KDE 3.3 version released

<u>Software</u>

NEWS

The KDE Project announced version 3.3 of the popular KDE desktop environment. According to KDE, this release was focused on integration and includes several new features for "linking applications across the desktop together to save you unnecessary time and effort." KDE



SoftMaker Office 2004

SoftMaker has released SoftMaker Office 2004, an office suite billed as an alternative to Microsoft Office. SoftMaker is a multi-platform suite with versions for both Windows and Linux. Like other office suites, SoftMaker is actually a collection of component applications, including the word processor TextMaker and the PlanMaker spreaadsheet application.

TextMaker reads and writes files for Microsoft Word 6.0 and higher. PlanMaker includes over 320 calculation functions and seamless import and export of files from Microsoft Excel.

Of course, an alternative to Microsoft Office is also an alternative to StarOffice and OpenOffice. Softmaker 2004 offers some advantages for integration with Handheld PCs that aren't found in the other popular Linux offices suites.

In fact, SoftMaker states that its system is the only word processor "that is available for Windows, Linux, FreeBSD, PocketPCs, HandheldPCs, and Windows CE-NET." SoftMaker 2004 sells for US\$ 69.95 or EUR 69.95.

http://www.softmaker.de/index_en. htm

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release coordinator Stephan Kulow adds, "improvements in terms of usability, stability, and integration are particularly noticeable in the KDE PIM (Personal Information Management) suite."

New applications included with version 3.3 include Kolourpaint, a replacement for Kpaint, Kimagemapeditor, KthemeManager (a control module for themes) and other tools. Tools such as KwordQuiz and KLatin have been added to the set of educational tools in KDE.

The integration changes include improvements to Kontact, which is now integrated with the Kolab groupware solution, and better support for instant messaging.

http://www.kde.org

Mozilla Calendar Application

Mozilla announced the first official beta release of Mozilla Sunbird. Sunbird is a standalone calendar application based on the Mozilla Calendar component. The Sunbird project is currently developing Sunbird along with an enhanced version of Mozilla Calendar based on Mozilla XUL. (See the article on programming with Mozilla XUL on p68 in this issue.)

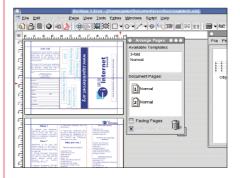
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Sunbird is intended for users who are already using Mozilla tools such as the Firefox browser or the Thunderbird mail client and wish to integrate a calendar component into their daily routine. Mozilla says the primary goals of including the XUL user interface language and other enhancements are to reduce the footprint and increase performance. *http://www.mozilla.org/projects/*

calendar/sunbird.html

Scribus 1.2 released

The Scribus team announces the release of Scribus 1.2, an open source desktop publishing system. Scribus calls release 1.2 "the first commercial implementation of Scribus for commercial newspaper production," and adds that the premier issue of Twin Tier Times, a US weekly newspaper, was launched with a production system based around Scribus and Gimp.



Changes with the version 1.2 release include over 800 bug fixes and user requests, a print previewer, a new EPS/PS importer, and a new *Save as Template* plugin that allows users to generate pre-formatted documents. The Scribus GUI is now translated into 27 languages.

http://www.scribus.org.uk

IBM Aims Stinger at Oracle

International Business Machines (IBM) announced the release of DB2 Universal Database Version 8.2. Version 8.2, which IBM has dubbed as "stinger," is aimed at Linux and Unix systems and provides some self-management enhancements designed for reducing administrative overhead. According to IBM, DB 2 version 8.2 can cut administrative tasks by as much as 65%.

DB2 version 8.2 reportedly starts at US\$ 25,000 for the enterprise edition. A few years ago, that would have seemed like a lot for a software package aimed at Linux systems. The big prices for the giant software systems provided by vendors like IBM and Oracle are the best evidence that Linux is a front-line corporate system now. The times they are a-changing.

http://www-306.ibm.com/software/data/ db2/udb/v82

Software **NEWS**

Knoppix 3.6 "aKademy edition"

Knoppix 3.6 – known as the "aKademy edition" – was released in conjunction with the 2004 aKademy KDE world summit. Knoppix, which you may have seen recently on a Linux Magazine DVD, is a bootable CD, live Linux distribution based on Debian.

The Knoppix distro, which has become an increasingly popular alternative for live Linux, supports a great variety of hardware, including graphics cards, USB devices, and other peripherals. Version 3.6 comes with Linux kernel 2.4.27 or, as a boot option, Linux kernel 2.6.7. Updates include KDE 3.2.3 and GIMP 2.0.

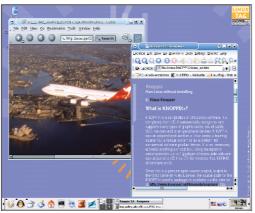
One of the more promising features is new support for ndiswrapper, which has recently gained attention as a means for interfacing Linux with

New Desktop/LX 1.4 from Lycoris

Lycoris released version 1.4 of the Desktop/LX Linux-based desktop operating system, which they call "the #1 alternative to Windows." Version 1.4 uses KDE 3.2.3 and provides a strikingly XP-like look and feel.

Despite the elevated enthusiasm of Lycoris, a company that calls itself "the worldwide desktop Linux leader," the summary sheet for Lycoris looks very similar to that of other Linux desktop alternatives, Included along with KDE3.2.3 is a collection of other common open source tools for business, communications, graphics, and administration. One interesting enhancement to the Lycoris software collection is the addition of Bitsteam's btX2 font rendering subsystem. proprietary drivers for wireless network cards.

As you might guess, one of the reasons for a CD-based distribution is to reduce dependence on the local hard drive. The result of the recent flurry of activity in



the field of live distros could breathe new life in the concept of the *network computer* – a diskless (or nearly diskless) client that depends on a server system for file storage. The network computer revolution never really happened –

mostly because hardware became so inexpensive that it didn't matter if the client had a hard drive or not. But the sheer convenience of a live Linux could tip the scales to the diskless paradigm.

As if in anticipation of the shift, Knoppix 3.6 includes the FreeNX server. NX technology provides an efficient means for running remote X sessions across narrow band network connections, thus increasing the viability of thin clients.

http://www.knoppix.org

Tomcat Prowls the Branch

The Apache Software Foundation has released Jakarta Tomcat 5.5. Tomcat is an open source implementation of Java Servlets and JavaServer Pages. Version 5.5 includes the open source Eclipse development tool set.

The inclusion of Eclipse is a major change, since it allows Tomcat developers to avoid Sun's Java SDK, which, according to many, has limited performance and reduced flexibility in some situations.

The changes for version 5.5 were significant enough for Apache to hail the release of version 5.5.0 as "the first release of the new Tomcat 5.5 branch." This release was followed a week later with the release of Jakarta Tomcat version 5.5.1,

http://jakarta.apache.org

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AI², or "AI squared," which stands for Advanced Application Integration Infrasructure. The acronym for this term is AAII, which apparently gave rise to the name AI². You can tell that this term was created by a marketer and not a programmer because a programmer would have called it (AI)².

The company states that the AI² feature "bridges the gap between Linux and 3rd party components." According to Lycoris, AI² recognizes the software and automatically configures the computer to best take advantage of it."

The price of US\$ 40 or EUR 32.60 is reasonable for a for-pay desktop Linux, so if you're curious, contact Lycoris.

