

# K-tools MUSICAL HANDICRAFTS

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We present tools that have proven to be especially useful when working under KDE, or are just some of the nicer things in life you wouldn't want to do without.

MP3s are all very nice, but anyone who has not yet treated themselves to the luxury of a portable MP3 player, will not get much joy out of the new summer hits on their home hard drive, while they're working on a tan at the beach. So what could be more obvious than moving the musical gems onto an audio CD?

In the last Linux Magazine we offered you *KonCD*, a powerful burn program for KDE. But if all you really want to do is quickly capture a few pieces of music on CD, *k3b* would serve you well. This quickly and simply burns audio CDs consisting of *wav* or *mp3* files. The newest version of this turboburner can be downloaded at any time from the homepage of the author at <http://k3b.sourceforge.net/>.

After installation (which you deal with as usual with the Linux three-step, *./configure, make, make install*), start the program either by a click on the start menu, *Applications/K3b* or by entering a *k3b* & in a **terminal emulation** of your choice. You will then be

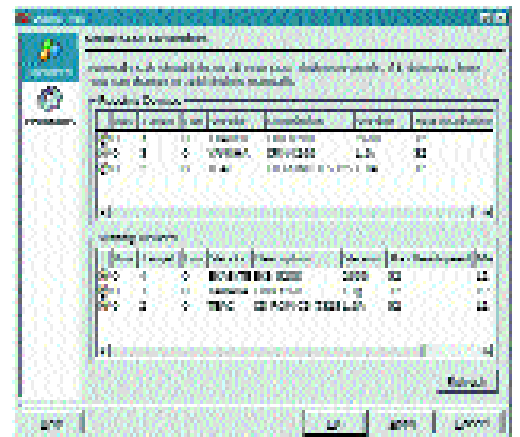


Figure 2: All aboard?

confronted by a window, as shown in Figure 1.

*k3b* shows you a nice clear overview of your directories in two windows. In fact, you could begin burning at this point, but first you should check whether all devices and programs which *k3b* uses have been correctly identified. Normally the program does this for you, but it's better to be safe than sorry if you want a properly burnt CD.

For your inspection visit, open *Settings/Configure K3b*, and take a look in the window which will then appear (Figure 2) to see if everything is all right. If not, quickly change the settings, before setting off.

## Off we go

In order to finally get down to business – after all, the beach and the portable CD player are beckoning – click in the menu bar on *File/New Project/New Audio Project* and simply use drag and drop to move the MP3 files which are to go onto the CDs, from the directories on the left into the right-hand window (Figure 3).

If you want to change the name of the file, right-click on the MP3 file and in the pop-up menu, select *Properties*. In the pop-up window which appears, you can then make your changes. If you have changed your mind, and the track is not to go on the CD, correct this mistake by a click on *remove*

**MP3:** MP3 or MPEG 1 Layer 3 is the best compression algorithm for sound data. Using this method, sample data can be compressed by a factor of up to 12, without any loss of quality.

**Terminal emulation:** The main objective of a terminal emulation is to serve as a sort of substitute for virtual terminals, under a graphical user interface, between which you can happily skip back and forth under Linux by pressing *Alt* and *Fx*. This console substitute allows you to use programs under X, which are really intended for the command line.

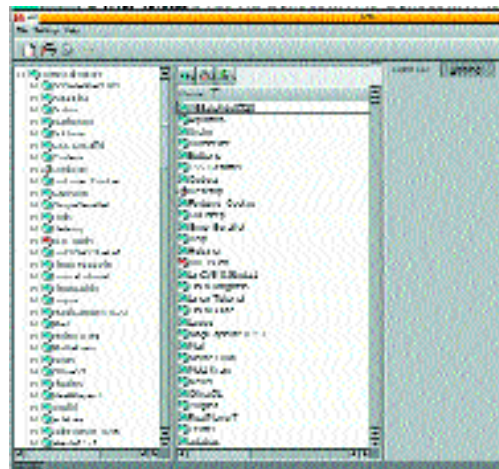


Figure 1: Split in two

in the pop-up menu at once.

As soon as you have compiled the data for the audio CD to your liking, click to start the burning process, on the CD icon in the menu bar or select *File/Burn*. *k3b* opens a window (Figure 5), in which you can specify details on the speed of your burner or if the burn process should be simulated first. If everything matches your settings, do a kick-start with a click on *Write* and then calmly observe the progress of your burn project (Figure 6).

## Undercover

Once you have yourself a nice new audio CD, it would be a crime not to put it into a cover of its own. There are programs such as *Kover* (Figure 7) or *KCDLabel* (Figure 8) which take care of this, and you can find their latest versions on the cover CD.

Start *Kover* via the start menu, *Multimedia/Kover* or alternatively *KCDLabel* via the start menu, *Applications/KCDLabel*. True to the WYSIWYG motto *What you see is what you get*, here you can enter titles and contents, select text colour, size or font and if required, also include photos. You can keep an eye on the result of your masterly artistic achievement, large or small, at all times in the preview window.

*Kover*'s strength is that it spits out your lovingly designed cover when it prints it out, neatly provided with fold lines. Also, the newest version even comes with an implemented **CDDB** autofilling function – for both the CDDB database on the Web and for your local title database on the hard drive.

*KCDLabel* on the other hand offers one or two additional graphical design options. Whether ring-shaped text or the CD title in the form of a rainbow. In the menu bar, open *Character string/Insert curved line*, and start typing. Even round CD labels are no problem for this program, thanks to *File/Print Round Label*.

## My home ...

... is my happiness. If this saying applies to you, you will not be moving away from your computer and so won't be needing any audio CDs. To finish off, we have a program (or rather, a front-end) for you, with which you can comfortably tootle away your MP3s on the computer.

Exactly the same as *xmms-kde*, which we presented to you in the K-splitter column in Linux Magazine issue 10, *kmms* is an *xmms* applet for the control panel, with which you can control the easy-to-use MP3 player at all times via the panel, without having to switch to the desktop.

Start it after installation – simply right-click on the KDE panel and select *Add/Miniprogram/Kmms*, and delight in an applet as in Figure 9. For anyone who has already installed *xmms-kde*, the functionality of the two applets is the same in principle. Try them both out to decide which one suits you best.

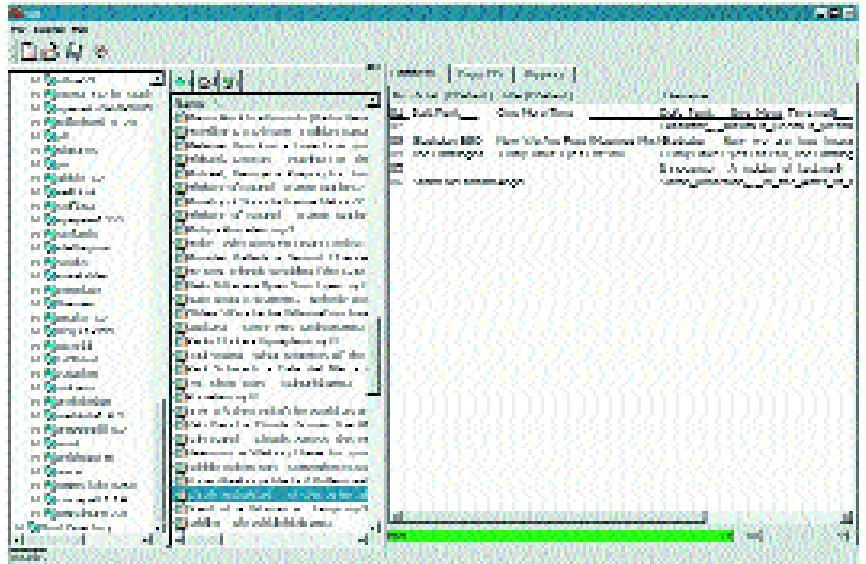


Figure 3: Decide what to burn in seconds using drag and drop

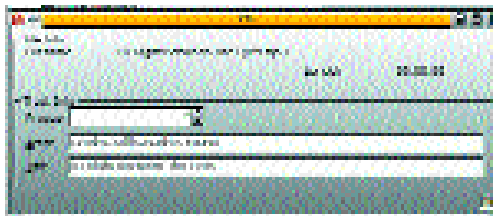


Figure 4: If anything else needs changing...

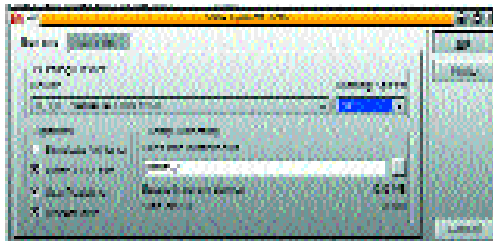


Figure 5: It's the speed that counts

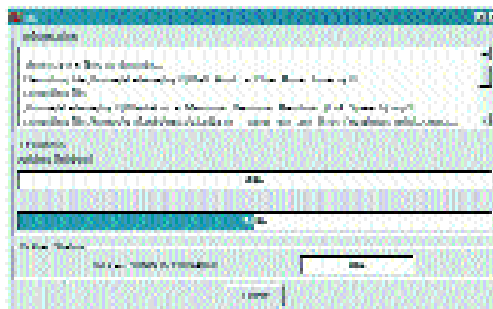


Figure 6: Progressive

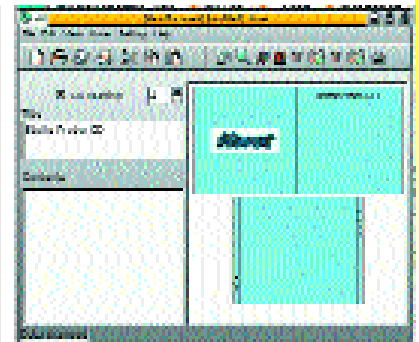


Figure 7: Kover even comes with CDDB support

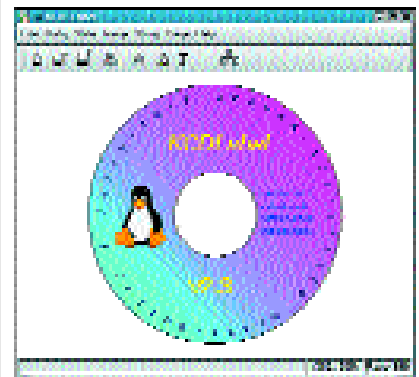


Figure 8: A CD label ready to print

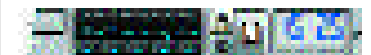


Figure 9: An applet rarely comes alone

**CDDB:** Compact Disk DataBase is a CD title database on the Internet. This database contains all information on any audio CD which has ever come onto the market. CDDBs are either held locally or are fetched from the Internet. In the case of an audio player, which supports the CDDB format, as soon as the CD is inserted it checks whether the CD is already known. If not, the CD player tries to connect to the Internet and to find the data there on a CDDB server. CDDB programs access the TOC (Table of Contents) of a CD, which every CD includes.