

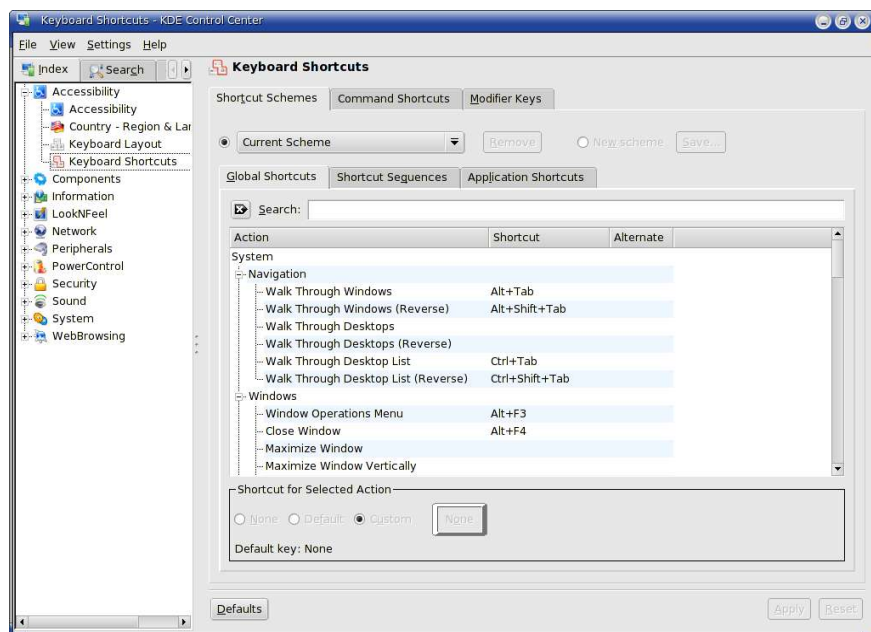
Keyboard Shortcuts

If you've switched over from Windows, you've probably already been pleasantly surprised that some of the keyboard shortcuts (like ALT-TAB to move between open applications) you are used to already work in Linux. When I switched over five years ago, that was what finally sold me on using Linux on my desktop and laptop...well, when I finally owned a laptop, anyway. However, you've probably also come across some keyboard shortcuts you wish you had, even if they never existed in Windows.

In this how-to, using KDE's kcontrol (type “kcontrol &” on the command line for a quick start) on Mandriva, we'll go through how to set up your own keyboard shortcuts, and I'll set up one to maximize a window.

First, a note from the kcontrol help page: “Please note, that the application shortcuts configured here are only the standard actions often found in applications. Most applications will define their own actions as well, for which you have to customize key bindings using the application's key bindings dialog.”

After starting kcontrol, expand on **Accessibility** and click on **Keyboard Shortcuts**. You'll find the following screen.

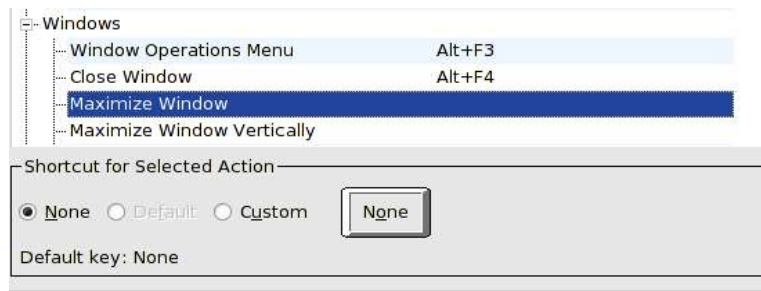


You'll notice there is an option to use some pre-set themes, or you can make your own custom theme. This will automatically switch to the **New Theme** if you modify the “Current Theme”. Once you've done this, you'll want to save the theme and name it as you like.

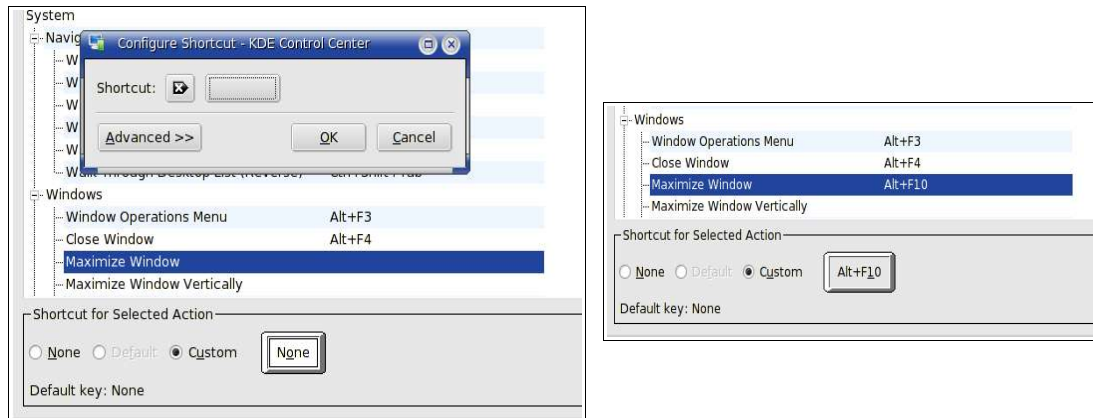


“Well, how do you even make a change to the shortcut?”

Glad you asked. First, highlight the line with the action you want to change, then click the “Custom” radio button under the list of shortcuts.

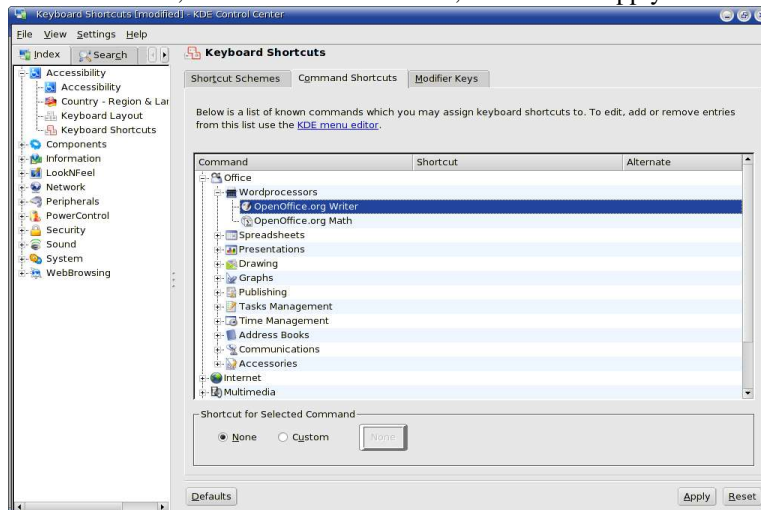


In this case, I highlighted “Maximize Window” and I want to use ALT-F10 as my shortcut. Once I hit the Custom radio button, a popup will show. I held down ALT and pressed F10, and my action was recorded. Here, you see Alt+F10 as the shortcut after I click OK on the popup.



Be sure to click **Apply**, then your new shortcut will be available for use.

Notice the **Command Shortcuts** tab. Here, you can create a shortcut for items in the K-Menu. Let's say I want to create a shortcut for Open Office Writer. I will expand “Office”, then highlight “OpenOffice.org Writer”, and then click the Custom radio button. Again, the popup shows for you to place your shortcut. In this case, I entered CTRL-ALT-W, and clicked Apply. It worked perfectly.



A quick note about the other two tabs, **Shortcut Sequences** and **Application Shortcuts**, both under **Shortcut Schemes**.

Shortcut Sequences can let you define a shortcut to assign the active window to another virtual desktop, or switch between virtual desktops. For example, CTRL-F1 switches to desktop 1, CTRL-F2 switches to desktop 2, and so on.

Application Shortcuts let you define shortcuts for use within most applications, such as CTRL-C to copy and CTRL-V to paste (both defaults already).

The **Modifier Keys** shows the mapping between Windows and Mac keyboards, and their X11 equivalents. For example, the ALT key on the Windows keyboard comes up as mod1 under X11. Don't worry if it doesn't make much sense since you'll really only mess with this if you switch between a Windows and Mac keyboard...not likely.