Vol. 16 No. 4 December 2003
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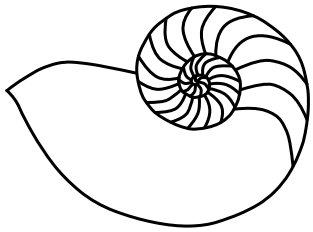

MUUGlines

The Manitoba UNIX User Group Newsletter

Next Meeting: December 9

Where To Find The Meeting

Meetings are held at the IBM offices at 400 Ellice Ave. (between Edmonton and Kennedy). When you arrive, you will have to sign in at the reception desk, and then wait for someone to take you (in groups) to the meeting room. Please try to arrive by about 7:15 PM, so the meeting can start promptly at 7:30 PM. Don't be late, or you may not get in.

Limited parking is available for free on the street, or in a lot across Ellice from IBM, for $1.00 for the evening. Indoor parking is also available nearby, at Portage Place, for $2.00 for the evening.

The Grinch Who Stole Linux

Pamela Jones of Groklaw (www.groklaw.net) writes: "Long-time Groklaw reader Scott Lazar has written a parody, 'The Grinch Who Stole Linux,' which he sent to me. I found it delightful, and with his permission, I am sharing it with all of you. Sometimes, it's nice to take a break and just smile. Thanks, Scott." For the full version, see http://www.groklaw.net/article.php?story=20031106164630915.

The Grinch Who Stole Linux
by Scott Lazar
Every GNU down in GNU-ville
Liked Linux a lot...

But SCO,
who lived just North of GNU-ville,
Did NOT!

SCO hated Linux! The GNU Linux season!
Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.
It could be that their heads weren't screwed on quite right.
It could be, perhaps, that their shoes were too tight.
But I think that the most likely reason of all
May have been that their bank account was two sizes too small.

J2EE Spec Approved

Sun Microsystems announced that the Java™ 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition [J2EE™] version 1.4 specification was approved by the Java Community Process™ in a unanimous vote making it the industry's approved platform for Web services interoperability. This accomplishment for the Java community is marked with another Web services industry-leading move to license the new specification and its Compatibility Test Suite (CTS) under new license terms friendly to non-profit and open source projects. Apache Software Foundation and JBoss Group are demonstrating their commitment to the compatible J2EE industry, a key value proposition for the IT industry, by being amongst the first open source organizations to license J2EE 1.4 specification and CTS.

"With nearly four million downloads and over 30 licensees, the J2EE platform and Software Developer Kit (SDK) is establishing itself as the popular choice and premier platform for Java and Web services development," said Mark Bauhaus, Vice President of Java Web Services for Sun Microsystems. "The delivery of the J2EE 1.4 specification realizes the vision of an architecture that fuses Web services standards and the Java platform, and represents the most complete implementation of the WS-I Basic Profile that promises cross-vendor Web services interoperability."

Shared with a wide community of developers who contributed to the design of the J2EE 1.4 standard through the JCP, Sun brings to developers the best in Java Web services technology that is the first to support the Web Services Interoperability (WS-I) Basic Profile. The J2EE 1.4 specification also includes improved deployment and management capabilities to help developers accelerate time to market for their Web services applications. Complete information about the J2EE 1.4 specification can be found on the web at http://jcp.org/en/jsr/detail?id=151 .

"We received a clear message from the J2EE community to provide complete support for Web services standards and interfaces," said Mark Hapner, Distinguished Engineer for Sun Microsystems and co-spec lead of the J2EE 1.4 specification. "Sun took this

challenge and in collaboration with the J2EE 1.4 Expert Group, we believe we have delivered the most interoperable and standard Web services platform in the form of this important Java specification, Reference Implementation and Software Developer Kit."

Key Open Source Players License J2EE 1.4 Specification

Taking advantage of open source license terms for J2EE 1.4 that Sun is making available for non-profit and open source projects, Apache Software Foundation and JBoss Group have licensed the J2EE specification and TCK to bring the benefits of Java compatibility to their open source communities for development and deployment. This will lead to increased adoption of J2EE through a broader community of developers and further popularize this premier middleware platform. The new licensing provisions were introduced by the JCP program through the JCP 2.5 process document and require that all Java specifications allow for development and distribution of compatible independent implementations, make specification products available separately and offer Technology Compatibility Kits (TCK) free of charge to qualified non-profits, educational organizations and individuals.

"As a member of the executive committee of the JCP, Apache is thrilled that JCP is meeting its promise as a forum for the development of industry-leading specifications that can be implemented by open source vendors," said Greg Stein, Chairman of the Apache Software Foundation. "Apache is looking forward to completing and releasing an application server that is fully compatible with the J2EE specifications through our Apache Geronimo project. Working closely with Sun and leveraging Sun's support extended to us at no charge through the Compatibility Scholarship Program, we are optimistic we will quickly deliver product to our communities of developers."

"As JBoss continues penetrating the enterprise market, proving its J2EE compatibility is becoming more important to our customers, ISVs and partners," said Marc Fleury, founder of JBoss.org and president of JBoss Group. "Achieving J2EE certification is part of JBoss Group's strategy to deliver Professional Open Source to the market. We look forward to a release of the first officially compatible version of the JBoss application server."

Complete information regarding Sun's Compatibility Testing Scholarship Program can be found at http://java.sun.com/scholarship/ .

Pricing and Availability

The J2EE 1.4 specification was available as of November 24, 2003. The J2EE 1.4 SDK that includes a J2EE 1.4-certified version of a fully-deployable application server from Sun (the developer release of the Sun Java System Application Server 8 Platform Edition) was also made available on November 24, 2003. The new SDK includes documentation and tools for developers to learn J2EE and get started with the J2EE 1.4 specification. It is available as a free download on the Solaris™ Operating Environment and Windows platforms at Sun's Developer Network site at http://java.sun.com/j2ee/download.html .

Judiciary Moves To Linux

PEC Solutions, Inc. announced that the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC) awarded the company a contract to provide technology support to migrate the Federal Judiciary's national IT infrastructure to a Linux/Intel platform.

PEC will support the transition of the Judiciary's mission-sensitive applications, including case management, finance and accounting, probation and pretrial services, and case-tracking management systems to the Linux standard. PEC will provide Linux operating system and applications technical support and assistance, including planning, advice and recommendations, help desk support, installation and testing support, and full problem resolution.

The award is for one year with four option years under PEC's GSA Schedule. If all options are exercised, the total value of the contract is $9 million dollars. Services will be provided at the AOUSC's Washington, D.C. offices, its San Antonio, Texas, national technology, training and support facility, and its Independent Test Facility in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Public Sector Open Source Project

The Public Sector Open Source Project, convened and sponsored by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will facilitate and loosely organize the sharing of software owned and developed by or for the public sector. This project will commence with a meeting held in Cambridge, Mass. on December 9th, 2003, of individuals from U.S. state and municipal governments who are interested in discussing and creating a relatively informal collaboration among public sector enti-

ties.

The initiative is premised upon the need for taxpayer information technology dollars within and across public sector entities to be used frugally, and the economic and engineering desirability of pursuing reusable software code. For example, code sharing has the potential to ease application interoperability issues across jurisdictions. The momentum behind use and development of open source software within governments domestically and abroad is considerable. In the IT sector in general, open source promises to transform the way software is designed, sold and supported.

Public entities invest significant funds annually in software development. Some of the code developed by these entities is owned entirely by them. At the same time, all these entities are in the same "business" - supporting licensing, permitting, voting, corporations administration, public safety, health and welfare programs and education. Public entities could save a considerable amount of the money that they now spend on software development by sharing with each other source code that they own.

To maximize the benefits of public sector code sharing, public entities should license their code to one another under "open source" licenses permitting licensees to access and modify the source code. The licenses should also require that all modifications and enhancements to the code be made available for free to all public entities participating in the open source project. One of the first tasks for the collaborative will be to review the potential open source licenses (such as Mozilla and GPL) to determine a small subset that will meet members' needs. An online web based code repository of some kind will be selected for this initiative. The repository, along the lines of www.sourceforge.net, will facilitate the initiative by making a forum available for participating governments to post information about new open source code they are contributing to the community and to facilitate other collaboration.

During the next month, Massachusetts will continue to reach out to state and local governments to identify a core group of interested participants in the MIT kick-off meeting and for potential membership in this emerging initiative. It is envisioned that no entity will be in sole control of this project, though the government of Massachusetts and MIT are initial organizers. It is also envisioned that the repository will not remain under the dominion of any single party, but will be subject to the will of members of this collaborative. These and other organizational topics will be addressed in a Memorandum of Understanding developed by and agreed to by participants in the collaborative.

For more information on this initiative, and to find out how your government can participate, please contact Daniel Greenwood, Director of the MIT E-Commerce Architecture Program and coordinator of this project for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, at opensource@civics.com

Interview With George Staikos

KDE is one of the industry's leading desktop environments. At the current stable version 3.1, it is without a doubt a great piece of work. KDE Core developer George Staikos answered some questions for USALUG (www.usalug.org).

USALUG: Tell us about your connection to the KDE project.

George Staikos: I am a KDE core developer, app developer, the North America/Canada press contact, and I am also involved in North American PR, among other things. :)

USALUG: What big changes should we be expecting in the upcoming releases?

George Staikos: To put it simply, speed, applications, features, and bug fixes. The number of changes are astonishing, and I can't possibly list them all, but I'll try to touch on some of the important ones.

Speed: We did some great optimizations in various areas of KDE. Some of note include major KJS performance enhancements (from Apple and us as well), faster loading Konqueror via the preloader, application launch time reductions, and general optimizations to the core libraries.

Applications: We have several new applications. Kopete is a general purpose instant messaging client with plugins for AIM, MSN, Yahoo, IRC, and more. Umbrello is part of the KDE SDK now, and is a powerful UML tool. KPDF is an XPDF frontend. A wireless network monitor and configurator is included in kdenetwork. Kontact provides an Outlook-style interface for KMail, KOrganizer, and other PIM apps. JuK is an iTunes style media player. For developers, KCachegrind is a great profiling application that works together with valgrind. There are at least half a dozen more new applications in 3.2 that I haven't mentioned!

Features: Many Safari fixes for KHTML have been merged, providing a faster and more full featured

KHTML. We also have a password manager with strong encryption called KWallet which is used to automatically fill in passwords where possible. The KDE APIs have been enhanced as usual, providing an even more powerful development environment. An excellent looking new widget style known as Plastik has been added, and KMail IMAP support has been greatly enhanced. Laptop support is much improved. I could write pages upon pages listing all the new features we have in 3.2.

Bug Fixes: I don't remember a release since the "2.0 days" which had as many bug fixes as 3.2 has. Some of the top "most hated bugs" have been fixed too, including KHTML form widget z-order, several big KMail bugs relating to IMAP, many general KHTML bugs, and more. The graphs on bugs.kde.org speak for themselves.

USALUG: What look is KDE going for? With the start menu it resembles Windows, but with the icon panel it resembles Mac?

George Staikos: We don't try to emulate any look that's out there. What is important is to make the desktop accessible to people with a bit of knowledge but who are not computer "pros". This means making an interface that is somewhat familiar. The beauty of KDE is that this interface is almost infinitely configurable, so that once you are comfortable with KDE, you can make it look like whatever you like. There are even replacements for Kicker, replacement window and widget decorations, and more.

USALUG: Being recognized as one of the simplest and easiest window managers, what do you feel is the reason for KDE's success?

George Staikos: We have always been very consistent with the look and feel. Despite regular comments to the contrary, we have always had a user interface style guide and we even have automated tools to verify compliance with various parts of this guide. The Qt and KDE APIs are rich enough to provide for almost any UI needs in an application, and this means that all applications look and feel the same. It's very easy to dive into a new application when this is the case.

It's important to point out that KDE is not just a window manager. It is a full desktop environment and platform which happens to include a window manager. It takes all parts of this platform to make a complete, easy to use desktop. From the file dialogs, to the panel and desktop, to the widgets, everything is important.

USALUG: With KDE's Control Center, and various GUI tools do you feel KDE is helping newer users with Linux?

George Staikos: I like to think of the Control Center as the power user's playground. Most settings for new users are inside the applications, and get set via wizards or just have the right defaults to begin with. New users don't tend to change too many settings. The best thing we can do for new users is to make sure that the default settings are chosen carefully. The worst thing we could do for power users is to remove configuration options. Don't forget, new users eventually become power users.

That being said, I think that one of the most important things for KDE is to help new users become productive with Linux and other platforms that KDE runs on. The goal is to help people move to free software.

USALUG: At the current time, do you think Linux and KDE are ready for the end-user?

George Staikos: Yes, definitely. The biggest problem is that people find Linux and KDE "confusing" because they can't call up their friend or neighbor to ask a question - they're Windows users of course. This is changing as Linux gains more and more users.

For the full interview, see http://www.usalug.org/index.php?view=14.

Sending Us E-Mail?

Due to the amount of e-mail MUUG receives, we've set up an auto-reply to give you immediate feedback, and redirect some of the e-mail to the appropriate places. Why not look at http://www.muug.mb.ca/about.html#contacts first?

Share Your Thoughts

E-mail us with your comments on the newsletter, whether it's criticisms or commendations, and continue to send in articles or ideas for same. **Specifically**, what sort of material would you rather see: Announcements, technical articles, new products, or...?

If you have a How-To or other idea, and aren't ready to give a presentation at MUUG, an article is a great alternative! If you can write better than the editor, that's terrific; if you can't, submit it anyway and we'll get it into shape for publication. We know that many of you have some great ideas and lots of knowledge.

Why not share? Mailto: editor@muug.mb.ca.