Tiling Window Managers for X

Tom Most North Bay Linux Users' Group March 2015

What is a Tiling Window Manager?

- ...what is a window manager?
 - UI which lets you move, and resize windows in X.
 - Boundaries are blurry:
 - Compositing managers
 - Desktop shells (GNOME shell, Unity, KDE Plasma)
 - Desktop environments (GNOME, Unity, KDE)
 - Most tiling window managers are standalone

Tiling and Modern Desktops

- Modern desktops have manual tiling features
 - Window snapping
 - Screen edge snapping
 - Windows' "Aero snap"
 - GNOME's Mutter
 - Ubuntu's Unity
- Lacking in flexibility

Why a Tiling WM?

- Automatic tiling
- But most also offer:
 - Keyboard control
 - Configurability
 - Scriptability
 - Low resource use

Prominent Tiling WMs

	Focus	Configuration
dwm*	Simplicity, small size	C header file, .patch files
ratpoison	Keyboard control	Command script
wmii*	Configurability	Virtual file system, scripting
Xmonad	Haskell!	Haskell
Awesome	Configurability, extensibility	Lua
Qtile	Configurability, extensibility	Python
i3*	Configurability, docs	Structured config file

dwm

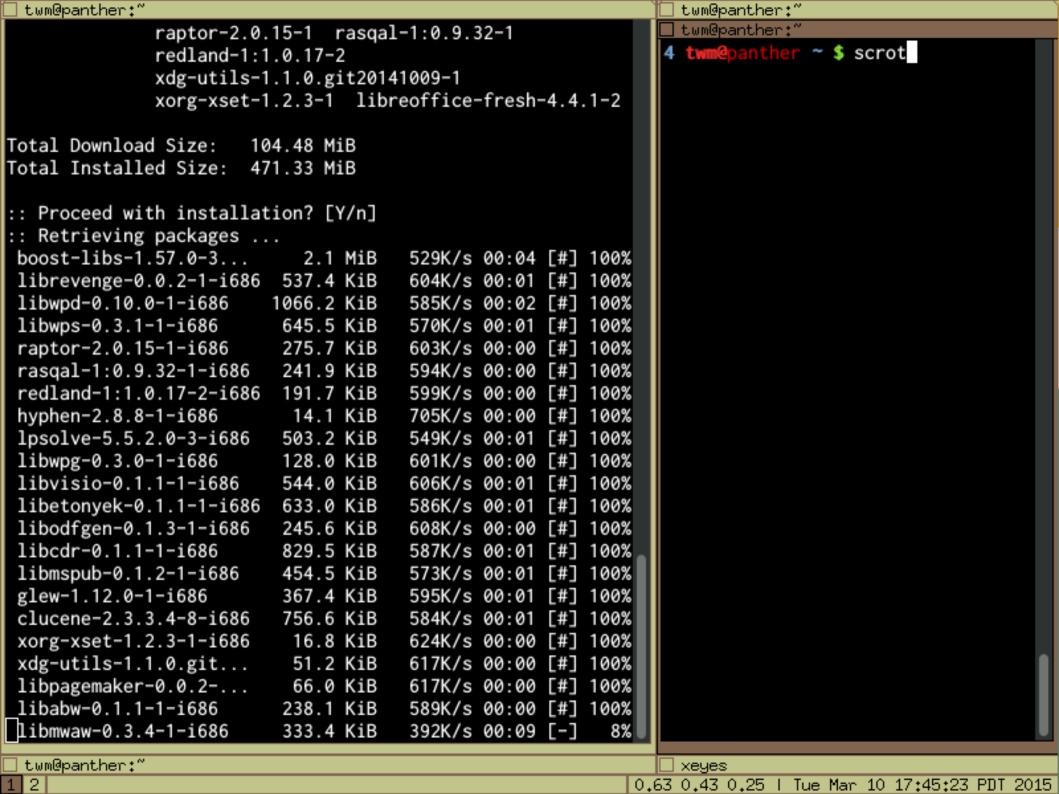
- Configurable via C .h file, patches
- Simple layouts:
 - Monocle
 - Tiled (master)
 - Floating
- Commonly forked



wmii

- Configuration via a 9p "virtual file system"
 - Bash, Python,Ruby, rc
- Nice columnoriented layout
- Status bar, system tray





i3

- Configuration via text
 Great docs config file
- Layouts via containers:
 - Stack
 - Split
 - Vertical or horizontal
 - Nestable

- Also:
 - i3bar
 - i3status
 - i3lock

i3 Demo