

## Re: Framebuffer programming

**Source:** <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.linux.development.apps/2004-10/0483.html>

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**From:** Roger Leigh ([\\_\\${roger}\\_at\\_invalid.whinlatter.uklinux.net.invalid](mailto:${roger}_at_invalid.whinlatter.uklinux.net.invalid))

**Date:** 10/30/04

Date: Sat, 30 Oct 2004 20:35:53 +0100

otto.wyss@orpatec.ch (Otto Wyss) writes:

> Roger Leigh <[\\_\\${roger}\\_at\\_invalid.whinlatter.uklinux.net.invalid](mailto:${roger}_at_invalid.whinlatter.uklinux.net.invalid)> wrote:

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>> otto.wyss@orpatec.ch (Otto Wyss) writes:

>>

>>> Ahhh, sorry. The correct URL is "<http://linux-fbdev.sourceforge.net/>".

>>> Where did you find the old inactive "www.linux-fbdev.org"?

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>> In the Framebuffer-HOWTO, while googling for "linux framebuffer programming". It's in the one linked to from the new site.

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> Please give me the exact link so I may see that the correct URL is mentioned. Or better send the maintainer a mail yourself, that he should correct it.

<http://en.tldp.org/HOWTO/Framebuffer-HOWTO.html>

(from <http://linux-fbdev.sourceforge.net/links.html>)

>> WRT asking on mailing lists, I haven't yet, but I am kind of hoping that something as important as the framebuffer actually has some written reference! The new site does not appear to have an API reference. Are the ioctls and available pixel formats documented anywhere other than the source? Basically, I just want to understand <linux/fb.h>.

>>

> As much as I know the only description is within the "Linux/Documentation/fb" itself. For more info you have to ask in the mailing list. BTW the old website can be view at "<http://linux-fbdev.sourceforge.net/old/>", if you find some useful material there just say so, so the can be made available again.

Thanks, but I didn't see anything.

> It would be nice if a reference would be put onto the web but so far nobody volunteered to do it. Would you?

I have written quite a number of manuals, reference and tutorial documents, but only when I have been intimately acquainted with the subject matter. Since my knowledge of the framebuffer is currently minimal, I'm not in a position to help here.

I don't mean to offend, but the framebuffer has been around for over \*6\* \*years\*. It's pretty rubbish that \*none\* of the developers have taken the hour or so it would take to document the user-level interface in that time... It's doubly rubbish because it's not even a big interface. If you want people to actually use the framebuffer, then you will have to document it...

[Example: I used FreeType2 for the first time last week. My first program to render and draw glyphs worked perfectly first time. Why? Because the FreeType folks have \*actually bothered\* to write both a complete API reference and tutorial. Most folks \*do\* write API references. It needn't be a literary masterpiece, just a description of what it does.]

I /could/ use it by making use of the code examples I've seen (I have already got working code), but to write a truly portable program I need to fully understand it, and I can see there are endian issues and visual issues that I will get wrong (i.e. write broken or nonportable code) unless the API and data structures are actually described in full. I don't want my program restricted to 32 bpp LE. The docs fb/\* don't even tell you what the pixel layouts are for each colourmap, let alone describe how to set pixel values for each possible variant, and I don't like guessing when I'm writing code—I like my code to actually work because it was written properly, not because of blind luck...

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Roger Leigh

Printing on GNU/Linux? <http://gimp-print.sourceforge.net/>  
Looking for a Better Distribution? <http://www.debian.org/>  
GPG Public Key: 0x25BFB848. Please sign and encrypt your mail.