Open in Oregon

O'REILLY'S OSCON

More than 2500 open source enthusiasts met in Oregon for O'Reilly's annual OSCON convention. **BY MIKE SCHILLI**

In July, O'Reilly Media hosted two conferences in Portland, Oregon – about 2700 open source enthusiasts attended OSCON, while the Ubuntu 2007 conference simultaneously attracted 750 registered participants to the same venue. I focused on OSCON, but I also benefitted from celebrity speakers presenting at both venues.

OSCON offered up to 15 parallel tracks at times, making it really hard to decide which ones to attend. Topics covered Perl, PHP, Python, MySQL, PostgreSQL, Ruby, Security, Open Source Licensing, and other open source tools and components. Many talks were presented by engineers from major corporations, including Google, Yahoo, Sun, and Microsoft, and the speakers discussed best industry practices and newly released open source products. Tim O'Reilly's keynote is available online [1].

On the exhibition floor, industry players such as Intel, Google, Yahoo, and others presented their products, distributed tchotchkes, and recruited new engineering talent.

The OpenID project is reportedly making great strides. After failed initiatives, such as the proprietary Microsoft Passport project and the open Liberty Alliance, OpenID attempts to ensure that authentication systems can be used by anyone but aren't owned by a single cooperation. Some big-name players such as AOL are already on board, and Firefox 3 will have "some sort of" OpenID integration.

MySQL's new Falcon storage engine – providing grown-up DB features such as transactions and foreign keys – is in beta, but not ready for production use. Falcon will potentially replace InnoDB, which was purchased by Oracle last year. The MySQL 5.1 release candidate promises to cure instabilities of 5.0 and will be available in about three months.

Ian Murdoch of Debian fame promoted his employer's OpenSolaris, a new player in the PC-Unix arena. OpenSolaris is already a highly regarded new open source server operating system that provides features such as the next generation ZFS file system and kernel debugging with DTrace.

The new project "Indiana" is an attempt to build a community release such that Indiana is to OpenSolaris as Fedora is to Red Hat. Sun's engineers are reportedly working on providing drivers for

Figure 2: Tim O'Reilly interviews Mark Shuttleworth.

cheap commodity hardware on the PC/Laptop platform, solving a well-known problem for newcomers in this space.

Google and O'Reilly presented awards to open source leaders. David Recordon was rewarded for his work on OpenID, Aaron Leventhal for stellar accessibility in Firefox, Karl Fogel (Subversion) as best community leader, and Pam Jones for FUD (Fear Uncertainty Doubt) fighting on groklaw.org, and a lifetime award went to DNS inventor Paul Vixie. White Camel Awards of the Perl Foundation went to Allison Randal for the second version of Perl's Artistic License, Tim O'Reilly for pushing Perl conferences since 1997, and Norbert Gruener for Perl community work in Europe. ■

Figure 1: Open Source enthusiasts waiting for the keynote.

INFO

[1] Tim O'Reilly's OSCON keynote: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3418920621539117184