

## FVWM Themes

# Getting a New Look



Just a few years ago, FVWM [1] was one of the most widely spread window managers. However, if you think that time has passed by the classic desktop, think again. FVWM is not only one of the most highly configurable window managers, it can also use the FVWM themes add-on [3] to quickly and easily change its appearance. All of this is menu-driven, meaning that users who are wary of editing configuration files can avoid the risk.

## Package Manager Based Install

You will find the source code and some pre-compiled binaries for RPM and Debian based distributions at [2]. Suse Linux 9.0 works fine with the *fvwm-2.5.8-2.i386.rpm*, *fvwm-themes-0.7.0-2.noarch.rpm* and *fvwm-themes-extra-0.7.0-2.noarch.rpm* RPM packages, for example.

### Desktopia

Only you can decide how your desktop looks. With deskTOPia we regularly take you with us on a journey into the land of window managers and desktop environments, presenting the useful and the colorful viewers and pretty toys.

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and desktop themes are no exception. FVWM themes give one of the oldest window managers a really new look, and whet one's appetite for more. **BY HAGEN HÖPFNER**

The first package – a developer version of FVWM2 – is required, as the FVWM version provided by Suse Linux is incompatible with the current FVWM themes. The second package contains the theme add-on itself, and the third has a variety of different dressings for the window manager.

Making sure you are root, enter the following command in the download directory:

```
rpm -Uhv fvwm*.rpm
```

to install all three packages. However, you can use your distribution's package manager if preferred. The package manager will automatically install any other libraries required by FVWM themes.

If you intend to build FVWM themes yourself, you need to build the current FVWM version first, followed by *fvwm-themes-0.7.0.tar.bz2* and then finally the extra themes (*fvwm-themes-extra-0.7.0.tar.bz2*). For the first two packages, use the normal commands: *./configure ; make ; su -c make install*. Then use the *fvwm-themes-config* Perl script installed by the previous steps to add the extra themes. The command for doing this is:

```
fvwm-themes-config --site 2
--install fvwm-themes-extra2
-0.7.0.tar.bz2
```

Assuming that the *Installation of fvwm-themes-extra-0.7.0* is completed message appears when you are finished, your desktop wardrobe now has an extra 16 outfits for the window manager.

## Getting Started

The *fvwm-themes-start* takes care of launching the window manager with the

theme extensions. If you log on in text mode, add:

```
exec /usr/bin/fvwm-themes-start
```

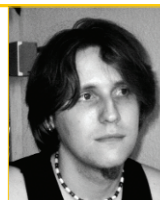
to the *.xinitrc* file in your home directory. If you built FVWM themes from the source code, modify the path to use */usr/local/bin* instead of */usr/bin*. If you log on to the GUI, add the script to the drop-down menu for your login manager. If you have the KDE variant, KDM, you can open the Control Center and select *System Administration | Login Manager* to do this. Click the *Administrator mode* button to assume root privileges, and add a new session type with the *fvwm-themes-start* command in the *Sessions* tab. The next time you log on, the entry should appear in the KDM drop-down menu.

## Up and Running

The shiny new FVWM will launch into the standard look shown in Figure 1. You need to update the selection of themes, before you can choose a new theme. To do so, click the desktop background to access the main menu. Then select

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**Figure 2: Make one from five: “OSX” with title bars from “QNX”, buttons from “ICE”, the “RedmondXP” background, and the “Sa” color scheme.**

(see Figure 3). This tells FVWM to behave just like Windows or the KDE default. Windows are activated by clicking, and keep the focus until you click on another window.

If you prefer to tile open windows, rather than allowing them to overlap, you can additionally enable *Placement is smart if there is free place, stairs if not*. This tells FVWM to cascade windows only when it runs out of room on the desktop. There is also an option to tell the window manager to tile new windows. If it runs out of room, it will ask the user to place the window rather than deciding itself. To do so, FVWM displays a window frame at the cursor position, allowing the user to click to drop the window at the current position.

If you want add theme extensions to modify FVWM even further to reflect your requirements, such as increasing the number of virtual desktops, you have no option, but to use your editor. The FVWM Themes FAQ at [3] provides an introduction to editing FVWM configuration files. Even without manual editing of configuration files, FVWM themes can easily hold their own with other desktops. 

## INFO

- [1] René van Bevern, “The Chameleon”, Linux Magazine, Issue 46, p. 78
- [2] FVWM Themes:  
<http://fvwm-themes.sourceforge.net/>
- [3] FVWM Themes FAQ: <http://fvwm-themes.sourceforge.net/doc/FAQ>

The screenshot shows a window titled "P4WM Themes Global Feel" with a standard Windows XP-style title bar (minimize, maximize, close buttons). The window contains a "Configuration ..." tab. The configuration is organized into three main sections: "Focus Policy", "Options for the Focus", and "Window Placement". Each section contains several options, some of which are checked (indicated by an 'X' in the checkbox).

**Focus Policy**

- ☒ Click on a window to set focus
  - ☐ The Focus follows mouse
  - ☐ The Focus follows mouse but on the root
- ☒ Placement is smart if there is free place, stairs if not
- ☐ Placement is smart if there is free place, active if not
- ☐ Placement is always clever
- ☐ Placement is always clever (percent method)
- ☐ Placement is always active
- ☐ Placement is always stairs

**Options for the Window Placement**

- ☐ New windows take the Focus
- ☐ Take into account the program specified position (Position hint)

**Options for the Focus**

- ☒ The Focus passes a click to the window
- ☐ If a click on a window raises it
- ☐ The "ColorMap" follows the Focus

At the bottom of the dialog is a "Configuration Loaded" button. Below the dialog, there is a row of five buttons: "Save", "Try", "Default", "Help", and "Quit".

- [1] Ren  van Bevern, “The Chameleon”, Linux Magazine, Issue 46, p. 78
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