

Scribus 1.3.5



Can there really be a competent, cross-platform desktop publishing package that serves both newbies and professionals alike? **Bob Moss** finds out.

In brief...

» A free desktop publisher that can create documents similar in quality to commercial offerings. See also: *OpenOffice.org Writer*.

We've reviewed *Scribus* a number of times in the past and even included a feature made using the tool in **LXF96**. However, each revisit tends to throw up the same old problems: *Scribus*'s lack of reliability and poor interface. Thankfully, after two years of solid development, these woes have been banished. Well, mostly.

The most noticeable change here is the interface: the Image Manager and New Document windows have been rearranged into logical positions, and the interface itself has a shiny new icon set. The Font Preview has also been subtly altered, hiding away its ream of detail until you need it. Meanwhile, object insertions now have a pop-up window to define object proportions, and most of the image and text import



» The updated Save As PDF tool gives *Scribus* a more logical and professional feel.

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bugs seem to have been resolved, increasing the program's stability.

But *Scribus 1.3.5* isn't all refinement: new features include support for pre-built shapes with associated path tools – vector graphic and colour palette import support from Adobe's *Illustrator* and *InDesign* – which is a huge bonus.

In addition, there's a raft of new pre-press options during the PDF export

stage that will appeal to professionals. These include crop and bleed marks, colour bars, and page information, which are especially useful when printing, since what you see on screen doesn't always match what comes out on paper. If you're feeling adventurous, you can even add transition effects to each page, so your PDFs take on the feel of a slideshow.

Something for everyone

New users have also been taken into account with an excellent new Quick Start guide that helps prime you in the basics of desktop publishing quickly. Those with prior knowledge of desktop publishing are well served too, with comprehensive documentation that covers some of the more obscure topics you may come across.

As with previous versions, *Scribus* hasn't tried to reinvent the wheel, focusing solely on desktop publishing instead. For instance, the default setup uses the *Gimp* for image manipulation and *Aspell* for spellchecking. This not only promotes other open source projects, but also means that those replacing another publishing package won't need to leave behind favoured photo editors and drawing apps.

Despite these steps forward, though, *Scribus*'s developers have stressed this is by no means a stable release, calling on distro-makers to maintain *Scribus 1.3.3.1* and package this release as *ScribusNG*. This is because the new version's file formats aren't backwards compatible, so if you do choose to use this release, it's recommended that everybody you work with follows suit.

However, this is the most stable development release of *Scribus* we've come across so far and, as such, it's well worth trying out to see if the new features and layout suit your needs. **LXF**

LINUX FORMAT Verdict

Scribus 1.3.5

Developer: The Scribus team
Web: www.scribus.net
Price: Free under GPL

Features	9/10
Performance	8/10
Ease of use	9/10
Documentation	9/10

» With professional features and a clean interface, all Scribus needs now is to nail a few final stability issues.

Rating 9/10



Features at a glance



PDF export

There are plenty of new options for PDF exporting, including crop and bleed marks, colour bars, transitions and more.



Quick Start tutorial

This is concise, logical and packed with handy screenshots – everything newcomers will need to get started.