

K-tools

BABYLONIAN BABBLE

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Not for nothing do we talk about the global village, since on the World Wide Web you can now find every language under the sun. A land of milk and honey for linguists, a nightmare for all those who daydreamed through their French or German classes. Anyone who has ever stumbled over a site in a foreign language which looked very interesting, but was hard to decipher due to the lack of language knowledge knows the only remedy is to swot up vocabulary and grammar.

Translate me



QTrans 0.0.3

On the other hand, it is much cleverer to use a little helper such as *QTrans* to outwit the cognoscenti elegantly. Behind this slightly cryptic name hides an instant translator for KDE, based on the Babylon dictionaries and the program of the same name for Windows.

To bring some order to the Babylonian babble, you first need to obtain the current version, *qtrans 0.0.3*, from <http://digilander.iol.it/merlim/qtrans-0.0.3.tar.gz>. Unfortunately - or perhaps thankfully, due to their size - the dictionaries are not included in the packet, so you still need to make a brief side-trip to the Babylon site at <http://www.babylon.com/>. By the by: If you have already used Babylon in the

offline version under Windows, you can save yourself this trip and use the files/dictionaries on your windows partition in QTrans.

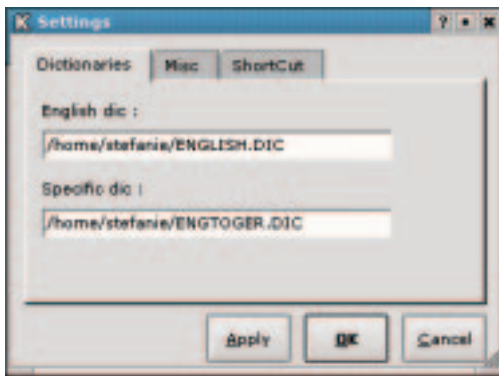
Everyone else is now faced with a fairly hefty download. Go to the Babylon site and search, in the section *Glossary Index/Languages* for the appropriate dictionaries, so that you can get going. I settled on the German variant and in the *German* sector, immediately downloaded the first glossary *full_ger_dict50.exe*. At around 5MB, a solid chunk, but worth the effort, as you are about to see.

Please note that you are getting hold of an exe file. It is only these self-extracting archives which contain the *dic* files which QTrans needs to work. Behind the other files are hidden so-called Babylon *glossaries*, which QTrans cannot read yet. The author of the program is, however, according to his own claims, working feverishly on glossary support.

If you have finally got the file *full_ger_dict50.exe* onto your harddisk, unpack it with a user-friendly *unzip full_ger_dict_50.exe*. After that, among others, the following files should appear on your computer: *ENGLISH.DIC*, *ENGLISH2.DIC* and *ENGTOGER.DIC*. If you like, you can of course also unpack the file at any time under Windows. It is also possible that you see the file names written in lower case rather than upper. But this doesn't matter, all that counts is that they are on your computer.

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In this column we present tools, which have proven to be especially useful when working under KDE, solve a problem which otherwise is deliberately ignored, or are just some of the nicer things in life, which - once discovered - you wouldn't want to do without.



The joy of configuration

Let's now look at the translator itself. Install QTrans using the good old Linux three-step *.configure*, *make*, an *su* root and *make install*. Finished? Then we simply start the program with a *qtrans* & in a **terminal emulation** of your choice or via the *K* start menu, *Applications/QTrans*.

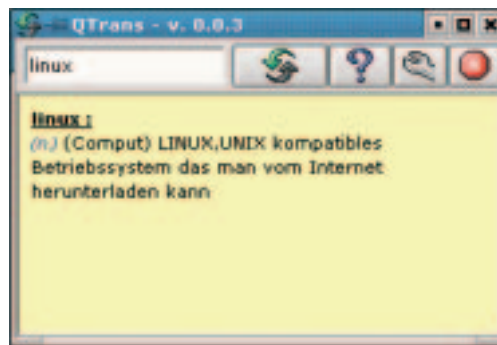
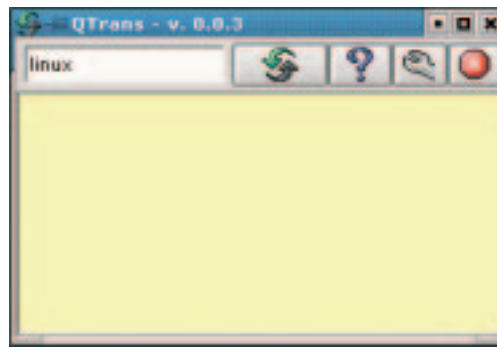
You will be greeted by the QTrans configuration window (Figure 1), in which you should now enter as quickly as possible the **paths** to the respective dictionaries. This also applies, by the way, if the files concerned are hidden away on a windows partition. This just has to be **mounted**, meaning you have to be able to access this partition with Linux. In our example, in the field *English dic*, you enter */path/to/file/ENGLISH.DIC*. The zone *Specific dic* is adorned with the entry */path/to/file/ENGTOGER.DIC*. Another click on *Apply*, and that's it.

Also interesting are the entries in the tab *Misc*. Click on any of the fields here. QTrans then automatically docks with the panel, starts minimised and does not shut down when you click on the *Exit* button of the window. Instead of this, it lies in wait as an icon in the panel for the words it has yet to translate. The function *Enable Auto Pop-Up*, from version 0.0.3, has had the effect that the QTrans window only pops up out of the panel on your desktop, when the program has found an appropriate translation for the selected word.

The way the electronic dictionary works is brilliantly simple. Just enter the corresponding word in the box next to the arrow button (Figure 2), click on the arrow button, and then enjoy the result, as in Figure 3.

Your eavesdropper in the panel

Sometimes it is not even necessary to enter the words into the translation tool at all. If the program with which you are currently working (and from which you wish to translate something), is a KDE application such as for example *Konqueror*, all you have to do is highlight the word concerned with the mouse. QTrans observes your KDE clipboard and immediately sets about translating, as soon as its content changes. If you ever want to shut down the program, just click with the right mouse button on



the arrow icon in the panel and there select the item *Exit* (Figures 4 and 5). A click with the left mouse button on this icon retrieves the program window at any time from its self-imposed exile in the panel on your desktop.

su: *The su command stands for "substitute user", or swap the user. It allows you to change your identity while working under Linux. Normal activities such as mailing, surfing etc. should always be done for security reasons with a simple user account. But since it would be extremely tiresome to have to log off and log on again as root for each and every administrative action, you can also use su to become administrator as you go along. You can easily tell the status has changed from the altered shell prompt: Instead of \$ there now appears # as the prompt.*

Terminal emulation: *Expression referring to a program which imitates a text terminal. Under Linux this can be either a representation in true VGA mode or one of the terminal emulators for the X-Window system (konsole, kvt, xterm, etc.).*

Path: *The way to a file in the file tree, thus a listing of all directories via which one must pass to reach the file.*

Mount: *This is the name for integrating a storage medium (such as disks or partitions) in the Linux file tree. If there is no appropriate entry in the configuration file *etc/fstab*, this integration can only be performed by the system administrator root.*

[left]
Figure 1: Configuring the dictionaries

[right]
Figure 2: Translation made easy

[below]
Figure 3: It depends on the result



Figure 4: Docked



Figure 5: If you ever want to leave QTrans...