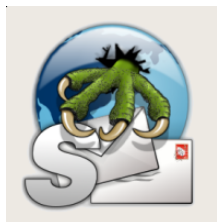


12 June 2006

By: Bogdan Radulescu, Editor, Linux Software Reviews



Sylpheed-Claws Review

The user-friendly, lightweight, and fast email client

Perhaps I should begin by saying that this software evolved from the [Sylpheed e-mail client](#). At this point we have to figure out if there is much of a difference and which one is better. You can imagine that this software is very similar to Sylpheed so I will emphasize on the differences, but similarities will also be discussed. The first addition that really makes a difference is actually the first thing you see when the software is opened. It's a wizard that allows adding e-mail accounts in a very easy manner. Most of the settings can be done from this wizard and generally there is no need for further configuration. The user can just start using the e-mail account right away. Next, you'll see the main interface. It is very similar to the original program and differences are hardly noticeable. Things that are modified include: an icon here, another one there, small modifications related to the behavior of some buttons and differences in the behavior of the quick search button. The quick search feature of Sylpheed-Claws is actually better than the one in Sylpheed. I like it mainly because it's located somewhere in the middle of the screen but also because it is advanced and in the same time easier to use. A criterion can also be set in extended search and an information button is available for displaying and explaining the symbols that can be used. Something that I don't like in Sylpheed-Claws is the replacing of the text New, Unread and # with icons of different colors. If I hadn't used Sylpheed before it would have been very hard for me to figure out what that icons stand for. At some point I went through the help menu and there I noticed an icon legend. This is very useful but how many of us go through the help menu?! A big step forward for Sylpheed-Claws is that it has support for themes. Some users like to customize their applications because either they don't like the standard look or just want to make them "theirs". Generally, a new theme will not change much in this software but even little things like changing the icons and some colors make a big impact. A very cool addition to Sylpheed-Claws is the plugins. They are excellent for software because, in many cases, a lot more functionality can be easily added without modifying the whole software. With plugins you can integrate Sylpheed-Claws with software like the Clam AntiVirus, the SpamAssassin Server, the light Dillo web browser for reading HTML mail and many more. Other plugins enable support for vCalendar message handling and there is one that even handles various ACPI mail LEDs on most brand laptops. If you read the review of Sylpheed you noticed that I tried to make the point that even though the configuration is very detailed, it is a bit complicated. In this one the configuration window is redesigned. Most of the functions are the same but some additions are made. For example, after loading a plugin it can be configured from the plugins section. You may find out that the default web browser will not always open. If you want to correct this problem you have to replace the fancy command (`mozilla-firefox -remote 'openURL(%s,new-window)'`) for opening external browsers with this one: `firefox %s`. You will most certainly want to do this because the external browser opens the links in Sylpheed-Claws. Filtering is as powerful as it is in Sylpheed so this is a very good thing. It is redesigned too but I'm not sure it's actually easier to use. I don't find it more complicated but also not easier, perhaps it's just different. **The Good** All the good things that are present in Sylpheed, like speed and stability, are also present here. The availability of the wizard, the support for themes and plugins makes this software a lot more usable by non-experienced users. I almost forgot to say that it can fetch news and this is an excellent feature for a mail client. **The Bad** Since several people work on this one, minor bugs can be noticed in Sylpheed-Claws sometimes. Spam control is poorly supported. It's only supported through plugins and you have to be an expert to be able to configure it efficiently. Considering that one of the greatest things about the Sylpheed family

is that it's able to handle large amounts of mail efficiently, an efficient and easy to use spam mail control feature is badly required. **The Truth**Sylpheed-Claws is an e-mail client based on Sylpheed. It owes a lot to that software because it puts the Sylpheed in Sylpheed-Claws. The truth is that this client is even better because it has an easier to use interface, support for plugins and for themes. There is also a [review of Sylpheed](#). Perhaps reading it will be useful. *The screenshots below show Sylpheed-Claws in action:*