TkDesk User's Guide

Christian Bolik, `Christian.Bolik@mainz.netsurf.de` Version 1.0b3, 25 September 1996

TkDesk is a graphical, highly configurable and powerful desktop manager for UNIX and the X Window System. This document is meant to be a comprehensive guide to the functions, services and possibilities offered by TkDesk. (It may not be fully up to date with the current version, but should be useful anyway. Take a look at the CHANGES file for latest news.) A list of answers to frequently asked questions is also included. Please note that there is a TkDesk-page on the World Wide Web at `<http://people.mainz.netsurf.de/~bolik/tkdesk/>`, as well as a mailing list at `majordomo@mrj.com` (send a mail with the body "subscribe tkdesk" to join).

Contents

1 Introduction

Please note: As of TkDesk 1.0b5, this guide unfortunately has become slightly out of date. To find out what has changed or been added since this guide was written, please take a look at the change log ("Help/Changes"), even if you're a first time user.

TkDesk is a graphical desktop manager for UNIX (especially Linux) and the X Window System. Compared with other file managers available, it offers the most complete set of file operations and services, plus gives the user the ability to configure most aspects of TkDesk in a powerful way. The reason for this is the use of Tcl/Tk as the configuration and (for the greatest part of TkDesk) implementation language. TkDesk has been influenced by various other systems and file managers: NeXT, for laying out the file browser windows, Apple Finder, for the idea of file annotations and, (shock horror), Windows 95, for some other (of course minor and unimportant) inspirations.

This is a brief overview of the most prominent features of TkDesk:

- Arbitrary number of automatically refreshed file browsers and file list windows,
- Configurable file-specific popup-menus,
- Drag and drop,
- Files and directories may also be dropped onto the root window, a.k.a. desktop,
- Configurable application bar, with several displays and cascaded popup menus for each button, files can also be dropped here,
- History of visited directories, opened files, executed commands, and others, which is automatically saved to disk,
- Find files through their annotation, name, contents, size or age,
- Trash can for safe deletion of files and directories,
- Calculation of disk usage for directory hierarchies,
- All file operations (find, copy, disk usage, etc.) are carried out in the background,
- Traversal of directory hierarchies through recursive cascaded menus,
- Bookmarks, create menu entries for often used files/directories,
- Comprehensive hypertextish online help,
- Built-in multi-buffer and undo-capable editor,
- Close coupling with Netscape for displaying HTML files or selected URLs,
- Sound support,
- Powerful configuration of nearly all aspect of TkDesk through Tcl/Tk, this also allows the Tcl-literate to extend TkDesk in arbitrary ways,
- Free of charge! But see the file `COPYING`, or menu entry `Help/License` for information on usage and redistribution of TkDesk.

1.1 Acknowledgments

TkDesk uses a number of other freely available packages without which TkDesk would not have been possible. I'd like to say many thanks to the following people:

- Chris Sterritt for setting up and managing the TkDesk mailing list (at `majordomo@mrj.com`, send a mail with the body "subscribe tkdesk" to join),
- Ken Hornstein for his wonderful netscape-remote package,
- Ioi Kim Lan for making an XPM image reader for Tk available,
- George Howlett for his great BLT, of which parts are used by TkDesk,
- Michael McLennan for his massively useful `[incr tcl]`,
- John Ousterhout for Tcl/Tk, which is definitely the best thing since sliced bread,
- Greg Hankins and Matt Welsh for putting together the most wonderful linuxdoc-sgml package,
- and of course, Linus Torvalds whose Linux kind of changed my life, really!

And a very big thank you to the growing TkDesk user community, which provides me with a constant flow of bug reports (getting less now `:-)`), suggestions for enhancements of TkDesk, and lots of motivation and encouragement.

Special thanks to Chuck Robey for revising a previous version of this guide.

1.2 Using TkDesk's Help System

If you have Netscape running, TkDesk will use that for displaying this User's Guide on-line. Otherwise, to reduce overhead, TkDesk uses its own, rather sophisticated help system. It features hypertext links, context sensitivity (which is not yet utilised by TkDesk) and full text search.

The help window consists of three areas:

1. A listbox listing all the section headings. A section can be selected by pressing the left mouse button,
2. the text display, which contains the actual help text, and
3. a button "Back", which jumps back after a hypertext link has been followed (see next paragraph), a button "Close" which closes the help window, and a text entry. In this entry a regular expression can be entered (such as `[Ff]eatures`). After hitting `Return`, the whole help text is searched for this expression. Pressing `Return` again continues the search.

Text that is displayed blue in the help window is a hypertext link. When the left mouse button is clicked over such a link the display will automatically change to the referenced section. One can jump back by pressing the "Back" button described above.

The following keys are bound when the mouse pointer is inside the help window:

`Tab`

Moves to the next section.

`Shift-Tab`

Moves to the previous section.

`Control-Tab`

Moves to the first section.

`Control-Shift-Tab`

Moves to the last section.

`Up, Down`

Scrolls one line up/down.

`Page up, Page down`

Scrolls one page up/down.

`Control-Home`

Jumps to start of help text.

`Control-End`

Jumps to end of help text.

`Meta/Alt-b`

Equivalent to pressing the "Back" button.

`Meta/Alt-c, Escape`

Equivalent to pressing the "Close" button.

1.3 Command Line Options

Usually TkDesk is started simply by executing the command "`tkdesk`" from the shell prompt or your X initialisation file. The command line options understood by TkDesk are the following:

-configdir *dir*

Reads the configuration from directory *dir* instead of `~/.tkdesk`.

-default

Reads the default configuration of TkDesk instead of the user's one in `~/.tkdesk`.

-fvwm

TkDesk uses the icon window facility only if fvwm is the current window manager. Since other window managers may also support icon windows, or TkDesk maybe unable to detect you're running fvwm, this command line option forces TkDesk to use icon windows. The advantage of these is that they look nicer and files can be dropped on them.

-iconic

Iconifies all file browser and file list windows created by TkDesk during start-up.

-startdir *dir*

If this option is given, the first file browser will open with directory *dir*.

For example, the command "`tkdesk -fvwm -iconic`" forces Tkdesk to use icon windows and starts with all windows iconified.

2 The File Browser Window

The file browser window is the largest window when TkDesk is started for the first time. It contains a menu bar, a button bar (for fast access to the most often used file operations and other functions), an entry field (displaying the current directory), a horizontal scrollbar, a certain number of file listboxes (three by default), and a status and information bar.

2.1 The Menu Bar

The following sections describe the entries of the individual menus of the file browser windows.

2.1.1 TkDesk

The "TkDesk" menu contains the following entries:

New Browser...

Asks for a directory for which to open a new file browser window. If the directory is the empty string, the operation is cancelled.

Clone Window

Creates a new file browser window with the same directory as the current one (that is, the directory of the file browser from which this menu entry was invoked).

Application Bar

Opens the application bar if it had been closed before, or raises the application bar above all other windows.

Edit Config Files

This is a submenu from which individual or all configuration files of TkDesk can be opened to modify them.

Reread Config Files

Another submenu whose entries reread individual or all configuration files.

Auto Save

Here you can select which parts of TkDesk are automatically saved periodically and when TkDesk exits.

Save All Now

Saves all parts of TkDesk's configuration no matter what the settings in the previous submenu.

Close Window

Closes the file browser window.

Quit

Quits TkDesk if this is what the user really wishes.

2.1.2 File

This menu provides all the usual file operations plus entries for finding files. The contained menu entries are:

Information

Opens a file information window for each currently selected file. This window, which can also be used to add annotations to files, is described in section 4.1.

New File...

Asks for the name of a file which will be created in the current directory of the file browser or list.

New Directory...

Asks for the name of a directory which will be created in the current directory of the file browser or list.

Copy, Move, Link...

Opens a dialog box for copying, moving, linking, and symbolic linking of files. If the currently selected file is a tar archive the dialog contains an extra button labeled "Untar". This dialog window is described in more detail in section 4.2.

Rename...

For each selected file, TkDesk asks for a new name. Before actually renaming TkDesk checks for an existing file with the same name.

Delete...

Opens a dialog to delete files. The section 4.2 gives more details.

Print...

Asks for a command to print the currently selected files. The names of the selected files will be appended to the command. The default command can be defined in the configuration file "System".

Find Files...

Opens a dialog window which can be used to search for files, using a variety of characteristics. This dialog is described in more detail in section 4.3.

Find Annotation...

Lets you search for files with a certain annotation. More details in section 4.3.

Copy To X Selection

Copies the complete names of all currently selected files (i.e. including their paths) to the X clipboard. They can then be pasted into any other X application using the middle mouse button.

Open Selected Files

For each currently selected file, the default action is performed.

2.1.3 Directories

The main purpose of this menu is to select directories which are to be opened. It also manages TkDesk's trash can. The menu contains the following entries:

Open...

Asks for a directory. A new file list or file browser window will be created, baesed on the setting of the "In Browser" checkbutton.

New...

Asks for the name of a directory which will be created in the current directory of the file browser or list.

Home Directory

Changes the directory of the window from which this entry is invoked to the user's home directory.

Trees

Contains two cascaded submenus: "Home" and "Root". The contents of these submenus is dynamically generated and corresponds to the directory hierarchy rooted either at the user's home directory or at "/". Selecting an entry from these submenus changes the directory of the window to the selected directory. Pressing `Control` at the same time opens a new window with this directory.

Trash

Opens a file list window displaying the contents of the trash can. When this window is iconified and TkDesk uses icon windows the icon can be used as a Mac-like trash can.

Empty Trash

Empties the trash can after confirmation from the user.

The remaining entries can be configured by the configuration file `Directories`. See section 7 for details on how to do this. If one of these menu entries is invoked, the path of the file browser will change to that directory. If such an entry is invoked while at the same time pressing the Control key, a new file list window will be created (if the option "Always In Browser" is selected a file browser window will be created), displaying the contents of the selected directory. This feature applies to **all** menus that contain directory names!

2.1.4 Commands

This menu provides entries to execute commands either once or periodically, and provides some "job control". Its entries are:

Execute...

Asks for a command to execute. The button to the right of the command entry contains a history of previously executed commands. Selecting one of these copies its name to the entry widget.

Periodic Execution...

Opens a window which can be used to execute a command and watch its output periodically. If the "Don't execute" checkbutton is selected, the execution is paused.

Job Control

Opens a window which allows to stop, terminate, kill etc. processes which have been started by TkDesk.

The remaining entries can be defined in the configuration file `Commands`. See section 7 for details on how to do this. If one of these menu entries is invoked, the corresponding command will be executed.

2.1.5 Bookmarks

This menu lets you create bookmarks for often used files and directories. To do this, select at least one file/directory and invoke the "Add Bookmark" menu entry. The name(s) of the selected files and directories will now appear alphabetically sorted in the "Bookmarks" menu. You can remove any bookmark from the menu by selecting its corresponding entry from the "Remove Bookmark" submenu.

The bookmarks you add will be automatically saved, if the "Bookmarks" entry of the "Auto Save" submenu contained in the "TkDesk" menu is selected (which is the default).

2.1.6 Options

The `Options` menu lets you configure many aspects of TkDesk "on the fly". The entries are:

Add Icons

If selected, pretty little images will appear left of the file names in the file listboxes. This looks nice, but has currently a major drawback: It is very slow. For this reason this option is by default deselected.

Show All Files

Whether to show files in the file lists whose name start with ".".

Folders On Top

If selected (default) folders will always appear on top of the file lists.

Append Type Char

Whether to append a file-type specific character to the file names. This is mainly intended for monochrome displays and is then automagically selected.

Single Click (Dirs)

Lets you open directories with a single click of the left mouse button. Individual directories can still be selected by pressing `Control` at the same time.

Always In Browser

If this option is selected, the "In Browser" checkbutton of the "Open Directory" dialog will always be selected. `Control-Doubleclick` on a directory will open a file browser instead of a file list window.

Strip <your home directory>

If this is selected, and the current path of the browser is somewhere under your home directory, the leftmost file listbox will contain your home directory rather than the root directory. This speeds up the display of directory hierarchies under your home directory.

Overwrite Always

If this option is selected, TkDesk won't ask if the destination file already exists when copying or moving files.

Really Delete

Relates to the deletion of files. If this option is selected, the "Delete Files" dialog box will always have the "REALLY delete" checkbutton selected by default.

Quick Drag'n'Drop

Normally when you drop files onto a file list, the copy dialog appears. If this option is selected, dropped files will be moved to the destination directory without further questions. If `Control` is pressed during dropping, the files will be copied. If the drop target is the trash can, TkDesk will ask if the files are to be deleted "really".

Sort History

This option determines whether the history menus are to be sorted alphabetically or not.

Use Sound

If you have sound working with TkDesk on your machine, you can temporarily disable sound by selecting this option. Handy when playing Audio CDROMs, for instance.

Dialogs at Pointer

If selected, TkDesk will always try to place new windows right under the mouse pointer.

Number Of Listboxes

This relates to the number of listboxes in the file browser window. Between 1 and 6 can be displayed, though 18 would theoratically not be a problem.

The settings of these options are by default automatically saved. This can be disabled by deselecting the "Options" entry of the "TkDesk/Auto Save" submenu.

2.1.7 Help

This menu tries to give you some help with using TkDesk. It also contains entries for displaying the list of FAQs, recently made changes to TkDesk, and the license for using and distributing TkDesk, as well as an option for activating or deactivating the balloon help. The setting of the ballon help entry will be saved together with the ones of the "Options" menu.

And then there is the most important menu entry of TkDesk: "About TkDesk..." Make sure you invoke it at least once!

2.2 The Button Bar

The button bar allows you fast access to more often used functions of TkDesk, or other commands. When you place the mouse button over any of these buttons, a small help window will appear telling you what this button does (provided the "Balloon Help" option is activated).

The contents of this button bar can be defined via the configuration file `ButtonBar`. See section 7 and the configuration file itself for details on how to do this.

2.3 The Path Entry

This entry field displays the current path of the file browser or file list. You can also type directly into this field to change the display to another directory. There is a sort of "auto-completion" available; if you type only the first part of a directory's name and press Control-Tab, its name will be automagically completed. That is, provided there is no other directory starting with the same letters.

If you click the right mouse button over this field a popup menu appears which lets you select any of the current directory's parent directories.

The button to the right of the entry field contains a menu of the last 20 (default) directories you have visited. If you select one of these, the current path of the browser will change to it. The "Control-trick" described in section 2.1.3 works here as well!

2.4 The File Listboxes

The main part of the file browser are the file listboxes. Directories are by default displayed in blue with a bold font, executable files in red and bold, and regular files in black and a medium font. These settings can be configured via the `System` configuration file. The color and font of individual file types can be configured via the `FileTags` configuration file. See section 7 for details on how to do this.

Every listbox contains a "long" listing of its directory. You can make the hidden parts visible by scrolling the listbox with the horizontal scrollbar at its bottom border. Every listbox also contains a menu, which can be accessed by clicking on the listbox's title. It contains entries for:

- Refreshing the listbox. Although TkDesk refreshes all its file lists every 5 seconds (default), sometimes you may want to have a file listbox instantly updated.
- Calculating the directory's disk usage, i.e. the number of bytes occupied by that directory and all its subdirectories. A window will appear when this has been done, containing a sorted list of all subdirectories and their individual disk usages. If you double-click on any of its entries, a new file list window will appear displaying the directory's contents.
- Executing a command in the listbox's directory. All the usual %-shortcuts my be used (see section 7).
- Setting a mask for the listbox's display. For example, you can configure the listbox to only display files matching the pattern `*.gif`.
- Sorting the listbox's contents, either by Name, Size, Date, Extension, or not at all.
- Displaying all files, that is also those starting with a ".".
- Inverting the listing.
- Open a new file list window displaying the directory's contents.

This menubutton can also be used to drop files, as well as to drag the directory displayed in the associated listbox to another target, e.g. the root window.

2.4.1 Handling of the Listboxes (Bindings)

The handling of the file lists is very similar to that of the NeXT file manager: when you double click on a directory, the listbox right to the current one will display this directory's contents. You can open a directory in this listbox, and the listbox right to this one will display its contents. This way you can browse through complete directory hierarchies, while having instant access to the contents of the complete directory tree. When the number of opened directories exceeds the number of visible listboxes, you can scroll the listboxes with the horizontal scrollbar which is located right above the file lists.

Files are selected with the left mouse button. A single click selects a single file, deselecting all other files. If the Control key is pressed simultaneously, the old selection will be retained. By dragging the mouse pointer over a file list, while at the same time pressing the left mouse button, a set of files can be selected. Shift-doubleclick selects all files in that file list. Holding down the shift button extends the current selection unto that file ("range-selection").

Note that if the option "Single Click (Dirs)" is set a single click on a directory will open it. Then you need to use Control-Click to select a single directory.

A double click performs the default action for the selected file. For directories that opens the directory, for executables it executes it, and for files it invokes the first entry of the corresponding popup menu (see below). If the Control key is pressed while double-clicking a directory, a new file list or file browser window (depending on the setting of the "Always In Browser" option) is created displaying the contents of that directory. For files, a dialog box will appear asking for a command to execute on that file.

Files can be dragged by pressing the middle mouse button on any selected file. If no file is selected, the clicked-on file will be selected. Files can be dropped by releasing the mouse button over any other file listbox and the menubutton above them, over windows of the built-in editor, over the application bar (if the corresponding button has been configured to handle dropped files), over iconified file browsers and file lists (only if TkDesk is in "fvwm-mode", see section 1.3) and in general over any other application supporting the `file` protocol of the BLT package's drag and drop implementation. Valid drop targets can be identified by looking at the window that is displayed while files are dragged: the window's relief appears raised if over a valid target, flat if not.

The right mouse button is used in the file listboxes to access the file-specific popup menu. Every popup menu contains a submenu, labeled with the file's name, which contains entries for the most common file operations. The remaining entries of the menu can be configured via the configuration file `Popups`. See section 7 for details on how to do this.

2.5 The Status Bar

The status bar is located at the bottom edge of file browser windows. It displays either

- the current state of TkDesk,
- details of the currently selected file, or
- number and summed size of currently selected files.

3 The File List Window

The file list window is basically a more compact version of the file browser window. It displays only one listbox, which results in the fact that the contents of opened directories are always displayed in the same listbox, and it doesn't have a status bar. Its advantage is that it is more quickly created than a file browser window and occupies less space on your screen. My usual setup is that I have one file browser and lots of file lists opened.

The menu bar of the file list windows is also more compact, but allows access to all menus of the file browser through submenus of the "Others" menu. This menu contains one additional entry to open a file browser window displaying this file list's directory.

4 File Operations

4.1 File Information

The "File Information" window displays detailed information about a file. It can also be used to change the owner or access-permissions of a file. In addition, an annotation to a file can be added here.

The following information is displayed:

Path

The path of the file.

Size

The size of the file in bytes.

Modified

When the file was last modified. By clicking on the button displaying the date file can be "touched", ie. their modification timestamp will be set to the current time.

Owner

Displays the owner of the file. By clicking the button displaying the owner, the owner can be changed to another user.

Group

Displays the group ownership of the file. By clicking the button displaying the group's name, the group can be changed.

Mode

Here the access permissions are displayed in "ls -l" style. The first three button correspond to the rights of the owner (r: may read, w: may write, x: may execute or open the directory), the second three buttons to the rights of the group, and the last three buttons to every one else's rights. The "x" button are special in that they cycle through four settings: `x` for executable, `s` for set user/group id *and* executable, `S` for set id only, and `-` for not executable. If the settings any of these buttons is changed, the "Change Mode" button at the bottom edge of the window must be clicked to actually change the file's permissions.

Links

Number of (hard) links to this file.

Type

Tries to give some information about the file's contents. TkDesk uses the shell command `file` for this.

In the "Annotation" text field you can enter any remarks about the file. This annotation will be saved when the "Close" button is pressed. If the window displays information about a file an additional button labeled "Disk Usage" is provided, which calculates the disk usage of the hierarchy rooted at that directory. The entries of the "Disk Usage" window can be double-clicked to open new file list windows.

4.2 Copying, Moving and Deleting Files

These functions can be accessed from the "File" menu. There is one dialog for copying, moving and linking files, one dialog for renaming files (which does nothing else than moving the file to its new name), and one dialog for deleting files.

The "Rename" dialog is very straight-forward and probably does not need further explanation. The "Copy etc." dialog contains the obvious source and destination entry fields, plus a checkbutton labeled "all selected files". If more than one file is selected and this checkbutton is checked (default) the operation will be applied on all selected files. If it is not checked, each file will be handled individually. The "Skip" button can then be used for skipping individual files.

The "Delete" dialog also contains this checkbutton, plus a checkbutton labeled "REALLY delete". If this checkbutton is checked, the files will *not* be moved to the trash can but will be **really and finally deleted!!** The default setting of this checkbutton can be set from the "Options" menu.

4.3 Finding Files

The "File" menu contains two entries for finding files: "Find Files..." and "Find Annotation...". Files can be annotated through their "Info" dialog (accessible from the "File" menu or from their popup menu), see section 4.1.

"Find Annotation" enables you to look for an annotated file whose annotation matches a certain regular expression (which can be as simple as an ordinary string).

"Find Files" lets you look for files (or rather: let's you instruct TkDesk to look for files) whose name match a certain pattern, which are of a certain type (such as directory), which contain a certain string, which are smaller or bigger than a certain number of kilobytes or which are younger/older than a certain date. All fields which are not left blank in this dialog will be combined with a logical AND. This dialog is currently the only one utilizing the balloon help capability of TkDesk, so for now I would like to refer you to this. For instance, if you want to know how to enter the file size you're looking for, place the mouse pointer over the "Size" entry field without moving it for a few seconds.

Both "Find" dialogs display their results in the same file listboxes that are used by the file list and browser windows, so the same bindings described in section 2.4.1 apply here as well!

5 The Application Bar

TkDesk provides you with an application bar for fast access to your favorite applications, commands, directories etc., plus displays for the current date and time, system load, and the status of your mailbox. It consists of an arbitrary number of buttons. Each button (also the aforementioned displays) contains a popup menu which can be accessed by pressing the right mouse button over any of them. If you single-click the left mouse button over such a button, the first (active) entry from the corresponding popup menu will be invoked.

The first button (displaying a comet) could be called TkDesk's "Start Button", although I would prefer "Take-off Button" `;-)`. Its popup menu contains entries for accessing TkDesk's most often used functions, such as executing a command or opening a file list or browser window, plus submenus for your bookmarks, the files you most recently opened, and the directories you've last visited. The next entry is a submenu labeled "Application Bar". Here you can configure all aspects of the application bar, especially its **position and orientation**. See my answer to the MFAQ 8.1 for more. The last entry labeled "Configuration" contains another submenu which gives you fast access to TkDesk's configuration files.

The remaining two entries allow you to configure the application bar and TkDesk to your heart's content. See section 7 for details on how to do this.

The second button with the question mark gives you access to this guide to TkDesk, and lets you view manual pages, also making use of a running TkMan (which is a hypertextified manual pager which is to be highly recommended). This button also allows you to drop executables on it to automatically display their manual page, if they have got one.

All the other buttons can be configured by you! See section 7 for details on how to do this.

6 The Built-in Editor

The built-in editor of TkDesk is meant to be a simple ASCII editor for editing files smaller than, say, 500kB. A single editor window can handle an arbitrary number of buffers each of which contains another file. Files can either be loaded through the "File" menu of the editor or by simply dropping one or more files on the text field of the editor window from one of the file listboxes.

An editor window contains the following menus in its menu bar:

File

Contains entries to load, save, and print files, and to close the current buffer, current window, or all windows.

Edit

The first entry provides access to the editor's "Undo" functionality. Note that the undo buffer may contain a maximum of 500 events. This menu also contains entries for managing TkDesk's own text clipboard. Also provides entries to search for text (regular expressions), replace text, or find the next occurence of the currently selected text. The entry "HyperSearch" is a special form of search: all matching lines are displayed in a file listbox. If one of its entries is clicked on, the editor automatically displays that line at the top of the text field. This can be useful for jumping to headings, function definitions etc. Oh yes, and the regular expressions entered here are also saved with the other histories.

Options

The "Auto Indent" option determines whether the cursor is automatically indented after hitting `Return`. If the "Send to Netscape" option is set, the current file will be loaded by (maybe a running) Netscape each time it is saved. Useful when editing HTML files. The "Font..." option lets you select a font by making use of the xfontsel program, which is pretty standard on X systems, I think. TkDesk might provide its own font selector at one time though.

Buffers

Lists the buffers of the editor window. Buffers can be selected from this menu.

TkDesk

This menu is only available when editing one of TkDesk's configuration files. It lets you save the file and reload it into TkDesk by selecting the corresponding menu entry or pressing `F5`, or exactly the same plus closing the buffer by invoking the next entry or pressing `F6`. This way configuration files can very quickly be edited and reloaded into TkDesk.

The text area provides all the more common Motif- and Emacs-like key-bindings (including `Control-Space` for selecting an area of the text). Maybe it should be mentioned that `Control-C/X/V` do not work on the X selection but on TkDesk's own clipboard. Use the middle mouse button to paste from the X selection into TkDesk or from TkDesk into another application.

Marks can be set with `Control-[1-9]`, and be jumped to with `Alt/Meta-[1-9]`. You can always jump back with `Control-0`.

7 Configuration of TkDesk

Currently, TkDesk can be configured only by editing ASCII files. This is not necessarily a drawback, because this way you can add complex Tcl/Tk procedures to the configuration files, but if you don't know Tcl/Tk you would probably prefer a dialog-based configuration. This should be implemented in a future release of TkDesk.

If you don't know Tcl/Tk: don't despair! For the biggest part of TkDesk's configuration files it is absolutely not necessary for you to know how to program in Tcl/Tk, since you just have to modify values or extend the examples I have provided. And to those who want to exploit all of the power available by using Tcl/Tk as TkDesk's configuration language, have a look at the answer to FAQ 8.9.

The configuration files can be accessed from the `TkDesk` menu via the entry `Edit Config Files`, or from the "Configuration" submenu of the popup menu of the application bar's first button (I should really call this the "comet-button" or something similar). The built-in editor will then appear with the selected configuration file(s) already loaded. Each configuration file contains rather detailed comments on what the individual settings are for, and how they can be modified. Well, at least they contain examples, which can guide your modification attempts. Once you have modified the configuration file, you can save it and reload it into TkDesk making use of the entries of the editor's "TkDesk" menu described in section 6. Use F5 to save the file and reload it into TkDesk, and F6 to do the same but additionally close the configuration file.

The following sections briefly describe what the individual configuration files are used for by TkDesk, and what settings can be defined by them.

As already mentioned, each configuration file contains directions on how to modify its definitions. The general advice is: just look at the example definitions, because these make things clearer than lots of explanations can. And don't be shy, but experiment! It's easier than you might think, really!

7.1 AppBar

This configuration file lets you define all aspects of the application bar (apart from its geometry, use the entries of the submenu "Application Bar" of the comet-button's popup menu for this). This is what you can define here:

- If the application bar should be managed by the window manager just as an ordinary window. I don't like this, so this is disabled by default `:-)`.
- The maximum number of buttons in a column (vertical layout) or row (horizontal layout). Yes, the application bar can contain several columns or rows!
- The fonts to use for the time and date display.
- The actual button definitions, ie. which image to display, and the entries of the (possibly cascaded) popup menu. See the "AppBar" file itself for the syntax used. TkDesk comes with a rich set of b/w XBM and colour XPM images, these are located in the `images` subdirectory of TKDesk's library directory. You can find out where this is by looking at the fifth line of the `tkdesk` script.

7.2 ButtonBar

This file defines the contents and appearance of the Button Bar, which is displayed underneath the menu bar of TkDesk's file browser or file list windows. Both button bars are configured independently from one another.

7.3 Commands

In this file you can define entries which will be added to TkDesk's "Command" menu, for example to uncompress all selected files or do whatever you can possibly imagine.

7.4 Directories

Here you can define entries and cascaded submenus of directories which will be added to TkDesk's "Directories" menu. More details are contained in the "Directories" file itself.

You can also define a list of directories whose parent directories are not to be displayed in file browser windows, as is usually the case with your home directory. This can speed up display of directories underneath an AFS directory, for instance.

Another list lets you define action that are to be performed when a specific directory is opened. This can be used for example to auto-mount floppy and CDROM drives.

7.5 FileTags

Contains definitions for color and font of specific file types, that will be used in TkDesk's file lists. Also the icons displayed when the "Add Icons" option is selected are configured here, as well as the icons used for the desk items, i.e. files and directories which have been dropped on the root window.

7.6 Popups

The popup menus that appear when the right mouse button is clicked over a file or directory are defined here. There are individual definitions for the popup menus of directories, executables, and of other files.

7.7 Sounds

Here the command to be used for playing sounds can be defined, as well as the sound files which are to be played at certain events. TkDesk comes with a few VOC sound files which are located in the `sounds` subdirectory of TkDesk's library directory. You can find out where this is by looking at the fifth line of the `tkdesk` script.

7.8 System

All the more "basic" features of TkDesk can be configured here. These are:

- Colours to be used by TkDesk,
- Fonts to be used by TkDesk,
- Default geometry of file listboxes,
- Definitions of shell command which are used by TkDesk to copy, move, delete etc. files. These should be fine as they are in most cases.
- The default command for printing,
- Which editor to use, plus settings for the built-in editor,
- Periods for automatic refreshing of the file lists and saving of TkDesk's configuration,
- Maximum number of entries in history menus,
- If TkDesk should ask for confirmation when the user wants to quit TkDesk,
- If TkDesk should allow the menus to be "tearoff-able",
- The paths in which TkDesk will look for images and sounds used in the configuration files,

- Icons to use for file list and browser windows, and for the help window,
- And if TkDesk should try to emulate Motif as closely as possible.

And that's it! Well, for the moment at least...

8 Frequently Asked Questions

This section is intended to give answers to the most frequently asked questions about TkDesk. This file is derived from the emails I'm receiving, so if you think something is missing just tell me about it (`zzhibol@rrzn-user.uni-hannover.de`).

8.1 How can I change the position of the application bar?

You can drag the application bar around simply by holding down the Alt- or Meta-key and simultaneously pressing the left mouse button over the application bar. You can also invoke the "Move..." entry from the comet button's popup menu to do the same without having to press Alt/Meta.

Since version 1.0b1 the configuration file "AppBar" sets also a variable named tkdesk(appbar,wm_managed) which can be used to have the apllication bar managed by the window manager, although this is usually not necessary.

8.2 Can I have transparent icons?

No, but have a look at the answer to the next question.

8.3 How can I change the background colour of the icons and desk items?

The background colour of icons used when the window manager iconifies a window can be set in the configuration file "System". The variable you are looking for is tkdesk(color,icon_background). By setting this variable to the same colour as your root window you can achieve the effect of transparent icons. You can define the colour either as a normal name (such as "grey", "blue") or in the form #rrggbb.

8.4 How can I have a different set of desk items on each virtual screen?

8.4.1 FVWM and similar or derived window managers

First, you have to set the variable `tkdesk(desk_items,wm_managed)` in the System config file to 1. Then you have to configure fvwm to not decorate windows of class `dsk_DeskItem`. For instance:

```
Style "dsk_DeskItem"    NoTitle, NoHandles, WindowListSkip, BorderWidth 0
```

8.4.2 CDE window manager

As for FVWM, you first have to set the variable `tkdesk(desk_items,wm_managed)` in the System config file to 1. To tell the CDE window manager (dtwm) to not decorate desk items you have to add the following line to either the file Dtwm or .Xdefaults in your home directory, and then restart dtwm:

```
Dtwm*dsk_DeskItem*clientDecoration:  none
```

8.5 Binding to execute (export foo=bar; program;) doesn't work.

Yes, this is a bit tricky. What you need to do is the following:

```
dsk_exec sh -c {export foo=bar; program}
```

8.6 Composing characters doesn't work in TkDesk's editor.

Currently you have to edit the file cb_tools/bindings.tcl in TkDesk's library directory to make this work. Locate the two lines containing the word "XKB"; all you need to do is to comment out the following lines by prepending a '#'.

8.7 I'd like TkDesk to do this and that. How can I achieve this?

The first place to start are the various configuration files of TkDesk. These can be accessed either by the "TkDesk/Edit Config Files" menu of the file browser windows, or by the "Configuration" submenu of the popup menu of the very first button of the application bar of TkDesk. `:-)`

Since TkDesk uses Tcl as the language for its configuration, and these configuration files are simply "source"ed, you could add any sort of Tcl proc for instance to the configuration file "System". This proc would then be available in every other configuration file as well. With the set of commands provided by TkDesk, which are listed e.g. in the configuration file "Popups", TkDesk provides a very powerful platform for the user who knows Tcl.

8.8 Is there a TkDesk mailing list?

Yes! Thanks to Chris Sterritt, there is a mailing list dedicated to TkDesk at mrj.com. Just send a mail to `majordomo@mrj.com` with an empty subject line and "subscribe tkdesk" as the message body. Please join!

8.9 Where can I find out more about Tcl/Tk?

The official Tcl/Tk homepage is at `<http://www.sunlabs.com/research/tcl>`. The Tcl/Tk FAQs and lots of user-contributed software can be obtained from `<ftp://ftp.neosoft.com/pub/tcl>`. There is also a newsgroup dedicated to Tcl/Tk: `comp.lang.tcl`.

9 Tips and Tricks

This section currently contains just one tip on how to combine TkDesk and XEmacs. If **you** have any procs or other stuff in your configuration file which you consider could be useful for others as well, or just think it's generally cool, please send me an email, so that I can add it to this section! Thanks!

9.1 TkDesk and XEmacs

If you are using XEmacs 19.12 or later you can couple TkDesk and XEmacs quite closely together by adding the following proc into any of your configuration files (I have it in "Popups"):

```
proc xemacs_load {what {where same}} {
    switch $where {
        "same" {
            exec gnudoit -q (find-file \"$what\")
```

```
            }
            "other" {
                exec gnudoit -q (find-file-other-window \"$what\")
            }
            "frame" {
                exec gnudoit -q (find-file-other-frame \"$what\")
            }
            "scratch" {
                exec gnudoit -q (switch-to-buffer-other-frame \"*scratch*\")
            }
        }
    }
```

And now my generic popup menu for files matching `*` reads:

```
        {{*} {
            {{Edit} {dsk_edit %s}}
            {{XEmacs} {xemacs_load %s}}
            {{Other Window} {xemacs_load %s other}}
            {{Other Frame} {xemacs_load %s frame}}
            -
            {{Print} {dsk_print %s}}
        }}
```

This way you can load files from TkDesk into a running XEmacs! This assumes that you have the command **gnudoit** somewhere in your path, and have started the XEmacs server. This can be done by adding the following line to your **~/.emacs**:

```
(gnuserv-start)
```

Like that? Stay tuned for more...