KBear FTP Client

Bear Necessities

If you are looking to use FTP for software downloads, specialized client programs offer considerable advantages in comparision to using a web browser. KBear can access several servers simultaneously, for example.

BY STEFANIE TEUFEL

After first introducing the GUI based FTP program *KBear* over 18 months ago in this column [1], it looked as though program development had come to a complete standstill. The latest version (1.2.1) was from April the previous year – and all has been quiet on the bear-front since then.

Thank goodness that seems to have changed now, and the first pre-release of version 2.0 sees the program making the jump to KDE 3.0. So, if you want to try out the latest version of KBear from the homepage at *kbear.sourceforge.net*, you will need KDE 3.0 and Qt 3.0.x.

Updating is particularly easy for any Mandrake users who can download a pre-configured package from *prdown⊅ loads.sourceforge.net/kbear/kbear-2.⊅ 0alpha1-1mdk.i586.rpm.* Users of other systems will need to extract the source code archive using

```
tar -xIvf kbear-2.0alpha1.tar.⊅
bz2
```

and then launch their compiler (Box 1).

First time out

The first time that you launch KBear by typing *kbear* in your favorite terminal emulation, or via the *KDE* menu entry *Internet / KBear*, you will probably notice that KBear steps somewhat out of

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KTOOLS

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 are just some of the nicer things in life, which – once discovered – you wouldn't want to do without.

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line in comparison to other FTP clients. Before you get started, this second generation program confronts you with a so-called configuration wizard designed to provide you with support while configuring the program.
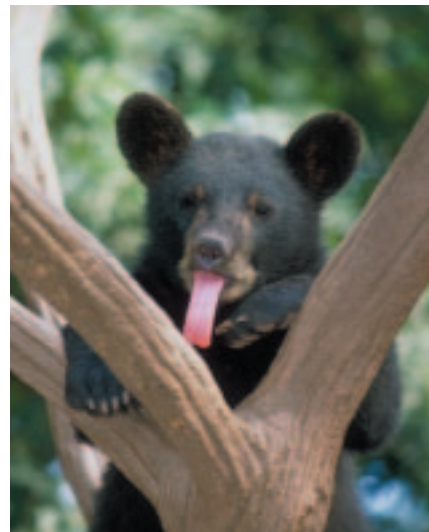
Keep the default settings in the first two windows *iView Settings* and *Window Settings* for the time being, and click on the button marked *Next >* in both cases to continue. Later you will be able to access any items the wizard presents at this stage, and even call the wizard itself via the *Settings / Run Wizard…* or *Settings / Configure KBear* menu items.

If the "useful" tips provided when you launch the program start to get on your nerves, you will probably want to access *Mixed Settings* and disable *Run "Tip of today" at startup..* If you forget to enter your email settings in *Network/Email* in the KDE control center, you can also use this window to inform KBear of your email address.

The last wizard window is used for firewall settings (Figure 1). The default value here is *Do not use a firewall (most users will use this)*. You will definitely

want to keep this setting, as the firewall configuration is still experimental. You can then click on the *Finish* button to launch the FTP client proper.

A Completely New Point of View

The first time you start KBear (Figure 2), you will not see the typical two-framed window that you are familiar with from
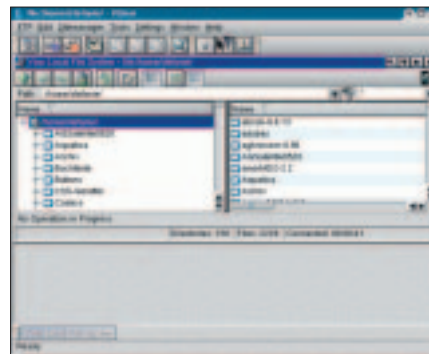

Figure 2: The initial window

Figure 3: Free choice of FTP servers

Figure 1: Omit the Firewall in the Alpha-Version

other clients, where you have your home directory on one side and the FTP server on the other.

KBear uses a different approach even here. You will still find your home directory as expected, but most of the window is reserved for the various FTP servers that you might want to access in future.

Outgoing

Bells and whistles are fine but an FTP client is no use, unless you can convince it to talk to FTP servers of your choice. KBear provides you with two ways of doing this: You can click on *FTP / Quick Connect* (or use the keyboard shortcut [Ctrl-N]) and type the address of the required server in the dialog box that then appears (Figure 3).

You will normally want to access public FTP servers where you do not possess an **account**. In this case you will need to check *Anonymous Login* to access that part of the server reserved for anonymous logins.

After you enter your email address via the wizard, KBear automatically uses this email address as your password for anonymous login – and this is what most FTP servers expect. Note: Servers will sometimes prompt you for a password despite *anonymous login*. In this case you should type *anonymous* in the dialog box that pops up on your screen – after doing so you should be able to log on without any difficulty.

Are you ready? Just one more click on

GLOSSARY

FTP: *The "File Transfer Protocol" controls the transfer of files from one computer to another across the Internet. FTP allows comprehensive file management after logging on to the host system. Depending on your access privileges, you can transfer, delete, copy or move files and directories.*

Header file: *Files ending in .h contain descriptions of how to call functions written in the C or C++ programming languages. They are essential for compiling programs. If you use a package manager to install a library, they are normally found in a separate archive with the "dev" or "devel" suffix and need to be added specifically.*

Account: *Access privilege for a Unix computer. A user who possesses a user name and password for this system and also has a home directory based on this system, is said to possess an account on the host.*

Compilation Tricks and Traps

Alpha versions always have a few rough edges – this is particularly true of the installation and defnitely the case for KBear: Extreme caution and some resilience to setbacks should help.

The default setting for KBear will place the client in the */usr/local/kde/bin*, */usr/local/kde/lib* directories, etc. This would mean the program crashing immediately on Red Hat 7.3. The solution is to install the program in the directory reserved by Red Hat for KDE under */usr*. To do so, we simply called *./configure* in the source directory *kbear-2.0alpha1* and added *--prefix=/usr*.

If you have several KDE and Qt versions (including **header files)**, you will need to point the variables in *KDEDIR* and *QTDIR* to the correct version in the KBear source directory before you call *configure*, as in:

```
export QTDIR=/usr/lib/qt3
export KDEDIR=/opt/kde3
```

The right directory differs from system to system. But even if *configure* seems to work, you should not assume you have successfully compiled the tool. The compilers on SuSE 7.2 and Qt 3.0.3 refused to cooperate and instead issued a message to the effect of:

```
kbeardeletejob.cpp: In method `void KBearDeleteJob::slotEntries↵
(KIO::Job *, const KIO::UDSEntryList &)':
kbeardeletejob.cpp:121: implicit declaration of function `int ↵
assert(...)'
make[3]: *** [kbeardeletejob.lo] Error 1
```

If a compiler complains about an implicity declared function, it normally means that the programmer has forgotten to include a header file. If you add the following line at the beginning of the *kbearlistjob.cpp*, *kbearcopyjob.cpp*, and *kbearfilecopyjob.cpp* files in *kbear-2.0alpha1/kbear↵ /base*

```
#include <assert.h>
```

you should be able to compile the KBear sources without any problem.

the *Connect* button (provided you are online) separates you from opening a connection to the server of your choice with a little help from KBear.

The *Save to Sitemanager* box in Figure 4 gives you an idea of the second method of contacting FTP servers. Björn Sahlströhm, KBear's developer, used the *Sitemanager* to organize a whole bunch of FTP servers – neatly and tidily by type and content – including their logins. If you decide to access one of the servers in

this list, you simply click on the list entry. You can use the above mentioned box to add entries to the list.

Easy to import

KBear 1.2.1 veterans will be familiar with [Ctrl-O] as a shortcut to opening the Sitemanager configuration. The current version now provides the additional enhancement of allowing you to import FTP bookmarks from other programs.

As you can see in Figure 4 this dialog box not only contains a bunch of nicely organized servers but also an *Import* button. A single click on this button allows you to use the dialog box that pops up (as you can see in Figure 5) to integrate your bookmarks from KBear 1.x, the GNOME FTP program, the ncFTP command
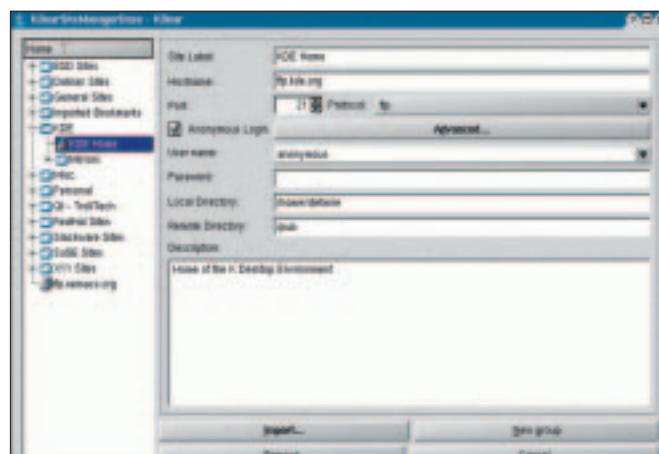

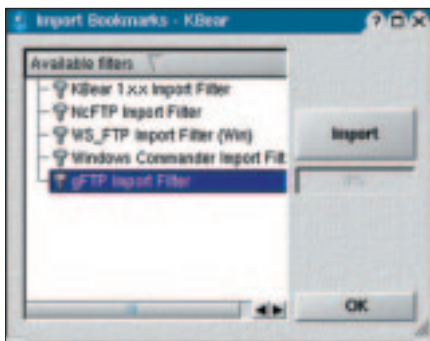**Figure 4: Add a server of your choice to the Sitemanager!**

Figure 5: Thanks to the new import function, you can keep your bookmarks

line tool, WS-FTP and the Windows-Commander from the Windows environment (which no doubt took years to compile) into KBear 2.0.

Of course you can open connections manually in the *KBearSiteManagerBase* window. To do so, simply select the FTP server you need, click on *Connect*, and you're up and running. This is useful for users who prefer a more sophisticated approach: The *protocol* option allows you to select the more secure *sftp* variant from the Secure Shell family instead of simple *ftp*. You can also click on the *Advanced…* button to define additional options, such as the number of retries, or toggle *Passive Mode* (Figure 6) on and off.

Gimme, gimme!

After connecting to one or more FTP servers there is nothing to stop you downloading to your heart's desire. But connections to multiple servers will tend to clutter the main KBear window. To prevent this, you might like to organize the layout of your windows by selecting *Window / Tile.*

If you really want to revert to the look & feel of more traditional FTP clients, the *Tile vertically* option is probably your best bet. More horizontally minded users can also opt for *tile overlapped* (Figure 7) or *tile non-overlapped*. Everyone else will just have to discover their favorite option by trial and error. You can also use *Settings*
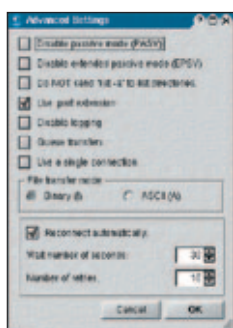

Figure 6: Active or passive?

/ *Configure KBear / Views* to view the files in the folders on display as icons or as a detailed list including rights, time-stamps, and so on. This is also the place to opt for a tree view, to display the taskbar and the like.

After configuring the environment you simply use drag & drop for your down-loads, as one would expect from KDE. Just click on the file you want to down-load from a directory on the FTP source server and drag your mouse to the target directory on your local machine. Let go of the mouse button and select *copy* in the context menu that then appears –

finished. Now you can lean back and watch the transfer progress indicator in the bottom frame (Figure 8).

You can even take a peek at a file before you download it. To do so, right-click on the file and select *View* in the drop-down menu. Depending on the file type KBear will then offer you a selection of programs to view the file contents in advance and at your own pace. ■
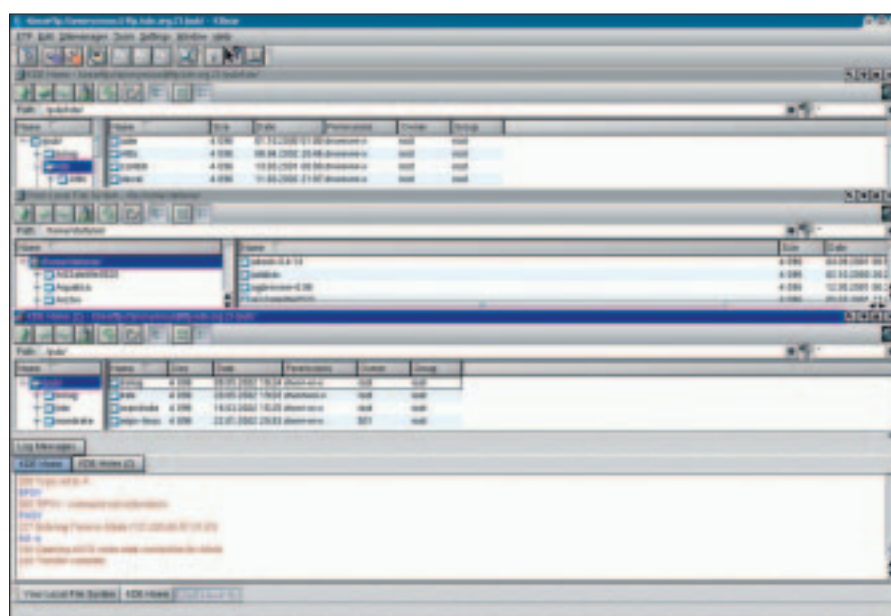
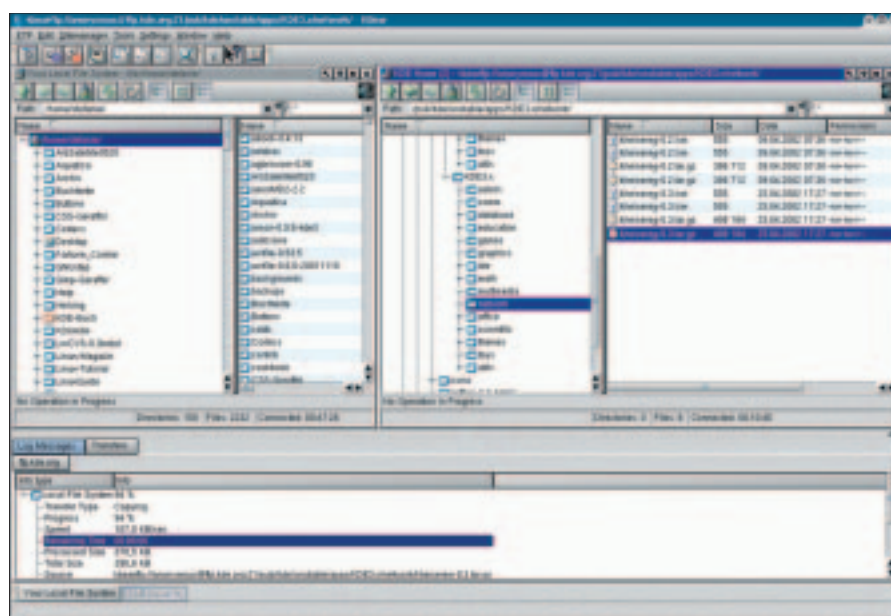**Figure 7: Multiple servers tiled to give some order to the window**

Figure 8: Making progress with KBear. The bottom panel is indicating the rate of transfer and the percentage completed.