

The KHelpCenter



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Abstract

KDE is an international technology team that creates [Free Software](#) for desktop and portable computing. Among KDE's products are a modern desktop system for Linux[®] and UNIX[®] platforms, comprehensive office productivity and groupware suites and hundreds of software titles in many categories including Internet and web applications, multimedia, entertainment, educational, graphics and software development.

Chapter 1

KDE Help System Handbook

1.1 KDE Help System

The KDE help system is designed to make accessing the common UNIX[®] help systems (man and info) simple, as well as the native KDE documentation (XML).

All base KDE applications come fully documented, thanks to the efforts of the Documentation team. If you are interested in helping with the documentation efforts, join the [mailing list](#) and write to the team at kde-doc-english@kde.org. No experience is required, just enthusiasm and patience.

If you would like to help translating KDE documentation to your native language, review the information, including coordinators for each language team, on the [Localization web site](#).

1.1.1 Installation

KHelpCenter is an integral part of the KDE Base installation, and is installed with every copy of KDE. It can be found in the kdebase-runtime package, and is available from the <ftp://ftp.kde.org/pub/kde/> , or will be found in your operating system's kdebase-runtime package.

1.2 Invoking Help

KHelpCenter can be called in several ways:

From the Help menu

The most common will probably be from within an application. Choose **Help** → **Application Handbook** (F1) to open that application's handbook.

From the Kickoff Application Launcher

Choose the big **K** in your panel, and select the **Applications** tab followed by selecting **Help** to open KHelpCenter, which will open up to the default start page.

From the command line

KHelpCenter may be started using a URL to display a file. URLs have been added for **info** and **man** pages also. You can use them as follows:

The KHelpCenter

An application help file

`khelppcenter help:/ kwrite`

Opens the KWrite help file, at the contents page.

A local URL

`khelppcenter file:/ usr/local/src/qt/html/index.html`

A Man page

`khelppcenter man:/ strcpy`

An Info page

`khelppcenter info:/ gcc`

Invoking `khelppcenter` with no parameters opens the default start page.

1.3 The KHelpCenter interface

The KHelpCenter interface consists of two panes of information.

The toolbar and menus are explained further in Section 1.3.4.

Documents contain their own navigation tools, enabling you to move either sequentially through a document, using **Next**, **Previous**, and **Contents** links, or to move around in a less structured manner, using hyperlinks.

Links can take you to other parts of the same document, or to a different document, and you can use the **Back** (Left pointing arrow) or **Forward** (Right pointing arrow) icons on the toolbar to move through the documents you have viewed in this session.

The two panes display the contents of the help system, and the help files themselves, on the left and right respectively.

1.3.1 The Contents Pane

The contents pane in KHelpCenter is displayed on the left hand side of the window. As you might expect, you can move the splitter bar, to make sure you can comfortably read the contents of either pane.

The contents pane is further divided into two tabs, one containing a [tree view](#) showing all the help information KHelpCenter is aware of, and the other contains the KDE [glossary](#) of terms.

1.3.1.1 The Contents Tab

The **Contents** tab contains the following default top level entries in the tree view:

KDE Fundamentals

The Fundamentals introduce you to the many features of the KDE Software Collection and describe many common tasks you can perform in all KDE applications.

Plasma Manual

The Plasma Manual is the documentation for the most visible pillar of KDE, the core interface to the desktop.

Online Help

A page with links to online help and additional information provided by the KDE community.

Application Manuals

Native KDE application documentation. All KDE applications have documentation in XML format, which are converted to HTML when you view them. This section lists all the KDE applications with a brief description and a link to the full application documentation.

The applications are displayed in a tree structure that echoes the default structure of the **K** menu, making it easy to find the application you are looking for.

Control Center Modules

Provides a list of links to various modules that are located in the KDE System Settings application.

KInfoCenter Modules

Contains a list of links to various KInfocenter modules documentation.

Kioslaves

Contains a list of links to various KIO modules documentation.

UNIX[®] manual pages

UNIX[®] man pages are the traditional on-line documentation format for UNIX[®] systems. Most programs on your system will have a man page. In addition, man pages exist for programming functions and file formats.

Scrollkeeper

Additional non-KDE documentation installed on your system.

Browse Info Pages

TeXinfo documentation is used by many GNU applications, including **gcc** (the C/C++ compiler), **emacs**, and many others.

1.3.2 The Man and Info sections

Man pages are the standard UNIX[®] manual pages, and have been in use for many years on many operating systems. They are extremely thorough, and are the very best place to get information about most UNIX[®] commands and applications. When people say 'RTFM', the Manual they are referring to is very often the man page.

The man pages are not perfect. They tend to be in depth, but also extremely technical, often written by developers, and for developers. In some cases this makes them somewhat unfriendly, if not downright impossible for many users to understand. They are, however, the best source of solid information on most command line applications, and very often the only source.

If you've ever wondered what the number is when people write things like `man(1)` it means which section of the manual the item is in. You will see KHelpCenter uses the numbers to divide the very many man pages into their own sections, making it easier for you to find the information you're looking for, if you're just browsing.

Also available are the Info pages, intended to be a replacement for the man pages. The maintainer of some applications no longer update the man pages, so if there is both a man page and an info page available, the info page is probably the most recent. Most applications have one or the other though. If the application you are looking for help on is a GNU utility, you will most likely find it has an info page, not a man page.

1.3.2.1 Navigating inside the Info pages

Info documents are arranged hierarchically with each page called a node. All info documents have a **Top** node, i.e. the opening page. You can return to the **Top** of an info document by pressing **Top**.

Prev & Next are used to move to the previous/next page at the current level of the hierarchy.

Clicking on a menu item within a document moves you to a lower level in the hierarchy. You may move up the hierarchy by pressing **Up**.

Man is treated similarly to info, with the section index being the Top node and each man page on the level below. Man entries are one page long.

1.3.3 The KDE glossary

The glossary provides a quick reference point, where you can look up the definitions of words that may be unfamiliar to you. These range from KDE specific applications and technologies, through to general UNIX[®] computing terms.

In the left hand pane you will see a tree view, with two choices: **Alphabetically** or **By Topic**. Both contain the same entries, sorted differently, to allow you to quickly find the item of interest.

Navigate down the tree views to the left, and items you select will be displayed on the right.

1.3.4 The menus and toolbar

KHelpCenter has a very minimal interface, allowing you to concentrate on getting help rather than learning how to use the help browser.

The icons available to you in the toolbar are as follows:

TOOLBAR ICONS

Table of Contents

Go to the main start page of KHelpCenter.

Back

Go to the previous page you viewed. Click the check mark right to the icon. This displays a list of previously viewed pages. Selecting one will take you directly back to that page.

Forward

Go forward one page. This icon is only active if you have already used the **Back** icon.

Copy

Copy text to the clipboard to be pasted in another application.

Find

Find a word or words within the currently visible page.

Increase Font Sizes

Increase the size of the text in the viewer pane.

Decrease Font Sizes

Decrease the size of the text in the viewer pane. This icon is only enabled if you have previously enlarged the text.

The menus contain the following entries:

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File

File → **Print (Ctrl+P)**

Print the contents of the currently visible page. Handbooks in PDF format you find on the [KDE Documentation Server](#).

File → **Quit (Ctrl+Q)**

Close and exit KHelpCenter

Edit

Edit → **Copy (Ctrl+C)**

Copy the selected text to the clipboard.

Edit → **Select All (Ctrl+A)**

Select all the text in the current page.

Edit → **Find... (Ctrl+F)**

Find a word or words in the currently visible page.

View

View → **Set Encoding**

Change the encoding of the current page. Normally, the default setting of **Default** should be sufficient, but if you are having problems viewing pages written in languages other than English, you may need to choose a specific encoding in this menu.

Go

Go → **Table of Contents (Alt+Home)**

Go to the main start page of KHelpCenter.

Go → **Previous Page (Ctrl+PgUp)**

Go to the previous page of the current documentation.

Go → **Next Page (Ctrl+PgDown)**

Go to the next page of the current documentation.

Go → **Back (Alt+Left)**

Go back to the previous page you were viewing.

Go → **Forward (Alt+Right)**

If you have previously moved back with the back icon or menu entry, you can work your way forward again with this menu entry.

Settings

Settings → **Configure Fonts...**

Allows you to configure the font family and size used by KHelpCenter.

Additionally KHelpCenter has the common KDE **Settings** and **Help** menu items, for more information read the sections about the [Settings Menu](#) and [Help Menu](#) of the KDE Fundamentals.

1.4 Credits and License

KHelpCenter

Originally developed by Matthias Elter elter@kde.org

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