

# World News

## ■ Too Slow to Adopt Open Source

The Dutch Liberal party D66 wants to commit the government to using Open Source. Expressing his dissatisfaction with the current recommendation to start using Open Source by 2006, politician Bert Bakker said: "We should get to a situation where we use it everywhere unless it is really impossible", commenting the governmental program adopted by the parliament in November 2002 that suggests the use of free software.

The first results are anything but promising. Says Bakker: "This approach is too voluntary and the campaign should be setting its sights much higher." The politician intends to question at the Minister of Economic Affairs

and the Minister of Internal Affairs with the aim of introducing more coercive measures. He also claims that the government, being the largest IT customer in the country, is not exploiting its financial power well enough. D66 sharply criticizes the "inefficiency and high costs" that monopolies cause.

Mr. Bakker commented that the Netherlands is lagging behind in the Open Source stakes, despite viewing itself as a knowledge-driven economy. Bakker has been frustrated with the low level of technological achievement in the Netherlands: "Promoting Open Source encourages people become innovative." D66 also thinks that security will be



Bruno de Winter

enhanced by introducing Linux: "Don't forget that Microsoft, not Linux, is top of the vulnerabilities league."

Meanwhile, Albert Heijn, one of the largest food chains in the Netherlands, with about 700 supermarkets, is reported to be testing Linux in five of their shops to replace Solaris/x86. ■

## ■ No to Software Patents in Europe

Hundreds of European web sites closed their doors in answer to the FFII's („Foundation for a Free Information Infrastructure“) online campaign against European software patents 27th August.

Participants ranged from personal pages to high-volume sites in the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and Spain and even included international sites such as Debian, Apache, GNOME, KDE and Linux Magazine. Several IT companies related with the Open Source Software Community supported this initiative, too.

Most of these sites replaced their front pages with a warning message about the directive in various languages for which the FFII provided a sample page at <http://swpat.ffii.org/group/demo/demo.en.html>. Some sites redirected users to a call for action against the proposed directive.

In addition to the online protest, several hundred demonstrators gathered in front of the European Parliament building in Brussels (Belgium) to express their protest against software patents. They wore black t-shirts with slogans like "protect innovation against software

patents". During a press conference in the Parliament building, prominent anti-patent activists like Hartmut Pilch, the president of the FFII, and Henk Barendregt, of the Foundation of Mathematics and Computer Science at Nijmegen University in the Netherlands, explained the reasons for the protest. They are not the only ones who believe e-patents will harm the innovative capacity of and competition within the IT industry. More than 190,000 scientists, politicians, economists, software engineers and other people have signed the petition against software patents so far.

Meanwhile, the European Commission decided to delay the vote on the European Software Patent directive that initially was planned for September 1, by several weeks.

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/indprop/com02-92en.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/indprop/com02-92en.pdf)  
<http://www.eurielec.etsit.upm.es/OnlineDemoPartnersWebsites.php>  
<http://eurolinux.ffii.org/>  
<http://swpat.ffii.org/>

**PATENTS ON COMPUTING LOGIC?**  
**MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SAY NO!**

... OF COURSE YOU CAN BREATHE FREELY  
 BUT WE PATENTED YOUR SUFFOCATION ....

**SOFTWARE PATENTS...**

- UNDERMINE COPYRIGHT PROPERTY
- DECREASE INNOVATION AND COMPETITION
- PUT EUROPEAN INDUSTRY AT RISK

**THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MUST...**

- REJECT OR REWRITE THE PROPOSED DIRECTIVE
- BRING THE EUROPEAN PATENT SYSTEM UNDER DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

[HTTP://SWPAT.FFII.ORG/PAPERS/EUBSA-SWPATO202/DEMANDS/](http://swpat.ffii.org/papers/eubsa-swpato202/demands/)

## ■ Dr. Linux

Following the footsteps of "Linuxer", the Taiwanese Linux magazine that was withdrawn in February 2003 due to its publisher's financial problems, a new Chinese-language print publication named "Dr. Linux" made its debut at the 3rd Taipei Linux Expo, which took place from July 30 to August 3 this year. With 144 colorful pages covering practical topics as well as local community news and four CD-ROMs including Thiz Linux Desktop 7.0, a distribution of Hong Kong origin, and the Taiwanese release of Knoppix v3.2 BV1AL, publisher Brain-c.com tried to attract new readers.

This investment in the Chinese Linux market might well pay off in the future as the government of The People's Republic of China, along with Japan and South Korea plan to undertake concrete steps to develop an alternative



to Microsoft Windows – very likely on the basis of Linux. Meanwhile the Japanese government is already in the process of migrating the network infrastructure of its ministries and the civil service to Linux. And Japanese companies continue to push Linux education among their employees: In August, 880 of 1,500 LPI exams world-wide were taken by Japanese examinees. ■

<http://www.drlinux.com.tw/>

## ■ Debian and KDE go Chinese

Not everyone on this planet speaks English fluently. Thus, to a large degree the success of Open Source software depends on providing information in local languages. Projects like KDE or the Debian web site translation team count on numerous volunteers to work on this huge task. However, not every one who wants to help is familiar with basic technologies like the Web Meta Language (WML) and CVS repositories used in these translation projects.

To lessen this barrier as well as to increase productivity, local translation web sites have been created for both the Chinese Debian and the Chinese KDE projects. With their help, volunteers can participate in the translation effort without installing Make/CVS/WML tools (which means even Windows users can contribute), and it is no longer necessary to download the entire content (the .wml source consists of more than 50 MB of files), a prerogative of those with broadband internet access. Prior to building and publishing the .wml source files, all contributions will be corrected by the project coordinators.

Both the Chinese Debian and the Chinese KDE translation projects are based in Taiwan, but aim to support the entire Chinese-speaking world, including China and Hong Kong. Which is not as easy as one might guess: The spoken languages differ, and hence the computer languages in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China diverge, too. While Taiwan and Hong Kong use traditional Chinese (Chinese Big 5), China insists on simplified Chinese (GB Chinese). For instance, the words 'file' and 'documents' have different meanings in Chinese Big 5 and Chinese GB. The coordinators accordingly have to take care to distinguish between the two systems, [HKTW] and [CN], when coordinating the WML source files.

Recent statistics of the Chinese Debian translation project showed that eight percent (132 files) have been translated so far, of which 115 files (87 %) are up to date. Thus, the Chinese Linux translation projects still have a long way to go. ■

<http://www.linux.org.tw/~chihchun/CDDP/>

<http://www.linux.org.tw/~ycheng/kde/>

## ■ Georgy for Governor

She is probably the only person to have run for governor who has ever been asked the vital question "vi or emacs?" on Slashdot. And yes, Georgy Russell, the almost 27 years old programmer and Democrat from Mountain View, California, USA, did give a diplomatic answer appropriate to canvassing for votes and aiming to become the governor of California (that is, if the current officeholder, Gray Davis, is ousted at the same election): "vi for quick editing, emacs (NOT xemacs) for coding projects."

Among the 135 candidates, Georgy Russel was the first to have a website, which made her one of the more promising proponents. Pro renewable energy sources, legalization of marijuana, universal health care, gay marriages, Open Source, higher taxes for high incomes and against the death penalty she believes in a political system "where great ideas are valued over great amounts of money".

Whether a political nobody like her has a chance in the recall election is something that Californian voters might

already have decided by the time this magazine went on sale. But the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a delay to the poll scheduled for October 7, reasoning that approximately 40,000 votes would be invalidated if the punch-card ballot machines weren't upgraded.

Read our exclusive interview with Georgy at <http://www.linux-magazine.com/Magazine/OnlineExclusive/Georgy>. ■ <http://www.georgyforgov.com/>

