Contributing to GNOME Documentation

André Č. Klapper
Traditional way:
A whole manual to read (and maybe some search field)
Empathy Manual V2.1

1. Introduction
2. Getting Started
3. Accounts
4. Contacts and Groups

About This Document

Empathy Manual V2.1
Introduction
Getting Started
Accounts
Contacts and Groups
Real men don't read manuals.
Plus I just wanted to change my IM status, not read a book!
A new way:

Task-oriented help („Mallard“)
Empathy Internet Messenger

**Introduction**
Introduction to the Empathy instant messenger.

**Account Management**

**Add a new account**
Add a new account to Empathy.

**Register for a new account**
Register for an account with one of the supported messaging services.

**Change your status**
Just tell me how to do what I want. Don't explain half of your app.
So what's this „Mallard“ thingy?
projectmallard.org: It's a markup language. Think of HTML, but easier.
projectmallard.org:
It's a markup language. Think of HTML, but easier.
Your first user help guide
Start your text editor (e.g. gedit).

Create an empty directory, like

/home/user/newdocu/
Create index.page

<page xmlns="http://projectmallard.org/1.0/"
type="guide"
id="index">
<title>Beanstalk Help</title>
</page>

...and save it in that directory.
Now look at it in Yelp (that's GNOME's help browser):

`yelp /home/user/newdocu/`
Yes, it's empty.
Now let's link this into the index.page...
Linking:

```
<page xmlns="http://projectmallard.org/1.0/"
      type="topic"
      id="planting">
  <info>
    <link type="guide" xref="index"/>
  </info>
  <title>Planting Beans</title>
</page>
```

Links added in topic instead of guide

↔ Enhanceability (1 file to add instead of another to change)
Beanstalk Help

- Planting Beans
Adding a second guide: uses.page

```
<page xmlns="http://projectmallard.org/1.0/"
     type="guide"
     id="uses">

    <info>
        <link type="guide" xref="index"/>
        <link type="topic" xref="planting"/>
    </info>

    <title>Bean Uses</title>

</page>

...but you can also still add links the other way round
Beanstalk Help

Bean Uses

Planting Beans
Adding some content in planting

<title>Planting Beans</title>

<p>How do to this.</p>

<steps>
  <item><p>Dig a hole 5cm deep.</p></item>
  <item><p>Place the beans in it.</p></item>
  <item><p>Fill the hole with dirt.</p></item>
  <item><p>Water daily.</p></item>
</steps>
Planting Beans

How do to this.

1. Dig a hole 5cm deep.
2. Place the beans in it.
3. Fill the hole with dirt.

Further Reading

More About
Beanstalk Help
Bean Uses
That's it in short. Of course you can also have tables, pictures, videos, ....
Just spend 10 minutes here:
http://projectmallard.org/about/learn/tenminutes.html
For validation errors: See terminal

```
/home/andre/gnome/evolution-docs/view-junk-message-number.page:40: parser error: Premature end of data in tag page line 1

^)
/home/andre/gnome/evolution-docs/view-junk-message-number.page:33: parser error: Opening and ending tag mismatch: item line 30 and steps
</steps>
  ^)
/home/andre/gnome/evolution-docs/view-junk-message-number.page:38: parser error: Opening and ending tag mismatch: steps line 28 and page
</page>
  ^)
/home/andre/gnome/evolution-docs/view-junk-message-number.page:40: parser error: Premature end of data in tag page line 1
```
Yes, this can become complex.

Sorting and organizing mail

**Searching Mail**
Searching messages.

**Using Filters**
Use filters to sort your mail automatically into folders.

**Sorting the message list**
Sorting the message list of a mail folder.

**Using Folders**
Use folders to organize your mail.

**Advanced Options**

**Using Labels**
Use labels to categorize your mail while keeping it in their folders.

**Using Search folders**
Use search folders to see messages in one folder while still keeping them in their original folders.

**Further Reading**

**More About**
Mail Management
Sorting and organizing — On organizing and finding your data in Evolution.
Planning to write documentation
Identify those topics that are important to users. Start with the basic ones.
Reuse an existing FAQ?
Analyze questions of last months on user mailing list / IRC logs?
Common „invalid“ bug reports?

Bug 211404 - IMAP mail port

**fmaheu** [reporter] 2001-10-01 **Description**

Just a nice to have feature that would be appreciated. It would be great if it could be possible to change the port number of the IMAP (and possibly other types of servers) we connect to. What for??

**Dan Winship** [developer] 2001-10-01 **Comment 1**

You can do this by typing "localhost:8143" as the hostname in the config dialog.
Have a meeting with the dev team to find important issues to cover
The hardest part:
Try to find good categories
Example for Evolution (improvable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Calendar</th>
<th>Memos &amp; Tasks</th>
<th>Intro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create/edit accounts</td>
<td>4.1-4.3, 4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.8, 5.9</td>
<td>First time wizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching items</td>
<td>8.1, 1.1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Categories, Ad-books (8.9)</td>
<td>5.7 partially</td>
<td>Categories, Calendars</td>
<td>Quick Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.x Search Folders, Folders, Filters, Sort, 8.4.3 Labels, Threads, Followup-Flag</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.7&amp;8.4.5 Spam</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.x Exchange</td>
<td>8.6.1-3 Settings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.x Groupwise</td>
<td>8.6.2 LDAP</td>
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<td>Corporate</td>
<td>4.4/8.9.2 LDAP</td>
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<td>8.2 Autocomplete</td>
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<td>8.4.6 AutomaticContacts</td>
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<td>2.6 Encryption</td>
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<td>2.1 Reading Mail</td>
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<td>8.4.1/2 DispyPrefs</td>
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<td>2.5 IMAP Subcrip's</td>
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<td>8.3 IMAP Headers</td>
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<td>8.4.4 Headers</td>
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<td>2.2&amp;.3 Writing mail</td>
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<td>8.5 Pref</td>
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<td>2.4/8.4.7 Invitat's</td>
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<td>Misc</td>
<td>8.8 Certs</td>
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<td>8.7 NetworkPrefs</td>
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<td>Common Probs</td>
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<td>Mail</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A) Advanced or corporate stuff in Italic

-GNOME Summit Asia 2011 Apr 2-3, Bangalore India
But even in doubt: Create new pages and write. Just do it! You can always rename, move & sort later.
Good practices
Don't blindly reuse text or structure from the old manual.
If reusing: Are licenses compatible? (e.g. GFDL vs CC = ✗)
Screenshots: Do they really provide an additional value to the help text?
Use a constant string to mark unfinished work (e.g. TODO) - Easier to find when collaborating
Avoid fill phrases in title or desc: "How to ...", "Explains ...", "A short introduction on ..."
Use words with similar meanings in desc for better finding (e.g. Spam & Junk / Delete & Remove).
Getting involved
http://live.gnome.org/DocumentationProject/Tasks

(e.g. convert to Mallard format; work on Desktop Help; etc.)
http://mail.gnome.org/mailman/listinfo/gnome-doc-list

#docs channel on GimpNet IRC
http://live.gnome.org/DocumentationProject
Questions?

Slides available at:
http://people.gnome.org/~aklapper/gnome-asia2011/