

World News

■ Hindi is the Language of the Tux

In his now famous piece on Slashdot entitled "Why Linux Makes Sense for India", Professor Venkatesh (Venky) Hariharan argued that "the localization of Linux to Indian languages can spark off a revolution that reaches down to the grassroots levels of the country". This simple statement was the inspiration behind setting up IndLinux – The Indian Linux Project with initial funding from Netcore and a handful of volunteers.

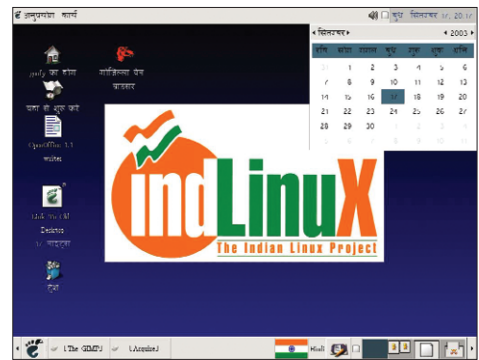
Addressing the need for localized software and interfaces, the project aims to build a fully Indian language enabled distro, with focus on ease of use and functionality. With a small team of dedicated volunteers, the project has come a long way. So far it has managed to complete 80 percent of KDE 3.2, 20 percent of GNOME and 100 percent of Xfce string translations. Furthermore it has released in the public domain localized application sets based on GNOME and KDE, Xfce desktops in Hindi as well as a bootable LiveCD with Indian language interface.

Deployment efforts primarily center around the personal desktop or community kiosk. The initial aim is to provide a functional and localized computing experience which enables the end-user to learn and reskill.

The project has seen a constant turnaround in the number of volunteers with quite a few choosing to stay on throughout the lifetime. Translators and language experts as well as people skilled in C/C++, Python, Perl and shell scripting are always welcome to join it.

The hurdles IndLinux faces are similar to other localization projects. These include the small number of volunteers, coordination issues, font and other technical issues. For Hindi in particular, lack of standardized terminology is an issue, which however has been addressed by creating its own set of jargon.

IndLinux plans to initiate a Hindi translation project, which would derive from GNOME-KDE Hindi work done so



far. The aim is to have a large team of translators who can work on technical and general translations including user documentation.

Further down the line there are plans to integrate content development tools for anyone to develop Indian language content rapidly.

The project is also involved in team formation and initial support for Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi and Telugu localization initiatives – the Indian sub-continent is rich in languages spoken by millions of people. ■

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

<http://www.indlinux.org/hindi/gnome/gnome24.html>

<http://www.indlinux.org/hindi/kde/gallery/>

■ Free Code from Africa

Africa Source, the first pan-African meeting of free and Open Source software developers, drew together over 60 people from 25 countries (including nearly 20 African countries such as Benin, Tanzania, Cameroon, Ethiopia, just to name a few). Coming from the commercial, academic and non-profit sectors, the spectrum of participants ranged from advanced programmers to those with basic skills in LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP).

The five day developer workshop, organized by Amsterdam-based NGO Tactical Technology Collective took place in Okahanja, Namibia March 15 to 19. Its aim was to build a network of OSS developers across the continent, to facilitate cooperation, improve education and aid NGOs by sharing experiences and skills. Accompanied by African food (braai food), aboriginal African dance and

music, the participants were totally immersed in mutual learning.

Hence participant and GStreamer developer Andy Wingo felt "wonderful to meet other hackers of the continent, and especially seeing quality home-grown hackers working on home-grown solutions". He was particularly impressed by Guido Sohne and organizers like Joris Komen from SchoolNet



Namibia. "They do hard, enthusiastic work towards equalizing the social problems that prevent the development of good hackers." Neil Blakey-Milner of South Africa was delighted to see that many people found learning about blogging and Zope was the best thing they'd learned in the past week.

An NGO-in-a-box, a set of CDs for people trying to convince non-governmental organizations to use Open Source, should be a great help in improving the situation for better learning, cooperating, and coding. At the end of the event, each participant was given a copy. However, Africa still suffers from fundamental problems such as a lack of computers, and expensive bandwidth. ■

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

<http://www.advogato.org/person/wingo/>

<http://www.ryze.com/go/wgsohne>

<http://www.schoolnet.na/>

<http://mithrandr.moria.org/>

■ A Summit for All

Following up from the "KDE Contributor Conference" in August 2003, the KDE project moves on to higher grounds, inviting all and sundry to the "KDE Community World Summit 2004", codenamed "aKademy". The event will be held in Ludwigsburg, near Stuttgart, Germany, August 21 to 29, 2004.

The new name is only one of the measures taken to make the event more attractive, not only to KDE programmers, but to contributors and users in general. Although it's 2003 predecessor "Kastle", held in Nové Hradý, in the Czech Republic (see Issue 36, p86) was dubbed a "contributor conference" to emphasize the fact that technical writers, translators, promoters, artists and other non-coding KDE developers were equally important to the success of the software, and equally welcome, only a few non-programmers attended. The 2004 event is looking to change this, and the agenda



reflects the event's focus.

It starts with a "KDE Developers' and Contributors' Conference", August 21 to 22, and ends with a

"Users' Conference", August 28

to 29. On the days in between, programmers are invited to join the "KDE Improvement Coding Marathon, while admins and users can spend their time enhancing their skills in tutorials. Proposals for conference talks and tutorials should be sent to cfp2004@kde.org. The conference language is English. Partici-

pants and volunteers are invited to join the mailing list, kde-conference@kde.org.

Parallel to the event, the "First International Software Freedom Day" will be held at the same location, a film academy, August 28, and all attendees are welcome to celebrate the freedom of software with a big party. ■

<http://conference2004.kde.org/>

<https://mail.kde.org/mailman/listinfo/kde-conference>

http://www.filmakademie.de/index_html?set_language=en

<http://softwarefreedomday.org/>

■ Slack Party 2004

In mid-March, Taiwan was completely caught up in the presidential election fever. But there were a few exceptions. On March 14, a largish group of Taiwanese Slackware users gathered at the country's first Slackware user meeting, determined to create a social network around their favorite distribution.

The participants reported on their experiences with *jmccce* (a program used for Chinese text on the Linux console), the "Open Type Font Organizer" *oto*, installation, how to build a server, as well as Linux application development and the career of Linux programmers. ■

<http://slackware.org.tw/>

"There Goes the Neighbourhood"
 An Original Full-Colour Print by J.D. "Illiad" Frazer

Available in May of 2004
 at the UserFriendly.Org
 Online Store

UserFriendly.Org
 The Original Geek Humour Comic Strip