



# Jo's Alternative Desktop DOCKAPPS

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You alone determine the look of your Linux desktop. In this series we look at some alternative window managers and desktop environments. This month, we take a look at the special dockapps which make working with the window manager Window Maker so much easier.



wmmail 0.64, mountapp 2.7, wmcup  
1.2.8, wmmoon 1.0b2, wmpppp 1.3.0,  
wmsysmon 0.7.6, wmtime 1.0b2  
yawmppp 1.2.1 ?????/desktopia/

Since Windows 95 came out we all expect at least one clock on the desktop. Environments such as GNOME or KDE meet these expectations perfectly. But these environments have also committed themselves to doing a great deal more. There are tools for connecting and disconnecting to an ISP or a pager to switch between different desktops. All this – and a lot more besides – is there for the taking in Window Maker too. *Dockapps* are small programs which can be attached like an icon onto the dock (or clip) of Window Maker. You do this simply by dragging an icon to the desired point on the dock (or clip).

## WMTIME ...

... is definitely *the* clock for Window Maker. Anyone who calls it up with the parameter *-digital* will see it in digital form – otherwise it appears as analogue. Some nice person has tinkered about a bit with the somewhat dowdy digital mode and equipped it with Internet time – not that anyone needs it, but a person can never have enough ... So we are indulging in this luxury and have packed the sources of precisely that version onto this issue's CD.

Anyone familiar with WMTIME and who is now looking at the illustrations of this article in amazement due to the wrong colour reproduction may like to know that it is possible to alter the colours of most dockapps by modifying the graphics in the source package. Of course, that is often really tedious, but is still feasible. Also, in many programs it is possible to select the text colours via command line options – the option *--help* will usually come up with a lot more about the dockapp in question.

## So where do they run, then ...

Unfortunately at present one of the most important web pages for Window Maker dockapps is being restructured and thus at the moment has been wiped clean (<http://windowmaker.mezaway.org/>). All I can do now is, as with so many tools, to pack my own sources onto the CD without reference to any newer versions on the Web. But they all work wonderfully, and anyone who ruffles through the CDs of his distribution will certainly find one dockapp or another ready for use.

The following web sites are also good places to find dockapps:

- <http://www.BenSinclair.com/dockapp/>
- <http://freshmeat.net/appindex/x11/window%20maker%20applets.html>
- <http://nis-www.lanl.gov/~mgh/WindowMaker/DockApps.shtml>
- <http://www.cs.mun.ca/~gstarkes/wmaker/dockapps/>



Fig. 1: WMTIME in both analogue and digital form



Fig. 2: WMMON in all views

## Tank watches

Many people find a system monitor rather obtrusive, but anyone like me who is keen on tinkering with the system will certainly want to know about it when a program runs amok. And as Linux actually runs several applications at the same time, it may be that one only notices the lack of memory caused by some program malfunction when other programs are already tumbling out of memory. Luckily, there are dockapps which leave us in no doubt about the system status:

## WMMon

This dockapp has three views. By default it monitors the CPU. If you like you can just click on the mouse and then instead of the CPU, hard disk activity will be monitored. After another mouse click we find out all sorts of information about the memory, the swap (use of swap memory), and the uptime (time elapsed since last boot procedure). If you'd rather have everything in view at the same time simply start this dockapp three times: the second time with the option `-i`, and the third time with the appendage `-s`.

## WMSysMon

But surely, rather than starting WMMon three times, it's nicer to replace two WMMons by one WMSysMon. Only two, because WMSysMon doesn't display the CPU load, though it shows everything else (and more) in a convenient form. Anyone looking for the associated home page can find it at <http://www.gnugeneration.com/software/wmsysmon.html>.

## mount.app

One handy tool for mounting storage media is *mount.app*. It allows you to mount and unmount

the drives listed in the file */etc/fstab*. As a little bonus, the configuration of *mount.app* – as shown in Figure 5 – is done with a separate tool called *mount.conf*, which is called up by the dockapp with a double click. The future development of *mount.app* can be followed at <http://mountapp.sourceforge.net/>.

## WMPPP

*WMPPP* is a marvellous tool which makes or breaks a configured Internet connection at the click of a mouse, displays the status of the connection, graphically displays data transfer and shows it in bytes, displays online time and also – provided the modem configuration allows – reveals the connect rate. But it is not a front end for *pppd*, so the

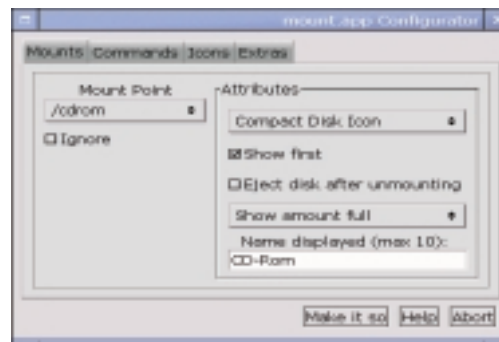


Fig. 3: WMSysMon



Fig. 4: mount.app

Fig. 5: Configuration of mount.app

# anzeige



Fig. 8: Alternative display by YAWMPPP



Fig. 6: Connection to an ISP with WMPPP



Fig. 7: KPPP-replacement YAWMPPP

connection to the ISP has to be set up some other way. *WMPPP* can only execute a command line to make a connection.

A remedy for this is promised by a slightly modified version of this tool named *YAWMPPP*, found at <http://yawmppp.seul.org/>. With this, you should have the same functionality that you get with *kppp*, or so I believe, as I personally have been unable to make a connection using either of them. I feel it is better to dial into the Internet without a graphical front end, and so my preference is for the simpler *WMPPP*.

### WMMail.app

At <http://www.eecg.utoronto.ca/cgibin/cgiwrap/chanb/www/wmmail> can be found a dockapp which can check mailboxes of all conceivable kinds in all possible ways for their content. It has already become so powerful that even changing over from version 0.59 to 0.64 requires lengthy perusal of the documentation. It may not sound fun, but it's worth spending the time, as the different views in Figure 9 prove.

Anyone installing the current package may find themselves looking in despair for *WMMail.app* – it can be found in the directory `/usr/local/GNUstep/Apps/WMMail.app/` where it answers to the name of *WMMail*. But that's not all: to be able to use *WMMail.app* each user needs their own configuration file, which is copied from the *Defaults* subdirectory into the user's own GNUstep default directory, thus to `~/GNUstep/Defaults/WMMail`. After that, this file still has to be modified using the text editor.

### wmcp

Those coming from KDE will certainly miss the buttons that enable you to switch from desktop 1 to

Fig. 9: How WMMail can look



Fig. 10: wmcp in "scalpel" and "gv"

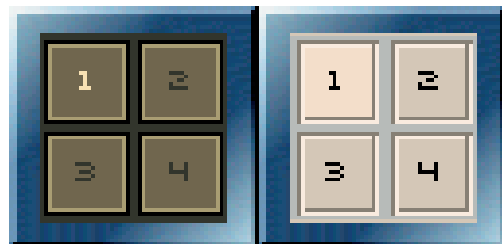


Fig. 11: Options for dockapp

desktop 4. You can of course switch between desktops using the corner of the clip (paper clip), but it isn't as easy. The remedy for this is provided by a pager going by the name of *wmcp* which can be found on the attached CD or at <http://www.linuxave.net/~bac/>. The author of this little tool also supplies two different faces (Figure 10) – and anyone who is a bit creative can whip up their own graphics here.

### Useless?

Here's another illustration with all sorts of dockapps not yet introduced. Since over 120 of them exist and not one of them is a standard dockapp (and for almost all of which there are equally usable alternatives introduced by myself), I will say no more about them now, but would encourage you to take a look for yourself in the dockapp archive. Then you can use all sorts of things which you certainly do not need, simply because you like them.

But without further delay let's look at what the screenshot shows: *wmglobe* (the earth with light and darkness depending on the sun's position), *wmWeather* (your local weather report), *ascd* (CD player), *asmixer* (small audio mixer) and *wmeyes* (eyes follow the mouse cursor). Whoops – "ascd" instead of "wmcd"? Right! Some "dockapps" designed to work with AfterStep can also be used with Window Maker, which increases the number of tools at your disposal even more ...

There's still the question of how to make these little helpers always start automatically when you log in. To do this, just click on the edge of a dockapp with the right mouse button, select *Settings...* and tick *Start when Window Maker is started*. ■