K-tools

WELL PACKED

STEFANIE TEUFEL

This month's installment of K-splitter covers Kleandisk, a tool which you can use to make a bit of space on your overstuffed disk. However, it really isn't necessary to fill up your disk, so this article is devoted entirely to Karchiver, a program which will help you to compress data and files simply.

Maybe one or two of you have already worked with the forerunner *karchiveur*. But you should still risk an update. *karchiver* might have lost the *u* from its name, but in other ways it has only gained.

karchiver 2.0.3 co-operates smoothly with KDE 2.0. Besides, with diverse *wizards*, a few little helpers have been brought in to make life even easier for you. And a lot has stayed the same: *karchiver* still turns working with compressed data - whether *tar-*, *gz-*, *bz2-* or *zip* files - into child's play. And in the new version you can use this tool to look at all these files, unpack and repack them. The latest Karchiver can be downloaded from *http://perso.wanadoo.fr/coquelle/karchiveur_en.sht ml*. Also, the packages/programs **gzip**, **bzip2**,

unzip, *zip*, *lha*, *rar* and/or *arj* should be on your computer. That's no problem anyway, since common Linux distributions always come with these on board. They just have to be installed.

Packing

Start your graphical archiver by simply entering a *karchiver &* in a terminal emulation, and off it goes. *karchiver* first supplies, in a separate window, some tips, which may or may not be helpful. If these bother you, though, you can quickly chase them away by deselecting the box *Display tip of the day at next start*.
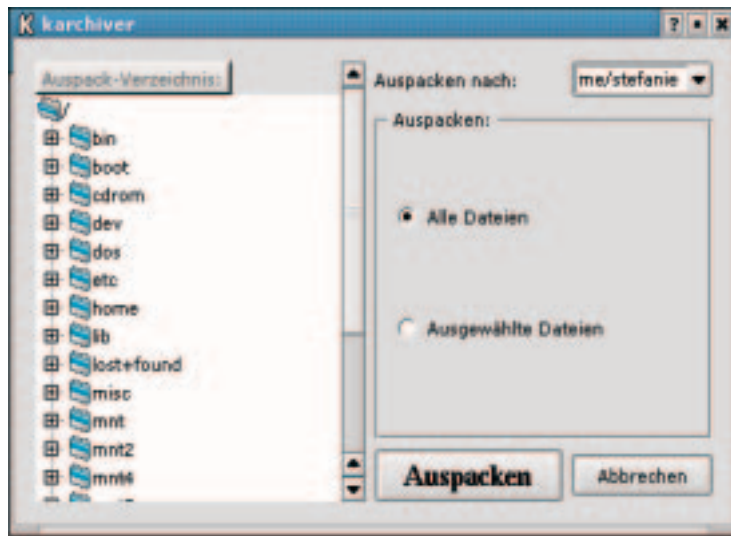
Admittedly, the introductory window (Figure 1) does not exactly look spectacular. But the first

**[left] Figure 1:
karchiver says Hello**

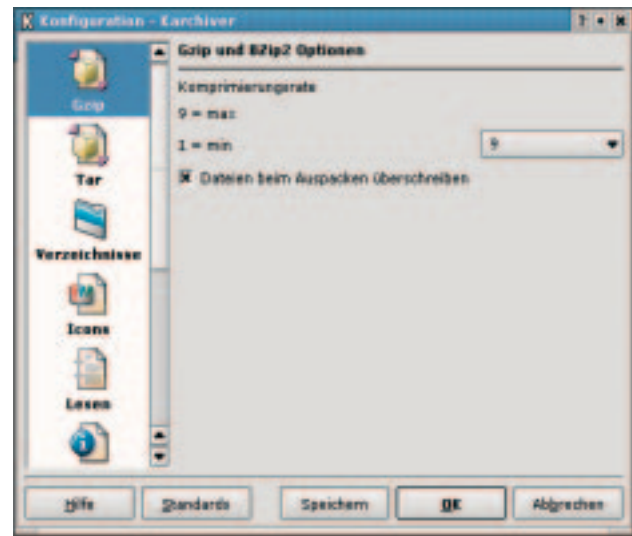**[middle] Figure 2:
Faster access thanks to the archive browser**

**[right] Figure 3:
Meaningful**

BEGINNERS KORNER
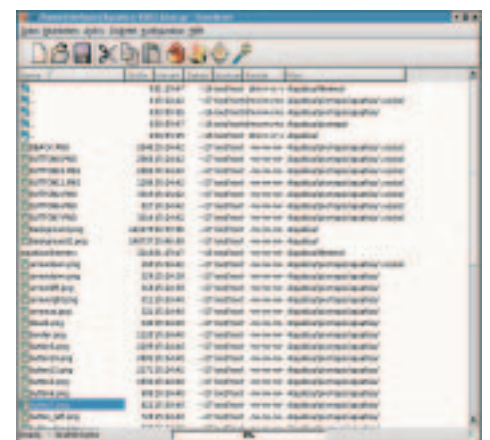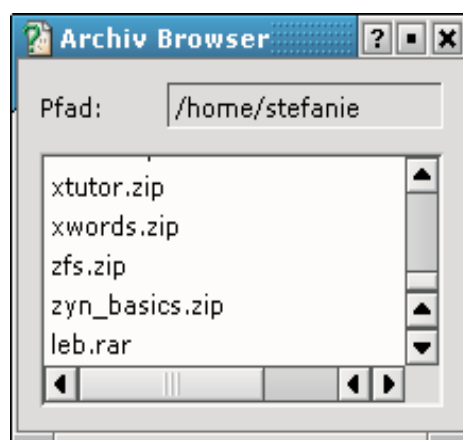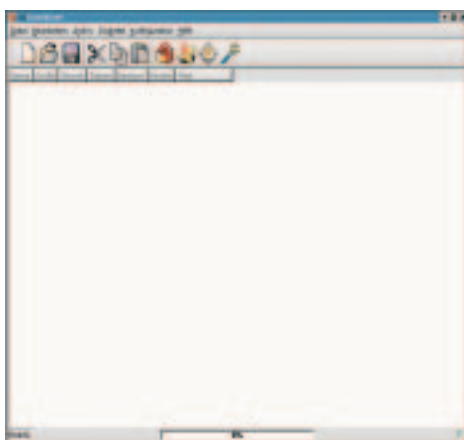
impression is misleading. In the new version, the so-called archive browser opens automatically, which helps you quickly select the *tgz-*, *zip* etc. files on your hard disk (Figure 2).

If you want to know more about the inner life of a compressed file, all you need to do is click on it in the archive browser. Alternatively, select *File/Open* in the menu bar and troll through the old familiar KDE selection box until you reach the right file. Depending on the size of the archive, *karchiver* presents you, sooner or maybe a bit later, with the content of the file, including useful information such as the size, date and permissions of the individual files (Figure 3).

Once invited into the *karchiver*, it's entirely up to you to choose what you want to do with the archive. You can find the various options all neatly listed under the menu item *Archive*.

Let's assume the file is to be unpacked. Simply select *Archive/unpack to*, and you can immediately

define, in a window as in Figure 4, where all the files, or only the files you are looking for, are to be unpacked. As soon as you have decided, click on the bold *Unpack* button, and off it goes.

karchiver would not be a proper KDE program if it didn't offer even simpler methods. As is so often the case, these are revealed by the drag and drop ability of KDE applications. To create a new archive, select *File/New* or click on the page icon in the menu bar. Then simply drag the files or directories of your choice out of a Konqueror window into this empty archive. If you wish to add data to an existing archive, drag it in exactly the same way into the open archive.

Options

karchiver also proves to be flexible with respect to **compression levels** and lets you define, with the aid of the menu item *Configuration/Settings*, how thorough the programs implemented, *gzip* and *bzip2*, should be in each case (Figure 5).
Under *Tar* you can specify the behaviour of the program of the same name in more detail (for example whether subdirectories are to be created or not), under *Icons* the icon size can be set, and *Packer* answers the crucial question: "Have I really installed all the pack programs?" In *directories* you define in which directory (**$HOME**, the last directory etc.) *karchiver* should unpack the archive by default.

Cutting your cloth...

All this compressing may be very nice: But even with this, disk space will run short at some point. Wouldn't it be fantastic if you could also trim bigger files so that they would fit onto completely normal diskettes? Then we could safely wipe them off the disk drive. The command line command *split* does just that.
So that you don't have to read up first on its command syntax, *karchiver* provides the *Diskette* menu item. If you want to split a file into bite-sized,

---

gzip: This tool compresses the files specified by you with the Lempel-Ziv coding (LZ77). This automatically renames the packed file as file.gz, normally retaining access rights and timestamps, but ignoring symbolic links.
bzip2: bzip2, like gzip, allows data to be compressed. Since, due to the fact that it uses a different algorithm, better compression can often be achieved, this program has been increasingly given preference recently. Files compressed with bzip2 can be recognised by the ending .bz2.
Compression level: Determines the quality and speed of compression; the lowest value, 1, produces a fast compression, but bigger files. 9 is the maximum and leads to higher/longer computing times, but smaller (better compressed) files.
$HOME: The environment variable HOME contains the location of your Home directory. The $ symbol in front allows (e.g. within a shell) access to the variable content.
Patches: Using so-called patch files, you can upgrade from one version of a program to the next. These are text files, in which there is an exact description of the places at which the individual files of the source code must be altered. The pre-requisite for patching a program is that the complete and unaltered source code of the respective previous version exists. The advantage of patch files: They are relatively small and so save you the sometimes very large and thus expensive download of a new program version, in which maybe only one file has changed.

---

or rather diskette-sized, morsels, select *Diskette/Split*. Now simply specify, in the selection box that appears, the file to be split, and *karchiver* automatically parcels it out into morsels 1.4MB in size and any remainder respectively. You can then calmly shovel each of these pieces, which are given the suffixes *.01*, *.02* etc., onto a diskette. If you want to piece the data back together, choose *Diskette/Combine* instead.

Pure magic

The various wizards are a completely new feature of the latest *karchiver* release, with which *karchiver* takes you by the virtual hand and helps you to deal with your archives.

For example, if the selected file contains the data necessary to **patch** a source code directory, simply let the appropriate wizard guide you step by step. Another task that can be dealt with by the wizard is that of completely installing a source text archive (meaning: unpacking everything and then applying the Linux installation rule of three –

configure, *make* and *make install*). And if you want to convert an archive into a different format, this is where to come.

First, select the archive file you want to edit, and then click on the menu item *Archive/Start wizard*. A window appears, as in Figure 6, in which you can select which *karchiver* (or rather wizard) should organise next with the corresponding file.

As an example, let's convert a file into a different format. To do this, we click on the item *Convert archive format*. Now we need to activate the *Next* button to continue. In the window from Figure 7 we can now select which format our file should have from now on. How about a *.zip* archive for the ex-Windows users among us? After that, you have the option of giving the baby a new name. If you want to leave it with the old name, you need do nothing at all. To finish off, *karchiver* asks you if you want to delete the original archive (Figure 8). Decide for yourself. You should now find a file with the same basic name, but in the format and with the ending *.zip* on your hard drive.   ∎

**[left]
Figure 6:
Which wizard
should it be?**

**[right]
Figure 7:
Being well
zipped is half
the battle**

K-tools

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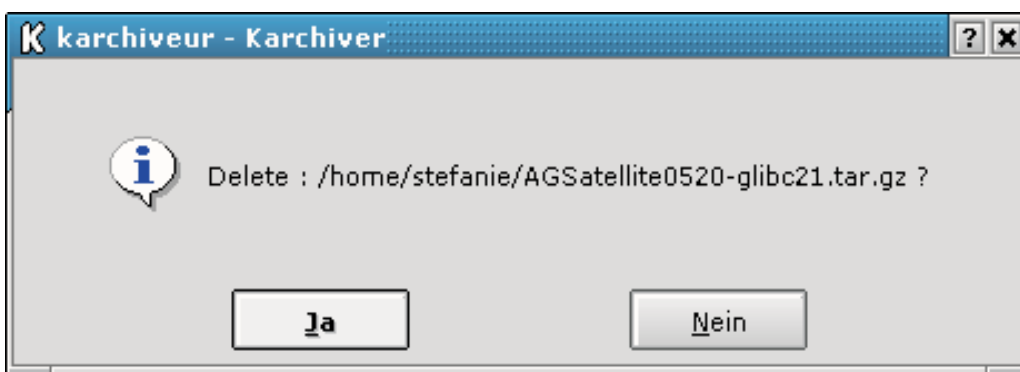

**Figure 8:
Rather not delete it?**