

News and Programs to do with GNOME

GNOMOGRAM

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We present the pearls among the Gnome tools here. This month's topics include: All over for Eazel?, Gnome Packaging Project, Restructuring at Ximian, Sikigami, Ximian Gnome 1.4 and Sawfish commands in the panel.

All over for Eazel?



It looks as if the radical downsizing at Eazel did not make it any more attractive to investors. Not even the recently started fund-raising campaign via Paypal has been able to rescue it – apparently there was not a great deal of interest in Eazel T shirts for \$20. But if one bears in mind that in a single year, Eazel has consumed some \$11 million of risk capital, it was a utopian dream right from the start to think the firm could keep its head above water by means of donations. According to as-yet unconfirmed reports, by the time this issue comes out the second half of the workforce will have been sacked and Eazel will finally have gone bankrupt, without the firm having been able to realise its actual business model – namely the sale of services – in any way. It remains to be seen whether Ximian will manage this feat – because hype alone is no longer enough to make money. This bankruptcy does, however, also highlight one of the great advantages of free software, namely that Eazel's graphical shell Nautilus can still continue development, even without the company. It emerged from the very first sackings that former employees were still working on Nautilus.

Gnome Packaging Project

The Gnome Packaging Project (GPP) was established in order in future to produce packages for all the big Linux distributions and Unices, which are free from

any kind of expansions by distributors or companies such as Ximian. There are also plans to compile regular snapshots from the Gnome CVS, in order to make life easier for Beta testers and compilers.

Restructuring at Ximian

Unlike Eazel, Ximian is acting much more optimistically and has restructured its complete management over a brief period. In the course of this action co-founder Nat Friedman was made VP of Product Management and handed over his old post to Patrick David, former President of Worldwide Sales at *The Learning Company*. Jon Perr will in future be in charge of Marketing, and Bijan Sabet has been appointed new VP of Business Development. Since so many vice presidents will also want financing, Todd Miceli has been given the post of CFO at Ximian.

Sikigami

At the instigation of the Japanese distributor of Red



Figure 1: Gnome for PDAs

Hat, the software forge AXE has developed a version of Gnome adapted for PDAs. The first screenshots of this interface, christened Sikigami (Japanese for daemon) can be admired at www.sikigami.com, the source code is available after completing a Japanese form.

Ximian Gnome 1.4

Most Gnome users have had to be patient for a long time, and some have even been threatening to switch to KDE because of the delay. But at the end of April, the day finally dawned when Ximian could present its version of Gnome 1.4. From the enormous onslaught on the FTP server one can conclude that most users had in fact remained faithful to Gnome; and praise was flooding in as

URLs

www.eazel.com
www.paypal.com
developer.gnome.org/projects/gpp/
www.ximian.com
www.sikigami.com
sawmill.sourceforge.net/prog-manual.html

soon as the mere announcement and a couple of screenshots could be seen.

With the graphical Ximian installer, which can be started as usual by the command "lynx -source http://go-gnome.com/lsh", all the necessary packages for the respective distribution can be downloaded and installed. Ximian has actually made some very useful changes to Gnome 1.4, aimed principally at newcomers. On first starting Ximian Gnome, a configuration assistant named Doorman (Figure 3) welcomes the user and helps him to transfer his personal data to Ximian and to change the most important settings to do with the look and feel. Here the user can choose between several suggestions for settings, such as the background or the panel. To make it easier to use, Ximian also comes with its own menu, which is especially impressive because of its professional icons. But one thing missing in the menus, just as with all the other changes to Ximian, is the translations, which – where they exist – are not exactly up to the Gnome standard. This is due to the fact that Ximian kept all its new features a secret and the regular translators had no access.

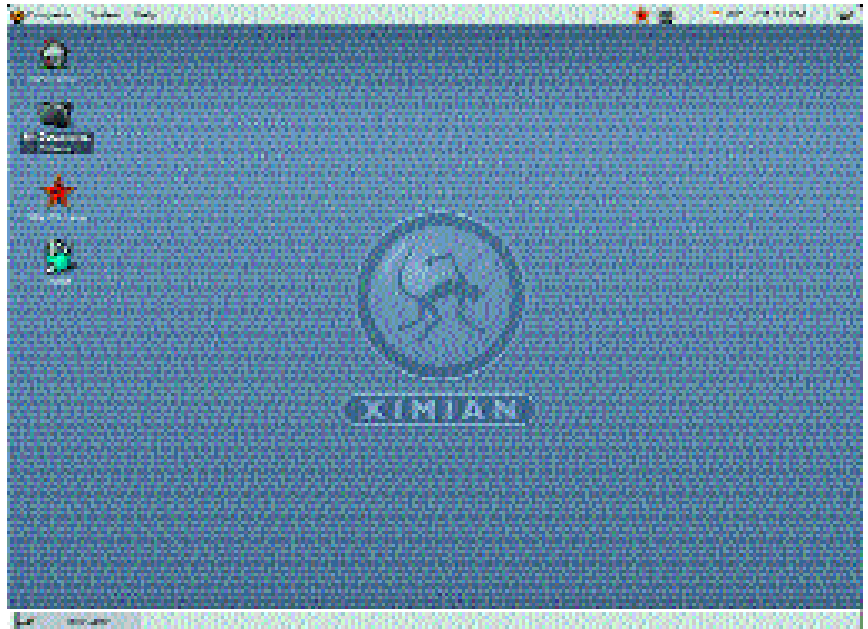
Another facility for beginners is the file dialog, which has been extended by several buttons, which lead directly into the specified directories. To do this, Ximian Gnome also creates a directory named `~/Documents/`, which roughly corresponds to the *My files* under Windows. The help menu has also been expanded. Via *Help/Chat* an extremely simplified X-Chat version named Monkeytalk (Figure 4) starts, which leads into one of the Ximian help channels. With a bit of luck there might even be a Ximian employee there, who could help you out with any problems.

Also in the menu panel, which is known internally as the Foobar, Monkeytalk sits alongside a Ximian FAQ, the Bugbuddy and the Gnome manual in the help menu. Right next to them in the system menu, Ximian has accommodated a little search program and the package manager Red Carpet. Anyone who cannot get anywhere with Red Carpet, has at least the option under Debian of adding the line "deb http://red-carpet.ximian.com/debian stable main" (or woody) to `/etc/apt/sources.list` and as usual of using `apt-get`. Lastly, Ximian has rounded off the upper corners of the menu panel and hidden a new Easter egg, which should be located, after activating the menu panel, in a log file in the home directory.

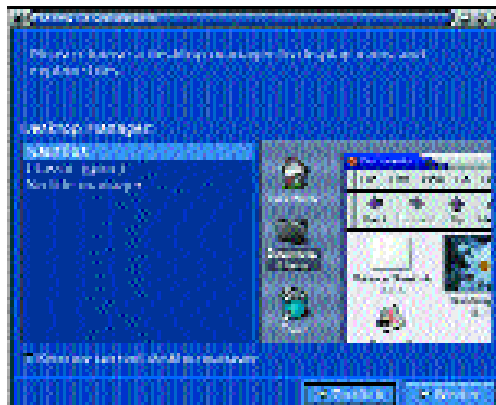
Overall, the update to Ximian Gnome 1.4 is certainly worthwhile. But anyone who has already installed the Debian (Woody or Sid) version of Gnome 1.4, should be ready for a few problems if they update.

Sawfish commands in the panel

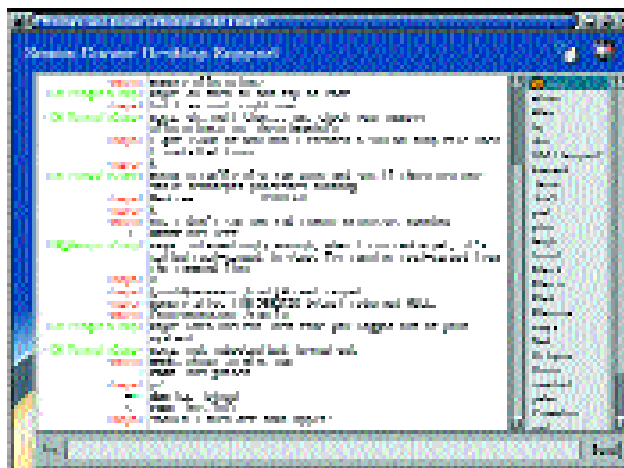
Those not satisfied with starting Sawfish functions via key combinations, thanks to the program `sawfish-client` also have the option of linking these



[top]
Figure 2: Ximian GNOME comes out with rounded corners



[middle]
Figure 3: Doorman leads the user through the basic configuration



[below]
Figure 4: When the documentation no longer helps, find some advice in Monkeytalk Chat

with a starter on the panel. A new starter can be found via a right-click on the panel under `Panel/Add to panel/Starter`. As command, you must specify "sawfish-client -c Lisp command", at which point the basic Sawfish functions can be found with `info sawfish`. As we have already described in the last Gnomogram, Sawfish can also be expanded by means of modules, which in turn come with their own functions. These modules are found under `/usr/share/sawfish/VERSION/lisp`. ■