

KDE 4.0 release schedule revised, libraries to be released early to speed up porting

After initially deciding to push the KDE release schedule back from October 23rd, the release team entered several weeks of debate to produce a new schedule. The compromise was to have an early release of the stable underlying libraries and components, while pushing back the release of the KDE 4.0 Workspace into early December.

By Troy Unrau | Last updated September 7, 2007 5:52 PM CT



After initially deciding to push the KDE release schedule back from October 23rd, the release team entered several weeks of debate to produce a new schedule. Much of the debate centred around the fact that the libraries are already nearly stable, and that by pushing the date back, it would discourage third party developers from porting their applications to KDE 4 already. In addition, if the tagging dates were pushed too far into December, the developers responsible for tagging the release would be on holiday, making tagging the release nearly impossible. The compromise was to have an early release of the stable underlying libraries and components, while pushing back the release of the KDE 4.0 Workspace into early December.

Here is what the new schedule looks like, subject to change for show stopper bugs and other unforeseen problems:

- KDE 4.0 Beta 3: tagging on September 26th, releasing on October 2nd.
- Total Release Freeze (the so called Deep Freeze): October 19th
- KDE 4.0 RC1: tagging on October 24th, releasing on October 30th. The kdesupport, kdelibs, kdepimlibs and kdebase/runtime modules will be considered to be fully released at this point, known as the KDE Development Platform.
- KDE 4.0 RC2: tagging on November 7th, releasing on November 14th
- KDE 4.0.0 Final: tagging on December 5th, releasing on December 11th

While there are a number of KDE 4 applications that will be quite stable by the time the December release rolls around (some have been perfectly stable for months already), there are still a number of applications that will be late in arriving, such as Kopete, KDE's instant messaging program. Fortunately there is work underway to ensure that KDE 3 and KDE 4 can peacefully coexist on any system. This entails renaming some executables (some have simply had the number '4' appended to the name) and ensuring that library versions do not conflict. This should ensure that your favourite KDE 3 applications are still available well into the KDE 4 series, as well as allowing distros to ship KDE 4 components in their stable releases (like the forthcoming Kubuntu LTS) without worry.

Obviously KDE 3 and KDE 4 components will be able to interact on a basic level, such as icons embedding themselves in the system tray normally. This is possible since KDE 3 and KDE 4 both follow inter-desktop standards, although this is a somewhat unique case as the two desktops are both KDE desktops. However, KDE 4 has also introduced and revamped a huge number of old KDE technologies like switching from their in-house DCOP (Desktop COmmunications Protocol) to the DCOP-inspired D-BUS standard that is being rapidly adopted by other desktop environments. Since the high level of integration between various KDE applications relies on the communication system, this means that KDE 3 applications will not integrate as smoothly into the KDE 4 environment until they are properly ported.

The early release of the KDE 4 Development Platform will help to ensure that the simpler applications (code-wise) can be ported in time for the December release. At the same time, this delay allows applications such as the Plasma workspace some additional time for development and testing to ensure that it is ready for a release that the KDE team can feel confident in shipping.

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