KOffice Workshop: Part 2

PRACTICAL EXERCISES WITH K. IN THE OFFICE

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While the last part of our KOffice Workshop concentrated on the simpler text functions of the KWord components, this we'll be turning our attention to the more complex layout functions. Using the example of The Penguin Echo, we will delve more deeply into the handling of frames, which until now have been rather neglected.

In order to make the material a bit less dry and dusty for you, this time we will also explain the ways KWord works and functions by a little example that you can participate in. Following this, the front page of the newspaper, The Penguin Echo, will be produced. This page 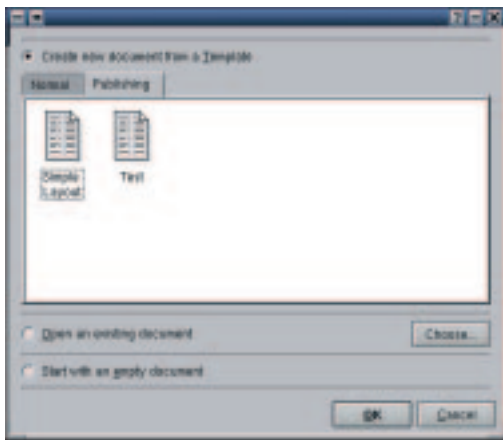will be given a big headline, two columns of body text and a little eye-catching graphic. Before the Workshop starts round two though, we would like to expressly remind you that KWord is still in development and therefore crashes (especially when using the layout and frame functions below) are not all that rare. You should therefore back up your documents at regular intervals and in general not entrust any important data to KWord (cf. the first part of our Workshop).

Like The Penguin Echo

In KWord, all elements such as graphics, formulas, tables and even text are each filed in their own, appropriate, frame. This somewhat unusual method, which is unlike other word processing programs, is highly advantageous whenever you want to create a more complex document such as a club newsletter. With ordinary word processing programs, you may for example be faced with a problem, if you want to insert a text box into your document later on. You can find lots of examples of these additional boxes in

Workshop summary

1. *Word processing with KWord - Part 1: A business letter*
2. **Word processing with KWord - Part 2:** *A newspaper*
3. *Tables and diagrams with KSpread and KChart*
4. *Graphics and images with KIllustrator*
5. *Presentations with KPresenter*

[left]
Figure 1: Selecting the right template for our newspaper

[middle]
Figure 2: KWord after starting the selected template

[right]
Figure 3: Reduce the left frame to about this height

Linux Magazine. If you want to compare the working methods of KWord with those of an ordinary word processing program, you should, as a test, try to copy the box associated with this article, 'All that's left'. Under KWord, all you need to do for this is create a new text frame using *Tools/Create text frame*, drag this to the desired position and the right size and finally just enter the desired text. Unlike other word processing programs, under KWord the formatting and editing options available for this are not restricted. So all the functions addressed in the sample letter in the last installment (see Linux Magazine Issue 8) can be applied to any text in a frame. Even if KWord did cleverly conceal its working method in the first part of the Workshop, even there, the text was entered into a text frame.
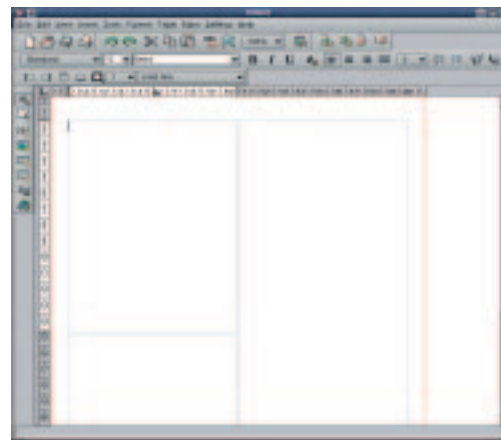
It is precisely when producing a newspaper or newsletter that it can be an advantage, instead of beginning with a single, large frame, to start with several smaller text frames arranged in columns. By providing suitable templates, here again KWord offers an ideal starting point.

In order to be able to understand the Workshop, after starting KWord you should create such a multi-column document via *File/New*. To do this, on the *Publishing* list, select the template *Simple Layout*. As you can now see, KWord has created a new document with three text frames, whose arrangement already somewhat resembles the typical layout of a newspaper.

Mode confusion

As already mentioned in the last part, KWord works with two different input modes. In the so-called 'text editing mode' you can enter your text in the corresponding frame, while on the other hand the 'frame editing mode' allows you to modify the layout of the document and thus to adapt the size and position of any frames.

After starting, KWord goes by default into text editing mode, as can be seen from the switched-on top symbol in the toolbar on the left-hand side. If on the other hand the second symbol from the top is highlighted, this means the frame-editing mode is active. Since in our first step we want to insert the title 'The Penguin Echo', you should change, using *Tools/Edit frame* into the mode of the same name. Alternatively, a click on the aforementioned symbol in the toolbar will achieve the same thing.
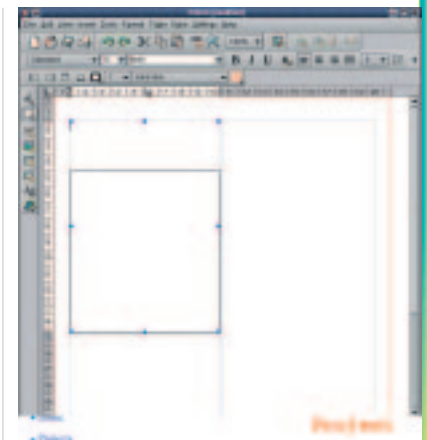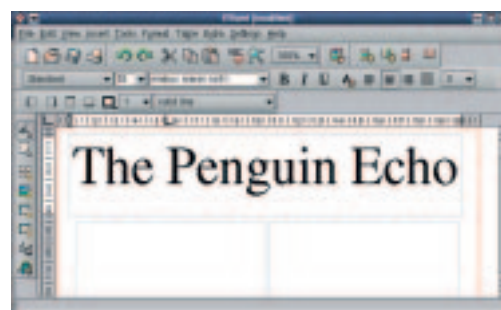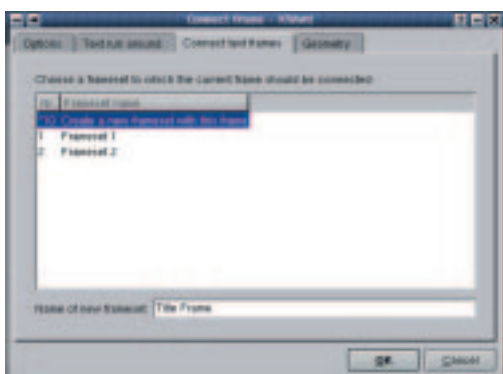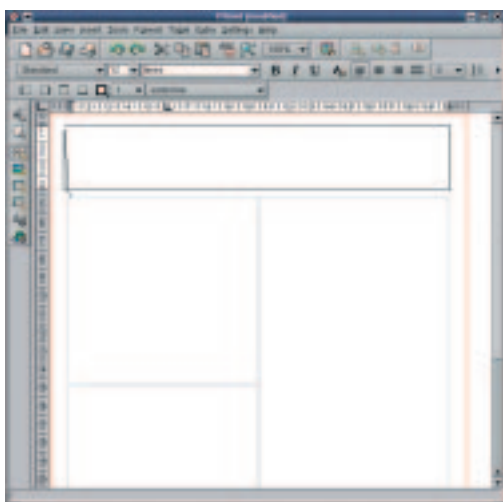
Figure 4: The frame drawn up for our title

[left]
Figure 5: Every newly created frame must be given a designation

[right]
Figure 6: The finished title

Figure 7: An example of the linking of two frames: The text in the frame on the upper left is now automatically continued in the lower frame
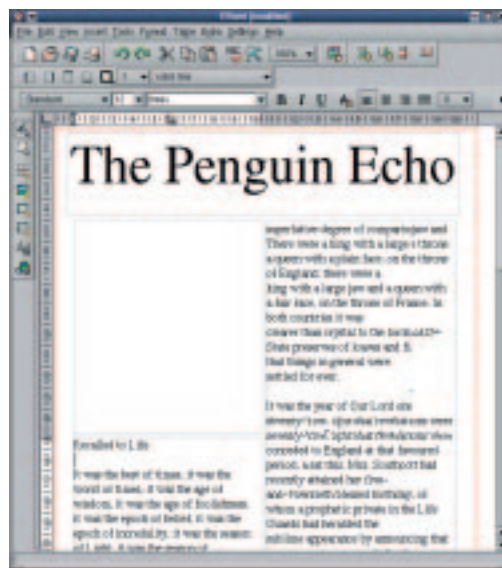
Shunting depot

The three text frames set up by the template already occupy the whole page, so at first there is not a spare inch of space left for our title. To make a bit of room, click on the top left frame with the mouse. This should now be highlighted, as can be seen from the eight little boxes round its edges. Now position the mouse cursor on the little box in the middle of the top edge. It is important that the mouse cursor takes on the form of a double arrow and not that of a cross, as otherwise you would shift the whole frame with the following procedure. Now press the left mouse button and hold it down. Move the mouse downwards, which will automatically reduce the size of the text frame. As you will note, when moved, the frame border always snaps into the position specified by KWord.

Reduce the text frame until there is plenty of room above it for a header (roughly until the value 4.5 is reached on the left ruler). Repeat this process with the right, long box, so that its upper edge is at roughly the same height as that of the left box.

In the frame

The next step is to create a new text frame for our header. To do this, select from the menu the item *Tools/Create Text Frame*, or click on the corresponding symbol in the toolbar. Now place the mouse cursor, which has in the meantime turned into cross hairs, in the top left-hand corner of the page. But when doing so, keep a bit of distance from the actual edge of the page. Then hold down the left mouse button and drag up a frame, as in Figure 4.

As soon as you release the mouse button, a settings window opens. Each frame in your document is assigned a name, which the user can choose at will. Think of a suitable designation for our example such as 'Title frame' and enter it in the lower input box provided for this purpose. This name will be needed again later on in our Workshop series. Leave all the other settings on the individual listings of the window in the default setting and click *OK*.

Change back to the frame editing mode and adjust the size of your frame in the now familiar way. If you do not like the frame, you can remove it again at any time, when it is selected, using*Edit/Delete Frame*. Now switch to text input mode and click on the frame just created. In the active box, enter the title 'The Penguin Echo'. Mark this text (for the exact method, see Workshop Part 1), increase its font size and then centre it. To achieve this latter step, you can either use the corresponding symbol from the symbol bar or go to the menu *Format/Paragraph* and there on the *Flows* listing, select *Centre*. The font size should be set such that the text roughly fills the entire text frame.

Connecting

Once our title is in place, the rest of the frames should also be filled with content. As you have

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All that's left

In addition to the functions mentioned in the article KWord also offers a few more design options. Here by way of example is a brief description of how to create headers and footers and the implementation of styles.

To create a header or footer, select the menu item View/Header or View/Footer. KWord then creates, on the top or bottom edge of the page respectively, an additional text frame in which you can enter your header or footer text.

So-called 'styles' are formatting templates that also exist in a similar form in other word processing programs. If your document contains repetitive, time-consuming formatting, you can save this as a style. To adapt the text you enter later to the desired layout, all you need do is activate the corresponding style. KWord comes equipped with a few styles of its own for various purposes. You can activate a style by selecting the desired template from the list in the associated symbol bar at the far left. To make a new style template for yourself you must call up the menu item Extra/Stylist and then click on Add in the newly opened window. There, using the corresponding buttons, you can set all the text attributes which your style template is to include and click on OK. These should immediately be available for selection in the list mentioned above in the symbol bar.
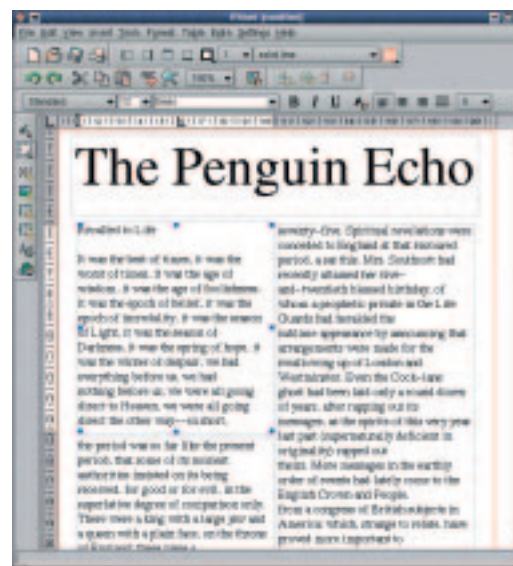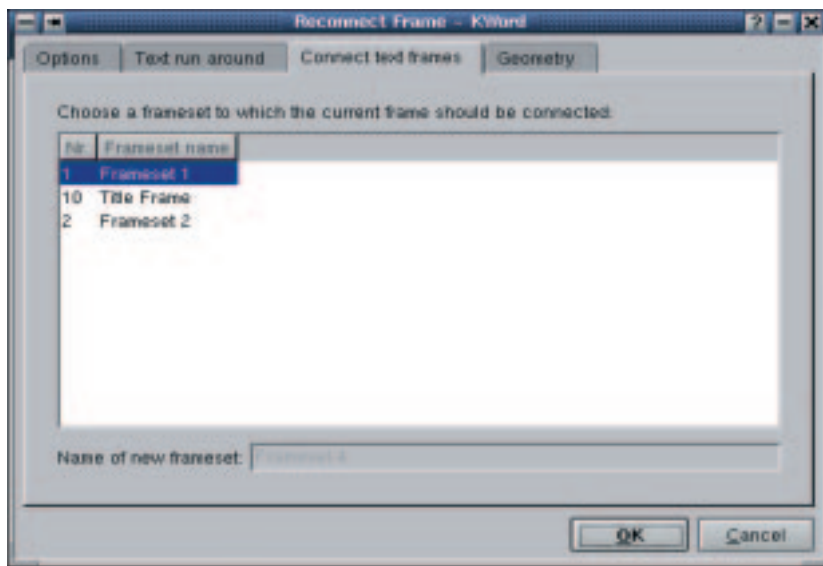
already seen with the title, you can select a text frame by simply clicking on it. Now try to enter a little text in each of the three text frames already made. You will not be able to do this in the long text frame on the right, because this has been linked by KWord with the bottom left text frame. This means that the text, if it is too long for the left lower frame, is automatically continued in the long, right-hand frame.

Next, as an example, the left upper frame will be linked to the left lower frame. To do this, change to the frame-editing mode and mark the left upper frame by clicking on it with the mouse. Then select *Edit/Reconnect Frame* from the menu. In the window that pops up, you can change a few settings relating to the behaviour of the inter-linked text frames. For our example, accept all the defaults and change to the listing *Connect Text Frames*. Here you will see a list of all the text frames included in your document. The frame you have clicked on is highlighted in colour in this list. By the way, you will also find the exact names you entered when creating the text frames here. These designations now make it easier to identify the link candidates concerned. The three pre-set frames from our newspaper example were created from the template and thus bear the standard names pre-set by KWord. Select the list *Frameset 2* and click *OK*. The two frames should now be linked together in the same way as the left lower one and the right, long one previously (cf. Figure 9).

Bulleting

The content of our newspaper is intended to appear in the left upper
    box already set by KWord in the form of a small bullet list. To do this, select the menu *Format/Paragraph* and (on the listing *Numbering*) the item *Arabic Numbers*.

In the lower part, under *Start at (1,2,...)* enter the figure '1', as the result of which the first bullet point will start with the number 1 instead of 0. Click on *OK* and enter a few fictional items of content in the text box, which are intended to appear in The Penguin Echo. Whenever you press the Enter key while doing so, KWord automatically creates a new bullet point. If you have entered all the points, call up *Format/Paragraph* again and select, in the listing *Numbering*, the item *No numbering*. You can make a list considerably faster (but with fewer setting options) via the corresponding symbol from the symbol bar. Click on this once, and a list is created automatically. You can leave the bullet mode thus activated just as quickly by simply clicking again on the symbol.

Eye catcher

All we need now is a little graphic, placed exactly in the centre of the page to round off the overall impression of our newspaper. Give in to temptation and, in text input mode, insert a graphic via the
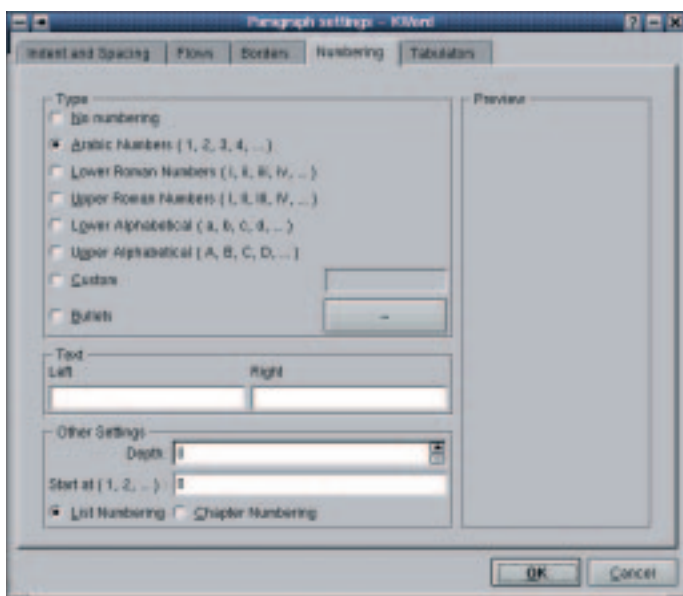
[left]
Figure 8: Two frames are linked together

[right]
Figure 9: After the frames have been linked as described in the article, the text is continued in the respective following frame


Points of view

Every application from KOffice is able to show different views of a document at the same time. To do this, the corresponding application must be running without the KOffice desktop. If so, select the menu View/New view. This opens a new application window with the same content. Via View/Split View you can now divide this window into two further windows. This makes it possible to view two different parts of the same document at the same time and thus omitting all that fiddly scrolling. In the View menu, there are, by the way, a few other sub items with which you can control these views.
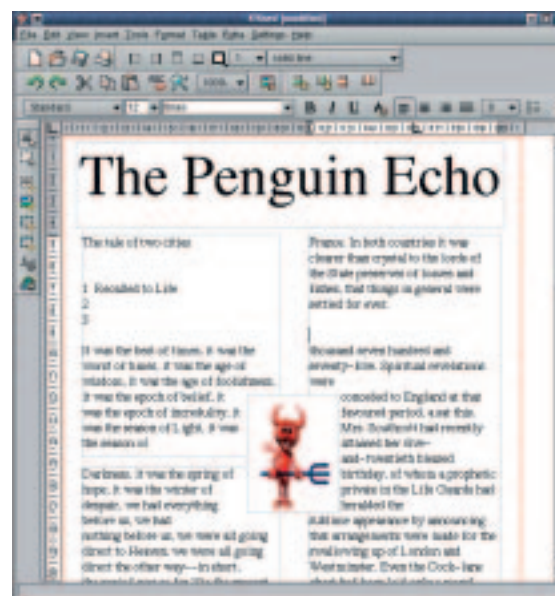
menu item *Insert/Picture* in your text. Any graphic inserted in this way will be treated like a normal symbol in the text. This mainly means that you will find it difficult or even impossible to alter the position and the size of this graphic. Instead, create a graphics frame via the toolbar (fourth symbol from the top). Alternatively, the menu command *Tools/Create Picture Frame* also leads to the corresponding dialog window. After selecting the image file to be imported, the mouse cursor, as it did when the text frame was created, turns into cross hairs. Now click on the place in your document where you'd like the graphic inserted. As soon as KWord has placed the image in this position, you will notice that the object cannot be changed, either in size or position. KWord seems to be holding tight to this graphic. This behaviour is attributable to the still-active text-editing mode. To get back to frame-editing mode, click in the toolbar on the second symbol from the top or select *Tools/Edit Frames* from the menu. Now you can click on the graphics frame just created and modify its size and position.

To change the size of the marked object, position the mouse cursor, exactly as with the text frame, on one of the little boxes, until it turns into an arrow with two points. Hold down the left mouse button and then drag the object to the requisite size. The graphic can be moved to a different position in a similar way: Place the mouse cursor on the object until it turns into a double arrow. Now, keeping the left mouse button pressed, you can bring the image to its new position.

Should the graphics overlap other text frames, KWord can allow the text contained therein to flow around the graphics object. You can activate this by pressing the right mouse button over the text frame in which the object concerned is located. In the context menu which appears, select *Properties* and then the listing *Text Run Around*. Here you can set how the text flows round the object.

With this sample newspaper, so too ends the presentation of the word processor KWord. As you have seen, the frame-based approach, which certainly takes some getting used to at first, is a good starting point for creating really complex documents in a relatively simple way.

Next time we will be taking a look at the no less interesting spreadsheet, KSpread, whose range of functions is already a match for many professional programs. ∎

The author

Tim Schürmann is a student of IT at the University of Dortmund and wonders why the Linux penguin does not have feathers, but a highly-polished exterior?

Info

KDE homepage:
http://www.kde.org/
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Workshop Part 1 in Linux
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Creating your own templates in KWord

Creating your own template in KWord by means of the corresponding assistants is almost child's play. First make a KWord document in the usual way, containing precisely the content with which the template is later to be created. To do this you can use all the tools and functions available in KWord. Then select from the menu the item Extra/Create Template From Document. In the window now shown, give your template a name in the corresponding box. In the list below this you will find all the groups to which you can assign your template. When selecting the templates, the overriding group corresponds exactly to a listing on which later the individual, subordinate templates will be offered for selection. Via Add group you can create a new listing. If you have decided on a group, simply click OK. From now on, when creating a new document you will also be able to select your own template.