Venture into the Web with Konqueror

EXPLORE THEN CONQUER

A browser should be fast, easy to use and secure. Linux has a few options to offer for this – Anja M. Wagner explores KDE's Konqueror

Anyone who's used Netscape under Windows can sit back and relax, as Netscape has been running under Linux for ages. Many recent distributions, such as SuSE Linux 7.2, have Netscape up and running right from the start. You can find the Netscape browser on your desktop or via *K/SuSE/Internet/WWW*. (In other distributions Netscape hides away in a different sub-menu; in case of doubt you can start it by entering *netscape* in the terminal window.)

In this Workshop we want to introduce you to the KDE browser Konqueror. The tool may already seem familiar to you, as Konqueror is also the standard file manager of KDE.


Figure 1: The most important components of the Web browser Konqueror

Konqeuror can be started either via the icon on the desktop or the corresponding button in the panel. On a practical point for confirmed users of Internet Explorer from Microsoft: the favourites can be imported into Konqueror without any problem. The same also applies, of course, to the Netscape bookmarks.

Figure 2: Install the browser according to your own requirements
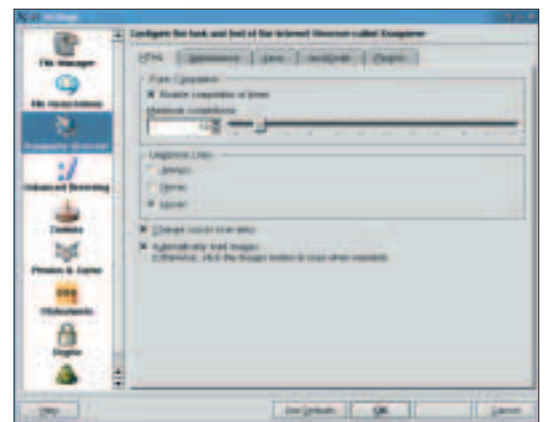
Konqueror starts via the icon on the desktop

Once connected to the Internet you can start surfing straight away: enter a Web address in the URL line and press Return. After the first pleasant surprise at the rapidity of the "conqueror", we shall devote ourselves to the configuration of the program. From the menu list, select *Settings/Configure Konqueror*. In the left column of the window which then opens, select Konqueror browser.

On the first tab, HTML, you can set whether links to a Web site should always or never be underlined. A third option "Hover" is set by default. Regardless of what you select, no difference can be detected in the display. Links are always underlined in some KDE versions, while in others they are always shown Hovering – a minor bug.

Back to basics

The options "Change cursor over links" and "Automatically load images" are also set by default. If you want the browser to load a Web site even faster, you can deselect the automatic loading of images, however the Web then becomes very drab and colourless. If you're surfing with a 28K modem, it does make sense to do without the images at first, because they are data-intensive and will therefore slow down the construction of a Web page. After selecting this option, a new button will appear on the
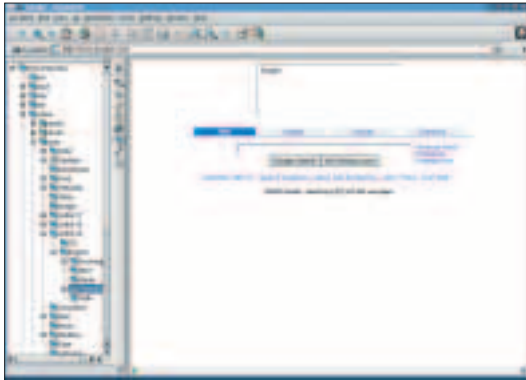
Figure 3: Images can be loaded after the text by clicking on the button on the far right of the Konqueror toolbar

Konqueror toolbar: with a click, the browser then loads the images from the current site.

If you have defined some style templates for displaying Web sites, such as Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), you can select these via "User-defined stylesheet" option. On the tab sheet *Appearance*, you can define the size and type of font. In addition to the usual font sizes from "Very small" to "Very large" you can select the minimal font size. The default is the fairly small 7. Independently of the setting defined here, you can find two buttons in the toolbar to adjust the zoom factor.

Figure 4: Zoom a Web site larger or smaller from one to the next

The Java dilemma

There's one thing of particular note on the Java tab sheet: the execution of Java applets is not usually selected. It now depends on your security requirements, whether you wish to change this. Java and JavaScript, like Microsoft's ActiveX, are executable contents, which in some circumstances can manipulate your system. For the correct display of many Web sites, you will need to use Java.

Konqueror offers a similar security strategy to Internet Explorer. Exactly as in IE, where you usually
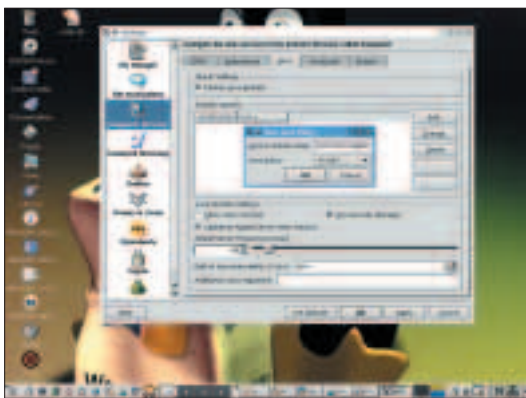

Figure 5: Java or not Java, that is the question

set the security settings to "High" and can then adjust downwards for "trustworthy sites", so as not to be constantly confronted with warning messages when surfing, in Konqueror you can usually leave the execution of Java deselected but allow it for specified sites. To do this, click Add in the Domain-specific area and enter the name of the computer or domain in the new window. Confirm with Apply/OK. The procedure can also be done in reverse, by generally activating Java and rejecting it for certain computers. The first way is safer, so don't let the amount of work put you off. For JavaScript, there are corresponding settings.
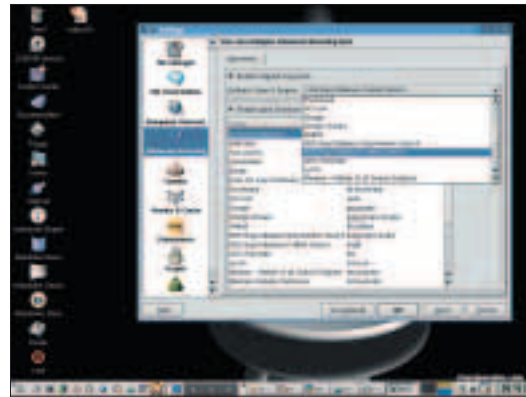
All that you're looking for

Figure 6: The shortcut to search engines and databases

On the last tab sheet, labelled Plugins, you can usually only select or deselect existing Netscape plug-ins. Now from the options in the left-hand column select Enhanced Browsing. The URL line of Konqueror not only opens the door into the Web, but also directly to your favourite search engine. In this section the keyword search is activated with Google selected as default search engine. A smart choice, which you can of course alter via the dropdown menu "Fallback search engine".

If you've selected the keyword search, you can enter a search term in the URL line of the browser. After pressing the Return key the browser connects to the default search engine and displays the search results, thus saving work steps. In the large window
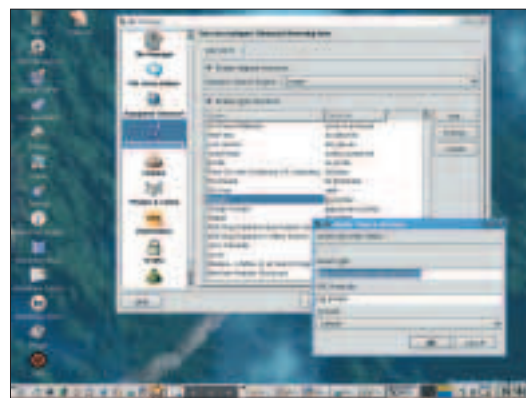

Figure 7: It's easier to remember your own abbreviations

Offers a similar security strategy to Internet Explorer

in Enhanced browsing area are your Web commands. You can reach other search engines by using these short commands. For example, if Google is your default search engine and you want to find out something from the KDE problem database using a full-text search, type in the URL line the short command *bugft:searchword* and press Return. If an abbreviation like *bugft* is too cryptic for you, click on Change and enter a different term. If you want to access one of the search services on the starting page, such as the translation database LEO, just type *leo:* in the URL line.

In the **Cookies** section you will again find something familiar. As with Internet Explorer you can always reject cookies, always accept them or demand a confirmation from the browser. Since many Web sites cannot be used without cookies, a global Reject will mean you are only able to use a small part of the Internet. Cookies are not so much a security problem as an intrusion on your privacy. If, on the other hand, you get a prompt for confirmation with every cookie, you will be unable to surf because you'll be so busy confirming. As with Java and JavaScript you can reject cookies generally and accept them from certain servers or vice versa. You should not accept servers that pass cookies on to third parties. The Management tab offers more detailed information about the cookies you receive.

Cache and carry

If you are using a proxy server, you can configure it in the Proxies & Cache domain in the left-hand column, however this section is also interesting even without

a proxy. The browser saves all the pages loaded in a buffer, known as the **cache**. If you return to a Web site you have already visited during an online session, the browser loads the site from the cache. This is quicker than re-loading the Web page from the Net. The bigger the buffer, the more pages can be saved there. The default size of 512Kb should be altered according to the resources of your system.

In the Crypto section, **SSL** v2 (Secure Socket Layer) and SSL v3 are activated by default. These settings should not be changed, unless instead of SSL you want to use its successor, TSL (Transport Layer Security). The browser can warn you if it leaves the secure SSL mode when surfing – and this, too is pre-set. It can also tell you when you change to SSL mode.

Going underground

An important section for unhindered surfing pleasure with Konqueror is the *User Agent*. Unfortunately, you will still come across some Web sites which are not correctly displayed with Konqueror. There is a trick which helps: Konqueror has to mask itself and fool the server into thinking it is Internet Explorer. Enter the "unfriendly" Web address in the line "When connecting to" and select your camouflage from the drop-down menu "Send
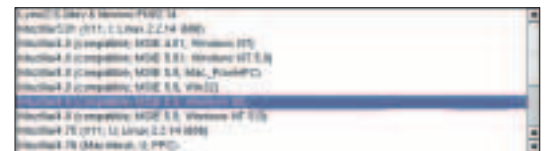
Figure 10: Sometimes Konqueror has to put on a mask

Cookies Cookies are information about the status of an HTTP connection between a client and server. The simplest form of cookies takes the form of symbols created by the server and transferred to the browser. The browser saves these symbols, together with the URL invoked. If the user again invokes the same URL, the browser checks the values in the cookie (e.g. domain and path) and if they match automatically transfers the information belonging to these values to the respective server. Its operator can thus determine which computers on which sites have accessed this Web service. Cookies received are first buffered in the main memory and saved in the cookie file at the end of the session. Cookies are of interest to Web providers for collecting information about the surfing habits of their users and potentially orienting their service to these habits.
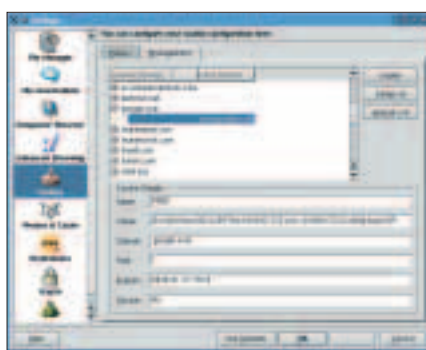
Figure 8: Precise information about a cookie received

Cache The cache is a special buffer to speed up access to data. Any information that has already been read is saved by the system in the cache. If a new read access occurs, the system first checks whether the data requested can be found in the cache. If this is the case, the data is loaded from the cache and not from the medium to which the read access is actually directed. This speeds up data access, because the cache has a substantially shorter access time. (This is the Web cache, not to be confused with the hard disk cache.)
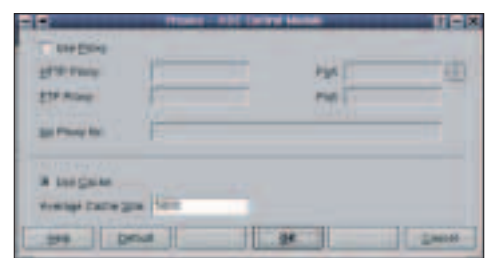
Figure 9: Installing a proxy server and cache

SSL (Secure Socket Layer) is a transfer protocol for secure transactions on the Internet. It works by using server authentication via a certificate together with data encryptions and data integrity via public and personal keys. Banks and online shops use this as a procedure acknowledged as secure.

user-agent-identification". With the selection "Mozilla/4.0 (compatible with MSIE 5.5, Windows 98)" you will more than likely be on the safe side. Click on Add and the new user-agent-identification appears in the window.

Konqueror's functionality can be extended using Netscape plug-ins. If required it can search your system for new plug-ins (via the Search tab). You can even make the browser do this every time the program starts. Behind the tab sheet Plugins is hidden an overview of the plug-ins existing in the system.

Favourite things

In the course of a surfer's life, many bookmarks mount up, which Internet Explorer calls Favourites. You can easily import your valuable collection of Favourites from IE into Konqueror. Start IE and select *File/Import/Export*. As usual, Windows starts an assistant to lead you through the process. Export the Favourites into the file "bookmarks.htm".
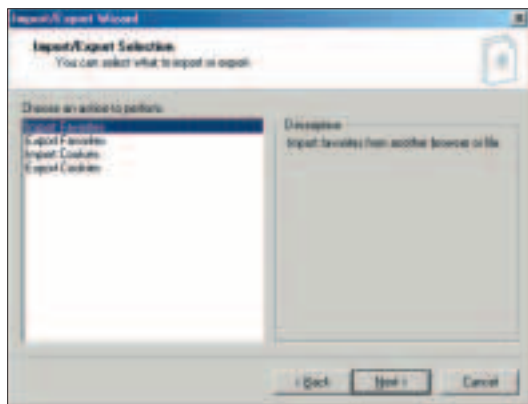

Figure 11: Take your collection of favourites along into the world of Linux

If you've installed Linux on a separate computer save your Favourites collection on a diskette or CD-R, depending on the file size. If Linux and Windows are installed on the same computer, simply access the Windows partition. Open KEditbookmarks via Konqueror's menu list: *Bookmarks/Edit bookmarks*. It's advisable to make a new folder (such as "Favourites"). Open the file manager Konqueror and use drag and drop to place the file "bookmark.htm" in this folder. You can edit this list using KEditBookmarks tool. This can be started
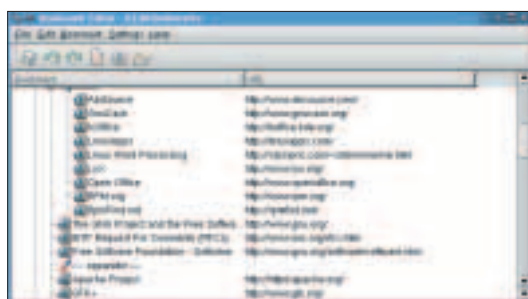

Figure 12: With KEditBookmarks you can edit your bookmarks

Figure 13: Konqueror can make a link list too

Figure 14: Even more tools in the extra list

independently of Konqueror via *K/SuSE/Internet/WWW*. In this menu it is given the common name of *Bookmark Editor*. In the editor, it is quickest to edit entries by using a right click on a directory or a bookmark.

You don't need to do without the links bar either. Make a directory called Links in the bookmark editor. Put the links you want to appear in the bookmark list into this directory. Highlight the directory with a mouse click and select *Settings/Set as toolbar folder*. Save the changes when closing the editor and finally select, *Settings/Show bookmark toolbar* from the Konqueror menu. The practical link list will then appear beneath the URL line.
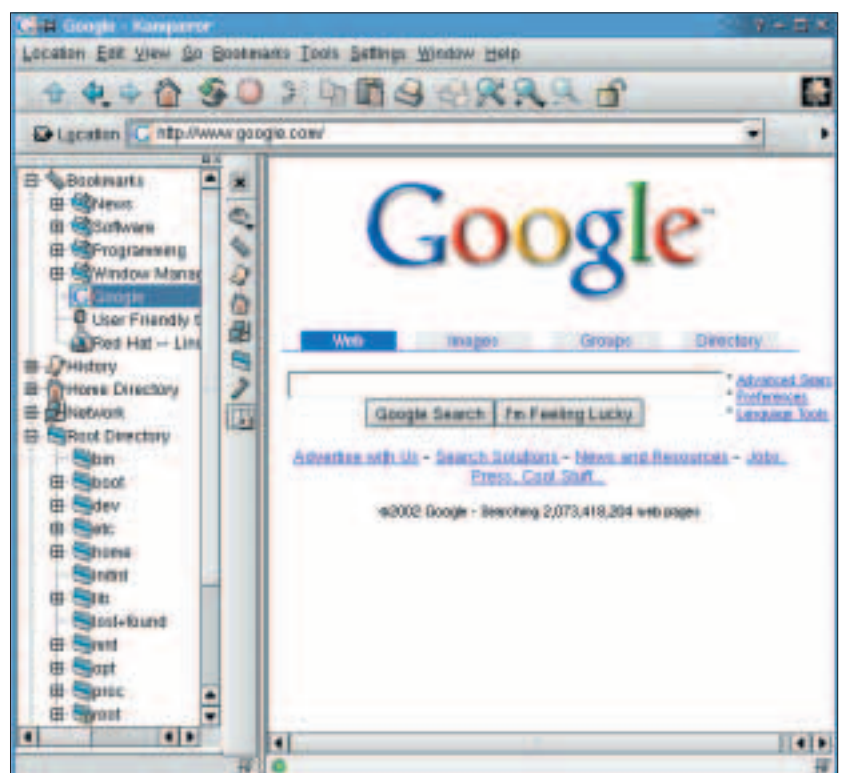

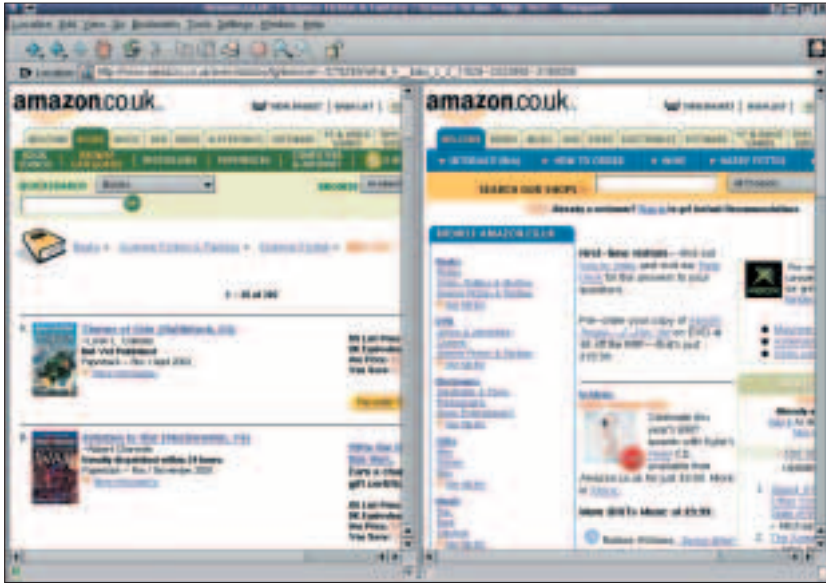**Figure 15: In the extended sidebar you can find the "History" from Internet Explorer**

Figure 16: Split view is twice as easy

Figure 17: Which buttons would you like in the toolbar?

Your history

In the Settings menu, you will find an item labelled "Show Extra toolbar". You can use the buttons on this bar to start some helpful and practical capabilities of Konqueror. The first button opens the Extended Sidebar on the left.

Here you have easy access to all the directories in your system. In addition to the Bookmarks directory you will find the History item: as with Internet Explorer, you can get an overview of the history of your online session and thus go back to Web sites you have already visited. A right click can sort the entries by name or date. Internet Explorer's History sidebar may be easier to use, but Konqueror also lists accesses to folders and files in your system and not just Web sites. Another click on the History button closes the site list again.

The other buttons on the extra toolbar split the window view of Konqueror. You may be familiar with this from using Konqueror as a file manager. This property can be very helpful when surfing, too: by clicking on Split View Left/Right, you can surf in parallel on two or more Web pages. This means you can compare sites or keep the page in one
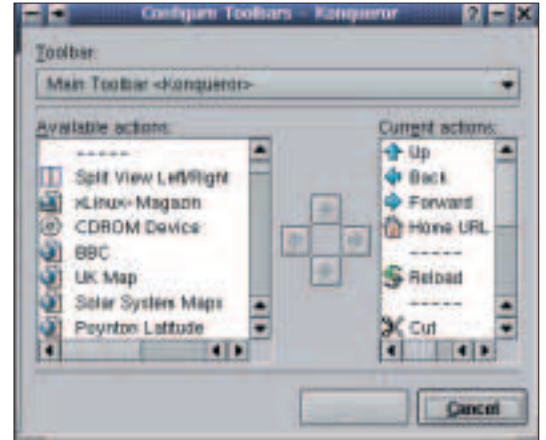
window and look at a linked site in the other. However, if you have more than two windows it soon starts to get confusing.

The current active view can be distinguished by a green dot in the lower left corner of the window (Figure 18). The active window is closed by the right button in the extra toolbar. Which buttons should there actually be in the toolbar? You can configure them via *Settings/Install toolbar*.

In the upper drop-down menu, you should first choose which bar you want to configure. In the right-hand window underneath this, you will see the available action buttons and on the left are the ones that already exist on the toolbar. By selecting the actions and the arrow buttons on the platform between the windows you can add or remove items. In order to install a standard start page, enter the address, wait until the page has been built up and then select *Window/Save View Profile "File Management"*. If you intend Konqueror to start with a blank page (which is the quickest way), open the browser, enter in the URL line "about:blank" and then select the menu item just mentioned. The input field in the URL line is deleted by a click on the small black button on the left; this is quicker than selecting and deleting. And that brings the latest Migrations Workshop to an end. Have you any topics you would like to see covered in this series? If so, please write to the editor.
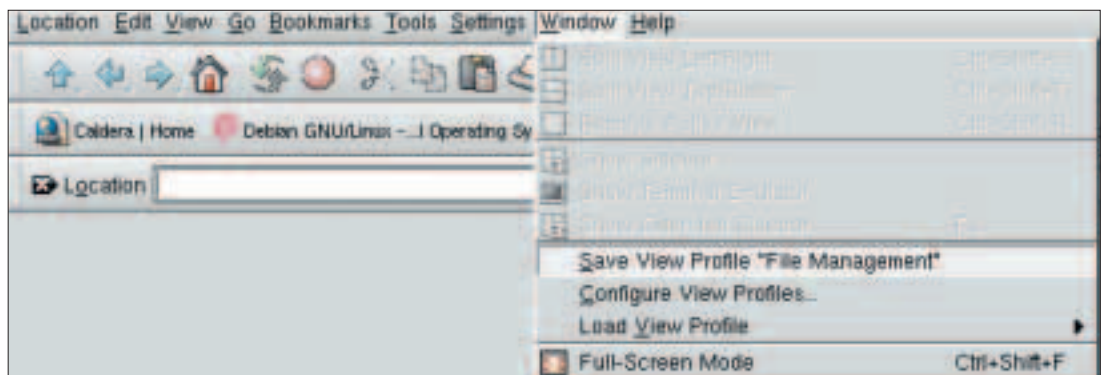

Figure 18: Konqueror can start with your favourite page