

Travailler avec des logiciels libres, c'est maintenant possible...



The LUGGER drops in on the Namur Linux User Group in Belgium

For those of you who don't know, I should explain that Namur is just south-east of Brussels and north of Bouillon in the heart of Europe. Most of this part of Western Europe is a jewel to visit, even in winter, and a trip to visit Namur LUG can make it all the more worthwhile an experience.

HOW IT ALL STARTED

Namur Linux User Group was set up about eight years ago in an initiative by two students from the University there. Fabian Bastin, who is now a researcher in mathematics, and Emmanuel Koch, who is now a computer scientist, founded the LUG together after they decided to promote free software in Namur. They had heard about Linux User Groups and decided to create their own. They asked Frederic Bulet if he wanted to collaborate with them on this project. At the beginning he says he really didn't know that GNU/Linux existed or anything about it. He "discovered this great operating system at the time we built up the committee." Right from the

world of GNU/Linux or free software is made welcome. If

you require help with your problems, or explanation of some of the complex issues to do with software, or if you want to share your experimental ideas or your opinions, you can join in. If you are interested in debates, or curious to discover new aspects of Linux you can go along to their meetings and find someone who will do their best to help you with your interests. You can even take your machine along so that they can help you with configuration of certain peripherals, programs, or other technical support issues that might not be easy to understand.

EVENTS

During mid-March, Namur LUG put on its own series of conferences, known as the Namur Linux Days 2006. These events aimed to present the free software applications available for end users, describing their

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start, he said, "we had a lot of activities."

Fred is 30 years old just now. He graduated from the University of Namur in computer science, and is now working as a software engineer in a small Belgian company. They are developing their software using GNU/Linux and the product is based on GNU/Linux as well. Currently living in Louvain-La-Neuve in Belgium, Fred is now the President of the LUG. Namur LUG was one of the first LUGs in Belgium that organised monthly meetings where everybody was welcome to talk about free software.

In the present day Namur LUG is composed of about ten people who make up the core of the team, which is all about making decisions and organising activities. They are all volunteers; they don't have an official legal status, but there is a hierarchy which might or might not be official in structure. The Vice-President is Laurent Desmecht. The Secretary is Lionel Montrieux, and Vincent Fally, who is thought to be responsible, is trusted to be the Treasurer. There are some others with no official title, such as Arnaud Ligot.

MEETINGS

Since Namur LUG was born at the University of Namur, Namur LUG mainly organises its meetings there. They have a place where the committee is allowed to carry out official meetings. They also have a room to hold their open monthly meetings. When they need to organise big conferences, they ask the University for large rooms like public auditoriums.

The regular meetings take place on the last Wednesday of each month. Namur LUG organises a meeting where anyone who is interested in the

degree of usability, their progress and their diversity. The talks were intended to be accessible to any person interested in IT, or anyone that uses a PC on a daily basis. Applications profiled included OpenOffice.org Writer, Calc, and Impress, KDE's Amarok media player, the Evolution mail client and the Gimp image editor. There was also a demonstration of GSM, Bluetooth and WAP technology in combination with Linux.

The demonstrations were followed by a conference on free software and intellectual property, led by researcher Philippe Laurent, of the Namur University Centre de Recherches Informatique et Droit. Laurent is also a lawyer at the Brussels bar, working in the commercial law and intellectual property departments at Marx, Van Ranst, Vermeersch & Partners. His current research concentrates on the 'droit d'auteur' (the normal legal protection granted to the author of a program) in the context of free and open source software licences. He also contributed to the book "Le logiciel libre face au droit" (Free software and rights), a project of Creative Commons Belgium.

The purpose of this conference was to explore the legal principles relevant to free software licensing. After having analysed the free software licences from the traditional viewpoint of 'droit d'auteur', the conference considered the protection of software by means of intellectual property (patents and trademarks) and the consequences which this could have on the free software movement.

Au revoir mon ami!

Namur LUG
<www.namurlug.org>

Namur Linux Days 2006
<www.nld2006.be>