

11 October 2006

By: Mihai Marinof, Linux Editor



[KMPlayer Review](#)

A KDE-integrated multimedia player

KMPlayer is a multimedia player integrated into the KDE desktop system, capable of playing audio and video formats. However, the main difference between KMPlayer and other multimedia players is that KMPlayer acts as a front-end to multiple multimedia libraries such as MPlayer, Xine or GStreamer. This means that KMPlayer can play everything that MPlayer, Xine and GStreamer will play, all together. Not only that it supports video, audio and recording files, it also supports many other formats such as podcast RSS/Atom, DVD, VCD and VDR. You can also watch TV with KMPlayer, supposing your card is supported by Video4Linux. Installing KMPlayer can be done by compiling the source, from a RPM file or by using a package manager such as Fedora's yum. However, at least in my case, I had a lot of trouble installing it as there were a lot of requirements to be met. Once you install and start it, KMPlayer will detect if you either have MPlayer or Xine installed on your system. If both are detected, switching between them can be easily done by pressing the black arrow pointing down and selecting Xine or MPlayer from the menu entry "Play with...". From the same menu, you can also zoom the video or switch to full screen. Further on the toolbar are the rewind, play, forward, stop, pause and record buttons. The record button allows you to save a stream to a MPEG4 format file. By default, the file is saved as record.avi under your home directory but you can modify the output name and target from the menu Settings > Output settings. If KMPlayer is properly integrated into KDE, video files can be previewed in Konqueror by right-clicking on the video and choosing the appropriate entry from the menu. When you are previewing a video file in Konqueror, there is a button bar right under the video feed. Clicking on the first button, which is a black arrow pointing down, will pop up a menu with several options. The first, "Play with", allows you to select the engine which will play the video (MPlayer, Xine etc). This option is very useful because some video files are rendered better with MPlayer and others are rendered better with Xine (streaming videos, for example). From the same menu, you can bookmark videos, zoom in or out and adjust the brightness and contrast, or switch to full screen. The last option is Configure KMPlayer which opens a preferences window. The preferences window is divided into four sections: General Options, Source, Recording and Output Plugins. The first section is divided as well into four tabs. From the first tab, General, you can switch on or off options like keep size ratio, show console output, loop and so on. In the next tab, Output, you can choose the video and audio driver, from a quite long list. The last two tabs, Xine and MPlayer, allow you to change advanced options for those players. However, it's recommended you leave those as they are, unless you know exactly what you're doing. In the second section, Source, you can configure several options regarding the multimedia file's source, such as the location of it, its subtitles and also, here, you can choose what player to use for its rendering (GStreamer, Mplayer or Xine). A useful feature that you can also find here is the bandwidth managing section where the preferred and maximum bitrate can be set. Besides the URL source, KMPlayer can be used for playing other multimedia formats such as VCD, DVD and can even be used with a TV tuner to output a cable TV source. KMPlayer can be also used for recording both the audio and video source. For the recording process, several options can be configured. You can choose the recorder, the arguments for the recorder and where to save the recorded file. As for postprocessing, KMPlayer supports several postprocessing filters, gathered in the Custom Preset tab. Moreover, it also supports deinterlacing if you ever want/need your rendered file to be compressed. **The Good** Overall, KMPlayer is a useful application for viewing multimedia files in the KDE environment. It supports a lot of formats and sources and offers a nice collection

of plugins and configuration options in order to make the video experience as pleasant as possible. **The Bad**KMPlayer is a front-end to several multimedia players. Because each of these players has its own share of features and options, it's impossible to integrate every single one of them into KMPlayer. So basically, the user is missing a lot of Mplayer, Gstreamer or Xine's features by using the KMPlayer front-end. Also, KMPlayer tries to make the multimedia experience a pleasant one but unfortunately, some of its features (such as recording) are rather difficult to configure in order to work properly. **The Truth**Because it has a GUI interface, KMPlayer makes viewing multimedia files easier, but being just a front-end for more than one program at a time, facilitating this process generates the loss of certain (some) functions and options of these programs. *Check out some screenshots below:*