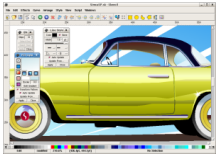


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## Skencil Review

*Skencil, yet another vector drawing program.*

The first application I used for vector drawing was Inkscape. I was so impressed that I had to write a review. Now I encountered a new piece of software useful for vector graphics, called Skencil. Even though they are somehow similar, I learned that they are actually very different applications. The development for this software started a decade ago, so it's a lot older than Inkscape, perhaps one of the first software for creating vector graphics. The problem is that the development is very slow and it feels like it stands still. In the meantime, Inkscape makes a very fast progress - it became a (almost) professional application in a very short time. The interface of Sketch uses GTK+. It uses it since 99', when it switched from Tcl/Tk. At that moment, GTK+ was great for any software, but now it's a bit of old news. This one is a graphics application and it truly deserves to have a pleasant looking interface that uses GTK2. This API has evolved quite a lot since then and, taking into account the differences, the old one feels like something Fred Flintstone would appreciate. Anyway, I'm exaggerating because it does the job, but the truth is that a good implementation of GTK2 would open new horizons for it. The best thing about this software is that it's well implemented with Python. Since this programming language is very versatile and in the same time easy to use, it allows other users to create extensions for this software. I was a bit surprised when I saw that Skencil supports several known formats. It also has a proprietary format that is selected by default, but most users prefer to use either the most common one or the best format. Since I am familiar with SVG from Inkscape, I tried to open some of those files. At that very moment I realized that when SVG was implemented in this software most of the advantages that we have today weren't there. Skencil was able to display correctly only very simple SVG drawings. In fact, this software is quite capable of nice graphics. I located some good ones on the website, I downloaded them and played a little with the software. I think the .sk proprietary format was a lot more capable than SVG at that time. Other supported formats are cmx, cmg, wmf, aff and ai. I can't really say how well are this formats supported, but since they haven't evolved like SVG had, I can speculate that the support for those is good. Creating and editing shapes in Skencil is quite easy. Nice results can be obtained with little effort in case of very basic drawings. If you want to create a banner or logo that has a professional touch, this software can't be used because it hasn't support for anti-aliased drawings, for TrueType fonts or for different encodings. The lack of this features limit its use a lot! Related to the line style and the fill style, many options are supported and the related windows can be easily accessed using the F6 and F7 keyboard shortcuts. I think that this feature gives a lot of functionality to this software. Raster and postscript images can be imported and easily transformed to fit in your project, and then, they can also be exported in the same format. This feature is supported by Python and in theory all the common bitmap file formats can be used. Pretty powerful editing is supported and learning the shortcuts from the curve menu can greatly improve your productivity, but this generally applies to any program. **The Good** Bezier curves are well implemented and behave just fine. Fill and line properties are good. Python provides a lot of extensibility to this software. **The Bad** The GTK+ toolkit that is currently used for the GUI is legacy. Support for the SVG format is very outdated. An advanced text editing is impossible with this software. **The Truth** This software can't really go too far if there isn't support from the community. I'm not sure it will actually go a lot further if the development is done at this speed. Anyway, to be realistic, I have to say I can't think of any good reason for using this software over Inkscape. *The screenshots below show Skencil in action:*