

Does GNOME 2 nostalgia harm the future of the free desktop?

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For a desktop that was supposed to become defunct two years ago, GNOME 2 remains surprisingly alive. Linux Mint offers a direct fork in Mate, and recreates GNOME 2 with a series of extensions in Cinnamon. A new distribution called SolusOS now offers Consort, a fork of GNOME fallback, which resembles GNOME 2. Meanwhile, the GNOME project prepares to support a set of core extensions to reproduce the GNOME 2 experience. Hardly a week goes by without some distribution announcing a release that includes some form of GNOME 2.

All this activity is understandable, and even admirable to a degree. It's testimony to users' anger over GNOME 3 and the ability of free software to empower users.

However, increasingly I worry about the effect that these efforts will have on the future of the desktop. In the stampede to return to the past, the ability to innovate frequently seems to be trampled without anyone caring.

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