

WIP/CFT: Lumina Desktop Calls for Developers

BY TOM JONES AND JT PENNINGTON

The free desktop space has a no shortage of options when it comes to desktop environments. They range from small minimal environments with a window manager and some utilities for decoration all the way up to competitors for Mac OS or Windows in the form of Mate, KDE and Gnome.

In the free desktop space there is a shortage of projects that are freely licensed and developed with BSD as an explicit target. The Lumina desktop fills this space. Lumina was originally started by Ken Moore to be a BSD-licensed desktop environment for TrueOS. It can be run on any OS and with the right support it targets a FreeBSD-based platform.

This allows Lumina to support FreeBSD specific features and to couple well to FreeBSD interfaces for the desktop environment.

Lumina development is now headed by JT Pennington who you might know as the magic behind the excellent BSDNow podcast (as a host, I am allowed to sing our praises). JT was involved in the PC-BSD and TrueOS projects and it was there he met Ken Moore. JT picked up the project when Ken's work commitments made it hard for him to contribute as much time as he wanted.

JT, speaking for Lumina has asked for help to carry the project forward. He has ideas for projects which are a little beyond the time he can contribute — these are big steps forward for the desktop environment.

Open Project Requests

In a blog post on the Lumina Website [<https://lumina-desktop.org/post/2022-02-08/>], JT wrote requests for help with three areas:

- Port build system from Qmake to Cmake
- Lumina File Manager rewrite
- Lumina 2.0 Window Manager

Port Build System from Qmake to Cmake

Qmake is QTs build system for projects, but it is starting to act as a barrier for porting to Linux distributions (and is probably a headache in FreeBSD, too). Help here would increase the user and testing base for Lumina and a larger testing base means a better desktop environment.

Lumina File Manager Rewrite

The Lumina File Manager is unique because it is able to integrate with the OS quickly. It offers zfs-specific features giving you access to snapshots in a simple and convenient view, something no other file manager offers.

Lumina-FM is ready for a rewrite, it is time to learn from the good features it has now and to add more customization. JT's blog post details some ideas he has for a better file manager, these

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include showing break downs of disk usage for file hierarchies and better thumbnail caching that understands network drives.

Lumina 2.0 Window Manager

The 2.0 version of the Lumina Window Manager doesn't need grand new features, instead it needs to be updated and enhanced to the state where it can replace the current Fluxbox Window Manager which is the basis of Lumina.

First the Lumina Window Manager needs to be developed to feature parity with Fluxbox, then the next step is to add in some features obviously missing from Fluxbox such as the ability to resize a window from any corner and modern features like snapping to screen corners.

Advanced features like Wayland compatibility can come later, but first the Lumina project needs a usable window manager.

How to Contribute

Lumina uses QT as its basis for its windowing toolkit. To be able to help you will need to know (or want to learn), C++ and the QT interfaces. The improvements to the file manager and the build system will also require knowledge or a willingness to learn a lot of intricate details about zfs and cmake respectively.

Both Lumina and its web site are on github [github.com/lumina-desktop/lumina], the project welcomes contributions there in the form of pull requests for bug fixes and new features and issues to report bugs or to make feature requests.

Lumina is an important part of the BSD eco system, if you have time to contribute in any form, then the Lumina project will be happy to hear from you.

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TOM JONES wants FreeBSD-based projects to get the attention they deserve. He lives in the North East of Scotland and offers FreeBSD consulting.