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Konversation Review

IRC client for KDE



Most of the people discover IRC, among other things, while using the Internet for the first time. Some of them get over it very fast; others remain "IRC addicts" for a long time. There are also a lot of people that use Linux and are either some kind of IRC lovers, or just need IRC for a short while for who knows what reasons. Konversation is an IRC client for Linux, designed for all kinds of IRC users, novices or advanced. Even though Konversation has been built for KDE, unfortunately, it's not included in it. This means you'll have to manually install it. The installation can be completed rather easily if you're using a RPM-based distribution such as Fedora or Ubuntu. Simply use you distro's package manager to issue the Konversation installation (yum install konversation for Fedora or apt-get install konversation for Ubuntu). Once installed, the first time you run it, you will see the "Edit Preferences" dialog. Here, you can set various settings about your IRC identity and the servers you want to connect to. The first page contains the servers list, by default only one is already available, Freenode. This is Konversation's home server. Of course, you can add your custom servers very easily by pressing the "New Server" button. You can select a server that Konversation will auto connect at start-up by selecting the server, clicking "Edit.." and checking "Connect on application start up". It's also possible to supply a default channel, which will be opened after the connection to the IRC server has been established. In the "Identity" section, you can enter your real name and nicknames. Among many, many other features, Konversation offers an easy auto-authentication on connect. Also, from the "Identity" section, enter the Service nickname and your nickname password. The service can be either NickServ, Q or many other service nicknames. Other preferences that can be set here are the quit and kick message. From what I've noticed, if you configure some advanced preferences, you will have to quit Konversation and start it again in order for your preferences to be applied. After the preferences' customization, it's time to connect to the IRC server. Simply select the server from the list and press the "Connect" button. After the connection messages and notices, it's time to join a channel. The easiest way is to type "/join #channel" in the main window. If you're not sure what channel to join, just use the channel listing feature. To retrieve this list, go to "Window" menu, click "Channel List" and press "Refresh List". This will issue the "/list" command to the server, getting the list with all the channels created on that IRC server. Be aware though, as this can take a rather long time if your connection isn't very fast or if you have joined a very large IRC server with thousands of channels. Once you have joined the desired channel, Konversation will show you the basic information about that channel, such as its topic, its modes and the time it was created. The channels tab can be positioned by every one's preference, in the top, bottom, left or right section of the Konversation window. Also, in a channel window on the right, Konversation will list all the users currently on that channel. You can interact with all of them at once by typing in the channel window, or you can start a private chat by double clicking the person's nickname. Moreover, you can interact in different other ways through the menu that pops-up if you right click a person from the list and by choosing to send files or, if you are in a channel operation, to kick or ban that person. From the same right-click menu, you can add persons from the nicklist to your address book, as Konversation has another useful feature: KAddressBook integration through DCOP. Konversation can be configured through the "Configure" dialog available from the "Settings" > "Configure Konversation" menu. In this window, you will have a lot of sections in the left and the section's options in the right. Among the options you will have available for customization, there's the "Nicklist themes", "Colors", "Fonts", "Connection", "Ignore" where you can add or

delete users that you don't have to deal with, "Logging", "DCC", "Highlight" where you set Konversation to react with a sound when your nicknamed has been said in one of the channels, and the "Watched Nicknames" which is something like "Notify" in mIRC. Here, you can add the persons you would like Konversation to react once they join the IRC server. For advanced users, there's the ability to use scripting within Konversation. Scripting in Konversation is rather easy, simply add shell scripts in the apps-directory of Konversation. Make them executable and then simply run them with the "/exec" command. Personal scripts are to be placed into ~/.kde/share/apps/konversation/scripts, systemwide scripts into \$KDEDIR/share/apps/konversation/scripts. If you want to create your own scripts, the /exec command passes at least three arguments to your script which can be accessed in bash as \$1, \$2 and \$3. The arguments are: *\$1 the DCOP port of Konversation* *\$2 the IRC-server connected to* *\$3 the target, that is, the IRC-channel you're currently on* You'll need the DCOP port to be able to influence Konversation. For example, telling Konversation to say something on the channel is done by: *dcop \$1 Konversation say "\$2" "Hello, World"* If you provide more input than just /exec and the scriptname, the extra text is broken into pieces by separating out each word delimited by spaces. For example: */exec mycmd one two three four* is available in the mycmd script as the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh argument, accessible in bash as \$4, \$5, \$6 and \$7. If you are going to make scripts that output a lot of lines, beware of saying them too fast on a channel, because otherwise, you'll flood the channel and you'll end up having problems with the persons in that channel. **The Good** Konversation is an IRC client written in Qt/KDE which means it will run pretty smoothly if you use the KDE environment. It has a lot of features both for the beginner and the advanced IRC user. It supports multiple servers and identities for each one, it also supports file transfers and text decorations and colors. All that come with an easy to use and highly configurable interface. Moreover, it supports scripting but this is, more or less, targeted at advanced users. **The Bad** As for the bad parts, Konversation was missing some major functionality in the past versions but all have been corrected or added so I couldn't find anything specifically wrong with the last version of Konversation. However, it still might not have just every feature an IRC client should have, that's why it still doesn't convince everyone to drop Kopete or Xchat in order to use it as the preferred IRC client. **The Truth** Konversation is most likely the IRC client you will want to use once you've decided to join an IRC channel, while using Linux. It offers all the features you will need once you entered the IRC world. However, there is always room for improvements. For the moment, every Linux IRC client is able to do just about everything Konversation is able to do and even more, so a mass switch from Kopete, X-chat, etc to Konversation is not likely to happen in a near future. *Check out some screenshots below:*