

Bangalore readies for 'one of world's largest' FOSS events

FOSS.IN, a Bangalore-based annual event that calls itself 'one of the world's most focussed Free and Open Source Software events', has announced its Nov 23-25 meet will have 82 talks and tutorials.

Organisers of the FOSS.IN said they faced 'truly a Herculean task to wade through the tonnes of amazing talks and tutorials'. Many good talks were left out for unavailability of slots, said organisers.

By its sheer size and participation, FOSS.IN has become one of the largest and most focussed Free and Open Source Software events, held annually in India.

Over the years it has attracted thousands of participants and organisers assert that the speaker roster reads like a who's who of FOSS contributors from across the world.

Each year about 1,500 techies from what is India's closest equivalent of a Silicon Valley flock to the meet, marked by inexpensive entry fees, some geeky tech talks, and a chance for India's Open Source community from diverse states to meet up.

Key organiser Atul Chitnis said: 'FOSS.IN/2006 will be full of technical talks, discussions, workshops and tutorials related to FOSS projects and technologies.'

BoFs, or informal meet-ups called 'birds-of-a-feather' sessions, are aimed at allowing impromptu discussions on a variety of subjects. There is also an 'expo' scheduled, to focus on FOSS-related products and services at the event to be held at the National Science Symposium Centre of the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore.

This event is targeted at those who have skills - in coding, testing and documenting - or existing contributor to FOSS projects, wanting to share ideas with colleagues.

In recent years, support has come for this event from multinationals and, more lately, the government of India, both of which see the potential of techies in a country like India in possibly shaping the future of the software industry of the planet.

Free and Open Source Software, or FOSS, is liberally licensed to grant the right of users to study, change, and improve its design through the availability of its source code. It also grants the right to distribute the changed program.

Since the late 1990s this has been seen as an increasingly powerful way of building software. India, because of its huge coder base, is seen as having a key role to play in the rivalry between FOSS and the more traditional way of writing software through the 'closed' or proprietary format.

In [Bangalore](#) this month-end, talks at the event will bring in prominent speakers like Canadian KDE prominent developer Aaron Seigo, Canada infantry officer-turned-GNU/Linux advocate Andrew Cowie, database guru Christof Wittig, German kernel expert Christoph Hellwig, Brazilian LinuxChix founder Sulamita Garcia, Danise Cooper of Intel and others.

Those to take part also include Australia-based Indian expat developer Sirtaj Singh Kang and

Danish-Canadian programmer and original creator of PHP Rasmus Lerdorf. PHP is the third most popular programming language worldwide, playing a crucial role in cyberspace.

Talks from the growing number of Indian contributors will focus on issues like writing applications, Linux Wi-Fi, kernel testing, the made-in-Japan programming language Ruby, IT asset management, digital photography under GNU/Linux, and how to become an 'Indian Debian developer'.

Rahul Sundaram talks on the ambitious 'One Laptop Per Child' plan, an idea of mass-creating laptops costing US\$100 for children in the 'developing' world, a plan which seems to have run into some rough weather in India, with some key officials questioning its utility here.

Bangalore-based Sunil Abraham, currently the manager of the UN-linked International Open Source Network (IOSN.net) in Thailand, talks on the impact of Indian copyright and patent law on FOSS.

By its size, scope and persistence, the event is seen as one that will have some impact on shaping the future of coding in India.

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