

LUDEX 2004 in London, Olympia

The Show must go on...

April 20 and 21 saw exhibitors and visitors, developers and users, geeks and the general public meet at the Olympia Exhibition Centre, in London, England. Although the show was not quite as well attended as the Expo in October last year, it was definitely a success and well worth a visit.

BY HEIKE JURZIK



Figure 1: Flying high – FlightGear linked to the helicopter.

Numerous exhibitors spread across two floors of the exhibition center. The ground floor provided a platform for businesses, large and small, to present their Linux business solutions. In the basement, visitors had the opportunity to attend the Conference talks or take a stroll through the .Org Village and chat with developers.

News News News

Visitors could catch up with Suse Enterprise Linux solutions at the Suse/Novell booth and preview the features of the new Suse Linux version 9.1.

The BBC Research and Development (R&D) team presented the open standards MXF (Material eXchange Format [3]) and AAF (Advanced Authoring Format [4]), which provide interoperability between professional broadcast equipment, such as cameras and other post-production tools. They have also released a prototype implementation of a new open source video codec called Dirac, which uses more novel techniques than MPEG-2 while trying to keep the implementation as simple as possible.

The .Org Village, which was sponsored by uklinux.net, was described as “the largest presence of community members in the English-speaking world”. Besides the usual community names, there were

a number of new faces. One of these belonged to Franz Schmid from the Scribus project [6]. He introduced many features implemented or in the pipeline for the developer version of the desktop publishing program.

The Mambo team let visitors peek behind the scenes, providing details on the new features for the upcoming version 5 of the Open Source content management system. One of the major enhancements will be the use of XML-RPC, a simple, portable way to make remote procedure calls over HTTP. They also mentioned Mambo’s new portal called MOSForge.net [7]. It’s a central repository for all Mambo development, including third party components, templates and modules.

Flying High

One of the highlights of the show was a free flight with the FlightGear flight simulator [8]. A Royal Navy Westland Wasp helicopter from the Fleet Air Arm Museum, sponsored by IBM DB2 Stinger, was used with a large display, making the flight a unique experience.

Awards

The annual Awards were presented to the winners during a gala dinner. The winners of the five “Reader Nominated

Awards” included Suse Linux as the best distribution, the AMD Athlon 64 as the best hardware, and Mambo Open Source as the “Best Linux or Open Source Software”. IBM received a prize in the category “Corporate Contribution to Linux”, and Linus Torvalds for his “Personal Contribution to Linux”.

Besides the “Reader Awards”, a jury awarded prizes in a total of 12 categories including the Best Open Source Project (Open-Office.org - Sun Microsystems), the Best Embedded Linux (Trolltech Qtopia), and the Best Desktop Environment (KDE 3.2).

Party On

The Linux Party provided an alternative for those who could not, or would not, afford to attend the awards. Some 60 geeks gathered for a pizza fest. Organizer Brian Teeman, said: “Judging from people’s comments the next day, everyone felt it was a good opportunity for Linux Users from across the UK and Europe to get together in an informal environment and swap ideas and put faces to email address or IRC handles.” ■

INFO

- [1] Conference Info: <http://www.linuxuser.co.uk/expo/>
- [2] Linux Expo 2003 .Org-Village: <http://www.linuxexpo.org.uk/>
- [3] MXFlib: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/mxflib>
- [4] AAF Association: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/AAF>
- [5] Dirac Video Codec: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/dirac>
- [6] Scribus DTP for Linux: <http://www.scribus.net/>
- [7] MOSForge.net: <http://mosforge.net/>
- [8] FlightGear: <http://www.flightgear.org/>