

K-splitter

FAIRGROUND STALL OR MONK'S CELL?

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Who says there is no place for gossip and scandal in a Linux magazine? K-splitter broadcasts the latest news from the K-World and noses around here and there behind the scenes.

Up close and personal

Where there are lots of options, there is great confusion. The more the KDE project grows, the more comprehensive the configuration options become.

That does not exactly make life simple for new users, which is why a new tool is now being worked on feverishly, the so-called *Kpersonalizer*. This is supposed to start from KDE 2.2 on first login of the user and accompany them through their first steps through the desktop configuration jungle (Figure 1).

Adaptability with respect to the look and feel is highly sought after. So should **anti-aliasing** be used for fonts and icons or not? The user can decide by a mouse click whether KDE should behave like Windows – whether the desktop responds to double instead of single clicks, or whether KDE should take after the good old UNIX type.

What may be even more interesting is the also integrated *Eyecandy-O-Meter* (Figure 2). Here one

will be able in future to choose – depending on the computer equipment – between a multicoloured fairground stall or a Spartan monk's cell; at least when it comes to graphical effects. Simply move the slide controller in the respective direction, the rest is done by KDE.

But there will be no support for the installation of printers and similar inconveniences. Because the developers fear that some distributor or other could, due to the differences between distributions, quickly and comprehensively deactivate the new configuration tool.

Making a facsimile of himself...

... is not something *Michael Goffioul* has been doing, although he is making a good few waves in the KDE Project. First he came up with the print **library** for KDE 2. Then he expanded this by various print back-ends, and lastly he enhanced the KDE 2

Anti-aliasing: *Aliasing* refers to the stair effect at the edges of graphics, especially of text or lines, which arises because it is only possible to display truly straight lines with pixels if they are horizontal or vertical. The solution – inserting shading pixels into the steps – is called *anti-aliasing*.

Library: A file containing a collection of useful C functions for specific purposes. So for example there is *libm*, which provides mathematical functions, or *libXt*, containing functions for programming the X11 window system. Often libraries are utilised by several programs simultaneously (shared).

MIME: This abbreviation stands for Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions, a method of specifying standardised file types. Examples of MIME types are *text/plain* (pure text file without formatting) or *video/mpeg* (MPEG-compressed video stream). MIME is used primarily in mail programs or Web browsers. Normally this data is stored in a file named *mime.types*.



Figure 1: Start at the beginning



Figure 2: Fairground Stall or Monk's Cell?

printworks by fax and PDF support. But as if that were not enough he has now come up with the little tool *KdeprintFax*, with which it is possible to send a fax directly from any KDE 2 application.

The rather sad background to this glad development: The program *Ksendfax* which used to exist has, like so many other small, but useful programs, not been ported to KDE 2.

The main features of the new fax maker are *EFax* support and *Hylafax* support, and also an in-built filter mechanism, which converts any file type, before sending, into PostScript format. The usual external programs act as filters here, which are freely configurable within the fax utility and can be defined for every **MIME** type. One nice side effect: Documents that you want to send by fax need only be dragged into the main window using drag and drop.

Goffioul has already integrated the source code of the program into the existing **CVS tree**. Whether, and to what extent, the program will make it into the next major KDE release (2.2) had not yet been determined when we went to press.

A thesaurus for KWord

KWord development is gathering pace. In order to make it more attractive for users to change over from their usual word processing programs such as *Word* or *StarOffice* the developers are constantly coming up with new ideas. The latest idea stems from *Daniel Naber*, who presents a patch on the developer list which serves to expand *KWord* in the near future by a thesaurus based on **Wordnet**.

The substantial, 13MB, size of the download from <http://www.cogsci.princeton.edu/~wn/> and worries about the free distribution of Wordnet have now led to a search for alternatives. Under discussion is, among others, *Kdict*.

All bets are off

KDE games are growing up. This has apparently been noticed by the makers of the *GGZ Gaming Zone*, a free alternative to Microsoft's Gaming Zone, because part of their new release 0.0.4 is for the first time a KDE front-end. As on other online gaming sites, players can log on to the Gaming

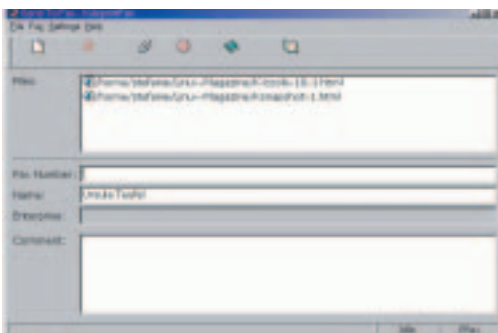


Figure 3: The new miracle weapon in printing

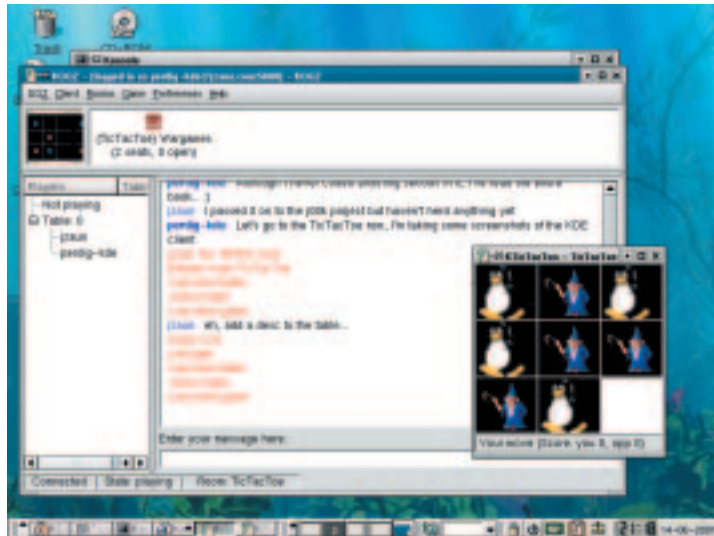


Figure 4: Tic Tac Tux

Zone and then play against other users or computers. GGZ offers, among other things, various levels of difficulty, chat rooms and statistics – and all are available now in the usual KDE look and feel thanks to the new KDE client.

At present there are just three KDE games, but by the time the next release comes out their number should have doubled. In order to avoid duplicates, the makers of the Gaming Zone want to work closely with the people from the KDE games project.

Further information and the latest gossip from the world of GGZ gaming can be found by hobby-gamblers at <http://ggz.sourceforge.net/>. And anyone who would like not only to play, but also to make a real contribution to the further expansion of the project, can lay down their suggestions and offers of assistance at any time at ggz-dev@lists.sourceforge.net ■

CVS-Tree: Especially when many developers are working on a software project, it is necessary to have a procedure which prevents anyone overwriting changes made by their co-programmers by mistake or destroying the only working version. Many projects therefore use a Concurrent Versions System. It is also possible at any time to reconstruct an older development version from a CVS file tree, but obviously it is most often used to hold the latest program code. The Answer Girl in this issue gives an insight into the construction and use of a CVS depot.

Wordnet: Work began on the Wordnet project in 1985 and is still going on. Those working on development are mainly psychologists and linguists from the University of Princeton, USA. Wordnet is a sort of online lexicon. The structure of the lexicon is in line with psycholinguistic theories about human memory, unlike the more usual lexicons, which are organised according to alphabetical order or into classes of synonyms. Wordnet is not restricted to a specific area and currently consists of over 95,600 different English word forms. One of the most important characteristics of Wordnet is that for any given word, a distinction is made between the word form and the meaning of the word. The meaning of the word is represented here by a number of synonymous word forms. This thesaurus is mainly recommended as an aid to composition when one wishes to write an English text.