



GNOME™

Annual Report 2006



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Dear Friends,

All traditions need a starting point, they say. What you now hold in your hands is the first annual report of the GNOME Foundation, at the end of what has been an eventful year for us.

Each year brings its challenges and rewards for the members of this global project. This year, many of our biggest challenges are in the legal arena. European countries have been passing laws to conform with the European Union Copyright Directive, and some, including France, have brought into law provisions which we as software developers find it hard to understand, but which appear to make much of what we do illegal. We have found ourselves in the center of patent wars as bigger companies jockey for position with offerings based on our hard work. And we are scratching our heads trying to figure out how to deal with the constraints of DRM and patents in multimedia, while still offering our users access to their media files.

But for each of these challenges, no matter how much they weigh on our minds, we also have liberating moments when we feel like the work we have done is changing the world. GNOME software will be included on the 1.2 million laptops which will be distributed to every Libyan schoolchild, ensuring that the world gets a new generation of free software developers in 10 or 15 years. The blood and sweat that we and other free software developers pour into our work has made it possible for people to have a real alternative to monopolistic hegemony—even if we are not yet at a level where mass adoption is realistic. Social movements like the Software Freedom Day and the Free Culture movement spread our ideas far and wide. The enthusiasm and passion in the eyes of the people who use our software, and who love it for the price, but also for the freedom and community, makes all those evenings and nights spent in front of a screen feel worth it.

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams, Eleanor Roosevelt once said. And so I give you the first GNOME Foundation annual report—the first of many. I invite you to join us in sharing the burden of our difficulties, and in celebrating our many successes. Let the future be ours, because our dreams are beautiful.

Dave Neary
GNOME Foundation, Chair







Macedonia schools FOSSDEM releases a year of announcements

2006—a year in GNOME. 2006 was an exciting year for the GNOME Foundation. With a new, leaner 7 person board behind the wheel the year was started with the exciting news that 5,000 schools in Macedonia are migrating to the GNOME desktop.

TEXT Davyd Madeley **PHOTO** (left) Travis Reitter; David Navi

During Linux.conf.au, Glynn Foster premiered the GNOME Love Wall, which allowed users to write down and stick up the things they love and hate about GNOME.

Thanks to Damien Sandras, FOSSDEM once again had the GNOME Developer's Room. The room allowed developers and interested users to meet, run mini-presentations and give tutorials on all things GNOME.

March saw the smooth release of GNOME 2.14 including new software like the accessible GNOME Screensaver, the incredible useful Deskbar and integrated fast user switching. GNOME 2.14 was shipped with a number of popular desktop distributions including Ubuntu 6.06 LTS and Fedora Core 5.

Google's popular Summer of Code ran again in 2006 with GNOME mentoring 20 projects. Although GNOME received 181 applications, not one was from a woman. For this reason, Chris Ball and Hanna Wallach decided to launch the Women's Summer Outreach Program. The program was highly successful with 100 applications being received in just two weeks. 6 were chosen to participate in the program.

For some, GUADEC is the most important part of GNOME. This year Vilanova i la Geltrú, in deepest, darkest Catalonia, was the host town for the conference. With its longer, revamped format, GUADEC was a huge success. Both around the conference venue and at the "hacker village", faces both new and old could be seen talking about, designing, developing and enjoying GNOME. Memorable events at this year's GUADEC included the Fluendo party and the Nokia party, with a live band consisting of seven GNOME contributors.

New versions of several pieces of the GNOME Platform were released in July including GLib 2.12, GTK+ 2.10 and Cairo 1.2. July also saw the attempted migration of the GNOME project from the CVS revision control system to the much newer Subversion. Unfortunately things did not go to plan and the migration had to be aborted. Not giving up hope, the project hopes to be using Subversion for revision control by 2007. Christian Perrier of the Debian project was invited



PHOTO SIGGRAPH 2006. The graphics community has some of the highest standards for software, and open-source is fulfilling them.

to Bhutan to attend the launch of the Debian-based Dzonkha Linux, including the GNOME Desktop.

It was a year of big software releases both in and around GNOME. Gnucash reached version 2.0; Ekiga 2.0 was released, had its 5th birthday and won an award for its excellence; Glade 3.0 released; and exciting new projects like Jokosher, a GNOME and GStreamer based audio editor and Elisa, a GStreamer based media centre had their first releases. Project Portland, the cross-desktop working group announced its 1.0 release of cross-desktop compatibility tools.

It was also a year of big GNOME announcements, with OLPC, OpenMoko and ACCESS (formerly PalmSource) announcing they're now using GNOME technology in their devices. Nokia released the 2006 update for the popular Nokia 770 including VoIP support based on the Telepathy framework.

The GNOME Mobile and Embedded Initiative, conceived by Jeff Waugh, had its first two meetings this year. The initiative



PHOTO SIGGRAPH 2006—The 33rd International Conference and Exhibition on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques, Boston, Massachusetts. A view of the open-source pavilion from above.

is focussed on the use of GNOME technology in mobile and embedded computing environments (see article).

Soon enough it was that time again, and GNOME 2.16 released on time this September. 2.16 contained a number of important pieces of software, as well as taking full advantage of the latest GTK+, GLib and Cairo, it also include the Orca screenreader, a fully functioning menu editor (finally), integrated power management and the Tomboy note taking application. The inclusion of Tomboy was controversial, because it meant that GNOME also included the GTK# and GNOME# bindings for Mono applications.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology once again played host to the GNOME Summit this year. For the first time, we were received in the MIT Media Lab, spiritual home to the OLPC project. Jeff Waugh and Chris Blizzard conducted an orchestra of talented hackers in a series of BOFs (Bird of a Feather sessions) which each focused on a particular aspect of GNOME development. The meeting notes were posted online afterwards for the benefit of those who could not attend.

Among other noteworthy events this year, Sun kindly donated a T2000 and two Ultra20 workstations to the foundation. The workstations were awarded to Elijah Newren and Behdad Esfahbod for their outstanding contributions to GNOME, and our belief that they would give them a good work-out. The great feedback from this donation was undoubtedly the last straw that Sun needed to finally release Java under the GPL (with a classpath exception), a decision which came at about the same time as a redesign of the java-gnome bindings is underway, with the goal of improving further Java support in the GNOME platform.

So as 2007 looms ever closer, GNOME finds itself with a new board, the upcoming Subversion migration and the first freezes of the GNOME 2.18 release, leaving GNOME poised for total world domination, probably at some point in 2008, undoubtedly a Wednesday, around 1pm.

Fedora Ubuntu SLED RHEL Maemo Sugar OpenSUSE OpenSolaris

Distributions in 2006. GNOME has had continued support from all of the major distributions this year, with the latest release of the desktop and developer platform being a strong part of various distribution releases.

TEXT Glynn Foster **PHOTO** David Zeuthen

In October this year, the Fedora community released Fedora Core 6, codenamed 'Zod', including GNOME 2.16. Red Hat are currently in beta for a new version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, also including GNOME 2.16, due out early next year.

Earlier this year Canonical announced Ubuntu 6.06, providing long term support for the product, with a special emphasis on the needs of large organizations with both desktop and server versions. The Ubuntu community have also continued their regular release schedule with Ubuntu 6.10, codenamed 'Edgy Eff', out in October, also leading with GNOME 2.16.

The OpenSUSE community produced 10.2, with a strong focus on a 'design first' methodology, conducting several usability studies and later using them to produce their final desktop designs. OpenSUSE was also one of the first distributions to include functionality taking advantage of OpenGL with the Compiz window manager. Novell released their enterprise product, SuSE Linux Enterprise Desktop 10, in March this year.

The OpenSolaris community had its one year anniversary in 2006, and made consistent strides in providing an up to date desktop environment, with GNOME 2.16 being included in Sun's Solaris Express release in November.

Debian continue working on their next stable distribution, Etch, which will include GNOME 2.14. In October this year, Mandriva launched their Linux 2007 distribution, also including a GNOME based AIGLX and Xgl 3D-accelerated desktop.

The Maemo project released the 2006 upgrade to the firmware for the Nokia 770—including GTK+ 2.6, and other elements of the GNOME platform. And OLPC made several pre-releases of the Sugar human interface development library, which also includes the GNOME development platform.

The GNOME Foundation would like to congratulate all the distributions for their hard work during this year, and would like to thank everyone for their continued support of the project.



PHOTO GUADEC—The GNOME Conference—was held in the scenic seaside town of Villanova i la Geltru, near Barcelona. A row of conference participants working digitally.



The GNOME Conference • Vila Rica • Peltrú • June 24-30

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FreeFA World Cup GUADEC party Drooling Macaque Band

GUADEC—The GNOME Conference. This year, GUADEC was held in the scenic seaside town of Vilanova i la Geltrú, near Barcelona. The conference had a new format, and many small but significant changes to the formula of previous conferences.

TEXT Dave Neary

PHOTO Tuomas Kuosmanen

Some of the highlights of the conference happened outside the lecture halls. The FreeFA World Cup, a football tournament for conference participants, was a great success. The Drooling Macaque Band, made up of a number of musician-hackers, rocked the night away at the Nokia hosted party on Wednesday evening.

The fine people at Fluendo hosted a beach party on Tuesday night which left many sore heads and some incriminating photos of midnight dips the day after. And with a show released daily, the guys at LugRadio provided the conference with a sound-track.

This year, the conference had three distinct phases—Warm-up Weekend, dedicated to tutorials and workshops, often in Catalan or Spanish, the Core conference, with three parallel streams of talks interspersed with some exceptional keynote speakers, and After-Hours, a wind-down series of planning meetings and hack-fests.

The conference is like a fusion reactor for the GNOME project—coming together, we reach a critical mass of energy, which results in chain-reaction effects which last many months.

Inspirational presentations like Kathy Sierra's "Creating Passionate Users", or Luis Villa's "GNOME is people" get people thinking in new ways about the project and the ways we can develop it. Projects like OLPC, presented by Jim Gettys, and the Nokia 770 open our eyes to alternate audiences to our traditional all-purpose desktop environment.

The first meeting of the GNOME Mobile and Embedded (GMAE) initiative also took place in Villanova. In previous years, GUADEC has hosted a GIMP developers conference, a multimedia mini-conference and a GNOME in Business conference. GUADEC is a great place to foster this type of meeting, where tightly-focussed groups of people come together to identify areas of collaboration.

"It's fascinating seeing all this stuff getting done. Daniel Holbach decided to package Jokosher for Ubuntu and did it during Jono's Jokosher talk. You don't get that at other technical conventions."

Stuart Langridge, LugRadio

"The venue was ideal for the talks [...] it encouraged us to stay in the village after work for tapas, beer, football, swimming and technical discussions. I was made to feel welcome from the moment I arrived and I really enjoyed the casual collaboration that took place."

Brian Nitz, Sun Microsystems

"[GUADEC] was awesome, for serious stuff (presentations, talks), for fun (Fluendo and Maemo parties) and for people (I can't name everybody, but sharing GUADEC with Damien, our beloved Ekiga hacker) ... I think Kathy Sierra keynote was enlightening, not only for GNOME community, but also from a distribution POV."

Frédéric Crozat, Mandriva

"The BoF on continuous integration for GNOME was a clear success [...] as we had the right ingredients, the BuildBrigade (a working group—with already more than 10 members—inside Gnome, in charge of the creation and promotion of an automatic build environment for the project) was created. The general requirements and ideas were agreed during the BoF, and the same afternoon we got together again for deciding about the technical details and the first steps to carry out."

Juan José Sánchez Penas, Igalia and GNOME Build Brigade



MIT Boston Summit BOFs, hackfest accessibility embedded

GNOME hackers descend on MIT Media Center. The traditional Autumn gathering of GNOME hackers in the heart of New England, the 2006 edition of the GNOME Summit took place in the MIT Media Lab for the first time this year.

TEXT Dave Neary

PHOTO (left) Garrett LeSage; Jakob Steiner

The Summit is a very different type of meeting to GUADEC—around 100 people gather to plan and hack, and there are no organised presentations. Instead, group leaders channel efforts towards topics chosen by the group into BOFs (Bird of a Feather sessions), which typically include 10 to 20 people. This year, Jeff Waugh and Chris Blizzard worked the conference into a frenzy, and the volume of plans and notes to come out of the week was incredible.

Among some notable subjects discussed at the Summit were making GNOME's artwork rock, improving data collection on bugs from GNOME users, text layout and fonts, improving desktop accessibility, and more.

There was also a very well received embedded hackfest and meeting at the Summit, which attracted developers from Nokia, ACCESS, OpenedHand, Collabora and other companies and individuals in the mobile and embedded space.

"I got more hugs this weekend from more people than I have in any 42-hour period in quite a while. What fun!"

Krissa, Luis Villa's better half

"The Boston GNOME Summit was a great time.

The summit has a focus on hacking and it was good being able to spend some face-to-face time with everyone there."

Brian Cameron, Sun Microsystems

"[The GNOME Summit] was a stimulating and affirming time for me. I came away with increased conviction in Open Source as a great solution for end users and firm reassurance of Mozilla and GNOME's commitment to Accessibility."

Steve Lee, Mozilla Accessibility Project

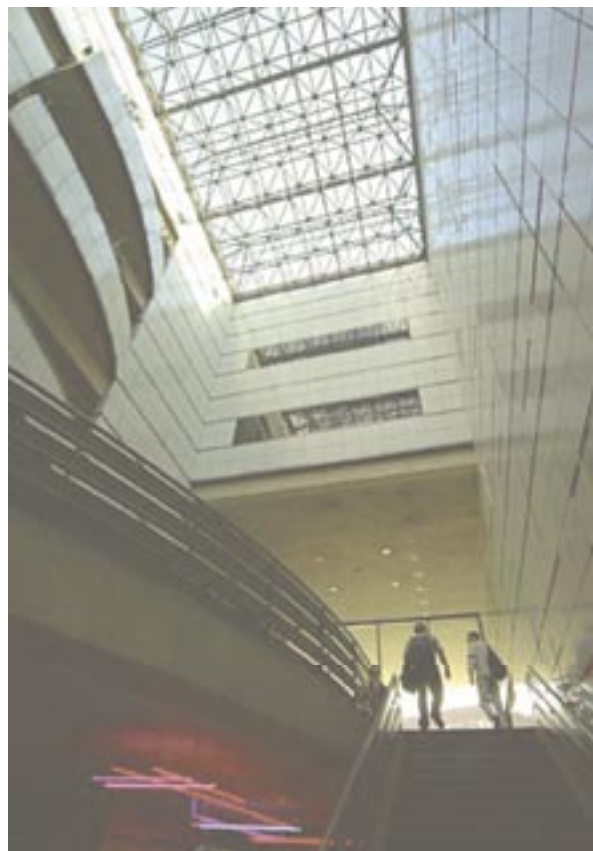


PHOTO The traditional gathering of GNOME hackers, the GNOME Summit, took place in the MIT Media Lab for the first time.

GNOME Event Box active user groups world-wide community

GNOME User Groups. GNOME is a worldwide organisation. Our latest version has been fully translated into more than 30 languages, and at least partially in more than 50.

TEXT Dave Neary **PHOTO** Vincent Untz

There are over 20 active GNOME User Groups world-wide—some of the bigger groups include GNOME Chile, GNOME Brazil, GNOME Deutschland, GNOME Hispano and GNOME-fr, a user group for french-speaking GNOME users.

Our user groups are the life-blood of our advocacy effort—working from the bottom-up to tell people about GNOME, our philosophy, and developments in the desktop. User groups organise local events such as the GNOME Developer Meetings in South America (organised by GNOME Chile and GNOME Venezuela) and GUADEC-ES organised by GNOME Hispano. They participate in dozens of conferences and trade shows annually on our behalf.

In recent years, we have begun better supporting our user groups. Towards the end of 2005, Murray Cumming organised the first GNOME Event Box—a metal case containing the raw materials for a GNOME stand, including a small-form computer and a flat screen, several distributions including recent versions of GNOME, and printed materials like posters and LiveCDs which could be distributed during shows.

The event box has seen action in France, Germany, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands so far, and has proven to be a great success. This year, we have added a second event box for North America, which was revealed for the first time at LinuxWorld Boston.

As well as the GNOME Event Boxes and the work of the marketing team in gathering marketing material, the board has allocated funds to contribute to the costs of printing and travel which user group members incur. We have created a work space in the GNOME Wiki to encourage the sharing of information, and have created a mailing list dedicated to user group co-operation.

Next year, we hope to expand the activities of various user groups by providing the means to have more local gatherings of GNOME users, and by encouraging participation of user groups in regional conferences.



PHOTO The European event box unpacked.

www.gnome.org revamp Plone release schedule shared process

The www.gnome.org revamp. www.gnome.org (aka wgo) is going through a complete revamp process planned to blossom on March 14th, the day GNOME 2.18 will be released.

TEXT Quim Gil

The new website will introduce the GNOME desktop, applications and community, targeting mainly computer/freedom hobbyists, software developers, public sector, contributors and the press. It will look as good as the GNOME desktop and it aims to be localized to as many languages as the GNOME desktop.

GNOME's web forefront was created years ago and since then it has been patched through CVS commits. In the meantime GNOME, free software and web publishing have evolved drastically. More than a redesign we needed a whole rethink, a revamp. The new website will be developed on top of a Plone CMS and will be easily editable by GNOME writers and translators.

The planning process and implementation is being shared by the Marketing Team (vision and content) and the GNOME Webhackers (technical aspects). We are applying the basic development procedure professional web teams have, adapted to our community and cyclic context.

The main novelty in the development process is the fact of tying the wgo milestones in with the GNOME release schedule. GNOME is a big heart with a regular rhythm. When contributors are told "we must complete Goal X by the 2.18 release" everybody understands the importance of this. It is also a way to tell to web contributors that their work is as important as the work done by the rest of teams involved in the release schedule.

It's also useful to make contributors understand that good web development requires more or less the same amount of planning, design, implementation and testing than good software development. This is why it's useful to make a parallelism with the internal milestones of the GNOME release cycle. People understand the implications of a feature freeze, a string freeze... These deadlines push discussions to agreements and what is not agreed/achieved will jump to the next release cycle, getting the team concentrated in what needs to be done now.

GNOME Platform. *Developers building on the GNOME platform often ask for some place they can go to get an overview of the various libraries and technologies in the platform, and how they link together in the big picture.*

TEXT Federico Mena Quintero

At the end of 2005, the GNOME Foundation Board hired Shaun McCance, a well-known member of the GNOME Documentation Project, on a contract basis to write a high-level document describing the various parts of the GNOME development platform. This work was finished in early 2006. The published document is available on the GNOME developer website.

This "Overview of the GNOME Platform" is the first case where the GNOME Foundation Board has hired someone explicitly to perform work related to development. It was an experiment to see if the Board could coordinate the work of finding a suitable contractor, defining the tasks tasks and finally evaluating the work. We are glad to say that this was a complete success.

In the future, the Board plans to hire other technical people for various tasks: writing documentation, keeping parts of the GNOME web site updated, and performing system administration tasks. This is the kind of work that the community has not been completely successful in doing, at least based only on volunteers. Working on these neglected tasks is an excellent example of where funds can be put to good use in the community.

GNOME Foundation Administrator

TEXT Dave Neary

Rosanna Yuen joined the GNOME Foundation temporarily as an administrator in March of this year. After taking some time off for the birth of her daughter Eleanor, Rosanna formally joined the foundation in July. In the time that she has been with the foundation, she has made a huge difference and has been a great addition to the staff.

Welcome!



Hanna Wallach and Chris Ball female students role models

The Women's Summer Outreach Program. You have almost certainly heard of Google's Summer of Code, but perhaps you haven't heard of the Women's Summer Outreach Program, which is also being run by the GNOME Foundation this summer. Davyd Madeley teams up with Hanna Wallach to find out more.

TEXT Davyd Madeley and Hanna Wallach

This year GNOME received 181 submissions for Google's "Summer of Code"—not one was from a woman.

This imbalance is hardly surprising though. In 2002, it was reported that only 1.5% of libre software contributors were women, compared to roughly 28% in the proprietary software world. Of the many causes, the 2006 FLOSSPOLS report found that the age at which men and women are able to start tinkering and installing free software on their own computer can differ significantly. Girls, on average, typically receive their first computer at age 19, as opposed to boys at age 15.

Working with the GNOME Foundation, developers Hanna Wallach and Chris Ball put together the Women's Summer Outreach Program. The program aims to promote the participation of women in GNOME-related development. "It was clear to us that the GNOME community can't be the inclusive group we want it to be without putting in some effort," said Chris. Funded with money received by the Foundation for participating in the Summer of Code, the program originally offered the chance for three female students to receive a stipend of US\$3000 to work for two months on a mentored, GNOME-related project.

While six new female developers won't make a staggering amount of difference to this problem, Chris and Hanna are hopeful that the program will still have a significant amount of impact. In the short term, GNOME will get six awesome women working on six exciting projects. Longer term, the students might fill the gap for strong female role models in the community, and encourage other women to get involved as well.

"We're not trying to artificially raise the percentage of female GNOME developers up to 50%," Chris emphasizes, "we're trying to start a bootstrapping process that gets some female developers involved with GNOME in a way that will create a positive feedback loop."

An impressive 100 applications were received from female developers spread across the globe in just under a fortnight.

"We're not trying to artificially raise the percentage of female GNOME developers up to 50%... we're trying to start a bootstrapping process that gets some female developers involved with GNOME in a way that will create a positive feedback loop."

"We had far more applications with excellent technical merit than slots to fill; all of the applications on our shortlist were extremely high in quality," Chris told GNOME Journal. In fact, the applications were of such high quality that Google stepped forward to provide the funds for three additional projects, bringing the program up to six participants.

"We've been thrilled to see that several of the applicants whom we weren't able to accept have mentioned wanting to work on their proposal on their own," said Chris. An unpaid mentoring scheme has been proposed as part of the successful GNOME Love project. This scheme, taking many attributes of the mentoring from Summer of Code and WSOP, would allow both men and women to undertake mentored work in the GNOME project.

The Foundation hopes that the WSOP will act as a pilot program for other organizations hoping to make more women feel welcome in their development communities. Perhaps the most important outcome is that this program be seen as a clear demonstration that things can be done to encourage women to participate in open source, even in what has traditionally been considered an exclusively male arena.

The Participants



Fernanda Foertter

Fernanda Foertter was born in Brazil, but is now a citizen of the United States. With a physics major under her belt, she is now doing a doctorate in materials science at the University of Florida. Her project is gJournaler, an “iTunes-inspired” cataloging system for PDF journal articles. “Two years of grad

school is frustrating,” Fernanda explains.

“You have to read hundreds of papers and have no real good (open source) solution to catalog them.”



Ümran Kamar

Ümran Kamar is an undergraduate computer engineer from the Izmir Institute of Technology in Turkey, now in her fourth year of study. She is working on an Evince plugin for Mozilla-based web browsers. Ümran hopes to be an ambassador for Turkish women in libre software.

“There are many women programmers interested in Linux in my country, but they lack the courage to join projects and lead the women’s community. I am expecting this project will be a landmark for the Turkish women’s community, helping them to be more confident in joining Linux-based projects,” she told GNOME Journal.



Cecilia González

Cecilia González is at the Politechnical University of Catalonia (UPC) in Barcelona and is also in her fourth year of her computer engineering degree. Since she started using free software, she has wanted to contribute to the community. With an interest in performance, her project will be to work on optimizing the switching of components in the Evolution groupware suite.

“I find the GNOME community very human and always interested in our work; I feel happy to be working in a such project.” she says, “It will be great if I can participate actively in the community after the WSOP.”

Clare So

From McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, Clare So is in the first year of her PhD in computer science. Her project is to define and implement formula editing functionality in the GtkMathView widget, used to display MathML in AbiWord and other applications. She is also interested in looking at research aspects of her project.



Monia Ghobadi

Monia Ghobadi is an Iranian studying at the University of Victoria in Canada’s British Columbia. She has been working towards her masters in Computer Science since September last year. She got involved with the WSOP because of an interest in open source software development and because she wanted to learn about Linux programming.

Monia is working on integrating GNOME Terminal with GNU Screen, a console based “screen manager” that multiplexes multiple interactive shells onto a single terminal. “My mentors are incredible. The community is wonderful. I’d love to remain a part of GNOME,” she replied when asked how she found working with the rest of the GNOME community. “I’d like to thank GNOME and encourage all the students to participate in these programs,” she added.



Maria Soler

Maria Soler is from Catalonia in Spain, but studying in Aarhus, Denmark. After doing three years of mathematics, she decided to study electronic engineering. Having completed her engineering degree, she will start a specialist course in industrial software this August. Her project, syncing Tomboy

notes between computers, is a chance for her to make a useful contribution to the free software community while learning Mono and C#.

Maria had previous experience with the GNOME community through the GNOME Translation Project and the Catalan translation team.

Already, the program has been a huge success. All six participants say they are enjoying working with the GNOME community and that their mentors have been really positive and encouraging. They all hope to remain part of the GNOME community after the summer’s program is over.

“I want to thank GNOME and Google for giving women an opportunity to shine in the developer community,” wrote Fernanda, “I hope the open source community will begin to see the benefit of encouraging more women to participate.”

mobile embedded OLPC, Nokia ACCESS co-ordinate investment

The GNOME Mobile and Embedded Initiative. Early in 2006, Jeff Waugh was thinking about the ways in which the GNOME platform and desktop were being taken in strange new directions by people who we had not considered part of our core constituency—streamlined, stylus-based interfaces like the Nokia 770, or focussed single-use devices like television media centers.

TEXT Dave Neary **PHOTO** fuse-project

The GNOME platform has been heading in new directions by people who have not been considered part of the core constituency - streamlined, stylus based interfaces like Maemo, or focused single-use devices like television media centers.

Early in 2006, Jeff Waugh came up with the idea of bringing key players who are invested in the GNOME platform together to discuss collaboration and co-ordinate investment and development of GNOME in the mobile and embedded space. The GNOME Mobile and Embedded (GMAE) initiative was born.

The mission of the GMAE initiative is:

- > Increase community and commercial visibility of GNOME Mobile and Embedded technology and participating companies
- > Co-ordinate investment in the GTK+ and GNOME platform, documentation and developer tools.
- > Increase development focus on the “mobile experience”, particularly the integration of GNOME desktop and GMAE technology.
- > Facilitate healthy development collaboration between participating companies, the GNOME community and related organisations; and between GNOME desktop and GMAE developers.
- > Pursue standardisation opportunities at the platform and potentially user interface levels.
- > To ensure that Software Freedom is a reality beyond the desktop, and is in the hands of users around the world.

The list of founding members includes several members of the GNOME Foundation advisory board—ACCESS, Imendio, Nokia, OLPC and OpenedHand. Of the other companies involved, several are small companies started from within the GNOME project such as Waugh Partners, Openismus, Collabora and Fluendo. Alongside these, industry heavyweights and free software projects are actively participating.



PHOTO The children's laptop from One Laptop per Child—a potent learning tool created expressly for the world's poorest children living in its most remote environments.

After a very successful initial meeting during GUADEC, a second meeting and hackfest was held during the Boston Summit in October. As a result of those meetings, a clear plan for addressing the needs of a mobile application platform is in place, and several long-standing memory and performance issues have been resolved. We have high hopes that the initiative will build on these early successes to generate real momentum behind the GNOME platform in this space in 2007.

new members Intel Canonical Imendio OpenedHand OLPC

The GNOME Advisory Board. This year has been particularly rich in new arrivals on the foundation's Advisory Board. With the introduction in Summer 2005 of a lower membership rate for small companies, we welcomed two young companies—OpenedHand and Imendio—into the fold.

TEXT Dave Neary

PHOTO David Zeuthen

At the time, Matthew Allum of OpenedHand wrote: "We strongly believe that GNOME technologies give advantages on today's mobile and embedded platforms—at OpenedHand we are both GNOME developers and users."

Mikael Hallendal, CEO of Imendio, had similar sentiments—"The GNOME platform has always been a core part of our business", he said, "Our developers have been involved both professionally and personally in GNOME since the beginning of the project."

Two non-profit organisations aligned with GNOME came on board this year. The Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC) is a non-profit which provides legal advice with a free-software twist—a group of techno-savvy lawyers gathered by Eben Moglen to help free software projects in need get bleeding-edge answers to questions relating to trademarks, liability, patents and other thorny issues facing our community. We are happy to welcome the group onto the advisory board.

When Nicholas Negroponte announced his plan to produce a laptop for \$100 in 2005, the polite among us wondered how he was going to do it. Since then, the One Laptop Per Child association has been working to turn that vision into a reality. This year, they released an initial version of the software development kit they have been using, based on the GNOME development platform, to enable free software developers around the world to adapt their software to the environment. Hundreds of prototype motherboards and PCs have been shipped to developers around the world.

Other new faces have arrived on the board this year too—Intel, Canonical and Access (formerly PalmSource) have also signed up to support the shared vision of the GNOME project during the year.

The presence of Access, along with Nokia, Imendio and OpenedHand, is particularly pleasing, since it indicates the extent to which the project is reaching outside its traditional boundaries into the embedded and mobile device market (see article on the GMAE initiative).

Waldo Bastian of Intel puts the accent on standardisation and co-operation—after announcing that Intel were joining the advisory board, Waldo wrote on the foundation's mailing list that "through OSDL and LSB, bridging the gaps between industry leading Linux desktop environments for the benefit of users and application developers has been an important goal for us. We very much appreciate the opportunity work more closely with the GNOME community to realize that goal."

For Jane Silber of Canonical, joining the advisory board is a way to help GNOME grow over the coming years—"GNOME provides an immensely valuable set of software to Ubuntu, as well as to the rest of the open source ecosystem. Through our participation directly in the GNOME community and in the advisory board, we are able to foster further support for the open source desktop, help finance GNOME, and work with the Directors to guide the overall direction of the project."

The advisory board has gone through some changes this year—we have had regular phone conferences focused on particular issues the foundation has faced, and a very successful face-to-face meeting at GUADEC. We have also broadened the scope of the group to be a place where co-operation is possible between members on a technical level. Over the coming year we will get that co-operation started, and have a meeting with technical representatives of the advisory board focussed on the needs of partners, and how we can fulfill them.



Perhaps more than anything else, GNOME
is a worldwide community of volunteers who
hack, translate, design, QA, and generally
have fun together.

www.gnome.org



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