The conference formerly known as LinuxWorld Canada

IT 360°

The IT 360° Conference and Expo 2007, May 1-2 in Toronto, Canada, was smaller than normal, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing. **BY RIKKI KITE**

I f you are going to be naked, as a company, you better be buff," said Keynote speaker Don Tapscott, Chief Executive of New Paradigm and author of *Wikinomics: Harnessing the Power of Mass Collaboration*. Tapscott addressed a standing-room only crowd on the first day of the conference, and although what he said probably wasn't new to this audience, Tapscott did put a fresh spin on the idea of mass collaboration.

IBM, Red Hat, Novell, and Sun were noticably absent this year, but other exhibitors such as Symantec, O'Reilly, EmperorLinux, and Linux Professional Institute took advantage of the elbow room and steady stream of attendees. Even though the 2007 conference had fewer booths, visitors to the *Linux Magazine* booth said that this year it was easier to see all the vendors and find out more about the products and services. There also wasn't much of a wait to check email in the Koolu-sponsored email garden. Jon "maddog" Hall, "CTO and ambassador to the world for Koolu," stayed busy spreading the word of low-cost, low-power computing.

Linux Magazine recently opened a North American office, so this was our first trip up to Toronto to exhibit. Joomla, a continuation of the Mambo project, occupied the booth next to ours, and staffers were busy both days promoting the open source content management system. Linux Professional Institute (LPI) was on the other side of our booth, offering free LPI exams for paid conference attendees and discounted exams for show attendees.

Old Friends, New Faces

CLUE, the Canadian Association for Open Source, exhibited next to the Greater Toronto Area Linux Users Group (GTALug). CLUE doesn't hold meetings, but instead promotes "the use and development of free, open source software, by providing a public voice to the community of its Canadian users, developers and supporters." Evan Leibovitch, Executive Director, said that political advocacy, such as copyright laws that protect both creators and consumers, is a main focus of the group. He added, "We try to inject some sanity into things."

Light-up devil horns were scattered throughout the conference. BSD booth visitors donated to the cause and found out more about the upcoming BSD Certification. Dru Lavigne, President of the BSD Certification Group, said that the curriculum is still in development, but objectives can be found on *bsdcertification.org*. The site also provides updates on beta exams, which will be available soon.

One of the more inviting booths was the Mon Ami booth, complete with comfy couch and table lamp. The living room-like atmosphere helped demonstrate the Mon Ami appliance, developed by Tertec Enterprises. Mon Ami isn't free, but it runs under Linux and is pretty impressive. The appliance is intended to help physically challenged people or people with mobility problems stay independent. Mon Ami is "plug and play" and can easily be programmed to help caregivers remotely manage and communicate with the user. The user can control devices in the house, such as table lamps, with the help of the appliance. Mon Ami can read books and play music for the user, manage appointments, remind the user to take medications, and record the user's memories for posterity. Mon Ami has been in development for four years, but should be available in July.

Quality Over Quantity, Eh

Traffic dwindled by the end of day two, but the vendors and attendees I spoke with agreed that despite the smaller expo, there was a high-quality mix of enthusiastic attendees and innovative products and services. This was the fourth LinuxWorld Canada for Alliance Technologies, and representative Gerard Maynard acknowledged that they were surprised IBM didn't have a booth this year. He also said that the Alliance booth stayed busy during the expo and the response from this year's attendees may be the best so far. ∎

Photo courtesy of Naomi Hiltz

Figure 1: Standing-room only keynote.

INFO

[1] IT 360°: *http://www.it360.ca/*

[2] Joomla: *http://www.joomla.org/*

[3] LPI: *http://www.lpi.org/*

[4] CLUE: *http://www.linux.ca/*

[5] BSD Certification: *http://www.bsdcertification.org/*

[6] Mon Ami: *http://www.mymonami.com*