

Scrivener Writing Software has a Linux Version

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In some ways, Scrivener is the very embodiment of anti-Linux, philosophically. Scrivener is a writing program, used by authors. In Linux, one strings together well developed and intensely tested tools on data streams to produce a result. So, to author a complex project, create files and edit them in a simple text editor, using some markdown. Keep the files organized in the file system and use file names carefully chosen to keep them in order in their respective directories. when it comes time to make project-wide modifications, use `grep` and `sed` to process all of the files at once or selected files. Eventually, run the files through LaTeX to produce beautiful output. Then, put the final product in a directory where people can find it on Gopher.

Gopher? Anyway ?

On the other hand, emacs is the ultimate linux program. Emacs is a text editor that is so powerful and has so many community-contributed ?modes? (like add-ins) that it can be used as a word processor, an email client, a calendar, a PIM, a web browser, an operating system, to make coffee, or to stop that table with the short leg from rocking back and forth. So, in this sense, a piece of software that does everything is also linux, philosophically.

And so, Scrivener, despite what I said above, is in a way the very embodiment of Linux, philosophically.

I've been using Scrivener on a Mac for some time now, and a while back I tried it on Linux. Scrivener for the Mac is a commercial product you must pay money for, though it is not expensive, but the Linux version, being highly experimental and probably unsafe, is free. But then again, this is Linux. We eat unsafe experimental free software for breakfast. So much that we usually skip lunch. Because we're still fixing breakfast. As it were.

[Details with Screen Shots Here](#) [2]

Anyway, here's what Scrivener does. It does everything. The full blown Mac version has more features than the Linux version, but both are feature rich. To me, the most important things are:

A document is organised in ?scenes? which can be willy nilly moved around in relation to each other in a linear or hierarchical system. The documents are recursive, so a document can hold other documents, and the default is to have only the text in the lower level document as part of the final product (though this is entirely optional). A document can be defined as a ?folder? which is really just a document that has a file folder icon representing it to make you feel like it is a folder.

Associated with the project, and with each separate document, is a note taking area. So, you can jot notes project-wide as you work, like ?Don't forget to write the chapter where everyone dies at the end,? or you can write notes on a given

document like "Is this where I should use the joke about the slushy in the bathroom at Target?"

Each scene also has a number of attributes such as a "label" and a "status" and keywords. I think keywords may not be implemented in the Linux version yet.

Typically a project has one major folder that has all the actual writing distributed among scenes in it, and one or more additional folders in which you put stuff that is not in the product you are working on, but could be, or was but you pulled it out, or that includes research material.

You can work on one scene at a time. Scenes have meta-data and document notes.

The scenes, folders, and everything are all held together with a binder typically displayed on the left side of the Scrivener application window, showing the hierarchy. A number of templates come with the program to create pre-organized binder paradigms, or you can just create one from scratch. You can change the icons on the folders/scenes to remind you of what they are. When a scene is active in the central editing window, you can display an "inspector" on the right side, showing the card (I'll get to that later) on top the meta data, and the document or project notes. In the Mac version you can create additional meta-data categories.

An individual scene can be displayed in the editing window. Or, scenes can be shown as a collection of scenes in what is known as "Scrivenings mode." Scrivenings mode is more or less standard word processing mode where all the text is simply there to scroll through, though scene titles may or may not be shown (optional).

A lot of people love the corkboard option. I remember when PZ Myers discovered Scrivener he raved about it. The corkboard is a corkboard (as you may have guessed) with 3 x 5 inch virtual index cards, one per scene, that you can move around and organize as though that was going to help you get your thoughts together. The corkboard has the scene title and some notes on what the scene is, which is yet another form of meta-data. I like the corkboard mode, but really, I don't think it is the most useful features. Come for the corkboard, stay for the binder and the document and project notes!

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[1] <http://www.tuxmachines.org/taxonomy/term/101>

[2] <http://scienceblogs.com/gregladen/2014/08/29/scrivener-on-linux-try-it-youll-like-it/>