

Adventures with LXQt: six years on

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LXQt is a lightweight Qt based desktop, begun as a collaboration of some of the LXDE developers and the razor-qt developers. Over the past six years the difference between the amount of memory that it and KDE Plasma uses has declined. So it is better seen as an alternative to Xfce than to LXDE.

On first login six years ago (Figure 1), it offered the opportunity to configure the power management; after that I went to Preferences▷LXQt Configuration Center (Figure 2) to configure each element separately.

Some things are different now and this paper has been updated to reflect the changes over the past six years.

1 Preferences

Preferences offers a variety of configuration options including, with openSUSE, access to YaST.

Appearance allows you to select Widget Style, Icons Theme, LXQt Theme, Font, Cursor and GTK Style. There are a dozen LXQt Themes but only a small number of options under the other categories. Desktop allows you to choose icon size and margins and, under Background, a wallpaper. There are 24 of these under `/usr/share/lxqt/wallpapers` but you can, of course, select your own from elsewhere. Keyboard and Mouse enables you to specify single click; it also offers switchable keyboard layouts as in KDE but only by configuring the change rather than offering a keyboard switcher in the System Tray. Monitor settings allows you to configure a second monitor, for example, when doing a presentation. Shortcut Keys allows you to add or edit the Shortcut Keys. I edited Control+Alt+I to open ImageMagick (Figure 3).

If you happen to use the Folder view widget in KDE, you may see some redundant icons on the LXQt desktop (Figure 1), you can get rid of these in LXQt by moving them to a hidden folder in KDE and pointing the Folder view widget at the hidden folder.

2 Panels

The height, position, length and elements in a panel can be configured by right clicking on the panel (Figure 4). The default panel contains an application launcher, desktop switcher, quick launcher, task manager, network launcher, battery monitor (which also gives access to the power management configuration — which is rather good), removable devices manager, volume control and date and time applet. All these work fine.

I added a second panel on the left hand side of the screen to hold links to commonly used programs (see Figure 6) by right clicking on the existing panel and choosing Add New Panel.



Figure 1: First sight

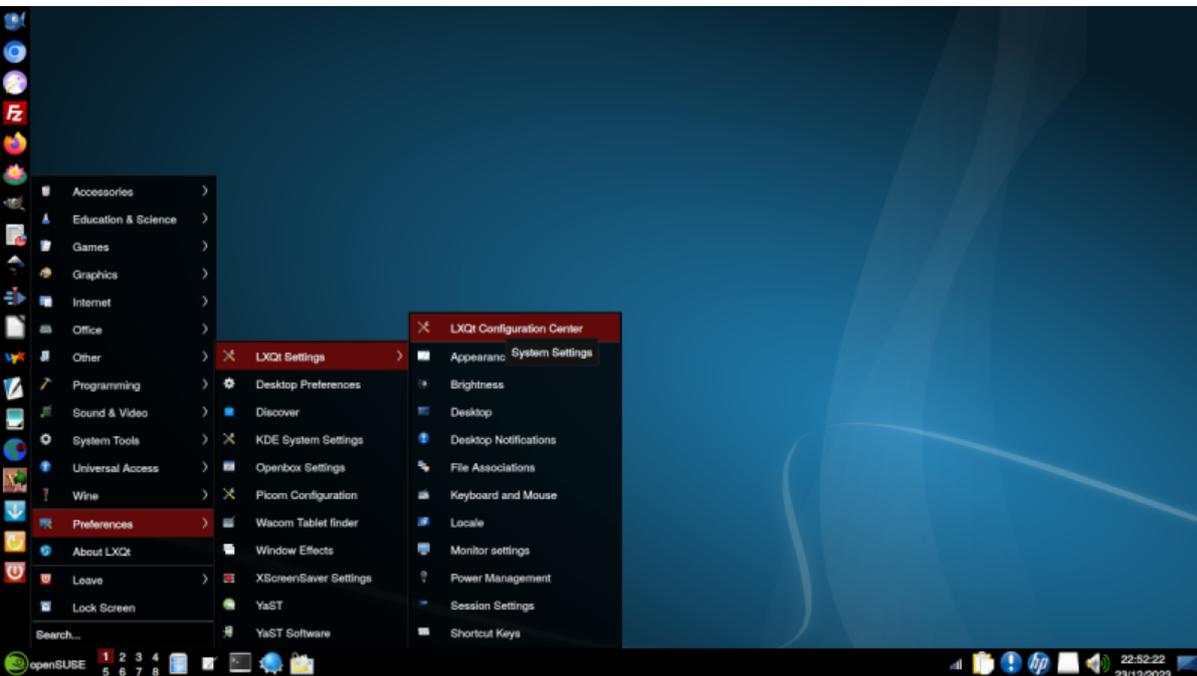


Figure 2: Preferences

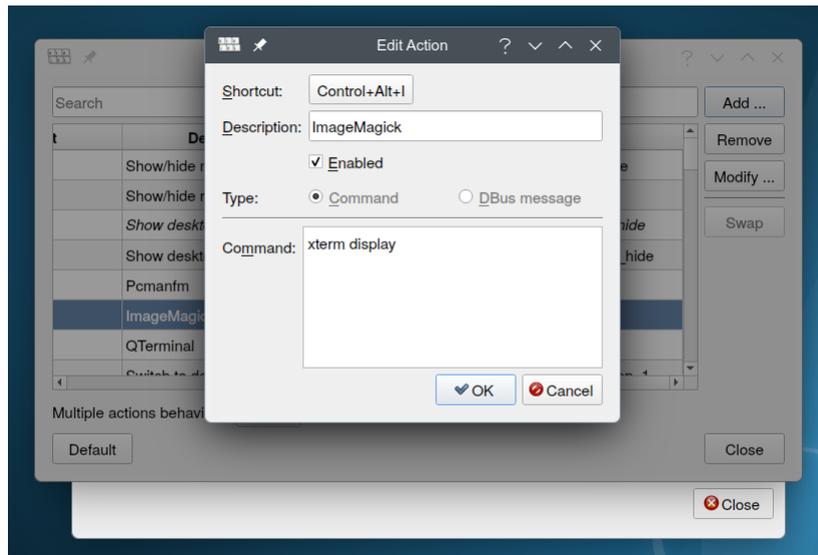


Figure 3: ImageMagick Shortcut Keys

This only contains the quick launcher and I had to adjust its length so that it did not cover the application launcher in the bottom panel. Adding links to the quick launcher is simply a matter of clicking on the program icon in the application launcher and holding it down as you move it to the panel. Right clicking on the icon allows you to move it to a different position in the panel.

Connection management is the same as in Plasma. You may need to configure the volume control to ensure that it is controlling the analogue stereo rather than the HDMI output (Figure 5).

The main addition to the System Tray in the bottom panel which I have made is KDE's klipper clipboard application. This involved editing the line

```
OnlyShowIn=KDE;
```

in `/etc/xdg/autostart/klipper.desktop` to read

```
OnlyShowIn=KDE;LXQT; 1
```

3 Applications

After a few problems with particular programs at the outset, I have had no recent problems using any application within LXQt.

3.1 PCManFM

PCManFM is a competent file manager which, however, lacks the more sophisticated selection, copying and moving features of the KDE applications. Using it for these types of operations reminds me of Krusader, which was the KDE file manager before Konqueror.

¹Thanks to wolfi on the [openSUSE forums](#) for this tip.

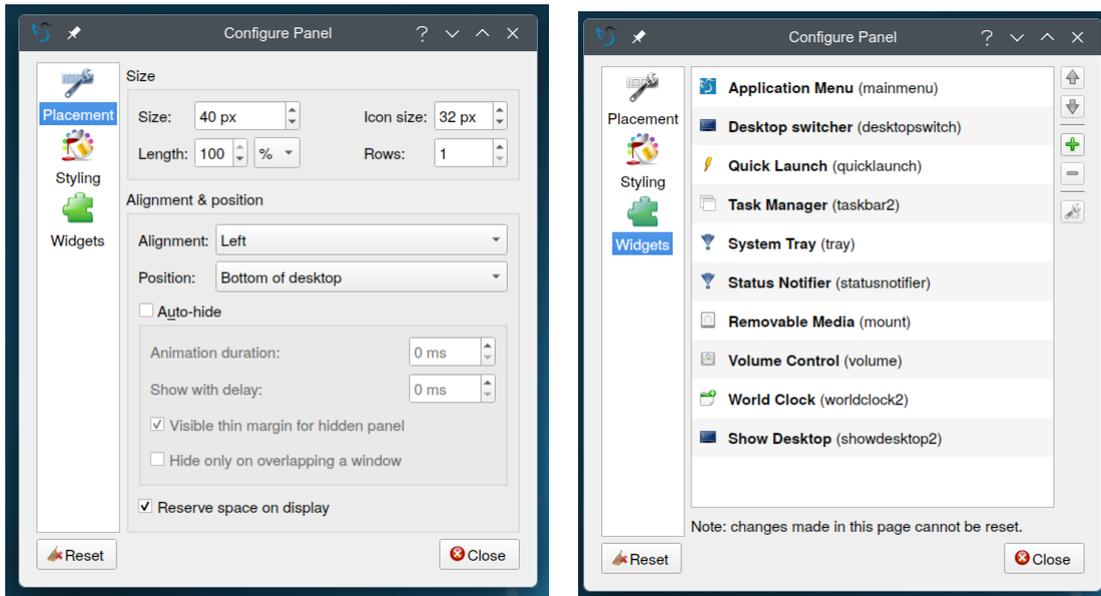


Figure 4: Configure panel

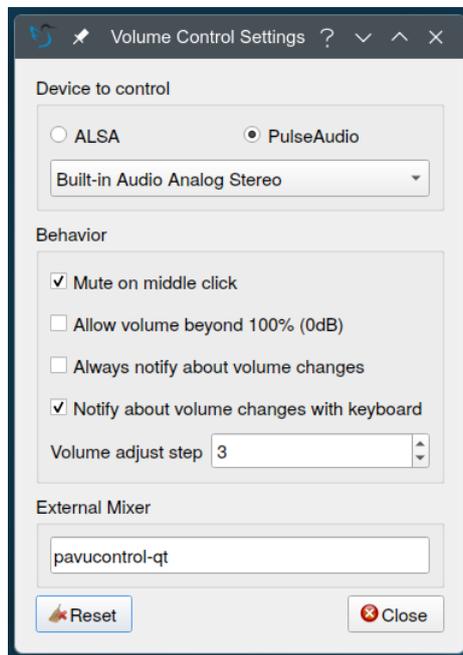


Figure 5: Volume control configuration

However, PCManFM wins hands down in the way it displays files and thumbnails in icon view, including SVG and EPS files. It also has a rather clearer progress dialogue when copying or moving than the ones in KDE.

4 Dell Latitude d430

Four years ago I bought a second hand 2007 Dell Latitude d430 with just 2GB of RAM but a 64-bit processor which had originally had Vista on it and installed LXQt on it. Apart from taking three minutes to start up, it has worked fine with LXQt including making video recordings when at special events.

5 Conclusions

Over the past six years I have found few downsides to using LXQt, the main ones being:

- the keyboard layout switcher cannot be changed from within the system tray;
- LXQt does not always respect its own file association settings.

Plus points are:

- most settings working seamlessly between KDE and LXQt;
- it works fine with only 2GB RAM;
- overall usability; I very quickly found that I could do all the regular things I used to do in KDE as easily if not more easily in LXQt.

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