DeskTop Publishing on Linux

Introduction

Desktop Publishing (DTP) is the art of bringing together seperate elements in one format. It can be used to create flyers, posters and newsletters

Applications

There are 3 main applications for Linux to do DTP. To write text use Openoffice or Abiword and save the files as .txt files. For image editing use The Gimp and save images as .jpeg or .png files. To bring all these together use Scribus.

Philosophy

The easiest way to create a good publication is to create all the necessary parts in different applications before bringing them into Scribus. It is a different approach to editing a Word document where text is usually typed in and formatted on each page. If you are creating a newsletter with many pages this approach would be time consuming and any changes would have to be repeated over and over again

Scribus uses **templates** and **paragraph styles** to make this easier. You can create different layout templates for different pages for example pages with images on could use one template and pages with just text could use another. These can be repeated so adding the text and images each time is easy, rather than laying out each page by hand every time. Similarly with **paragraph styles.** Before the publication is created , you decide on how the type should look, so a headline would be a certain font and a certain size , body text would be different and so could image captions.

Then when the text is imported into Scribus it is formatted using the paragraph styles defined above. The advantage of this is when a change needs to be made. you decide you want to increase the headline font. Rather than having to go to every page and changing the size, you just change the paragraph style and the changes are then updated throughout the whole document

Openoffice Howto

Openoffice is the free open source version of Microsoft word. Make sure any articles you write are unformatted and saved as .txt files

Scribus Howto

Scribus is free and open source. It is only available for Linux and Mac OS X. It is collaboratively written over the internet by many different people. It is quite simple to use as long as you familiarise yourself with each feature.

Make things easier by creating a folder called 'text' and one called 'images' (or something you choose) and keep text and pictures in them. This makes creating and editing the document easier and is called **workflow**

Preferences

When you start Scribus you will presented with many possible options. First of all do not panic!First of all go to the **'Settings'** menu and select **'Preferences'**
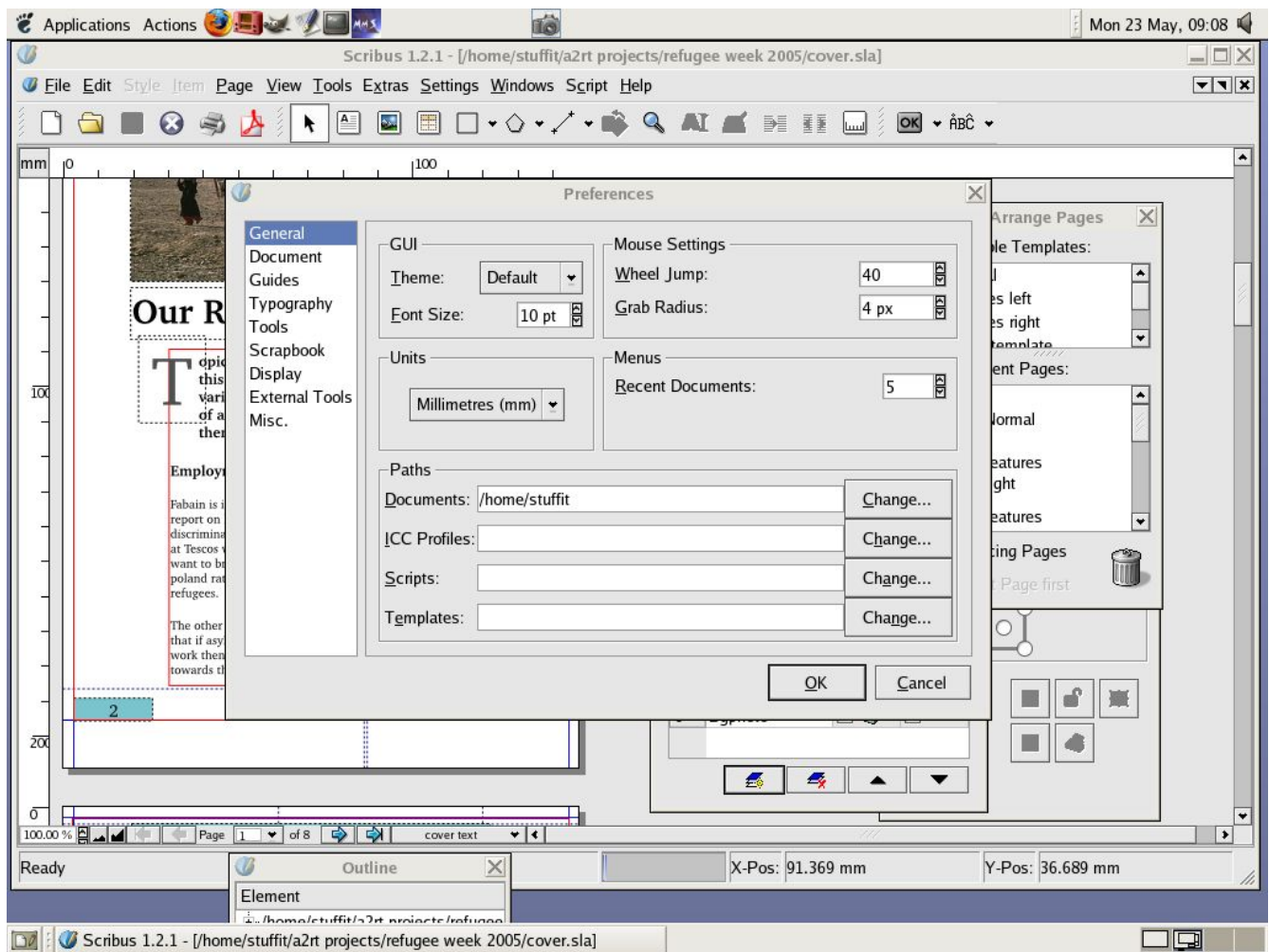
Here you can change certain things to make it better for designing newsletters. Select 'General' and then change the 'Units' setting to 'Millimetres (mm) ' . Then go to 'Display' and make sure the box by 'PDF 1.4 transparency features' is selected and finally go to 'Tools' and choose a nice readable font to be used , for example 'Bitstream Charter Regular'. Click 'ok' and we're ready to go!
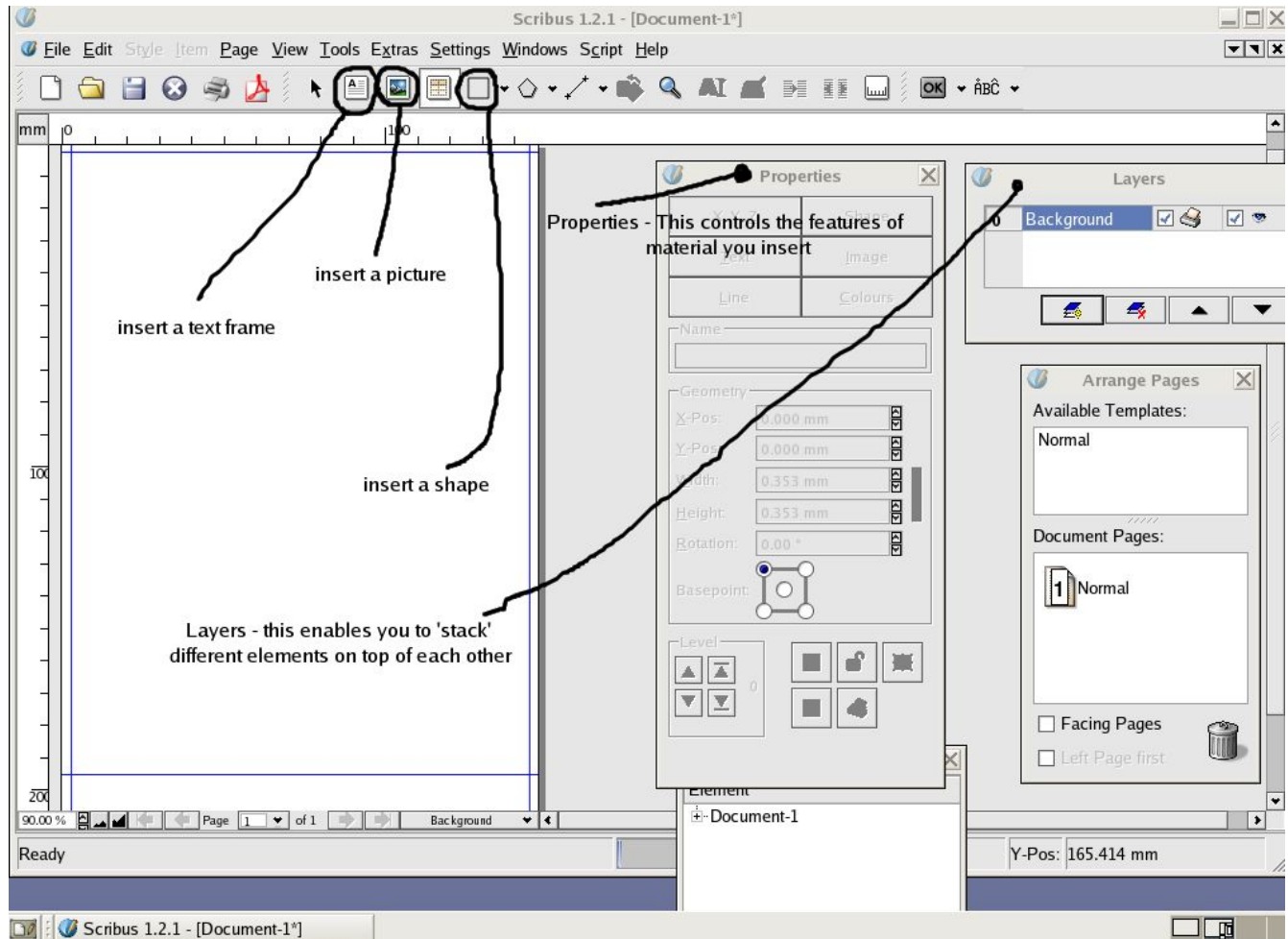
New document

Go to 'File' and select 'New':
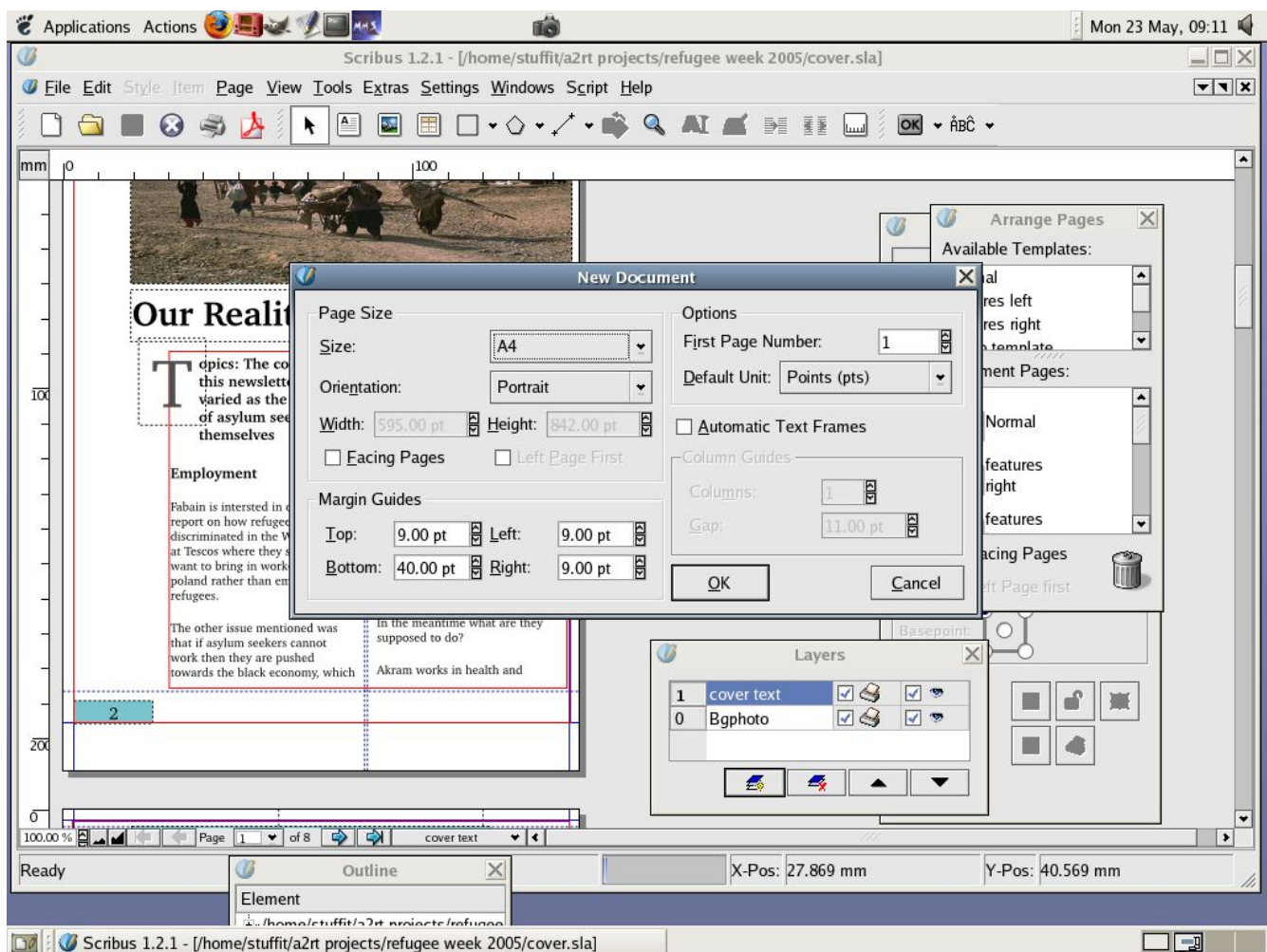
Here you choose the size of the page. For the newsletter we are using 'A5' so select that and click 'OK'

Here is the layout and the important features of Scribus:

Before importing any text we need to set up some templates for the pages. This makes it easier to create more pages that don't need to be formatted.

Templates

For the newsletter we need to create 3 templates: one for a page thats going to be printed on the left , one on the right and one that has a layout for photography

To do this go to 'Edit' then select 'Templates'

From here select 'New' then give the template a name, i.e 'Page left'
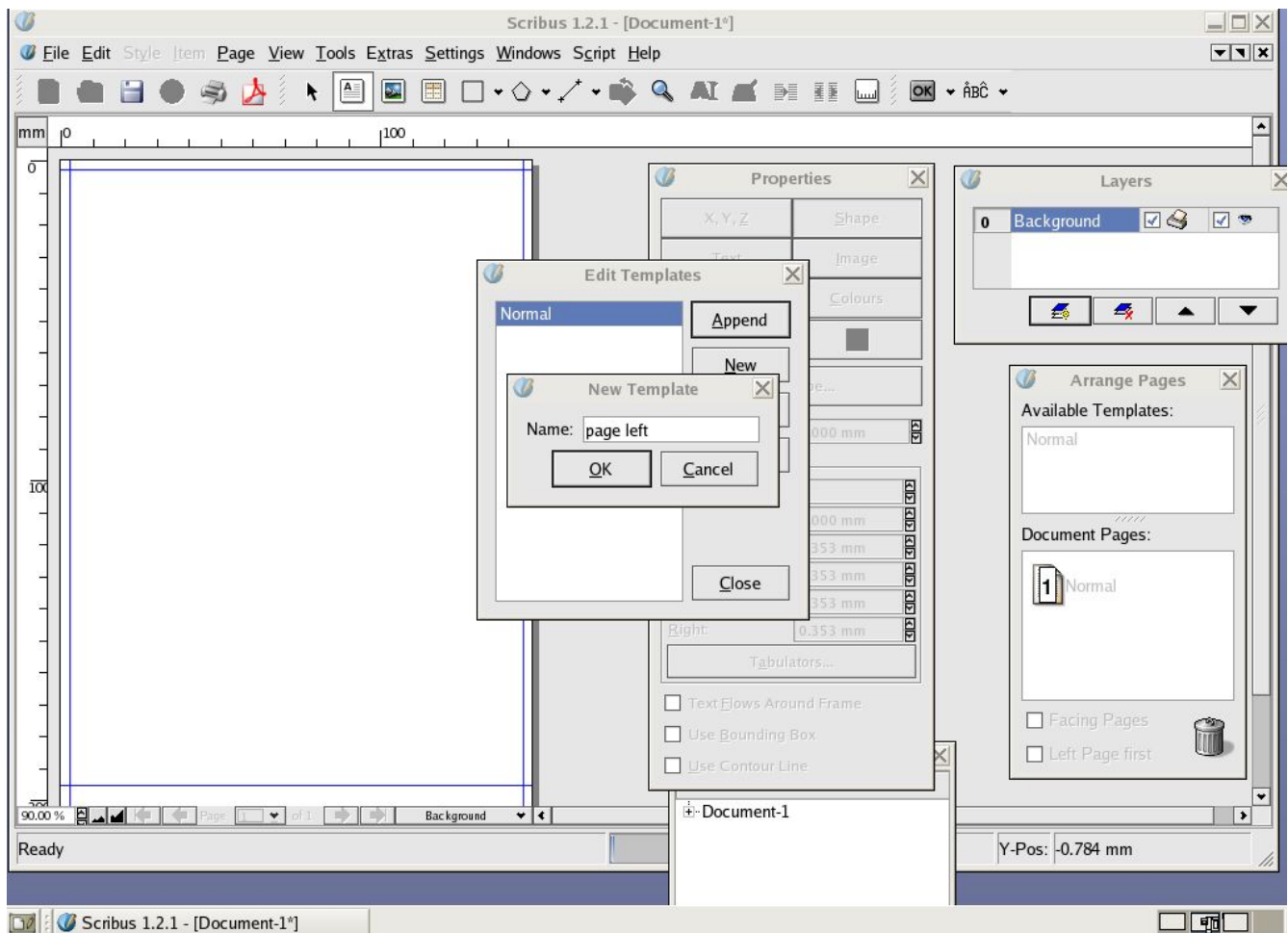
Click 'OK' and then we can create the template. Leave this window open whilst the template is made.

Using Guides

Use Guides to help with this – this makes it easier to layout text and images well. There are 2 ways to do this :

1>Drag them over from the margins to where you want them to be. This is less accurate
2>Enter them using the 'Page > Manage Guides' menu. This is better.

For the 'Page left' template we need to set up four guides - 2 horizontal guides at 16 mm and 183 mm and 2 vertical guides at 40mm and 137mm:
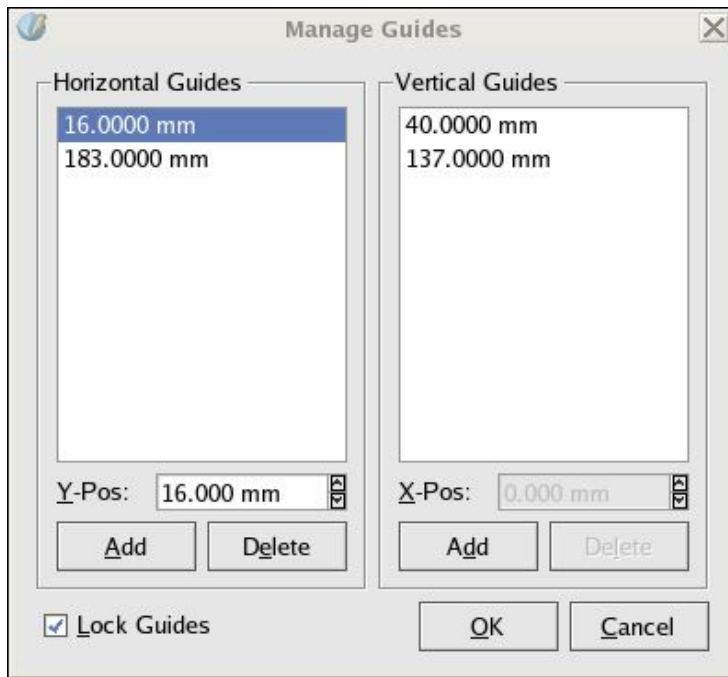
Click on the 'Lock Guides' checkbox (so the guides cannot be moved by mistake) and click 'Ok'

Your page should now look like this:
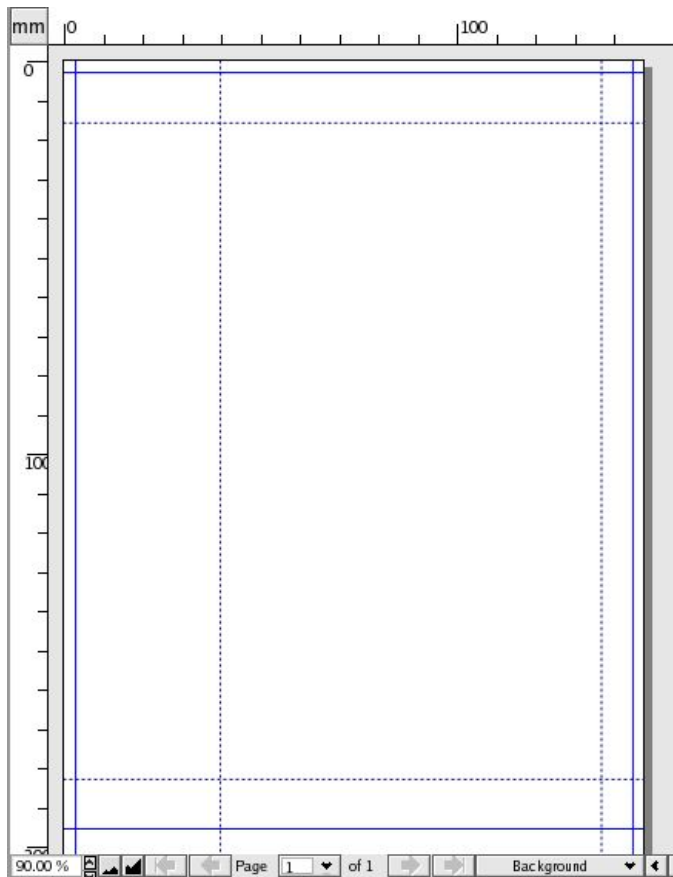
The next thing to do is to add a small banner at the top which will be used throughout the newsletter. First of all add a box between the top margin and the top guide and make it a colour. To do this
1>Click the 'add shape' icon
2>Draw a rectangle
3>Go to the 'Properties' box and click on 'Colours' and choose 'none' for the border and 'Antique white2' for the fill. See below:
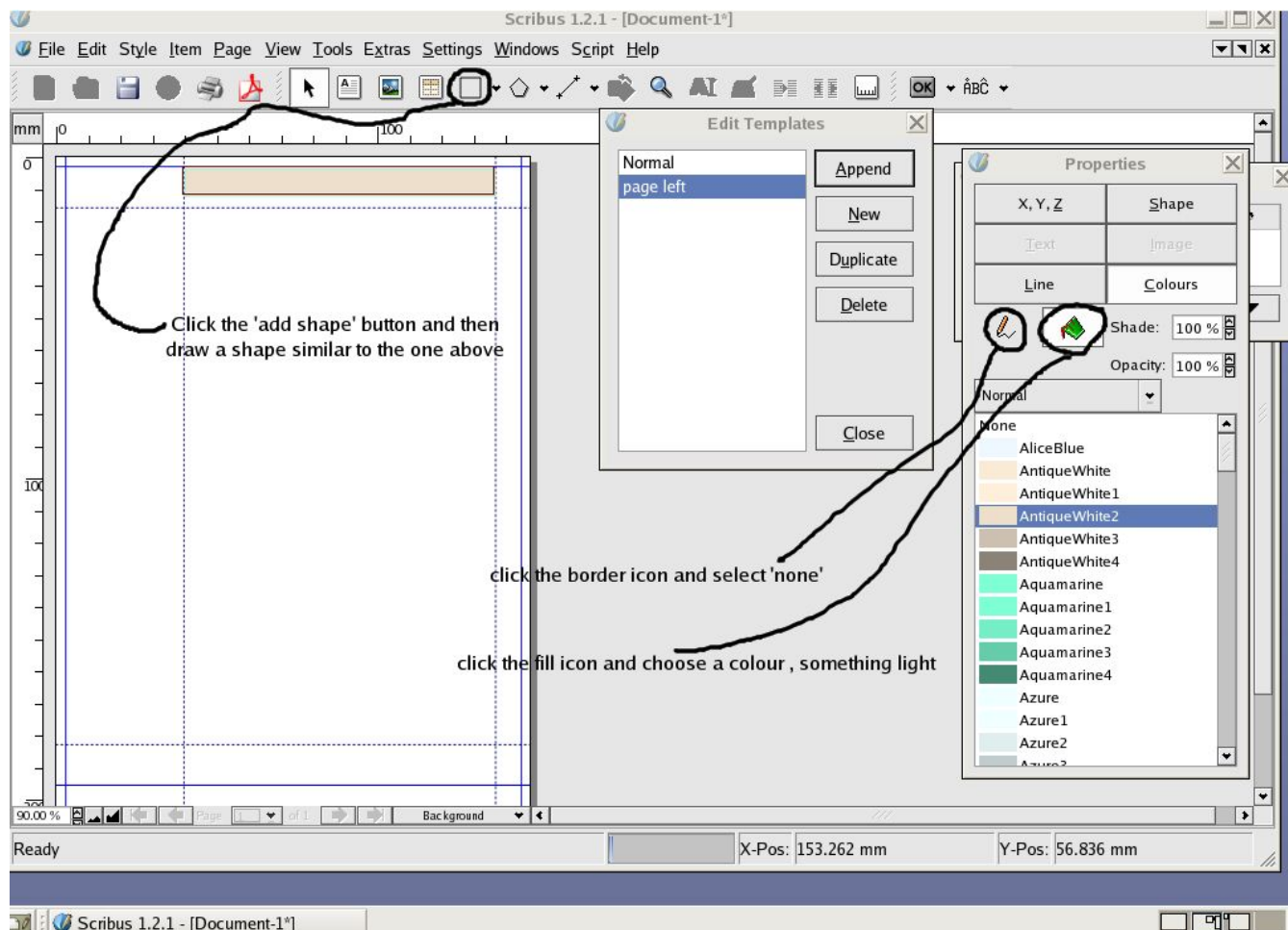
Next select the 'Insert Text Frame' box and draw a box on top of the banner. Double click on it and type in some text like 'My Newsletter'. Click on the 'Properties' box and then 'Text'

Change the font size to 17pt by clicking on the arrow buttons, and also adjust the Kerning (the spaces in between the letters) to 13 pt. This is the top banner which can be repeated throughout the newsletter' See below for details:
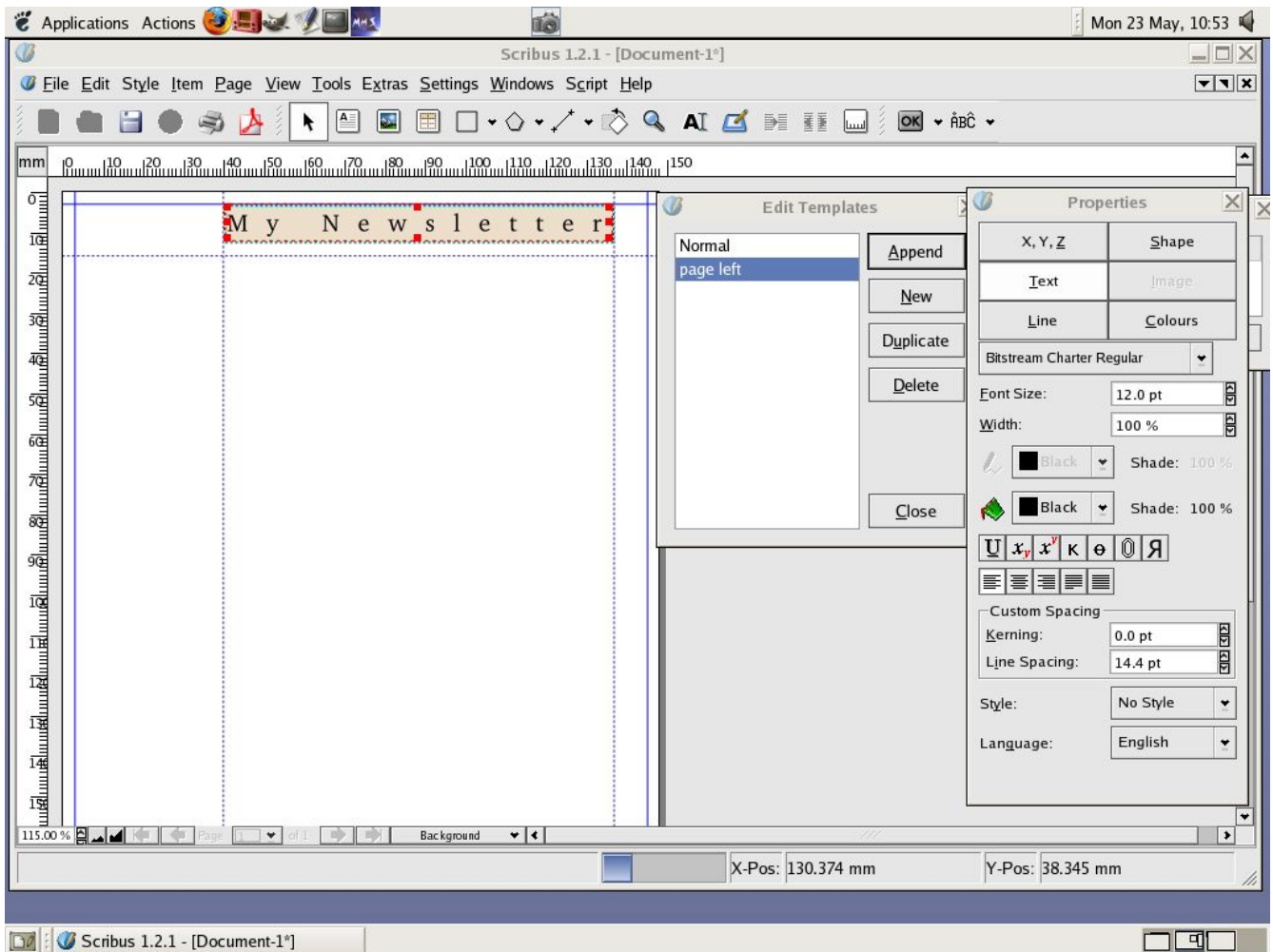
Next we want to add a banner at the bottom which will contain the page numbers. Scribus contains a nifty way of doing this which automatically adds the page number when a new page is created.

To do this create a small banner at the bottom between the bottom margin and guide. In this add a textfram and when you double click on the text frame instead of adding text press the following key combination : Ctrl + # (i.e press 'ctrl' and '#' at the same time not 'ctrl "+" and '#'). This is a shortcut that tells Scribus to insert a page number automatically. It should look something like below:
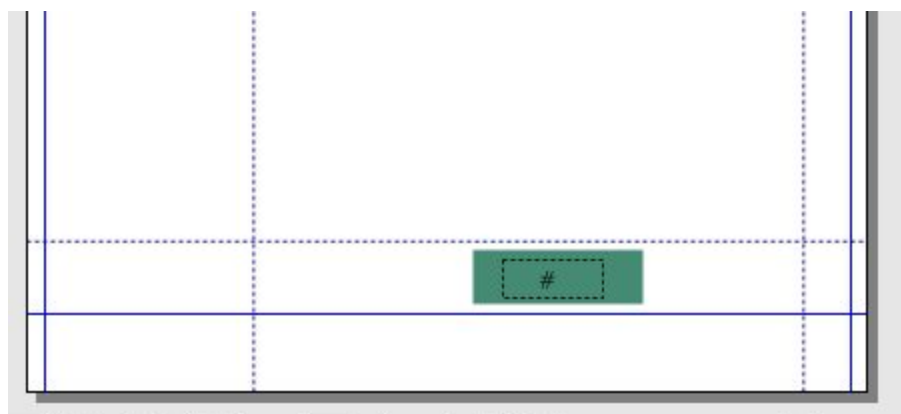
You have created your first template! Save it by clicking 'Close' on the 'Edit Templates' window and you will end up with a blank page. Now you can apply the template to this page by clicking 'Page>Apply Templates' and selecting the 'page left' from the menu.

The page will update to reflect the changes. now we can start laying out the text

Adding Text

Click on the 'Add text frame' icon and click and drag a box from the top left down that covers the area in the guides . Click on the 'Properties' window and select 'X,Y.Z' In here give it a name i.e 'First page text' then select 'Shape'. In here we choose the way we want the text to be displayed. For this newsletter choose 2 columns with a gap of 5 mm.

Rather than enter the text directly into this box it is easier to have it ready before and to import it. Select the Text area and right click the mouse.

From this menu choose 'Get text' and in open the folder 'txt' by double clicking on it. Then select the file 'diary.txt' and click ok. The text will then appear in the box. There will be a little red cross at the bottom. This means that there is too much text to display in the folder. This means we have to add a new page. It would be easiest to click 'Insert > New Page' but it wouldn't be contain any of the banner elements and page numbers so we will need to create a new template for the right hand pages.

Click on 'Edit> Templates' and in the templates box click on 'duplicate' . name the template 'page right' and you will have a copy of the left template ready to change. All that needs to be changed is to move the guides and the banners so the layout works well well printed.

Click 'Page>Manage Guides' and change the vertical guides to 11mm and 108 mm. The guides will then shift over to the left.

Next using the selection tool draw a box around the top banner and text (this ensures that you select both of the elements and then drag them over so they fit in the space between the guides. Do the same with the bottom elements. Your page should now look like this:
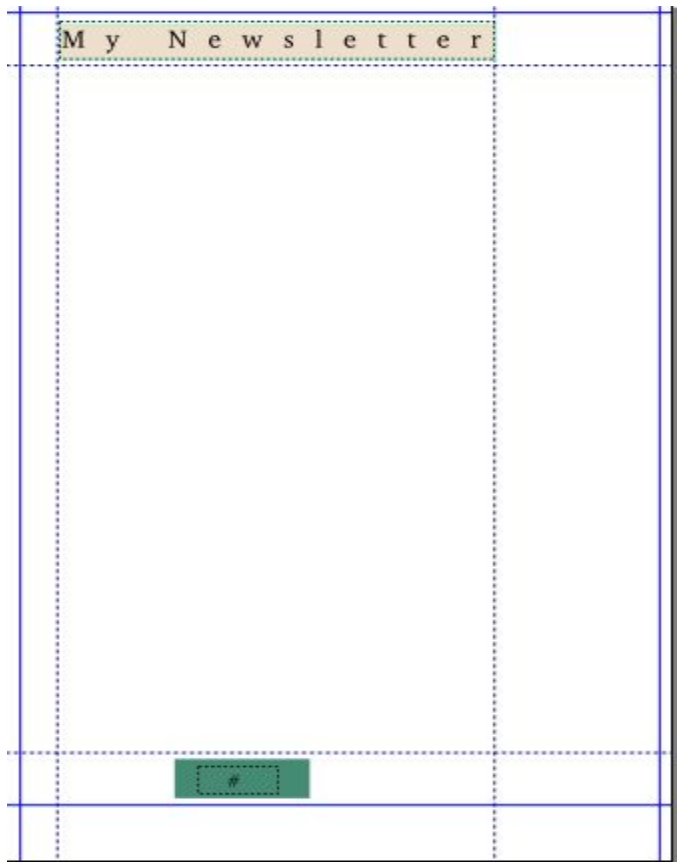
Click 'Close' on the 'Edit templates' button and you will be back at the first page with the text.

Adding pages

Click on 'Page>Insert' and then you can insert the new page using the new template ('page right').This with all the correct formatting and with the right page number:
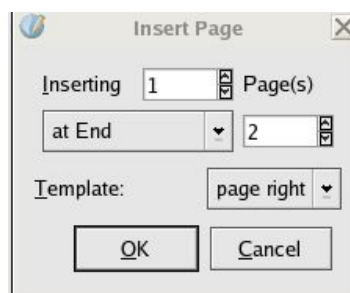
Linking text across pages

The text is still to big to fit on just the first page and for a newsletter to work well long articles need to work well across multiple pages. the way to do this is to link the text frames.

It's easy!

Insert a new text frame on the second page like you did on the first one (Make sure that when you insert the frame it fits in the guides, and that you make it 2 columns with a gap of 5mm using the 'Properties>Shape' box

When you have done this select the text column on the first page and then click on the 'Link Text Frame' button :


Then after this select the Text Frame on the second page. The text will now flow into the frame:
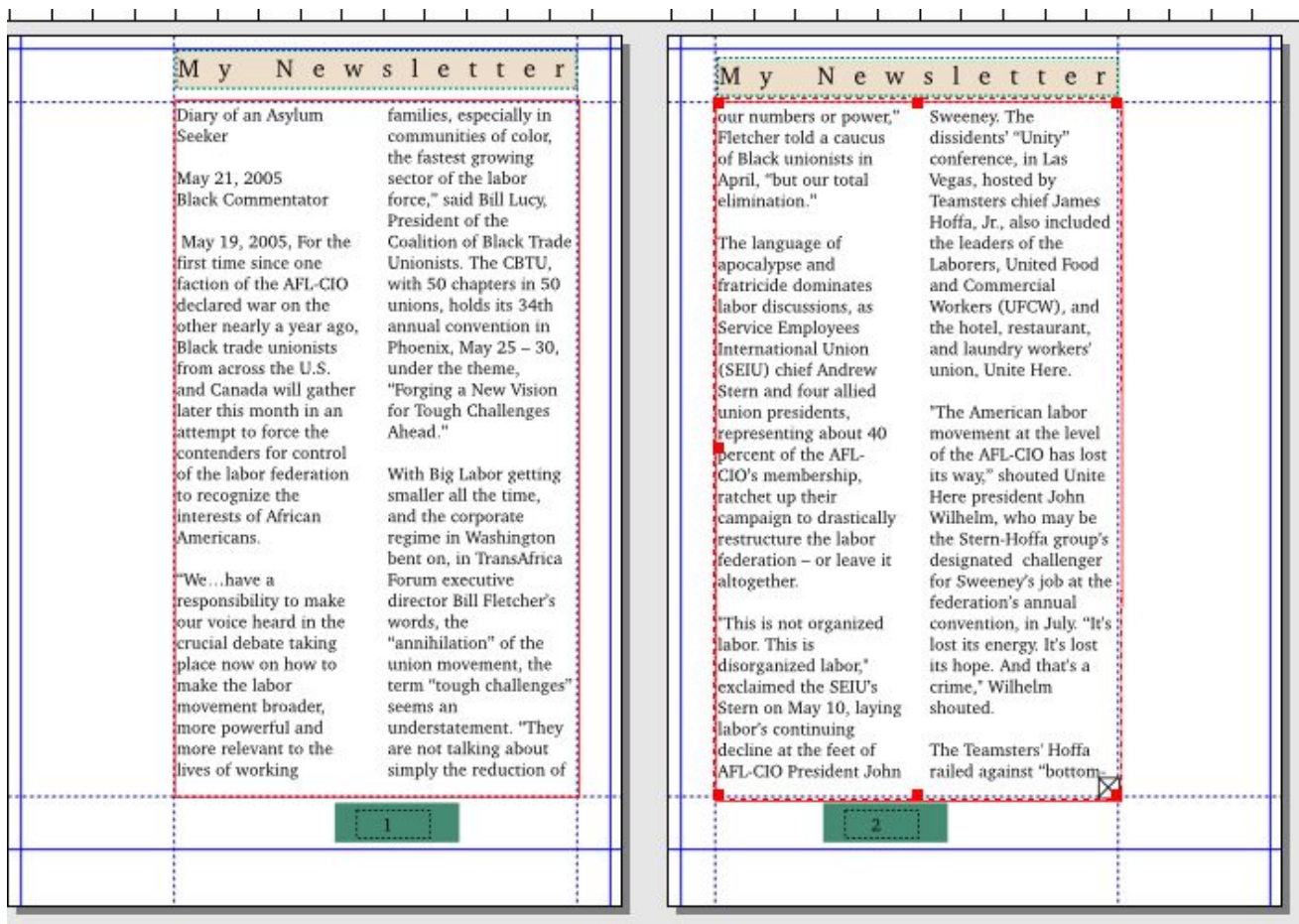
Formatting Text

To format text you first need to define some styles of text for example a big bold font for the headline / titles and a slightly smaller font for a subheadline and a smaller font for the main body text. To do this go to 'Edit > Paragraph Styles'

Click 'New' then for name choose 'Headline' and Font: Bitstream Charter Bold , Size: 15pt' and click 'ok'. Add styles for subheadline (Bitstream Charter Bold, Size: 14pt) and Body (Bitstream Charter Regular, Size: 12pt). Click 'Save' then 'OK' in the Styles window.
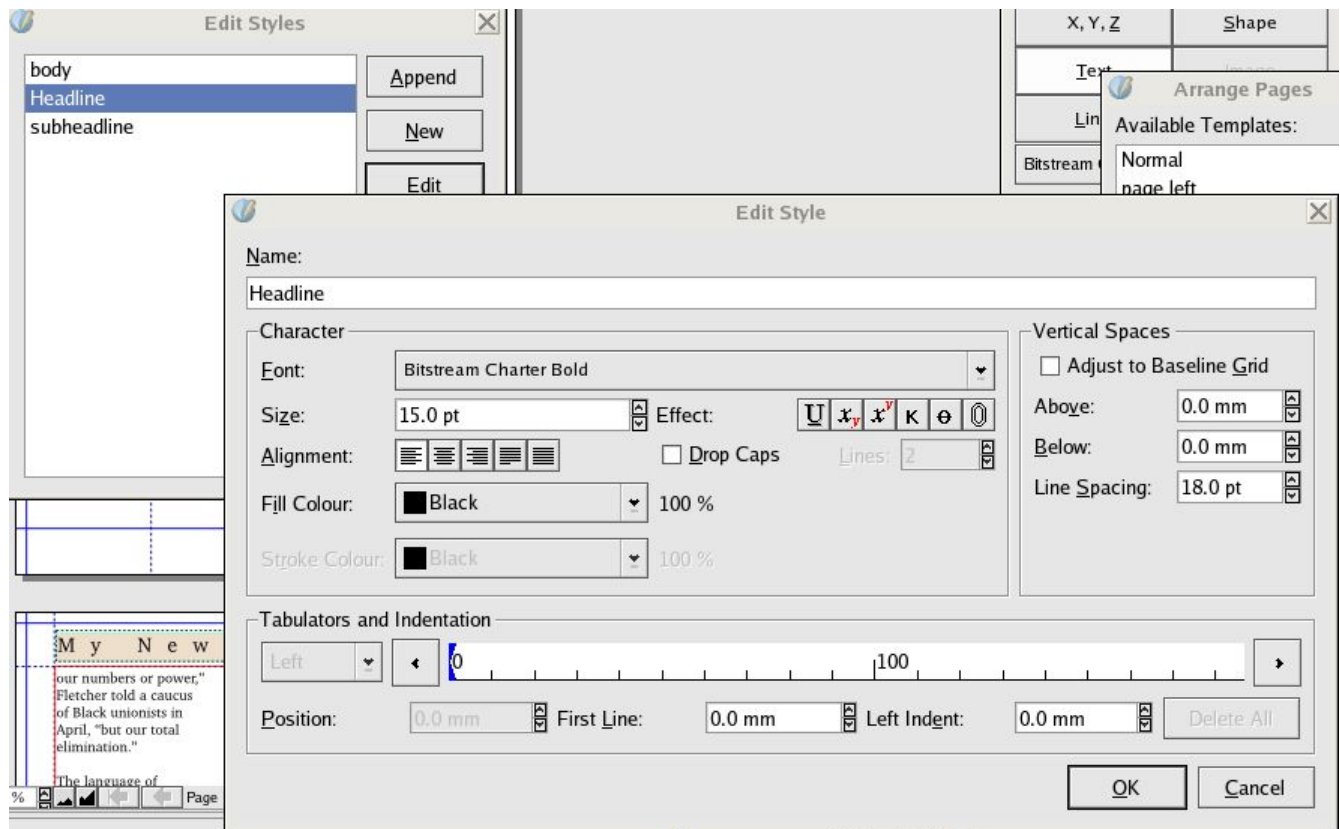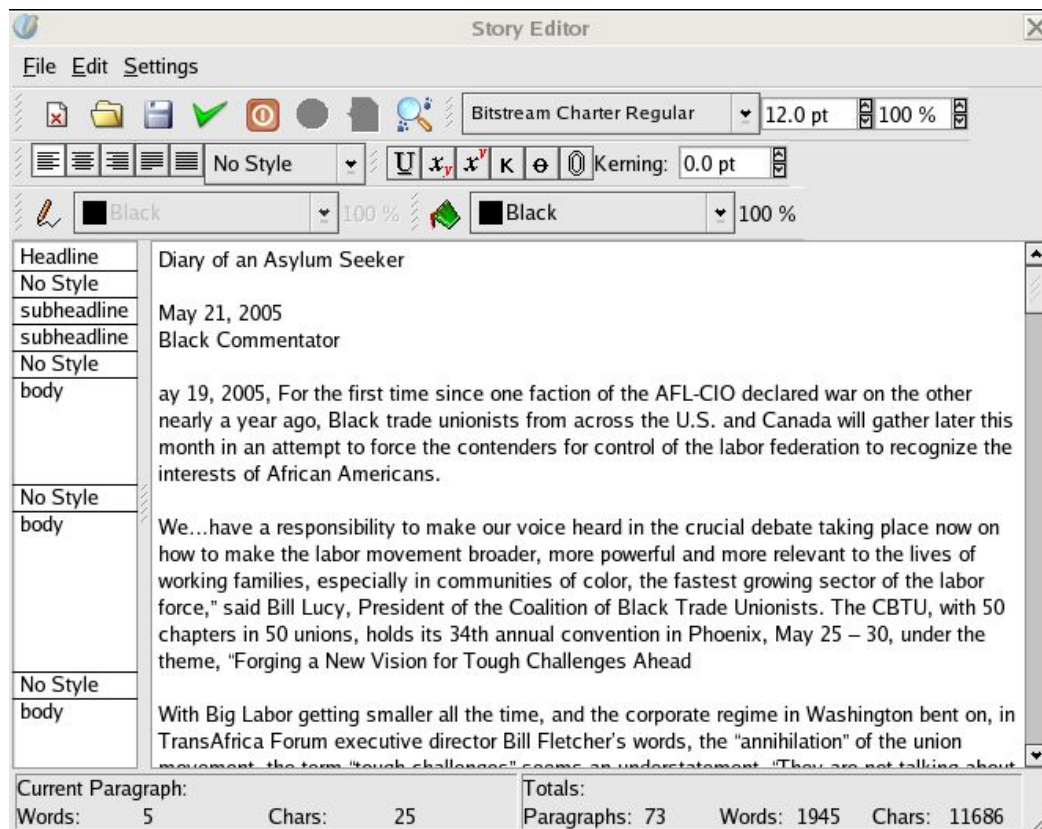

Applying Styles

To apply styles select the text frame then click the 'Story Editor' icon :
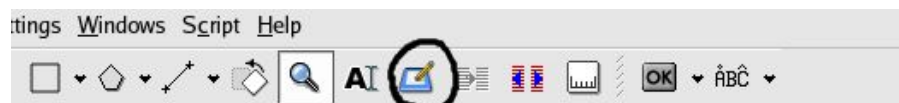
This will open up the 'Story Editor' which is where you apply styles to the text you imported

Each piece of text has a drop down menu on the left which lets you choose the style for it.

So for the line 'Diary of an Asylum Seeker' select Headline. For 'May 21, 2005 and 'Black Commentator' choose subheadline and for the rest choose body.

Click the green tick or choose 'update text frame and exit' Now the text you entered will show the formatting

The subheadline looks a bit too big, so change the font size to 13pt using the 'Edit >Paragraph Styles' menu. the text will then automatically change to reflect this. Imagine if you had 17 pages with subheadlines on – rather than having to change page after page manually you can easily change it using styles.

Drop Capitals

Often it looks good if some paragraphs feature a Drop Capital :

One way of doing this is to flow the text around an invisible box and then insert the letter on top of that.

To do that choose the 'Insert shape' button and draw a box covering the first few letters across and a couple of lines down on the paragraph. Make sure it has no outline or fill using the properties box. Then in the Shape menu make sure the the checkbox for 'Text Flows Around Frame' is ticked:
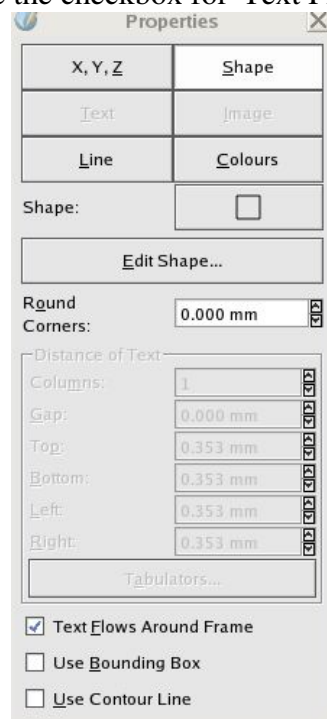
The text should now flow around the rectangle:
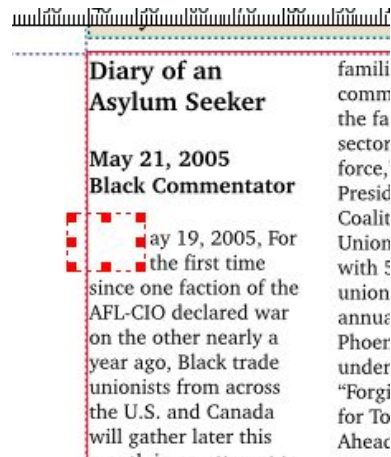
Then draw a Text frame on top of this , insert the letter M and make it font size : 50pt It should now look like the example below:


The other way to do this is to create a new Paragraph Style called 'Drop Caps' . Apply the 'body' style to a block of text using the story editor then select the first letter and apply the 'Drop Caps' style to it. This is easier to use but is less flexible, i.e the example above would not be possible as the letter is falls outside the text frame.

Inserting Pictures

All thats left now is to insert images. Scan and prepare your images using The Gimp (see worksheet) and import them into Scribus using the 'Insert Picture' icon:
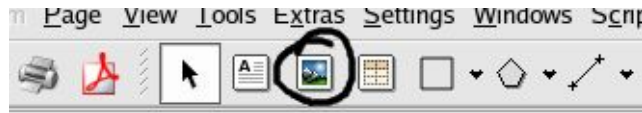

Insert a shape bigger than where you want to insert your picture. Use the properties box to make sure that the text flows around the frame. Then draw an Insert Picture' box inside this. At the moment the box has a big red cross through it:
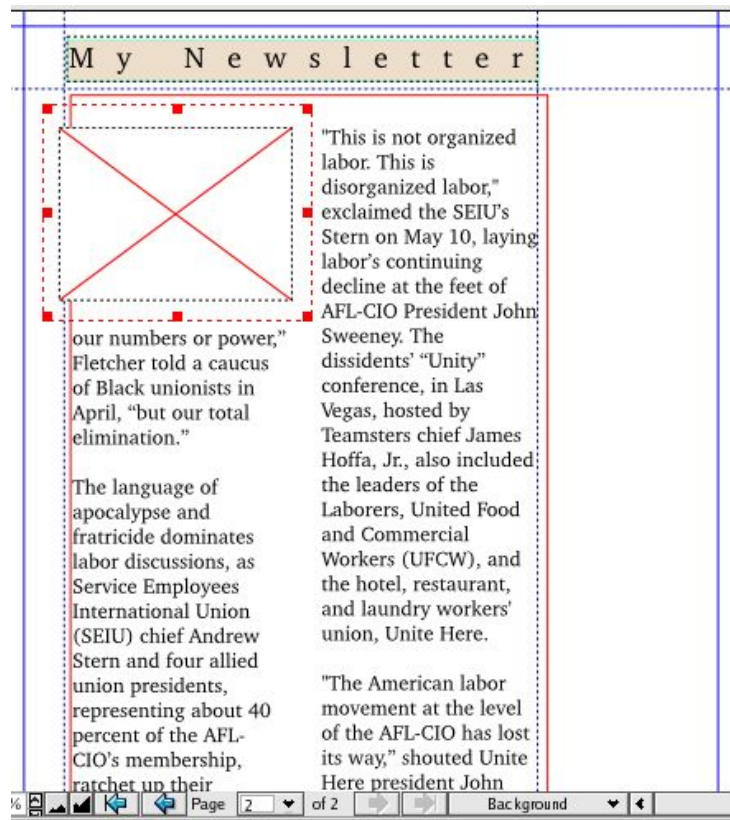
Select the picture box and right click with the mouse and choose 'Get picture'

Choose the image 'Example.jpg' in the images folder and in the Properties box select 'Shape > Scale to Frame Size' :
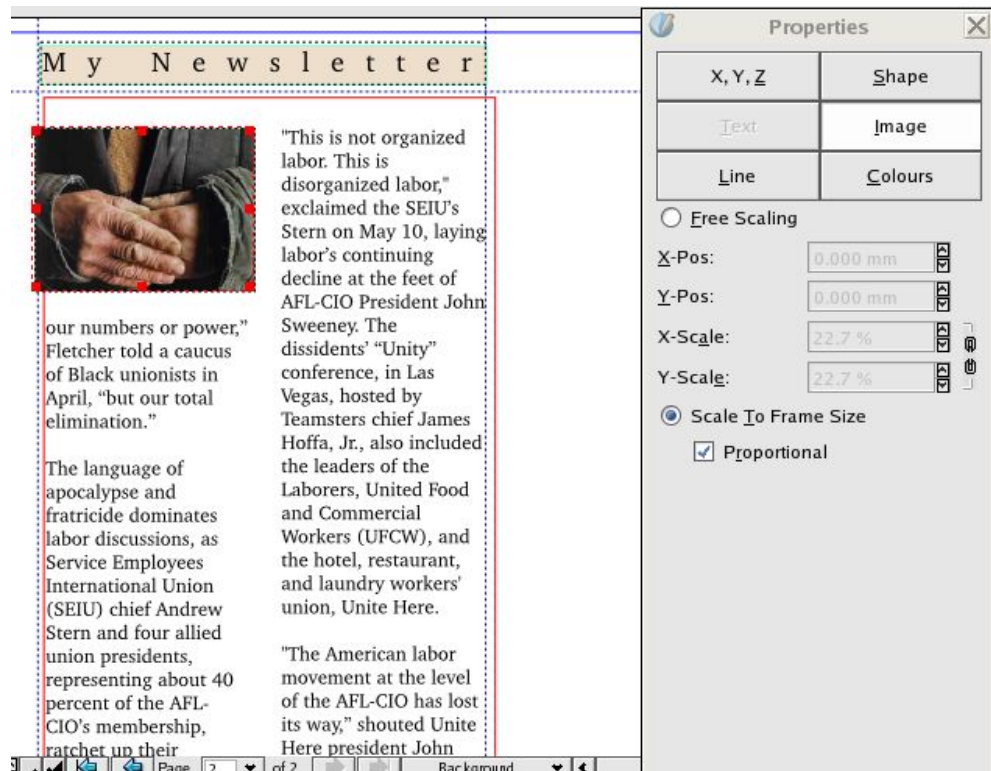

The image should now appear on screen.

So this is the basic way to build up a news letter! To carry on insert more pages using the 'Page > insert' and you can choose the template to apply and where you want the page to be inserted.

Other features

A useful feature that hasn't been used so far is Layers. These enable you to 'stack' layers of items on top of each other. It can come in useful when you have lots of elements on a page as you can put different ones on different layers, and then select the layer you want to work on in the Layers box. This can help with selecting items. To add a layer make sure the box is visible by clicking on the 'Tools > Layers' menu and click on the new layers button highlighted below:
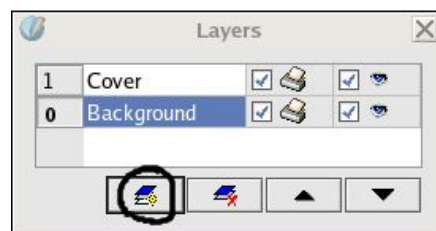
When you make the new layer double click on it in the layers box and give it a name. The layer highlighted in blue is the 'active layer' which means that anything you draw and insert on it willl be editable. If another layer is highlighted then you won't be able to move or edit stuff on another layer.

Making a Cover

To make a cover insert a page before Page 1. Don't apply a template to it.

Draw a big image box in the margins choose 'Get picture' and select 'Example02.jpg' and get it to 'Scale to Frame size' like before.
Using 'Properties > colours ' you can change the opacity of the image (meaning it goes see through).
Try changing it to 30% and see how it looks:
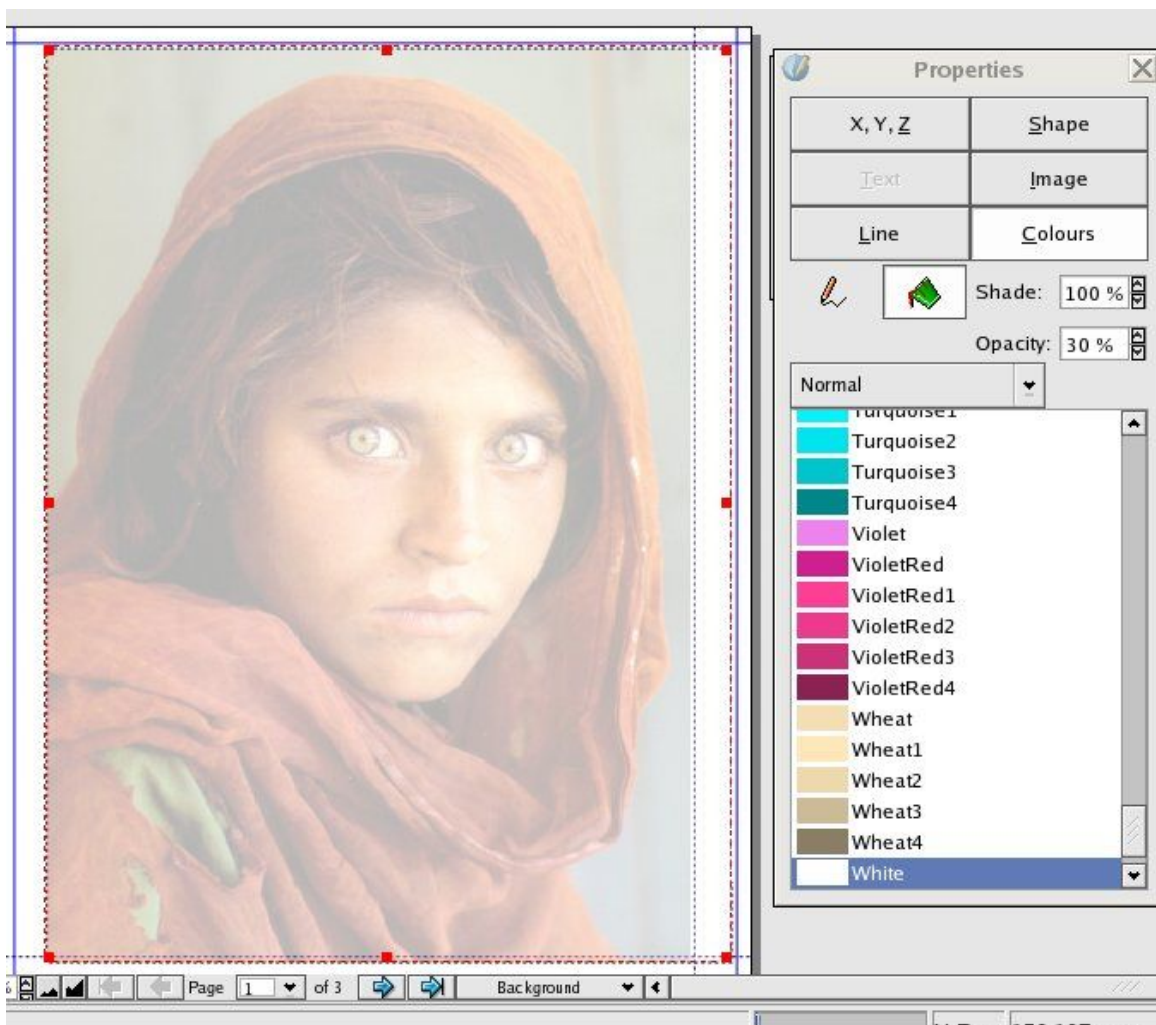
Adding titles

Next add a text frame , make it a light colour like 'AliceBlue' and then click on the 'Edit contents of Frame button' and add some text :

After typing 'My Newsletter' (or whatever you like!) press return to start a new line and type 'for everyone' and then change the font size and colours until it fits. If the 2 lines are crowded over each other adjust the 'Custom spacing > Line spacing' value up or down. This is where you can stretch the text using kerning.

Save the file as a PDF and you have the beginnings of a newsletter! Click on the 'Arrange Pages' box and select 'facing pages' to view how the newsletter looks:
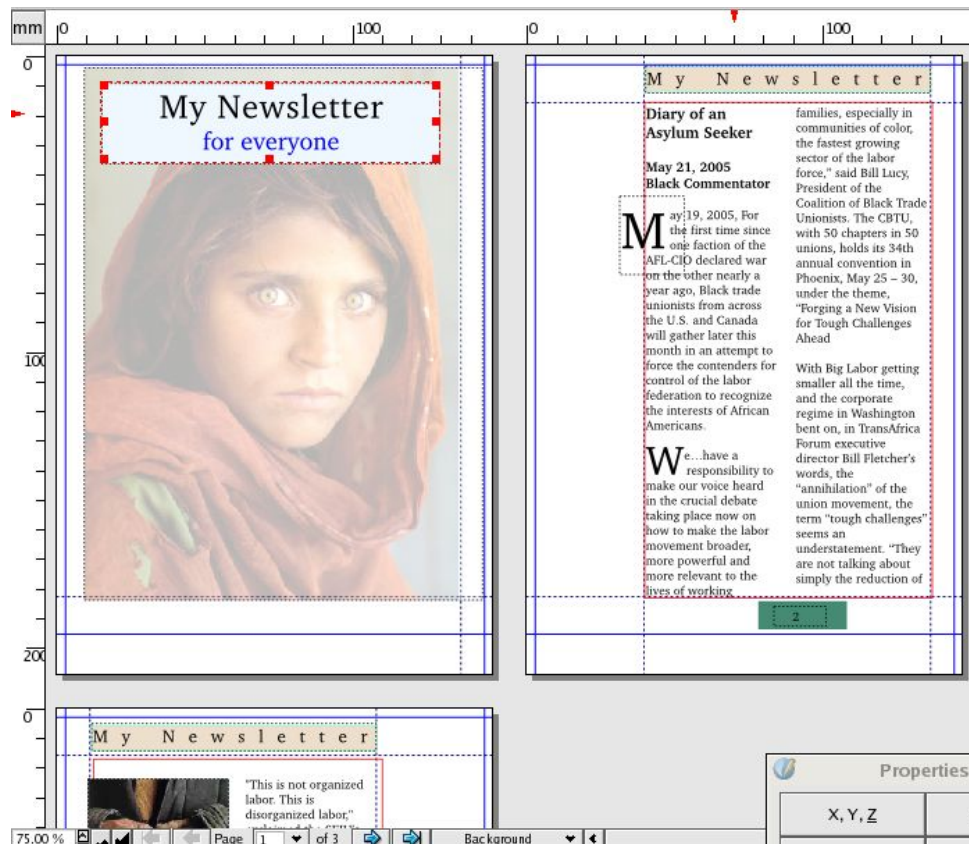
Further help and information

Check out the scribus websites for more help:

http://docs.scribus.net/
http://www.scribus.org.uk/