

Formatting, editing and packing

ODDS AND ENDS

Windows collects a number of useful applications together under the heading of "Accessories". Anja M. Wagner shows you how to find and use these and other odds and ends in KDE

The applications of KDE, and here we are referring to KDE 2.2 from SuSE Linux 7.3, are often very similar to those of Windows, which makes it easier to migrate – but some flows do differ.

Formatting diskettes

For example, in Windows you format a diskette via the desktop and the option Format in the File menu. Try hunting for this option in KDE and you'll be looking in vain. Instead, you must start a little tool named Kfloppy, which you will find under System/Tools/KFloppy. The diskette drive must not be mounted before formatting.

Kfloppy offers a number of setting options. If you have a diskette drive, it bears the drive letter "A" and is recognised and selected as such by Kfloppy in the drop-down menu. This is a concession to users who are accustomed to Windows, because in fact there are no drive letters under Linux. If you have two diskette drives in your



Figure 1: Kfloppy offers many setting options

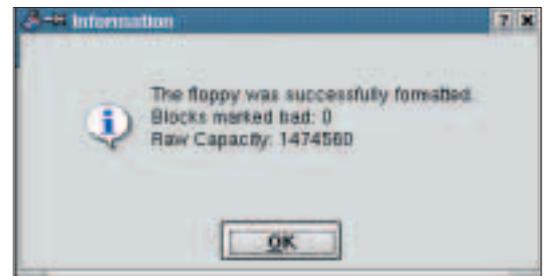


Figure 2: Completion message after full formatting and error check

system, select the one holding the diskette for formatting – either drive A or B – in the drop-down menu. As well as the usual 3.5in diskettes the old 5.25in diskettes are also supported.

In the second drop-down menu, select the memory capacity of the diskette. This is normally HD – High Density (1.44Mb). The older diskettes with DD, Double Density, have more or less disappeared from the market. They store only 720Kb of data. Which sort of diskette you are using is written on the diskette.

When formatting a diskette, a filesystem is created on the data medium. Under Windows, only **FAT** is available. Kfloppy lets you choose between MS-DOS (thus FAT) and the Linux filesystem **ext2**. If you format diskettes in the DOS format, Linux has no problem accessing these data media – it does not work the other way round however: Windows cannot read an ext2-formatted diskette.

As formatting methods, you can choose from fast or full formatting. Fast formatting deletes all data on the diskette, but only works if the diskette was already formatted. The full method also deletes hidden files, checks for errors and can also be used on unformatted diskettes – although these are no longer available. Once you have selected the appropriate settings, click on Format to begin the process – the full formatting can take some time, but you can check the progress via the blue bar.

Check memory capacity

Diskettes are, like hard drives, partitions and CDs, storage media for your system. It is often important to find out how much total memory space is available on a storage medium and how much is already taken

FAT: FAT stands for File Allocation Table and refers to the filesystem of MS-DOS and Windows 9x/Me. The table itself represents the table of contents of a data medium, thus for example a diskette.

ext2: The Second Extended Filesystem (ext2) is used by Linux. It is a more modern filesystem than the Windows FAT system.

Packing and unpacking files

When working with data you will often have to unpack compressed archives. Certainly the most popular compression program in the Windows world is WinZip. KDE offers a number of alternatives. One of these is the classic Ark, which is now very similar to WinZip in look and feel. With this tool, which you will find under System/Tools, you can unpack both zipped files (*.zip) and the compressed files which are common in the Linux World with the endings tar.gz and tar.bz2.

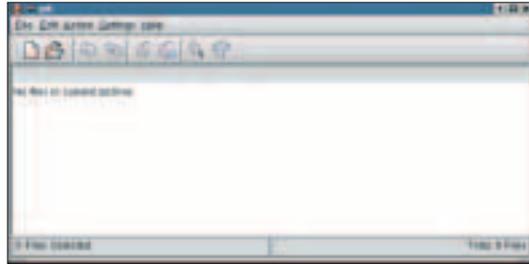


Figure 8: When starting the compression program Ark the main window is still empty

At first, the main window of Ark is empty. Click the Open button or in the menu list select File/Open and open a file to be unpacked in your system. If it is on a diskette, remember to mount the drive first. After confirming with OK, the files in the archive will now appear in the main window of Ark. If you want to unpack the entire contents of the archive into a common folder, you don't need to mark anything. Click on Extract and via Browse select the destination folder. If the destination folder does not yet exist, click on the cog symbol on the far right in the toolbar and select New Directory.

Activate the All option when all the files are to be unpacked. The Selected Files option is only active if you have previously marked one or more files in the main window of Ark. Confirm with OK, and straight away the files are unpacked.

New archives are created via File/New. In the dialog window, specify the directory in which the new archive is to be stored, for example your home directory. In the text line, Location, enter the name and the archive ending. With the ending, e.g. .zip or .tar.gz, you are defining the archive type.

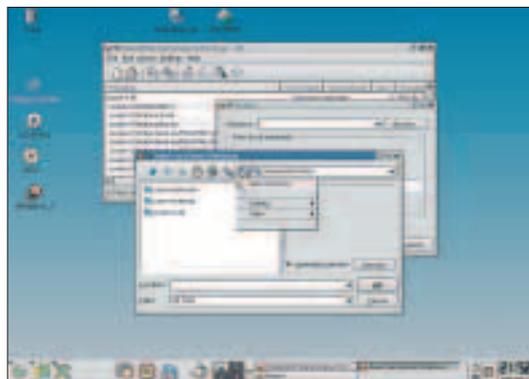


Figure 9: The destination directory, into which files are to be unpacked, can be created directly with Ark

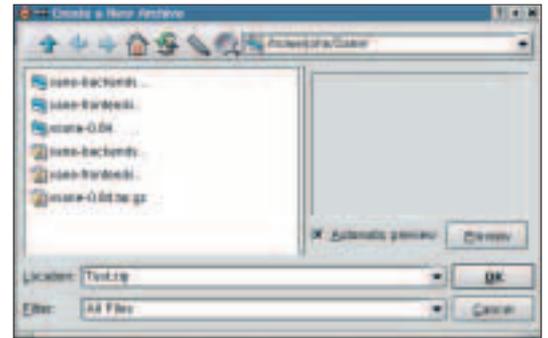


Figure 10: Packing files means creating a new archive and filling it with content

You can fill the new archive with content either via Action/Add File or Action/Add Directory. Select the files and directories in the window which opens, which are to be compressed in the archive. You can also drag the files and directories, if Konqueror is open, via drag and drop into the main window of Ark. The procedure ends with File/Close Archive.

The editor KWrite

There is a wealth of editors to choose from in KDE. KWrite is very similar to the Windows editor, but offers a few additional abilities. Start the program via Office/Editors/Advanced Editor. The settings of KWrite are set, as in most KDE applications, via Settings/Configure editor in the menu list.

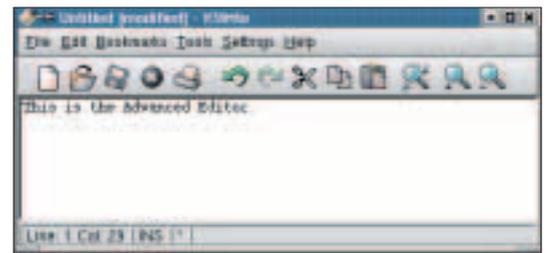


Figure 11: Very similar to the Windows editor but easier to use: KWrite

Here you can change the background colours and the colour of marked sections of text. Font type and size can be adapted to your individual requirements. When working with KWrite the text can also be enlarged or reduced with a click on the magnifying glass symbol in the toolbar.

In the section *Setting/Configure Editor/Edit* you can define after how many characters a line should wrap – the default is 80 characters. The wrapping only becomes active, though, when you invoke *Edit/Apply Word Wrap*.

The width of the tabulator indentation can be varied, as can the number of possible undo steps. One practical function is pre-set in the area Select: all text sections copied with the mouse are automatically buffered. So this saves you the command Copy and you can immediately insert the marked material at the corresponding position in the text. This works the same as under Windows.

KWrite has a spellchecker. In the section headed

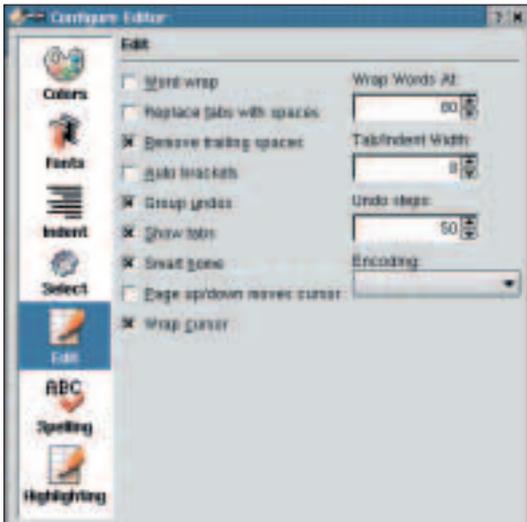


Figure 12: Line break and tabulator width can be adjusted, as can the number of undo-commands

Settings/Configure Editor/Spelling you can choose between Ispell and Aspell.

The Comment tool, which put KWrite close to an office program, is not yet implemented. It is easy to jump to a specific line via Edit/Go to Line. Individual words can be found with Edit/Find, and automatic replacements are possible, via Edit/Replace.

Activating the wheel function of the mouse

Linux recognises all the common mice without any problem during installation. Unfortunately though, in the case of a wheel mouse, the wheel often does not work – a configuration file has to be amended to do so. This is where you can get to know how to work with the editor KWrite at the same time: Log in as Root and start the editor via Office/Editors/Advanced Editor. Activate, in the menu list, File/Open. In the directory tree, select the configuration file `/etc/X11/XF86Config`.

In this file there are two "InputDevice" sections, one for the keyboard and one for the mouse. In the input

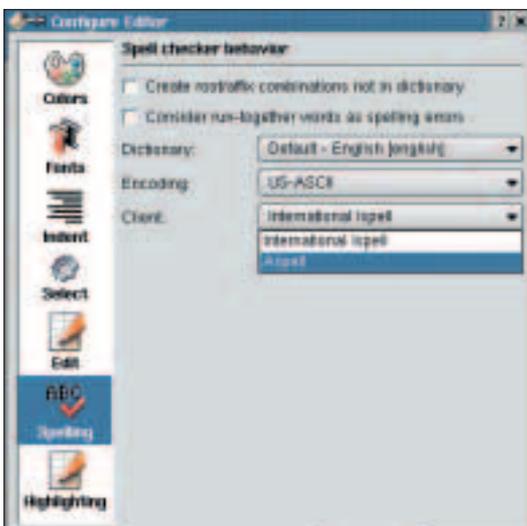


Figure 13: Changing the spellcheckers settings

device section with the "mouse" driver, you have to insert, after the last option, the line:

Option "ZAxisMapping" "4 5"

In the line Option "Device", for USB mice it must state: `/dev/input/mice`, for other mice `/dev/psaux` or `/dev/lmports`. In the Option "Protocol" line it must also say `imps/2`.

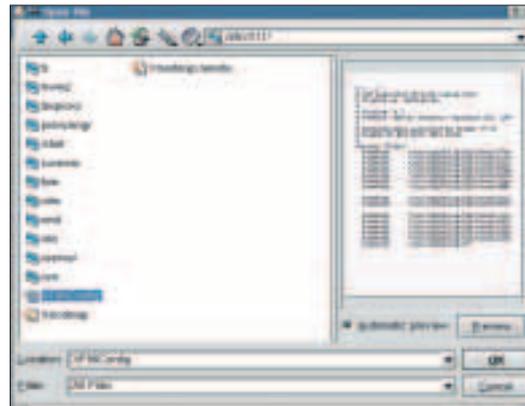
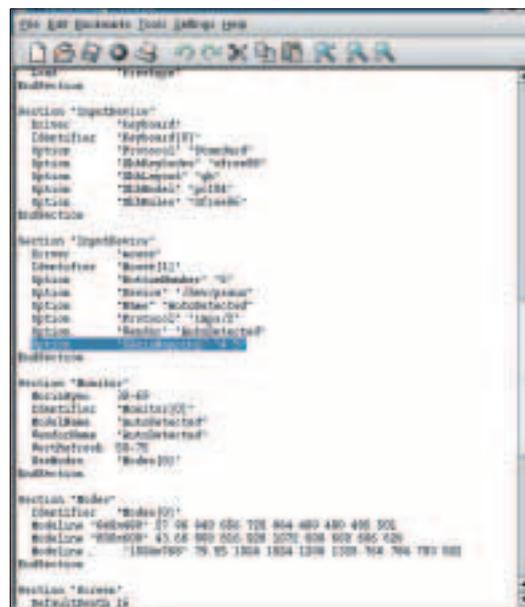


Figure 14: Open the file XF86Config with an editor

The effect of the ZaxisMapping entry is that the movements of the mouse wheel are interpreted as pressing the fourth and fifth mouse buttons.

For a current distribution such as SuSE 7.3 the configuration work is finished at that point. Start the X interface again (log out and then press Ctrl+Alt+Del), and the little wheel on your mouse will work. If you are still working with XFree86 3.x, you will have to start the tool `imwheel` in addition to the procedure described above. You do this for example when starting the work session with the fast starter Alt+F2. Enter "imwheel" and press Enter. We will present some more useful applications which Windows files under "Accessories" in the next issue.



One line has to be inserted into the file for the wheel mouse to work