

The aKademy 2006 KDE developer conference in Dublin

THE ROAD TO KDE 4

Some 200 members of the KDE project met at Trinity College in Dublin at the end of September for the week-long aKademy conference. **BY MATHIAS HUBER AND MARCEL HILZINGER**

The KDE community turned out in Dublin for the annual aKademy conference [1]. The venue for the event was Dublin's historic Trinity College. During the eight-day meeting, developers networked, formulated goals for the coming year, and drafted the technological roadmap for version 4 of the KDE desktop environment.

Speeches and Sessions

One of the invited speakers for this KDE meeting was John Palmieri of the Gnome project. He referred to the relationship between the two desktop environments as "competition and cooperation," calling for KDE developers to stop competing with Gnome for the current 5 percent share of the market, and, instead, extend the free desktop user base by cooperating on [Freedesktop.org](http://freedesktop.org).

Jens Herdens spoke on KDE in Cambodia. Other presentations on KDE in Asia showed how free software can support countries that don't receive localization attention from proprietary companies. Holger Freyther focused on consumer electronics and mobile devices. For Holger, the typical computer today is a cellphone or an MP3 player. To get

Linux running on these devices, KDE components need to be leaner and require fewer dependencies. He pointed to Apple's KHTML derivative Webkit as a successful example. Also, KDE on the PC should be capable of integrating mobile devices. The talk by John Cherry from the OSDL Desktop Linux Initiative warned that Linux has to be more attractive for the "iPod generation".

The programming sessions over the next few days focused on Open Document Format (ODF). The XML-based document format is not far from final approval as an ISO standard. Applications such as OpenOffice and KDE's own KOffice already implement it, although the implementations are neither complete nor standardized, as Lotzi Bölöni from the University of Central Florida pointed out. Bölöni used an ODF test suite <http://netmoc.cpe.ucf.edu/Projects/OpenDocument/> to demonstrate his point.

Rob Weir from IBM suggested creating an OpenDocument developer kit to give developers the ability to process the format outside of office applications. A suitable API would let developers automatically reformat, convert, and digitally

sign text with just a few lines of code. Rob describes more application scenarios at <http://opendocument.xml.org/node/154>.

KDE 4 Underway

The focus of many talks was the next major release of KDE. Now that the basic functions of the KDE libraries have been ported to Qt 4, the applications are due to follow. Matthias Kretz and Kevin Ottens presented the Phonon [2] multimedia system and the new Solid [3] hardware framework. Talks by Tobias König and Tobias Hunger on the KDE4 PIM and communication frameworks Akonadi [4] and Decibel [5] were well attended. Aaron Seigo devoted a 30-minute talk to the new KDE desktop, Plasma [6].

David Faure demonstrated the most efficient way for developers to set up a build environment that let's the user work on both KDE 3 and KDE 4. Lubos Lunak gave programmers tips on speeding up application launches. The KDE developers went on to implement several of these suggestions in the ensuing hacking marathon.

Conclusion

After spending a week in the Irish capital, the KDE community will be looking to implement its roadmap for KDE 4. Kudos to the members of the local organizational team for making sure that the conference days – and the evenings spent talking shop in the local pubs – went off so smoothly. ■



Figure 1: The venerable walls of Trinity College were the venue for some 200 KDE contributors.

INFO

- [1] aKademy 2006: <http://akademy2006.kde.org>
- [2] Phonon: <http://phonon.kde.org>
- [3] Solid: <http://solid.kde.org>
- [4] Akonadi: <http://pim.kde.org/akonadi/>
- [5] Decibel: <http://decibel.kde.org>
- [6] Plasma: <http://plasma.kde.org>