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[Liferea Review](#)



A simple, yet powerful RSS feed reader for GTK/Gnome.

There are a whole bunch of RSS Feed Readers available for Linux but, in my opinion, only two are worth using, depending on your current desktop environment. If you're using KDE, you'll have Akregator set as the default RSS reader, thanks to its flawless integration with Konqueror. As for Gnome however, chances are you'll go with Liferea, which is a news aggregator for GTK/Gnome. Of course, nobody will stop you from using Akregator in Gnome and Liferea in KDE, if that's the way you want it. Liferea is a very simple RSS feed reader which offers basic, yet useful features for managing your subscriptions. Unfortunately, you won't yet find fancy features such as integration with web browsers, adaptive filters, you won't be able to post on a blog and so on. On the other hand, Liferea is very fast, clean and elegant compared to other aggregators. At the moment, there are two Liferea version branches available. The latest 1.0.x branch offers version 1.0.26, while the 1.2.x branch has version 1.2-RC3 available for download. I've tried both out of curiosity but unfortunately, the difference (until now) between them consists in several bug fixes, several interface translations and a few more small modifications. No big features have been added to 1.2 from 1.0.26 so far, but this is only the release candidate 3 and a lot of changes can take place until the final release. Moreover, a 1.3.x branch has been announced, which may bring a version with more features. Because it's a pretty popular application, packages for most of the Linux distros have been made available by packagers. This means that you will probably be able to install Liferea through your package manager. I'm using Fedora Core and installing Liferea was just as easy as typing `yum install liferea` into a terminal. This installed the 1.0.26 version which is very stable and reliable. But I was curious about the 1.2-RC3 version, so I've decided to get the RC3 source package, compile and install it. Everything went smooth and without incidents. So, whether you choose to install Liferea through yum, apt-get, emerge and so on, or by compiling the sources, you will have Liferea installed on your system in no time, which is very good considering how other applications scream for several dependencies through the whole installation process. Once the installation was finished, I found the Liferea shortcut in both KDE and Gnome main menu, under the Internet submenu and gave it a go. The first thing I've noticed about Liferea is that it comes with a whole bunch of RSS subscriptions by default. I found feeds like art.gnome, gnomfiles, slashdot and a few Fedora-related ones. Most of them are quite important and useful and I'm sure they will make a great starting point for everyone using a RSS reader for the first time. Liferea knows three display modes: **Normal View** - Email client-like: the upper right pane contains a list of all headlines of the selected feed and the selected headline is shown in the lower right pane. **Wide View** - 3 panes: the middle pane contains a list of all headlines of the selected feed and the selected headline is shown in the right pane. **Combined View** - 2 panes: the right pane contains a combined display of all headlines of the selected feed. You can change between these modes in the "View" menu. This is a per-feed setting so you can view each feed in the mode that fits best. The default viewing mode is "Normal View". Every item can be tagged as important using the flag button from the auto-hide toolbar under the item's title or using the "Toggle Item Flag" from the menu, found once an item has been right-clicked. Once an item has been flagged, it will show-up in the "Flagged" folder under the subscriptions list. Also, the flagged item won't be dropped from the cache when aging. There's also a search function which allows you to search through the downloaded items but also, you can use an online search engine to look for news. An interesting search-related function I found is the permanent search folder. This feature allows you to create a folder among your subscriptions that contains all items

matching the search rule. Creating a new subscription is a rather easy process; all you'll need to do is press the "New subscription" button from the toolbar or from the Feeds menu and enter the feed address into the text box. After successfully creating a subscription, you'll be able to change the feed properties by right clicking it and selecting the appropriate button. Usually, there's no need to change a feed's properties unless it needs HTTP authentication or other feed specific options. Liferea can be customized from the Preferences window, which can be opened by pressing the "Preferences" button on the toolbar or from the Program menu. The preferences window is divided into seven tabs: feeds, folders, headlines, browser, GUI, proxy and enclosures. The feeds tab allows you to change basic feed-related options such as the default number of items to be saved in each subscription or the feed update interval. From the folders tab, you can change the way feeds are loaded once a subscription has been selected, while from the headlines tab, you can change the default hotkey for skimming through the items and also, you can set the default bookmarking website. This feature allows you to send an item to a bookmarking website (such as del.icio.us) once you've clicked an item's bookmark button. From the browser tab you can configure several options related to the internal and external browser. From the GUI tab you can enable the system tray icon and set whether you'd like to be announced when new headlines are downloaded or not. The proxy tab contains, of course, proxy-related options. Finally, from the Enclosures tab you can set what download tool to be used for downloading enclosures and the directory where to be downloaded to. Enclosures are often media files added to the feeds in order to enhance the visitor's experience. For instance, some weblogs provide feeds containing more than just html text, but also an audio or video file. Liferea allows you to select the appropriate media player used for playing each media format downloaded from a news item.

The Good Liferea is a simple, clean, fast and yet quite powerful RSS reader for GTK/Gnome. It offers basic features for creating and maintaining subscriptions. It has a powerful search function and provides system tray integration for quick access. Moreover, it allows flagging the items you don't want to be deleted for aging.

The Bad Unfortunately, there's no integration with Gnome (or KDE, for that matter) browsers but I'm not sure this is Liferea's fault, so adding items to the subscription list won't be as easy as with Akregator (click'n'go). Also, there are a few important RSS-related functions which are missing such as easy to use filters. Finally, there isn't an option in the preferences window which allows you to change the font used for displaying selected headlines.

The Truth Even though it doesn't have a lot of advanced features to offer, Liferea is still a powerful, fast and clean RSS aggregator which you should definitely try out. *Check out some screenshots below:*