Universal File Manager Konqueror

FLEXIBLE CONQUEROR

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The acquisition of new territory always follows the same pattern. Once it has been discovered by the navigator, it is explored by the explorer in order to be taken by the conqueror. So the name given to the program which replaces the KFM ("K FileManager") from KDE 1.x is quite logical. It is the Konqueror.

Konqueror itself is basically a small and lean program, which can if required load in additional subprograms ("components"), in order to offer extended functionality. So, to display a Web site the KHTML components are loaded, or to show images, the kview components.

So where is he then?

When KDE 2 is started for the first time the Konqueror introduces itself as file manager and displays the home directory. If not, you can call up Konqueror via the panel at the bottom of the screen. One click on the house-icon is all it takes to get a quick overview of your files. If there are a great many files, you will immediately notice that Konqueror has become much faster compared with KFM. Anyone who has ever got lost with the old KFM in the /dev directory will know that it sometimes took more than half a minute to construct the entire directory, with its 2000 files. Using Konqueror this takes just a moment.

It all depends on your view

And now it is possible to alter the view precisely according to your own wishes. On the symbol bar on the right you can toggle back and forth between *Symbol view*, *Multi-column view*, *Tree view*, *Detailed directory view* and *Text view*. The tree-view (Fig. 1) is a great inside tip, if, when moving files to various places in the file system, you want to observe the overview. It displays the directory structure and the precise properties for all open folders at the same time. Via *View/Display details* it is possible to set which properties are shown and their sequence can be defined by drag and dropping the column headers. Since the directory tree over on the left in the tree view is superfluous, this can be cut off via the menu entry *Window/Display directory tree*.

Those who prefer a perfectly normal symbol view have not been forgotten. If you frequently work with images, you will certainly want to switch on the image preview, in which a reduced version of the images is used as icon. (*View/image preview*).
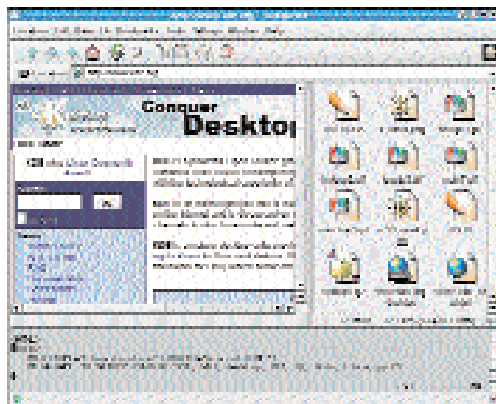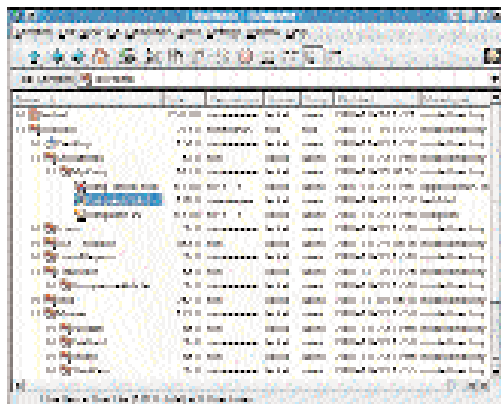
[left]
Fig. 1: Practical when dealing with files: the tree view of Konqueror:

[right]
Fig. 2: Konqueror with various sub-windows – a console is embedded at the bottom.
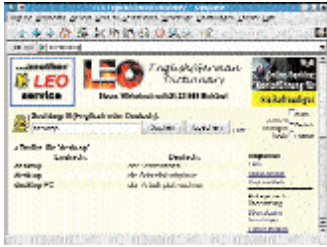
Fig. 5: Documents can now be assigned much more simply to the respective application responsible for them.

The size of these thumbnails can be changed together with the icon size via *View/Symbolmode*.

Divide and rule!

As an advanced user you will certainly discover many additional interesting features in the Window menu. You can break the window into as many horizontal and vertical areas as you like via *View … split*. This is similar to the classic Norton Commander, in which one can then deal with completely different things.

The Konqueror window can be split in two vertically (*Split view into left and right halves*). This makes it easy to move or copy files.

Another example can be found in Figure 3, where work is going on in a Konqueror window on a Web site. On the left at the top the files are displayed, from which the Web site is composed and on the right, the current version of the Web site can be shown at all times. On the bottom margin you will discover a console window, in which work is being done via the text editor *vi* on the Web site. Such a console window can be added via *window/display terminal-emulator*.

Symbols and profiles

But how do you know in which window section you are actively working? This is made clear by the green LED, which lights up in the respective active window at the bottom left. The checkbox at the bottom right, on the other hand makes it possible to link or decouple various views by means of a chain symbol. So it is possible to ensure that two different window

Fig. 3: With KGhostview a document is displayed here in Konqueror
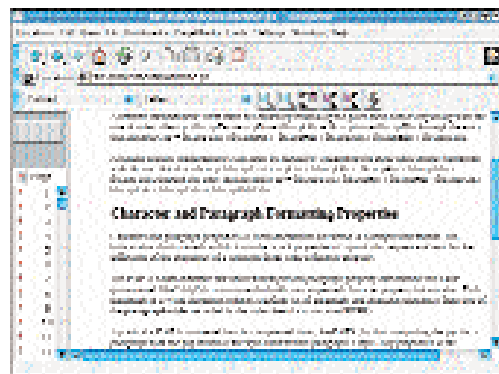
Fig. 4: Flash-Plugins also function in Konqueror.

sections always show the same directory. For example the window sections can be removed, by clicking with the right mouse button on the bottom grey edge of the window section and selecting *Remove active view*. There are various combinations of the window sections on offer for different purposes. Therefore, you can load and store the "Layout" of the window section via so-called Profiles in the menu *window*.

File, open sesame!

As with starting programs, opening documents is done with a click of the left mouse button on the associated icon, although you can set a double click via KControl, the KDE-Control centre. As a rule this does not start an independent application, but only those parts of the program ("components") embedded in Konqueror and needed to display the corresponding documents. When clicking on a graphics file, for example, the file is displayed in Konqueror as an image and the menus and symbol bars are simply altered so that all necessary functions are available.

If on the other hand one clicks with the right mouse button on the document, it is possible to select the application with which the document should be opened. It is either listed directly in the context menu or you select the *Open with* entry, via which the desired application can be entered as appropriate. In addition, though, it is possible via *Settings /Install/ File allocations* to set, easily and permanently, which document type should be opened with which program and whether the application for this should be embedded or started completely normally (Fig. 5).

An alternative to Netscape?

As already indicated, there are numerous other components in KDE 2, including the KHTML components to display Web sites. This means that you can also use Konqueror as a fully-capable browser, since with KHTML it can master all current standards necessary for the viewing of Web sites: HTML4, CSS1/2 in part, Javascript, Java and even Netscape-Plugins. Since Konqueror is very fast, uses few resources and still copes with all current standards, it's a good idea to use it rather than your previous browser.

To do this, type the desired web address in the URL-line directly into the opened Konqueror or else start it via the globe icon in the panel. You should first tell Konqueror whether you wish to use a proxy – such a proxy can considerably speed up the loading of Web sites. If you have been using Netscape until now, you can also check there under *Edit/Settings/Extended/ Proxies/Manual proxy configuration*, whether you have previously been making use of a proxy and, if so, what the proxy and port numbers are. You can then take over these settings for Konqueror under *Settings/install/ Proxies*. For some sites it may still be necessary to activate Javascript- or Java support, under *Settings/Install/Browser*.

Pure surfing pleasure

Now you can get started surfing the Internet. Begin for example with *http://www.konqueror.org*, where you can find out if there is any news about your new favourite browser. Another very easy one is the history function, which guesses the complete address just by typing in the URL. Should this guesswork prove unsuccessful, simply carry on cheerfully typing until the correct address appears. Then you can make Konqueror display the desired Web site by pressing the Enter key, in full image mode if you like. When you have installed OpenSSL, secure connections of up to 168 bit encryption cause no problems for Konqueror. Some KDE developers are now even using Konqueror for their home banking.

Abbreviations and foreign languages

One additional and extraordinarily helpful feature is Internet keywords. If you enter *gg: KDE* in the URL box for instance, the search engine "Google" is automatically called up. This then shows you all the Web sites in the Internet in which the word KDE is mentioned. Other Internet keywords make it possible, for example, to translate texts from other languages, search for RPMs or look up terms in lexicons or dictionaries (Fig. 6). By making your own definitions you can extend this functionality to completely match your own taste. Beyond everyday surfing, the fun is practically unlimited. KHTML also supports characters whose character set goes beyond the Latin alphabet (the magic phrase here is "bidirectional Unicode support"), so that for example you can look at Japanese Web sites (Fig. 7). But to do this, the corresponding characters also have to be installed.

Sight for sore eyes

Apropos: If the font on the Web sites is too small, this can also be remedied, by making the appropriate adjustments under *Settings/ Install/ Browser/ Appearance*. And a minimum size for fonts can also be specified in order to avoid the text being so small as to be illegible. For temporary changes in text size it is a good idea to use the corresponding entries from the symbol bar to enlarge or reduce the text on the Web site.

Where was it now ...?

Sites of especial interest can be provided with a bookmark: After a click on *bookmark/add bookmark* the corresponding URL is included in the bookmark menu. The bookmark functionality is not, however, limited to Web sites, but can also be used for FTP download addresses and directories on your own computer. All entries can obviously be divided by folder into subject areas. If you have been using Netscape or Mozilla until now, then you have
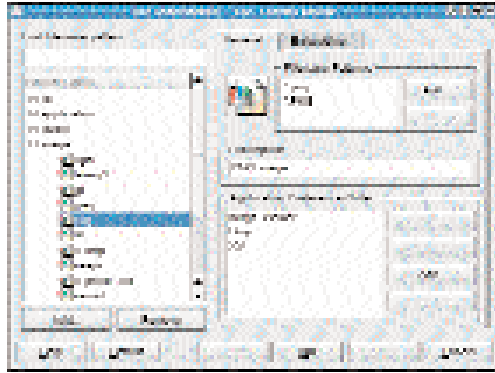
probably already created a bookmark collection by tedious, fiddly work. But here, too, Konqueror meets the user halfway, by taking over the existing bookmark under *bookmark/Netscape bookmark*. Anyone who wants to reach his absolutely favourite sites almost at the touch of a button can do so via *bookmark/bookmark list/add bookmark*. Then the bookmark is specifically included in a special symbol bar, which can be activated via *Settings/display bookmark list*. As in all other KDE-applications, the composition of these symbol bars can be configured more precisely via *Settings/Install/toolbar*.

And the download session?

Obviously Konqueror can also be used for FTP-downloading, and the downloading of many packets at the same time is completely unproblematic. In order to retain an overview when doing so, it can be advantageous to ensure (via *Settings/Install/File manager/Other*) that status information on all network connections is displayed together in one window.

A glimpse of the future

Beyond the standard protocols HTTP and FTP already mentioned, Konqueror also has some other common protocols available, such as for NFS- and SMB-Shares, and LDAP-directories. In principle these services are made available throughout KDE. So, for example, you can use FTP not only in Konqueror, but also with other programs which make use of it. Because of the modular architecture of KDE 2, it is easy for the developers to add additional protocols. The result of this will be that in future you will also be able, via the URL line in Konqueror, to read your e-mails and/or newsgroups or can download the images from your digital camera. A refinement of the functionality and appearance of History- and Bookmarks is planned. So there is also a prospect of a better view of icons and a preview for text files. In addition to increased stability there is thus some additional attention to detail in the pipeline. Because it is mainly the many useful details, which make KDE and also Konqueror so popular. In the meantime the KDE team wishes you lots of fun with KDE 2 and Konqueror! ∎

[top left]
Fig. 6: translating with konqueror ....

[top right]
Fig. 7: Konqueror in FVWM2: Obviously, Japanese Web sites can also be displayed.

Fig. 8: The toolbar, too, can be configured freely in any KDE program.