

Konserve

Better Safe than Sorry

“Konservation” is a good thing, and Konserve, a KDE tool is no exception; its sophisticated backup mechanisms really do prevent those backup headaches. **BY STEFANIE TEUFEL**

You may be familiar with this horror scenario. As the deadline for a thesis, an article, or a contract draws near, you suddenly notice that the document has mysteriously disappeared from your machine. Of course, you had not always remembered (or were possibly just too lazy) to create a backup of your most important documents. Wouldn't it be a good idea if a background tool took over this monotonous task? This is the basic idea that Florian Simnacher had, when he launched the *Konserve* program.

The project homepage, <http://www.simnacher.net/konserve/konserve.html>,

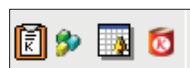


Figure 1: Small, but so useful

provides a **tarball** with the source code. If you have Red Hat 8.0, you can use the RPM package, but everyone else will need to compile the sources. The usual steps will do the trick: *configure; make; make install*.

As the program installs to */usr/local/kde*, and this is not typically the default KDE directory, a call to */usr/local/kde/bin/konserve* will not find the icons or the help file. And there is no entry in the *K* menu either, at first. There

are two workarounds for this. While configuring, you can enter the **path** to your KDE directory:

```
./configure -prefix=path/to/kde-directory
```

This allows *make install* to install the software in this directory later. As this does not allow you to distinguish between core distribution software applications and tools you have added, the second approach is preferable. Pass the top level

directories for KDE software on your system to the *KDEDIRS* variable, as in:

```
export KDEDIRS=/opt/kde3:/usr/local/kde
```

After completing the installation steps, you can start the backup tool either by accessing the KDE start menu *Programs / konserve* or by typing *konserve &* in a console window (you may need to specify the path). Doing so places a small icon in the menu bar (see Figure 1). Now



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 would not want to do without.

GLOSSARY

Tarball: The *tar* program collates multiple files to create a single archive file. This collection of data is commonly referred to as a “tarball”. Tarballs typically have extensions like *.tar* or *.tar.gz* or *.tgz*. The latter two extensions indicates that the files were first added to the

tarball, before being compressed using the *gzip* program.

Path: The path tells you where a file is located in the filesystem tree. That is, it is a list of all the directories you need to cross to access that file.

right click on the icon to drop down the menu shown in Figure 2.

We're off to see...

The *Wizard*, or at least, that is what I would recommend, to help you through your initial backup jobs. As Konserve supports any number of backup jobs with user-definable scope, you will need to supply a name for the backup profile in the first window. Choose something intuitive that will help you more easily the profile. Finished? Okay, then click *Next* to continue.

In the next dialog box (see Figure 3), specify the files you will be backing up in the *Source url* field. The "URL" name component is slightly confusing, as the program expects file or directory names. Konserve actually refused to back up a website in our test.

If you specify a directory, any subdirectories or files below that directory will be backed up automatically. If you cannot remember the name of the directory you want to back up, click on the folder icon and use the file manager to browse to the required files. Then click *Next* once more.

Konserve now prompts you to specify where you want to store the archive. If you use the *Backup url* field to specify a directory, Konserve will provide a unique name with the following format *directoryname-yyyyMMddhhmmss.tar.gz*. The file will not be overwritten by the next job. If you specify a filename, however, Konserve will overwrite the older backup file with the new backup.

One more thing: the target directory must already exist on your system, as Konserve will otherwise show an error message and go on strike.

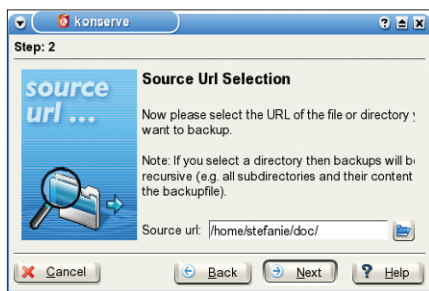


Figure 3: The source files for the backup job

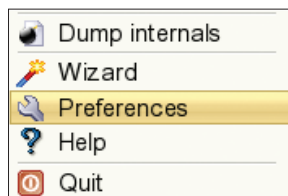


Figure 2: The drop-down menu provides access to critical functions

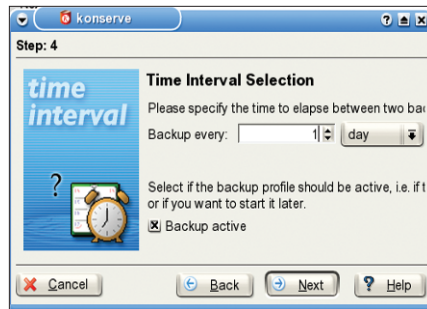


Figure 4: Specifying the interval between backups

After specifying what, and where, screen four (see Figure 4) allows you to say when. You can define the interval between individual backup jobs. The pulldown menu allows you to choose between days, hours, minutes, seconds.

After the wizard has finished, you can check the *Backup active* checkbox to launch a backup job. Alternatively, access the *Preferences* dialog box to manually launch the job. Screen five (see Figure 5) provides an overview of your selections. You can then finally click *Finish* to launch the backup process.

Shortcuts, anyone?

No matter how user-friendly the wizard may be, once you have understood the way Konserve works, you will probably want to do without all that help the next time you create a profile. To do so, select *Preferences* in the drop-down menu, and add the required details in the dialog box shown in Figure 6.

The dialog box has the same functions as the wizard, although some names



Figure 5: A quick check of the selections

have changed: *Source url* is now known as *Source*, and *Backup url* as *Archive*. You can also optionally use the *Move Up* and *Move Down* buttons to change the profile order.

As the names would suggest, *Add* will create a new profile, and *Remove* will tell Konserve to remove the selected profile. Clicking on *Restore* tells Konserve to restore the last backup it created. This is quite useful if you mistakenly delete the source files. All you lose, is the changes you made since the last backup.

Any existing profile can be used to create a non-scheduled backup. The drop-down menu provides a list of profile names. Simply click on an entry to tell Konserve to run a backup job. This is useful if you need to save a day's work before leaving the office, for example.

In addition to creating local backups, Konserve can also back up to an FTP server. To create a backup copy in web-space, instead of on your local machine, simply specify an entry such as *ftp://yourusername@ftp.yourprovider.org/path/to/file/file.tar.gz* as the target *Archive*. And when you feel you have done enough backing up for the time being, simply click *Quit* to exit.

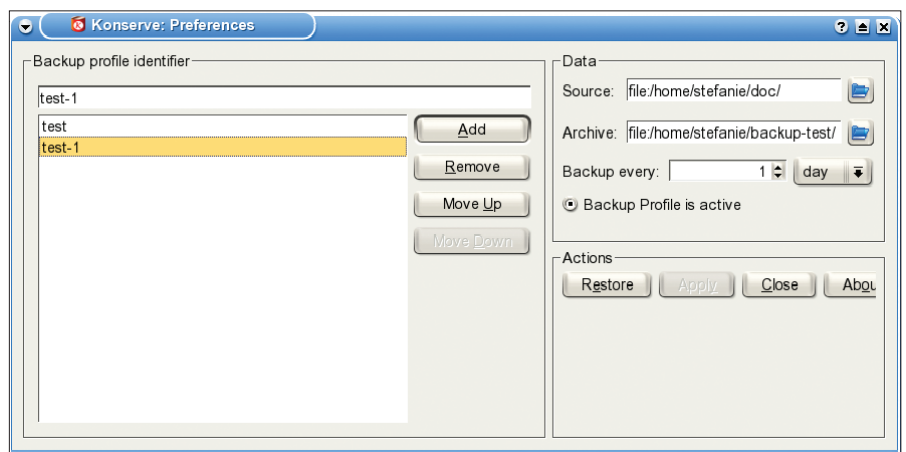


Figure 6: The Preferences dialog box provides a shortcut to creating backup profiles