

LinuxWorld Conference & Expo, London

London Linux Olympics

Once again, London Olympia saw exhibitors and visitors, geeks and business people, software developers and users attending the LinuxWorld Conference & Expo. From 6th to 7th October people came together to look at the latest products and projects of the Linux world.

BY HEIKE JURZIK

This year's LinuxWorld Conference & Expo [1] provided an exhibition as well as a technical conference. While some visitors claimed that the show had been getting smaller every year, it was in fact a great opportunity to really talk to developers and product managers instead of just paying brief visits to the individual stands. The subject on everybody's lips was "Linux on Desktops" with everybody talking about Linux in business environments.

Through the Looking Glass

Tomorrow's desktop could be different: Flipping and spinning translucent windows, an audio CD collector that looks like a 3D jukebox – Sun Microsystems presented a prototype of their "Project Looking Glass" [2].

At the Suse/Novell booth one could preview the features of the new Suse Linux Professional 9.2 release [3]. Included is kernel 2.6.8, KDE 3.3, GNOME 2.6, OpenOffice.org 1.1.3, Inkscape, Nvu and a selection of proprietary software, such as TextMaker and MainActor. Suse Linux 9.2 also comes with enhanced support for mobile devices and better power management for laptop computers.

At the HP stand visitors could experience "Linux in the fast lane" – a Formula



Figure 1: "Linux in the fast lane" – visitors virtually racing in a real Formula 1 car at the HP stand.

1 racing car was attached to a simulator, so that people could compete to see who was fastest around a virtual track.

Community Chat

At the .Org village (sponsored by UKLinux.net and Linux Magazine) you could meet developers, user groups, campaigns and organizations to discuss the latest Free Software and Open Source developments. Busy as always were the KDE and the GNOME stands, presenting their new features for the Linux desktop. Members of the Association For Free Software [4] were very happy about a lot of new subscriptions and said that the show had been a huge success for them.

The Debian stand attracted the usual crowds asking everything from newbie questions to how to become a developer. The upcoming release of "sarge" was one of the hot topics. It was very nice to see members of the EmDebian.org project [5] in the Debian area, presenting miniature devices and systems, all running embedded Debian GNU/Linux.

The Great Linux Debate

Both days saw a panel of Linux and industry experts, discussing Linux and its future development. Graham Taylor,

Director OpenForum Europe [6], moderated the debate and did a good job motivating the audience to ask difficult questions. The discussion covered software patents and licences, file systems, and how to help the Open Source community. It was made clear that none of the big companies had created Linux, but that software innovation was a community-driven thing. The quote of the event went to Jeremy Allison, Head of the Samba Team, HP, who stated: "Free software is a scientific method. Proprietary software is like alchemy, turning lead into gold – it's never going to work." ■

INFO

- [1] Linux World Conference & Expo: <http://www.linuxworldexpo.co.uk/>
- [2] "Project Looking Glass" by Sun Microsystems: http://www.sun.com/software/looking_glass/
- [3] Press release for Suse Linux 9.2: http://www.suse.de/en/company/press/press_releases/archive04/92.html
- [4] AFFS website: <http://www.affs.org.uk/>
- [5] EmDebian.org: <http://www.emdebian.org/>
- [6] OpenForum Europe: <http://www.openforumeurope.org/>