

AEWAN - a nice advanced GNU / Linux console ASCII art text editor

Author : admin

I'm a guy fascinated by ASCII art, since the very early days I saw a piece of this *awesome digital art*.

As time passed and computers went to be used mostly graphics resolution, *ASCII art* loose its huge popularity from the early *DOS* and **BBS** (internet primordial days).

However, this kind of art is still highly valued by true computer geeks.

In that manner of thoughts, lately I'm researching widely on ASCII art tools and ASCII art open source tools available for Linux.

Last time I check what is available for 'ASCII job' was before 5 years time. Recently I decided to review once again and see if there are new software for doing ascii manipulations on Linux and this is how this article got born.

My attention was caught by **aewan (ASCII-art Editor Without A Name)**, while searching for ASCII keyword description packages with:

apt-cache search ascii

Aewan project [official website is on sourceforge check it out here](#)

Here is the complete description of the Debian package:

```
hipo@noah:~$ apt-cache show aewan|grep -i description -A 5
Description: ASCII-art Editor Without A Name
aewan is an ASCII art editor with support for multiple layers that can be
edited individually, colors, rectangular copy and paste, and intelligent
horizontal and vertical flipping (converts '\' to '/', etc). It produces
both stand-alone art files and an easy-to-parse format for integration
into your terminal applications.
```

I installed it to give it a try:

```
noah:~# apt-get --yes install aewan
Selecting previously deselected package aewan.
(Reading database ... 388522 files and directories currently installed.)
Unpacking aewan (from .../aewan_1.0.01-3_amd64.deb) ...
Processing triggers for man-db ...
Setting up aewan (1.0.01-3) ...
```

aewan package provides three executable binaries:

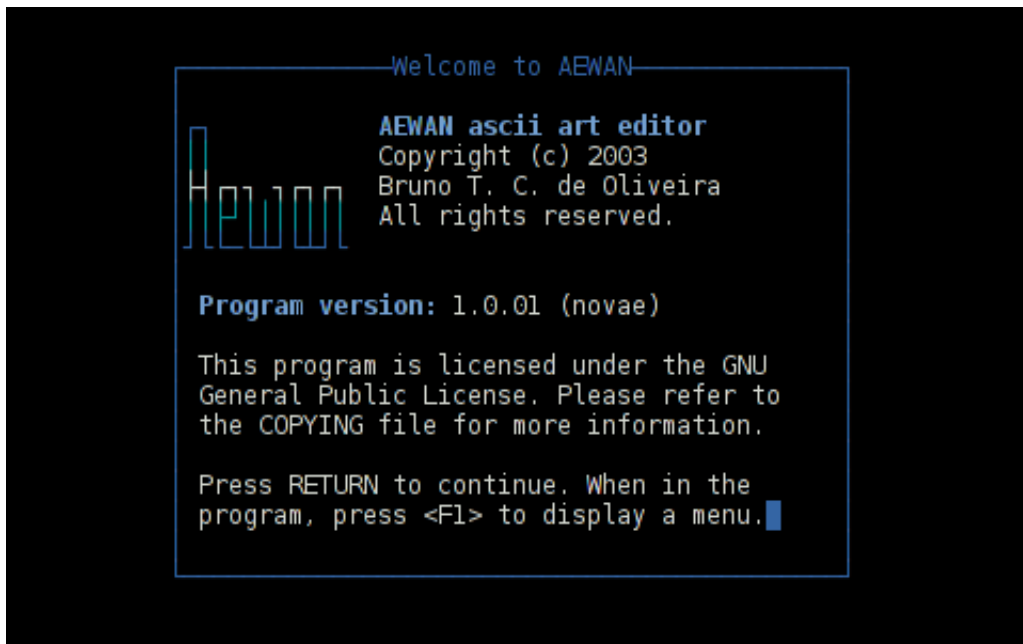
```
noah:~# dpkg -L aewan|grep -i /bin/ /usr/bin/aecat  
/usr/bin/aewan  
/usr/bin/aemakeflic
```

1. **aewan** binary is the *ascii-art editor itself*
2. **aecat** is utility to display an aewan documents (aewan format saved files)
3. **aemakeflic** - tool to produce an animation from an aewan document

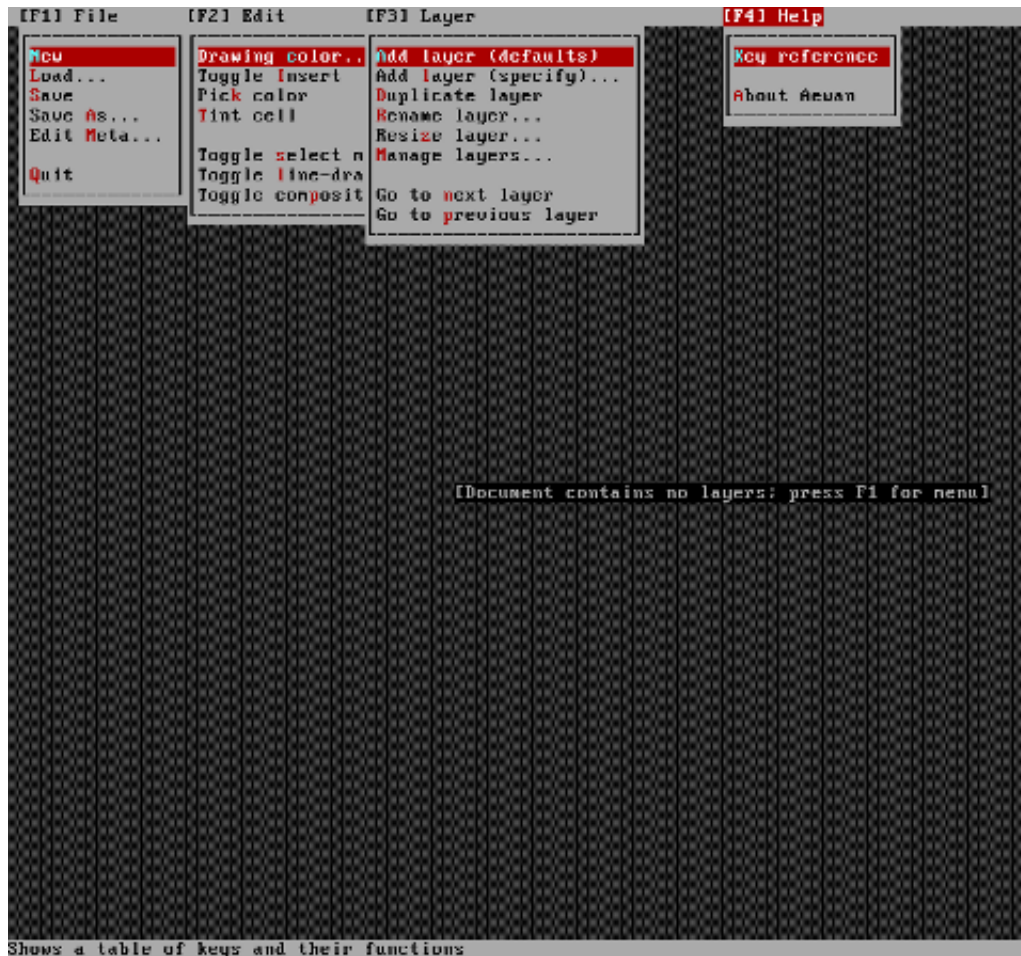
Next I ran it in plain console tty to check how it is like:

```
hipo@noah:~$ aewan
```

Below are screenshots to give you an idea how powerful *aewan* ASCII art editor is:



Aewan immediate entry screen after start up



Aewan ASCII art editor - all of the supported tool functions

As you can see from the shot the editor is very feature rich. I was stunned to find out it even supports *layers* (in ASCII!!) (w0w!).

It even has a Layers Manager (like GIMP) :)

To create my first ASCII art I used the:

New

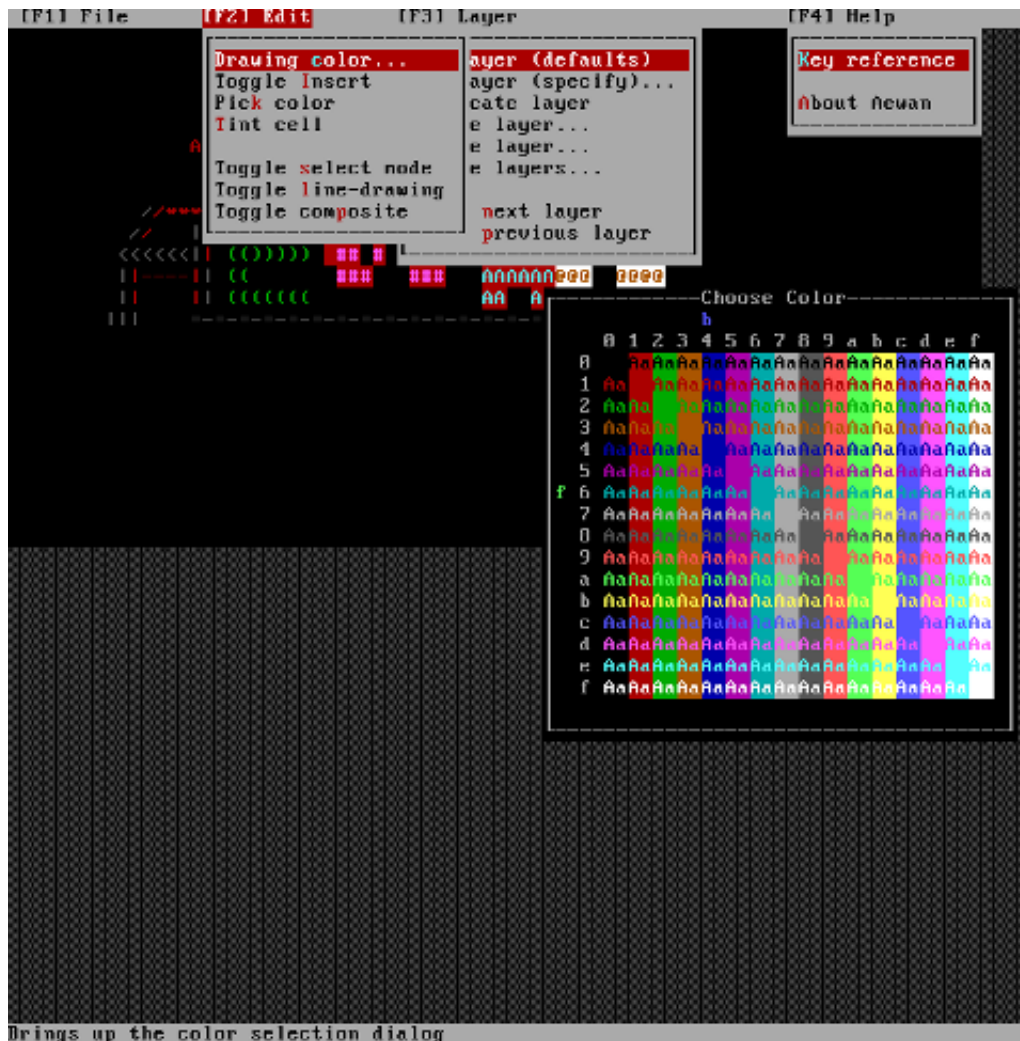
menu.

This however didn't immediately show the prompt, where I can type the ascii characters to draw my picture. In order to be able to draw inside the editor, its necessary to open at least one layer, through using the menu:

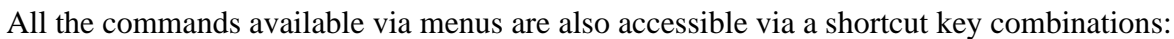
Add Layer (defaults)

then the interactive ASCII art editor appeared.

While an ASCII art is created with the editor you can select the color of the input characters by using **Drawing Color** menu seen in the above screenshot.



I've played few minutes and created a sample ascii art, just to test the color and editor "look & feel", my conclusions are the editor chars drawing is awesome.



5 / 7

Don't expect `zcat` to show you the `ascii` as they're displayed in `aewan`, `zcat`-ing it will instead display just the stored *meta data*; *the meta data is interpreted and displayed properly only with **aecat** command.*



For those inrested to make animations with **aemakeflic** you need to first save a multiple layers of pictures. The idea of creating ASCII art video is pretty much like the old school way to make animation "draw every scene" and movie it. Once all different scene layers of the ASCII art animation are prepared one could use **aemakeflic** to export all the ASCII layers as common video.

aemakeflic has the ability to *export the ASCII animation in a runnable shell script* to display the animation. The other way *aemakeflic* can be used is to produce a picture in kind of text format showing the video whether seen with **less** cmd.

Making ASCII animation takes a lot of time and effort. Since i'm too lazy and I lack the time I haven't tested this functionality. Anyways I've seen some ascii videos on telnet to remote hosts (some past time); therefore I guess they were made using *aewan* and later animated with *aemakeflic*.

I will close this post with a nice colorful ASCII art, made with **aewan** (picture is taken from the project page):

