



SouthEast|LinuxFest

L I N U X I N T H E G N U / S O U T H

Ambassadors Event Report

Southeast Linux Festival - Charlotte North Carolina

June 9 – 11, 2017

Attending Ambassadors:

Ben and Kathy Williams (kk4ewt/cewillia) (Fedora event coordinators)

Andrew and Julie Ward (award3535/jward78) (Event report author)

Nick Bebout (nb)

Dan Mossor (danofsatx)

Rosnel Echevarria (reher)

Fedora has been involved in this particular event since its first festival in 2009 and has continued to be a vital part of the event through 2017. The event is the only large scale Linux and open source festival for the South Eastern United States. Even though there is a large number of Linux Users Groups throughout the south this is the only event that draws various communities together in celebration of Linux and Open Source Software. There was a similar event in Orlando Florida in 2015 called FOSSETCON, but the event coordinator announced that the event would occur every two years vice annually. Hopefully the event did not come apart for the fall this year as it normally is scheduled.

Most of the Ambassadors arrived on Thursday 8 June the night prior to the event commencement. The actual event began on the 9th at 9 am with the first set of speakers' sessions to kick-off the event. The Fedora booth setup began at 7:35 am that day due to the uncertainty of attendance numbers and since the attendees were actually showing up early. We had the booth put together by 8:20 am and started making Fedora 25 Media Desktops. We always provide a different variety of items and demonstrate the different desktops offered by Fedora. We also had some remaining F25 pressed media that was available for distribution. The booth also was equipped with the IBM Laptop with the multi desktop environment (available for demonstration of various desktop environments) and the ever so popular OLPC. We also have a selection of stickers and case badges available for visitors stopping by. The Fedora pens were the popular swag item for the first two days until our supply was depleted.

The first day was busier than expected. The previous year's attendance on the first day was minimal due to weekday vice weekend. Friday turned out to be a busy day for all of us. Even though the Expo Hall Flex Day (Optionally open on a per-exhibitor basis) we were glad to be open and ready to demonstrate and assist with any Fedora issues. We took the opportunity to walk around later that morning while several talks were in progress and noticed that there were no other operating system vendors there other than BSD and Pogo. Ubuntu who had been a staple along with us at this event was quite peculiar and alarming. There were a lot of familiar faces with booths that included Pogo, Linode, Percona, and some new attendees such as Black Duck. This gave us a unique opportunity in promoting Fedora. Usually at these events you do have the hard-lined folks towards Ubuntu and since they were not in attendance we did not see or have the questions of why should I use your product.



JULIE SETTING UP TO PRODUCE MEDIA

Although there still was a presence of Ubuntu users that were actually interested in using Fedora since the unity desktop is no longer the default. This time we did get a lot of how do get this to work with Fedora questions as well as what is the difference between Mate and KDE. Ben, Nick, Dan, Ross, and I all fielded many technical questions on several variants with desktops and driver problems. They ranged from MacBook pro driver questions with wireless cards, through video driver problems encountered while loading and running Fedora. The first day we all were busy with question answering and demonstrations. We actually were the busiest booth of the day, and attendees actually were very interested in what we had available and were quite impressed with the knowledge of our Ambassadors. The majority in attendance on Friday was a mixture of novice and experienced Linux users and was there for learning and help with their personal desktop environments. Almost every person we met was not in search of corporate/enterprise functionality but there to better their own experience and knowledge. I guess you could correlate this to the "Average Joe" or "Average Jane" individuals looking for something better to use at home and how it functions with applications available to Linux. Most were just looking for a better Operating System than Windows but were lost on what applications were available similar to those they were using in Windows.

Two of those individuals that were lost in the sea of applications and availability came up from Jacksonville Florida (from the LUG I attend) with a lot of confusion on how to find software they were looking for. One had a specific need and didn't know where to find applications that he needed and felt



INITIAL SETUP

overwhelmed with the applications/software is listed on various other platforms. When you search for an application it tends to be a sporadic listing of various sources but no examples or specifications listed. He was quite frustrated with trying to find the right application for his specific need. After discussing at length what the end product need to be, I said that I could help with that. After showing this person the Labs section on Fedora specifically with the scientific capabilities listed with both the Robotics and Scientific Labs bundles that



he was not aware of. He also was not aware of the various desktop environments available with Fedora. I presented him all the various live desktops available on a removable hard drive he provided, and the available Robotics and Scientific Lab media as well.

By mid-day on Friday we had already given out approximately 100 F25 pressed media DVD's and about the same for the various desktop environments Julie had created using the DVD duplicator. It seemed that Gnome desktop was the most popular desktop environment, and taking a



second the Cinnamon desktop that totaled about 50 percent of the Gnome desktop environment. There were many questions about Gnome and what was the difference between the other desktop environments. Mostly what the user was taking away from the various desktops was what they were most comfortable with. We demonstrated all of them at various times with what the customer was looking for. Most liked the feel of Cinnamon and Mate, and others really liked the Gnome environment. I showed a few individuals what my desktop looked like and the tools I used to get the appearance and feel for me. Many individuals were not aware of the Gnome tweak tool and its capability to change the appearance of the environment from the default. Since we had all the desktops available it was quite



easy to find out what individuals were looking for and many of our own personal laptops were available to show how easy it was to personalize each type of desktop. Since I was running Gnome, Ben was running Mate, and Ross running Mate as well, there was vast differences in appearance and what was running. I think that when people left our booth that day we had achieved giving the choice of Freedom and Friends to everyone we met.

As the day continued Ben and Nick had some events on the schedule. Nick hosted the GPG Key Signing session and Ben was scheduled to conduct the amateur radio study guide cram session in preparation for the exam the next day. Both events were scheduled after the Expo area had closed, so both had a late night of events and also had the speaker's dinner that evening as well.

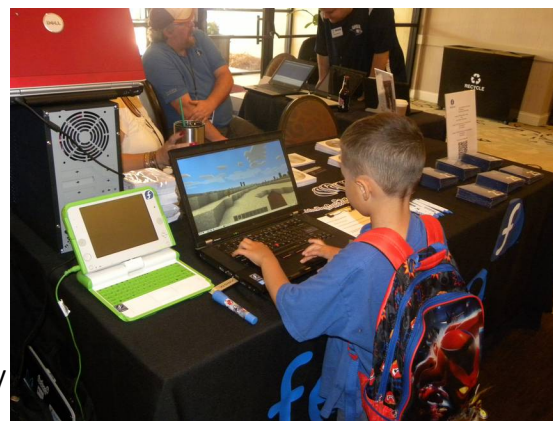
The next morning (the 10th) we began to set up with the anticipation that it was going to be busier than the previous day. The booth was set up and ready to go by 8:20 a.m. By this time we already had visitors at the booth, they actually began asking questions at 8:15. The first scheduled talk was not until 9 a.m. that morning nor was the expo area due to be open until 9 a.m. but we are always ready to help and to answer questions our visitors may have. The morning progressed to be the busiest we have had in a long time. This I believe was attributed due the fact there was no other non-Corporation operating systems present which made us the only one available to the users. We also had some repeat visitors that always make it to the event and spend a lot of time discussing upcoming changes and features with Fedora.

There were some individuals that showed up to the booth that required some assistance in configuration and driver issues. Ben Williams aided in loading and configuring one individual's laptop successfully. We received a lot of praise from this individual for assisting correcting the problem and loading the laptop with one of Fedora's Desktop environments. Several people inquired on a number of driver issues regarding wireless cards and video driver issues. All questions were answered or



NICK AND CARTER (CARTERS FATHER GAVE ME PERMISSION TO USE THIS PICTURE IN THE REPORT)

either demonstrated on how to correct the issues. Most problems were corrected on the spot with the available equipment or definitive answers give to each person. The one significant event that stood out was a return customer from the previous year a young boy was entirely fascinated with Fedora. Last year Nick helped him choose a specific desktop environment and his father was quite interested in the SOSA spin. So Nick had provided his contact information to the father of this enthusiast and it wasn't long before they started communicating on getting Fedora his computer. This year, the family returned and spent a significant amount of time at the booth. This young man is only 8, his name is Carter, and with some help from Nick, he demonstrated all of the different desktop environments, and once Carter picked the environment that he liked (I believe it was Cinnamon) we provided the media for him to load. Carter was quite pleased to see how easy it was to run a game (Minecraft) on a Fedora PC. He spent a lot of time at our booth playing the game until his father said it was time to leave and learn more at the event. Several times during the day Carter stopped by to just play with the different desktops and a little Minecraft. As the rest of the day went on we all were busy discussing points about Fedora and upcoming features the day began to wind down. The next event was in Ben Williams's court with the Amateur Radio License Exam. There were 28 that took the exam (General and Technician) with a passing rate of approximately 50% (estimated). Nick also had the GPG Key signing event at 8 p.m. A long day for all.



MINECRAFT DEMONSTRATION (HIT WITH THE KIDS)

Sunday, the last day of the event, still had a full day of talks scheduled until about 4 pm. Ben and Nick both had talks scheduled that day. The booth was ready by 8:30 a.m. and we were ready to get started. Although the traffic of people was not the same as the previous days, but we did have more of the repeat individuals including Carter and his father, there were many more questions we were asked. One in particular came back to the booth to thank us for the previous day's assistance. This was the one individual we discussed earlier that was lost in a sea of applications. He let us know that he loaded Cinnamon the previous night and starting working with it. He was quite impressed and came back to let us know that he was quite happy with the software (I received and email the day after the event ended; Quoted "I really enjoyed the show and meeting with you guy. I got the Fedora Cinnamon loaded it looks really good. The Fedora Lab's looks like it will do everything I need for my engineering work. I am waiting for the 16GB memory I ordered for the I7 Asus so I can get everything setup properly. I got some Fedora Live disks from your bud to give out at Jaxlug and JaxDlug. You guys have a good week talk later."). As mentioned earlier, both of these individuals are from North East Florida (Jacksonville), took the trip to Charlotte specifically to attend this event since there was no

other event in the south east, they both last attended FOSSETCON in 2015 but found this event far more informative and well organized.

The event ended later in the afternoon. Most of the major contributors had begun to pack up in mid afternoon when the crowd started to dwindle as well did we. The remaining media was given out to individuals that would bring the items to their local LUG including the



North East Florida individuals (they would provide the media to the JaxLug and JaxDlug). The event officially ended at 3:45p.m. on Sunday 11 June 2017.

To answer the question “Why” does Fedora attend Southeast Linux Fest. Well to start, the obvious was Carter and his father. To have such an enthusiast so interested in what we do and the product we represent goes right to the Four Foundations of Friends and Features. After spending time using each of the available desktops and choosing the one that was right for him (remember he is only 8). His father only guided him when he asked for help but was making his own decisions on what he wanted to accomplish with his laptop. Everyone of us at the booth was quite impressed with with this young man. The other obvious subject was media production of our variants in desktops. The duplicator produced 225 desktop environments for distribution with all available spins. We also gave out another 200 F25 media DVD’s during the event. All locally duplicated spins were given out and the rest of the media brought to the event was given to those individuals that would further distribute them to local colleges and Linux User Group meetings. Here some other things that we accomplished;

- Aided the installation of three laptops with Fedora
- Demonstrated the various lab environments available
- Answered numerous questions on device driver installation and configuration
- Demonstrated the various Desktop environments (Cinnamon the most popular)
- Discussed upcoming release and features
- Demonstrated F26A releases
- Demonstrated the abilities of Gnome and the tweak tool
- Demonstrated the software GUI loader within Gnome vice using terminal
- Produced and handed out Live USB media for those who were truly interested in Fedora

The event in our opinion is more structured to the Desktop users, novice, and to moderately technically savvy users and enthusiasts . Even though we did have some individuals that were corporate level system administrators, they were more interested in items and software for their personal use rather than the enterprise level engineering or administration. We also had a wide range of expertise on hand with our ambassadors that covered areas of system administration (Ben, Ross, and Dan), security and network security (Andrew), and cryptology (Nick). There were no questions that we could not answer with respect to Fedora! As always we had a survey available for those who wish to leave us comments or suggestions that will be available separately for review.



The Crew: Sitting Julie and Cathy; Standing Andrew, Dan, Nick, Ross, and Ben