K-splitter

# SMOOTH OPERATOR

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**Who says there is no place for gossip and scandal in a Linux magazine? K-splitter broadcasts news from the K-World and noses around here and there behind the scenes.**

## A whole new typeface

Fonts and Linux – never a marriage made in heaven. With the new XFree86 version though, that could change, because with this properly installed you can finally get true **anti-aliasing** under KDE, too.

There are a few conditions, though: XFree86 in a version greater than or equal to 4.02, and also the package *Freetype2* must both be present on your computer. Unfortunately, that's not all, because the Xfree driver for your video card must support the *Rendering Extension*. You can winkle out of your system to what extent your driver does so with a

```
stefanie@diabolo[~]> xdpyinfo | grep RENDER
```

If, after entering this line you are not confronted with a shining *RENDER*, for the time being you will not see any smooth fonts under KDE.

Finally, make sure that */usr/X11R6/lib/lib Xft.so.1.0* links to Freetype. This is easy to check with an *ldd libXft.so.1.0*. If the output does not include anything from the Freetype library, you have unfortunately picked up an Xfree package which does not include *Xft* ("*X FreeType*"-) support. But fear not, because this support is at least included in the more recent Mandrake and SuSE packages.

Now all you need is *qt* in Version *2.3.0* with Xft support compiled in to complete your anti-aliasing. If you cannot find this, you can also compile this library yourself from the sources. You will find these on the FTP server of the Troll at *ftp://ftp.trolltech. com/qt/source/*. But please don't forget to add on an *-xft* to the *.configure* command.

Everything present on your computer so far? Then all that stands between you and the new font miracle is a few changes in diverse configuration files. One more little tip before you get cracking: Please do not delete any entries or files whatsoever,

but merely decomment entries and rename old files. If there are problems with the new configuration, you will then have the option of setting your computer back to its original condition in seconds.

The first thing to do is to get rid of all font servers which may be running on your system. To do this, decomment everything in your *XF86Config* file in *FontPath* which bears any similarity to a *unix/:7100*. Because you are so conveniently doing some decommenting, please place another # at the start of the lines */usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/truetype* and */usr/X11R6/X11/fonts/Type1*, if they exist. Insert the following in the section *Modules*:

```
Load "type1"
Load "freetype"
```

If you have bad luck – as I did with my Red Hat 7.0 – in the font path there will now be the font server we have just decommented and absolutely nothing else. In this case you will have to enter the paths to your font directories by hand. This should look something like this:

```
Section "Files"
  RgbPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/rgb"
  # FontPath "unix/:7100"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/100dpi:↵
unscaled"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/75dpi:u↵
nscaled"
  # FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/truetype"
  # FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/Type1"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/100dpi"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/75dpi"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/misc"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/local"
  FontPath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/misc:un↵
scaled"
  Fontpath "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/Speedo"
  ModulePath "/usr/X11R6/lib/modules"
EndSection
```

*anti-aliasing: Aliasing means the staircase effect at the edges of graphics, especially of text or lines, caused by the fact that with pixels it is really only possible to show straight lines exactly if they are vertical or horizontal. The countermeasure – the insertion of shading pixels into the stairs – is called anti-aliasing.*
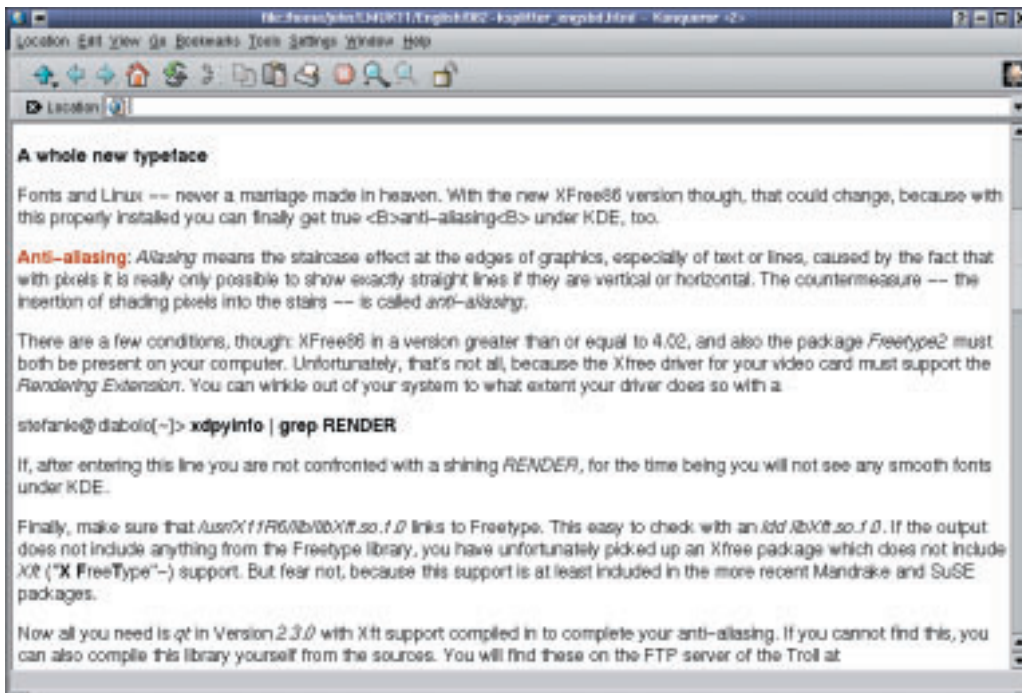
**Figure 1: No more edges or corners**

In */usr/X11R6/lib/X11/XftConfig* you must now enter the two font paths which you have just decommented in the Xfree configuration file – even if in a somewhat different form, as follows:

```
dir "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/Type1"
dir "/usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/truetype"
```

If you don't yet possess any TrueType fonts, the time has now come to get your hands on some. A neat package can be found at *http://keithp.com/~keithp/fonts/truetype.tar.gz*, which you should simply unpack into the directory */usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts*. Now all you need to do is set the variable *export QT_XFT=true* in a file such as the */etc/profile* or the */etc/profile.local*. That's it.

For owners of a SuSE 7.1 the following method has been tried and proven: Install the packages *qt-experimental* and *ttmkfdir* if these are not already on your computer. Then copy all the TrueType fonts which you would like to use later into */usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/truetype*. Anyone who has not to date monkeyed around with */etc/X11/XF86Config* and */usr/X11R6/lib/X11/XftConfig* is as good as finished, because then these are correctly configured. Nevertheless, make sure as a precaution that *XftConfig* contains both of the *dir* lines mentioned above and the path to the font server is decommented in the */etc/XF86Config*. After that, change to the directory */usr/X11R6/lib/X11/fonts/truetype*, and there enter the following:

```
# ttmkfdir -o fonts.dir
# SuSEconfig -module fonts
```

Now anchor the entry *export QT_XFT=true* in the file */etc/profile.local*, and next time you start KDE

everything will be smoothed out, as you can see in Figure 1.

## Thematic

Beautifying your KDE 2.1 desktop with your own themes should soon no longer be a problem, because at *http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/* a new online tutorial explains to design-mad hobbyists what KDE themes are all about. The tutorial is free to use, although a brief registration is necessary. For those who would rather enjoy the tutorial at leisure offline: No problem, there is also a download version.                                  ∎

**Figure 2: Construction of themes made easy**