

Accessorise your KDE desktop

MORE TOOLS

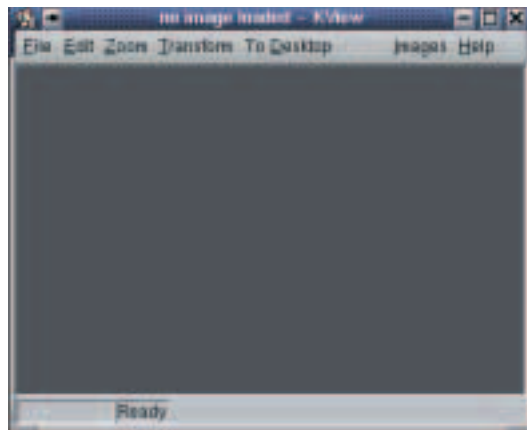
FOR YOUR BELT

Windows collects several useful applications together under the heading of Accessories. Anja M Wagner explains, in brief workshops, where you can find and use these and other odds and ends in KDE

KDE applications (here we are referring to KDE 2.2 under SuSE Linux 7.3) are frequently very similar to those of Windows, which makes migration somewhat easier. Some, on the other hand, are very different.

Viewing images with KView

KView is an image viewer in a similar vein to Imaging under Windows. You can start it either via the start menu *Multimedia/Graphics/Image viewer* or with the shortcut Alt+F2 and entering *kview*. In SuSE the menu is *Graphics/Graphics/Image Viewer*. After opening KView you will be met by a bleak desktop.



The desktop of KView looks a bit bleak

First load an image via *File/Open*. In the dialog window, search for the image in your system directory. If you want to load several images in a folder at the same time, hold down the Ctrl key while marking each with the mouse. The desktop of KView opens, adapted to the size of the loaded image. By "touching" it with the mouse the window can be drawn bigger or smaller.

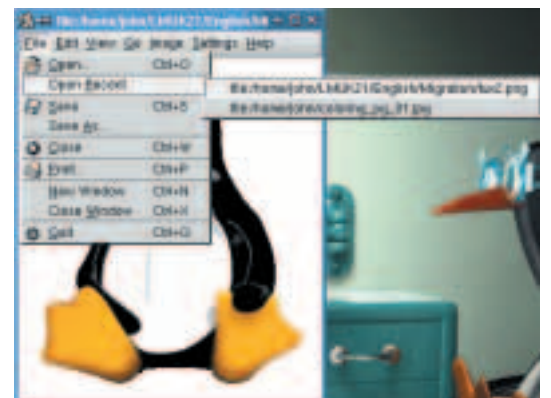
A number of image viewers can also be opened at the same time. Load another image in a new window via *File/Open*. If you have already loaded various images, you can also select the option *File/Open Recent*. You can then select the previously viewed file



Several image viewers on the desktop

you wish to open from the selection menu. As a third option, select *File/New window - KView* then starts another instance with the blank desktop.

The displayed size can be altered via the View option in the toolbar. Here you will find the steps Half as big, Normal size, Twice as big and Full image mode. The symbol buttons with the magnifying glass allow you to zoom into or out of the image. The default is 100 per cent of the original size – if you want to work with a different zoom factor, select *View/Zoom factor* and enter the new value in the text line. Zooms with a high factor can take some time, depending on system resources.



KView stores your recently opened files to speed up access

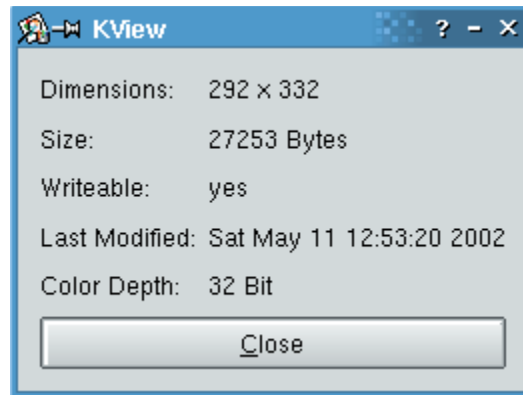
As already mentioned, KView can load several images simultaneously. The tool saves the paths of the loaded images in a list: this list is displayed via *Go to/Image list* in the menu bar. The Sort button next to the image list arranges the image files in the usual alphanumeric order. The Random button cancels the sorting again.

Once an image list has been created it can be saved for future use: click on the Save list button and store the list in your home directory. It is advisable to create a separate folder for this and give the list a telling name, so that you can find it again later. The Load list button lets you load a previously stored image list and, for example, display them in the form of a slideshow. This only works, though, if the files are still located in the previous location. If the image list contains any pictures that are stored on a diskette, the floppy must then also be in the mounted drive. KView save only the path of the files, but not the image files themselves.

A slideshow displays the images in a list in the sequence stored therein. By default the image changes every five seconds. Slideshows are started via *Go to/Slide show on/off* or the S key. Pressing the S key again ends the show.

With KView you can not only view images, but also change them and then save them. In the menu list select the Image option. There are a variety of filters available. The menu item Intensity allows you to edit the brightness of an image and to correct the gamma value. The brightness is set by default at 100 per cent; enter the desired value in the text line.

If you've reduced the brightness to something like 10 per cent, you cannot restore the original condition of the image by re-entering the brightness value of 100 per cent – you have to reload the original image. The gamma value, which must be greater than one, corrects the mid-tones or grey shades of an image. The default value is one. *Filter/Grey shades* converts a colour image into a black and white image. The filter option Smoothed reduces the contrast between adjacent pixels and makes the image look smoother. An image can be rotated by 90, 180 and 270



The vital statistics on each image

degrees and reflected vertically or horizontally. The rotations are performed clockwise.

Each image loaded in KView can be used as background for the desktop, if you click on *Image/On the desktop* and select Tiles, Maximum size or Maximum view. The background image then appears on all installed desktops. You can alter or delete it via the KDE control centre. From the start menu select *Control centre/Appearance/Background*. On the Background image tab, select either no background image or pick another.

The menu item *Image/Info* is practical: there you receive information about the loaded image such as the size in pixels and bytes, colour depth and the date the image was last changed.

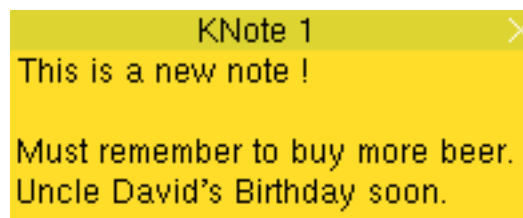
As is usual with KDE applications, the appearance and desktop can be adapted to your own individual preferences. In the Settings menu, you can also display the toolbar and status bar. The option *Install KView* allows you to change the background colour of the tool and to replace the bleak black with a jollier colour. The interval for the slide change can be altered, too.

Memos on the desktop

Sticking yellow Post-It notes all over your monitor is one way to remind you of your must-do tasks or computer commands. A much more elegant alternative – and one guaranteed not to blow away in a freak gust of wind – is a Post-It note directly on the desktop. KDE makes this possible with KNote.

Start the program via the start menu item *Office programs/Organisation/Memos* or via Alt+F2 and entering *knotes*. A bright yellow memo appears on the desktop – click in it and type your memo.

You can hide the memo via the X at top right; with



It's better to stick a memo on the desktop than on your monitor



Tux – a credit to any desktop

on-screen memo might be a great reminder

a click on the KNote symbol in the panel the memo reappears on the desktop – and right on the spot to which you last dragged the virtual memo. By clicking in the header bar you can activate a triangular area in the lower right-hand corner of the memo. Guide the mouse cursor over this field and it turns into a little double arrow – here you can use the mouse to change the size of the memo by dragging it.

You can make further settings and changes to KNote by right-clicking in the header bar and thus opening the pop-up menu. The first option in the pop-up menu, Insert date, writes the time and date in the memo. Click on Send to send the memo via KMail; all you need do is enter receiver and subject. If a memo is not to be sent via KMail, change the entry in the *Actions* box. Enter something like *sylpheed* or another client.

The tool simply names each new memo “KNote” with a serial number. Select Rename from the pop-up menu, to enter a more informative name.

Whilst an on-screen memo might be a great reminder, it’s far less likely to jog your memory if it’s covered up by large window. To prevent cover-ups, click Always in the foreground on the pop-up menu. Regardless of which window is now opened on the desktop, the yellow memo always “sticks” in front of it. You can cancel this by again selecting the Always in the foreground option.

If you use several desktops, you can define on which desktops the memo is to appear via On desktop. The Memo settings offer you the option of changing the background and text colours, font type and size.

English dictionary

A practical German-English dictionary is at your disposal with *ding*. This is not an online dictionary – it is resident on your system, and as such may need to be installed with YaST2. Once installed, start it via Alt+F2 and enter *ding*.



The desktop of ding, a German-English dictionary

The dictionary, with some 130,000 entries, searches automatically in both directions, thus in both the German and English entries. Type the word you want in the Search word field and click on the Search button. Apart from the word itself, compound phrases are displayed in which it occurs: the search



The search for the term “computer” produces over 100 entries

for “computer” for example displays 134 results.

The list displayed can be saved: right-click in the list and keep the button held down. Select the Save option and store the list, for example, in the home directory, to edit or print it out later. It will be saved as a text file (.txt).

The search parameters of *ding* can be altered via the Search parameter item in the menu list. Instead of looking for whole words, *ding* can start a partial search. This makes sense if the complete spelling of a term is unknown or all words with specified components are to be sought. After entering “hyper” *ding* finds precisely one result, when it is looking for entire words. But the partial search comes back with 31 entries.

The tool can be made case-sensitive or not case-sensitive. Regular expressions can also be used, such as e.g. “nu(sslB)”, to search for “nuss” and “nuß”. The search parameter settings Simple search and Reg. expressions appear to have no effect: regular expressions are always evaluated. With the Settings button in the menu list you can change both desktop and the appearance of the tools in the usual KDE manner.

Especially helpful are two functions of *ding*, which are activated via *Settings/search methods* or faster via the selection button on the right next to the Search word field. With the Spelling option “ding” checks the word you have typed in and comes up with suggestions. Spell check activates the check for English words.

Even with some 130,000 entries in the dictionary, sooner or later you will come across omissions but *ding* has the ability to learn. As root administrator, use a text editor to open the file */usr/X11R6/lib/ding/ger-eng.txt* and enter missing words, explanations and transcriptions manually.

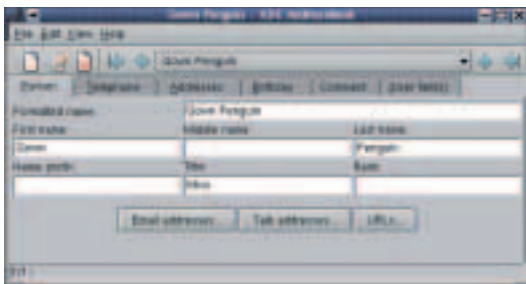
Address management with kab

First the good news: all addresses which you enter in the KDE address book *kab* can also be found in the address book of KMail and vice versa. The bad news

is that you cannot import any addresses from Outlook or Outlook Express.

Start the program via the start menu item *Office programs/Database/Address book* or enter *kab* in the fast starter. When you first start, the directory for the local settings is made in */home/username/.kde2/share/apps/kab.kab.config* and the standard address book is saved in your home directory under *.kde2/share/apps/kab/addressbook.kab*. The dot before the directory *kde2* indicates that this is a hidden system directory.

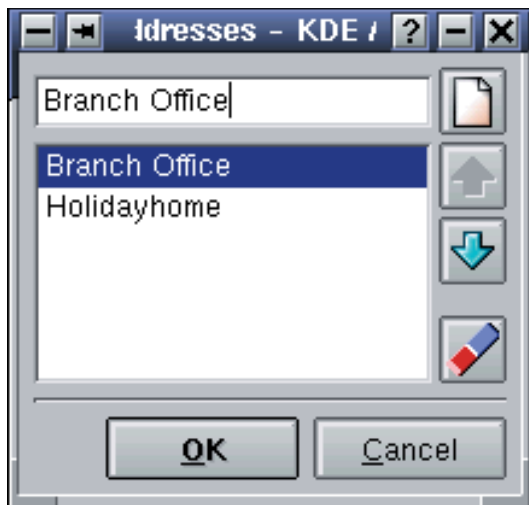
You can make a new or first entry in the address book via *Edit/Add entry*. The input mask is split into six tabs, which offer a wealth of options for addresses, telephone, email and also comments.



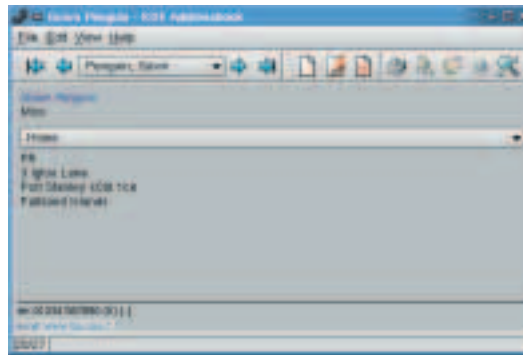
The input options of the kab address book split into six tabs

On the Addresses tab you'll find the field entitled Address type. In the drop-down menu there are at first no address types to choose from. If you want to define one or more types, which makes sense, select *Edit/Install this file* from the menu. On the Address types tab, click on the symbol button for a new entry and enter the designation of the type, for example Private, Work, Branch, Holiday home etc. in the now-activated text line.

When creating a new entry, click on the Add button, select an installed type and enter the details of the address. Now change the display, via *View/Business card*, and your details appear according to the address type selected.



Adding addresses by types gives a better overview



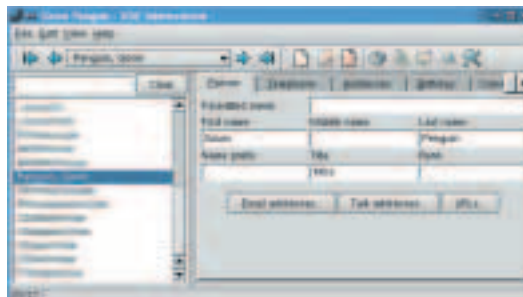
With the Business card view you can see all details at a glance

You thus have rapid and clear access to the various addresses in an entry.

At the bottom left of the Business card appears the email address and homepage of your contact, if you have entered these on the Person tab. With a click on the email address, a KMail window opens, in which, handily, the address of the receiver is already inserted.

On the tab right at the back, entitled (User fields), there are four text boxes available to you for additional entries. These fields are initially titled only User field 1-4. Click again on *Edit/install file* and give a more suitable name to the tab and the user fields.

Apart from the view for creating or editing a contact, *kab* offers another list with all entries. Click on *View/Display list of entries for navigation*. The names of your contacts will appear in alphabetical order in the left-hand window. Click on a name and then again select, via the menu item View, whether the visiting card or the input mask of the contact should appear on the right.



The list view sorts contacts according to the "formatted name"

You can leave the list view by clicking again on *View/Display list of entries for navigation*. If the list of contacts is already very long, the fastest way to find an entry is via the search function. Select *Edit/Search entries*. The selection list for the search parameter is long; You can search according to practically any field – from name via birthday to comments.

The search function can distinguish between upper and lower case text and above all, the wildcard "*" can search for any number of symbols you like and "?" for just one character.

your contacts will appear in alphabetical order