

KDE 4.7: Long-Term Vision, Ongoing Myopia

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Three years ago, KDE was the innovative desktop, and GNOME the conservative one. Today, KDE is the conservative desktop, doing incremental releases, while GNOME is divided between GNOME 3 and Unity, each as innovative and as controversial as the other.

Next week's release of KDE 4.7 does nothing to change the current relationships, being -- at least from an end-user's perspective -- full of small changes while failing to address some of KDE's ongoing usability issues.

From a developer's perspective, KDE 4.7 is full of news. In particular, KWin, the KDE window manager now supports OpenGL-ES 2.0, an API for embedded graphics hardware. Although this change is supposed to immediately improve the performance for effects on all KDE installations, its importance is largely long-term, as KDE attempts to expand into mobile devices.

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