

Jolt Awards 2014: The Best Utilities

Jolt Judges, August 05, 2014 The best programming utilities of the year

Productivity Award: [Araxis Merge Professional Edition](#)

While almost every SCM package offers a good diff/merge utility, the diff/merge package from Araxis goes far beyond typical or even advanced code-oriented solutions.

The GUI interface is very easy to use: You just need to select the type of files you want to compare: text, image, or binary. Then, you can use a ribbon to control the edit, merge, encoding, and visualization formats. The 64-bit version takes full advantage of the available memory and allows you to work with very large files. The GUI interface is super responsive and enables you to use a combination of automatic and manual merging.

The UI also provides features that are truly useful for developers and designers, such as in-place editing, built-in syntax highlighting, bookmarks and comments support, and the ability to use regular expressions to control the merge process. You can easily compare text from Word, Excel, PDF, RTF, and OpenDocument files. As shown in the image, you can also use the product to quickly scan for differences in entire directories. The UI shows a list of files with color coding to flag divergences.

One of the most interesting features in Araxis Merge Professional Edition is that you can easily integrate this utility with a large number of version control, software configuration management tools and IDEs. When you combine Araxis Merge with any of these tools, you will definitely have a productivity boost. Sadly, the lack of a Linux version prevents Linux developers from sharing in the benefits.

Finally, I should point out the utility provides both a GUI interface and a command-line version for both Windows and Mac OS X platforms with a single license. This is just about as good as diff'ing and merging can get.

— *Gastón Hillar*

