

More on DigiKam and its features

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This paper is a supplement to the one Roger Hurley produced in 2014 and mentions a few more things that were investigated by the group in April 2016.

Standard installation on Linux Mint

Linux Mint does not record all the dependences for DigiKam correctly, and nor may most other Linux versions. It needs the KDE libraries and these may not all be included. In particular, when I first started it, the tooltips were shown in an unreadable white text on a yellow background.

To fix this find and install the following packages from the repositories:

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kdelibs-bin kdelibs5-data kdelibs5-plugins systemsettings
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Then to correct the tooltips, start DigiKam and go to Settings → Configure digiKam, then select Miscellaneous from the bottom of the left pane, and set WidgetStyle to Cleanlooks from the dropdown list. You will now see then as white on black.

Collections and Albums

DigiKam maintains collections, each collection containing one or more albums. What the left pane shows is the list of collections at the top level, within which are the albums shown as a hierarchy of albums. New collections are made from the Settings → Configure digiKam dialog. Select Collections from the left pane, and then the Add Collection button against Local Collections. This shows a dialog for you to select the location where your pictures are held for this collection. Browse to the relevant folder and hit OK. The new collection appears in the list, but with no tick yet, they have not been imported into the digiKam database. Hit OK again, and then it may take some time to appear in the collection list under albums, since the application is creating all the thumbnails and importing all the files from the folders. It creates automatically a hierarchy of albums from the hierarchy of folders you selected.

New albums are created by selecting the relevant collection or album, right clicking, and then New in the context menu. The album appears in the hierarchy under the selected album. It can be dragged and dropped elsewhere should you wish to move it.

Importing existing folders of photos

If you keep collections of related pictures together in your own file structure, then perhaps the best way would be to create a new collection to import the photos. Otherwise create a new album and Import → Add Folders or Import → Add Images, and follow the dialogs.

Renaming files

Sometimes you may wish to change the names of your files in a whole folder to reflect the contents an/or date of the pictures. There is a powerful renaming feature to do just this, and here are some examples of the possibilities.

First select the images to be renamed, right click on one and select rename (or use F2). The dialog then shows the original names and the new names. As you adjust the contents of the new name box, the new names adjust in the top pane. The buttons below allow special functions to be added, and the icon to the right of the name box can add a modifier. For example, to set the new names to have the prefix 'devon-' followed by the characters 6-8 of the file name, then type 'devon-' into the box, select File → Name and finally the Modifier icon → Range to provide the range you want. The name box will then show 'devon-[file]{range:6,8}' and the pane above the actual new names.

Tagging

Pictures can be given tags so you can find them according to their contents. It is easier to manipulate them by selecting the Caption/Tag icon in the list of icons on the far right edge of the display. This will show the hierarchy of tags.

To add a tag, first select the set of images that you wish to add the tag to, and then right click on one of them and select Assign Tag. If you have already defined the tag and it shows in the list, select it. If you have not yet defined the tag, then select Add New Tag, and add the tag. Even if you add the new tag at the top level, using the right-hand pane, you can drag and drop the tag into its correct hierarchical position in the tree of tags.

The right pane also has a button at the top to open the Tags Manager to create and organise your tags as you wish.

Image editing

DigiKam also contains some useful common editing features. You can open the editor for an image when it is selected and either hit F4, or hit the Image Editor button at left of the upper toolbar, or go to Image → Edit.

Saving edits

After making edits, transforming the image, or whatever you did, the editing window closes, but the image editor remains. This allows multiple different edits to take place first without saving between them.

In the image editor window, you have options to save the image back as the original, as a new file, or not to incorporate it into your collections managed by digiKam by exporting it. The export dialog gives the ability to change the file type as well as place the file elsewhere and rename it.

Two examples of editing are described below, but there are many more.

Adding text to the picture

One thing you may wish to do when creating slideshows or to pass pictures on to other for display, is to add a caption onto the actual picture, so it shows on the picture. In the image editor, use Decorate → Insert text and set the text box where you want it, the font size and colour of text as you wish. You can also make it semitransparent to increase the contrast of the text where appropriate.

Type the text into the upper part of the text pane. It then immediately appears also on the picture.

Levelling the horizon

Another thing it can do is to level the horizon. In the Image editor, use Transform → Free rotation, which will then show crosshairs in the picture of the new dialog. Select a point in the picture at one end of the horizon, and hit the (1) Click to set/ The repeat for eh (2) Click to set and then Adjust. The picture should then adjust to the new image. There are some little pictures as icons along the base of the window toward the right. These indicate what will be shown in the picture window, whether the original, edited (target) image or, as “mouse over” mode which shows the edited version unless the mouse is moved over the picture when it shows the original again.

References

The early document by Roger Hurley is found at http://www.u3ainbath.org.uk/group_pages/foss/LinkedFiles2014/Photo-Management-RH-2014-04-24.pdf