Meetings and documents with *Gobby*

For a lot of people, the best free internet system for group chattering may be IRC. But what about taking minutes or shared editing of text documents? What about a dedicated protocol?

Gobby is a software to people works with Infinoted, the server part (both GNU GPL licensed). Server stores data and activity, and coordinates the simultaneous interaction from users as fast as possible. The result for the user is an interface with **plain text editor, documents tree and embedded chat**.
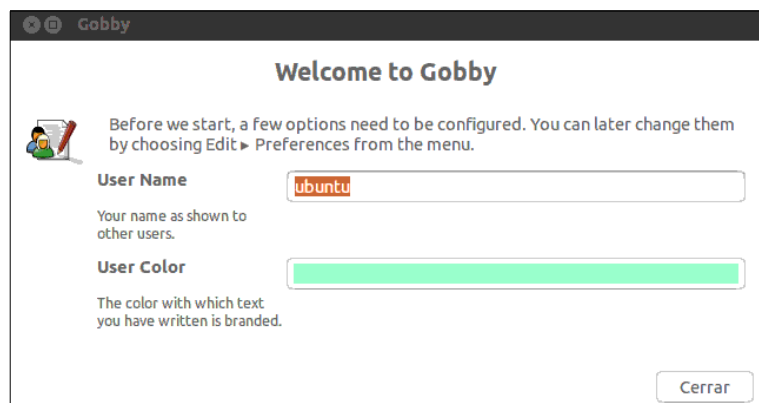
Installing client/user software

GNU/Linux users already have available a package called "gobby-infinote" or similar (use *package manager* or *software centre* to make installation), and for other systems you need to download an installation file from the website: gobby.0x539.de

Note: Gobby package from Android repositories has no relation with this collaborative software.

First configuration

On first launch of the application, it asks your visible name in the channel and background colour for your writing. These can be reviewed at *Preferences* before each connection. It's not necessary to allow remote connections (*Allow remote users*) to connect to a channel of internet server.

Connecting to a channel

Channel administrator should tell you at least the channel address, such as *meetings.example.net:50501*

You have to click on "Direct connection" and type that address to the *host name* text box.
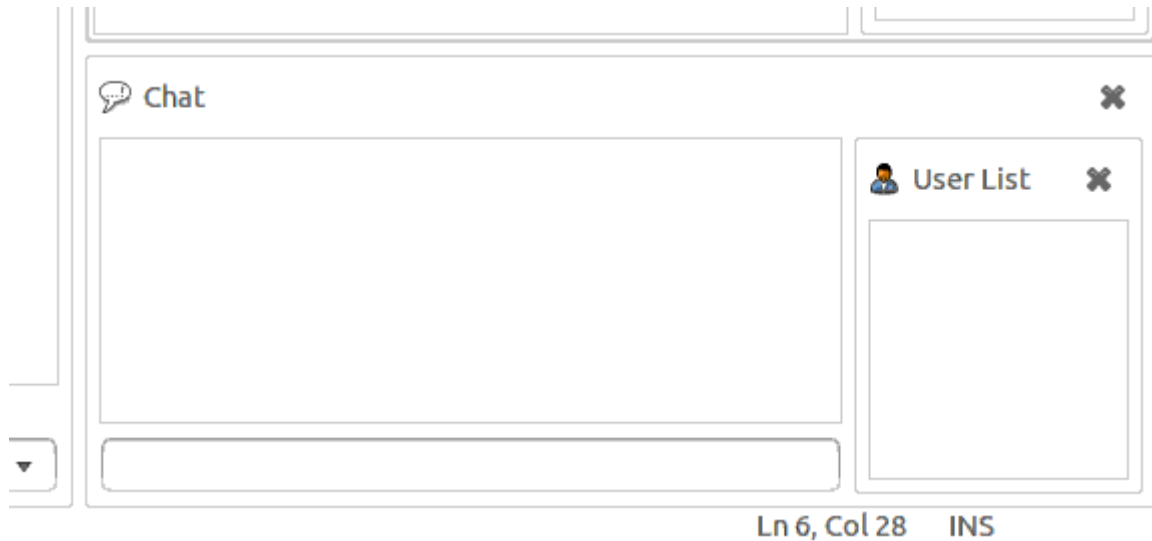
Once the channel address is written, you must <u>click on it</u> and press the key ENTER.

The first time you connect to that channel, probably a warning box is presented, telling that the connection may not be secure and certificate not trusted. This is only because your computer doesn't know this certificate for this channel. Here you have the opportunity to mark the checkbox (*trust the certificate...*) and continue connection with no problem.
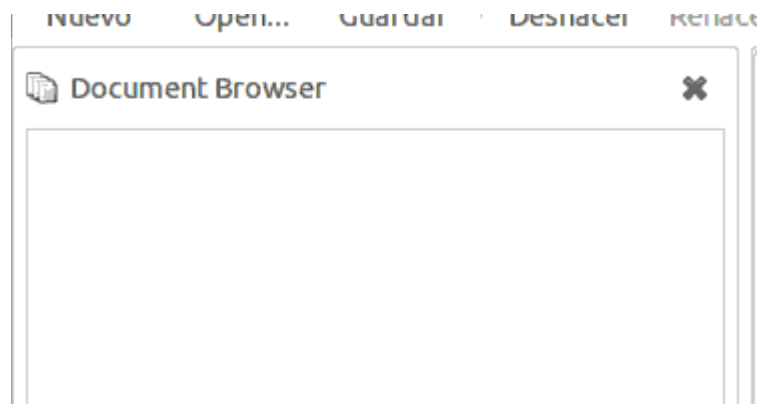
At last, you may be asked for a password if the channel is password protected. When connection is successful, you will see your name at the chat box as "joined".

Chat

On the right a "User list" is presented, with the names of the people currently connected to the channel. This means that all those users can chat with you, but they aren't necessarily working with each document. To talk, you have to click at the thin box below the Chat area, type your conversation, and press key ENTER.
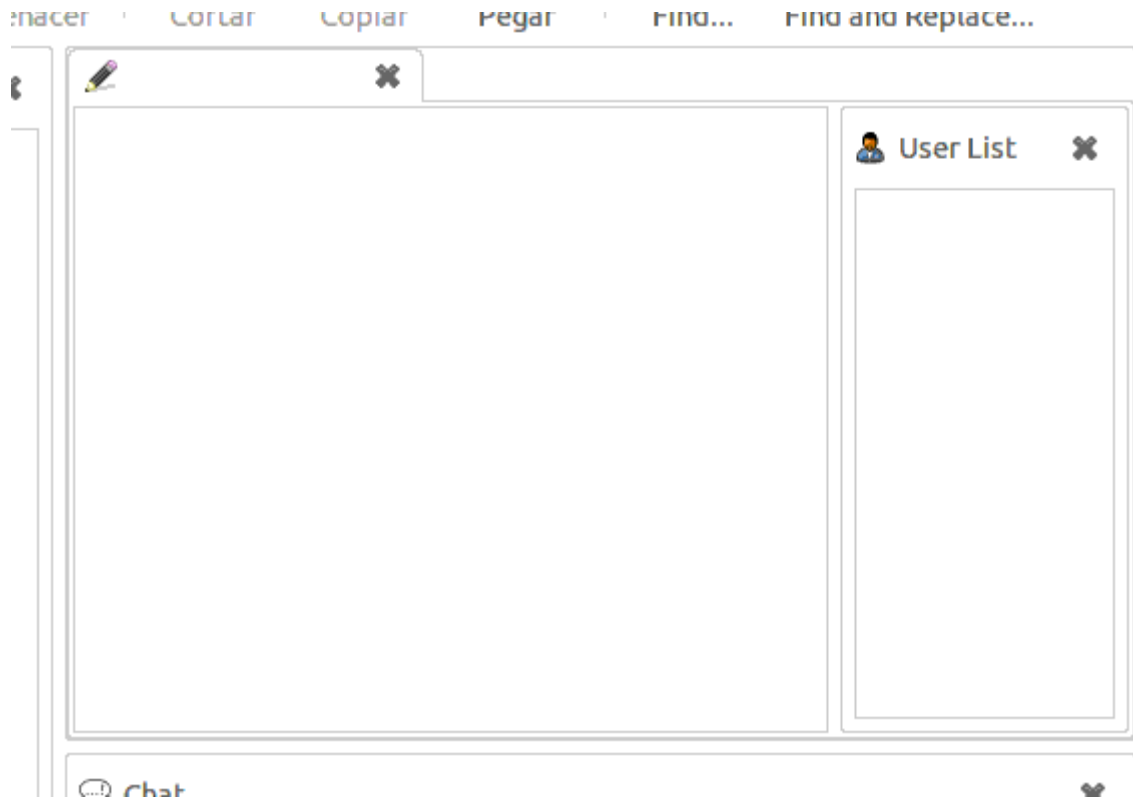
Creating documents and folders

On the left side there is an area with the channels where connected, existing folders in each channel, and documents. Each channel or folder have a small triangle to unfold the content. Once you have deployed the element, you will see if there are more folders or documents in it.

With mouse secondary button (context menu) you can click over the channel name or a folder name, and *Create directory* or *Create document* to have a new one ready for all the users. For documents, it's a good practice to name it ending with ".txt". Note: Any user can create and delete everything.

Document editing

To edit a document in the Gobby channel, this must exist. Once you see its name at the Document browser, you have to double-click it to open its content in the text editor presented on right side.

The "User list" presented here shows the users that sometime have open this document and their current connection status to the document. You can click in the text area and write freely and simultaneously. Note: Any user can write, modify and delete everywhere.

The document is automatically saved to the server, but you can also use the button "Save" to have a copy in your computer.

Specially for meetings

Some guidelines and good practices:

- Use a recognizable use name. If the others already know you as "Louis" don't use a nickname such as "L0u15" nor something unknown for the others. Anonymous participation is useless to work together.

- All people have other matters to attend and they have connected to solve soon. It is convenient that every participant helps to advance and complete, instead of being spectators "in silence". This way it ends soon and liking to all.

- Help others to write the minutes document; don't leave somebody to work alone. You can also correct spelling!

- Agree with an ending time for the meeting.

- Don't begin until all the topic points to talk are written and organized as headings in the minutes document.

- Don't jump to next topic until the current one has concluded. Care for maintaining ideas clear and organized, and advance in good rhythm.

- Write clear the word "AGREEMENT" or some expression (meaningful and easy to search) to mark each consensual idea, voting result or conclusion.

- If you need to develop a large content or show some other source (received e-mail, list to work on, technical script, etc.), it's better to create an additional document and invite gathered people to open it too.

- Once the meeting has ended, **save the minutes document** somewhere more permanent, to avoid later modifications or deletions that cause losses or confusion.

Warnings

- Provided service has a good external security but not internally. Gobby channel is not a good repository where to store long term writings, specially in front of possible accidental erasures.

- Current version of Infinoted+Gobby records everything, but still not helps auditing of who, how, or what is modified, such as is usually done in a Wiki. This makes group trust a requirement, and save texts definitive copies to another medium.

- This system solves simplicity, immediacy and sociability matters lacking in a Wiki, but at expenses of what Wiki can be in sophistication and analysis. This makes Gobby useful in meetings subject and not in investigation subject.