

Konqueror 3.2

The Browser Challenge

There have been a number of enhancements to the latest version of Konqueror, the KDE file manager and browser. We took a detailed look at this favorite tool to find out just what the new functions are and to show you how to get the best out of the new features.

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For the first time, the general purpose Konqueror [1] browser, one of the KDE core projects, has been able to benefit from cooperating with Apple, whose Safari browser [2] uses the same code base.

Many of the enhancements introduced by Apple developers have now found their way into the new version of Konqueror. The browser renders web pages far more quickly, with a noticeable decrease in display errors. Beside the improvements under the hood, there have also been quite a few improvements with regard to the GUI and ease of use.

Browser Tabs

Konqueror has been capable of tabbed browsing, the ability to display multiple browser tabs within a single program window, for quite a while now. In the latest release, a number of functions have been introduced to facilitate working with multiple subordinate windows.

The tab list below the toolbar includes a button for opening a new tab on the left, and a button for closing the current

tab on the right. You can hold down the middle mouse button to move a tab. The dropdown menu, which pops up when you press the right mouse button, allows you to duplicate tabs. Unfortunately, the *Open in new tab* item has disappeared with version 3.2, so you will need to configure Konqueror to open tabs in the background, if you want to go on using this function.

Hidden Options

To tell Konqueror how to handle tabs, call up the program settings in *Settings / Configure Konqueror*, and set up the Web behavior.

The options are slightly concealed. It might be easier for users if the options were accessible from a dialog box as is the case with Mozilla. You can then tell Konqueror to *Open links in new tab instead of in new window box*, whenever you click a link with the middle mouse button. This greatly improves the usability of the desktop.

Clicking on *Advanced options* takes you to a dialog box that gives you more granular control over tabbed browsing (see Figure 1). The two most important

options here are *Open new tab after current active page* which allows for quick access to a selected link, and *Open as tab in existing Konqueror when URL is called externally*. This prevents the desktop filling up with multiple windows when you read news or just click on mail links while reading news.

Dog-Ears

The developers have once more enhanced the bookmark management in Konqueror. You can now right click a bookmark in the bookmark toolbar to pop-up a menu where you can add a bookmark for the current page to the toolbar, add a bookmark for the current page to the bookmark folder, or delete the selected bookmark or bookmark folder. In addition to this process, you can use the dropdown menu to open the bookmark folder in the bookmark editor, where you can modify the folder. Unfortunately, this does not seem to work if you click on a bookmark folder in the navigation area.

The ability to double-click to store any tabs you have opened as bookmark folders is a useful function which Mozilla

has had for quite a while now. To do so, select *Tab / Bookmark tabs as folder...* You are prompted to type a name for the folder. After doing so, your links will be available as bookmarks.

The Bookmark Editor has also been enhanced. There is now a textbox below the toolbar where you can type a search key with which to search the bookmarks. Pressing Enter starts the search; you can continue the search by pressing Enter again.

Below the tree view with your bookmarks there are a number of text boxes where you can edit the properties of the selected bookmark, the address, description, and a comment, without needing to pop up a dialog box first. Bookmarks can be sorted alphabetically by folder, or collectively. The dropdown menu for the bookmark folder allows you to select folders to be displayed in the bookmark toolbar.

There are new bookmark export features. The Bookmark Editor can now export your collection of bookmarks to Opera and Internet Explorer formats. You can even create a HTML file or print out a list of bookmarks.

Sidebars

The current version of Mozilla supports Netscape compatible *sidebars*. Sidebars or *Web navigation panels* are web pages which have been optimized for viewing in a narrow column, and are regular-

ly updated by the provider. Figure 2 shows an active sidebar displayed as an example.

Konqueror displays sidebars in the navigation area on the left of the main window; you can use buttons for access.

There are two approaches to setting up a sidebar. Often, the content provider will have a link that points you to a script, which in turn installs the sidebar. Before adding a new tab, Konqueror always asks if you want to do so.

The second approach is to click the icon in the toolbar for the navigation panel. Then select *Add New / Web navigation panel*. A new button appears. Right-click this button, and select *Select address* in the dropdown menu. You can then specify the address of the required sidebar in the new dialog screen that appears.

We experienced some occasional bugs when adding Netscape sidebars. Sometimes Konqueror displayed nothing at all, and on one occasion it simply crashed while attempting to add a sidebar.

Miscellaneous

Besides the major changes, there are a number of minor improvements that enhance browsing convenience. One important addition is the ability to spell check text entries within forms. Konqueror calls KDE's spellchecker to do this. Right-clicking a text box within a

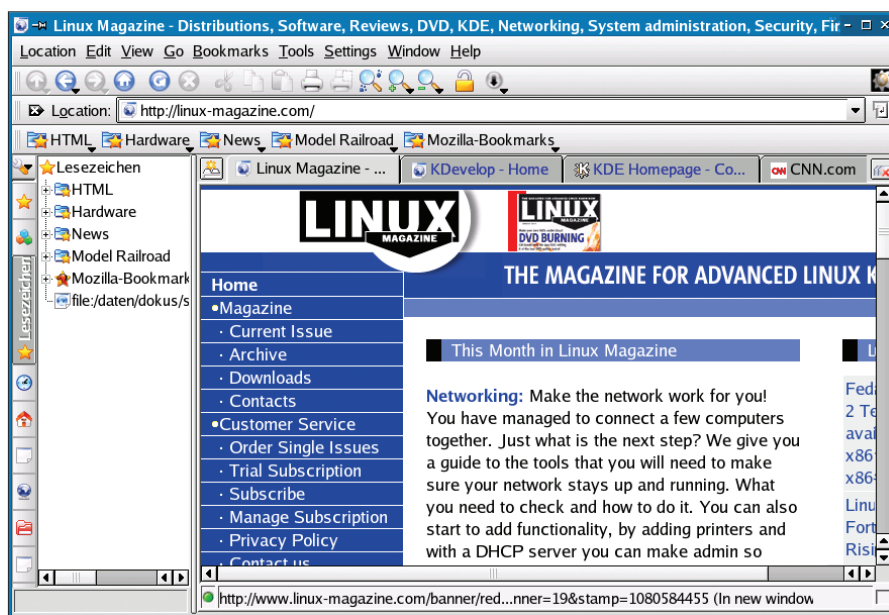


Figure 1: The Konqueror file manager acting as a web browser with different tabs while running under KDE 3.2.



form pops up a menu where you can opt to perform a spelling check. A dialog box suggests replacements for unknown words. Any words in a form that the program cannot find in the dictionary are highlighted in red.

Another of Konqueror's configuration options allows the program to launch more quickly. Select *Settings / Configure Konqueror...*, and then click on *Settings/Performance*. You can check *Preload an instance after KDE startup* to launch a copy of the program when you fire up KDE, and this saves a lot of time when you come to launch a copy of Konqueror.

The latest Konqueror release is undoubtedly a big success. The browser is extremely stable; it renders HTML pages quickly and with a minimum of errors. Our only complaint is that, despite the clean-up operation, many menus and dialogs are still a little overloaded, meaning that users can take a while to find the commands they are looking for. ■

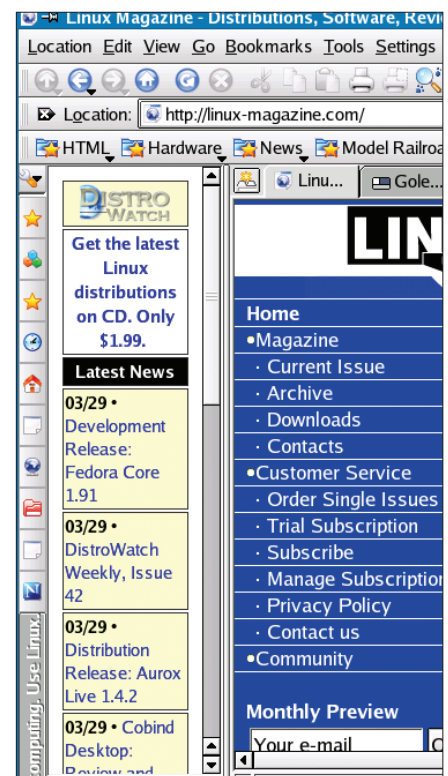


Figure 2: Konqueror showing the content of a Mozilla sidebar.