



Figure 1: Tim O'Reilly presenting his keynote at OSCON 2003

Embracing and Extending Proprietary Software” – the motto of this year’s Open Source Conference in Portland, Oregon, USA, was an invitation for the Open Source community to expect and build on the offerings of the more obstinate members of the traditional software industry.

Despite a difficult economic situation, an astounding 1,800 participants made it to this year’s OSCON – 300 more than



Figure 1: A bigger crowd at this year’s LinuxTag

Higher attendance figures, a pleasant atmosphere, and interesting talks – that more or less sums up the four-day Linux event in Karlsruhe, Germany. In fact, attendance was up on last year’s figures to 19,500.

The release of Skyrix, where development will continue under the new OpenGroupware name, was one of the major topics at the event, causing quite a

O’Reilly’s Open Source Conference

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last year. Thanks to top-notch presentations and a smattering of Open Source community superstars, the organizers managed to fill the conference facilities to the brim, showing the brand new developments for Apache, Java, XML, MySQL, Perl, PostgreSQL, Ruby and associated areas.

In his keynote, Tim O’Reilly, the CEO of O’Reilly Associates and an Open Source visionary, called on the Open Source community not to shun Amazon, Ebay and Google just because they are not willing to share their source code with the community. Tim called the three e-commerce giants “today’s killer applications”, and pointed out that many fewer people are actually contributing to Linux development than those reviewing books on Amazon.

Perl boss Larry Wall announced that Perl6 is getting closer all the time.

Damian Conway introduced Perl6 concepts designed to remedy known Perl5 problems, and a presentation of the new regular expressions in Perl6 showed that they are not only suited to typical Perl-esque word processing tasks, but even support the development of parsers for extremely complex grammar. It looks like Perl6 will be jam packed with absolutely revolutionary concepts, far beyond the mental capacity of Joe Developer.

Strangely enough, the arch-enemy of anything Open Source, Microsoft, supplied lunch, which had been axed as a cost-cutting measure, for the conference delegates. Hungry Open Source attendees were very appreciative of the lunch packages – with neat “Microsoft” tags – and smirked at the “Free as in Lunch :) – Microsoft” poster hanging in the exhibition center. ■

LinuxTag 2003

BY ANDREAS GRYTZ

stir. At the same time the OpenOffice project announced that it will be modifying its own software to interact with the OpenGroupware server.

The LinuxTag again occupied two venues, just like last year: The Gartenhalle (Garden Pavilion) provided companies and Open Source projects a platform on which to demonstrate their latest developments – whereas the Congress Hall staged four parallel tracks of top-notch talks and product demos.

For example, the filesystem developer, Hans Reiser, introduced some fourth generation design concepts relating to the filesystem that was named after him. A repacker, which reorganizes the filesystem more efficiently based on regular semantic analysis and statistics, is one of the major features.

While many visitors rounded off a successful day at the event with cold drinks

in the courtyard located between the two congress venues, some 20 young programmers could be seen hard at work at the Hewlett-Packard booth, battling it out in a hacking contest jointly initiated by HP, Intel, SuSE and the LinuxTag organizers. The winners were Frank Haverkamp and Jörn Engel, both students from Böblingen, an IBM Germany location. They demonstrated the quickest solution in optimizing code for a dual Itanium machine.

All in all, the congress was again very much like a family get-together for developers and users alike, with many familiar faces and a few new ones. Numerous companies indicated that the quality of the contacts generated this year was superior to last year – thus, the ongoing success story distinguishes the LinuxTag 2003 from other similar events. ■