

Re: [Usability] Switching between tabs with Ctrl+Tab and Ctrl+Shift+Tab and "recency list"

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 - *Date:* Tue, 28 Feb 2006 12:53:45 +0000
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On 26 Feb 2006, at 20:27, Adam Purkrt wrote:

Hello there,

I'd like to discuss/suggest a well known and handy feature I miss in GNOME.

So, is there any reason why Ctrl+Tab and Ctrl+Shift+Tab aren't/ shouldn't be used to switch forward/backward between tabs in e.g. gnome-terminal, gedit, other tabbed applications?

A couple:

- Ctrl+PgUp/PgDn is more widely-implemented across more toolkits/ platforms (or at least, it was when we originally researched it)
- Ctrl+Tab is already used as our universal "get focus out of here" combo, for situations where Tab alone doesn't work (because the control needs to use Tab for its own purposes, e.g. a rich text field)

Anyway, tabbed applications should (in my opinion) use an internal "recency list" when switching between tabs.

Hmm, interesting idea, but I wonder how generally applicable it is. By definition, there isn't necessarily any relationship between the content of different tabs in the same window, so it's not necessarily any more likely that you'll want to visit a recently-visited tab than any other. (This may or may not be more true of dialogs than documents, I guess.)

I know there are already shortcuts for switching tabs, but:

- 1) They aren't standardized (Ctrl-Alt-PageUp in gedit, Ctrl-Pageup in gnome-terminal for example)

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Ctrl–Alt–PgUp/PgDn should work everywhere. If it doesn't, please file bugs. (Ctrl–PgUp/PgDn is admittedly still the documented shortcut, but there are situations where it can't work, so the Alt alternative was added so there was always a working alternative.)

2) Ctrl–Alt–PageUp/Down isn't much convenient (three keys instead of two, can't be accomplished easily by one hand)

Right, that's why it's not our documented shortcut :) Still ought to be documented somewhere though, really.

3) Switching in gedit/gnome–terminal doesn't loop

This is actually an accessibility feature; controls that have a natural endpoint (such as lists and rows of tabs) should ideally beep (visibly or audibly, according to user preference) and (perhaps optionally) stop when you try to wrap around, otherwise blind users etc. have a hard time knowing when they've reached the end.

Of course, all this is another argument for not having application– controlled tabbed document windows at all, as was the HIG's original intention... if each document was in its own window (or tabbed by the window manager rather than the application), you could use the existing window manager shortcuts to do everything you're suggesting :)

Cheeri,
Calum.

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