

KOffice 2 Design Competition

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”

Do something. If it doesn't work,
do something else. No idea is too crazy.

“

Jim Hightower, The New York Times, March 9, 1986

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Introduction

It was a great pleasure to work on this mockups, but it was also lots of work. I hope you will like some of my ideas about the future of KOffice 2 and I wish that KOffice 2 will become the best Office suite out there. If you have any questions regarding my mockups you can mail me at moritzzimmermann@gmx.de. Please consider that i am not an native english speaker so there will be mistakes in my text. I used icons form nuoveXT (which can be found here: <http://nuovext.pwsp.net/>). And I release my work under the GPL. So lean back and enjoy the (possible) future of KOffice...

KWord 2

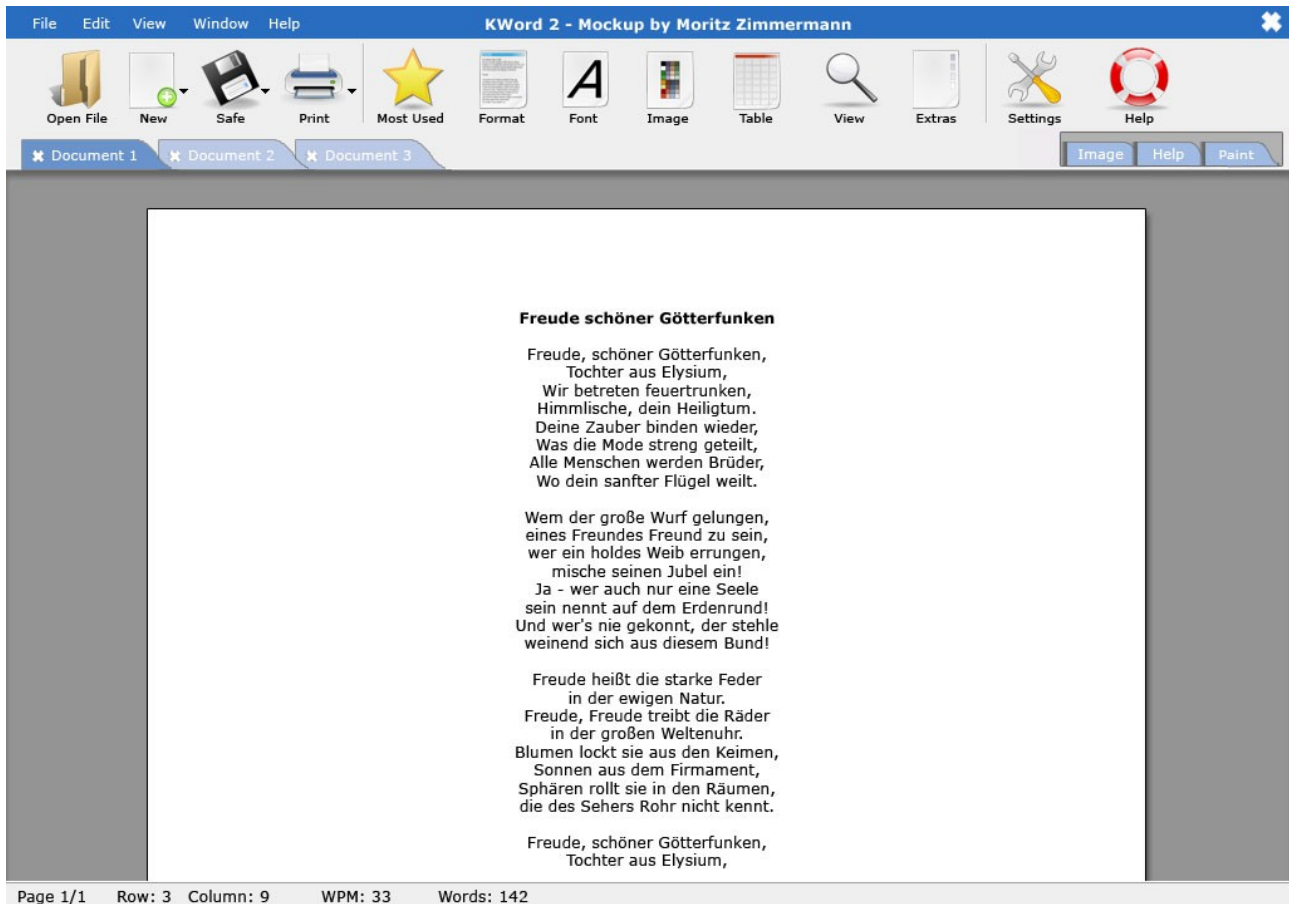


Figure 1: KWord 2 in the normal Mode without the Sidebar

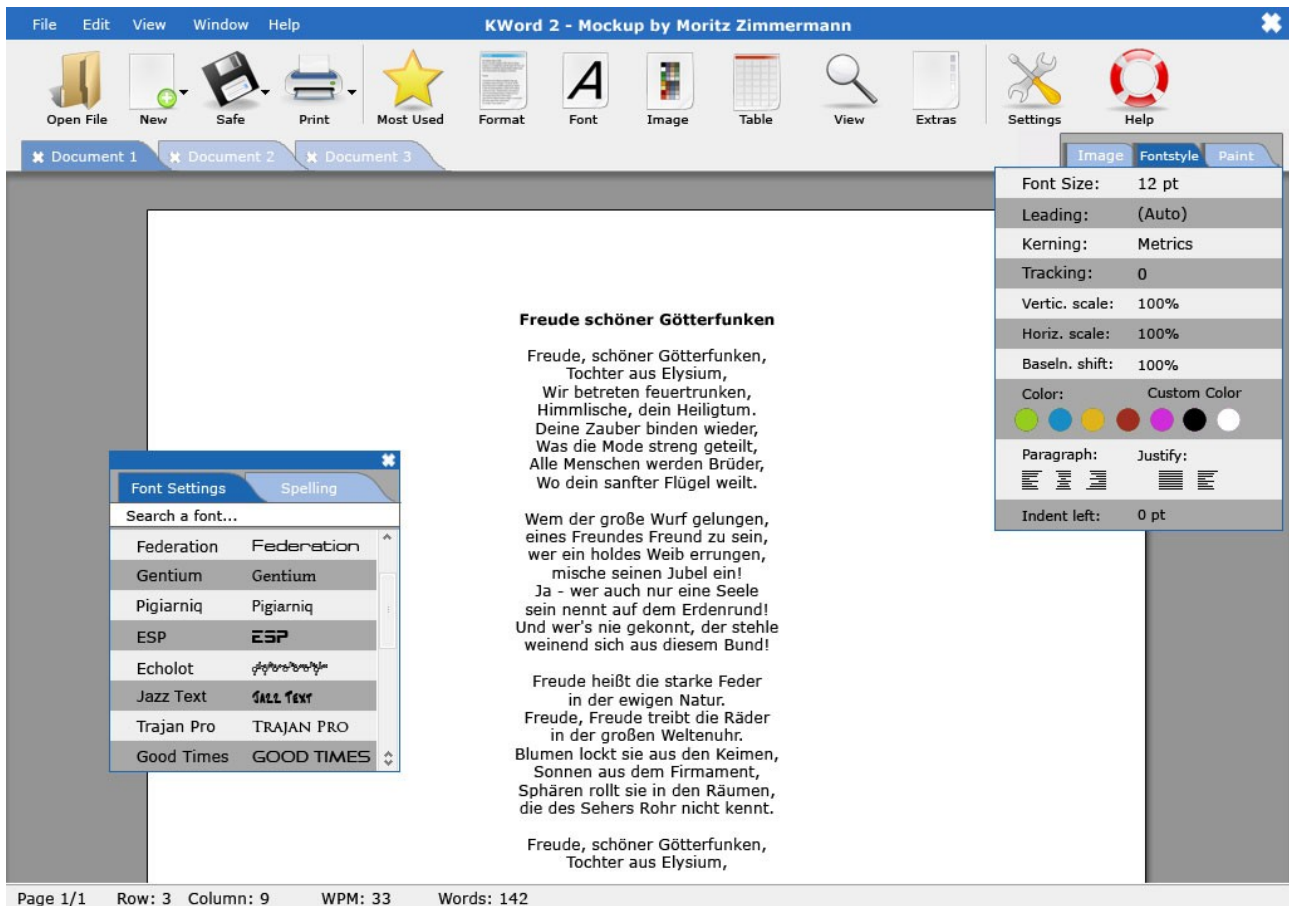
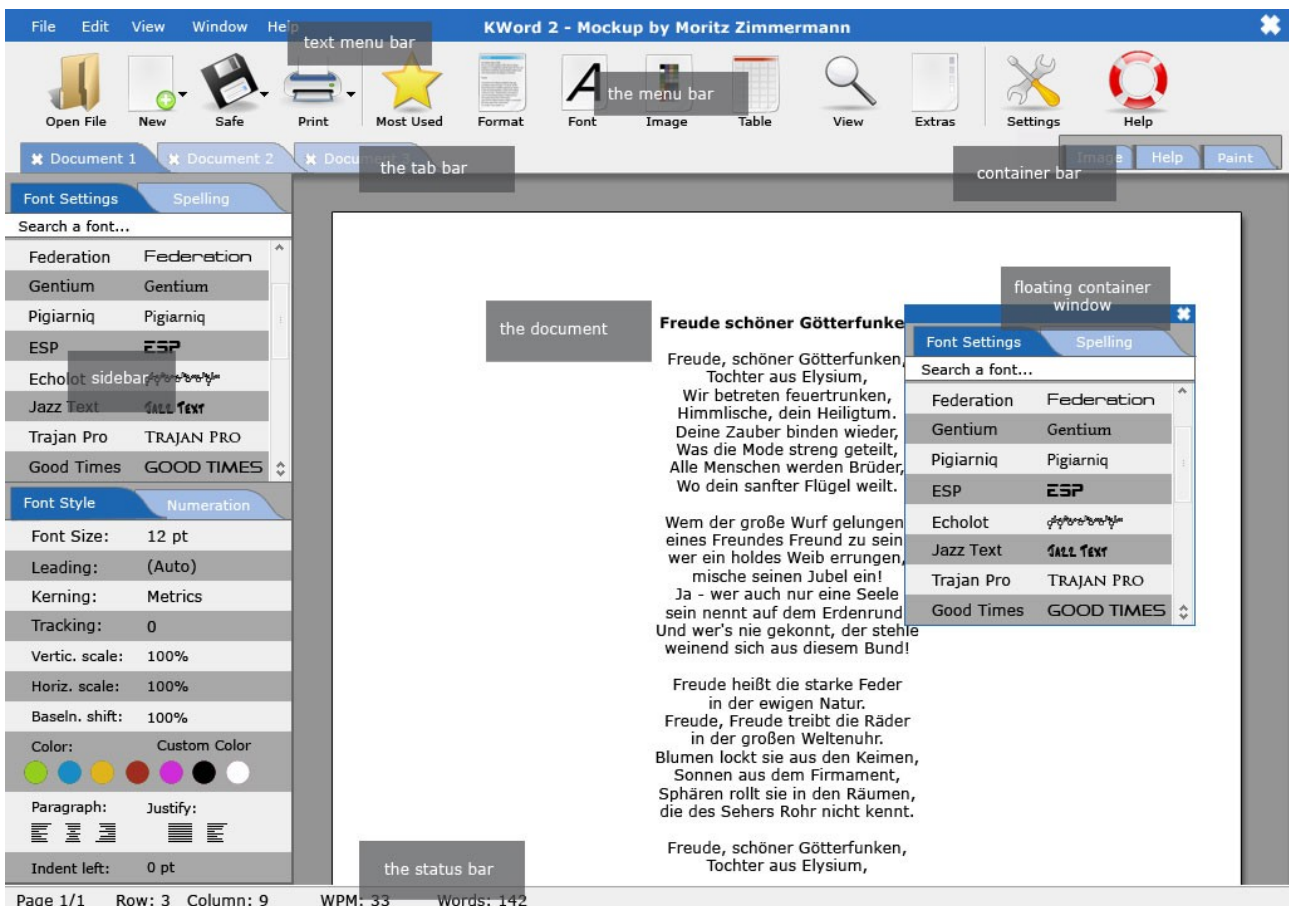
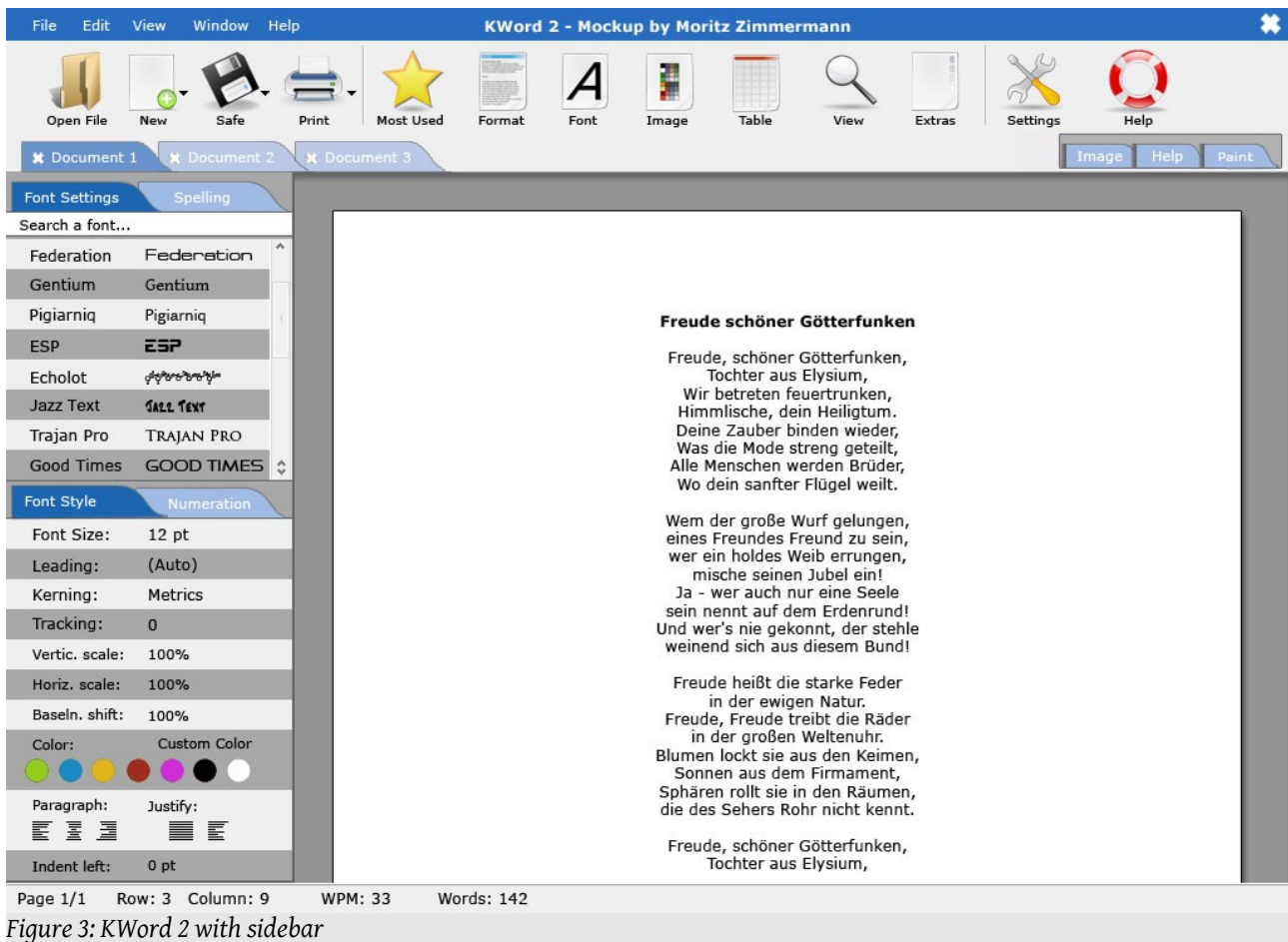


Figure 2: KWord 2 with an floating container-window and the containerbar



Concept

Containers

My concept of the new GUI for KOffice 2 is based on a very simple concept:

Every setting is accessible within containers.

Such a container could contain everything from Font Settings to actions to Image editing or Spellchecking. It should be possible for plugin developers to create their own container with their own specific tasks.

It is possible to join two or more containers in a single window (fig 5: The containers Spelling and Font Settings are joined in a single window). Furthermore it is possible to attach a window or a container to the Sidebar or to the container bar.

It should be possible to change the value of a setting by clicking at it and dragging the cursor to the left to decrease the value and to the right to increase it. With a single click an edit field appears and a dropdown shows up and the user can enter/choose a value. Generally all settings consist of pictograms or little images to make clear the effect it has.

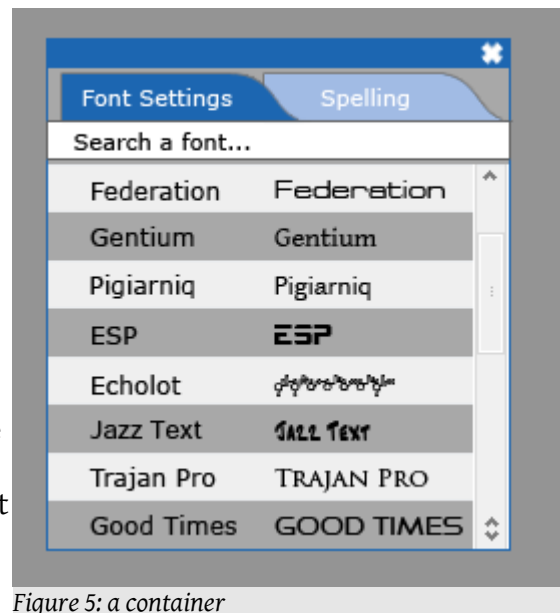


Figure 5: a container

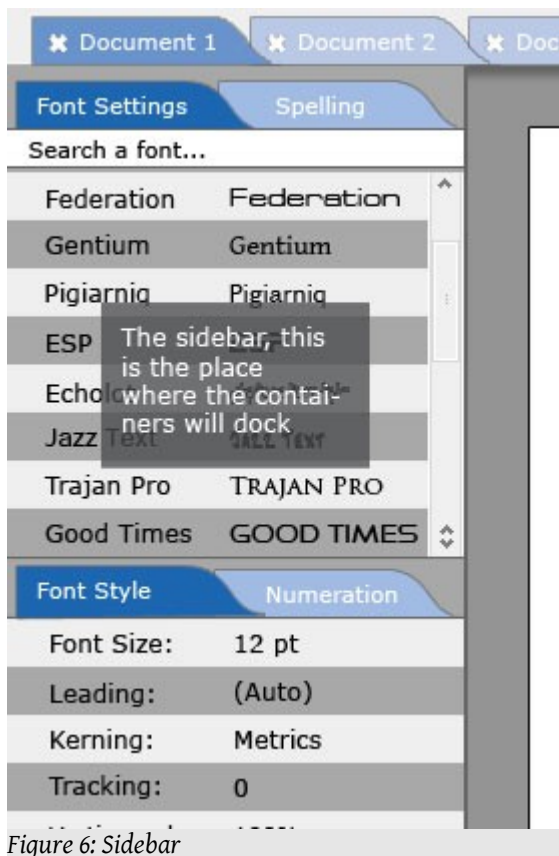


Figure 6: Sidebar

Sidebar

The Sidebar is the normal place for the containers, in a normal workflow the user would have all his containers in his Sidebar. With the Sidebar he has quick access to all his settings and can quickly hide/show the sidebar. As necessary he can show the sidebar to use a tool or hide it when he writes. He can resize the sidebar vertically and horizontal. The content should try to shrink and grow to place all elements viewable. If that's not possible a scrollbar appears.

Normally the sidebar appears left, but the user can customize it and move to the right, or to place the sidebar even at the top or the bottom is imaginable (I have no mockup for such a configuration).

Menubar

Please note that I did not have icons that fit 100% to my needs so some icons are unfitting and all icons are from the awesome nouveXT iconset. The Menubar consists of three different parts:

1. The Most-Used tasks. This part contains the most important tasks a user will do when working with the application. This menu is the same in KWord, KSpread and KPresenter. After clicking on an icon a popup will appear and the user can proceed his task.
2. The Application-Specific tasks. These tasks change from application to application and contain things like Font-Settings, Table-Settings and the Most-Used settings. When clicking on one of these icons the Sidebar will show up, if it was hidden, or change its state to the new topic. E.g. If the Sidebar was hidden and the user would click the Font-Button, the Sidebar shows up with containers containing font specific tasks (fig 6).



Figure 7: Most-Used tasks

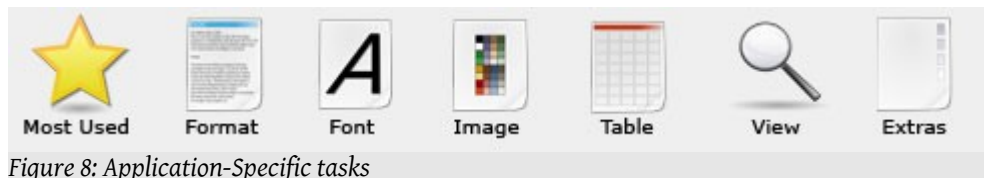


Figure 8: Application-Specific tasks

3. The Settings and Help menu. These buttons do just what you expect they do, they show up the settings and the help menu



Figure 9: Settings and Help

Textmenubar

The „normal“ text menu bar is moved to the window decoration to save space. Aside of this, the textmenubar is reduced to only 5 points: Behind File, Edit, View and Help is that was is there also today and with window you can show/hide your windows and containers.



Figure 10: textmenubar

Tabbar

Nothing special here really, each tab is for one document and you can access them with this tabbar. With the little cross you can close the document. The active document is slightly darker than the other documents.

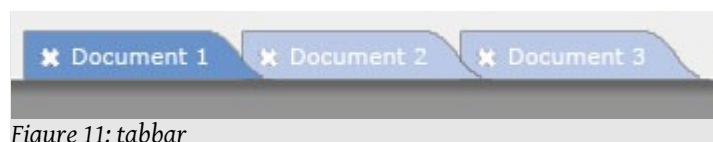


Figure 11: tabbar

Statusbar

The Statusbar show helpful informations about the document and the tool your using. It also gives you tips and shows you the shortcuts of the active tool.



Figure 12: Statusbar

Containerbar

The containerbar gives the user the ability to quickly access some containers. You can drag them to the containerbar and then you can click on the containertab and use your tool without being forced to open the sidebar or a having a floating window.

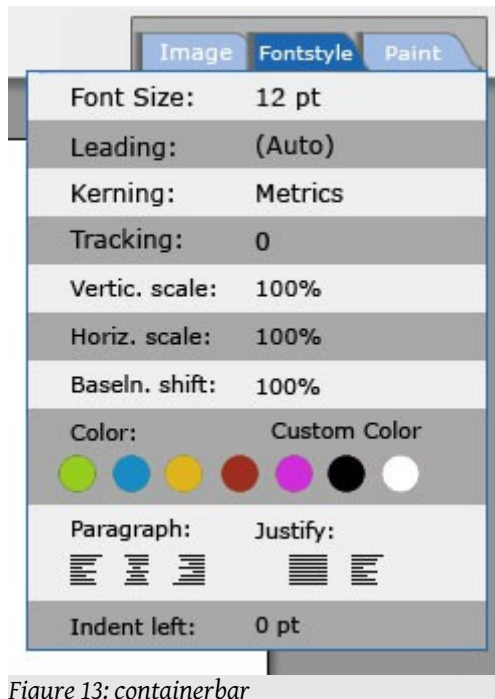


Figure 13: containerbar

After startup

After the startup KWord 2 (KSpread 2/KPresenter 2) shows an empty document and a particular sidebar with specific entrys with a list of the last used documents, templates to start a new document and both get previewed in the preview container. So the user can click on a template/recent document and he will see the preview of the template in the preview container.

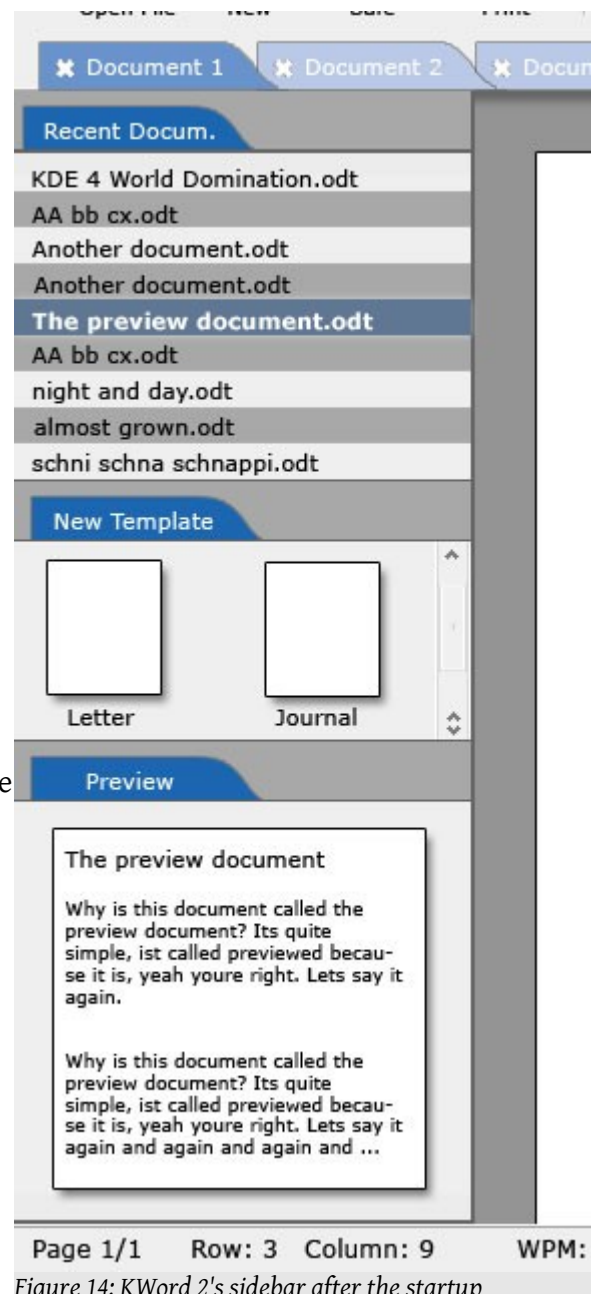


Figure 14: KWord 2's sidebar after the startup

Workflow

The workflow would be something like the following: The user writes his text with the sidebar hidden, when he wants to change something (e.g. the font-size), he clicks on the Font button at the menubar. Thereafter the sidebar shows up with settings like font or font-size or justify and so on. He will choose his settings and then he can close the sidebar again and continue writing or he will leave it open. This way he can still continue writing with the small disadvantage that he has slightly lesser space. If he wants to insert a table, he will click on the table icon and a table sidebar will appear... If he wants one container accessible all the time he can drag him to a free space and the container will become a floating container or he can drag him to the containerbar so he has to do just one click to access it. After some time he could create a custom sidebar with customized containers and add it to the menubar. After clicking the Most-Used icon a sidebar with his most used (yeah, like the name) actions will appear, which will speed up his workflow if he uses the same actions most of the time. The workflow for KPresenter and KSpread is practically the same.

KPresenter 2

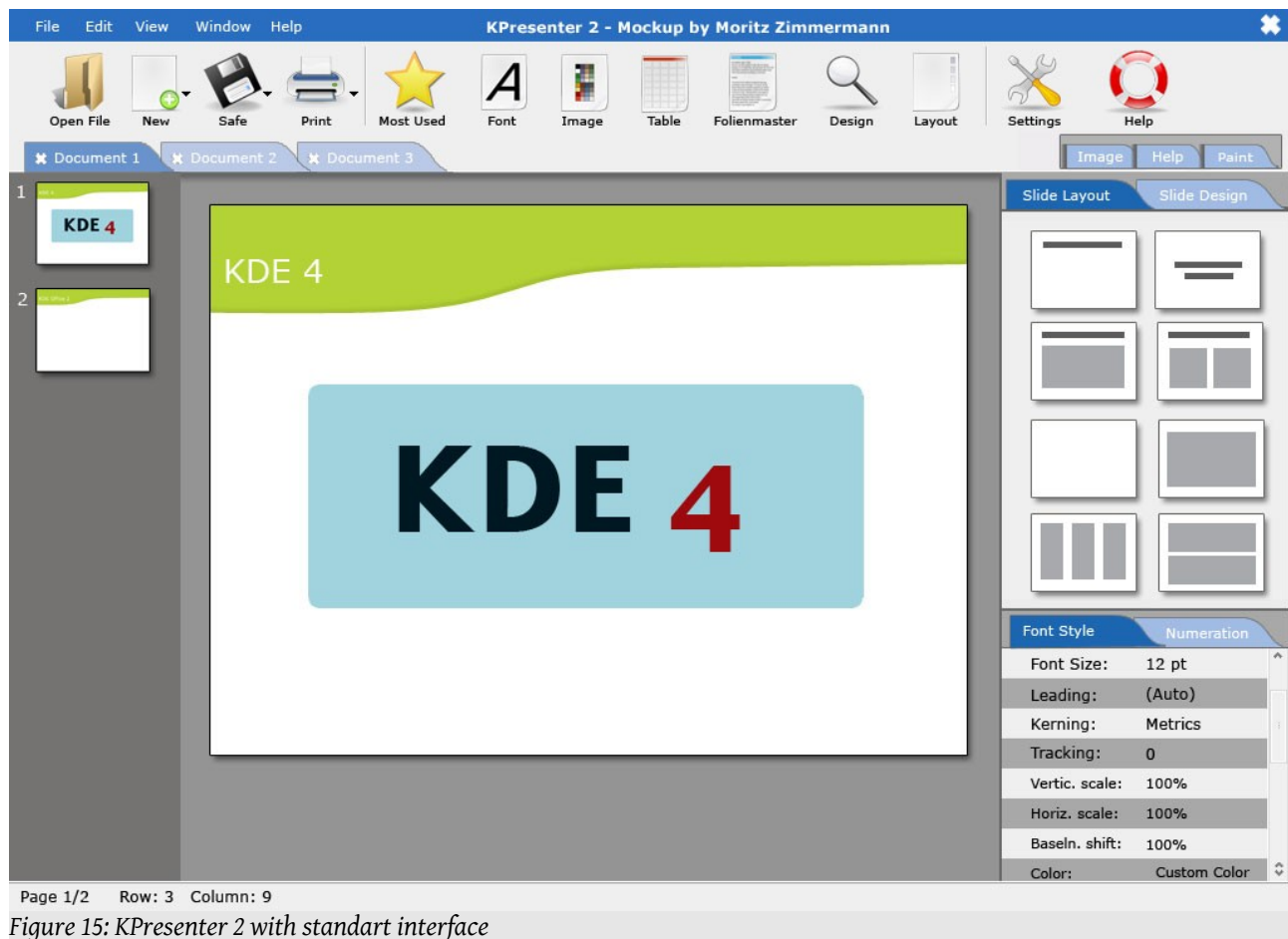


Figure 15: KPresenter 2 with standard interface

Modifications

KPresenter 2 follows the guidelines that apply for KWord 2 with only a few small changes: The sidebar moved to the right side to make space for the transparency overview. Another point is that the container now shows specific settings for the work with transparencies (the slide layout), consequently also the application specific menubar changed to show the necessary options for working (note that the icons should change but I did not have enough icons that fit my needs).

KSpread 2

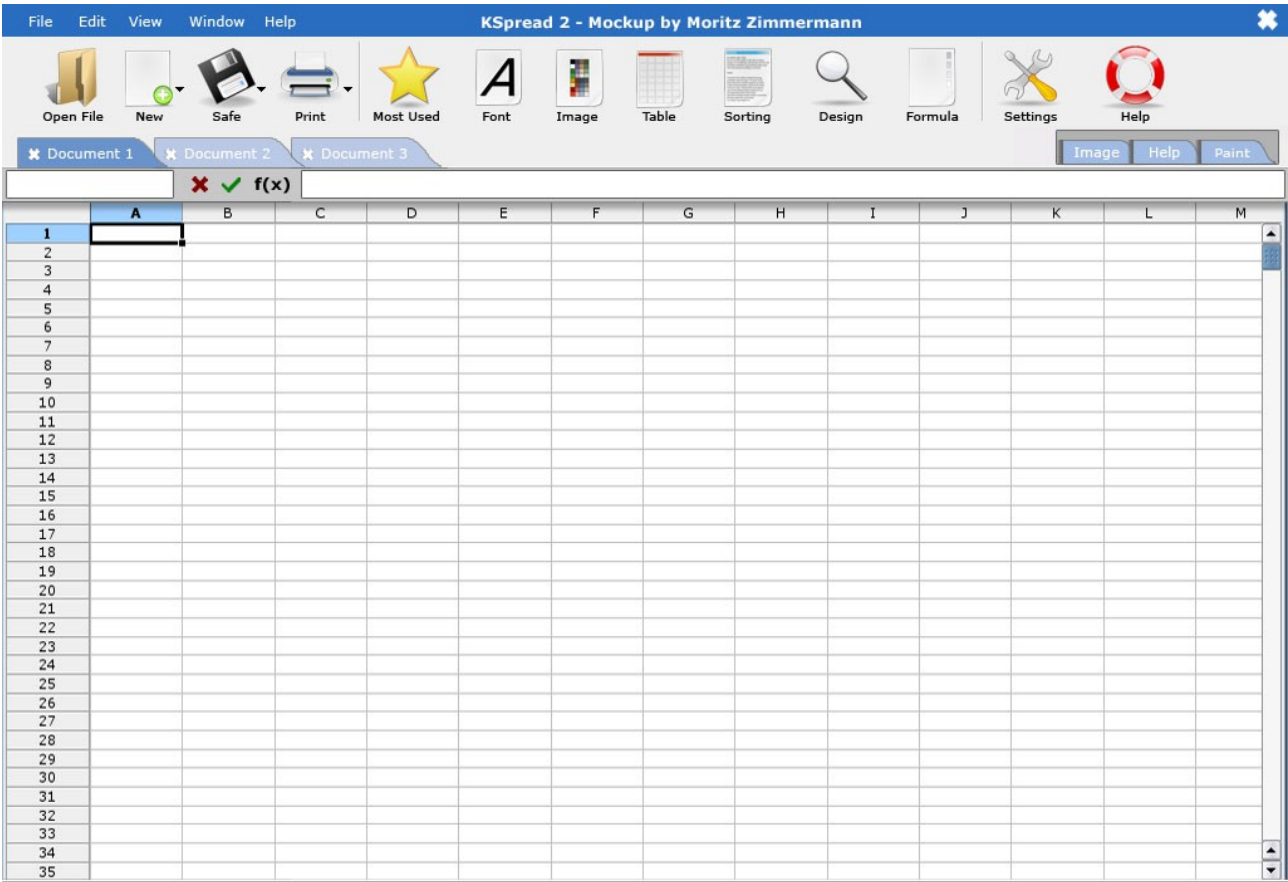


Figure 16: KSpread 2 without sidebar

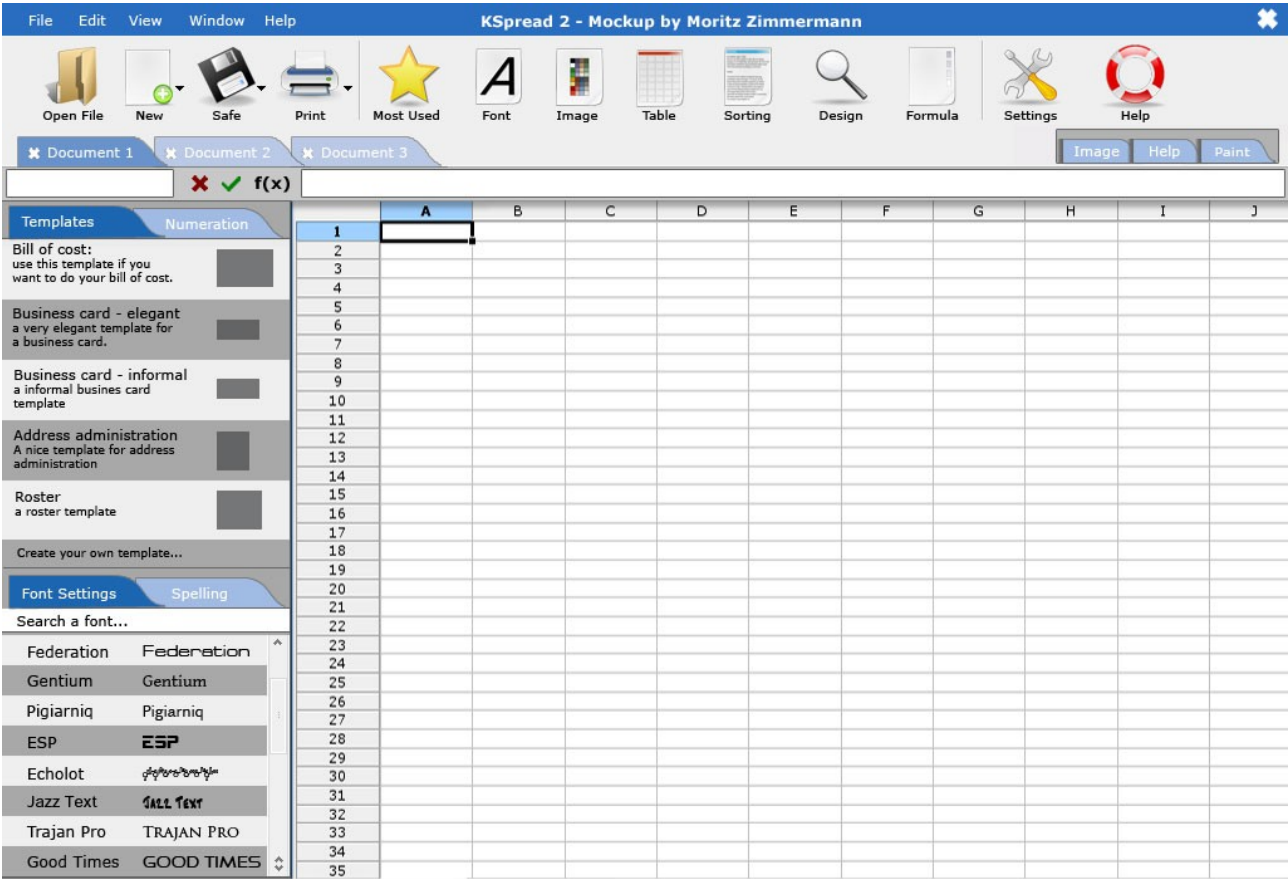


Figure 17: KSpread 2 with sidebar

Modifications

Again, the UI stays similar to the UI in the other applications, the biggest change is that the formula menubar appears and the sidebar shows specific informations/settings as templates.

Conclusion

I believe that this interface will really speed up the workflow for the user and it will be a much more natural experience, too. I am sure that this way of organizing your GUI will allow everyone a very flexible way to access all important settings in a easy graphical way with never more than three clicks. With this UI the interface will stay clear and will not get cluttered and easy to understand for the normal user and even the needs of the pro user will be fulfilled.

I hope you enjoyed reading my essay and that it could help improving KOffice 2.