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KWord Review

A powerful word processor from KOffice suite.

There are several word processors available for Linux, each with its own goals and features. Some are open source software, some are based on open source software and some are proprietary. You should choose the best suitable word processing application based on your daily activities and necessities. For example, if you're writing something small or informal like a few notes or an email draft, you definitely don't need to use a fancy word processor. On the other hand, if you're working in a stable and productive environment whose success depends on the manner of your writing, you'll probably go with a proprietary word processor like Corel's WordPerfect. Otherwise, KWord will make a perfect word processing tool for light writing.

Interface Most of word processors show the influence of Microsoft Word in their interface. Fortunately, KWord's interface is the less imitative and far cleaner than either Writer's (OpenOffice) or AbiWord's (Gnome Office). Moreover, KWord's runs faster than the other two, the starting process being sped up by the template screen. Once you've reached the editing window, you'll notice that its toolbar contains basic options, leaving the more complex options and features for the menu items. Also, you'll notice a Document Structure pane in the left side that keeps track of multiple frames. Overall, KWord's layouts are geared towards making rich media, highly formatted print media but also it's equipped to handle writing projects in general.

Styles Word processor styles are tools that enable users to easily configure numbering, line spacing, paragraph spacing, tabulators, borders and so on for each paragraph. By default, KWord offers only a few styles to choose from but as compensation, it allows you to create more styles by using the Style Manager. The large number and variety of functions available in Style Manager for each style is quite impressive, as it allows you to change many options such as font name, decoration, shadow, indent, spacing, layout, bullets and more. It also shows a small preview in most of the tabs.

Templates Like styles, templates offer a way to save time by planning and re-using the structure of recent documents. When you start KWord, by default it will ask you to choose from a bunch of already created templates. These templates are based on page size, orientation, margins and columns. You can either choose from an already saved template, or select "custom document" and configure your own values. Alternatively, you can add a new template by selecting File / Create Template From Document.

Inserting Objects KWord supports most types of objects. Its list includes objects such as links (local, hyperlink, mail, bookmark), notes, variables, expressions, tables, pictures, text frames, formulas and more. Linked graphics are described by KWord as "in-line", therefore disallowing linked graphics to be converted to embedded ones.

Bullets and numbers KWord include all the possible options related to positioning bullets and numbers in relation to list items but these options are available only as styles from KWord's toolbar button. The good news, however, is that cutting and pasting list items into new positions or new documents remain uncorrupted as long as you only use KWord.

Frames Most word processors are page orientated but this is not the case with KWord, which uses frames instead. This enables the user to write his text into a set of frames, where the normal pages based setup are emulated by showing one frame per page. The Document Structure pane shows how frames are nested and allows the user to extensively customize each frame, quickly building documents of impressive complexity. Although KWord's frames have fewer options, they are a lot easier to work with compared with other word processors' frames.

Headers and footers Headers and footers can be enabled or disabled in documents from the Format menu. They can be configured to either be the same for the whole document, or to be different for the first page or all pages. To edit the header or footer, you'll only have to

click on them and all the pages will automatically be updated. They also resize themselves if you add or remove text. And the best part is that you won't have to switch to another mode, like in other word processors in order to edit them.

Tables Because KWord is a frame orientated word processor, the tables are created as frames which means that every table cell is a frameset, enabling the user to easily resize and move the table. Moreover, if a text in a table cell doesn't fit anymore, the cell gets automatically resized.

Autocorrection One of the most important feature of a word processor is its ability to find spelling errors in your writing. This is an important feature because many of us, even if we do have an editorial staff to look over our work, the human eye can make mistakes from time to time, whereas a properly configured electronic proofing tool misses nothing and does not make any mistakes. The best aspect of electronic spell checking is its on the fly scanning. This tool checks your spelling as you type, enabling you to immediately catch errors and edit them. KWord also offers an Auto completion feature which, if correctly configured, will suggest words when at least the first 5 letters have been typed.

Import/export filter KWord offers the ability to load data from non-KOffice documents but the success of the import/export process will vary from format to format. Also, KWord can save data to non-KOffice data files, allowing you to interact with people who use other operating system and word processors. KWord supports importing/exporting Abiword, AmiPro, HTML, Oasis OpenDocument, OpenOffice Writer, Palm Document, plain text, RTF, WML, and WordPerfect files, while only supports importing Applixword, KPresenter, Microsoft Powerpoint and Word, PDF and XML files. As for the exporting support, KWord can easily export SGML and TeX document files.

The Good KWord is a word processor for GNU/Linux with all the features included for word processing. Besides the basic features such as writing, deleting, cut/copy/paste, finding/replacing text, KWord also offers more extended and advanced writing features like paragraph settings, bulleting, headers and footers, tables and autocorrection/autocomplete for your spelling. It also supports importing and exporting documents from many other word processors.

The Bad Even though KWord is a great word processor with amazing features, it still doesn't offer the same power and complexity as OpenOffice's Writer (free) or Corel's WritePerfect (proprietary).

The Truth KWord is a WYSIWYG word processor and desktop publishing program. Its tools and layout are geared toward making rich-media, highly formatted print media, although it's also equipped to handle general writing projects. However, KWord is not as advanced as other word processors and therefore, it shouldn't be suitable for very long and complex documents such as doctorate theses. Still, it's almost perfect for daily use by students or office workers.

Check out some screenshots below: