

Re: [Usability] "Finish" vs. "Close" in gnome-control-center dialogs

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- *From:* Liam R E Quin <liam@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 27 Mar 2006 13:36:27 -0500
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On Mon, 2006-03-27 at 18:08 +0100, Calum Benson wrote:

Just so I've got this right -- you want FEWER or NO full size screenshots in the docs?

That's certainly the approach the Sun guys tried to take when they wrote GNOME docs.

(Isn't it still common practice in the publishing industry to reduce all screenshots to 60-70% anyway, just because they look too big on the page at full size? I almost never use full-sized screenshots if I'm working on UI specs, mockups etc.)

This reply is very off-topic but might be useful...

What does "size" mean for a printed screenshot? For a 19 inch screen you'd need awfully big paper to do them at 100%.

Since most typesetting and printing equipment works at at least 1200 dpi, but usually for manuals in black and white, with dot screens to simulate grays, you can calculate the effective pixels per inch for, say, 64 distinct levels of grey: you'd need an 8x8 grid (at least), so that would give you 150 lines per inch ($1200/8 = 150$). A screenshot that's 1600 pixels wide would hence come out at $(1600/150)$ or 10.67 inches wide. At 2400dpi you could go to 5.33 inches wide without loss of detail.

However, 150 lines per inch is almost as expensive as stochastic screening, and most offset litho printers would want something lower, so they don't have to stop the presses and clean the plates as often.

If you went with 25 levels of grey instead of 64, you'd have a 5x5 grid, a common size for PostScript printers. A 2400dpi typesetter would then give you an effective resolution of 480dpi, so your

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1600x1200 screenshot would come out as 3.33 x 2.5 inches on paper.

If your image was originally 96dpi, reducing it by two thirds would take it to 144dpi, which turns out to work well with a 72lpi screen, which is actually much more realistic. In theory 72 lines per inch gives over 1000 distinct grey levels on a 2400 dpi device, or, at 1200dpi, it gives 256 levels, which works out very usefully. In either case there's enough margin to make symmetric dots (little circles), the default PostScript screening pattern, and still have a readable image.

When people talk about reducing the size of a bitmap for printing, though, most often they mean editing the Print Size tag, which e.g. Adobe Photoshop uses to determine the printed size of an image. This is a piece of metadata that is entirely independent of the actual resolution of the image, something that confuses almost every PhotoShop user at elast at first.

Liam

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Liam Quin – XML Activity Lead, W3C, <http://www.w3.org/People/Quin/>

Pictures from old books: <http://fromoldbooks.org/>

Ankh: irc.sorcery.net irc.gnome.org www.advogato.org

Usability mailing list

Usability@xxxxxxxxxx

<http://mail.gnome.org/mailman/listinfo/usability>