Using Fedora

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ACCESSING THE FLOPPY DRIVE

While most of the work is done using the hard disk of the PC, and system and user data are stored on the hard drive, sometimes you may want to transfer or copy files to another PC. One convenient way to perform this providing that the file sizes are not too large is to use a floppy disk or diskette. Diskettes are very useful as a portable storage medium for small files.

MOUNTING AND USING THE DISKETTE

Before a diskette can be used, you have to perform an operation called "mounting" the diskette. This is to let the system know that you are going to use access the diskette in the floppy drive.

To mount a diskette, move the mouse to an empty area on the desktop and right-click it. From the pop-up menu select:
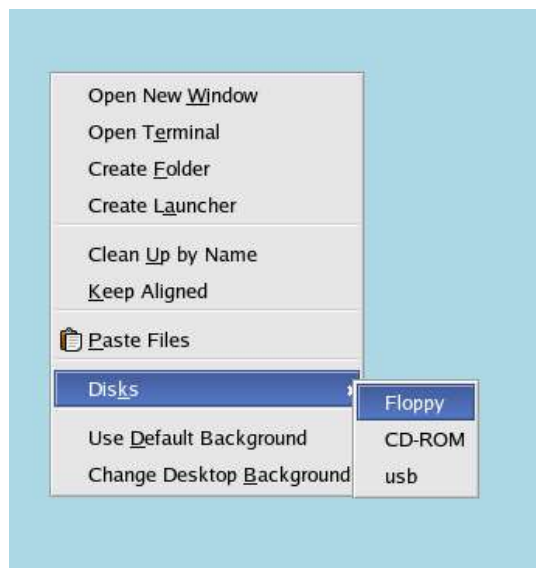
Disks --> Floppy

Fig. Mounting a floppy

This will mount the floppy and add a floppy icon on the desktop. Double-clicking on this will list out the files and folders in the floppy under the file manager.

Once you have successfully mounted the diskette and listed out its directory contents under the file manager, you can treat it like another folder to read and write files and folders. However, you have to bear in mind some differences between the floppy diskette folder and the normal folder you have been working with.

The diskette has a very low storage capacity compared with the hard disk; a floppy diskette typically will have about 1.44 MB of storage capacity only.

If the write-protect tab on the diskette is enabled, then the diskette can be used for reading only, i.e. you can read the contents of the files on it only. You cannot write to the files, and so you cannot modify and/or create new files or folders.

After using the diskette, you will need to unmount it before you take off the diskette from the floppy drive. To unmount the diskette, right-click on the floppy icon on the desktop and select "Eject". This will unmount the diskette and the floppy icon will disappear from the desktop. Once this has happened, you can safely remove the diskette from the floppy drive.

Note:
It is important that you unmount the diskette before removing it from the floppy drive, especially if it has been mounted for writing. failure to do so may result in incomplete data being written to the diskette and corruption of the file system on the diskette.

FORMATTING THE DISKETTE

Before a diskette can be used it gas to be "formatted" first. This will create the directory structures and other information needed for the system to keep track of where the data is stored on the diskette. You need to format a diskette once only.

Note:
Formatting a diskette will destroy all data stored on the diskette as the system needs to initialise the directory structures and storage information.

To format a diskette, you can use the floppy formatter selection from the Main Menu.
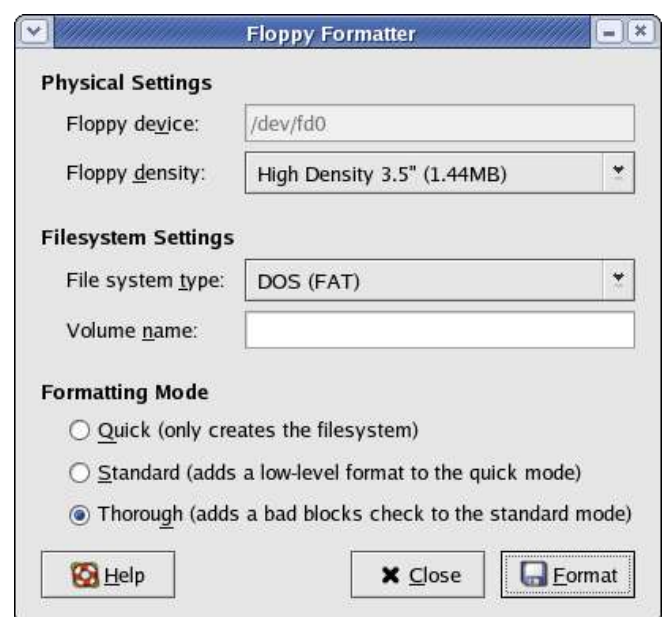
Main Menu --> System Tools --> Floppy Formatter

Fig. Floppy formatter dialog

Choose the default floppy density of 1.44 MB and the DOS (FAT) file system type. This will enable the diskette to be read on almost all commonly used operating systems including Windows.

ACCESSING THE CD-ROM DRIVE

Nowadays the CD-ROM is widely used as a means to store and distribute data and information. A typical 5.25" CD-ROM can store up to 700 MB of data. It is thus ideal as a medium for distributing large files, multimedia games and software packages.

By default when a CD-ROM is placed in the drive it is automatically mounted and the file manager will open it to display its directory contents. If it is not automounted, then it can be mounted by move the mouse to an empty area on the desktop and right-click it. From the pop-up menu select:

    Disks --> CD-ROM

This will mount the CD and add a CD icon on the desktop. Double-clicking on this will list out the files and folders in the CD-ROM under the file manager. The file manager can then be used to accessed the files and folders on the CD. Since the CD-ROM is a read-only medium, you can only read the contents of the CD and not write to it.

After using the CD, you will need to unmount it before you take it off the CD-ROM drive. To unmount the CD, right-click on the CD icon on the desktop and select "Eject". This will unmount the CD and the CD icon will disappear from the desktop.

ACCESSING THE USB THUMB DRIVE

Another popular portable storage medium is the USB thumb drive. Like th e floppy diskette you can read and write to a thumb drive but it has the advantage of storing much more data than a diskette. Thumb drive devices of capacity 32 MB, 64 MB etc. are common.

To access the thumb drive, place it in the USB slot (port) provided and move the mouse to an empty area on the desktop and right-click it. From the pop-up menu select:

    Disks --> usb

This will mount the USB thumb drive and add a thumb drive icon on the desktop. Double-clicking on this will list out the files and folders in the thumb drive under the file manager. You can then treat it like another folder to read and write files and folders.

After finishing with the thumb drive, you will need to unmount it by right-clicking on the thumb drive icon on the desktop and selecting "Unmount Volume", before removing it from the USB port.

ACCESSING THE INTERNET

The Internet can be accessed from your system using a variety of methods, depending on the type of access methods supported by the Internet Service Provider (ISP) you sign up with and the type of networking devices you have installed in your system.

DIAL-UP CONNECTIVITY

The simplest way to access the Internet is to use a dial-up telephone line connection. Almost all ISPs provide dial-up access connectivity to the Internet using the existing telephone line in the home or office. To do this you will need the availability of a telecommunication device called a "modem". Most modern PCs come with a built-in dial-up modem card or if it does not, you can purchase an external dial-up modem and use the serial port available on your PC for connection.

Before you can dial up to your ISP and access the Internet, you have to configure your system to recognise the modem and then dial the correct number to your ISP. You will need to have at hand the following information needed for the modem configuration:

- telephone number to dial to the ISP for the Internet access
- Internet access login name and password

MODEM CONFIGURATION

To configure your modem for Internet access access the "Internet Configuration Wizard" tool from the Main Menu:

    Main Menu --> System Tools --> Internet Configuration Wizard

You will be prompted for the root password as this is an attempt to change the system settings and so only the system administrator is allowed to perform this. Enter the root password and the Internet configuration wizard main screen will be displayed.

Fig. Internet Configuration Wizard

1. Select modem connection. Click on the Forward button.
2. If your system cannot detect the modem you will be prompted to enter the modem device name and related communication information. You can choose as follows:

    Modem device: /dev/modem
    Baud rate: 460800
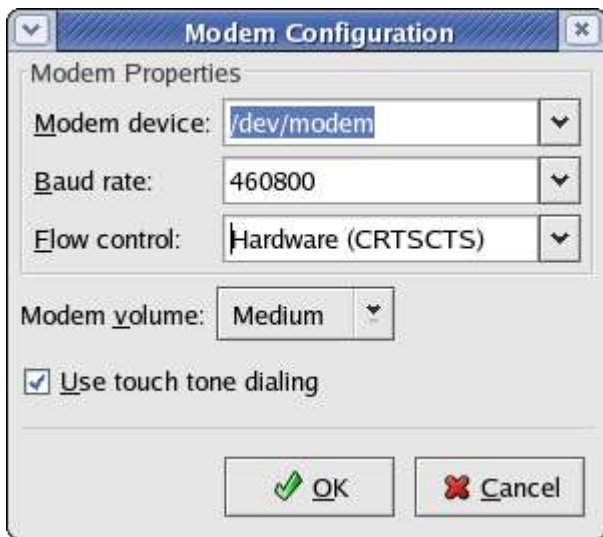   Flow control: Hardware (CRTSCTS)
    Modem volume: Medium

Fig. Select modem screen

Click on the Forward button.

3. Enter the phone number of the ISP (Internet Provider). If you need to use an area code and/or a dialing prefix to reach the ISP, you should enter them in the boxes provided, otherwise just enter the telephone number. Enter the name you want this connection to be known by, usually th name of the ISP is used (this is is just a nickname provided by you so that you can recognise this connection). Enter the login name and the password in the boxes provided.

Fig. Filling in the ISP provider information

Click on the Forward button.

4. For the IP Settings screen the default settings may be used if your ISP assigns IP addresses automatically (the default for most ISPs). Otherwise you will have to enable the "Statistically set IP addresses" button and enter your IP address and related information.

Fig. Filling in the IP settings

Click on the Forward button.

5. Click on Apply to accept and end the set up.
6. The Network Configuration window will pop up; exit from it.

ACTIVATING THE MODEM

To test your modem and Internet connectivity, select the Network Device Control tool from the Main Menu:

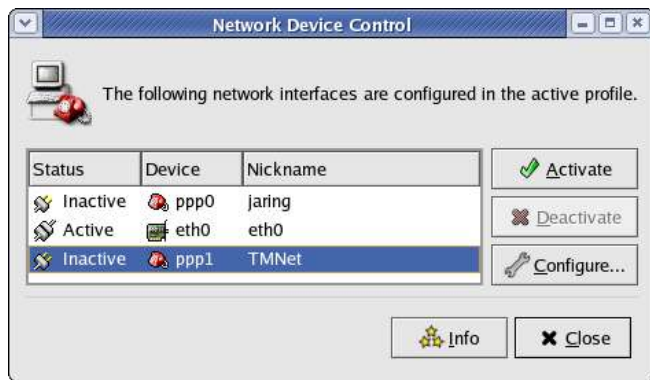Main Menu --> System Tools --> Network Device Control

Fig. Activating the modem

Select the profile you have set up (remember the ISP nickname you used in the set up above?) by clicking on it and then click on the "Activate" button. The modem will start to dial and connect to the ISP and after awhile upon successful login the status of the profile in the Network Devices Control screen will change to "Active" from "Inactive". You are now connected to the Internet. You can perform the web browsing and other services discussed in the next few sections.

To disconnect from the Internet bring up the Network Devices Control window and select the profile which was activated above and click on the "Deactivate" button. You will be disconnected from the Internet and the status of the profile will be changed to "Inactive".

BROWSING THE INTERNET

The Internet has much to offer in terms of information on almost any subject matter imaginable and interaction with people and organisations from all over the world. Much of this access and interaction make use of the environment which is popularly known as the World Wide Web (WWW). The WWW is an interlinked network of systems, called web servers, offering multimedia services and information.. A user can access these using what is known as a web browser.

THE MOZILLA BROWSER

Mozilla is a full-featured web browser, email client and news reader. Using Mozilla a user can be exposed to the richness and diversity of multimedia content and services available on the WWW.

To start Mozilla click on the Mozilla icon on the panel or launch the application from the menu system:
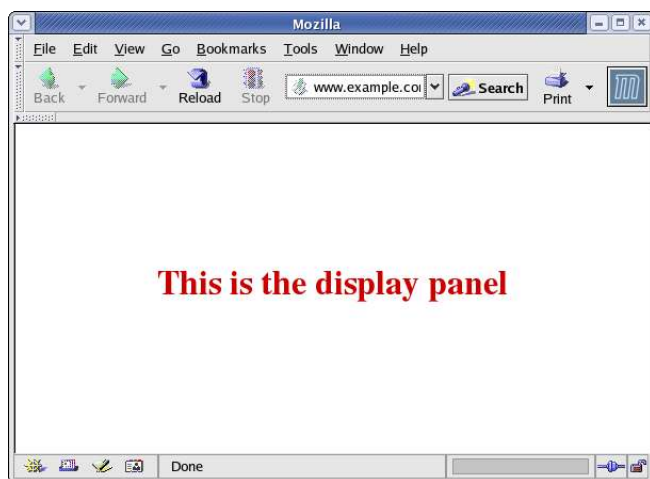
Main Menu --> Internet --> Mozilla Web Browser

Fig. The Mozilla browser

The Mozilla window has three main components.

- Th e navigation toolbar
- The menu bar
- The display panel

Only a very brief description of the functionalities and features of Mozilla are given here. The user should refer to the Help button on the menu bar for more details.

The Navigation Toolbar

Fig. The navigation toolbar

The navigation toolbar allows you to access a website by entering its Uniform Resource Locator (URL) e.g. http://www.mozilla.org in the address box provided. Actually you need to enter only the name of the host i.e. "www.mozilla.org" and Mozilla is smart enough to figure out that you want to access the web server on

that host. Clicking on the arrow at the right edge of the address box will open a pull-down menu showing a history of websites visited previously. You can click on an entry in the list to select that website to access.

Also present on the navigation toolbar are the Back, Forward, Reload and Stop buttons.

The Back button enables you to go back to the previous web page displayed.

The Forward button enables you to go forward to the next web page that you have already accessed.

The Reload button forces Mozilla to re-access the website and load the current web page.

The Stop button halts the loading of a web page that is currently proceeding.

The Menu Bar

Fig The menu bar

The File button caters to the performance of file level operations like the printing and saving of web pages. the opening of web pages files etc.

The Edit button allows you to find strings of text on the displayed page as well as to edit the Mozilla configuration to you personal preferences.

The View button allows you to control th viewing of the various toolbars as well as the zooming of text. The HTML source code of the currently displayed page can also be viewed using the selections under this button.

The Go button performs similar navigational functions as the navigation toolbar described earlier.

The Bookmarks button enables you to manage your bookmarks and personal folder. You can add frequently visited sites to the bookmark and/or personal folder.

The Display Panel

This is the area where the contents of a web page are rendered and displayed.

Navigation Tab Bar

Mozilla allows you to browse multiple websites within one browser window using navigational tabs. This overcomes the inconvenience of opening several windows under Mozilla to view multiple sites. To do this either choose under the menu bar:

File --> New --> Navigator Tab

or enter CONTROL-T.

If you open different web pages using this navigation tab feature, they will all be displayed under the same window. You can then use the tab bar to select between each tab screen.

INTERNET EMAIL

Internet email has become one of the most popular applications on the Internet. An Internet experience is not complete without the usage of email. There are two email software installed by default on your system: Evolution and Mozilla Mail.

Email Requirements

There are two main types of Internet email systems: webmail and POP3. Webmail, as the name implies makes use of a web browser to read, compose, send and manage your mail. POP3 email makes use of a POP3 email client to download your email from a server housing your email mailbox. The main difference between a webmail system and a POP3 email system is that for the former, generally, you have to be online to the server housing your mailbox to access and manage your mail. For the POP3 system, you need to be online to the server only to download your mail, after that you can go offline to read, reply and manage your local mail storage. You only need to go online again when you want to send out your email.

In addition to having a webmail account somewhere on the Internet, webmail needs only a web browser and Internet access to work. Examples of popular webmail services are those from Yahoo and Hotmail. Most ISPs also offer webmail services in addition to their traditional POP3 email services.

To use POP3 email you will need have a POP3 email client software running on your computer. Both Evolution and Mozilla Mail support POP3 email. In addition, you will also need to know the name of the computer on which your POP3 mailbox is located - the POP3 server, as well as the name of the computer which allows you to send out (relay) mail through it - the SMTP server.

Note:
Of course you will need to know your Internet email address irrespective of whether you are using webmail or POP3 email!

Since the usage of webmail involves using your browser mainly, we will not dwell on this form of email anymore here.

EVOLUTION

Evolution can be launched either from the icon on the panel or from the Main Menu:

Main menu --> Internet --> Evolution Email

The first time you run Evolution, you will be placed in the welcome/setup screen to configure Evolution to send and receive email using your email account. Follow the onscreen instructions to fill in the information required about your email account. Some of the important items to fill in are: described below.

Identity

For the identity screen the following have to be entered:

Email name: (fill in your name)
Email address: (fill in your email address)

Fig: Evolution email identity

Receiving Mail

For the receiving mail screen, the following have to be entered:

Server type: POP
    Host: (fill in name of your POP3 server)
    Username: (fill in username of your POP3 email account)

Fig: Evolution email POP3 setup

Sending Mail

For the sending mail screen the following have to be entered:

Server type: SMTP
    Host: (fill in name of your SMTP server)

Fig: Evolution SMTP setup

Time Zone

Ensure that you select the correct time zone.

Apply

After successfully filling in the configuration screens, click on the the Apply button at the confirmation screen, Evolution will be started and the main Evolution screen is displayed.

Fig. Evolution main screen

Only a very brief description of the functionalities and features of Evolution are given here. The user should refer to the Help button on the menu bar for more details.

In box Folder

The in box houses the email sent to you which you have downloaded from the POP3 server. To see what is in your in box click on the Inbox icon. If you have emails in your inbox, they will be displayed here. To read an email select it by clicking on it.
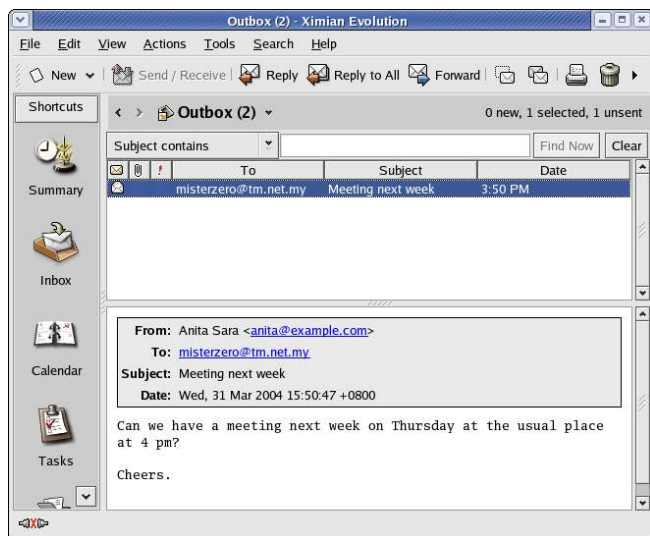

Fig. Evolution inbox

Composing Emails

To compose an email, from the inbox screen, click on the New button.

Enter the email address of the recipient as well as the subject. The latter should be a few words describing the contents of the mail but it should also not be too long. If you need to CC the mail to another email address, click on the View button on the top Menu bar and select CC field which will be displayed. After composing the email, you can send it.

Fig. Evolution composing email

Offline Mode

If you are on a dial-up connection it is very likely that you will want to compose all the emails that you want to send offline first before actually going online to send them. To do this click on the File item on the menu bar at the top and select Work Offline

  File --> Work Offline

(if the File menu shows the item Work Online then it means that you are already offline.)

In the Offline Mode, when you compose and send your mail they will not be sent out but rather they are stored temporarily in your Outbox folder. You can send them off later after connecting to the Internet by selecting the Send/Receive button.

Sending and Receiving Emails

To send the emails you have composed, connect to the Internet first and then select Work Online from the File menu. Click on the Send/Receive button or click on the Tools button in the menu bar and select Send/Receive. Unsent mail in your Outbox will be sent out and any incoming new mail will be placed in your inbox.

Deleting Emails

Any mail deleted from your inbox will be placed in the Trash folder. You should periodically empty the Trash by clicking on Actions from the menu bar and selecting Empty Trash.

Viewing Folders

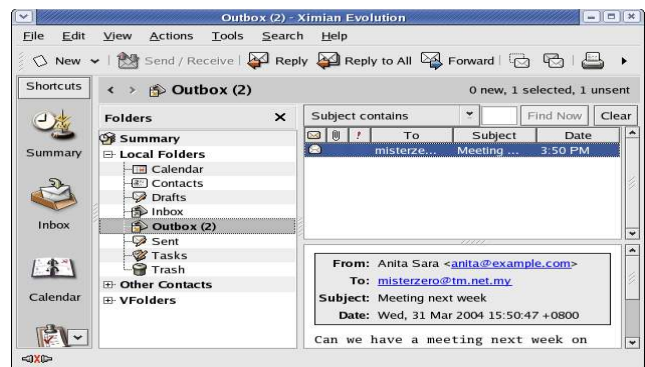To view your Evolution folders, click on the View button in the menu bar and select Folder bar.

Fig: Evolution folder view

PRINTER SETUP AND CONFIGURATION

If you have a printer attached to your system you will need to configure and set it up before you can use it properly. To do this, click on the Print Manager icon on the panel

Note: To enable the system to detect your printer properly, you should turn on the printer now if it is not turned on.

When you are prompted to run the printer configuration tool select OK. You will then need to enter the root password since you are now attempting to set and change some system parameters and configuration. At the printer configuration screen click on the New button to add and configure a new printer.
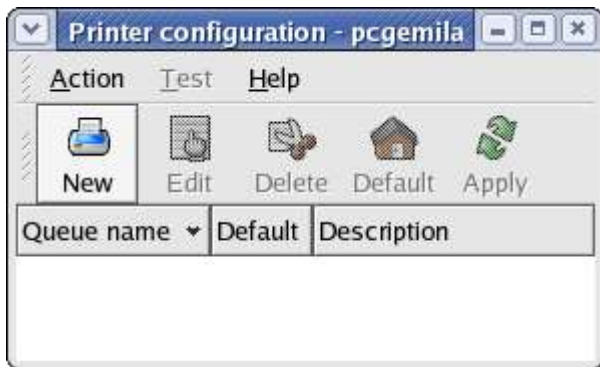
Fig. Printer configuration screen

The Add new print queue screen will be displayed. Select Forward.
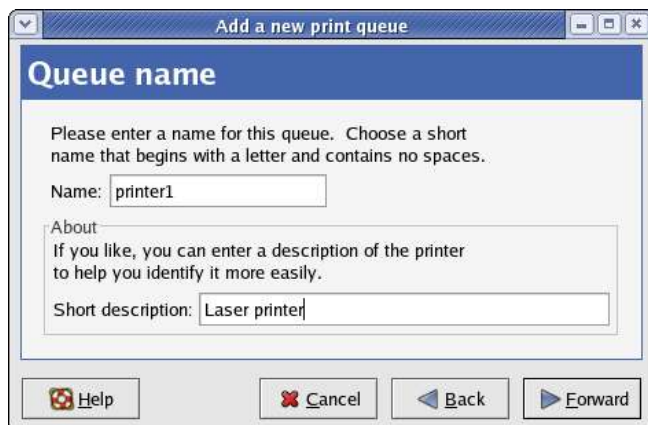
Fig. Print queue screen

Fill in the details for the print queue. Enter a unique name for the printer in the Name field. This name must begin with a letter and cannot contain spaces. You may also want to enter a brief description of the printer. Enter Forward to go to the next screen.

Fig. Queue type screen

Select locally-connected for the queue type. Select the printer device by clicking on the device displayed on the screen. If no device is shown click on Rescan device button for the system to check for the availability of the printer device. (For a parallel printer the device name is /dev/lp0 and for a USB printer the name is /dev/usb/lp0.) Select Forward to go to the Printer model screen.
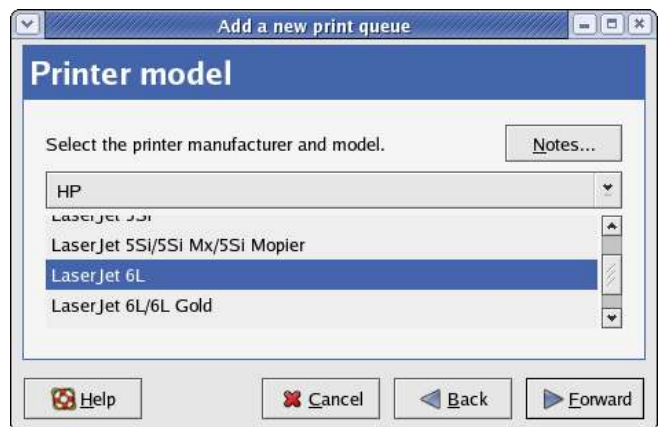
Fig. Printer model selection

The model of the printer should have been auto detected by the system. If it is not, click on the pull-down menu to select the manufacturer and the model of the printer. Click on Forward to go to the next screen.
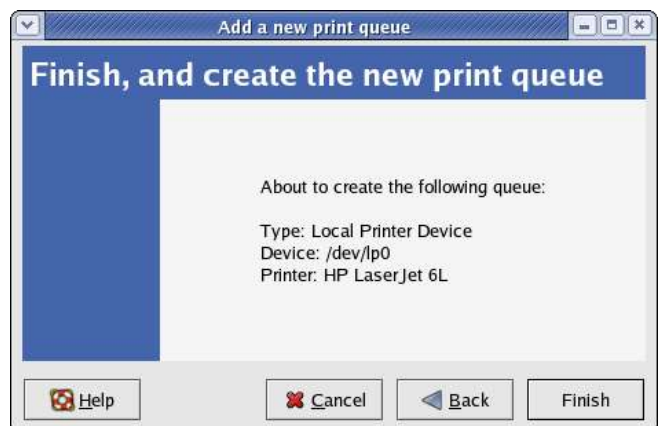
Fig. Finish and create new print queue screen

Confirm that the printer information displayed on the screen is correct. If so click on the Finish button otherwise click on the Back button to go back and make further changes.

After clicking Finish you will be asked whether you want to print a test page. Ensure that the printer is connected and online and answer yes to it. Check to see if the test page is printed properly. If it is click on the Apply button in the Printer configuration screen to add this printer to the system.

After setting up the printer you can delete it or edit its properties anytime by clicking on the Print Manager icon on the panel. The Print Manager screen will be displayed.

Fig. Print manger screen

Right click on the printer in question and select Properties. Select the print queue in question and click on the Edit button to make changes or the Delete button to remove it from the system.

Note:
If you delete all the print queues associated with a printer , the printer itself will be deleted from the system too and you will have to set up a new printer again in order to print.

MANAGING PRINT JOBS

When you send something for printing from your application, the data to be printed is stored in the print spooler area and a print job is added to the print spooler queue. In this way many printing jobs can be carried out without waiting for the printer to finish printing a job first before accepting another printing job. The Print Manager is used for managing the print jobs associated with a given printer.

The Print Manager can be utilised to check on the status of the printing jobs that you have submitted to the printer and to cancel jobs still in the queue if you need to. To do this, launch th e Print Manager and then double-click on the icon of the printer that you want to monitor. A list of current print jobs in the queue is displayed. To cancel a print job, highlight the job in question and then click on the Edit button on the menu bar on top and select Cancel Documents from the pull down menu.
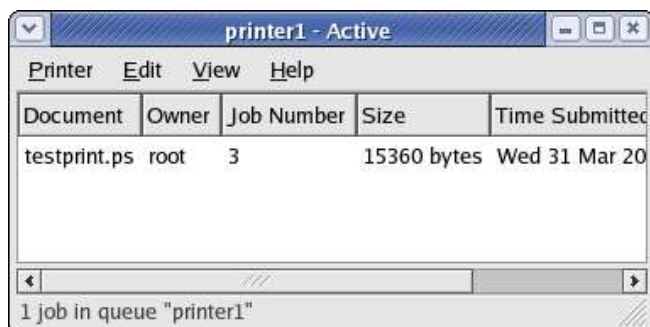

Fig: Status of print jobs in queue

USING THE PRINTER

Normal usage of the printer from an application is straightforward. Select the printing function from your application and a print job is then automatically submitted to the printer queue.

MULTIMEDIA ACCESS

Apart from being able to view and create graphics and other images, the system is capable of supporting a wide range of audio and video features and facilities. These include the playing of audio CDs, audio digital files, VCD and DVD as well as multimedia games.

Note: The necessary hardware has to be available before these multimedia facilities can be used, e.g. a DVD drive is required to be present on the system before you can play a DVD..

By default most modern PCs come with a CD-ROM drive capable of playing audio CDs and VCDs as well as a soundcard and speakers. As such in this section we shall discuss how you can listen to an audio CD, play audio digital files and view VCDs.

PLAYING AUDIO CDS

You can play an audio CD by placing the CD into the CD-ROM drive. The CD player application will be run automatically and to play the CD. Ensure that your speakers are turned on so that you can hear the CD! You can also manually start the CD Player application from the Main Menu:
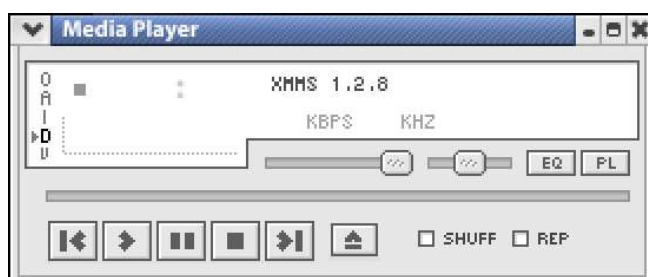
Main Menu --> Sound & Video --> CD Player

Fig. CD Player

You can control the CD Player just like a normal CD player with the buttons shown on the CD Player screen. These include volume control, track forward/backward, play/pause, stop, eject as well as jumping to any track on the CD directly.

PLAYING DIGITAL AUDIO FILES

The XMMS (X Multimedia System) application can be utilised to play a wide variety of digital audio file formats. These include the popular MP3 as well as the open Ogg Vorbis formats. To launch XMMS, select :

Main Menu --> Sound & Video --> Audio Player

Fig XMMS Player

Note:
XMMS may need additional plug-ins to be able to play some of the audio file formats. If these are not already installed on your system they can be downloaded from the XMMS website.

PLAYING VCD AND DVD

The xine application may be used to play VCD and DVD. You can start xine from the Main Menu:

Main Menu --> Sound & Video --> xine

The xine user interface is highly intuitive as it resembles a normal VCD/DVD player with all the basic control knobs and buttons.

To play a VCD place the VCD into the CD-ROM drive and click on the VCDO button on the xine control panel.

Fig. Xine control panel

To play a DVD place the DVD into the DVD drive and click on the DVD button on the xine control panel.

The volume control can be adjusted by clicking on the volume control button.

In the event that the xine control panel interferes with the playing screen image, you can hide it by right-clicking on the panel itself and select GUI visibility. This will hide the xine control panel. To bring back the xine control panel right-click on the playing screen and select GUI visibility again.

Xine is a very powerful multimedia application with many features. It can also play audio CDs as well as digital audio files. You should play around and experiment with them to exploit these features for your entertainment pleasure.

IMAGE VIEWER

The gThumb image viewer is a powerful tool for viewing and manipulating graphic image files. To start this application perform:
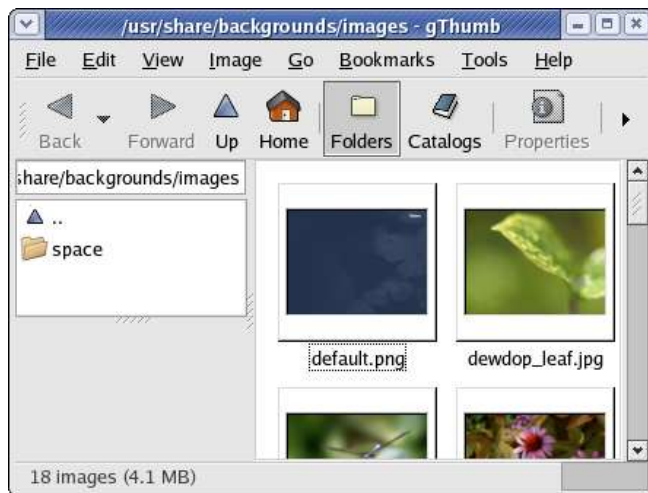
Main Menu --> Graphics --> gThumb Image Viewer

Fig. gThumb image viewer

On start up gThumb will check your home directory for any image files and if detected the gallery panel will automatically generate thumbnails of the images. You can highlight the thumbnail of an image you want to view and it will be displayed in the display area. If you double-click on the thumbnail it will be displayed in the main gallery area. You can also navigate to the next/previous image as well as go to full-screen viewing. Click on the Folders button at the top of the screen to go back to the thumbnails view. One useful feature of gThunb is the slide show. Clicking on this button will start a full screen slide show of the images in the folder.

You can also manipulate the images under gThumb. Supported functions include rotation, flipping, resizing, colour balancing, brightness control. gThumb has many other useful features. The online help guide may be consulted for more details on how to use gThumb.