

Letters to the editor

Write access

■ A smack on the wrists

I've been a reader of the magazine since issue 2. I liked it from the start for the great in-depth articles, but also because it is relevant to me here in the UK and written in my own language. Or at least it used to be.

Recently I've become rather disappointed with your increasingly sloppy use of English and the large number of Americanisms creeping into your articles. Even the latest editorial used the word "favorite". < cringe > Misspellings like "color", "license" (as noun), "dialog", "center", "fulfillment" and many others are common.

One of the fantastic things about Linux is the ability to localise properly. To this date Microsoft still does not recognise the existence of British English and has never bothered to produce versions of their OS or other products in our own English language. With Linux my desktop and many of my applications can be configured to use proper English and no longer do I have to put up with "colors", "favorites", "dialer" or "canceled"!

Please, Linux Magazine is a European/British magazine targeting, in addition, countries like Australia, South Africa and India which are part of the Commonwealth and use British English as a basis for their local English dialects. Since all of these countries and many many others (there are 54 countries in the commonwealth) use English that could be called British/European/Commonwealth English, please can't you pay a little more care to the way you write, and use proper English rather than American? After all, most of your readers do.

Besides you have a tendency to mix both American and normal English within the magazine, and often within the same article! Journalistically this deserves a smack on the wrists.

I look forward to future magazines that, once again, are written in English. Thanks for the fine magazine and the great articles.

David Bartlett, by email

LM Oh the Americanisation! Favorite, humor, recognize, initialize and as usual color have all personally annoyed me this month. Color especially because of its use in HTML coding. If that is not enough, product and project names that seem to be inconsistent – such as Red Hat (official spelling) redhat (found on the boxset). Top of my list are projects that insist their name should begin with a lowercase letter, then magically become a capital letter at the start of a sentence one week and lowercase the next.

Personally the Americanisation is an annoyance. It causes spell-check problems as we run each file through a UK checker first (to make it easier to read initially – so we can concentrate on the meaning and code of the article), then once marked for layout it is changed to Americanised English and run through another USA checker.

Although based in the UK, we are an international publication. When we relaunched the magazine with issue 23 / September 2002, one of the changes we made was to use Americanised spelling. This was not only to meet the expectations of the USA market, but also of our international readership in general, who, at least in the computer industry, tend to use American English. Regarding the mixing of American and British English in the magazine, you are absolutely correct – our wrists are stinging!

John Southern

■ Missing Lyx

In the November issue, there was an article dealing with Lyx which promised a follow up dealing with setup and advanced use. Unfortunately the next issue contained an article dealing only with LaTeX. Has the Lyx workshop gone away?

Just to say thanks again for the magazines. I will enjoy them immensely and learn a heap of new interesting stuff.

J Michael Gilks, by email



Please send your comments and suggestions to letters@linux-magazine.com

LM Yes, we did discontinue the LyX workshop in favor of the LaTeX article series, which we felt would be of use to a larger section of our readership. However, we didn't want to leave the LyX users in the dark and have therefore published the second article on our website, at <http://www.linux-magazine.com/OnlineExclusive>.

■ Pretty boxes

At work my copy of StarOffice 6.0 has fifteen different colour gradient fills for spreadsheet cells. At home I am using Suse Office Desktop's StarOffice and it only has six. Where do I obtain and import the others?

Simon Fox, Slough, UK

LM StarOffice allows you to design your own gradient color schemes. Start StarOffice and for a new spreadsheet choose Format/Area/Gradients. You can now choose how you want them to look, as shown in the screenshot below.

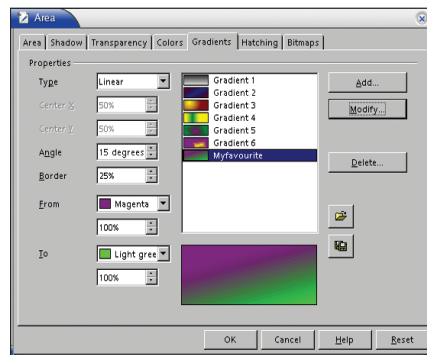


Figure 1: Gradient color schemes in StarOffice