

# World News

## ■ New and improved: Linux Australia

Australia's national Linux conference, linux.conf.au 2003 (see page 89) has been more successful than ever. As the conference makes a profit each year, the question arises: "Where does all the money go?"

Linux Australia, the non-profit organisation behind the conference, takes the challenge, and wishes to use these funds to help out the nationwide Linux community and give it a strong voice.

To make this move from a conference organiser to a lobbyist, the organisation needs powerful leadership, and the elections for the committee, held at the annual general meeting during the conference, showed the way: Pia Smith was voted the first female president of Linux



Australia. The network engineer from Sydney won the ballot against former president and now treasurer Anand Kumria. Anyone attending the meeting was allowed to run for one of the seven committee seats, and 25 candidates did so.

Asked about her plans to get Linux Australia moving, Pia went hands-on: restructuring the organisation, recruiting new members, increasing communication within the Australian Linux community and media presence, and last but not least promoting education by and for the community.

Looks like Linux Australia's website will soon offer a lot more than its current promises.

<http://www.linux.org.au/>

## ■ Taking Linux to the Indian road

It's on the road: literally. Open Source and Free Software shows are making it across various big cities in India.

Bangalore's early-December megabash has become an annual event (see Linux Magazine issue 27, p. 91). Calcutta (Kolkata, what the world knows as Mother Teresa's city of joy) LUG in eastern India took part in an ambitious IT event called COMPASS, a four day event, starting on the 24th of January, 2003.

More than 8000 people came to visit the event and the LUG Calcutta used this opportunity as a platform to introduce GNU/Linux and the philosophy of free Software to the visitors. They demonstrate, that the combination of both, free software and Linux can be a viable alternative to Microsoft Windows and proprietary software. A report from the LUG can be downloaded at <http://www.ilug-cal.org/compass/pr/press-release.pdf>.

Symbiosis College in Pune, central India, is having its own event (see Linux Magazine issue 28, p. 13). Bombay was toying with the idea. So as a hundred initiatives bloom, Open Source tourists to India, be prepared!

<http://www.ilug-cal.org/>

## ■ FLOSS: One view from Iran

Someone asked, in the course of a recent Internet discussion, whether there was "any case" for Free/Libre and Open Source Software helping to avoid the digital divide or providing education-to-all. "It's a red herring. I challenge anyone to tell me how open source will solve any of our major problems," said a prominent professor from the US.

Arash Zeini, a KDE developer from Iran, had a very clear answer: "In Iran, we live under sanctions from the US. The result is that as an Iranian you can not do any business with an American company. This may be good, it may be bad. But in any case, the only way we can empower ourselves is FLOSS. This approach gives us the necessary freedom."

"We have access to the best technology and it is Free/Libre/Open and not

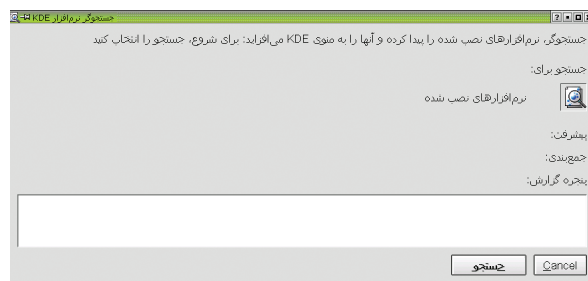
restrictive. It does not put us in chains, we do not need to wait until the US decide about us. If only the Iranian government would see it this way too!"

Zeini went on to explain that it would have been "ages" until proprietorial software giant Microsoft decided to implement Farsi (Persian) in a correct way into their OS.

"But with KDE around we can do it ourselves and we can do it better. With FarsiKDE we have now a desktop that is in Farsi, it is based on our own standards and does not include the mistakes that MS has in its attempts to support Farsi. Doesn't this help us when having computers at schools? A 12 year old does not need

to learn English first in order to use a computer. The minimum is that they can type in Farsi with the correct alphabet, not the MS Farsi alphabet, which is just a mess," was Zeini's logic.

Proof enough? To top it all, when he contacted KDE at first "I was not asked for my nationality, I did not need to prove that I am not a terrorist, and I was welcomed to the project and received all the support that one can dream of!"



## ■ Courts Deny LUG Use of “Linux” Name

It's red tape to the max in Germany as an official at the Courts of Law in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, called on the local Linux User Group to prove their right to use the “Linux” brand name.

As the official correctly noted, the group, who seek to register as an incorporated society, do not own the “Linux” brand name; he went on to state that “Linux” denotes an operating system.

In Germany, the brand name is formally owned by Linus Torvalds; it was assigned to him in Cologne during the GUUG annual conference on 17 September 1997. Linus by no means strict in the application of the brand name and so far has not refused a single user group the use of it.

The LUG has contacted everyone concerned with the case and looks forward to being able to officially register their society name in the near future.

<http://www.lug-whv.de>

## ■ Make those distros affordable!

What do you do if you're poor in resources and rich in talent? You share software, and you do that in style. Sofall (short for “Software For All”) is the initiative of 21-year-old student Ajay Kunkolienkar from Goa, India. His aim is to make it easy for people to share resources – in places where even blank CDs may be hard or costly to come by and broadband internet access rare.

Elsewhere in India, other young students are taking the Free Software revolution forward by selling Linux on CDs for an affordable price: Lincds.com is a couple of engineering students' initiative from Bangalore. Linuxplaza.org is run out of Mumbai (Bombay). Sukrit, a high school student, recently launched LinCDz from the former French colony of Pondicherry. Each of them offers CDs for less than 75 US cents (i.e. Rs 30 or less) plus courier charges.

<http://sofall.vze.com/>

<http://www.lincds.com/>

<http://www.linuxplaza.org/>

## ■ Danish Linux conference sold out in record time

Only 25.5 hours after the ticket sale opened, all 501 tickets available at the price of 100 DKK (13.5 EUR) were gone. The event causing this run was the 6th LinuxForum 2003, held in Denmark's capital Copenhagen 1st March.

Traditionally a Linux and \*BSD meeting, LinuxForum featured an exposition and two conference tracks, surrounded by keynotes held by security expert Bill Cheswick and GIMP evangelist Simon Budig.

Amongst the talks in Danish or English, were those by kernel-hacker Jens Axboe describing the Linux kernel moving from 2.4 to 2.6 and KDE's Kalle Dalheimer, introducing the Kroupware project.

<http://linuxforum.dk/2003/english/>



## ■ LUG Camp in Switzerland

For four years now, German Linux User Groups have joined forces with Linux User Groups from neighboring countries at the LUG Camp.

These informal events are characterized by their campsite atmosphere with undertones of a developer and hacker congress. Following last year's event that saw 120 attendees gathering in Flensburg, Germany, the camp will be taking place across the border in Switzerland for the first time.



much in the style of the software that is the event's major focus. To more or less cover their costs, the organizers will be charging an attendance fee of 45 Euro. This not only buys you lodgings and food, but also an excellent agenda of workshops and discussions.

<http://www.lug-camp.ch>



The LUG Camp is scheduled for 29 May 2003 through 1 June 2003 in and around Felsberg School. Attendees can look forward to some serious camping and talking shop around the campfire.

LUG Camp started life as an event organized for and by German-speaking Linux User Groups, but new members are welcome –

