KDE World Summit 2004 "aKademy", Ludwigsburg, Germany

Bigger than the Kastle

The annual KDE team conference has once again kept pace with the KDE desktop, and they both just keep on growing. This summer, the international KDE community met in Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart , right down in the south of Germany [1][2], for comradery and coding.

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Figure 1: The aKademy crowd takes a break from the coding marathon for a photo moment.

For many hackers, the days (or should we say nights?) between August 21 and 29 were one giant coding session on the top floor of the Movie Academy complex (and this explains the how the event got its name "aKademy". Venues that don't allow the organizers to replace the "C" in the normal spelling of the name with a "K" are obviously unacceptable to these folks. And this also explains why the KDE in crowd met at a Bohemian "Kastle" last year.) Besides the Coding Marathon, there were tutorials [3], a developer conference on the first weekend [4][5], and a user conference on the second.

The non-technical discussions at the 2004 event were mainly dominated by two topics: the genuine threat that software patents pose to Open Source, and mainstream IT in Europe in the light of the uncertainty over Novell's future desktop strategy.

Novell's acquisitions, Suse and Ximian, are two of the hottest enterprises in the KDE and Gnome desktop camps. This could give KDE a real opportunity to corner part of the mindshare on the US side of the Atlantic. On the other hand, people in Europe fear the potential repercussions from the not-invented-here syndrome, and an accompanying loss of status for the mainly European based KDE enthusiasts.

Chris Schlaeger's keynote did not fully alleviate these fears (Chris is a day one KDE developer and is now Vice President Research and Development for Suse.) The new Novell Desktop seems to point toward a peaceful coexistence of Gnome and KDE, giving users the choice between Gnome and KDE during the install phase. Chris Schlaeger hopes that approaches such as shown by Freedesktop.org will lead to improved integration.

The tutorial sessions were one of Akademy's more notable achievements. Not all of the sessions were based on KDE. Some sessions covered such diverse topics as Samba, Fully Automated Installation (FAI) on Debian and even live cracking.

Of course, the event at the Movie Academy building was not intended to be an end unto itself. The 200 developers who made the trip to Ludwigsburg put in a lot of programming, mainly for KDE 3.4, which is based on Qt 3.0. Trolltech's Eirik Chambe-Eng set the targets with a keynote specifically aimed at developers: improved performance, and quality assurance by quality teams.

The 250 "users" who made the trip to Ludwigsburg were more interested in Knoppix 2.6 (released to celebrate the occasion) and in NX by Nomachine as an extremely powerful remote desktop solution. Also, the sight of KDE running under Cygwin on Windows XP came as a big surprise to many. ■

Figure 2: Hacking Session at "aKademy".

INFO

[1] "aKademy" homepage: *http://conference2004.kde.org*

[2] Photos from "aKademy": *http://wiki.kde.org/tiki-index.php?page= Pictures%20@%20aKademy*

[3] Tutorials given at "aKademy": *http:// conference2004.kde.org/tutorials.php*

[4] Developer conference lectures: *http://conference2004.kde.org/ sched-devconf.php*

[5] Developer conference lectures for download as Ogg.Vorbis files: *http://ktown.kde.org/akademy*