

Software News

■ KDE 3.3 version released

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



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, Kimageeditor, 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>

■ 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 spreadsheet 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.

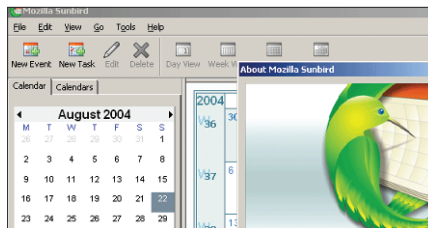
Of course, an alternative to Microsoft Office is also an alternative to StarOffice and OpenOffice. Softmaker 2004 offers some advantages for integration with Handheld PCs that aren't found in the other popular Linux offices suites.

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

■ 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.)

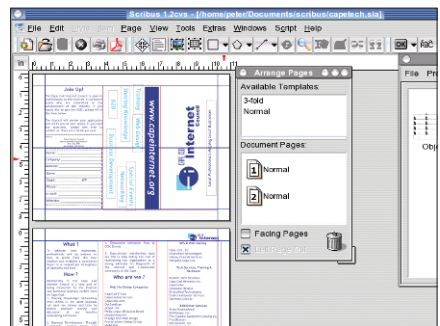


Sunbird is intended for users who are already using Mozilla tools such as the Firefox browser or the Thunderbird mail client and wish to integrate a calendar component into their daily routine. Mozilla says the primary goals of including the XUL user interface language and other enhancements are to reduce 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>

