GNOME Documentation: Past, Present, and Future

Presented by:

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Introduction: GDP Mission

- Provide GNOME community with high-quality documentation under GFDL
- Work with usability team to apply HIG, for example at UI reviews
- Define new terminology in the UI and documentation
- Work with developers to ensure integration of defined terminology
Introduction: GDP Roles

- Fearless Leader: John Fleck
- Documentation Authors: see DocTable
- Documentation Maintainers: see DocTable
- GNOME Documentation Style Guide (GDSG): Pat Costello, John Fleck, Sasha Kirillov
- Terminology List: Eugene O'Connor
Introduction: GDP Roles (contd)

- **GNOME Handbook of Writing Software Documentation (GHWSD):** Eric Baudais
- **Stylesheets:** Eric Baudais, Greg LeBlanc
- **Help Templates:** Sasha Kirillov, Irene Ryan
Past: GNOME 1.0 to GNOME 1.4

- GDP Processes
- Technical Aspects
- Desktop Help
- Application Help
- Localization
Past: GDP Processes

Style guidelines – circa 2000:

- Work had started on GDSG
- No specific guidelines
- No terminology recommendations
- GHWS provided basic getting started technical information
Past: GDP Processes (contd)

- Templates:
  - Help templates in DocBook 3.1 SGML format
  - Contained various non-Help-related sections

- Terminology development:
  - Discussions on gnome-doc-list
  - Slow process, often with unclear recommendation
Past: GDP Processes (contd)

- Interaction with other GNOME projects:
  - Individual contact with other GNOME projects
  - Limited formal cross-project integration, for example between the usability project and the GDP
Past: Technical Aspects

✦ Writing tools:
  - All documentation in DocBook 3.1 SGML

✦ Stylesheets:
  - Stylesheets supported DocBook 3.1 SGML
Past: Technical Aspects (contd)

- Help browser:
  - GNOME Help browser being replaced by the Nautilus browser

- Help links:
  - Limited number of Help buttons in Desktop
Past: Desktop Help

- User Guide existed for GNOME 1.0

- Issues:
  - User Guide update needed for GNOME 1.4
  - Needed a regular update process for the User Guide to support future revisions of the Desktop
  - Terminology in the existing User Guide inconsistent with terminology in the Desktop
Past: Application Help

- Help manuals existed for most applications and applets for GNOME 1.0

- Issues:
  - Level of updates varied
  - Function-oriented
  - Lots of non-Help-related information
  - Terminology and writing style varied considerably
Past: Localization

- Potential localization difficulties caused by:
  - Inconsistent terminology
  - Non-Help-related information
  - Colloquial language
- Limited localization of documentation
Present: GNOME 2.0 to GNOME 2.2

- GDP Processes
- Technical Aspects
- Desktop Help
- Application Help
- Localization
Present: GDP Processes

Style guidelines:

- GDSG is now a comprehensive style guide
- GDSG provides information on topics such as information design, writing for localization, describing UIs
- GDSG has a recommended terminology appendix with 268 terms
Present: GDP Processes (contd)

GHWSD:

- Provides DocBook information
- Provides up-to-date, practical advice on how to use writing tools
- Provides information on screenshots, indexing, and other topics
Present: GDP Processes (contd)

Templates:

- Revised templates available for application and applet manuals
- Encourage task-oriented information
- Non-Help-related information in the About This Document page
Present: GDP Processes (contd)

Terminology development:

- Writer discusses provisional definition of new term with a peer group
- Writer discusses term with GDSG editorial team
- Terminology coordinator adds term to GDSG, then sends to gnome-doc-list for comment
- Term is amended as required
Present: GDP Processes (contd)

Interaction with other GNOME projects:

- Increased cooperation between developers, usability engineers, and writers
- Writers log bugs
- Developers and usability engineers ask writers for input to UI development
- Writers participate in UI reviews
Writing tools:
- Moved from DocBook SGML to XML to benefit from wider industry usage of XML
- DocBook 4.1.2 XML with supporting tools

Stylesheets:
- Support DocBook 4.1.2 XML
Present: Technical Aspects (contd)

✔ Help browser:
  - Moved from Nautilus to Yelp with ScrollKeeper
  - Multichapter book problem
  - Pregeneration improves performance

✔ Help links:
  - Comprehensive set of buttons and menu items that link to relevant parts of the User Guide
Present: Desktop Help

📍 User Guide:

- Seven revisions, covering GNOME 1.4 to GNOME 2.2.1
- Development process includes:
  - Publication on http://www.gnome.org/learn
  - Incorporation of user feedback
- Aim to update the User Guide for every stable Desktop release
Present: Desktop Help (contd)

Other guides:

- Introduction to GNOME
- Accessibility Guide
- System Administration Guide
- Man pages, currently in SGML
Present: Application Help

- Help manuals are integrated into the GNOME 2.0 and GNOME 2.2 Desktops
- Help manuals are in development for the GNOME 2.4 Desktop
- Task-oriented approach
- Easy to translate
Present: Localization

- User Guide available in 11 languages
- Many application and applet Help manuals available in 9 languages
Future: GNOME 2.4 Onwards

- GDP Processes
- Technical Aspects
- Desktop Help
- Application Help
- Localization
Future: GDP Processes

- Style guidelines:
  - Improve updating of GDSG on GDP website
  - Achieve universal compliance to HIG and GDSG
  - Merge GNOME guides to form super-library
Future: GDP Processes (contd)

Templates:

- Develop template for multichapter book

Terminology development:

- Extend developer involvement in terminology process
- Develop terminology for new applications
Future: GDP Processes (contd)

Interaction with other GNOME projects:

- Achieve better planning of GDP jobs
- Complete the process of integration
- Help developers to leverage full benefit of GDP
Future: Technical Aspects

- Writing tools:
  - WYSIWYG writing tool for DocBook 4.1.2 XML

- Stylesheets:
  - Polished stylesheet for Help
Future: Technical Aspects (contd)

✈ Yelp

1. Introduction

The *gedit* application is a simple text editor. You can use *gedit* to create and edit text files. You can use *gedit* plugins to perform a variety of tasks related to text-editing from within the *gedit* window.

✈ KDE

Chapter 1. Introduction

KWrite is more than a text editor for the KDE Desktop. It is meant to be a programmer's editor, and could be considered as at least a partial alternative to more powerful
Future: Technical Aspects (contd)

Help browser:

- Recombined multichapter books in Yelp display
- Improved front-end with search and index

Help Links

- Provide links to the System Administration Guide
- Provide links to the Accessibility Guide
Future: Technical Aspects (contd)

⇒ KDE Help

SuSE HelpCenter

Search Results for 'spreadsheet'

*SLEC manual*

Documents 1 - 7 of 7 matches:

- Spreadsheets with Calc (05/07/03)
- Getting Started with OpenOffice.org (05/07/03)
- SuSE Linux Desktop (05/07/03)
- Overview of the Application Modules (05/07/03)
- Chapter 3, The OpenOffice.org Office Suite (05/07/03)
- Part II, Office Applications (05/07/03)
- Index (05/07/03)

SLD-Administrationshandbuch (englisch)
Future: Desktop Help

- Reissue User Guide for new Desktop versions
- Develop the System Administration Guide
- Include new applications such as GOK and Gnopernicus in the Accessibility Guide
- Extend the Help to include broader topics, for example Developer Guides
- Provide man pages in XML format
Future: Desktop Help (contd)

- Measure usability of Help, and improve accordingly
- Encourage reduced-text approach
- Assist development of context-sensitive Help
Future: Application Help

- Continuously update existing manuals
- Publish Help manuals for new applications
Future: Localization

- More language versions of documentation
- Shorter time interval between English language release and language versions
- Faster translation times due to modular documentation and reduced-text approach
- Machine translation
Summary

» Producing high-quality, up-to-date documentation and Help for the GNOME Desktop, applets, and applications

» Contribute to an improved look-and-feel

» Work more closely with developers and usability team to maximize our combined effectiveness

» Promote the GDSG as the foremost style standard in the world for free software
Vision

- Enhance the user experience in using the GNOME Desktop, applets, and applications
- Contribute to the GNOME Desktop being the desktop environment of choice for users worldwide
Questions?

⇒ If you prefer, we can take questions in the bar...