

The Dolphin Handbook

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The Dolphin Handbook

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Abstract

Dolphin is the default file manager for KDE, designed with usability as a primary focus.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Dolphin is KDE's default file manager. It aims to improve usability at the user interface level. Dolphin focuses only on being a file manager whereas Konqueror, which was KDE's default file manager in KDE 3 and can still be used for file management, is a universal viewer for many file types.

This development approach allows for concentrating on optimizing the user interface for the specific task of file management.

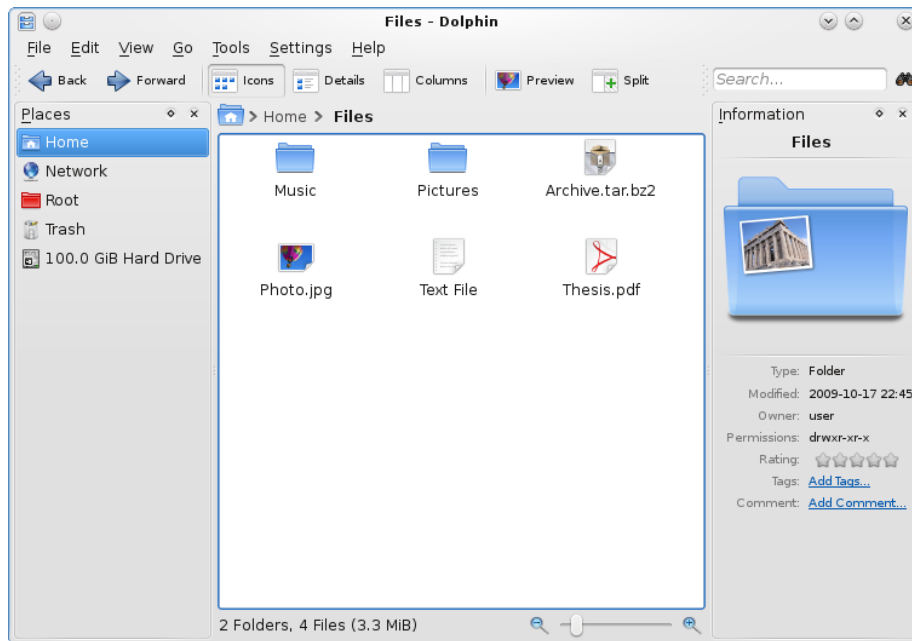
Please report any problems or feature requests to the Dolphin author via the bug report dialog. This is accessible from the Help → Report Bug... menu of the application.

Chapter 2

Using Dolphin

2.1 Dolphin User Interface

The screenshot below shows Dolphin's default user interface:



Dolphin's default user interface.

The elements of the default user interface are:

- The menu bar, which provides access to all commands and configuration options. See the [Command Reference](#) for a list of all menu commands.

- The toolbar, which can be used for quick access to frequently used actions. The toolbar can be customized by clicking it with the right mouse button and choosing [Configure Toolbars...](#) from the context menu or via [Settings](#) → [Configure Toolbars...](#) from the main menu.
- The location bar, which always displays the path to the current folder. It can be switched between two different modes, see the [section on the location bar](#) for details.
- The [view](#), which shows all files and folders in the current folder.
- The [Places panel](#), which provides quick access to bookmarked locations and disks or other media.
- The [Information panel](#), which shows a preview of the current folder or the file which is currently hovered with the mouse and can be used for rating the file and adding tags or comments to it.
- The status bar. It displays the name, size and type of the file which is currently hovered with the mouse, or the number and size of the files which are selected. At the right, there is a zoom slider that permits to adjust the size of the icons in the view.

2.2 The Dolphin View

2.2.1 Using the View

The view displays all files and folders in the current folder. These items can be accessed or manipulated in different ways:

- A file or folder can be opened by clicking it with the left mouse button (or double-clicking, if [Double-click to open files and folders](#) is enabled in the [Navigation section of the settings](#)).
- Clicking any item or the white area around the items with the right mouse button opens a context menu which provides access to many frequently used actions for the item or the current folder, respectively.
- If the left mouse button is pressed on an item, but not immediately released, the item can be dragged and dropped in another folder in the current view or in another Dolphin view (in another Dolphin window or in the same window if the view is split, see below) to move or copy it or to create a symbolic link. Items can even be dropped in another application to open them in this application.

Dolphin remembers the history of visited folders. To navigate backward or forward in the history, the corresponding buttons in the toolbar can be used:



The Back and Forward buttons in the toolbar can be used to navigate in the history.

2.2.2 Dolphin View Appearance

The toolbar contains buttons to control the appearance of the view:



The buttons in the toolbar which control the appearance of the view.

All the settings discussed below and other options concerning, e.g., the sorting of the files in the current folder can also be modified in the View menu and in the [View Properties dialog](#). By default, these settings are remembered for each folder separately. This behavior can be changed in the [General](#) section of the settings.

2.2.2.1 View Modes

The first three buttons in the above screenshot switch between Dolphin's view modes.

- In the Icons view, which is the default, files will be represented by an icon that visualizes the file type, and a folder icon will be shown for subfolders.
- In the Details view, the folder contents are displayed as a detailed list which contains the name, size and last modification time of each item. Additional columns can be added by clicking a column header with the right mouse button.

The details view offers the option Expandable Folders, which can be enabled in the [View Modes section of the settings](#). This option permits to view the current directory in a tree-like fashion: Each subfolder of the current folder can be 'expanded' by clicking on the + button next to it.

- In the Columns view, multiple levels of the folder structure can be viewed at once. If a subfolder is clicked, a new pane showing the contents of that folder is opened at the right edge of the view.

2.2.2.2 Preview

If Preview is enabled, the icons are based on the actual file or folder contents. E.g., for images a scaled down preview of the image is shown.

2.2.2.3 Split

If Split is clicked, two views are shown which can display the contents of different folders. This can be convenient for moving or copying files.

2.2.3 Selecting Items in the View

There are several ways to select items in the view. Once a group of items is selected, all actions, such as Cut, Copy, Move to Trash, and drag and drop operations, affect all selected items.

2.2.3.1 Selecting Items Using the Mouse

- You can press the left mouse button somewhere in the view and draw a rectangle around a group of items before releasing the button. This will select all items in the rectangle and clear the previous selection. If the **Shift** key is pressed during the selection process, the previous selection is kept.
- If the **Ctrl** key is pressed while an item is clicked with the left mouse button, the selection state of this item is toggled. If the **Ctrl** key is pressed while a rectangle is drawn around a group of items as described above, the selection state of all items in the rectangle will be toggled.
- If the **Shift** key is pressed while an item is clicked with the left mouse button, all items between the previous current item and the clicked item will be selected.
- If Show selection marker is enabled in the [Behavior tab of the General section of the settings](#), a small + or - button appears in the top left corner of the item which is currently hovered with the mouse. Clicking this sign selects or deselects the item, respectively.

2.2.3.2 Selecting Items Using the Keyboard

- If an arrow key, **Page Up**, **Page Down**, **Home**, or **End** is pressed, the new current item is selected, and the previous selection is cleared.
- If the **Ctrl** key is held while one of the above keys is pressed, the selection remains unchanged.
- If the **Shift** key is held while one of the above keys is pressed, all items between the previous current item and the new current item will be selected.
- If Ctrl+Space is pressed, the selection state of the current item is toggled.
- Shift+A selects all items in the view.
- Ctrl+Shift+A toggles the selection state of all items in the view.

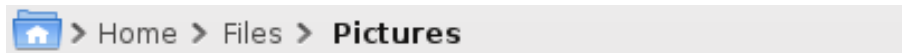
2.3 Location Bar

The location bar, which can be found on top of Dolphin's view, displays the path to the current folder. The location bar has two modes.

2.3.1 Bread Crumb Mode

In the 'bread crumb' mode, which is the default, each folder name in the path to the current folder is a button which can be clicked to quickly open that folder. Moreover, clicking the '>' sign to the right of a folder opens a menu which permits to quickly open a subfolder of that folder.

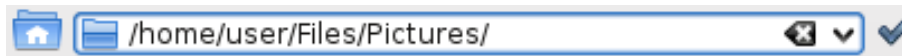
The icon in front of the path can be clicked in both modes to open a menu which offers quick access to 'places' and storage media. You can add and edit places, see the [section about the Places Panel](#) for details.



Location bar in bread crumb mode.

2.3.2 Editable Mode

When in bread crumb mode, clicking in the grey area to the right of the path with the left mouse button switches the location bar to the 'editable' mode, in which the path can be edited using the keyboard. To switch back to bread crumb mode, click the check mark at the right of the location bar with the left mouse button.



Location bar in editable mode.

2.4 Panels

Dolphin allows a number of panels to be placed next to the view. These can be enabled in View → Panels. By clicking and dragging a panel title, the panel can be moved to a different position.

2.4.1 Places

The Places panel is located at the left of the window by default. The Places panel shows any locations you have bookmarked. It also shows any disk or media attached to the computer.

The easiest way to add a folder to the Places panel is to drag it and drop it in the panel. Moreover, you can click inside the panel with the right mouse button and choose Add Entry... from the context menu.

2.4.2 Information

The Information panel shows extended information about the selected item(s), including size, type, and date of last modification. It also features a large preview of the selected item and permits to assign a rating, tags, and comments to it.

2.4.3 Folders

The Folders panel shows a tree view structure of the file system. It only shows folders. Clicking a folder with the left mouse button opens this folder in the Dolphin view.

2.4.4 Terminal

This panel contains a terminal. The terminal will open at the folder currently shown in the Dolphin view. Changing the folder in the active Dolphin view will update the working folder of the terminal. The terminal only works with local media. Note: Changing folder in the terminal will not affect the Dolphin view.

2.5 Quick Tips

The following are a number of tips to save time when using Dolphin.

2.5.1 Quick Bookmarking

To quickly create a bookmark in the Places panel for the current folder, right click in the work space and click Add to Places in the context menu.

2.5.2 Finding Files

Dolphin is capable of searching for files. If Ctrl+F is pressed or using Tools → Find File..., KFind will open already set up to search within the current folder and any sub-folders.

2.5.3 Mounting Storage Media

A quick way to mount Storage Media is to click on the device in the Places panel. This will mount and open the device in Dolphin.

2.5.4 Undo Actions

Dolphin is capable of undoing changes you have made to files. For example if you moved a file to the Trash, Dolphin can undo this and move it back to its original location. To undo an action, press **Ctrl+Z** or select **Edit → Undo: (action name)** in the menu, e.g. **Undo: Rename**.

2.5.5 Renaming A Batch Of Files

Dolphin is capable of renaming a number of files at the same time. Each file will have the file name specified, including a number, e.g., **Image1.jpg**, **Image2.jpg**, **Image3.jpg**. This can be useful, e.g., for pictures taken with a digital camera.

If you wish to rename a batch of files, first select the files to be renamed. This can be done by pressing the left mouse button and drawing a rectangle around the files to be renamed before releasing it, or by holding **Ctrl** and clicking each file to be renamed (see [Selecting Items in the View](#) for more details on item selection). Then open the batch-rename dialog by pressing **F2** or via the File menu: **File → Rename...**

Then enter the name you wish to give the files. The **#** character must be present within the name. The files will then be renamed, where the **#** character is replaced by a different number for each file.

2.5.6 Comparing A Selection Of Files

If the **Kompare** application is installed, you can use it to see the differences between two files.

First select the two files to be compared. Then launch the **Kompare** application via the Tools menu: **Tools → Compare Files**. **Kompare** will then open showing the differences between the files.

2.5.7 Filtering Files

Dolphin is capable of filtering files, i.e., showing only those items in the view whose name contains a given text. For example, if you wish to show only the MP3 files within a folder, you could filter for **' .mp3'**. This would then filter out all files whose name does not contain **' .mp3'**.

To filter files, first enable the filter bar, either by pressing **Ctrl+I** or via the menu: **Tools → Show Filter Bar**. You can then enter the text to be filtered in the filter bar. The filter bar can be disabled either by pressing **Esc**, or using the menu: **Tools → Show Filter Bar**.

Chapter 3

Configuring Dolphin

Dolphin distinguishes two different kinds of settings:

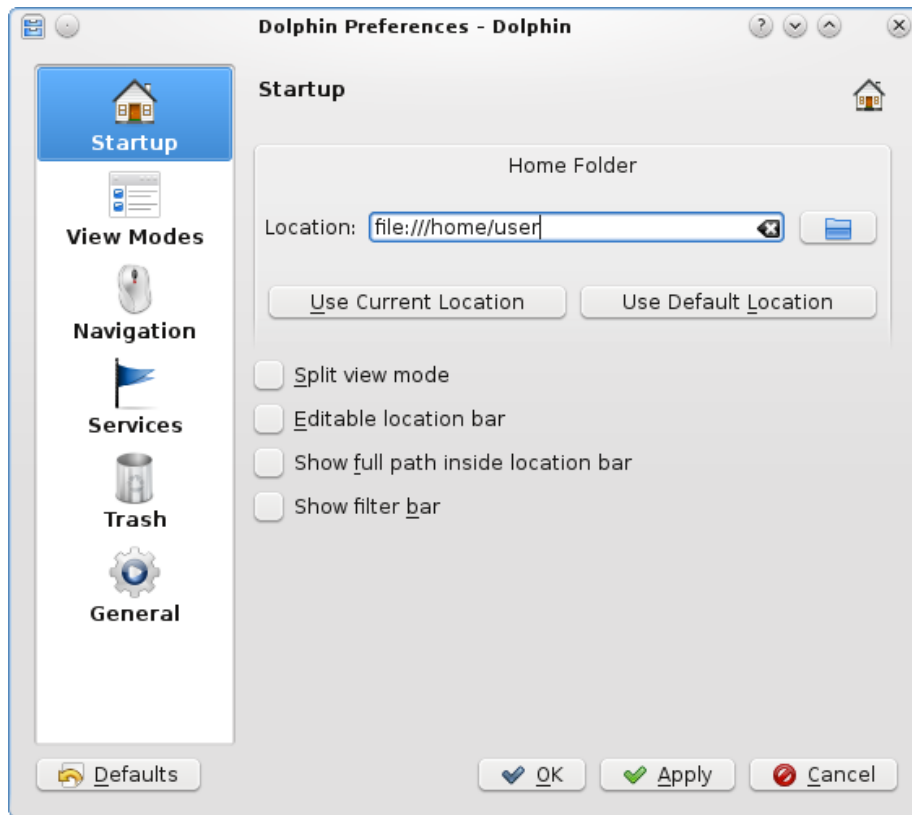
- Settings which affect the general behavior of Dolphin. These can be configured using the [Preferences Dialog](#).
- Settings which determine how the contents of a folder are displayed in Dolphin. These settings are called [View Properties](#) and can be controlled with toolbar buttons, via the View menu, and with the [View Properties Dialog](#). In the default configuration, the view properties are remembered for each folder, but Dolphin can also be configured to use common view properties for all folders in the [General section of the settings](#).

3.1 The Dolphin Preferences Dialog

The Preferences Dialog is opened via Settings → Configure Dolphin... in the menu in Dolphin's main window. The settings are divided into several groups which can be accessed by clicking the corresponding icon on the left of the dialog.

3.1.1 Startup

This group contains settings which control the appearance of Dolphin on startup.

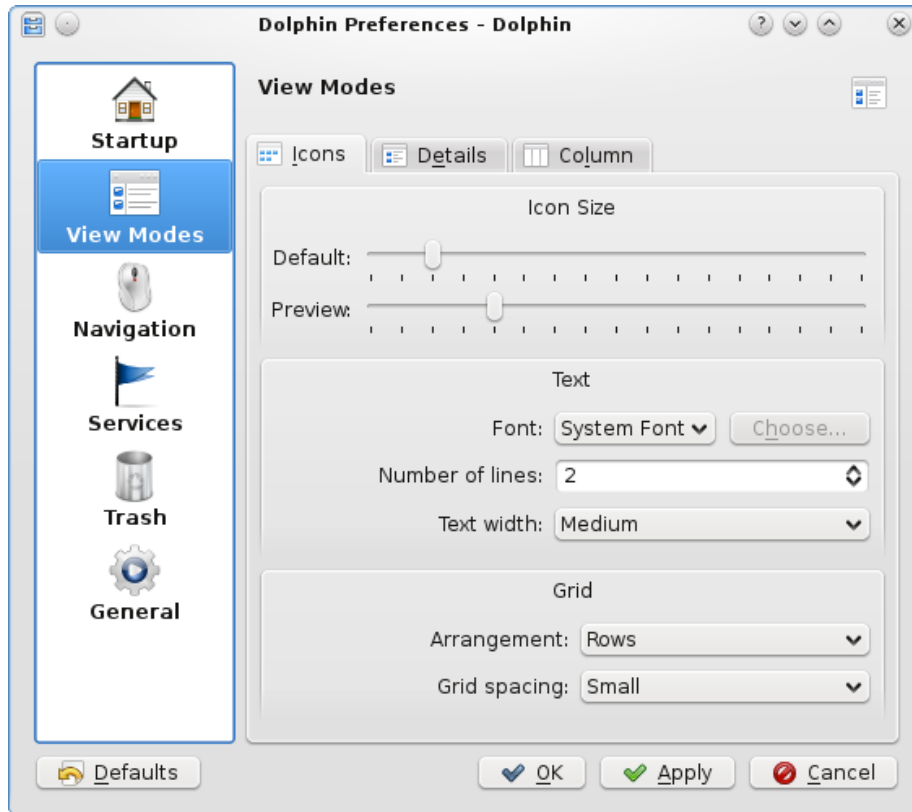


Startup Settings in Dolphin's Preferences Dialog.

- The Home Folder is the folder which is opened on startup. The location of the folder can be entered directly or chosen in a dialog which can be opened by clicking the button showing a 'folder' icon. Moreover, the current location or the default location (which is the user's home folder) can be used as the Home Folder by clicking the corresponding button.
- Split View Mode controls if the [Dolphin view](#) is split on startup or not.
- Editable location bar controls if the location bar is in editable mode on startup. The bread crumb mode of the location bar is used otherwise. See the [section about the location bar](#) for details about the two modes.
- If Show full path inside location bar is enabled, the full path of the current location is shown in the bread crumb mode of the location bar. Otherwise, a shortened version of the path is shown if it begins with the path of one of the places in the Places panel.
- Show filter bar controls if the filter bar is shown on startup or not. See the [section on the filter bar](#) for details.

3.1.2 View Modes

This group contains settings which control the behavior of Dolphin's view modes. The three view modes (Icons, Details, and Columns) are accessible via the tab bar on top.



View Modes Settings in Dolphin's Preferences Dialog.

3.1.2.1 Common settings for all view modes

All three view modes have some common settings:

- Sliders which control the size of the icons. The Default or Preview sizes are used if previews are disabled or enabled, respectively. Note that the icon size can be changed easily with the zoom slider in the status bar if the corresponding option is enabled in the [General section of the settings](#).
- A setting for the font used in the view mode: either the system font or a custom font can be chosen.

The settings which apply to only one of the view modes are discussed below.

3.1.2.2 Icons

Besides the [common settings of all view modes](#), the icons view has the following settings:

- In the Text section:
 - Number of lines is the number of lines of text which appear next to the icons. If the name of a file or folder is too long to fit into the chosen number of lines, it will be abbreviated, and '...' will be added at the end.
 - Text Width controls the maximum width that is reserved for the text of a file item.
- In the Grid section:
 - If Arrangement is set to Rows or Columns, the items will be arranged in rows from left to right or in columns from top to bottom, respectively.
 - Grid spacing controls how far the items are apart in the view.

3.1.2.3 Details

Besides the [common settings of all view modes](#), the details view has only one setting:

- If Expandable Folders is enabled, the details view can show the contents of all subfolders of the current folder as a tree. A branch of the tree can be expanded or collapsed by clicking the + or - button next to each subfolder.

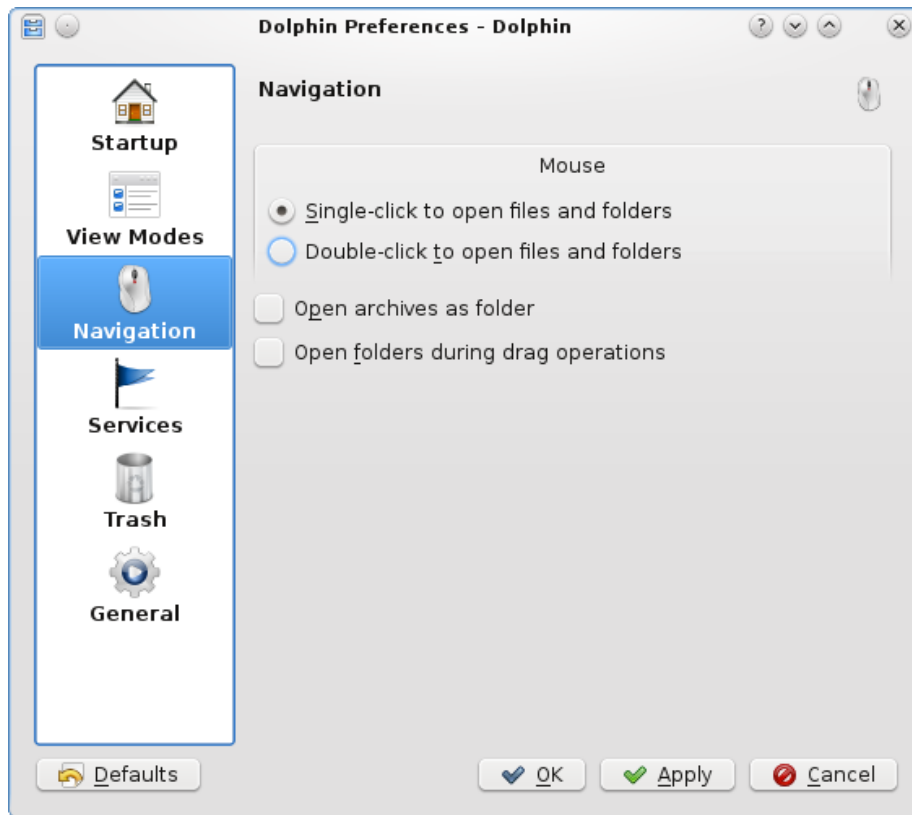
3.1.2.4 Columns

Besides the [common settings of all view modes](#), the columns view has only one setting:

- The Text Width setting controls the width of each column in the view.

3.1.3 Navigation

This group contains settings which control how navigation in the folder structure and in archives works.



Navigation Settings in Dolphin's Preferences Dialog.

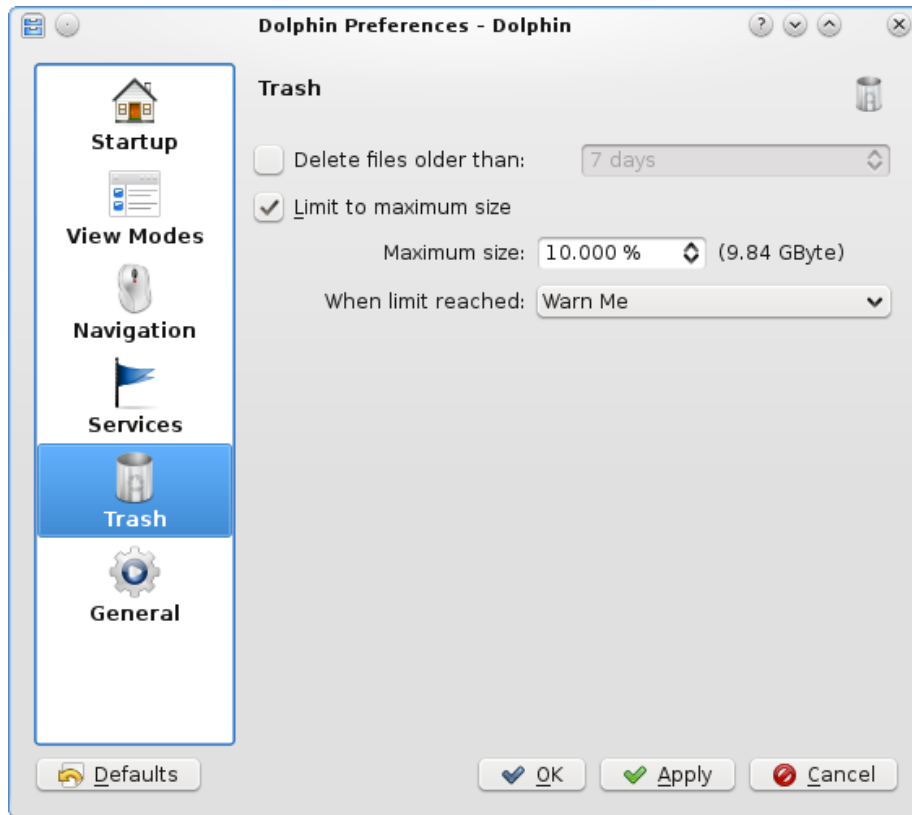
- Dolphin can be configured to open items with a single mouse click (Single-click to open files and folders) or a double mouse click (Double-click to open files and folders). In the latter case, a single mouse click will select the file or folder.
- Archives will be opened inside Dolphin, and not in an external application, if Open Archives as folder is enabled.
- If Open folders during drag operations is enabled, dragging an item with the mouse and hovering a folder with it for a short time will open that folder. This permits to move or copy items quickly to folders which are several levels deeper in the folder hierarchy.

3.1.4 Services

This group offers a selection of services that can be shown in the Actions sub-menu of Dolphin's context menu which appears when clicking a file or folder with the right mouse button.

3.1.5 Trash

This group contains settings which control the behavior of the trash.



Trash Settings in Dolphin's Preferences Dialog.

- Files which are older than a configurable number of days can be deleted automatically.
- The size of the trash can be limited to a configurable percentage of the disk size. If this limit is reached, a warning can be issued, or the oldest or largest files can be deleted automatically.

3.1.6 General

This group contains settings which control the general behavior of Dolphin. The group is divided further into four subgroups which can be accessed using the tab bar on top.



General Settings in Dolphin's Preferences Dialog.

3.1.6.1 Behavior Tab

- In the View Properties section, it can be configured if the [view properties](#) are stored for each folder or if common view properties are to be used for all folders.
- In the Ask for Confirmation When section, warning dialogs which are shown before potentially harmful actions can be enabled.
- If Rename Inline is enabled, no dialog asking for a new file name will be opened when renaming a file or folder. Instead, the name can be edited directly inside the view.
- When hovering a file or folder with the mouse, a small window with information about it is shown next to it if Show tooltips is enabled.
- Show selection marker shows a small + or - button above an item's icon if the item is hovered with the mouse. These can be used to select or deselect the item.

- Natural sorting of items controls how items are sorted in the view. If this option is enabled, the sort order of three example files will be

1. File1,
2. File2,
3. File10.

If this option is disabled, the normal alphabetical sorting will be used, which leads to the sort order

1. File1,
2. File10,
3. File2.

3.1.6.2 Previews Tab

In this tab, it can be configured for which file types previews are shown. Moreover, the maximum filesize for which previews are generated can be chosen, and it can be configured if thumbnails embedded in files are used or not.

If previews are enabled for folders, previews of some files in the folder will be shown inside a folder's icon.

3.1.6.3 Context Menu Tab

In this tab, it can be chosen if the Delete, Copy To, and Move To commands are shown in the context menu which appears when right-clicking a file or folder.

3.1.6.4 Status Bar Tab

In this tab, some additional items can be enabled for the status bar, provided the status bar is wide enough:

- A zoom slider which can be used to change the icon size quickly.
- A bar that shows how much space is free on the current drive.

3.2 Folder View Properties

The following settings control how the contents of a folder are displayed in the Dolphin view, and are stored on a per-folder basis by default:

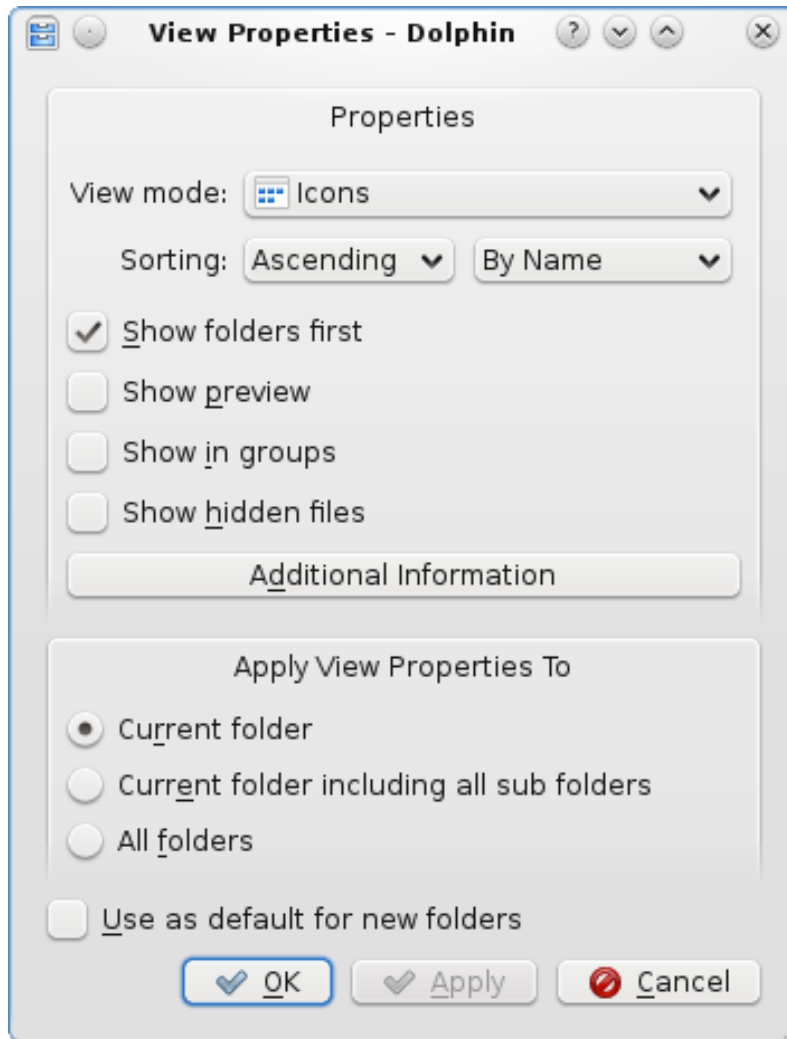
- The view mode (Icons, Details, Columns)
- The sorting of items, which is determined by the sort order (ascending, descending) and the attribute (such as name, size,...) that the items are sorted by

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- Sorting of folders and files – are folders shown first or not?
- Previews – are they shown instead of icons (based on the settings made in [Previews tab of Dolphin's General settings](#)) or not?
- Are items shown in groups in the Icons view?
- Are hidden files shown?
- What additional information (besides the name) is shown in the Icons or Details view?

The view properties can be configured in the View menu, some (such as the view mode) can also be changed using toolbar buttons.

3.2.1 The View Properties Dialog



The View Properties Dialog.

The View Properties dialog can be used to quickly modify several view properties at once. This is done for the current folder, for the current folder including all subfolders, or even for all folders, depending on the choice made in the Apply View Properties To section.

If Use as default for new folders is enabled, the chosen view properties will also be used for all folders which do not have customized view properties yet.

Chapter 4

Command Reference

4.1 The Menubar in Dolphin's Main Window

4.1.1 The File Menu

File → **Create New** Creates a new object (such as a folder or a text file) in the current folder.

File → **New Window (Ctrl+N)** Opens a new Dolphin window.

File → **New Tab (Ctrl+T)** Opens a new tab.

File → **Close Tab (Ctrl+W)** Closes the current tab.

File → **Rename (F2)** Renames the currently selected item(s).

File → **Move to Trash (Del)** Moves the currently selected item(s) to the trash.

File → **Delete (Shift+Del)** Permanently deletes the currently selected item(s). The items are not moved to the trash and cannot be restored.

File → **Properties (Alt+Return)** Shows the properties dialog for the currently selected item(s).

File → **Quit (Ctrl+Q)** Exits Dolphin.

4.1.2 The Edit Menu

Edit → **Undo (Ctrl+Z)** Undoes the last action performed by Dolphin.

Edit → **Cut (Ctrl+X)** Cuts the currently selected item(s).

Edit → **Copy (Ctrl+C)** Copies the currently selected item(s).

Edit → **Paste (Ctrl+V)** Pastes the currently copied/cut items to the current folder. If the clipboard does not contain files or folders, the clipboard contents (such as text or image data) will be pasted into a new file.

Edit → **Select All (Ctrl+A)** Selects all files and folders in the current folder.

Edit → **Invert Selection (Ctrl+Shift+A)** Selects all unselected items and deselects all selected items in the current folder.

4.1.3 The View Menu

View → **Zoom In (Ctrl++)** Increases the size of icons in the view.

View → **Zoom Out (Ctrl+-)** Decreases the size of icons in the view.

View → **View Mode** Changes the view mode to Icons (Ctrl+1), Details (Ctrl+2) or Columns (Ctrl+3).

View → **Sort By** Changes whether items are sorted by Name, Size, Date, Permissions, Owner, Group or Type. Descending reverses the sort order. Folders First sorts folders before files.

View → **Additional Information** Displays additional information like Size, Date, Permissions, Owner, Group or Type in the different views.

View → **Preview** Displays a symbolic preview of the file contents in the different view modes.

View → **Show in Groups** Displays the content of the current folder grouped by file type (only available in the Icons view mode).

View → **Show Hidden Files (Alt+.)** Shows all the hidden files and sub-folders within the current folder.

View → **Split (F3)** Enables and disables the split view mode.

View → **Reload (F5)** Reloads the current folder.

View → **Stop** Stops loading/reading the contents of the current folder.

View → **Panels** Enables and disables the different **panels**: Places (F9), Information (F11), Folders (F7) and Terminal (F4).

View → **Navigation Bar** → **Editable Location (Ctrl+L)** Changes the navigation bar between the two modes; the **bread crumb mode** and the **editable mode**.

View → **Navigation Bar** → **Replace Location (F6)** Switches the navigation bar to **editable mode**, if necessary, and selects the location such that it can be replaced quickly.

View → **Adjust View Properties...** Opens the **View Properties Dialog**.

4.1.4 The Go Menu

Go → Up (Alt+Up) Changes to the folder above the current folder.

Go → Back (Alt+Left) Changes to the previously viewed folder.

Go → Forward (Alt+Right) Undoes a 'Go Back' action.

Go → Home (Alt+Home) Changes to the users home folder, e.g., /home/Peter/.

Go → Recently Closed Tabs Shows a list of recently closed tabs which can be reopened.

4.1.5 The Tools Menu

Tools → Find File... (Ctrl+F) Opens KFind within the current folder.

Tools → Show Filter Bar (Ctrl+I) Enables and disables the [filter bar](#).

Tools → Open Terminal (Shift+F4) Opens Konsole within the current folder.

Tools → Compare Files Compare the currently selected files with Kompare.

Tools → Select Remote Charset Offers to choose the charset used by a remote connection manually.

4.1.6 The Settings Menu

Settings → Show Menubar (Ctrl+M) Hides and shows the menubar.

Settings → Show Toolbar Hides and shows the Main Toolbar and the Search Toolbar.

Settings → Configure Shortcuts... Opens the shortcut configuration dialog.

Settings → Configure Toolbars... Opens the toolbar configuration dialog.

Settings → Configure Dolphin... Opens the Dolphin configuration dialog.

4.1.7 The Help Menu

Help → Dolphin Handbook (F1) Invokes the KDE Help system starting at the Dolphin help pages. (this document).

Help → What's This? (Shift+F1) Changes the mouse cursor to a combination arrow and question mark. Clicking on items within Dolphin will open a help window (if one exists for the particular item) explaining the item's function.

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Help → **Report Bug...** Opens the Bug report dialog where you can report a bug or request a 'wishlist' feature.

Help → **Switch Application Language...** Opens a dialog where you can edit the Primary language and Fallback language for this application.

Help → **About Dolphin** This will display version and author information.

Help → **About KDE** This displays the KDE version and other basic information.

Chapter 5

Miscellaneous Questions

1. *Has Dolphin replaced Konqueror?*

Dolphin is not intended to be a competitor to Konqueror: Konqueror acts as universal viewer being able to show HTML pages, text documents, folders and a lot more, whereas Dolphin focuses on being only a file manager. This approach allows to optimize the user interface for the task of file management.

2. *How can I get involved with the development of Dolphin?*

The easiest way to get involved with Dolphin is to drop the developers an email. If you email Peter Penz (Lead Developer/Project Leader), what you can do, how much time you can devote etc., he will let you know what you can do in the project. If you wish to contribute to the documentation you can also email Peter Penz. The email address of Peter Penz can be found on the main page of the documentation, or in the [Credits section](#).

3. *How can I submit bug reports?*

The official channel for submitting bug reports is via the KDE bug tracking system. The KDE bug tracker can be found at <http://bugs.kde.org>.

4. *How can I submit feature requests?*

The official channel for submitting feature requests is via the KDE bug tracking system. The KDE bug tracker can be found at <http://bugs.kde.org>.

Chapter 6

Credits and License

Dolphin

Program copyright 2005–2009 Peter Penz peter.penz@gmx.at

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Appendix A

How to get Dolphin

Dolphin is part of the kdebase package which is an essential part of KDE.

For instructions on acquiring KDE please see <http://www.kde.org>.

For further information about Dolphin you might want to visit <http://dolphin.kde.org> or <http://userbase.kde.org/Dolphin>.