GNOME™

Online Desktop

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CHOOSING OUR PATH

Specific, defined direction and go after that direction with vigor

- Jono Bacon, this morning

What can GNOME do to meet a real need in today's world?

Today we have a concrete proposal.

How can all the great work presented at GUADEC come together into a single end user experience?

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ONLINE DESKTOP

The perfect window to the Internet: integrated with all your favorite online apps, secure and virus-free, simple to set up and zero-maintenance thereafter.

No more crufty local calendar and mail apps, no more pushing OpenOffice.org and other clunky stuff as the default; out of the box, defaults to keeping all your info online where you can reach it from any computer and share and collaborate with friends. Use all the best-of-class services you already use on the web.

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EVOLUTIONARY YET NEWLY FOCUSED

Build on usability with a user experience vision

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MOMENTUM IS TO WEB APPS

Many are in early stages, e.g. Quicken alternatives such as Wesabe and Mint are just launching, and Google Docs and Spreadsheets is pretty new. Others are more mature, such as photo management sites.

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WEB APPS ARE NOT "____ ON THE WEB"

Saying something like "web-based word processor" is misleading; the web changes the app. For me, Google Docs is a permanent and everywhere-accessible place to keep notes and personal documents. It lets me share some of them with my wife, and others with coworkers. The ability to edit the documents is a bonus, not the reason it's so compelling.

Similarly, the "online Quicken" sites such as Wesabe and Mint center on community features.

These apps change what people can do with their computer, for the better.

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PROPRIETARY COMPETITORS

So can you give us an indication of what the next Windows will be like?

Well, it will be more user-centric.

What does that mean?

That means that right now when you move from one PC to another, you've got to install apps on each one, do upgrades on each one. Moving information between them is very painful. We can use Live Services [a way to connect to Microsoft via the Internet] to know what you're interested in. So even if you drop by a [public] kiosk or somebody else's PC, we can bring down your home page, your files, your fonts, your favorites and those things. So that's kind of the user-centric thing that Live Services can enable.

- Bill Gates in Newsweek

But nobody wants Windows Live; they want a computer that connects to a wide array of services they already use, and new ones coming out every day.

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MICROSOFT'S APPROACH SUCKS

Windows Live requires Microsoft to replicate, reimplement, and compete with all the sites and services everyone is already using. A compelling desktop for the modern world would instead work seamlessly with all those sites and services, and all the new innovations that come out every year.

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OUR OPPORTUNITY

As people and organizations realize they aren't using Windows anymore, except to launch their web browser - open source will be there with a free-of-cost, super-simple alternative.

Remix Linux and GNOME into a new take on the desktop for the modern world.

And not just desktop. We can include GNOME's mobile platforms.

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DEMO

IMPLEMENTATION

SEARCH AND DESTROY everything that leaves my data stranded on a single computer.

INTEGRATE the best web applications with the desktop.

RETHINK the user experience to take advantage of live connections to friends on the net.

CHANGE THE DEFAULTS so naïve users taking no special action will create collaborative, backed-up, online data rather than local files.

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STRONG FOUNDATION

Much of the value in Online Desktop is to provide those things that must be local and not web-based – hardware drivers and hardware-related UI at the top of the list.

The web browser, obviously, has to be top-notch as well.

And a Live CD infrastructure is a natural fit.

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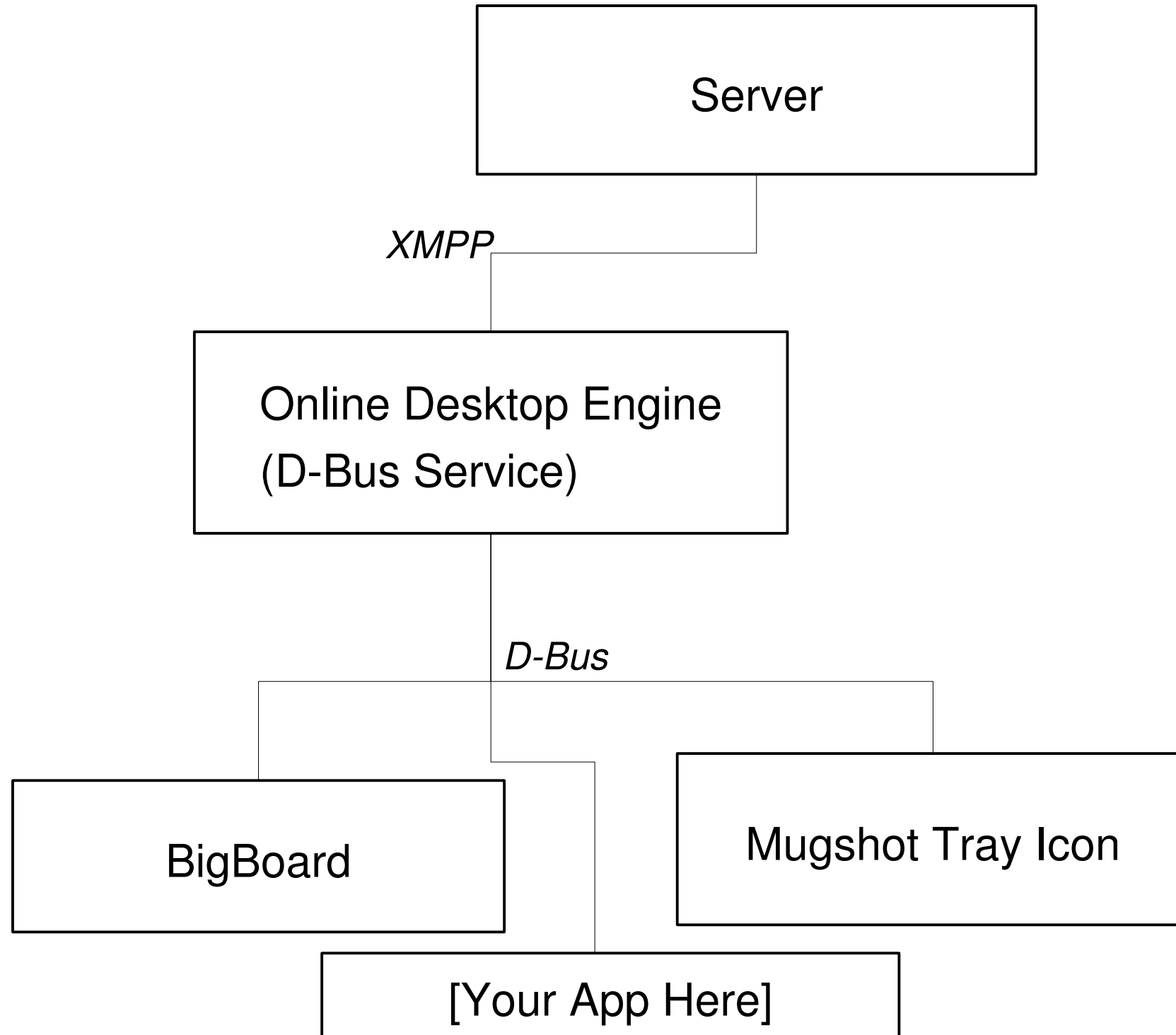# MAKE TALKING TO WEB APPS SIMPLE

Embarrassingly, there is no HTTP library that shares cookies, proxy settings, and cache with the web browser. We need to fix this, and be sure the HTTP library is simple to use from C and Python, and pre-integrated with the Glib main loop. Higher-level libraries to handle particular protocols such as GData would help too.

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DESKTOP DATA MODEL

Owen spent some time designing a simple, extensible system for mapping database tables to objects, and allowing everyone's desktop to efficiently track object state via XMPP. This means instant live notification as objects are modified on the server. The system is designed to be scalable to lots of users.

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                   XMPP       |
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  |                           |
  |  Online Desktop Engine    |
  |  (D-Bus Service)          |
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   D-Bus     |
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        | [Your App Here]   |
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SERVER COMPONENT

Have to figure this out. To innovate, we need some basic server-side functionality that we have control over as a community – for example, say we want to store Gconf settings online, no existing web site supports that.

We are moving to separate Mugshot.org from the server component of online desktop; ideally, the branded mugshot.org will be "just another site" (like Facebook) with respect to GNOME Online Desktop, and the more built-in-to-the-desktop features will be on a community server.

In any case, the online desktop has to be usable when a random person picks up a live CD, without configuring a server at a colocation site.

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WHY ONLINE DESKTOP?

What opportunities does it give us?

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IMPROVE THE GNOME MOBILE EXPERIENCE

With online desktop, we can connect GNOME-based mobile devices to GNOME online desktop and also to Windows (via the web). Users will be able to access their data from any device, and when they get a mobile device, it will already have their data on there with no configuration.

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SIMPLE, APPLIANCE-STYLE PRODUCTS

Companies could sell small, inexpensive PC appliances – not quite thin clients, but with low complexity and no local data to get messed up. GNOME Online Desktop would be the natural OS for these products.

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BEST COLLEGE PC

As "the kids today" increasingly live in software such as Facebook, we'll give them the perfect inexpensive computer to do it with. If we build great software, all we're lacking is a nice industrial design taken to market by someone enterprising.

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GOOGLE APPS FOR YOUR DOMAIN

Business customers are increasingly interested in hosting infrastructure with Google (many already host with Salesforce.com). For business users of the Google application suite, a GNOME Online Desktop appliance would be the perfect solution.

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR GNOME?

MORE EXCITEMENT AND MORE USERS.

Online desktop should not be tied to any single commercial service; it should be a true community project.

Bring sub-projects together as a coherent whole.

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HOW CAN WE GET STARTED?

Start thinking of your project as part of the whole desktop. Build and try out the whole.

Tackle some of the big problems, such as an http library.

Does your app keep local data? Fix it!

New ideas!

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DIFFERENCE IS HUGE

Open source leading next round of desktop innovation

Compelling user experience

Whole product, not a collection of subprojects

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