LINUX WORLD NEWS

OPEN FONTS FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Volunteers from SIL International, a NGO doing language-based development for minority language communities through linguistic research, translation, and literacy campaigns, have been actively contributing to many open source software projects, including Debian, Ubuntu, i18n, Mozilla, KDE, Gnome, and Freedesktop.org. Together, they have created a fully open stack of writing system implementation components that takes into account complex scripts.

Apart from a collection of open fonts, all available under the Open Font License (OFL, an open source license designed for fonts and related software), SIL's contributions include a keyboard input method (KMFL), a smart rendering library (Graphite), a Graphite-enabled office and internet suite (SIL.OpenOffice.org and SILA), and a Pango module that provides Graphite support in the Gnome Desktop.

SIL has just released two new fonts for non-Roman languages: Seonil Yun's font for the Zaghawa Beria language of western Sudan and eastern Chad (see sample), and another one (Namdhinggo SIL L) for the Limbu, or Kirat Sirijonga, script used by about 400,000 people in Nepal and India. Neither is a Unicode font (the Zaghawa Beria script isn't part of Unicode), although a Unicode version of the Namdhinggo SIL font is currently in the final stages of development. An interesting detail – Seonil Yun developed his font from the branding marks on camels and other livestock.

http://www.sil.org/
http://scripts.sil.org/
http://kmfl.sourceforge.net/
http://sila.mozdev.org/
http://www.ethnologue.com/

LINUX HAND-HELDS FOR KARNATAKA'S SUGAR INDUSTRY

India is the world's second largest producer of sugar, and workers in the sugar industry account for 7.5 percent of the rural population. Karnataka is the third largest sugar-producing Indian state, with a demand for suitable software solutions in the local language, Kannada. A new hand-held computer running Linux was launched in June that might help meet this demand. The ARM 7-based, lithium battery-powered device keeps track of information about the sugar-cane batches to be processed in a sugar mill, such as cultivation and production details, the area of origin, and other information about the crop. It also helps to follow and implement harvesting plans.

The hand-held device supports up to six SIM cards simultaneously, provides mobile (and network) access through GSM and UTMS, provides a USB and a serial port, and comes with a thermal printer and a smart-card reader. For its manufacturer, Belgaum, India--based software company C-Quad Computers, switching to Linux was quite a challenge; most of their previous software solutions use Microsoft Visual Basic.

http://www.thehindu.com/2007/06/18/stories/2007061852380300.htm
http://www.cqbgm.com/

OPEN SOURCE AND OPEN COCKTAILS

Only half a year after the last OpenExpo in Switzerland's capital Bern, local businesses and public administrators again have the chance to learn about open source solutions. Like its two predecessors, the third OpenExpo will be held at the Topsoft fair for business software, which takes place in Zürich Oerlikon in September 2007.

Among the open source projects that will have booths are The Apache Open for Business Project (ofbiz), Kool (an administration tool for churches and parishes), the ERP system SQL-Ledger, and the e-learning platforms Moodle, OLAT, and .LRN. Peter Steven will give a talk about agile project management, and visitors are invited to fetch a cocktail specially created for this event. (The recipe for the cocktail will naturally be available under an open source license.)

http://www.openexpo.ch/ (German)
http://www.topsoft.ch/ (German)
http://ofbiz.apache.org/
http://www.kool.kircheonline.ch/ (German)
http://www.moodle.org/
http://www.olat.org/
http://www.dotlrn.org
http://www.sql-ledger.com/

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