NeoMutt: new Thunderbird

I've used Thunderbird … a lot… actually every day since Google ditched Inbox. It was my daily driver for emails with 4 mailboxes. I'm a gruvbox lover so I've installed gruvbox theme and modified user-Chrome.css and userContent.css files so my email client looked even more gruvboxy with the same font I use throughout my whole system.

One day Mozilla came up with an UI overhaul called Supernova. This change turned Thunderbird into Outlook layout in default layout. Anyway half of my userChrome setup broke down. My font set-up was gone. Counting in the memory consumption this was the last straw on camels back. I had to migrate to something else.

Choices

Let's enumerate what options I had:

- Evolution - tied to Gnome
- KMail - tied to KDE
- Geary - not bad but uses Outlook-like layout
- Blue Mail - proprietary
- Claws Mail - used in past but the UI is ugly even for me
- Mail Spring - Electron …
- a few other Electron apps …
- a few discontinued apps …
- NeoMutt - CLI app - kinda rough

Long story short, except Thunderbird, there is no good e-mail client for Linux if you use WM not DE and you don't wanna go CLI. But wait… I like CLI (nvim, mocp, mc, weechat, ….) so I went for NeoMutt. Maybe it won't be that difficult + I will free some MB from my memory.

NeoMutt setup

First I went thru a few (i.e. here) blog posts so I was able to imagine what actually NeoMutt is. Also NeoMutt's homepage offers pretty good guide as an entry point. I recommend to read the whole guide. It's worth the time.

The blog post I linked above is good and goes thru the complex setup with a GMail mailbox - which was my case. Except setting a custom password for external application there was no issue whatsoever. My NeoMutt instance could connect to GMail and fetch all my mails - really fast - actually much faster than Thunterbird.

It's worth to mention there is quite a difference in setting up following directives

- `header_cache`
- `message_cachedir`

to file paths or to directory paths. In case of file NeoMutt uses that file as one large shared database file. In case of directory NeoMutt uses the directory as a root directory for caching stuff in more separated files. I went for option 2 because it performs faster.

NeoMutt has a ton of configuration directives therefore I went step by step - sidebar -> index (list of emails) -> pager (email message detail) -> …. I configured every piece of NeoMutt step by step so I get the expected behavior but wasn't overwhelmed by new stuff.

I also focused first on reading emails then on the NeoMutt machinery of composing emails. That prevented me from losing track what is what and gave me some time to get used to keybindings.

The good advice is to keep config separated in a few individual files and then `souce` them in the main `neomuttrc` file.

```
        File: neomuttrc

1       source ./accounts
2       source ./sidebar
3       source ./index
4       source ./macros
5       source ./pager
6       source ./ux
7       source ./keys
8       source ./theme
```

This helps to keep stuff organized by it's intent. Another step not to get lost in all the NeoMutt's config directives.

Here is my config (current to this date). You can check it out and get inspired. I removed most of unexpected (compared to Thunderbird) behavior, set up Firefox as default HTML emails viewer (some HTML emails contain HTML errors which the default viewer is not able to render), and set up a macro for saving attachments to disk.

First impressions

I've been using NeoMutt for like 4 weeks and I had no hard times. Surprisingly. I'm used to CLI so no potential hurdles here but I was surprised how intuitive the UI is and how easy it's to get used to a few

new keybindings.

After I tuned up the config the experience was pretty great. I started noticing the speed of CLI (which is why I use most of CLI apps) and different memory footprint - a fraction of what Thunderbird was taking. Handling NeoMutt is in fact much easier than I was thinking.

Screenshots

(please keep in mind that the look is my custom gruvbox theme)

Date: Tue, 14 Nov 2023 19:35:14 +0000 (UTC)
From: PyCoder's Weekly <admin@pycoders.com>
To: ▓▓▓▓▓l@gmail.com
Subject: SciPy Builds, Packaging Tools, Document with ChatGPT, and More

Read this issue in your browser: https://pycoders.com/issues/603/a1chlme1us

** PyCoder's Weekly #603: NOVEMBER 14, 2023

SciPy Builds on Windows Are a Minor Miracle

Moving SciPy to Meson meant finding a different Fortran compiler on Windows,
which was particularly tricky to pull off for conda-forge. This blog tells the
story about how things looked pretty grim for the Python 3.12 release, and how
things ended up working out just in the nick of time. Associated [HN
discussion](https://pycoders.com/link/11781/a1chlme1us).

https://pycoders.com/link/11765/a1chlme1us

An Unbiased Evaluation of Environment and Packaging Tools

This detailed article covers the wide world of packaging in Python, how the
different tools overlap, and how each has its own area of specialization. A
great deep dive on all the choices out there that can help you pick the right
tool for your project.

https://pycoders.com/link/11773/a1chlme1us

Automate LLM Backend Deployments Using Infrastructure as Code

New GitHub project to provision, update, and destroy the cloud infrastructure
for a LLM backend using infrastructure as code (Python). Deployment options
include deploying [Hugging Face models to Docker (local), Runpod, and Azure
→](https://pycoders.com/link/11753/a1chlme1us)

https://pycoders.com/link/11753/a1chlme1us [sponsor]

Document Your Python Code and Projects With ChatGPT

Good documentation is a critical feature of any successful Python project. In
practice, writing documentation is hard and can take a lot of time and effort.
Nowadays, with tools like ChatGPT, you can quickly document your Python code and
projects.

https://pycoders.com/link/11779/a1chlme1us

PSF Receives "Wonderfully Welcoming Award" From GitHub!

https://pycoders.com/link/11761/a1chlme1us

** Discussions

Idea: Return a NamedTuple

https://pycoders.com/link/11774/a1chlme1us

** Articles & Tutorials

Python Errors as Values

Error handling can be done in a variety of ways, and this article discusses why
one organization decided to use returned error values instead of exceptions.
Along the way, you'll see comparisons between Python, Go, and Rust to better
understand the different mechanisms.

https://pycoders.com/link/11754/a1chlme1us

Guide to Hash Tables in Python

Hash tables offer an efficient and flexible method of storing and retrieving
data, making them indispensable for tasks involving large data sets or requiring
rapid access to stored items. Python's `dict` is a hash, learn how it works and
how it can help your code.

https://pycoders.com/link/11775/a1chlme1us

Confusing `git` Terminology

```
INBOX [2]        4/29       1    N    Wed, Nov 22,  3:59pm    Kraken              A new device is trying to sign in
Starred             4       2         Wed, Nov 22,  3:11pm    GitLab              vystaviste web | Failed pipeline for featu
All Mail       40/9171      3         Wed, Nov 22, 11:57am    Jan Sehnoutka (@jan.   T-Business | Feature/ithreads (!44)
Drafts              0       4    N    Wed, Nov 22, 11:57am    Jan Sehnoutka (@jan.   └─>
Sent Mail        5195       5    N    Tue, Nov 21,  9:50pm    foodora             6449 - ?Jste připraveni získat přístup do
Spam            66/66       6         Tue, Nov 21,  9:05pm    Trading 212         🔗 Identity verified!
Trash [3]      258/504      7         Tue, Nov 21,  9:00pm    Trading 212         👋 Pavel - verify your identity
                            8         Tue, Nov 21,  8:46pm    Trading 212         👋 Welcome to Trading 212!
                            9         Tue, Nov 21,  8:46pm    Trading 212         ✉ Verify your email with a single click
                           10    N    Tue, Nov 21,  8:35pm    support@xtb.cz      Váš účet pro platformu xStation je nyní ak
[ Folder: +[Gmail]/Trash ] [*504 messages (258 new) ]─────────────────────────
Date: Wed, 22 Nov 2023 10:57:15 +0000
From: "                              ' <gitlab@mg.gitlab.com>
To:                  @gmail.com
Subject: Re: T-Business | Feature/ithreads (!44)


Reassigned merge request 44

https://gitlab.com/proboston/tmobile/t-business/-/merge_requests/44

Assignee changed   to n1

--
Reply to this email directly or view it on GitLab:
https://gitlab.com/proboston/tmobile/t-business/-/merge_requests/44
You're receiving this email because you have been assigned an item on
gitlab.com.
```