

World News

■ Pakistan to Train 4,000 in Open Source Software

If all went well, the first of 4000 government servants in Pakistan have started their government-sponsored Open Source training by the time this magazine is published. This is due to a pilot project worth 37 million Pakistan Rupees (approximately 544,000 Euro) which has been launched by Pakistan's Federal Ministry for Information Technology.

The Ministry "would sponsor the project under which training would be imparted to 4000 employees in the Linux operating system, Open Office and other application software, while 200 systems administrators will also be trained on Linux," Federal Minister for Information Technology Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari said at the beginning of April when partner training institutes had already been selected. End user courses will last approximately five weeks, those for system administrators with one to two years

prior experience of working on computers are planned to take about eight weeks.

The training programs are to be arranged in Islamabad, all provincial headquarters and at Muzaffarabad. Whereas trainees from private sectors (who are planned to represent half of all participants) would be invited through newspapers, the rest would come from government departments. Many of the government employees qualify for free training, but the government will cover 90 percent of the fees for private individuals, too.

The minister promised that depending upon interest a major follow-up project would be launched at a future date. Pakistan Computer Bureau (PCB), a subsidiary of the ministry, will organize, arrange and monitor the training activities to ensure proper quality. ■

■ Asian Countries to Share Open Source Knowledge

Since the inaugural Asia Open Source Software Symposium (AOSS) in Phuket, Thailand, in March 2003, Asian countries have been sharing policies and technical insights of OSS for their economies, tackling the common problems, and preparing a concrete collaboration scheme. The 3rd AOSS in Vietnam, bringing together nearly 300 participants from 17 Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Mongolia, during 8-10 March opened various discussions among experts from governmental, commercial, educational and non-profit organisations.

At the conference, the Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai announced an official Open Source plan for his country between 2004 and 2008. While this plan is believed to accelerate the application and development of OSS in Vietnam, enforcing soft-

ware copyright protection is ironically listed as one of the main tasks.

The Malaysian representative, Imran William Smith from the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems MIMOS (<http://opensource.mimos.my/>) proposed to create an Asian OSS repository. Though many western companies have offered to mirror this project, there is a concern about heavy dependency on western countries. The Malaysian pro-

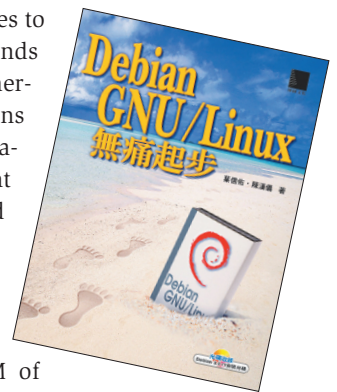


■ Read about Debian in Chinese!

Thanks to the active Debian community Debian@Moto in Taiwan, Chinese Debian users are no longer without a book on their favorite distro: "Debian GNU/Linux: The Painless Book" (ISBN 957-527-667-1) is written by Asho Yeh and Moto Chen, who also maintain the errata list.

The book illustrates Debian system management from installing packages to setting up all kinds of servers. Furthermore, it explains the Debian operation environment and desktop and helps building a firewall system.

To give its readers a head-start, a CD-ROM of Debian 3.0r1 comes attached to the book. ■



<http://moto.debian.org.tw/>

<http://moto.debian.org.tw/viewtopic.php?t=2968>

posal has been backed by the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Taiwan.

While the Taiwan-based Unicode-supporting Open Source Software Foundry (OSSF) is considered as a source code repository, the Asian Open Source Centre (AOSC) in Malaysia was suggested to act as a content repository. The participants also proposed to loosen the control over the AOSS wiki site and mailing list in order to facilitate communication between Asian OSS developers. This proposal was rejected by the Japanese webmaster based on security concerns. However, it was pointed out that the AOSS wiki site did not function as well as it ought to be and this might be due to the shy and modest attitude of Asian people.

50 participants of the 3rd AOSS roundtable representing the 17 Asian countries signed the Hanoi Statement for the roadmap of developing Asia OSS. The next AOSS will be held in Taipei, Taiwan in October 2004. ■

<http://www.asia-oss.org/march2004/>

