K-tools

DIFFERENT
VIEWS

BY STEFANIE TEUFEL

This column is where, every month, we tell you about particularly useful KDE tools of all kinds – from essential problem solvers to things that just make life more interesting.

There are now plenty of graphical **FTP** clients for Linux. What makes *KBear*, our K-tool of the month, different from the rest is its somewhat unusual appearance and basic design, which allows you to simultaneously browse through several FTP-sites.

Before we go any further, we have to warn you of a slight catch involved in running KBear – it requires *KDE 2.0* (or at least a Beta version of it) and *Qt-2.2.0* in order to run smoothly. This means that the traditionalists among you, who still don't want to be parted from your KDE 1.1.2, can't try it out. Those of you who are more open-minded will find the very latest version of the program at *http://www.kbear.org/*.

On your marks, download, go...

Once you've downloaded and installed the program, use *kbear &* in the terminal emulation window of your choice to get started. Doing so will start to reveal that Kbear isn't quite like an ordinary FTP client, and launches a configuration wizard with which you can define the program's appearance – see Figure 1.

You can happily leave everything at its default setting by just clicking on the *Next* button until the final screen, at which point you'll need to click on *Finish*. If you aren't in a hurry, exploring the options is well worth the effort. However, the wizard itself and any of its component pages can be called up again later via the *Settings--> General Settings* or *Settings-->Run Wizard...* menu items.

A quick glance at Figure 2 seems to indicate that Kbear doesn't split its main display window in two as other FTP clients normally do (with the home directory on one side and the window for the FTP server on the other side). Your home directory is actually shown here, it's just that the rest of the space is currently free and waiting to display the various FTP servers which you will be linking to once you contact them.

FTP: Abbreviation for "File Transfer Protocol ", a protocol governing the transfer of data in the Internet. Once you have logged onto a remote host computer, FTP allows comprehensive file management; depending on your access rights. Files and directories can be transferred, deleted, copied or moved.

Fig. 1: The Kbear wizard says hello

Fig. 2: A little unfamiliar

Fig. 3: Which server should it be?

Contacted

What's the use of the smartest FTP client if it has no connection to an FTP server? Not much. This is why Kbear offers you two different options for making contact with a server. The simplest to use is activated by a click on the *FTP-->Quick Connect* option (also accessible with a *Ctrl-N* key combination). This displays a dialog box into which you can enter the address of the desired server (see Figure 3). If this is a public FTP server you'll need to activate the *Anonymous Login* option in order to be able to log in. In any case, the next step is to click on the *Connect* button (always assuming you are now online). The Kbear will then make the connection and off you'll go. Do note though, that sometimes a public server will ask for a password, even though you selected the *Anonymous Login* option. If this happens, enter your own email address in the dialog box which pops open – the problem will be solved.

Incidentally, the little box labelled *Save to Sitemanager* in the dialog box refers to the second of the two connection options – *Sitemanager*, a sort of FTP phone book. *Sitemanager*, which can be accessed directly through *FTP-->Open Sitemanager* or the key combination *Ctrl-O*, comes preconfigured with a few of the main FTP servers

Fig. 4: Adding servers to Sitemanager

together with Login etc. See Figure 4 for what this looks like.

When using *Sitemanager*, all you have to do to get started is select the appropriate FTP server from those displayed, click on *Connect* and off it goes. If you would like to include other servers in this list, simply activate the box we mentioned earlier (*Save to Sitemanager*). Then let Kbear do the rest. Alternatively, use the *New* option in Sitemanager itself. The *Remove* option allows you to remove any sites you no longer want to use. Fanatics of tidiness can go even further, with *New Group* and allocate new main folders to the ones already defined (which include *General* and *KDE*), doing so permits you to separate and classify addresses by subject if need be.

Hand it over!

As soon as you have made a connection to one or more FTP servers, you're almost there in terms of a download. But perhaps just a few words first about the arrangement of the windows is in order before we leave you to it.
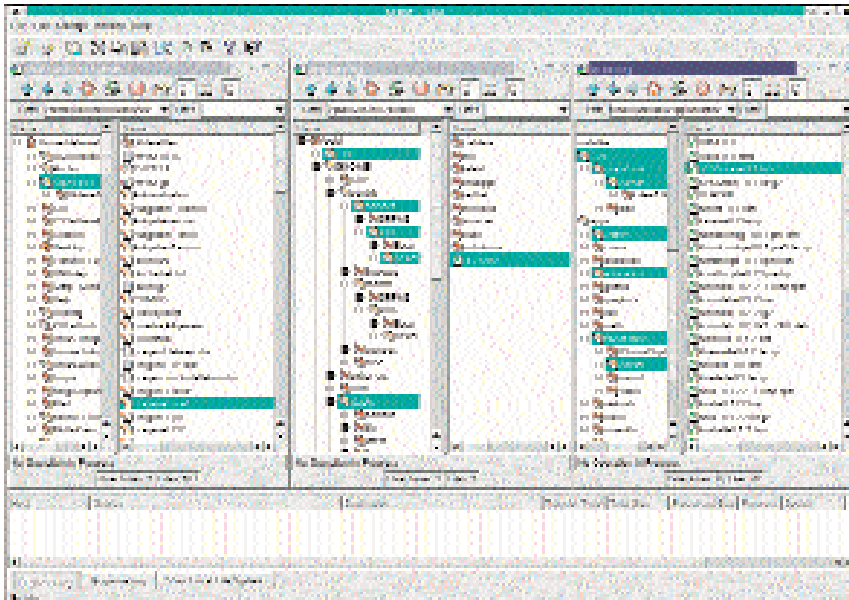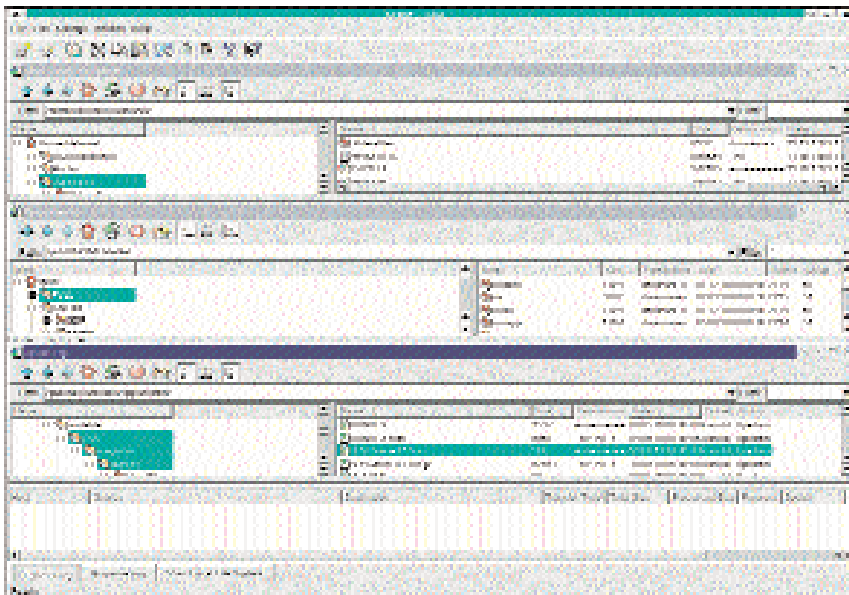
Fig. 5: Vertical...

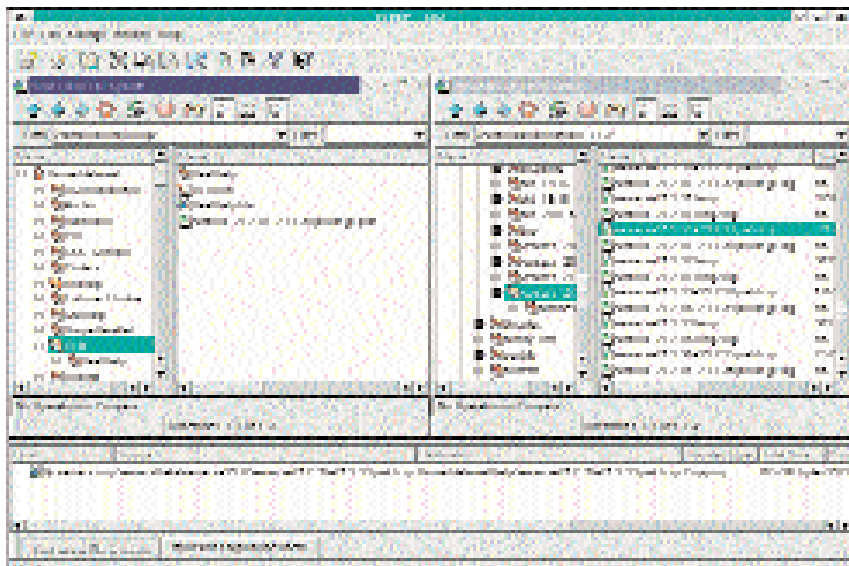**Fig. 6: ... or do you prefer horizontal?**
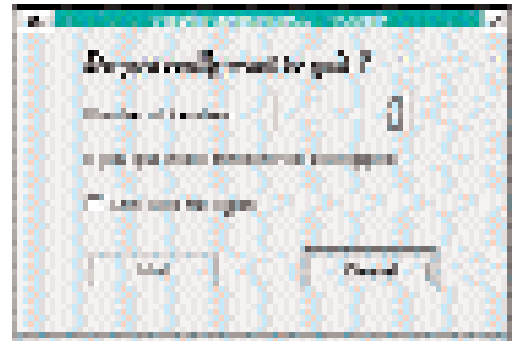

Fig. 7: It's making progress

Fig. 8: Caution is better than interrupted downloads...

You can change the window configuration very easily. Start by clicking on the *Window--> Placing* item, then select from one of the options displayed. For a traditional FTP client look and feel, the *Tile vertically* option (see Figure 5) will be the best choice. If you prefer things split horizontally, try *Anodine's tile* (Figure 6) instead. If neither of these appeals to you, then simply try whichever of the other settings suits you best.

You can also define whether you want the files in the directories displayed simply as icons or in the more detail, with rights, time stamp and so on shown. You can do this via the menu *Settings--> General Settings-->View Settings* menu item. This is also where you can define whether this should be a tree view, or whether or not the taskbar and other things should be shown.

But back to the nitty-gritty – actually downloading a file. This can be done, like so many other things in KDE, via drag and drop. Just click on the file you want to download from the FTP server's directory, then drag it with the mouse into the destination directory on your own hard drive. When you let go of the mouse button a context menu will appear. Then select Copy – and that's it. You can now simply lean back satisfied and watch the progress of the transfer in the lower Kbear window (Figure 7).

Before we finish, we'd like to tell you about two more Kbear features. The first allows you to view a file prior to downloading it. To do so, click on the file you want to view with the right mouse button, and in the context menu that appears, select *Open in standard browser*. Kbear then calls up *Konqueror*, in which you can look at the file at your leisure – file type permitting, of course.

The second and final feature we want to mention is an emergency brake. Kbear provides this feature for scatter-brained folk. On selecting *Quit*, which normally closes the program down, Kbear will let you know about any ongoing transfers that would be ruined if you were to actually shut the program down at that point (see Figure 8). Anyone who finds that this features gets on their nerves can switch it off by clicking on the *Don't ask me again* box. On doing so, Kbear will let you exit the program without any warning no matter what files you might be downloading at the time. ■