

LINUX WORLD NEWS

OPEN SOURCE FOR THE WOMEN OF THIS WORLD

“Weaving the information society: a gender and multicultural perspective” was the motto of the 3rd International Know-How Conference on the World of Wo-

men’s Information held in Mexico City August 21–25, 2006. After Amsterdam/The Netherlands in 1998 and Kampala/Uganda in 2002, 500 participants, from grass-root activists to politicians, met to

discuss methods and ICT tools that allow women to advance in a media world and help to efficiently fight for equal rights and fair representation.

The numerous workshops held during the first two days as well as the plenary sessions all focused on the use of open source by local women communities. Linux migration training sessions were held, and T-shirts, CDs, and manuals featuring OSS were provided to an interested crowd, who were mainly hearing about the topic for the first time.

Among them were indigenous women from North and South America who were particularly interested

in the Kubuntu Live CD and CMS such as Drupal, Plone, and SPIP.

Women from South Africa, the Philippines, the UK, and Bulgaria described how they – often without technical back-

ground – found affordable solutions for local communities using open source. They all agreed that OSS alternatives were equally usable compared to proprietary solutions when it came to web publishing and browsing, software installation, office tasks and graphics manipulation. “Open source breaks the dependency issue. But not only this. In our small organizations, where sustainability is most difficult to achieve, open source allows us to control our ICT resources and reuse old hardware,” says Natasa Primo, representative of WomenNet, South Africa.

http://knowhow-pueg.unam.mx/english_site/index_eng.html

<http://www.knowhowcommunity.org/>

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESENTS OSS SURVEY

Of British colleges and universities surveyed, 77% say that they regularly explore open source options during procurement, yet only 25% of these institutions mention open source in their institutional policies. This is one of the findings Dr. Ellen J. Helsper from the London School of Economics and Political Science reports in her 2006 survey of UK Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) institutions on the deployment of open source software (OSS) that she conducted on behalf of OSS Watch based at Oxford University.

Interestingly, 56% of FE colleges reported using Moodle, an open source course management system. Every HE and FE institution provides Internet Explorer on their Windows desktop PCs, yet 68% give a choice and have Mozilla Firefox installed. The survey also revealed that cost continues to be the principal reason for considering OSS.

<http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/studies/survey2006/>

<http://moodle.org/>



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EU CANDIDACY FOSTERS OPEN SOURCE USAGE

On July 12, 2006, the Government of the Republic Croatia released their “Open Source Software Policy” in order to comply with several EU action plans and programs. The name of the document is somewhat misleading since it not only refers to the deployment of open source software but also puts emphasis on the implementation of open standards in general, among others as “the foundations for the operation and development of the HITRO.HR system,” the administration’s e-government portal, and as file formats used to store and archive digital documents. The document also mentions OSS and open formats as a means of achieving transparency in the operation of state administration, a requirement of the stabilization and association program the EU has imposed on the country

which gained EU candidate status in 2005. The OSS policy recommends equal treatment of OSS and proprietary solutions in software procurement (opposed to the widespread preference for proprietary software in the country), and the promotion of OSS usage and development in general. It suggest fostering the development of Croatian-“speaking” software (also proprietary, if implementing open standards) as well as the translation of OSS solutions into the national language, and advises training civil servants to use OSS.

<http://www.e-hrvatska.hr/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=132> (Croatian)

http://www.e-hrvatska.hr/repozitorij/dokumenti/downloads/Open_Source_Software_Policy.pdf

http://www.hitro.hr/index_en.htm