

# A time and a place



Dear Linux Magazine Reader,

I managed to attend a business conference recently, specifically aimed at promoting Linux.

The first presentation was by a Linux distributor, tailored to the audience. You should consider Linux because it will make this difference to your company. No heavy sales pitch, just balanced reasons as to why it makes commercial sense. The lack of a heavy handed selling spiel helped to gain the audience's confidence.

In the small coffee break that followed, many could be heard getting quite enthusiastic. The talks then continued. During lunch different people started to say how they could deploy Linux and save money, something that, in the current economy, is only to be welcomed. At this point I was happy, we had potentially gained a few more souls in our quest for world domination.

After lunch there was a noticeable shift in the presentations. One reseller

tried to explain how wonderful the latest hardware box he was trying to sell was. During the hard sales pitch he explained that for the cost of a small car this box would allow someone who had previously run MS Word on their Windows 98 box to run MS Word on their Windows 98 box, but this time via a Linux server. Just about the whole of the audience was now confused. The morning had been spent explaining how to save money, now they were being told how to spend more.

The real crunch came with the final speaker. This was a technical talk that deterred every company who attended from trying Linux. How was this done? By explaining how insecure Linux was compared to his product.

All the speakers were from Open Source companies, but somehow the last two managed to dissuade a group of businesses from every trying anything with a Linux bent.

The technical talk was nice, but for the wrong audience. Explaining Mach kernels is not something a businessman really wants to hear about when he is just starting to think about moving from proprietary software.

Can it be done better? Yes. Attending a Linux User Group, the members had leafleted their city explaining they would hold an installfest. They had taken the time to explain to passers-by what Linux was and offered a friendly smile.

At the installfest, lectures were held on why they should choose Open Source software and in rooms set aside they showed people what Linux could do. Not just in a demonstration method, but making them try for themselves. It was

## LINUX MAGAZINE

We pride ourselves on the origins of our publication, which come from the early days of the Linux revolution.

Our sister publication in Germany, founded in 1994, was the first Linux magazine in Europe. Since then, our network and expertise has grown and expanded with the Linux community around the world.

As a reader of Linux Magazine, you are joining an information network that is dedicated to distributing knowledge and technical expertise. We're not simply reporting on the Linux and Open Source movement, we're part of it.

not as slick as the business conference. No PowerPoint presentations, certainly no men in suits. No funding or corporate spiels – just Sysadmins and users talking to potential companies and users.

A different time and place, but one which has helped, although only in a small way, to our world domination goal.

Happy Converting,

**John Southern**  
Editor

### Inside Dot Org

This month's magazine starts a new feature in the Community section. Many projects grow from just one or two developers into larger programming ventures. These normally find themselves with the .org naming for their domains, but not always.

We intend to show you a different software project each month that has an important impact on the Linux community. This month we start with a look at the way the IDE support inside the Linux kernel has changed over time (see page 90).