

# K-tools

# I WATCH THE

# GOGGLEBOX

STEFANIE TEUFEL

**Watching television or recording a little video of your favourite programme made easy: kWinTV offers total TV – and all with the familiar KDE look & feel.**

## K-tools

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

Programming, writing letters or answering emails, without letting go of the mouse to grab the TV remote control – no problem for those with a TV card to call their own. All it takes is a click with the mouse or a tap on the arrow keys, and you can change the station if you're fed up with the programme. It's also nice to know that Linux will now no longer thwart you in your plans, so that in a normal case, even with old hardware, you can easily get your virtual goggle box going. With *kWinTV*, we are presenting you with a piece of software with which watching television is made even simpler. Very few distributions actually install this program as standard, but nevertheless there is an *rpm* package on most distribution CDs. If this does not apply to your distribution, you will find the necessary files at <http://www.mathematik.uni-kl.de/~wenk/kwintv/download.html>. Start *kWinTV* either via the *K* menu */Multimedia/kwintv* or in a terminal emulation with *kwintv &*. If you hear a hissing noise, and see an image as in Figure 1, you're almost there. *kWinTV* now just needs to find the right transmitter, so that you can watch telly till the cows come home. But if instead a blue or black window appears, unfortunately either the wrong driver has been loaded or the right one has been wrongly configured. Make the necessary changes,

as appropriate to the type of TV card you have, in the file */etc/modules.conf*. The necessary details can be found, in the case of SuSE, for example, at */usr/share/doc/packages/bttv/CARDLIST* and */usr/share/doc/packages/bttv/README.SuSE.en* or for Red Hat at */usr/src/linux-2.4.3/Documentation/video4linux/bttv/CARDLIST*. Please remember, after making the change, to call up the command *depmod -a* and then reload the *bttv* module with the *modprobe* command.

Figure 1: The television images are still there



## Channelling

But now, back to *kWinTV*. In order to tune the program the right TV channels, the author *Moritz Wenk* has developed a *Stationscan* for you. Go to the menu list and select the item *Program / Wizard*. You will then be met by a screen as in Figure 2.

First of all click on the *Next* button in order to get started. There is nothing for you to do in this screen, since the television standard is already set to *PAL* and thus the normal one for the United Kingdom, so simply click again on *Next*. The following mask is a bit more exciting. This is where you decide whether all available frequencies should be sought for TV stations, or whether the Wizard should limit itself to certain frequencies. The author has made the default a scan of all frequencies. You can easily change this by deselecting the box *Scan whole frequency band* and specifying, in the pulldown menu below that, *Europe West* as region. The result in our latitudes is the same, except that the latter setting has the delightful advantage of being much faster. Click once again on the *Next* button and in the screen which then appears, click on the *Start* button, which will start the hunt for the television stations available to you. *kWinTV* will constantly keep you informed about progress and its findings (Figure 3). Finished scanning? With a final click on *Next* you will find yourself back in a screen as Figure

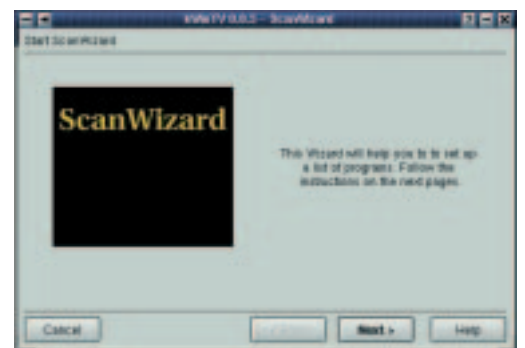


Figure 2: The ScanWizard says Hello

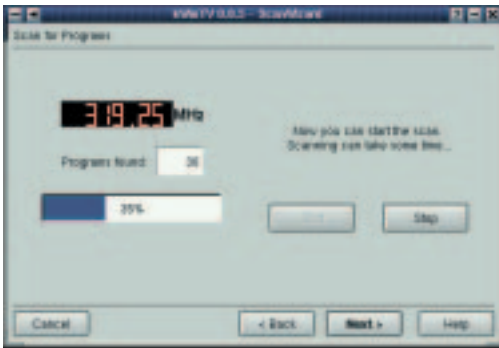


Figure 3: Progressive

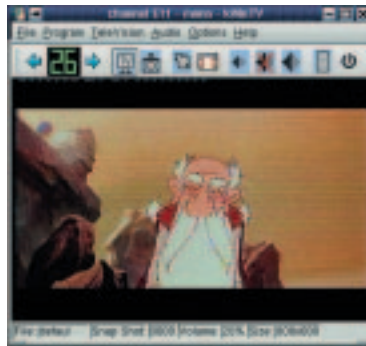


Figure 5: Moving pictures at last



Figure 6: kWinTV in full screen mode

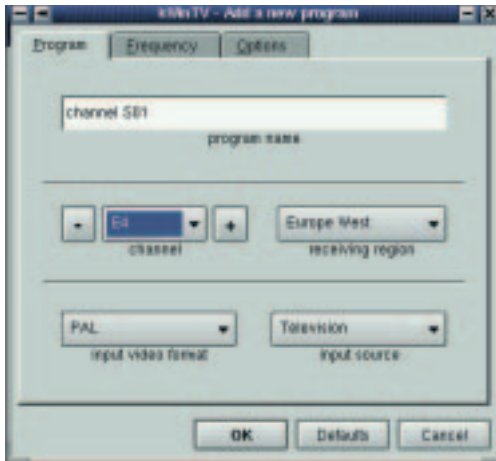


Figure 4: If the automatic scan can't hack it, a bit of manual labour is required

4, in which kWinTV proudly informs you that you are now through with this procedure. Finally, select the *Finish* button. That's it – kWinTV now has all it needs to allow you carefree hours of TV.

If, against all expectations, the automatic channel search does not work, you have the alternative option of setting the desired channel manually. To do this, select *Program / New*. Here, by the way, you can also configure the video source. This is necessary when you want to use the *Composite* or *S-Video* input of your card instead of the TV tuner (Figure 4).

## Channel hopper

So. There are your channels. kWinTV thanks you with an image as in Figure 5. For anyone who finds this too small: A full screen image is also possible. You can achieve this either via the menu item *TeleVision / Full Screen* or by a click with the right mouse button on the kWinTV window. In the pop-up menu, select *TeleVision / Full Screen* from the menu. kWinTV then shows its true size (Figure 6). If you want to get back into normal mode – a right mouse click is all it takes, and you can remove the tick next to *Full Screen*. Apart from the full screen mode the program also offers you other screen sizes, which you can set via the item *TeleVision / Set Size / Desired size*.

Once configured you can switch back and forth between the TV programmes at any time either using

the [up arrow] or the [down arrow] keys. You also have the option of changing the station as well as the programme number using the arrow keys. Anyone with an infrared remote control can obviously also use this. It is configured via *Options / IR Control Setup*. kWinTV brings you the sound of a flute via the menu item *Audio and a hardware-dependent input for the mixer such as Mixer Sound Blaster...* (Figure 7). But in this case, please make sure that the input to the sound card is either *Line in* or *Microphone* and the corresponding connection must be set to loud, so that you don't just receive silent films. The sound input, by the way, is set using the menu item *Options / General Options / Mixer*. The default *Line in* usually ought to be appropriate here.



Figure 7: A good mix

But kWinTV can do other things, too. Apart from the ability to take screenshots of the TV image which is currently running, you can also record a whole video clip and save it in AVI format. A large, fast hard disk is however a prerequisite. Watch out: The algorithm for AVI recording is not so effective as those of some similar text-based tools (e.g. *bttv-grab*), so that with slow computers lots of frames get lost and the video can often display horizontal bars. If you want to shoot a screenshot, click either on the little camera icon in the menu list or the menu item *TeleVision / Snap Shot*. The desired format (*jpg* or *png*) can be set under *Options / General Options... / Snap Shot*. Plus, at this point you also have the option of defining the desired quality, size and the directory in which you want to save the snapshots. Start the video recording via *TeleVision / Video Clip*. All this should just about cover the total TV requirements of even the squarest eyed geek. ■