

Localization Newsletter Issue 1, Vol 1 (April 1-15, 2004)

Editor speak

On behalf of the Localization community in India we are happy to bring out the first issue of the Localization newsletter. For the uninitiated, Localization is the process by which software and computing systems are adapted to a particular language and the specific cultural habits of a region. And before the process of localization can begin, the software has to be internationalized to support multiple languages and local customs. Its common to have the terms abbreviated as 'i18n' for internationalization (since there are 18 letters before 'i' and 'n') and 'l10n' for localization. In this newsletter we will be highlighting localization scene in India and around with respect to Free/Open Source Software - aka GNU, Linux etc. It would present the clear picture on who is doing what? , latest/recent developments, events happening etc. Our goal is mainly to publicise widely localization activities happening in India, so people get the whole picture rather than bits-n-pieces and to serve as a mouthpiece for all localization teams & their volunteers. We hope this way localization efforts get a wider audience , participation and feedback from users.

Since this is first version, its not much structured, & content written in very informal way but will have following sections initially.

- Headlines - some eye catching, mind blowing , surprising news.
- News Bits - things happening around and who is doing them, new releases, events etc.
- In Focus - A short article/howto on some aspect of Localization, (We will start this from next issue).
- Team watch - An update on a L10n team, interviews of their volunteers have to say.
- Help - Some l10n project requesting for help/volunteers. l10n teams can make requests here.

Everyone is welcome to give their comments on it. You can add them to [LocalizationNewsletter](#) wiki, or mail the editorial team. <http://www.indlinux.org/wiki/index.php?LocalizationNewsletter>

Contributions for future issues is welcome and relevant to localization under above sections. Contributions and feedback on this newsletter can be sent to editorial team.

Editorial Team

- G Karunakar (karunakar at freedomink dot org)
- Sankarshan Mukhopadhyay (sankarshan at soffhome dot net)
- Sayamindu Dasgupta (unmadindu at bengalinux dot org)
- Venky Hariharan (venky at indlinux dot org).

Headlines

- **Punjabi and Bangla become first supported Indian languages in Gnome 2.6.** 99.3 percent of Gnome essentials is already translated into Punjabi, which is about 16,000 translatable strings. Bangla is at 83%. Stats for other languages in Gnome 2.6 are - Hindi (63%), Tamil (36%), Malayalam (33%), Marathi (17%), Kannada (5%). See full statistics at <http://developer.gnome.org/projects/gtp/status/gnome-2.6/>.
- **KDE Hindi is now 80 percent complete.** Thanks to untiring efforts of Ravishankar Shrivastava and fellowship support from SARAI, KDE Hindi is now 80% complete, thats a record of 50,000 strings translated in span of 3 months. Tamil is ahead at 91%, with Bangla at distant 43%. Check out statistics at http://i18n.kde.org/stats/gui/KDE_3_2_BRANCH/index.php

News Bits

Workshop on Standardisation and Localisation (Indian Languages) on Free Software

A Workshop on Standardisation and Localisation (Indian Languages) on Free Software was held on 19th March at CDAC, Mumbai (formerly NCST). Highlights were talks by experts in Fonts, Localization and Free Software. Panel discussions highlighted experiences by localization experts. Also in presentation were demos by [Indix](#), [IndLinux](#) and [Indictrans](#) projects. See http://www.ncst.ernet.in/projects/indix/indix_workshop.htm for more.

Oye Balle Balle

Amanpreet Singh Alam and Gursharn Singh recently started off Punjabi localisation work, they have created a Gurmukhi Unicode font and doing Gnome 2.6 translations at rocket speed completing about 16,000 strings in a month. They along with Jaswinder Singh, Narinderpal Singh and Sushil Kumar are working Punjabi live CD based on GNOPPIX. They can be contact through <http://www.geocities.com/punlinux> or via email "punjablinux at netscape dot net".

First Linux distro with Indian language support

PCQLinux2004 bundles IndLinux Pali release, with its March 2004 issue. This makes it the first linux distro to have Indian language support enabled by default. PCQLinux2004 is based on Fedora, with a lot of customization to users for home and office needs. There are some glitches though, read <http://www.indlinux.org/wiki/index.php/PcqLinux2004> to get over them.

Indic Input tool for Windows 9X.

Abhijit Dutta from IBM informs about a tool for entering Unicode-based Indic text from older Windows machines <http://www.alphaworks.ibm.com/tech/indicime>. This could be killer app for people using Windows 95/98 and want to type Unicon in Unicode enabled apps like Internet Explorer (5.5 or above) , Mozilla / Netscape 7.0+, **OpenOffice**, etc. Visit <http://www.alphaworks.ibm.com/forum/indicime.nsf> and also post you feedback on it there.


IndLinux-Hindi 0.73 (Pali) released

This is a updated release for Gnome 2.2 including Gnome 2.4 . It also has the necessary fonts, keyboard settings and scripts to ready your distro for Indic. Supported distros - Redhat 8/9 , Fedora Core 1, Mandrake 9.1/9.2 . Morphix Gnome / Debian unstable with Gnome 2.x . Download it from <http://www.indlinux.org/downloads/>

Finally! Free OpenType Fonts.

Indictrans (<http://www.indictrans.org>) project which is working towards Marathi and Gujarati localization has released OpenType fonts for Devanagari (Gargi) and Gujarati (Padma) under GNU GPL. These fonts are based on the AkruTi Freedom TTF fonts released under GNU GPL. Fonts are available at : Gargi v1.1 - <http://www.indictrans.org/src/fonts/Gargi-1.1.ttf> , Padma v0.5 <http://www.indictrans.org/src/fonts/padmaa-Medium-0.5.ttf>

Taming The Dragon

Jungshik Shin of Mozilla team announced of Mozilla binary built with Pango for enabling complex script rendering. This build can be used to browses Indian language websites using Unicode by having the right fonts. It's available at <ftp://ftp.mozilla.org/pub/mozilla.org/mozilla/releases/mozilla1.6/contrib/mozilla-i686-pc-linux-gnu-gtk2-pango.tar.gz> 
He says "It's compiled with gtk2, xft and my patch for mozilla bug 215219 (http://bugzilla.mozilla.org/show_bug.cgi?id=215219). Please, spread the words so that as many people as possible can benefit from the build. If you use a type 1 postscript font for Western langgroup, you may have a trouble with Latin letters. There are two ways to solve the problem. One is NOT to use type 1 postscript fonts and the other is to upgrade Xft, fontconfig and Pango the latest. Please, refer to the following README file for more details. 
<ftp://ftp.mozilla.org/pub/mozilla.org/mozilla/releases/mozilla1.6/contrib/README-pango>"

Help ..F1

Your language needs you - Do you have some time to spare & good at your language, then you could help out with translations for your language. Join the localization team for your language.

Bengali - <http://www.bengalinux.org/>
Gujarati - <http://www.indictrans.org/>
Hindi - <http://www.indlinux.org/>
Kannada - <http://kannada.sourceforge.net/>
Malayalam - <http://smc.sarovar.org/>
Marathi - <http://www.indictrans.org/>
Punjabi - <http://www.geocities.com/punlinux/>
Oriya - <http://www.indlinux.org/oriya/>
Tamil - <http://www.tamillinux.org/>
Telugu - <http://www.indlinux.org/telugu/>

Indic-computing Handbook needs contributors

The Indic-Computing Handbook at <http://indic-computing.sourceforge.net/handbook/index.html> is a developers handbook that contains technical information about the issues involved in Indian language processing. Its part of Indic-computing project . Developing the Handbook requires two major kinds of skill sets

- Domain expertise, e.g., linguistic information for each of the languages being documented.
- Software development skills for building infrastructure capable of processing indian language text.

Join in at <http://indic-computing.sourceforge.net/contributing.html> to contribute

Team watch

This section will have reports on Localization teams, interviews of people actively working in localization area. In this inaugural issue, we have Sayamindu Dasgupta speaking on [Ankur Bangla Project](#).



Sayamindu DasGupta is one of the more recognised names on the Indic Localisation scene. As the co-lead of the Ankur Bangla Project at www.bengalinux.org, he is one of the hackers who are keen on pushing the envelope. In an interview with Sankarshan Mukhopadhyay (sankarshan at softhome dot net), Sayamindu (unmadindu at bengalinux dot org) talks about the Bangla L10n.

SM. Why did you join up Ankur ?

SDG. The ideal answer would be somewhat like - ..maybe because I am crazy ! Seriously speaking, during June-July 2002, I was quite excited to see GNOME supporting languages like Chinese, Spanish, etc. I made some queries, and found out that the first sep to a Bangla enabled GNOME would be to make fonts. I did not know anything about creating fonts, so while looking for info, I came across Taneem Ahmed, who was getting together all the resources related to Bangla & Free Software at Bengalinux.org. I joined him in his effort, and finally in January 2003, Bengalinux became Ankur.

SM. What is the release management protocol for the project ?

SDG. The process is quite informal. When a developer decides to release a package, (s) he (yes we are an equal opportunities effort !) usually sends in the tarball to me. If required, I make a RPM file, and upload the tarball and the RPM to our download servers, and make the announcements at the various websites and mailing lists. Regarding translations, we try to keep in sync with the release schedule of the project concerned. For example, we maintain a 6 month cycle for our GNOME translations, with translation and pofile release activities reaching a peak during March/September each year.

SM. Where is the project headed ?

SDG. Currently, KDE translation is a major focus area. Deepayan Sarkar is working on a early version of an open source Indic language OCR package.

Also, we are trying to Bangla enable the various GNOME based accessibility software. For example, we have already come up with a training text for Dasher, and currently, we are conducting a study on Bangla character occurrence frequency for localizing Gok - the GNOME On Screen Keyboard. The preliminary results of the study will be published very soon in our wiki.

Plans are also on for a Bangla screen reader (based on Gopernicus) - but that would involve the creation of a Bangla Text to Speech Engine, and I am not sure whether we have the required resources for that at this moment.

We are also adding to and enriching the content base of the Localised Low Cost Computing effort (L2C2) of Ankur.

SM. Where do you see Ankur from a long term perspective ? ie the vision and the goal

SDG. Our two major aims at this stage are

1. Get out of the box Bangla support for every major distro that is out there. Bangla should just work for user Suresh Das and Haridasi Pal.
2. Go beyond the Live CD, and create a full fledged distribution, specially customised and tailored for the Bengali user with considerable value addition.

SM. How many volunteers ? What are the major hassles ?

SDG. Volunteers: We have around 15 volunteers working on the various projects. The number of core developers is around 7-8.

Hassles: Getting more volunteers. We started out with around 12 volunteers, and the increase in the number of volunteers have not been satisfactory.

Moreover, bandwidth/connectivity remains a major problem. For example, one of our volunteers, Dr. Anirban Mitra can connect to the internet for only once a week. Since Ankur is totally a internet based project, this is a major bottleneck. I am one of the lucky ones, with a 24 hr 128 kbps connection, but I too have a bandwidth cap of 500 MB per month, which makes things really difficult for releasing Live CD ISO images and downloading large files (for instance OpenOffice.org source).

Hardware resources is also another problem - compiling stuff like Mozilla/OpenOffice.org can take really long, and doing this stuff on our regular production machines really hampers work.

SM. Current Project status?

SDG. With GNOME 2.6, Bangla will officially get a "supported language" status. Currently, 84 percent of the core GNOME Desktop is translated into Bangla.

KDE translation is progressing at a steady pace, and the stats currently stand at around 35 %.

The Online Archive of Bangla Literary Works is expanding nicely, and the Indic OCR, once developed should speed up things in this area.

The West Bengal Bangla Academy has recently released new recommendations on the Bengali script (simplifying some conjunct shapes and stuff like that), and the Bangladesh Bangla Academy also had release similar recommendations sometime back. We are currently developing an Open Type font which conforms to these recommendations.

SM. How about some information on the recognition obtained by Ankur ?

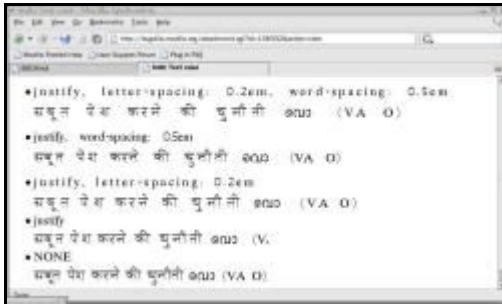
SDG. It is an interesting phenomenon that the initial recognition and appreciation for the Ankur Bangla Project came from outside India. For example, the recent issue of Linux Magazine has a write-up on the project in the World News section. We are also one of the 3 L10n efforts proposed to be highlighted in IBM Linux Redbook 2004.

The L2C2 package suitably customised is undergoing pilot tests at 19 community centres in UK, 2 in US and 1 in Australia.

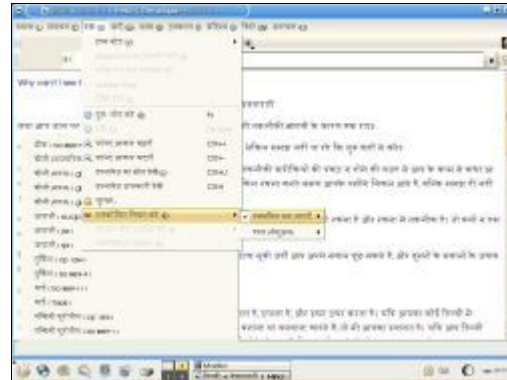
In India, [Linux For You](#) had a breaking news section on this project and we are in talks with the Govt of WB to implement on a pilot level the project at the Public Access Points of the G2C initiative.

By the way, we are at www.bengalinux.org

Gallery - Seeing is Believing!



[Mozilla rendering Indic Text](#)



[KDE Hindi Screenshot Gallery](#)



[Bangla Desktop](#)



[Anaconda Installer in Bangla](#)