

31 July 2006

By: Bogdan Radulescu, Editor, Linux Software Reviews



[KmPg2 Review](#)

Probably the easiest way to DVD compliant video!

In my latest review I've presented a wizard for creating DVDs from MPEG2 files. The software was all nice and stuff, but had one inconvenient: the use of MPEG2 files. If you want to get your video files on a DVD with that wizard you'll have to use an encoder. Probably the best solution is KmPg2, another wizard that can convert all sorts of video files to DVD compatible MPEG2 files. KmPg2 is developed by the same person as KDE DVD Authoring Wizard and I can easily say that's a very similar piece of software even though it serves totally different purposes. The similarities between these two are related to the interface that was built with komander and has the same style regarding the layout, the size, the font and even the help feature, which hasn't been implemented in this one too. This is a very good thing, because the interface is very easy to use and, as far as I can see, these wizards are complementary. For the sake of completeness, you should know that the wizard uses mjpeg tools for encoding the video. MJPEG Tools are pretty powerful and have an interesting set of features, but the wizard uses only their encoding capabilities. In the KmPg2 package there is another interesting wizard that is very useful for interactively creating optimization profiles for specific types of video materials. The processing tools are pretty powerful and can really make a difference in terms of improving the quality of the material that is encoded. When you open a video file, the software tries to detect information like video and audio format, playing time, resolution, intended TV systems and whether the video is interlaced or not. This info is cool to have, even though I can't really figure out a use for it. The next step is to add the subtitle and select a font for it. The available fonts are the same as the ones in KDE DVD Authoring Wizard, but the options regarding other settings to the fonts are even less. After the video file and fonts are selected, you'll be asked for a storage folder. An interesting thing is that the wizard automatically calculates if the space required is enough and prints the result on the screen. This doesn't work very well since I haven't got to the point of selecting the desired bitrate. We've now reached the step where we select the desired profile for image processing. This is a very nice feature, but you should be aware that this process takes a lot of time. If the quality of the content to be processed is good enough for you, I strongly advice you to select no filtering. At some point you'll reach the window where an image aspect ratio and a television system should be selected. This wizard presents a little more features than the previous one, but there's still room for more. The supported aspect ratios are 4:3, 16:9 and 2.35:1. I like it that you can preview your movie with the aspect ratio you've selected and see if you're happy with the results. Now you're at the color correction window. Here you can adjust the brightness, the saturation and the contrast, and then play the preview to see if the results meet your expectations. After this you are presented with the window for setting the image quality. You have two options here: either to select a value for a constant bitrate or to select one for the quality percentage when you use the variable bitrate. As a last result for obtaining a good result for the encoded content you are presented with some advanced settings. This is the only place where you need to have some strong knowledge related to encoding, if you really want something out of this window that is. In my opinion, the best think about this step is that you can add custom mpeg2enc command line parameters. If you don't recognize any of the stuff here, you can just click the next button to get to the step where you can preview 10 seconds of your next-to-be-encoded video file. If you're happy, click the next button and then just begin encoding. On my Athlon XP 2200+ processor, this seemed to last forever. It is definitely not something I want to do while I'm working on the PC. I'll reserve this task to be done during the night, because while I sleep I can't be frustrated that my PC doesn't all

the resources assigned to encoding. An interesting feature is that the encoding process can be run with low priority, but I've tried this and it still makes my PC almost unusable. Another interesting feature should be something that shows the progress on the screen. This didn't work in my case and I was a bit disappointed, because I can't know whether I have to wait an hour or ten for the encoding to be done. Up to this step I was very happy with this wizard and I wanted to give it 5 stars, but because of those last downsides I can't do it anymore.

The GoodThe wizard is very easy to use and, in the same time, it combines an interesting set of features. It's a pretty powerful software that makes good partnership with KDE DVD Authoring Wizard. **The Bad**The bugs in the last window set it back a lot. I don't know why the progress isn't shown but it's very important for the comfort of it's users. I wish I had more aspect ratios and more fonts. **The Truth**I'm pretty happy with the wizard and I recommend it to anyone who doesn't need fancy options or a lot of control. It's a perfect application for easily encoding video content to MPEG2, without being worried that you have no previous experience with encoding. *Check out some screenshots below:*