

Implementing Tamil on Linux and Free Software

A Progress Report

Goal of Tamil Linux Project



Create a complete
Tamil operating system
based on Free software

Why develop software in Tamil

- To remove English as a prerequisite to computer literacy
- To foster faster IT education among all Tamils
- To develop culturally-native programs in Tamil
- To speed up education
To reap all the meta benefits thereof

Three Active Areas

- KDE

KDE is the first true multilingual OS interface

- GNOME

GNOME is considered as THE desktop for the future

- Console

Ominpotent, omnipresent OS interface, for ever!!

KDE

- Latest release 2.2 contains Tamil language
- KDE is the first complete Tamil desktop environment
- Tamil is the first Indian language to appear in KDE
- Uses Unicode internally and TSCII fonts for display

KDE - Achievements

- About 120 applications translated
- Major hurdles in translating applications into Tamil already crossed
- The effort established synergy between the translators and Tamil scholars
- With the release of version 2.2 in August, the Tamil desktop will be commercially available from major Linux vendors in the near future

GNOME Version 1.4

- Current version
- Tamil is not yet one of the core language
- Based on TSCII character set

GNOME Version 2.0

- Expected to be released by the end of the year
- Uses Pango text processing engine
- Based on Unicode character set
- The translation team is hard at work
- Further help needed from volunteers to meet the deadlines

PANGO

- Unicode based text engine
- Implements most of the languages defined by Unicode
- Advanced text rendering and keyboard drivers
- Uses modules to implement various scripts and keyboard drivers
- Contains both display and keyboard module for Tamil

Linux Console

- consoleTamil package
 - Locales
 - Console fonts
 - Console keyboard driver
- IISc, Bangalore - Changes Linux kernel
- To be done:
 - Translation of important console tools to Tamil
 - Long term: Implementing Tamil into Linux kernel through Unicode

Other significant developments

- Tamil software for LaTeX typesetting software (Thuraiyappa Vaseekaran)
- Tamilxkb customized Tamil keyboard setup for X Window System (Dinesh Natarajah)
- Tamil interface for Simputer - People's Computer

Translations

- Translation teams use many Tamil scholars
- Scholars discuss and devise new technical words in mailing lists
- Translators implement these into software
- Mailing lists
 - tamilinix@yahoogroups.com
 - kalaichol@yahoogroups.com
 - wg01-infitt-experts@yahoogroups.com

Pending work

- A typical Linux distribution contains about 2500 packages
- Only a tiny portion of these are currently covered by KDE and Gnome translation efforts
- Current efforts focus mainly on GUI translations
- Documentations need to be translated
 - HOWTO guides
 - *man* and *info* pages
 - Other help documentations

Volunteers Needed

- All these efforts are volunteer work
- We need lot of volunteers for translations and development
- We also need volunteers to package the software and distribute

Contact Information

- Primary Website for Tamil Linux is **tamillinux.org**
- Primary mailing list is tamilinux@yahoogroups.com
- Website for KDE - www.kde.org
- Website for GNOME - www.gnome.org
- Website for Pango - www.pango.org