

Hands-on: testing the GIMP 2.8 and its new single-window interface

By *srlinuxx*

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The developers behind the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP) have announced the official release of version 2.8, the first stable update since 2008. The new version brings a number of significant technical enhancements and user interface improvements, including the long-awaited single-window editing mode.

The GIMP is an open source raster image editor with advanced features, such as support for layers and scripting. It was originally created by students at UC Berkeley in 1996 and later became part of the GNU project. The GIMP has spawned several other notable open source software projects, including the Gtk+ widget toolkit with which it is built.

The tremendous amount of functionality exposed by the GIMP makes it difficult to learn and use. The complexity of the user interface is often a source of major criticism. The project began a major redesign effort in 2007 with the aim of improving usability. Ideas for improvements came from in-depth expert analysis and community brainstorming. After collecting and evaluating proposals, the designers drafted specifications for some of the major changes, including the new single-window mode.

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