

G-TOOLS: Digging deeper to find the gems

PHONE HOME

In our inaugural GNOME tools, we take a look at the Rubrica address book, Gabber instant messenger and a SETI applet

Rubrica

Rubrica has now reached version 0.8.2 and has received a rare five cow award from the Tucows (<http://mclink.linuxberg.com/x11html/preview/172990.html>) download site. It is a GNOME-aware address book, which has a very crisp and clean looking user interface and was written by Nicola Fragale to practise Gtk+ programming.

Packages can be downloaded from http://digilander.iol.it/nfragale/download_gb.html and the Red Hat binary loads without fault. Starting from a shell with:

```
[fred@box ~]$ rubrica &
```

we are greeted with the opening screen (Figure 1).

As would be expected we can then start to input our first address book card.

Rubrica saves its address book output as .rub files

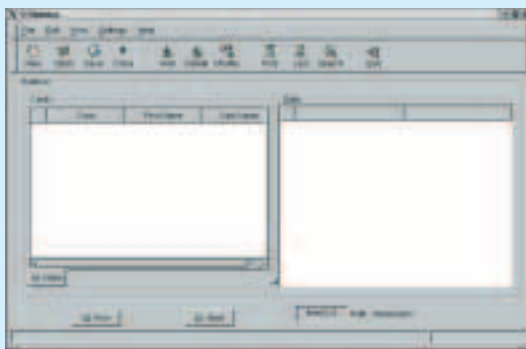


Figure 1: Rubrica starting

G-tools

This new column to Linux Magazine features a monthly round-up of some of the best tools available from the gnome.org Web site. Whether they be essential tools for everyday GNOME users or interesting curiosities, you're sure to find them here.

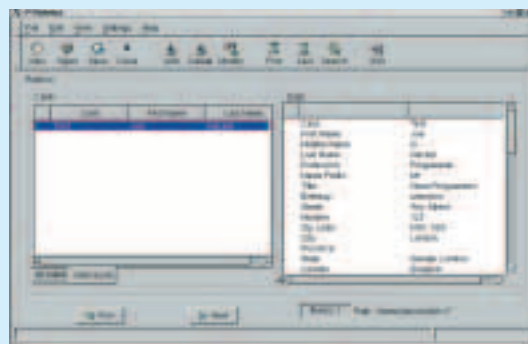


Figure 4:A card completed

and you can import data from Gnomecard and previous versions of Rubrica. Both Netscape and KDE address book import is planned along with exporting functions.

The project is a work in progress with requests for local language translations.

Gabber

Gabber is the GNOME Jabber client, which is an instant messaging system. [Jabber.com](http://jabber.com) and [Jabber.org](http://jabber.org) have a wide range of clients and servers for many platforms. Jabber has recently been chosen by BellSouth and French Telecom so it's not a fly-by-night system.

The binaries from <http://gabber.sourceforge.net/download.php> are some 1.6Mb in size. On first running you are asked for some details so the client can register you with jabber.com. Once this is done we are presented with a window similar to those of LICQ *et al*.

From here we can add contact friends, supposedly including those from other instant messaging systems. Supposedly being the key word here. We managed to add a contact from the ICQ network



Figure 2: Inputting data



Figure 3: More information

Somewhere out there...

The SETI project is the **S**earch for **E**xtra **T**errestrial **I**ntelligence, that looks at all the data generated by the world's radio telescopes. This mammoth task has been broken down into the clever Seti@Home project. In this, volunteers using data downloaded from the Seti@Home site use their own PC time to analyse the data. Where the project wins is that lots of PC processing time is not normally used (while you make a drink of Yerba Mat  or just spend the time deep in thought). Seti@Home operates in this otherwise idle time and by harnessing millions of volunteers, aims to make an impact on the data.

Linux users have been able to help by using the Seti client. You can download the compressed file from <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/unix.html>. Note: if you are using a K6 processor you need the i386 download and not the i686.

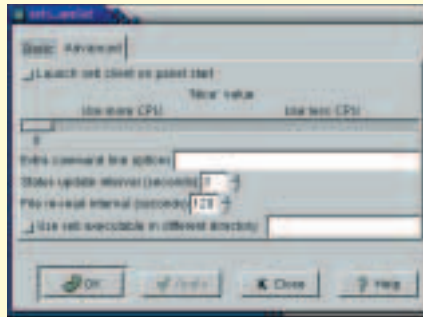


Figure 10: Setting options

Unpacking the file we find two files. The first is a text file explaining the options, while the second is the client. In the shell we start this with

```
[fred@box ~]$ setiathome
```

We are then asked for some personal details and if we want it to be available to others on the Seti site.

The client now communicates with the Seti site and downloads a small piece of data to be worked on. At this point you are left wondering if anything is

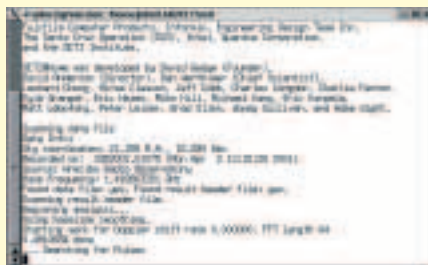


Figure 9: The Setiathome running in a shell

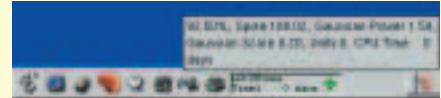


Figure 11: Nearly one unit completed

happening. Restarting with the command

```
[fred@box ~]$ setiathome -verbose
```

now gives us a little indication that something is happening.

The GNOME Seti applet can be now downloaded from <http://seti-applet.sourceforge.net/> and the rpm package installs as expected. From a shell start with

```
[fred@box ~]$ seti_applet
```

This starts the applet but you must first configure it to point to the directory where the setiathome client is located and then connect to Seti. This is done by clicking the right mouse button on the applet. Advanced features let you modify the priority of the applet. The radio telescope icon changes from red to green when active. The Seti data is slow to process. At maximum priority and no other tasks it ticks over at about 10 per cent per hour on a 1GHz machine.

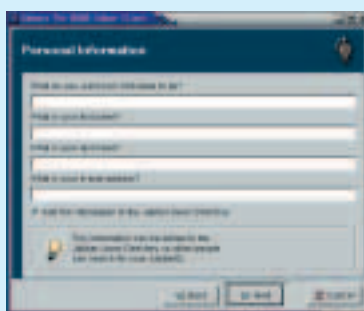


Figure 5: Inputting details

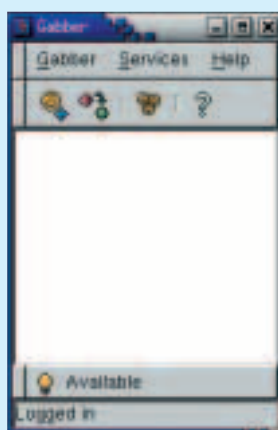


Figure 6: The main Gabber client

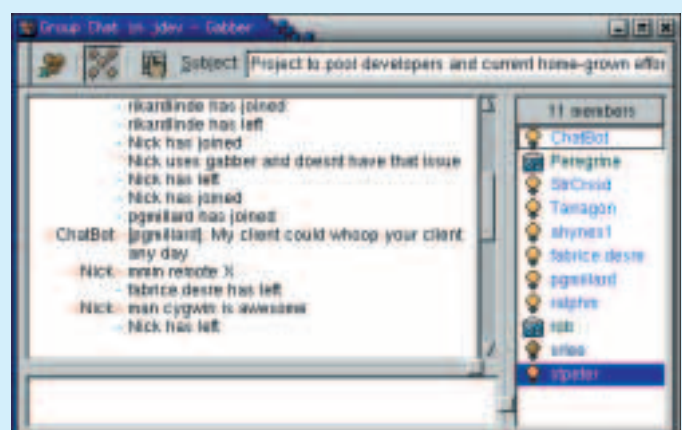


Figure 7: Jabber chat rooms

where they were using an old protocol, but both Yahoo and MSN failed. Disappointed, we chatted to a few Windows users who were shocked that we had managed to connect to an ICQ user as under three different WinClients this was practically impossible.

The Gabber client also lets you access Jabber rooms. These are IRC-type rooms that allow group discussions and can be useful for conference talks.

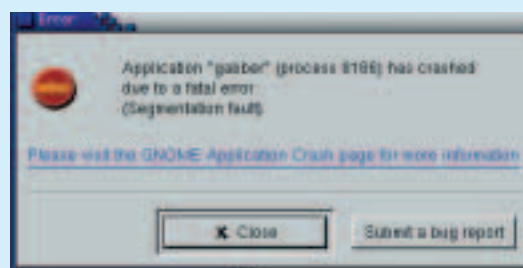


Figure 8: Not everything runs smooth