

Laptops for the masses

Donnie Berkholz
Editor

The ambitious mission of One Laptop per Child is to provide a revolutionary learning tool, a \$100 laptop, for the world's poorest children.

Two OSU students couldn't resist the temptation and jumped into the project.

Justin Gallardo and Mike Burns, both computer science sophomores, first got involved with OLPC a couple of months ago.

Burns started it all.

He joined the mailing list and IRC channel to ask questions, but they fell on mostly deaf ears. Seeing Burns' quandary, OLPC developer Andy Sisson reached out to him and initiated a phone conversation about possible areas that could use help.

OLPC had been so focused on the big picture, developers had never gotten around to a word processor, Burns said.

Burns took the idea to Gallardo and convinced him with the idea that his work would reach an audience of millions. This quickly led to a port of the AbiWord word processor.

Expecting a timeframe of months for the port, Gallardo instead had just a single weekend. But he made the deadline, and AbiWord remains in the official OLPC build as a text widget for other applications.

"This is too good of an opportunity for the OSU to not be part of," Burns told North Krimsly, head of the OSU's development efforts.

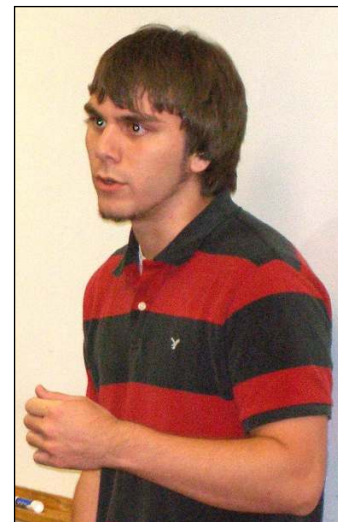
Information services head Shay Dakan agreed to hire a developer dedicated to OLPC work.



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OLPC prototype laptop, dubbed the B1 test

Michael Burns (above) and Justin Gallardo got an OLPC board for an AbiWord port, and the Open Source Lab received 10 more.



TIMOTHY BUDD

Gallardo was chosen because of his work on porting AbiWord. His first job is to set up 10 boards from OLPC for public development.

Burns plays a different role. "I'm appointing myself the cheerleader of OLPC," he said.

They have traveled around the state to give talks to various LUGs and high schools and don't plan to stop.

They have been a team since middle school and Linux users since high school. But not until now has their teamwork reached an audience of this magnitude.

Learn more:
www.laptop.org

Open source meets open house

Donnie Berkholz
Editor

Many prospective freshmen tasted open source software for the first time at this fall's annual Beaver Open House. OSU created the event to highlight university activities.

One of the big draws was the One Laptop per Child development board. Computer science sophomores Justin Gallardo and Mike Burns explained details of the board and more general information about the whole OLPC project. See the above story for more details. Alex Polvi also evangelized Linux.

This was the third event of its kind in the fall quarter. Earlier, the LUG also displayed at the outdoor community fair on campus and an open house for current students.

Later the same day, the LUG held another of its popular, quarterly InstallFests.

Kroah-Hartman on developing the Linux kernel

Donnie Berkholz
Editor

Greg Kroah-Hartman returned to campus to talk about the development model for the Linux kernel on November 17.

He maintains the driver core, sysfs, and the USB and PCI subsystems and also co-maintains the stable branch.

"It looks like a hierarchy, but in reality we're very interconnected," he said. "... We evolve over time ... You don't see us saying, 'Here's the five-year plan for Linux.'"

TIMOTHY BUDD



The LUG/OSEL table was one of the busiest at the open house.

Linux kernel hacker visits campus



TIMOTHY BUDD

Val Henson said her income kept going up for open-source work.

Donnie Berkholz
Editor

Val Henson tried to correct the assumption that you cannot get paid for open-source work, among other things, in a talk on campus.

“What people do not realize is that there is a huge subset of jobs working for hardware companies,” she said.

“There’s another set of jobs which is even more invisible,” she said. “... There’s literally thousands of tiny startups doing some kind of Linux appliance or storage appliance or something

like that, and they desperately need a Linux kernel person to come in and do it.”

“Part of why I’m here is that it frustrates me to have all these people asking me to find someone to fill this job, and all the people I know have work,” she said.

“One of the things I really like about open source is if you’re vaguely competent and you get some experience, at some point you become employed for life,” she said.

Another myth about open-source work is that the pay sucks, she said. “The jobs pay great,” she said, and

she drew a graph of her income, which was mostly composed of open-source jobs.

She has traveled to places including Hawaii, San Diego, Ottawa and Sydney to meet with other open-source programmers. Her employers have paid for all of it.

However, open-source work often stretches beyond 40 hours a week, she said. But this tends to be less important to people who are successful in open source, she said, because they feel strongly about the philosophy behind free software and about doing things right.

Students celebrate the Firefox 2.0 release in style

Donnie Berkholz
Editor

The Firefox 2.0 release marked an occasion for excitement and education at OSU’s student-organized party.

Nick Graham set up the event, which started off with a demo and moved on to set up a huge display, reminiscent of the Firefox crop circle, in typical LUG style.

“A lot of the people who showed up were aware we were planning on some sort of demonstration in commemoration of Firefox 2.0’s release,” Eric Betts said, “and were curious what it would be and how to help out.”

The crowd was neatly split between enthusiastic power users, Brandon Philips said,

“There were spatterings of conversations of how tabs worked and others talking about the cool new plugins.”

— *Brandon Philips*

and people who had hardly even heard of Firefox. “There were spatterings of conversations of how tabs worked,” he said, “and others talking about the cool new plugins.”

Topics included pop-up blocking and tabbed browsing as well as the new phishing protection and built-in spell checker, Betts said,

and they also showed helpful tips such as reopening accidentally closed tabs or resuming sessions with the tabs from the last session.

One of demonstrated extensions was “del.icio.us bookmarks.” The del.icio.us service provides a way to save bookmarks online and tag them. This allows for more flexible sorting than a hierarchy because you can give a single bookmark multiple tags.

After that, the group moved on to create a huge display on a hill. Picture a huge Firefox logo created entirely from blinking bike lights.

Learn more:
www.spreadfirefox.com

Questions or comments?

You can get in touch with us via our e-mail address, which is news@osel.oregonstate.edu. The OSEL Newsletter is brought to you by:

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What is the OSEL?

The **Open Source Education Lab** has a simple mission: help to get students at OSU involved in free and open-source software.

It’s about:

- community
- student-student interaction
- skill building

The Open Source Education Lab was created in partnership with the OSU Linux Users Group, the OSU Open Source Lab and the OSU College of Engineering.

To help the OSEL, contact osel@lists.oregonstate.edu.

What is the OSL?

The **Open Source Lab** facilitates open-source communities as well as the development and distribution of open-source software. It accomplishes this through hosting projects and developing software.

The Open Source Lab is a global, world-class facility and data center for open-source software knowledge, hosting, infrastructure, development and collaboration.

To help the Open Source Lab, contact donations@osuosl.org or getinvolved@osuosl.org to contribute to a project.

What is the LUG?

The **Linux Users Group** is a highly active, self-organizing group dedicated to advocating Free and Open-Source Software on campus.

The LUG supports Linux, increases awareness about FOSS and jointly creates events with other groups.

Google provides the pizza and the LUG provides the fun each Tuesday night. The LUG hosts a hacking social at 6 p.m. Tuesdays in Dearborn 401, the Penguin’s Nest.

Visit lug.oregonstate.edu for more information.