled. Although there is still a great deal to be done in this direction, it was already possible to present features on GUADEC such as speech output. And the development of a GNOME Office Suite, for which plans have long existed, was finally resolved. Under the name GNOME Office, several existing programs will be combined and harmonised with each other until the launch of GNOME 2.0. Images of GUADEC and the associated parties can be found at the second site listed below; also, by the time this issue comes out all the lectures should be available at the third site below as MPEG-2.

Eazel Reef

Since the technology currently in use by Eazel is very restricted by services over the Internet, a base has been created under the name Reef, which is considerably more powerful, at least on paper. The user receives Service View Bundles via Reef, containing script code and other data such as images. Python will be deployed in the first instance as a script language, but in the longer term other languages will also be supported. For communication between the local script and the server both SOAP, which also forms the basis for Microsoft's .NET, and XML-RPC are being discussed.

Progeny 1.0

Progeny is a commercial distribution, developed on the basis of Debian Woody and in which the Debian co-founder Ian Murdock played an important role. The long-term objective of the development, apart from the provisions of services, is simple management of Linux networks. But Progeny now also offers a few

improvements for GNOME users. Instead of the normal Debian front-end for Debconf, Progeny uses so-called configlets, which can be written in Python. These configlets are partly integrated into the GNOME control centre and offer features similar to Ximian's set-up tools. Anyone who has already installed Debian can simply upgrade via *apt-get* to Progeny 1.0 – otherwise ISO images of the distribution can be found at *archive.progeny.com/progeny/images/*.

Etherape

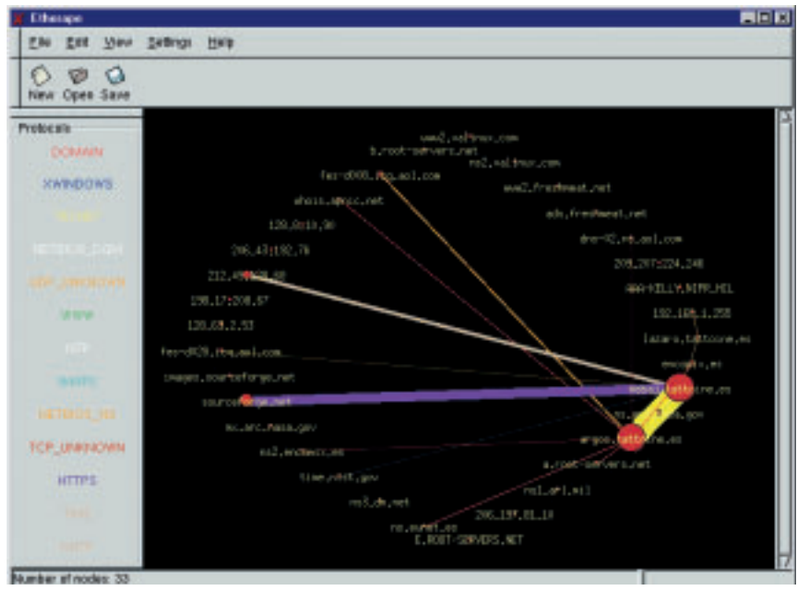
Etherape, which is based on Etherman, illustrates network traffic between your own computer and the local network and/or the Internet. To do so, Etherape represents each computer by a node and draws a connection corresponding to the amount of data volume between the individual nodes. The colour of this connection shows the protocol being used, and you can define which protocol levels Etherape should concentrate on. As data sources, apart from Ethernet, PPP and FDDI interfaces, the output from Tcpdump can also be used. This makes it possible to keep re-displaying network traffic which has been recorded once. Since only the connections which lead to your own computer can be analysed via a PPP or SLIP interface, Etherape uses the -m ip option, or the command *interape* to offer the possibility of adapting the display and positioning your own computer in the centre of the illustration. There are also modes for Ethernet, FDDI or TCP, where in the last type of illustration the network traffic from port to port is shown.

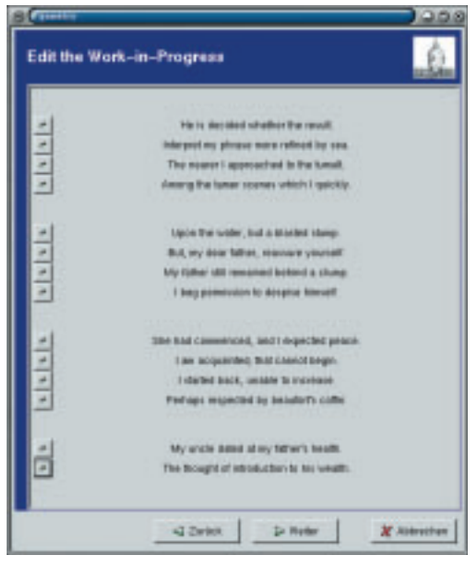
Gnoetry

As the name suggests, Gnoetry creates poetry, largely unassisted. To do so the program analyses existing texts statistically and then generates a text with similar characteristics. Gnoetry masters a wide variety of forms of poetry and is also capable of converting the rhyme schemes of western poets or metric patterns respectively to Japanese poems. Unfortunately quite often the rhymes are flawed, and it does happen that a syllable gets overlooked. Since the objective of the project is a joint production by man and machine, the lines of the poem can be regenerated as often as you like, until the poem is perfect. Gnoetry comes with only English texts as sources, since different languages vary too much for them to be interchanged without a lot of effort. Nor are any contemporary texts included for copyright reasons. But with the aid of a 5MB bonus pack at least a large number of classics can be added.

Adapting Sawfish

One of the great advantages of Sawfish is that this window manager can be expanded by means of scripts in Lisp dialect Rep. To do this you can make use of modules from */usr/share/sawfish/VERSION/*





[above]
Figure 2: Etherape shows where data is really coming from

[left]
Figure 3: Gnoetry creating a sonnet

lisp/, by loading them from the file *~/.sawfishrc* with the command

```
(require 'module)
```

In this file, there should also be the line

```
(require 'sawmill-defaults)
```

which, among other things, adds GNOME adaptations. New modules can be found at sites such as items nine and ten listed below. They must first be compiled with the command

```
sawfish --batch compiler -f compile-batch Modul.jl
```

before they are integrated. Sometimes there are also code snippets, which must be copied directly into *~/.sawfishrc*. If you want to expand Sawfish yourself you should take a look at *sawmill.sourceforge.net/prog-manual.html*, where all relevant functions and variables are explained. ■

The author

Björn Ganslandt is a student. When he is not involved in trying out new programs he reads books or plays the saxophone.

URLs

guadec.gnome.org
gnome.wlug.westbo.se/guadec/
gnome.org
mail.gnome.org/archives/gnome-hackers/2001-April/msg00002.html
progeny.com
archive.progeny.com/progeny/images/
etherape.sourceforge.net
www.beardofbees.com/gnoetry.html
www.sics.se/~lofgren/sawmill/
adraken.themes.org/map.ph
sawmill.sourceforge.net/prog-manual.html

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