

12 December 2006

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KPresenter Review

Slide presentation application.

KOffice is an office suite for the K Desktop Environment which includes a number of components, each unique and especially designed for a certain type of work. Each of its components has been released under an open sources license, meaning they're free to use. Unfortunately, not rarely does KOffice get overlooked and ignored in favor of its rival office suite, OpenOffice. Some would think it should be this way, considering OpenOffice offers a wider set of features, corporate backing and not to mention cross-platform compatibility which enables users to work with OpenOffice regardless of their current operating system. However, with every new release, KOffice gets more features, more usability and more power, slowly but surely getting closer to OpenOffice's level. Aside from a word processor and spreadsheet application, the third most important application in an office suite is the presentation software. KOffice has created an application called KPresenter for creating slide presentations (often referred as "Power Point presentations because of the large number of people using Microsoft Office's Power Point presentation software"). This application allows adding text and images and also allows placing them anywhere on the page. You'll notice some similarities to KWord, on one hand because it uses the same text engine and on the other hand, because it follows the design rules: slides in a presentation are listed on the left in a small pane, while the current slide appears in the main pane on the right. Several slide transitions and options regarding a presentation can be found in the Tools menu. The list of slides are divided into two tabs, one that shows a preview of each slide, while the outline tab shows a collapsible tree view containing all the elements on each slide. Once an element has been selected in the main pane, its items are automatically highlighted in the tree pane, allowing the user to easily edit their properties by using the right-click menu in the tree pane. Moreover, KPresenter displays notes below the main pane, which are not confined to a limited number of lines, unlike in OpenOffice's Impress. Making a slide presentation using KPresenter is a pretty straight-forward process, especially if you had any past experience with other presentation applications. By default, KPresenter will open the template window at its start-up, allowing you to choose from a quite large number of templates. These templates are sorted into five categories: Letter, A4, Legal, Screen Presentation and Screen. The first category includes a couple of empty templates, as well as presentation templates with a page title and one or two column text or not text at all. The rest of the categories include the same type of templates but on different sizes of pages. The Screen Presentations category, however, contains some nice, colorful presentations. If you have created a custom template for a presentation and you'd like to use it again in the future slides, KPresenter allows you to save the current presentation template from the Template Manager, found under the File menu. Simply select which group your template should be part of (you could create a new group only for templates created by yourself) and finally, give your template a name and press OK to save it. Once you've chosen which template to use for your presentation, you'll notice some innovations which are minor as individual but their cumulative effect increases KPresenter's functionality level and makes it easier to master. For instance, KPresenter makes selectable both slide layouts and background templates, instead of separating them. KPresenter provides quite a few drawing tools such as straight lines, polygons, Bezier curves and ellipses. All of these can be resized, rotated, colored or filled with gradients. The freehand drawing tool only allows you to change the color of the drawing but not the size as well. Page backgrounds can contain either a picture or a gradient fill. Individual objects can be animated. In fact, you can specify how they appear and disappear, the speed of the effect and a custom sound

effect. Unfortunately, movie files aren't (yet) supported. Moreover, the transition effects between slides only include movement effects, there are no crossfades or fade to black. **The Good**KPresenter is a quite powerful slide presentation software which includes all the basic features for creating presentations, as well as a powerful text handling, thanks to the KWord text engine. It also includes some extra features, some of them quite impressive such as the ability to export slideshows as HTML, which creates a set of webpages with images on each slide, notes and navigation control. It also supports several slide presentation applications format, including support for importing Microsoft Power Point files. **The Bad**KPresenter's set of features is rather narrow compared to those offered by other rival office suites (OpenOffice). It doesn't offer support for including video files in the slideshows and even though it does offer support for importing Microsoft Power Point files, this support is quite poor and most likely, it will destroy your Power Point presentation once you try to import it into KPresenter. Also, support for exporting presentations into Power Point format totally lacks. **The Truth**Many of the difficult features, such as drawing tools and text handling have already been implemented. However, if the trivial features such as the ability to use the mouse cursor as a pointer through a slide show or a better support for importing Power Point files would be here, KPresenter would be much more usable and would have definitely been used by more people. *Check out some screenshots below:*