Hanging out in Hannover, Germany

CEBIT 2008

At CeBIT 2008, the world's biggest computer fair, popular topics

included Green IT, mini-PCs, and open source. **BY ULRICH BANTLE**

Going "green" was already a popular topic before CeBIT, but this computer fair emphasized the green theme with green flashing lights and green clothing for pavilion staffers (Figure 1). Hype or no hype, all the major league vendors jumped on the bandwagon, with Fujitsu Siemens' zero watt display, Primergy's low-power industrial standard servers, and Blade-Frame's 400 systems running RHEL 5.0, SLES 10, or Windows.

Lenovo's Marc Fischer presented a "Green IT Survey," showing that IT managers in Europe are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly hardware. Sun Microsystems even arrived with a completely solar-powered datacenter dubbed Blackbox.

LinuxPark

This year's CeBIT saw its eighth Linux-Park, a long-standing tradition in a fast-moving industry, which included talks on environmentally friendly IT, security, migration, and Software as a Service (SaaS). According to CeBIT organizers, "There is hardly a special event at CeBIT that has developed so rapidly as Linux-Park." In cooperation with Linux New Media AG – parent company of *Linux Pro Magazine* and *Linux Magazine* – and leading industry associations, the CeBIT

organizers are working on a new Cebit track for next year that will feature open source topics.

Rosemarie Schuster, CEO of Linux New Media, said, "The rapid development of the topic in the past few years has made it quite clear how important it is to take open source into consideration in overall CeBIT planning."

Getting Small

The Asus Eee PC holds a top spot on many attendee shopping lists. The 900 Version, which was presented at CeBIT 2008 (Figure 1), features a larger display (8.9 inches), more RAM, and a larger solid-state disk.

Taiwan's Linpus Technologies exhibited a Linux distribution optimized for notebooks and ultraportable PCs (UPCs) that will also run on the Asus Eee PC. Mobile Intel CPUs and the C7 low-energy processor by Via are also supported. Linpus Linux 9.3 will also support 64-bit processors, such as the the AMD Athlon 64 and Intel Itanium, and it complies with the LSB 2.0 standard.

openSUSE 11.1 Feeds New SLES

Volker Smid, President and General Manager of Novell Europe, and Holger Dyroff, Vice President of SUSE Linux En-

terprise product management, expanded on their partner-centric company philosophy for CeBIT visitors. Novell has won over major players such as SAP, Intel, Accenture, and Microsoft with two more partners anticipated in the coming weeks. Novell is cooperating with Microsoft on an interoperability lab. The first items on the roadmap for the lab are running Windows 2008 Server as a virtualized guest on SLES and the complete integration of Novell products with Microsoft's Active Directory.

Novell also plans to connect worlds on the office front, performing loss-free conversion of Microsoft Office documents – including documents in the new OOXML format – to the Open Document Format, including all macros. The OOXML Translator is scheduled for a final release in the first half of 2009.

Linux in Munich

At CeBIT, Florian Schießl reported on his experience with the LiMux project, which migrates desktops at Munich's municipal authorities to Linux. Schießl reported on the introduction of open source applications and on standardized Linux basic clients. Some 38 percent of costs were due to staff training – a major item, but definitely a meaningful investment in competency. Training is being monitored by the University of Munich, and the city's eLearning offerings won the 2007 Eurela Award. TÜV-It certified the usability of the Linux client.

Open Source Inventors

The motto of 20-year-old inventor Pascal Schmitt's exhibit was "Please touch." Schmitt presented a light table with a multi-touch screen (Figure 2) and matching applications, all of his own design. The inventor used Linux and other open source tools for his project. Unlike other touch screens, the multi-touch screen detects touching with multiple fingers, which makes it multi-user capable.

Because normal touch screens cannot handle multiple mouse pointers, Schmitt has developed custom applications, including a mind-mapping program and an on-screen keyboard. ∎

Figure 1: The Eee PC with Linux operating system – safely stored in a showcase.
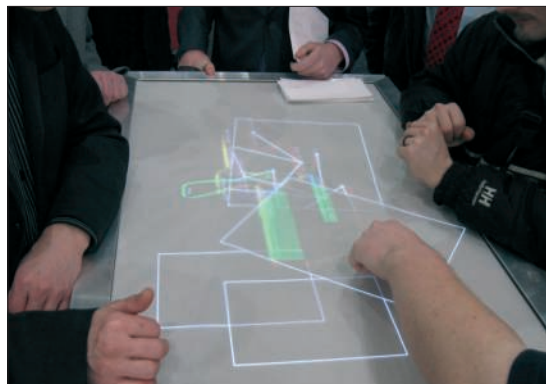

Figure 2: Inventor Pascal Schmitt presented a light table with multi-touch functionality.