KDE Akademy 2008

COMMUNITY CONGREGATION

About 300 attendees gathered at this year's annual KDE

desktop developer event in Sint-Katelijne-Waver, Belgium.

BY ANIKA KEHRER

From August 9 to August 15, the Campus De Nayer – part of the Lessius Technical University in Sint-Katelijne-Waver [1] – provided the backdrop for about 300 Akademy 2008 attendees.

Cornelius Schuhmacher, a member of the KDE e.V. board, presented a keynote talk focused on the current state of affairs at KDE. Vincent Untz, Gnome Foundation board member and Gnome Release Manager, delivered an emotional talk on cross-desktop platforms. Untz called for a common desktop platform, saying that users don't really mind which desktop environment an application belongs to because they judge applications on their own merit.

On the GUI front, a budding social desktop was introduced by Frank Karlitschek, the maintainer of several artwork and contributer web pages. In his keynote talk, Karlitschek proposed new plasmoids for the KDE desktop, including a kind of buddy list that would display photos of users near a person's computer location.

Karlitschek also suggested a KDE event calendar and contributor photos in addition to names in the *About* information for KDE applications. Karlitschek, who is from Stuttgart, Germany, has published an initial draft of his ideas online for public review and feedback [2].

The chair of the KDE association, Sebastian Kügler, spoke to *Linux Pro/ Linux Magazine* and said the KDE community has grown considerably since starting work on KDE 4.0. He said that the project continues to reach out to non-programmers, such as graphic artists and translators. In their keynote speech, Kügler and Novell's Dirk Müller talked about collaboration methods.

According to Kügler, it is important to view the KDE desktop as a kind of tree with a stable trunk and to encourage projects and distributions to develop and patch their own branches autonomously.

KDE e.V. always uses the developer conference to stage its annual general meeting. This year it passed the "Code of Conduct," a set of behavioral rules governing the KDE project [3]. For example, the code of conduct stipulates that members of the KDE community should treat each other with respect and offer mutual assistance.

Looking Ahead and Awards

In many areas, the program showed the effects of community growth. Now there is a five-person community working group that liaises between developers and users. And the association had something tangible to show here: Oxygen member, David Vignoni, introduced the first official KDE association logo.

The association also proved that it has sound economic sense. In 2007, assets totaled about EUR 82,000 and liabilities were about EUR 57,000 on the association's well-managed project account. In the future, the association will increasingly canvas for individual sustaining members who contribute at least EUR 100 a year to KDE e.V. One of the topics on the Annual General Meeting agenda was how to finance more developer meetings – workshops with about 10 attendees for whom the association would cover traveling expenses.

Figure 1: KDE Project Leader Frank Karlitschek, Sebastian Kügler, and Franz Keferböck (from left to right) surrounded by other conference attendees.

Last year's award winners – Danny Allen, Matthias Kretz, and Sebastian Trüg – presented the 2008 Application Award to Mark Kretschmann for Amarok. They emphasized the publicity generated by the player – it is also popular with non-KDE users – and went on to praise Kretschmann for his vision and ability to motivate.

Each award combines an objective and a personal achievement. For example, the jury gave the prize for the best non-application to Nuno Pinheiro for his icon collection in Oxygen, but he was also awarded the prize for bridging the gap between designers and programmers. The jury's special prize went to Aaron Seigo from the KDE association for his contribution to the Plasma Desktop, for his leading role in the developer community, and for promoting the project. Seigo became a member of the board in 2005.

In Sint-Katelijne-Waver, attendees will remember him for dancing on stage to fill gaps between talk delays. ■

Only Online

Linux Magazine/Linux Pro Magazine reported live from the 2008 KDE Akademy. Visit *http://www.linux-magazine.com/ online/news/akademy_video* to view video greetings from KDE developers.

INFO

[1] Akademy: *http://akademy.kde.org*

[2] Social Desktop, Draft 1: *http://www. open-collaboration-services.org*

[3] KDE Code of Conduct: *http://www. kde.org/code-of-conduct*