

Scribus 1.3.3.11



Cross-platform open source desktop publishing is no longer merely one of **Nick Veitch's** funny dreams – creativity, fly and be free!

In brief...

» Publish all sorts of writings from your home PC. For simpler documents or books with lots of cross-references, you might opt for *OpenOffice.org Writer* instead

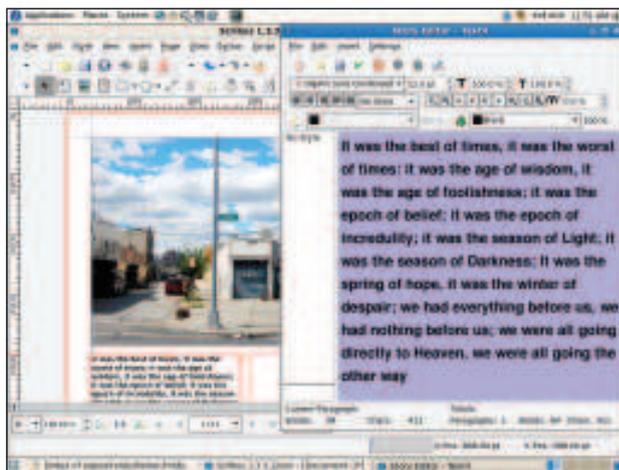


Graham says...

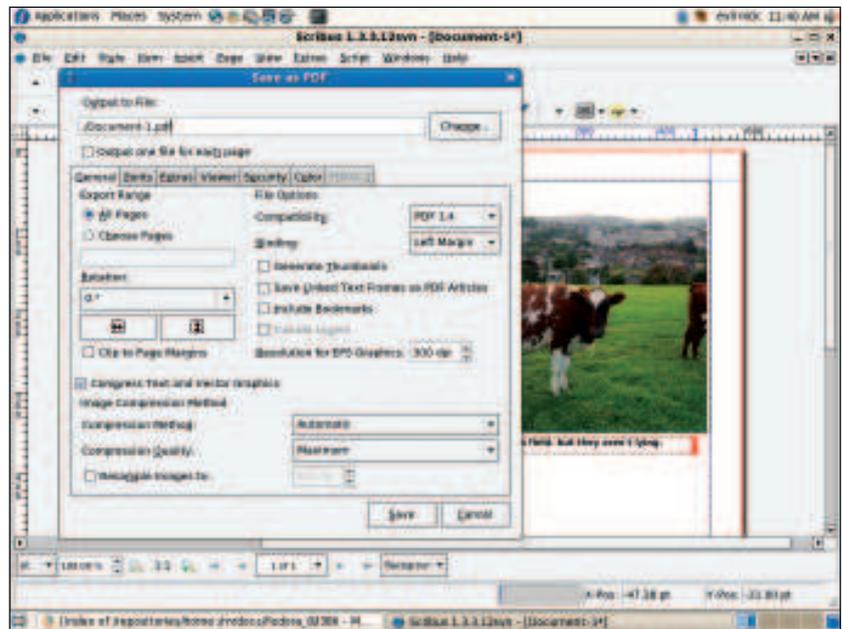
"Scribus has got an awful lot better with the 1.3.3 series, and is great for most users, but it's still not reliable enough for businesses, which just can't afford to have their productivity hampered by unstable software."

Way back in the distant mists of time, when the world was young and *Linux Format's* editor was still handsome, we produced an entire feature on publishing with open source software (actually, it was in **LXF96**). In some nightmarishly twisted recursive way, the feature was itself entirely produced using *Scribus*, open source's leading graphical desktop publishing software. Aside from sending several staff members even more insane, we proved beyond doubt that *Scribus* can be used as a replacement for proprietary DTP software such as *Adobe InDesign* and *Quark XPress*. We used *Scribus* to import bitmap and vector graphics, bring in text, arrange the whole lot on the page and export it to PDF ready for printing. Even if we do say so ourselves, the results were pretty impressive, but all the while we got the feeling that *Scribus* could have done more.

The 1.3.3 series has introduced a great deal of functionality, but it was also rather buggy in earlier versions. There have been no major problems with it, but plenty enough to be annoying. For example, various elements of the undo history didn't work properly, strange things happened when you used the magnify tool, and imported images sometimes didn't behave correctly. These weren't things that would seriously prejudice the finished work, but were annoying enough to mean that some features couldn't be relied on and were best avoided. Most of the focus for the 1.3.3.11 release has been on sorting out these bugs and getting things working.



» The story editor is much improved in the 1.3.3x releases, for faster styling and tweaking of troublesome text.



» PDF export from *Scribus* is excellent, including forms, effects and JavaScript support.

Since we last looked at *Scribus*, there have been improvements in image handling and PDF export, particularly PDF forms support. The PDF engine is now on a par with anything short of Adobe's own *Distiller* (and there are some who would even dispute that). Creating PDF forms may not be the traditional job of DTP software, but *Scribus* is now probably the best application on Linux with which to create them.

Sprechen Sie Scribus?

It's easy for native English speakers to overlook the importance of localisation to a project, but we should mention that the bug-fixing phase of the last few releases has enabled the translators to catch up a bit, and *Scribus* now features a solid German version as well as significant progress in Arabic, Danish, Polish and Russian. Indeed, the reason for the release of 1.3.3.11 so soon after 1.3.3.10 (both in January!) is mostly to do with fixing some bugs that cropped up in the translations system. The bottom line is that this version simply works better than the previous two, and the *Scribus* team are dead set on making it as reliable as possible.

At the outset of the *Scribus* project, the ambition was to create a professional-quality DTP application, not just a page layout toy. The goal was that people should

be confident about creating real work with *Scribus* – books, magazines and other artwork – without fear that it would let them down. The 1.3.3.x series is now reliable enough for most work, but if you're doing something out of the ordinary (using exotic graphics formats perhaps) you would be well advised to experiment first. With the amount of effort and checking that goes into each release, you're unlikely to come across anything showstopping though.

Scribus is an ambitious project, and while feature-wise it doesn't seem to have made a great deal of progress in the last 12 months (most of the exciting things are still in the unstable versions) it is making great progress towards the original goal. **LXF**

LINUX FORMAT Verdict

Scribus 1.3.3.11

Developer: The Scribus team

Web: www.scribus.net

Price: Free under GPL

Features	8/10
Performance	9/10
Ease of use	8/10
Documentation	7/10

» Scribus gets more reliable by the day.

Rating 8/10