

Checking Disk Usage with Kwikdisk and Kdiskfree

Mandriva comes with a useful tool called KdiskFree, a utility that pulls a few filesystem tools into a single gui interface. As suggested by its name, KdiskFree gives the amount of free space on available devices, such as hard drives and CD-ROM drives. KwikDisk is part of this package and remains in the panel when started. KwikDisk gives the user a one-click look at the current devices and their space. One of the best features of this application is the ability to receive notifications if a disk becomes critically full.

Since KdiskFree can be run from KwikDisk, let's first start KwikDisk and have a look. Click on K-menu > System > Monitoring > KwikDisk. After it starts, you'll notice its icon in the panel.



Either right-click or left-click on the icon to get the following menu:



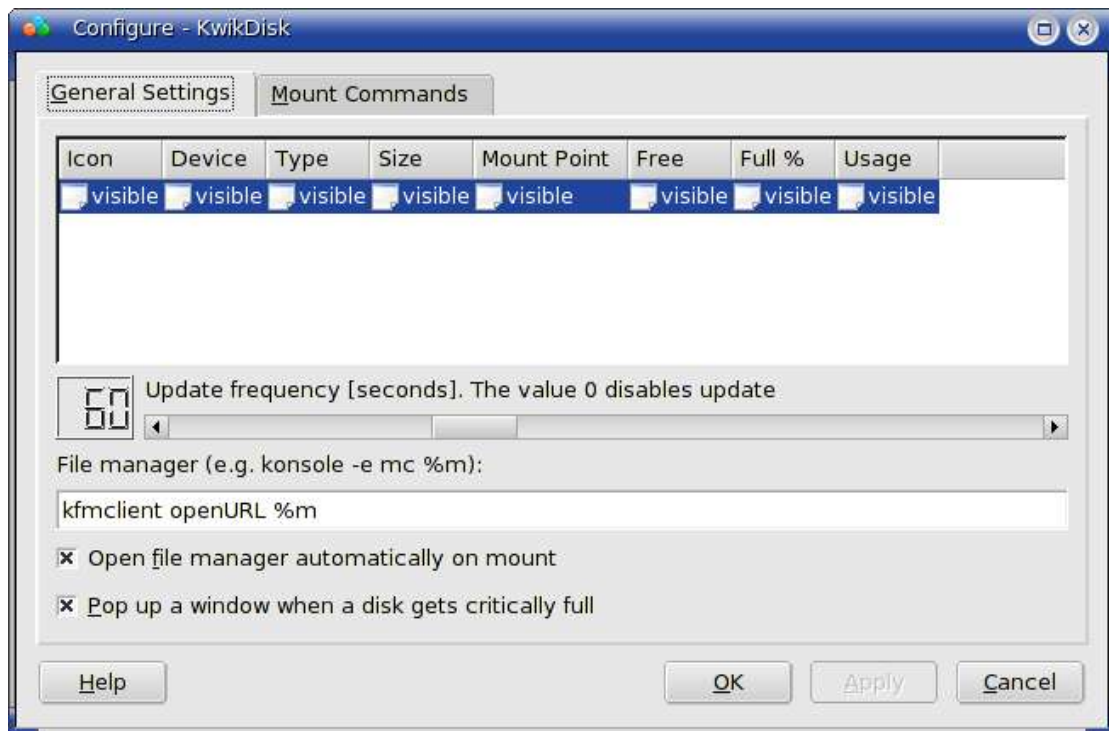
If you click on an entry, say /home, it will either try to mount the device if it is not mounted, or it will try to unmount if it is mounted. NOTE: Unless you have managed to start this as root, a dangerous situation, you will not be able to mount or unmount most of these. You should be able to mount/unmount as a regular user is if the device has the “users” option in /etc/fstab, such as my CDROM:

```
/dev/hdb /mnt/cdrom auto umask=0,user,icharset=iso8859-1,codepage=850,noauto,ro,exec,users 0 0
```

So, clicking on /home would give most users this error, which is a VERY good thing:



Let's look over KwikDisk's configuration options. The first tab, "General Settings", has three items we are going to concern ourselves with.



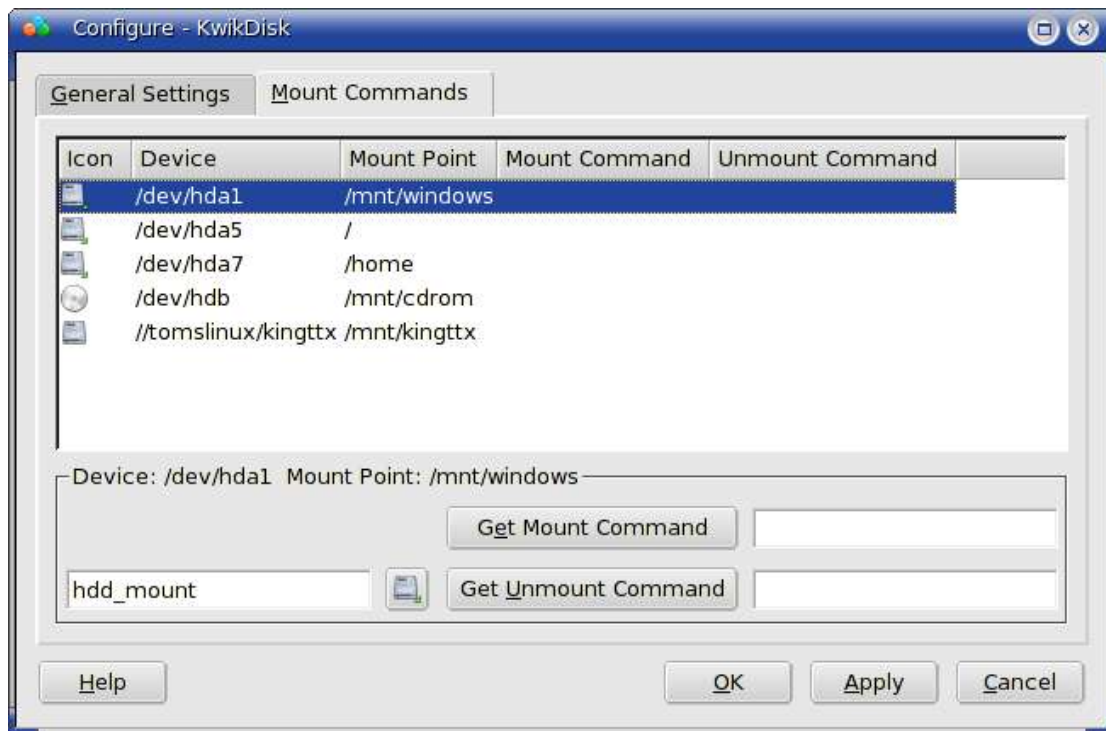
For now, ignore the area that has the columns Icon, Device, Type, Size, etc., since this does not function in KwikDisk's configuration box.

First, we want to figure out how often we want to update the disk information. Unless you are monitoring a file server or database server, you may not need to update more often than a few minutes. In my case, I could reasonably increase my time since this is on a laptop.

Second, do we want to have our system's file manager open when a device is first mounted, such as the CDROM? Here, I have the KDE default file manager (Konqueror) open the device's file listing as a URL.

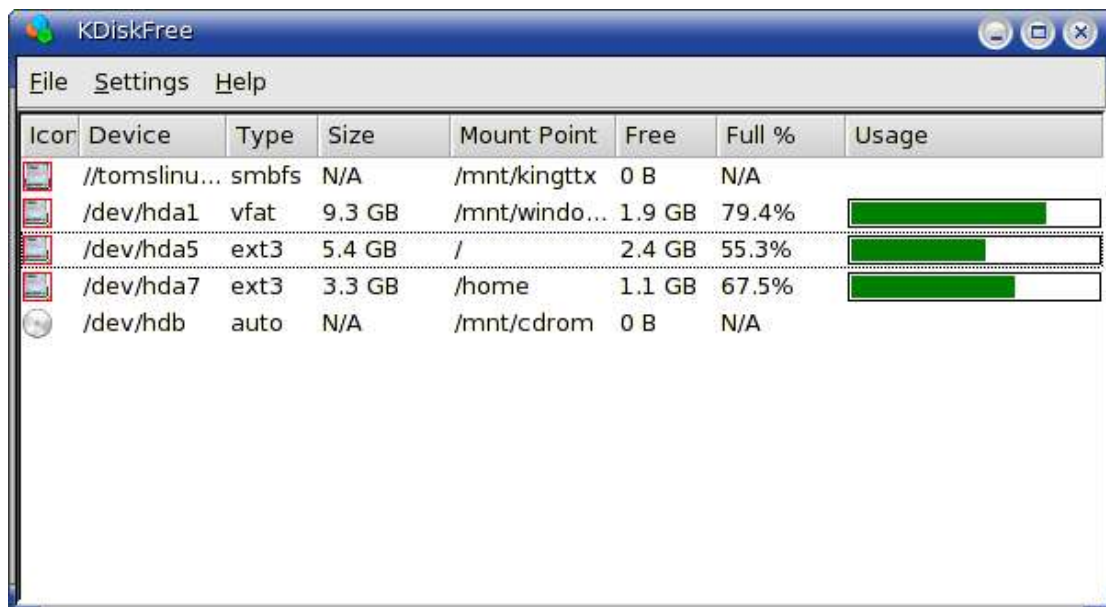
Third, do we want a window to popup when a disk gets critically full, 95% of the disk's capacity.

The next tab is “Mount Commands”, useful to pull in a script that contains special commands needed for special devices. In most cases, this can be left blank and the default will be used.



Here, also, you can change the icon for a mounted and/or unmounted device.

Now that we've gone through KwikDisk, let's look at KdiskFree.

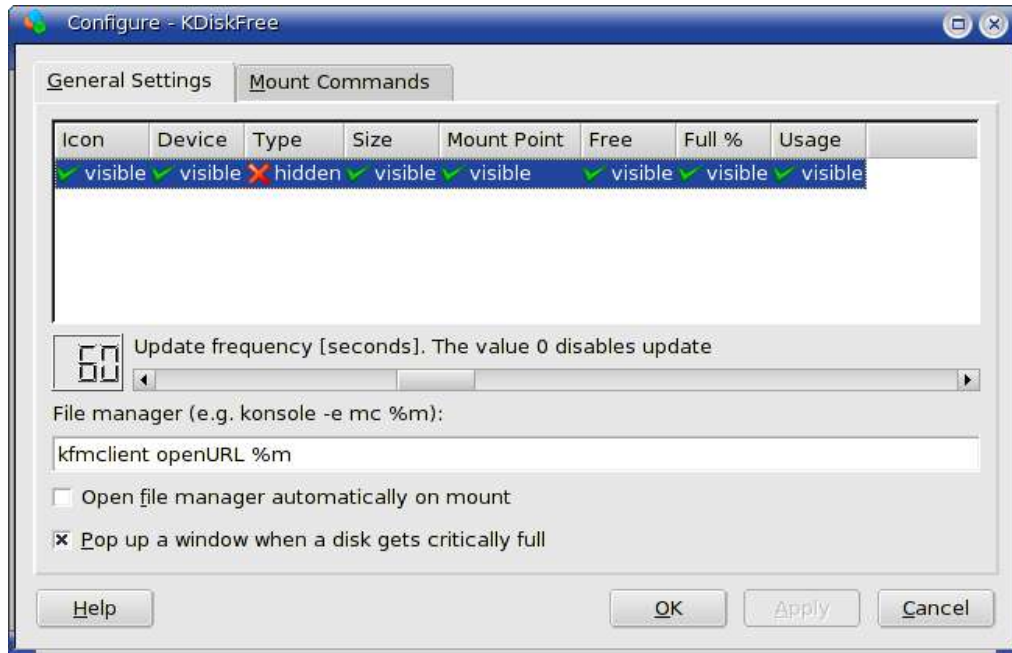


You'll notice this has a little more information than KwikDisk, and you also have a little more interaction.

Under the Files menu, you'll find "Update" and "Quit", both are fairly self explanatory.

Under the Settings menu, you'll find "Configure Shortcuts..." and "Configure KdiskFree". The first item, "Configure Shortcuts..." will allow you to add some kind of keystroke (such as CTRL-ATL-SHIFT-F12) to start something (such as "Update").

"Configure KdiskFree..." brings up the same configuration box as the one in KwikDisk, but you'll notice a difference in the Icon/Device/Type/... area: you can see the checkmarks and/or X's that you didn't see in the other configuration box. Because of some code sharing, this shows up in KwikDisk's config box but isn't functional. Here, we can select different columns we want to view or hide on the main KdiskFree window.



Once you've clicked OK or Apply, you should see that the hidden column naturally does not show up.

All other options were covered in the previous configuration box discussion.

Going back to the main window, right-click on one of the entries, and you'll get the following:



If the device is not mounted, you'll only get the option to Mount Device. If it is mounted, you'll get the options to either Unmount Device or Open in File Manager.



Keeping an eye on your computer becomes more and more important. Although hardware can be bought at very good prices these days, the user or administrator needs to monitor the computer to keep from losing data or locking up the computer completely. These two tools give the user and admin a convenient tool to do so.