

The KDict Handbook

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The KDict Handbook

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Abstract

KDict is a graphical client for the DICT protocol. It enables you to search through dictionary databases for a word or phrase, then displays suitable definitions.

Chapter 1

Introduction

KDict is a graphical client for the DICT Protocol. It enables you to search through dictionary databases for a word or phrase, then displays suitable definitions. KDict tries to ease basic as well as advanced queries. A separate list offers a convenient way to deal with the enormous number of matching words that a advanced query can return.

The remainder of KDict's user interface resembles a web browser. For instance, you can jump to the definition of a synonym by simply clicking on the highlighted word. The back/forward functionality is also implemented, enabling you to quickly go back to the result of previous queries.

KDict is able to process the content of the clipboard, so it's easy to combine KDict with your web browser or text editor.

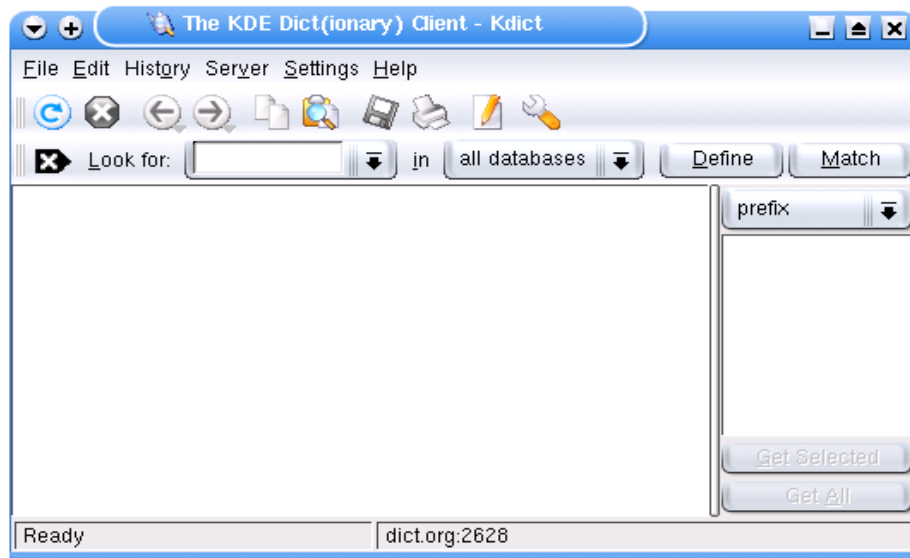
If your machine is behind a firewall, has no permanent internet connection or the server of dict.org is too slow for you, you can set up your own local server, all you need is available at www.dict.org. The advantages of a local server are optimal performance and the ability to install additional databases of your choice. This handbook contains a [small tutorial for installation and links to databases](#).

Chapter 2

Using KDict

2.1 Getting Started

After you have started KDict (using the panel menu, or by typing **kdict** at the command prompt) the KDict main window shows up:



The KDict main window.

There are two different methods to lookup a word or phrase with KDict. You can use a [define query](#). KDict will look for exact matches in the databases and displays all matching definitions in the lower left view. Or you can use a [match query](#), in this case all matching database entries will be displayed in the list view on the right side. You can then decide what definitions you want to

look at. This method has the advantage that you can use more sophisticated search strategies like prefix, suffix or regular expressions.

2.2 Configuring the DICT server

Before you can make your first query, you have to check if the preset server settings work with your setup. You can modify the settings in the [preferences dialog](#). The preset server is dict.org, which is a public server, so you don't have to change anything if you have a working internet connection.

You can test your configuration by selecting Server Information from the Server menu, this displays some status information about the server.

Now you should use Server → Get Capabilities, this will fetch a list of all available databases and strategies from the server. KDict is now able to show you all features of the server in its menus. (You should always call Get Capabilities after switching to a new server)

2.3 Basic Queries: Define

A define query will search for words/phrases in the selected database(s) that match the given text exactly. The definitions belonging to these words are displayed in the main view. If the server finds nothing suitable, KDict will use a search strategy optimized for spell checking to display a list of similar words.

In most databases some words (especially synonyms) are marked with brackets '{}'. These words are highlighted and by clicking on them with the left mouse button you start a new define-query with this word.

You can select a part of the text with the left mouse button. The selection is automatically copied into the clipboard. This is very convenient, because you can use the middle mouse button anywhere in the main view to define the content of the clipboard. So, if you want to get a definition for a word/phrase that is not tagged as synonym, you just mark it with the left mouse button and get the definition when you press the middle mouse button.

The right mouse button shows a popup menu, where you can choose to start queries with the selected text, the clipboard or the tagged synonym under the mouse pointer. The menu has also two entries Back and Forward. You can use them to browse through the results of previous queries.

2.4 Advanced Queries: Match

A match query uses the currently selected search strategy (the strategy selector is located above the match list) to search in the selected database(s) for words

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similar to the given text. The result is a list of similar words that appears in the match list on the right. The entries are grouped according to the database they belong to. Now you have multiple options:

- You can use the **Get All** button (located below the match list) to fetch all definitions. Please note that the number of listed words and fetched definitions may differ, because in some cases two or more words share one definition and KDict removes the duplicated definitions.
- You can use the mouse or the keyboard to select the most interesting words in the list and then press the **Get Selected** button (located below the match list) to fetch only them. If you want to get all definitions from one database just select the list item which contains the database name.
- When you press **Enter** (keyboard) or double click (mouse) on a list item, KDict will ignore the selection and fetch the definition for this item. When you do this with a 'root' item (an item that contains the database name), you will get all definitions belonging to this database.
- You can use one of the words as a starting point for a new query, this is done via the popup menu (right mouse button).

A click with the middle mouse button anywhere in the list will start a new match query with the content of the clipboard (similar to the main view).

The right mouse button calls the popup menu for a list item, which has the following entries:

Get Shows the definition for the current item.

Match, Define Starts a match/define query with the current item.

Match Clipboard Content, Define Clipboard Content Starts a match/define query with the current content of the clipboard.

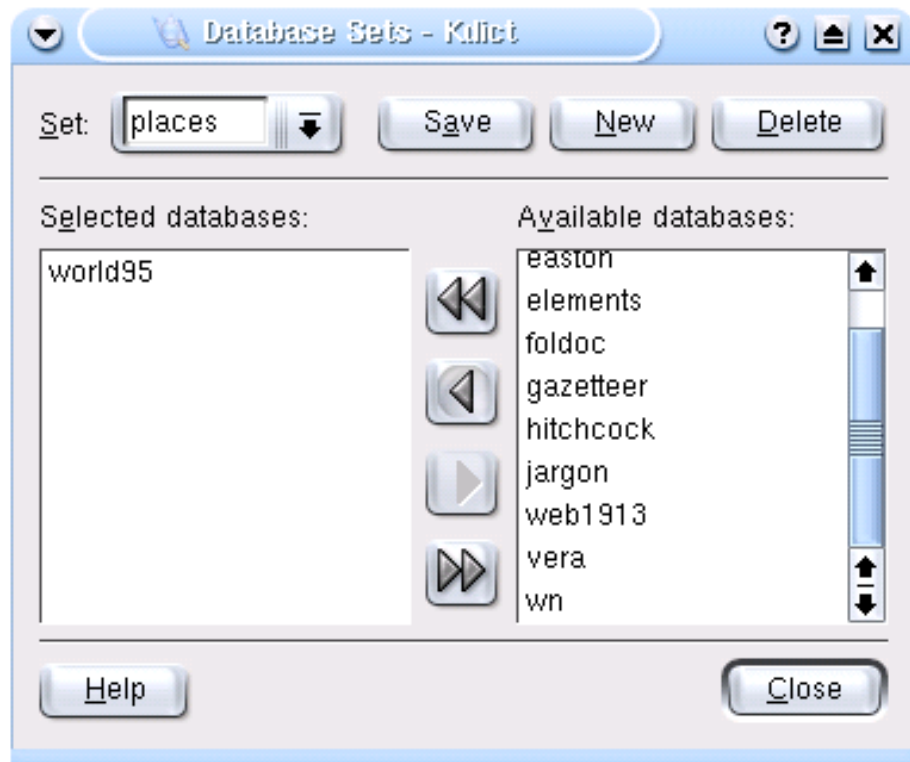
Get Selected, Get All Same functions as the buttons below the list.

Expand List, Collapse List (Un)folders all databases.

2.5 Database Sets

Sometimes it's useful to restrict a query to a subset of the available databases, for example all english-german dictionaries. This is achieved by defining 'database sets'. These sets appear in the database selector as virtual databases.

You can access the configuration dialog via **Server** → **Edit Database Sets** or the toolbar icon.



The database set editor.

The dialog has the following elements:

Set You must use this selector to select the set you want to modify. You can also rename a set here by entering a new name and pressing the Save button.

Save Saves changes you made in the current set. You must use this button before you select another set or leave the dialog, because otherwise all changes will be lost.

New This button creates a new database set.

Delete Deletes the currently selected set.

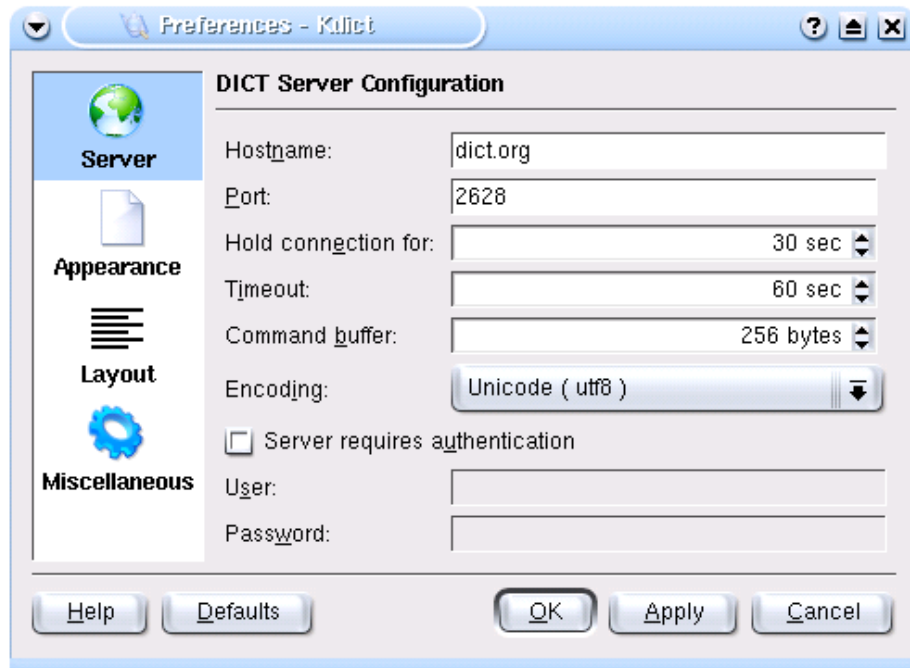
Close Closes the dialog without saving your changes.

The two lists (Selected Databases and Available Databases) show which databases are currently in the database set. You can use the arrow buttons between the lists to transfer items from one list to another.

By the way, you can leave this configuration dialog open and continue your work with KDICT. This is a nice way to test your changes immediately.

2.6 Preferences

You can modify many aspects of KDict's behavior in the preferences dialog. The dialog can be opened via Settings → Configure Kdict or the the toolbar icon.



The preferences dialog.

The dialog is divided into several pages. The Default button restores the default values for the current page. The Apply button will apply your changes on all pages. The OK button will apply the changes and close the dialog. The Cancel button does this without saving the changes. By the way, you can leave the preferences dialog open and continue your work with KDict. This is a nice way to test your changes.

2.6.1 The Server Page

Hostname The internet hostname or the ip address of the DICT server.

Port This is the port number the server listens on. 2628 is the default port and is used by the most servers.

Hold connection for KDict is able to keep the connection open in short periods of inactivity. This feature avoids the lengthy login procedure before

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every query. A value of 0 seconds disables this feature. Very large values aren't useful, because in most cases the DICT server will close the connection after a couple of minutes.

Timeout This value determines how long KDict will wait for an answer from the server.

Command Buffer The DICT protocol allows the client to send multiple commands in one network packet. The size of the internal command buffer determines how many commands are sent in parallel by KDict. You can try to tune this value for your network connection, but in most cases it is not worth the effort.

Encoding With this selector the text encoding method of the databases can be specified. The default value is "utf8", this setting should work on most servers. If an encoding is selected that doesn't match the encoding used by the databases, you will see broken characters.

Server requires authentication Activate this if you want to provide authentication with username and password. (a server may require this for access to all databases) You have to enter a valid Username and Password combination below.

2.6.2 The Appearance Page

On this page you can customize the colors and fonts of the definition view. A proportional font for the normal text will increase readability, but will also destroy the hardcoded layout of tables and similar things in the definitions of some databases.

2.6.3 The Layout Page

The layout of the result isn't really configurable yet. But you can decide how many headings (a heading states which database the definition belongs to) KDict should place in the result. The choices should be self-explaining. Note that changes on this page won't have any effect until you start a new query.

2.6.4 The Miscellaneous Page

On this page you can modify various limits that prevent KDict from eating up insane amounts of memory.

Definitions This limits the number of definitions you can fetch at once by selecting them in the match list.

Cached Results This number determines how many previous results are held in an internal cache for fast access. You can set this to 0, but this will disable your ability to browse back to old results.

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History Entries This is the number of past entries the input line remembers. Large values will cause a slower start and shutdown of KDict.

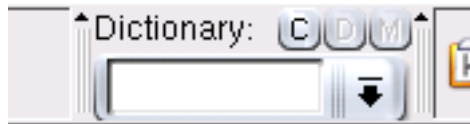
Save history on exit If this is selected, KDict will remember your history between sessions.

Define selected text on start If this is selected, KDict will immediately try to define the contents of the clipboard when it is started.

Chapter 3

The Panel Applet

If you use KDICT frequently you may find it useful to use the included panel applet. You can get the applet via K-Menu → Configure Panel → Add → Applet → Dictionary.



The Panel Applet

The input field behaves like the input field of the KDICT main window. When you press **Enter** KDICT opens and the query starts. Instead of typing you can also select a phrase you entered before from the drop down list.

Additionally the applet features three push buttons:

- C** Define the current content of the clipboard.
- D** Define the current content of the input field.
- M** Start a match query with the current content of the input field.

Chapter 4

Command Reference

4.1 The File Menu

File → Save (Ctrl+S) Saves the current result as an html document.

File → Print (Ctrl+P) Prints the current result..

File → Start Query Defines the content of the input field..

File → Stop Query Aborts the current query..

File → Quit (Ctrl+Q) Quits KDict.

4.2 The Edit Menu

Edit → Copy (Ctrl+C) Copies the currently selected text into the clipboard.

Edit → Select All (Ctrl+C) Selects the complete text.

Edit → Define Clipboard Content [Defines the current content](#) of the clipboard.

Edit → Match Clipboard Content Find database entries which [match the current content](#) of the clipboard.

Edit → Find... (Ctrl+F) Finds a string in the displayed definitions.

4.3 The History Menu

History → **Back (Alt+Left)** Displays the previous search result.

History → **Forward (Alt+Right)** Displays the next search result.

History → **Clear History** Clears the list of past queries.

At the bottom of the History the ten last queries are listed.

4.4 The Server Menu

Server → **Get Capabilities** Determines which databases and strategies are available on the DICT server. You must call this once to be able to specify search strategy and database for a query.

Server → **Edit Database Sets...** Opens the [database set editor](#).

Server → **Database Information** Submenu which offers a summary of the databases available, and detailed information for every database.

Server → **Strategy Information** Displays a list with short descriptions of the search strategies available on the current server.

Server → **Server Information** Displays some status information (uptime, etc.) about the current DICT server.

4.5 The Settings Menu

This menu provides options for configuring KDict, changing its appearance, shortcuts and standard behavior.

Settings → **Toolbars** Submenu which toggles the toolbars on or off. You can toggle either the Main toolbar or the Query toolbar independently.

Settings → **Show Statusbar** Toggles the statusbar on/off.

Settings → **Show Match List** Hides (or shows) the match list.

Settings → **Swallow Match List** This (un-)swallows the match list into the main window.

Settings → **Configure Shortcuts...** Opens a dialog for changing the key bindings. Using this option you can change the standard key shortcut for KDict's commands or create new ones.

Settings → **Configure Toolbars...** Opens a dialog for configuring the toolbar. You can add and remove toolbuttons for KDict's commands with this option.

Settings → **Configure Kdict...** Opens the [preferences dialog](#).

4.6 The Help Menu

Help → **KDict Handbook (F1)** Invokes the KDE Help system starting at the KDict 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 KDict will open a help window (if one exists for the particular item) explaining the item's function.

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

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

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

Chapter 5

Command Line Options

KDICT can be started directly from a terminal like Konsole or xterm. Several command line options are available.

kdict word/phrase lookup the given text. You will have to put the phrase into double quotes, if the phrase contains more than one word. For example: **kdict "double quote"**

kdict -c / --clipboard define the current content of the clipboard.

kdict -v / --version Displays the version number of KDICT (and that of Qt™/KDE).

kdict --license Shows under which licenses KDICT is being published.

KDICT also supports all other command line options common to KDE and Qt™ programs. You can get a list of these options with **--help**, **--help-kde** and **---help-qt**

Chapter 6

Credits and License

KDict - The KDE Dictionary Client

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Copyright (c) 1998, Matthias Hölzer-Klüpfel

KDict was originally written in 1998 by Matthias Hölzer-Klüpfel hoelzer@kde.org.
Currently it is maintained by Christian Gebauer gebauer@kde.org.

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Appendix A

Installation

A.1 How to obtain KDict

KDict is part of the KDE project <http://www.kde.org/> .

KDict can be found in the kdenetwork package on <ftp://ftp.kde.org/pub/kde/> , the main FTP site of the KDE project.

In order to compile and install KDict on your system, type the following in the base directory of the KDict distribution:

```
% ./configure
% make
% make install
```

Since KDict uses **autoconf** and **automake** you should have no trouble compiling it. Should you run into problems please report them to the KDE mailing lists.

A.2 Requirements

Besides a working KDE installation KDict requires the posix threads library which is available on all modern unices.

Appendix B

Mini-Howto: Installing a local DICT server

B.1 Obtaining and installing dictd

At first the **dictd** daemon has to be installed. The easiest way to install **dictd** is using a precompiled package. Such a package is included both in [Debian](#) and [SuSE Linux](#)[®]. You can find packages that should work on all RPM based Linux[®] distributions on [rpmfind.net](#).

If you want to compile **dictd** yourself, download <ftp://ftp.dict.org/pub/dict/dictd-1.9.1.tar.gz>. Compilation is easy, just unpack the archive and run `./configure`, `make` and `make install` in the **dictd** folder. You might want to use the `---` prefix option of the configure script to install **dictd** in a different folder. By default **dictd** will be installed in `/usr/local`.

B.2 Obtaining databases

Now you need to download some databases. The standard set (webster, wordnet, jargon file, foldoc, ...) that is present on the DICT server of [dict.org](#), is available from <ftp://ftp.dict.org/pub/dict/pre/>. These are also available as [Debian](#) and [rpm](#) packages.

B.2.1 Additional preformatted databases

[www.freedict.de](#) Translating dictionaries for Africaans, Czech, Danish, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Nederlands (Dutch), Portuguese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Swedish, Slovak, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Turkish and Welsh

<http://www.wh9.tu-dresden.de/heinrich/dict/> Translating dictionaries for English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese and Spanish.

<http://purl.oclc.org/NET/voko/revodict.tgz> Esperanto dictionary

<http://www.bainsware.com/downloads/obi-bio.tar.gz> OBI's Online Biographical Dictionary

<http://www.bainsware.com/downloads/inaug.tar.gz><http://www.bainsware.com/downloads/inaug.tar.gz> The Inaugural Addresses of all the US presidents

You can find more databases on the link page of www.dict.org, but the majority of them are not formatted for **dictd**.

Each database consists of two files: The `*.index` file contains the index and the `*.dict.dz` file the actual data. Unpack all packages into a folder of your choice, for example `/usr/share/dict/`.

B.3 Configuration

You have to create/modify two configuration files. Both are stored in `/usr/local/etc` if you used the default installation prefix (`/usr/local`).

`dict.conf` belongs to the basic **dict** client. It contains only one line: `server localhost`. This tells **dict** to use the local server.

`dictd.conf` configures the server. First you must add the access statement: `access {allow localhost deny *}`.

This example grants only local access and blocks all external connections. You can use more than one allow and deny rule, for example:

```
access {allow localhost allow *.workgroup deny
*}
```

The database statement configures the location of the index and the data file for a database:

```
database web1913 { data "/usr/share/dict/web1913.dict. ←
dz "
index "/usr/share/dict/web1913.index ←
" }
```

You must add a statement for each database you want to use.

Now you should be able to start **dictd** and to use it with **dict** and **KDict**.

Please consult the man page of **dictd** for a complete description of `dictd.conf`.

B.4 Starting dictd automatically

If you want to use the **dict** server frequently, you might want to start it automatically during the startup process of your system. Some of the precompiled packages install a suitable script, but you can also adapt the generic SYSV style script included in the source distribution: <ftp://ftp.dict.org/pub/dict/INITSCRIPT>.