

Is GNOME Still Needed?

By *srlinuxx*

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When GNOME began in 1997, the project had a clear purpose. At the time, there was no other free desktop, since KDE relied on the then-proprietary Qt toolkit. But today, looking at the mounting evidence of problems within the project and the denial of many project members, I have to ask: Does free software still need GNOME? Or has it outlived its usefulness?

The fact that such questions seem reasonable today is a bizarre reversal. Years ago, KDE became unquestionably free software. Yet the rivalry between GNOME and KDE, sometimes friendly, sometimes fiery, has long driven the development of the desktop to the benefit of all. The need for cross-compatibility, to say nothing of the hopes of equaling or surpassing each other, improved both desktop environments.

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