Using your personal data from KDE with other applications

Reusing Personal Data

No matter whether you intend to make the move from KDE to Gnome permanent, or simply switch desktops from time to time, you will not want to do without your browser bookmarks or your carefully maintained calendar and address data. It may take some work, but there is a way. **BY MARCEL BUCHHOLZ AND PATRICIA JUNG**

I f you change your desktop environment or **mail client**, either of your own volition, or because you use KDE at home, but Gnome and/or Mozilla at work, the transition will involve some time and effort. On the one hand you need to get used to a different look & feel. On the other, there are a few programs that need re-configuring. After all this effort, you will definitely want to avoid having to re-enter all your data collections.

Of course you can run most KDE applications on Gnome – if they are installed on your system; but they will often take a while to launch, and some applications may even crash. But if you have no say in the kind of software installed on the machine you are using, this is not an option. It's a free world after all, and the desktop you use is a question of taste. You may discover that a new **PIM** program covers your needs better than the solution you used previously, but that

doesn't mean that you will be happy to start from scratch.

Contacts for the Dragon

Your personal data will typically comprise address books, including the email addresses stored by KMail [4]. If you intend to use these in Mozilla's mail component [1] (there is no need to change your desktop to do this, of course), first open the address book in KMail by selecting *Tools / Address book* . This menu item does not take you to a special client-specific address book, but

to a generic KDE address book, which can also be launched from the command line by typing *kaddressbook*.

Enter *File / Export / Export List* to write your address book data to a **CSV**-formatted file. By default the file will be stored in your home directory as *addressbook. csv* (see Figure 1). You can simply accept the default.

Most people will put a program through its paces, before deciding to move to that program. If you have, the configuration wizard will already have created your individual Mozilla user account when you first launched the program. In this case you can head straight for the import wizard.

Select *Tools / Import …* in the menu (see Figure 2). As you want to import your address data, select *Address Books*. The next window prompts you to specify the type of data you want to import; older Mozillas will only support one type, *Text file (LDIF, .tab, .csv, .txt)*.
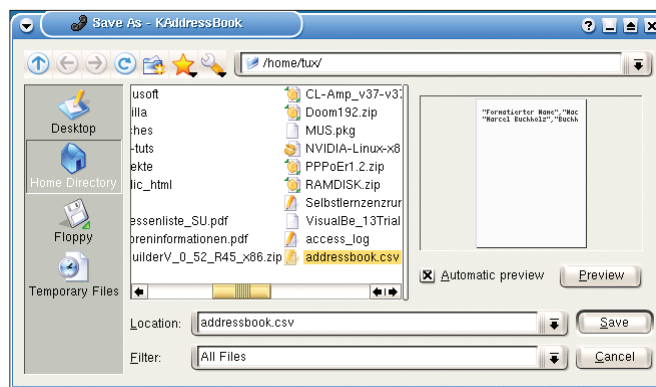
Figure 1: Where do you want KAddressbook to store your address list?

However, that's fine, because we stored the KAddressbook data in CSV format.

The next step is to select the exported file; this is *addressbook.csv* in our example. If you cannot see the file, make sure that the file type is set to *Comma separated (*.csv)* . Then click the *Open* button. This is where the fun starts.

You have to convert the data to the layout that Mozilla needs. The dialog box shown in Figure 3 (the labels may be different, depending on your version), is used to map the information in the file (on the right) to the corresponding fields in the Mozilla Mail structure (on the left). You can click the *Up* and *Down* buttons to move the labels to the position with the matching entry. When you are finished, the results should resemble Figure 3.

If Mozilla does not provide a matching field, you can simply assign the entry to an unused Mozilla category, and ensure that the checkbox on the left is unchecked. For example, Mozilla does not use titles. This is why we have to discard *Title abbrev. (front)* in our example. Find the best compromise and click *OK* to start importing. If all goes well, you should see the good news after a short while: *Address successfully imported from textfile….* If an error occurred, your best bet is to launch the import function again. You can click on *Finish* to finish the import process.

You can select *Window / Address book* to check the results (see Figure 4). The fact that the KDE address book specifies the column labels in the first line in the exported file made it easy to get the mappings right (see Figure 3). On the downside, Mozilla thinks that this line is a record. You can just click *Delete* to correct this assumption.
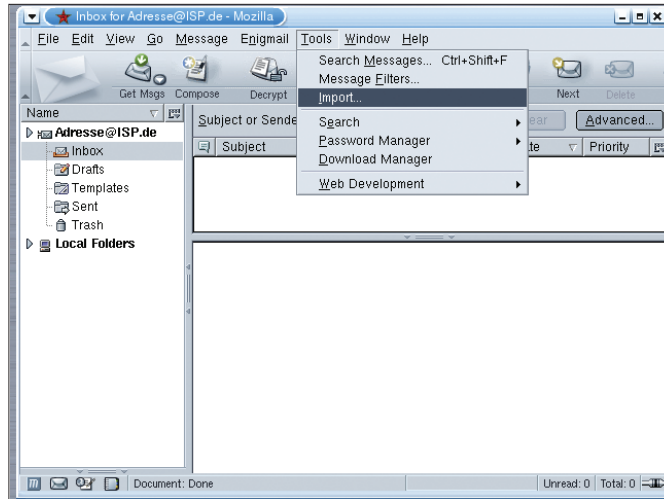

Figure 2: Importing data to Mozilla Mail.

The Evolution of an Address

If you opt for Evolution [3] as your PIM, there is a way of migrating your KDE data, although it does require the latest version of the desktop environment. Unfortunately, Evolution does not support CSV lists, and older KAddressbook versions do not have a facility for exporting virtual visiting cards, or vCards for short.

Even if you have the latest KDE version, there is still a lot of work to be done. *File / Export / Export vCard 3.0…* tells the address book to create a single *.vcf* file for the selected address book entry. And *File / Import…* in Evolution launches a wizard that performs an

Figure 3: Mozilla leaves data mapping to the user.

equally tortuous re-import operation. Select *Import single file* in step 1 *Import type*.

Then click on *Continue* to move on to step two, *Select single file*. Evolution really takes that literally; *Filename* must point to a single vCard file. On the upside Evolution 1.4.4 more or less automatically recognized the vCards we exported from KAddressbook 3.1.

Clicking on *Import* will finish the wizard, but that does not mean you are home and dry. Evolution pops up the dialog box shown in Figure 5 to ask you where you want to store the vCard data. The pre-selected folder *Contacts* is typically the right answer, but you can select *New* to create additional contact folders and subfolders, which you can specify as targets. It's just a question of how you like to organize things.

That's not all – if you were lazy in the previous step, and told the wizard to automatically recognize the file type, rather than specifying *VCard*, you now get to answer the question as to whether your data are appointments in *iCalendar* format or *VCards*. In fact, it made us wonder if this was supposed to be a kind of punishment for not using Evolution previously.

Appointments and Calendars

Appointments on KDE typically mean KOrganizer – no matter whether you run the tool as a stand-alone program or as part of a PIM, such as Kontact or Aethera [7]. If you want to export your KOrganizer appointments to Evolution, the procedure is similar to that for vCards. Fortunately, the iCalendar file will contain all your appointments rather than just one. If you like, you can tell the import wiz-
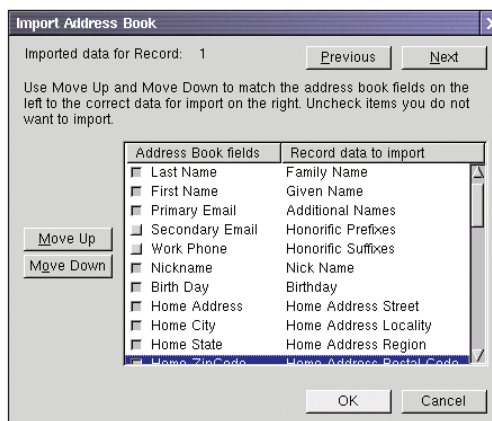
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ard that you are importing *iCalendar files (*.ics)*, when prompted for the *File type*. When exchanging data between KOrganizer 3.1.4 and Evolution 1.4.4, as in our test, the *Automatic* selection worked fine, assuming that we also chose the calendar folder in the dialog box shown in Figure 5.

You may note a slight glitch at this point: Evolution's importer does not finish off immediately, and asks you to wait for five seconds. After this wait, the program does finally complete the import procedure, and you can view and edit the data.

The whole process assumes that you have converted your KOrganizer appointments in iCalender format. To do so, select *File / Export / iCalendar* in the menu. Provided you have not stored any data with the same name previously, you can simply use the default filename (this is *icalout.ics* with KOrganizer 3.1.4).
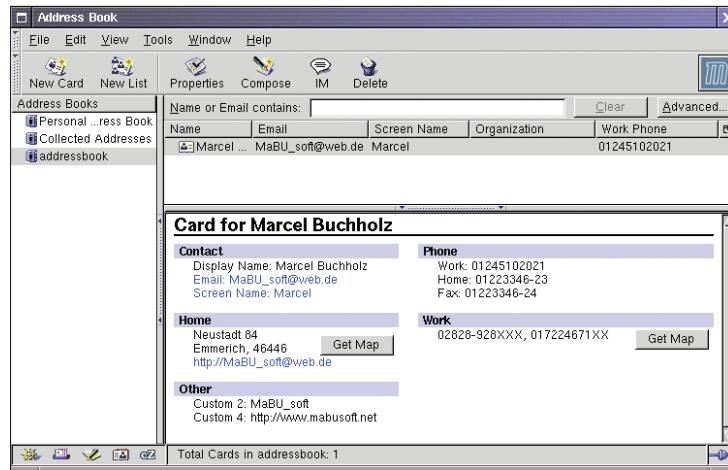
Recycled Bookmarks

There is another set of data that most people do not want to leave behind when they jump off the world of KDE, the **bookmarks** used by the KDE browser, Konqueror. It is extremely sim-

Figure 4: A quick look at the imported KDE address data tells you whether your field mappings worked out.

ple to export them. Open the K menu and select *Bookmarks / Edit Book-marks*. The bookmark editor shown in Figure 6 appears (incidentally, you can launch the bookmark editor by typing *kedit-bookmarks &* in the command line).

The next step involves a decision. If you will be using Mozilla [1] as your browser in future, select *File / Export / Export Mozilla bookmarks….*

This assumes that the Mozilla browser is already installed on your machine. Use the file selection dialog box to specify the directory name below the Mozilla configuration directory, *~/.mozilla*, that corresponds to your Mozilla profile. This is typically your username, or simply *default*.

The directory will contain a single sub-directory with a random name, such as

Red Hat
Enterprise Linux

Red Hat
Network

Certified
Applications

Services

It's all coming together.

You want Linux. Running your applications. With systems management and support you can trust. You want Red Hat Enterprise Linux: Seven platforms. Runs software you already use from Oracle, BEA, and more. Systems management via Red Hat Network. Backed by Red Hat.

www.europe.redhat.com or call +44.1483.734.995
In the UK 0800 358 2018
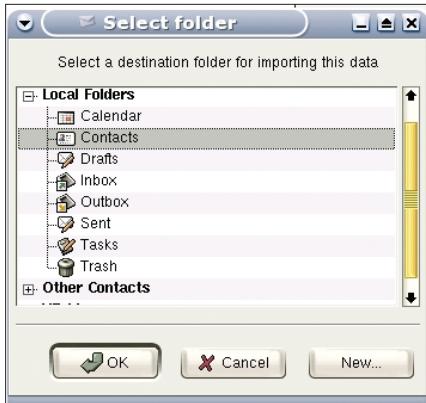**uk@redhat.com**

redhat

Figure 5: Importing KDE address data into Evolution is a slow process – after finishing the import wizard, you are asked where to put the card.

```
dmj1pgk2.slt
```

Change to this subdirectory, locate the Mozilla bookmark file, a HTML file called *bookmarks.html*. Select this file and click on *Save*. Any Mozilla bookmarks you stored in *bookmarks.html* will be overwritten.

To prevent this from happening, you can temporarily store your Konqueror bookmarks in a separate HTML file, and then use the Mozilla *Bookmarks / Edit bookmarks / Tools / Import…* function to import them to Mozilla sometime later. You may need to remove some duplicates. To export bookmarks to Netscape [2], the free, but commercial Mozilla-based browser, select *File / Export / Export Netscape bookmarks* in the KDE Bookmark editor menu. Again, the program will not tell you whether it was able to export your bookmarks, so you
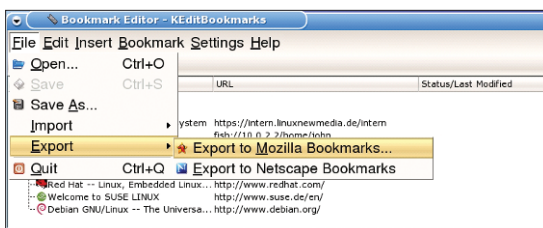

Figure 6: The KDE Bookmark editor makes exporting bookmarks to Mozilla or Netscape child's play.

will have to launch Netscape and take a look, by clicking on *Bookmarks*.

Users of the Gnome browser, Galeon [5], who want to export their bookmarks, are lucky. Galeon uses the same format as Konqueror, the "XML Bookmark Exchange Language" XBEL. To recycle your KDE browser bookmarks, select *Bookmarks / Folder operations / Edit*. This launches the Galeon Bookmark manager. You can then open your Konqueror bookmark file, which is located in the *.kde* directory, by selecting *File / Open*. As the file manager will not normally display **hidden folders**, enter the path manually – this is typically

```
~/.kde/share/apps/⤵
konqueror/bookmarks.xml
```

After opening the file, the program asks you to confirm that you want to overwrite your current Galeon data. If you intend to keep your Gnome browser bookmarks, you might like to save them by selecting *File / Save*.

Bookmarks Back and Forth

If you regularly exchange bookmarks between multiple browsers, you should take a look at the *bkedit* tool at [6], which can handle bookmarks for the Links, Opera, Netscape, and Mozilla browsers. The warning on the website that you need to drag & drop Konqueror 3.x bookmarks to *bkedit* is unfounded, as our test using KEditBookmarks 1.1 showed. We selected *File / Open…* to read *~/.kde/share/apps/konqueror/bookmarks.xml*, specifying *XBEL 1.0* as the *File Type:*, and this worked fine.

There is one exception: the GTK tool had difficulty with some foreign character sets

(see Figure 7). The characters destroyed on importing the bookmarks were not repaired when converted to target formats using *File / Save…* or *Save as…*.

Another minor problem occurred when we attempted to install the tool on a current distribution, such as Suse 9. After unpacking the *bk_edit-0.6.23.tar.gz* archive file, *configure* complained about not being able to find *gtk-config*. In this
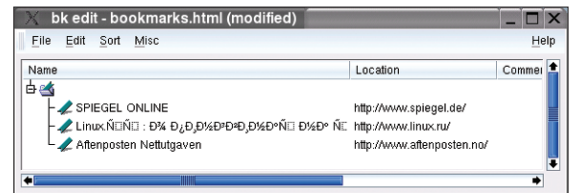

Figure 7: Bkedit converts bookmarks between multiple formats – it has some difficulty with Cyrillic descriptions.

case, you need both to check whether the GTK *dev(el)* package is installed, and if you have the correct version. The tool cannot use GTK2 and demands the previous generation, which Suse provides in the form of the *gtk* and *gtk-devel* packages.

After resolving this issue, you can type *make* to compile, and *make install* to copy the binary, *bkedit*, to */usr/local/bin*.

Although all of these import and export techniques are praiseworthy in their own right, they will only satisfy users who decide to migrate to a specific program. Peaceful coexistence, as in "Let's use Evolution today, and KMail tomorrow, or Konqueror today, and Mozilla tomorrow", where all of these programs can access the same set of personal data, is a thing that not even the world of Open Source can guarantee. That is a pity. After all, if it doesn't work here, where will it work? ∎

INFO

[1] Mozilla: *http://www.mozilla.org/*

[2] Netscape: *http://www.netscape.com/ computing/download/*

[3] Evolution: *http://www.ximian.com/ products/evolution/*

[4] KMail: *http://kmail.kde.org/*

[5] Galeon: *http://galeon.sourceforge.net/*

[6] Bkedit: *http://www2.fht-esslingen.de/ ~clfuitoo/sasnt/bk_edit/*

[7] Aethera: *http://www.thekompany.com/ projects/aethera/*

GLOSSARY

Bookmarks: *These mark Web pages often visited by a user. Web browsers typically display bookmarks in a menu for ease of selection.*
Hidden folder: *Files and directories whose names start with a dot, have a special significance in the Linux filesystem tree. They typically contain configuration data for indi-*

vidual programs. As they tend to cloud the user's view for more important daily tasks, the command line tool ls only displays these names if you specify the appropriate flag. Many graphical file managers and file selection dialog boxes honor this convention.