

Unforked Ghostscript released, now under the GPL, and works with CUPS

Ghostscript 8.6.0 has been released following the merger of ESP Ghostscript with the upstream Ghostscript.

By Troy Unrau | Last updated August 3, 2007 1:31 PM CT



This week Ghostscript, an open source postscript processor, released version 8.60. Ghostscript releases are not normally newsworthy since they are frequent and incremental, but this release is special. Years ago, when the CUPS (Common Unix Printing System) project was still in its infancy, they took a fork of Ghostscript to produce ESP Ghostscript. During the 8.60 development series, the original Ghostscript project decided to move to the GPL away from their own AFPL License. This was the stroke of goodwill required to get the unforking process underway and the developers began to pore over the code.

So on July 31st, Ghostscript released version 8.60, the first post-merge release and the first to fully support the CUPS system. This is good news, since it means that the CUPS people can now spend less time maintaining a fork of an already large project and more time working on printing issues. Plus, it now appears that Ghostscript is in a mostly usable state for many distributions without the extensive patching that was previously needed. Other features of this release include the modularization of the device code, a positive side effect of which is that there is no longer an apparent need to ship separate X11 and non-X11 versions.

Release candidate packages have already found their way into bleeding edge distros and are being used with some success, however due to the packaging and dependency changes, most users will have to wait until a new release of their distribution before they see any of the new code in action.

CUPS is used in almost all Linux and BSD operating systems (including OS X) to manage printing and printer drivers, including the processing required postscript printers, network printing, and more. Ghostscript is a postscript interpreter useful in viewing or converting postscript into a form that is usable by non-postscript printers.

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