

Accessing your mobile phone with KDE

MOBILIZING KDE

Composing text messages on a mobile phone isn't easy. A handy application called KmobileTools helps you manage your SMS messages and calls. **BY MARCEL HILZINGER**

If you are someone who does not use a mobile phone to send short messages because it is too much trouble to type messages with the phone's miniature keypad, take a look at KMobileTools, a KDE program that dials your phone, organizes short messages, accepts incoming calls, and even shows you the battery status.

Setting Up Your Phone

When you first launch KMobileTools, a welcome screen tells you that you need to set up the program for your phone. After clicking on *OK*, don't worry about the error message that appears, telling you that your phone has failed to initialize. You need to confirm the two warnings before you actually get to see the KMobileTools Setup window.

To just get started without too much fuss, select *Device | Mobile phone* and specify the device file for your phone (Figure 1). Depending on the connection

type, you can change the default setting of */dev/mobile* to one of the following:

- */dev/rfcomm0* (Bluetooth)
- */dev/ttyACM0* (USB)
- */dev/ircomm0* (Infrared)
- */dev/ttyS0* (COM1)

You can set up a symbolic link to the right device file, as in `ln -s /dev/right_port/dev/mobile`.

After selecting the correct port, click on the phone icon and select the right manufacturer and model. If you are not sure what kind of phone you have, simply select *Generic GSM Device*. When you are finished, click *OK*, and KMobileTools should show you your phone's signal strength and battery

status (Figure 2). If not, you will need to re-check the settings.

Hands-Free Dialing

If your phone supports hands-free dialing, or has an external loudspeaker and microphone, you can use KMobileTools to make calls. To do so, simply enter the number you want to dial in the empty

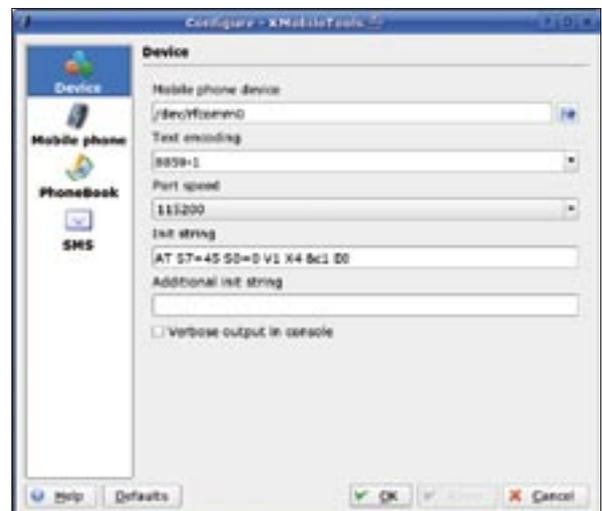


Figure 1: Use the KMobileTools Configure dialog to configure your phone and phonebook.



Figure 2: The KMobileTools main window showing the signal strength and battery status. You can use the input box to make a call.

text box and click *Dial*. To select a phone number from your contacts list, click *Phone book*. In the dialog box that then appears, look for the *All phone contacts* entry below *Phone book source* and click *Update*. This tells KMobileTools to parse the addresses in your phone book and in the KDE address book, and to store these contacts below `.kde/share/apps/kmobiletools/`. Despite the message to the contrary (see Figure 3), this step does not immediately sync your phone. In our test using a Sony Ericsson k700i, the progress bar got stuck for about a minute at the end of the process before the KDE tool decided to wake up again; so make sure you don't quit this step too early.

To call a contact, double click the appropriate entry, and then click *Dial*. To initiate a quick search for a specific contact, you can type the name in the search box at the bottom of the window. To accept an incoming call, click the *Answer* button. To end a call or refuse a connection, click *Hang up*.

Besides giving you access to normal contacts, the KDE program also lists recent or missed calls. To view the list, select *Settings | General settings* and click the phone book icon in the KMobileTools Setup window. Click the *Update* button on the lower right to tell KMobileTools to display a list of data sources. Then, to add the list of missed calls to your contacts, check the *MC* entry, and click *OK* to confirm.

The next time you click the phone book icon in the KMobileTools main

window, the new MC entries should be in the list.

Short Messages

KMobileTools can read and write short messages. Depending on the type of phone you have, this feature may still be at an early stage of development. To compose a new short message, click *New SMS* and enter the number as the *SMS Target Number*. Alternatively, you can select the recipient by clicking on *Select number*. Finally, you need to add the number to the list of recipients by clicking *Add target* to the list of targets.

Use the lower half of the window to compose your message. KMobileTools automatically selects the correct encoding type for SMS. Avoid non-standard characters in the SMS to save space. KMobileTools supports a maximum length of 160 characters for short messages, but using non-standard characters will reduce this to 70 characters.

When you have finished composing your message, click *Send SMS* to send the message. This option is not supported for some mobile phones, so it makes sense to take a detour via *Save SMS | Search SMS* until you are sure this works.

For newer devices, you may need to set up the SMS memory first. To do so, select *Update* below *Settings | General settings | SMS* and check the required slots. Users with Motorola phones that do not support the default settings additionally need to check *Enable Mode 2 setting*.

When you click *Search SMS* in the KMobileTools main window, the program shows you a list of short messages. To resend a message, select the SMS and then click *Send*.

If you want to free up a few kbytes of phone memory without losing your SMS messages, why not store your messages on your PC? To do so, click *Save SMS list* and then specify a location and filename. KMobileTools stores short messages in a

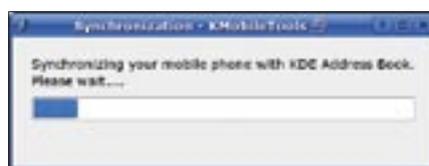


Figure 3: KMobileTools reading the entries in the KDE addressbook, the entries on the SIM card, and the contacts.

normal text file. After storing the messages on your PC, you can clear up the SMS memory by clicking in the KDE tool.

Notifier

If you have a Bluetooth connection (see article "GPRS in Linux" in this issue, boxout on p24), you might prefer to disable your phone's ring tone and leave your phone in your pocket. To help you avoid missing incoming calls and short messages, KMobileTools has a number of notify functions. To set this up, select *Settings | Configure Notification*. You can assign up to six different notification types for the following:

- Incoming call
- New SMS
- Mobile phone battery charged
- Mobile phone battery low

By default, KMobileTools plays a sound clip for each event and displays a message in the KDE kicker. If you want to keep track of your calls, you can tell KMobileTools to keep a logfile. To do so, create a new text file and enter the full path to the file in *Write to Logfile*. You can use the `tail -f /path/to/file.txt` command to monitor the file. Unfortunately, the program only stores the date and time of each call, not the phone number.

The *Run program* feature gives users some interesting options. For example, you could use a command like `kdialog --msgbox "Hello, You have a call"` to add your own message, or use DCOP calls to control KDE programs, or even run a script with AT commands to refuse incoming calls after, say, 9.00 pm.

Competitors

The Wammu program has features similar to KMobileTools. (See the article on Wammu in this issue.) Wammu is based on the engine of the Gammu command line tool, and Gammu is a spinoff from the pioneering mobile phone tool, Gnokii. As KDE users are obviously interested in the options that Gammu gives them, the KMobileTools project is looking to support the Gammu engine with its next release. For more details, go to the project homepage at [1]. ■

INFO

- [1] Project homepage
<http://kmobiletools.berlios.de>