CHAPTER 6: The KDE Control Center

Introduction:
One of the best features of Linux is the flexibility it provides for customization. You can chose your own window manager or your own desktop system. You can drag and drop files and application icons to any location on the desktop. You can also add new icons for all types of applications and resources to the desktop, panel, or file manager. The desktop itself is also highly customizable. You can change the appearance of buttons, window and frame decorations, and backgrounds. Configuration tools are also available which allow you to customize the way the desktop behaves at events such as single or double-clicking mouse buttons and defining keys to create time-saving shortcuts.

In this chapter, you will learn how to:
• Familiarize yourself with the KDE Control Center
• Customize your settings using the KDE Control Center

Situation:
You are finished working on your report and you still have 30 minutes to spare before your next class so you decided to customize your desktop environment. You want to personalize the look of your desktop with preferred colors, pictures, and theme.

Tasks:
1. Understand the KDE Control Center.
2. Customize your desktop environment using the KDE Control Center.
3. Apply the changes you have made.

Solution:
1. Understand the KDE Control Center.

   The KDE Control Center provides you with a centralized and convenient way to configure all of your KDE settings. The control center is made up of multiple modules. Each control center module can be executed individually . Each module is a separate application, but the control center organizes all of these programs into a convenient location. The control center groups the configuration modules into categories, so they are easy to locate. Within each category, the control center shows all the modules in a list, so it is easier to find the right configuration module.

   Many aspects of your desktop can be managed by the control center, these includes:

   • Appearance and Themes – backgrounds, colors, fonts, themes, styles, panels, etc.
   • Desktop – appearance, multiple desktops, taskbar, etc.
   • Information – devices, IO-ports, partitions, processor, sound, storage devices, etc.
   • Internet and Network – desktop sharing, email, file sharing, proxy, etc.
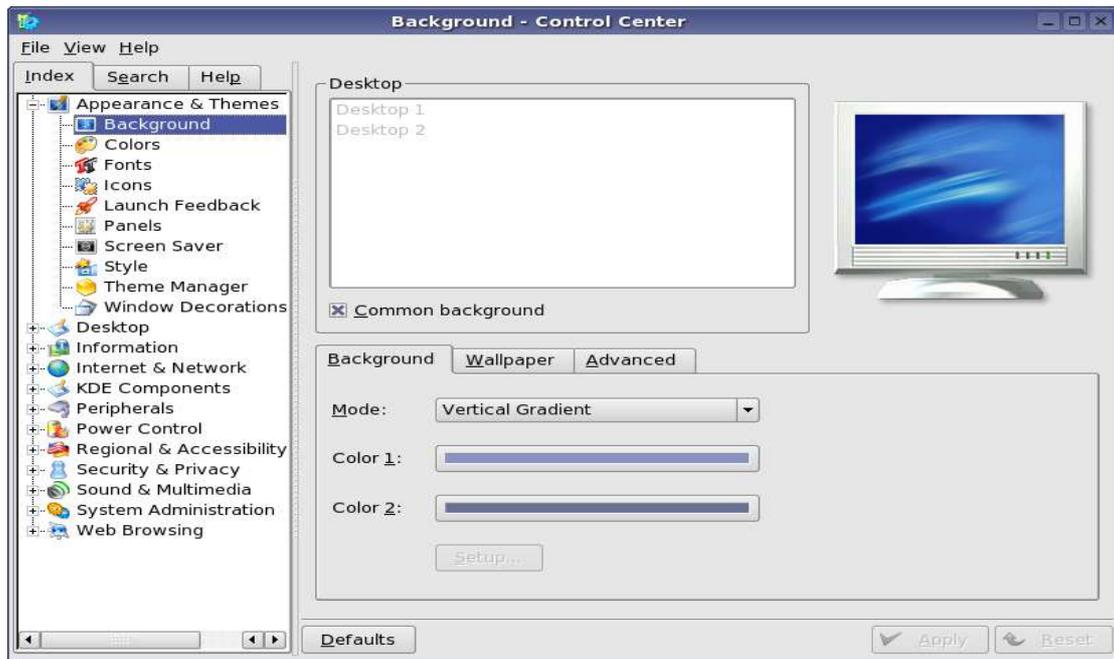   • KDE Components – file manager, session manager, spell checker, etc.

- Peripherals – digital camera, keyboard, mouse, and printers.
- Power Control – display power control, laptop battery.
- Regional and Accessibility – country/region & language, keyboard layout, etc.
- Security and Privacy – crypto, passwords.
- Sound and Multimedia – audio CDs, mixer, sound system, etc.
- System Administration – help index, login manager, paths, etc.
- Web Browsing – browser identification, cookies, plugins, web shortcuts, etc.

2. Click *Start Applications->KDE Control Center* to launch the "Control Center" window. When you start the control center, you are presented with a window, which can be divided into 3 functional parts. Across the top is a menubar. The menubar will provide you with quick access to most of KDE Control Center's features. Along the left hand side, is a column. This is a where you choose which module to configure. The main panel shows system information.
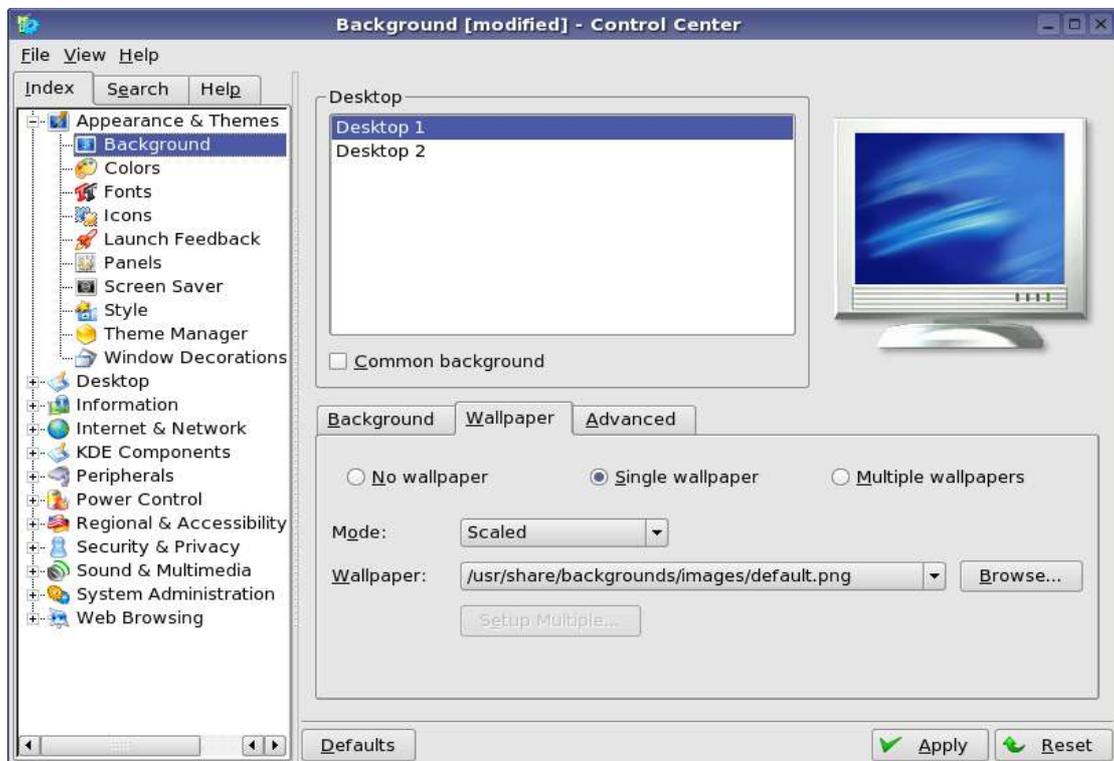

3. To change the backgrounds of your desktop, click *Appearance & Themes* and select *Background*. The main panel will show the system information of the
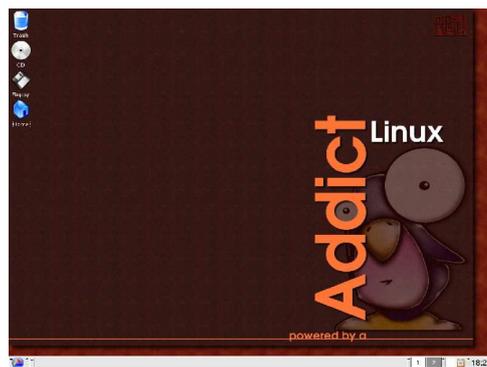
current Background settings.

4. On the main panel click on the "Wallpaper" tab to show the wallpaper settings. Uncheck "Common background" to enable different background on each desktop.

5. Select "Desktop 1" and on the "Wallpaper" tab, select the "Single wallpaper" radio button and click the "Browse" button to select available wallpaper.
6. The "Select Wallpaper – Control Center" dialog box will appear, from the list of

available wallpapers select the one you want as your wallpaper. Click "OK" button to select the wallpaper.
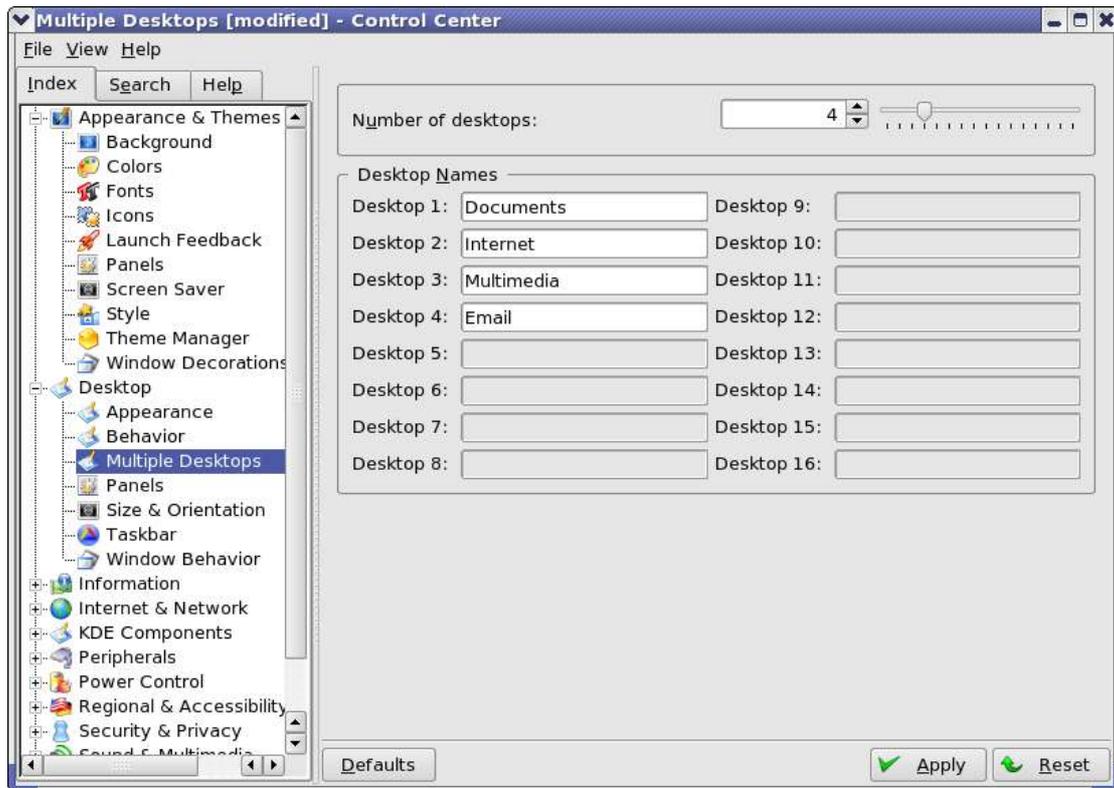
You now have a new wallpaper for Desktop 1. Do steps 5 and 6 with Desktop 2 to change the wallpaper and click "Apply" button to save the changes. This module can also be accessed separately, right click on the Desktop and select *Configure Desktop*.

7. Now, we will try to add virtual desktops so that you can organize your windows by task (work, play, Internet, etc.). To increase the number of virtual desktops available, click on the *Desktop* module (right after *Appearance & Theme*) and select *Multiple Desktops*. From the main panel, change the number of virtual

desktops by adjusting the slider in the "Number of desktops" entry. In our case we added two desktops from the two desktops we already have.
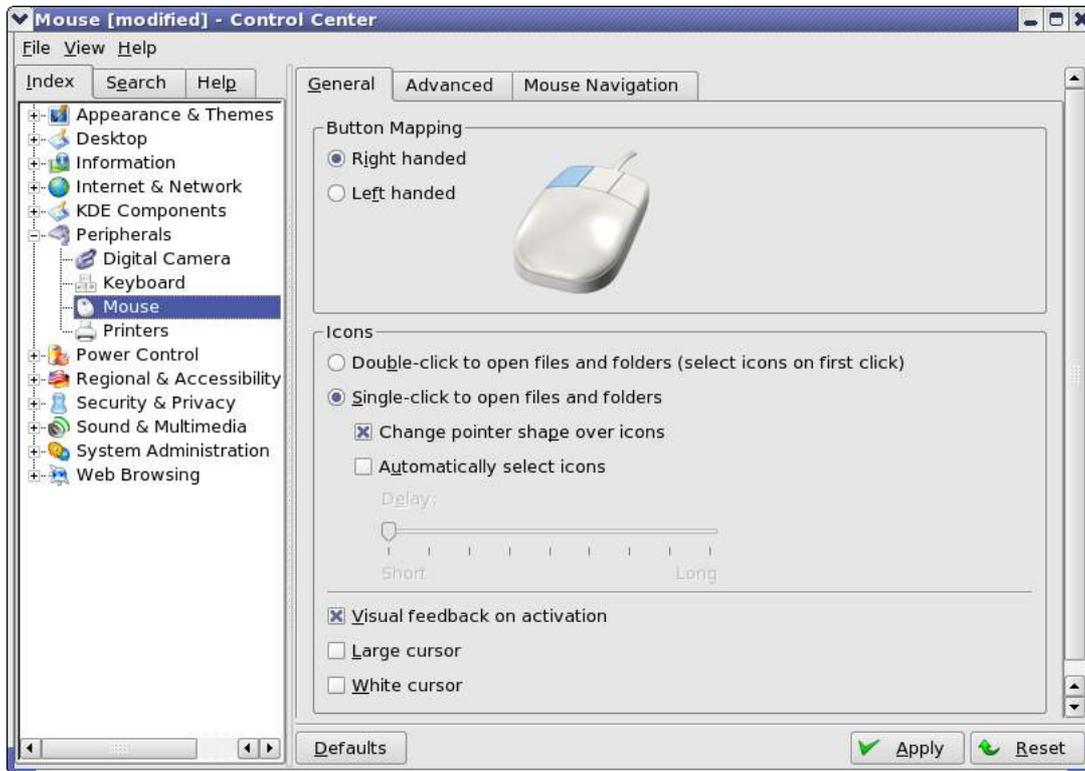

You can also change the names of the desktops through the "Desktop Names" frame. By default, virtual desktops are named DesktopN , where N is the desktop number. Change the name of the desktops to give more meaningful names to your virtual desktops. Click on the input field of the desktop you want to change the name and type in the new name. Press "Apply" to make the changes take effect immediately.

The first virtual desktop is the one opened by default when you login into KDE. To change among virtual desktops just click on the desktop name in the desktop switching bar.

8. To configure your system to respond to single mouse click, click on *Peripherals* module and select *Mouse*. This module configures the movement and button layout of your mouse. The mouse configuration comprises three tabs: "General", "Advanced", and "Mouse Navigation". For now, we will be working on the

"General" Options. Configuration options of the" General" tab include "Button Mapping" where you can specify right-handed or left-handed, for the convenience of left-handed users, use of your mouse and the Icons which determines how the system should react to clicks and double-clicks. To set the desktop to respond to a single click for opening files or folders and a mouse pointer that changes its appearance when it is moved over icons, select the respective options in the Icons frame.

Click "Apply" button to activate the new mouse settings.

9. You have now customized your desktop environment. The new settings will now be loaded every time you login using your account.

Summary:
You are now able to**:**
- Familiarize yourself with the KDE Control Center
- Customize your settings using the KDE Control Center