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Interview with Jaroslaw Staniek, A KDE developer working on the KDElibs/win32 project.

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Jaroslaw Staniek is a software developer who recently submitted patches for 277 files into the KDE CVS, making it possible to use KDElibs/win32 on Windows. The projects aims to make it simpler for developers to use the KDE libraries on Windows, not create "KDE for Windows". Read on to learn the future of KDElibs/win32 development.

A working version of the KDE program Kexi is [already available for win32](#).

Jaroslaw Staniek is curretlly working at [OpenOffice Polska](#), providing support and services for Open Source software.

Could you please give a brief overview of the QT-KDE Wrapper project?

The project started in march 2004 to enable building and running existing [KDE](#) applications under win32 as native (without X11 and Cygwin) MS Windows programs, without changing almost anything in the source code texts. My first, primary goal within this project was to deliver minimal functionality to be able successfully compiling and developing application I was interested in, more precisely: [Kexi](#).

Since then, I am employed for full time job by [OpenOffice Polska](#), company which has become a primary sponsor of the QKW Project as well as the Kexi Project.

Currently, as the QKW Project reached "final source code merge" milestone, it is known just as [KDElibs/win32 project](#), specifically - just a logical subproject within KDElibs Project. Now, most changes made by KDE developers within KDE project can be also accesible on win32 platform. This would be really difficult without the code merge, as KDE project receives many changes every single day. For example, I have spent many hours on porting my changes from KDElibs 3.0 (used by me in 2003) to current version (3.4).

How far are you reaching the goals set for the project?

First, I touched core KDE-libs functionality: dynamic modules and plug-ins were loadable, including KParts. After those, KDE Widget styles and icon effects were ported (this also enabled KDE Styles for use with Qt-only applications).

See idea.pl/~js/qkw/ for more details (interested changes are grouped in the "News" section at the right hand).

As Kexi doesn't (yet?) use KDE network API, this wasn't high priority for me to port it. Undoubtedly, somebody who really needs networking functions on win32, add the code in the near future. In fact, it's doable.

Will we ever see KDE desktop running natively on Windows, if so, when?

I'd like to stress that the project is not about porting KDE Desktop to MS Windows (although it could be quite funny for some developers). The goal is to make it easier for developers to use KDElibs as their framework of choice, delivering far more powerful features than using plain Qt framework. And let's don't even compare it to obsolete Microsoft Foundation Class (MFC).

People who are using KDElibs for their development, know that it is designed at higher level than typical widget libraries. It is at desktop, not widget level of abstraction.

There is very poor point to replace MS Windows GUI shell with KDE. Most people who really like or need KDE desktop's powerful capabilities (not just selected KDE applications), could also be able to run it on Linux or other Unix operating system.

Also note that even if somebody wants to port KDE desktop elements to replace, say, explorer.exe, this port probably will never be well updated in terms of functionality, efficiency and security, compared to KDE built on top of real Unix/Linux operating system.

Will we ever see Konqueror running natively on Windows, if so, when?

See above answer. Is there on win32 any other than "for fun" reason not to using existing excellent browser replacements like Mozilla, FireFox or Opera? Technically, Konqueror is a shell for so many KDE technologies (e.g. KParts, KIOSlaves), so if you want to see any advantage, you need to also install more KDE components on your win32 desktop.

How big is the OpenOffice user base in Poland, and what experiences have you made selling Open-Source software?

From our experiences: people and companies want to pay for something what means a value for them. Such a value is no longer colorful paper boxes with (too often outdated) Microsoft's software, full of inconvenient end-user license agreements, with poorly working support (at least in Poland, you need to go and buy a support from somebody else to have it working), and all this at the cost of brand new computer. At the other end, developers need to receive authoritative support, instead of papers full of advertisement and FUDs. Many of us finally realized that investing in newer Microsoft software made their hardware and operating systems obsolete: MS Windows 98 (which is still used by almost 30% of Microsoft customers) is not anymore supported by newer Microsoft Office offerings. So, Open Source together with professional services is here to solve problems like these, and people do appreciate this.

Products like OpenOffice, KDE and Linux are really making inroads in Poland as well as other European countries. People from companies and governments are really able to calculate their money and choose these attractive offerings. Within OpenOffice Polska company we are excited about adding technical support services and source code/design contributions for more and more OpenSource products. Last year we've added commercial version of QCad program, now we're preparing for releasing a first supported version of Kexi, long awaited MS Access-like application.

Recently, customers are using increasingly more new non-Microsoft software on their MS Windows desktops (OpenOffice, Mozilla/FireFox). For many of them this makes migration to Linux far more comfortable than before, because they are already users of "Linux" applications.

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Big thanks to Jaroslaw Staniek for his valuable time

Learn more: Could you also add this link (it always contains up to dated information on QKW project merged into KDElibs)?

- [KDElibs for win32](#)
- [KDE CVS digest September 2004](#)
- [Kexi project](#)

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