

Proposal to host the Desktop Summit 2011 in Berlin, Germany

Summary

We would like to propose the city of Berlin, Germany, as the location for the Desktop Summit 2011. We think that the combination of an open and diverse cultural environment, a vibrant Free Software scene, strong political support, and a great number of Free Software related local companies will provide the perfect ecosystem for the event. Moreover, numerous contributors to both Gnome and KDE are located and well-organized in Berlin. This will provide a foundation for the success of the conference.

Berlin is easy to reach, affordable, big enough, and attractive in many other aspects than Free Software. We expect hosting the Desktop Summit here to be well-received within the Gnome and KDE communities. The local team is experienced in preparing similar conferences. The city government, wider Free Software community, and a number of Berlin's IT companies support the proposal, and we expect a strong base of local sponsors. All these aspects make Berlin the perfect location for the Desktop Summit 2011.

Great Local Support

Berlin has a lively Free Software and hacker scene. A large number of contributors to both Gnome and KDE are living and working here, and companies close to the projects like Openismus and KDAB have offices here as well.

On top of that, both the city government, the Senate, as well as local companies openly support Free Software. The Senate has proclaimed a wide-ranging Open Source Strategy, with the goal to foster both the use and the development of Free Software. Dozens of Senate driven projects evaluate the deployment of Open Source solutions. To achieve this, the Senate has tasked the Technologiestiftung (Technology Foundation, TSB) with supporting and funding local Open Source activities and projects. TSB is one of the supporters of this proposal, and provides the event location.

Additionally, strong networks have been formed by the IT industry of the region. SIBB, the association of information and communications technology companies in Berlin and the surrounding state of Brandenburg, has also expressed its support for this proposal. Open Source Berlin, a co-operation initiative between 6 large Open Source businesses in the Berlin area, has also shown initial support for this proposal.

Location

Berlin, Germany's capital and with 3.4 million inhabitants also it's largest city. It is located in the North-East of Germany. Its population consists of people from 195 countries, and it prides itself in being a cosmopolitan and energetic city. Berlin is a hub for the industry, politics and culture, as well a start-up hotbed. It is a center for arts and sciences, and attracts many artists, young individuals, but also media and IT companies.

Date

Since the venue will likely be a local university, the conference should take place during university break. In the first month students will have to take exams, so the date should preferably be early August.

Free Software and Education

Berlin boasts a lively Free Software and hacker scene. It is home to several organisations from the Free Culture cosmos, like Wikimedia Germany, Creative Commons, Freifunk e.V, Linuxtag, and many others.

Examples for Free Software related events taking place in Berlin are:

- Linuxtag, <http://www.linuxtag.org/2010/10/> ,
- Chaos Communications Congress http://events.ccc.de/congress/2009/wiki/Main_Page
- Berlin Buzzwords, <http://berlinbuzzwords.de/>,
- Maemo Summit, http://wiki.maemo.org/Maemo_Summit_2008
- JSConf Europe, <http://jsconf.eu/2010/>
- Berlin Open, <http://www.berlin-open.org/>
- Re:publica, <http://re-publica.de/10/en/>

Berlin has four universities, seven universities of applied science, as well as more than 60 research institutions. Connections to these educational institutions are available through the support of TSB and the Senate. Besides a broad Free Software scene (e.g. user groups, "hacking spaces", local business groups) the city of Berlin itself shows a broad interest in a sustainable introduction and usage of Free Software in administration and education. Projects like BerliOS (<http://www.berlios.de>) provide free technical infrastructure for Free Software efforts.

Affordable accommodation and food

Cost of living in Berlin is considered low compared to other big cities. At the same time, quality and value for money is usually quite good. Conference attendants will have a choice of hotels and youth hostels that should be attractive to both corporate and community visitors. The visitor volume will not have a significant impact on the overall demand for accommodation, so the prices should remain stable around the time of the conference. Berlin is one of the primary touristic target locations in

Europe, and competition between hotels and hostels is quite tough. The city offers more than 110,000 hotel and hostel beds. A double bed room in a hostel typically costs between 23€-28€, prices for a single room start at 30€ per night. A four star hotel room will cost between 60€ and 120€ per night. We're planning to talk to hostels and hotels as soon as we get an okay for the proposal, to pre-book enough inexpensive rooms. It should be possible for all attendants to find accommodation within at most 15 minutes walking distance.

Prices for meals at restaurants are also comparatively low. A typical business lunch costs about 5€, fast food - even organic or vegetarian - starts at 2€. There are plenty of great locations for social events and parties, and enough restaurants and bars that are accustomed to hosting large groups of visitors. Catering is available from various vendors. Because of the diverse local population, providing food according to national, religious, and other requirements should not pose a problem.

Easy to reach

There are two international airports, Tegel and Schönefeld. Both are well connected with the public transport system and hubs for international flights. The city is easy to reach from all continents by plane, and within Europe, also well connected to the railway systems. During the conference, the average visitor will not need a car. Berlin has an extensive network of underground lines, urban railway lines and buses making it possible to get around the city in a comfortable and easy way. A single ticket costs 2,10€ and 7-day-ticket can be bought for 26,20€. Public transports offer service on a 24/7 base. Cabs in Berlin costs 2,50€ initially and then you can expect to pay 1,50€ per kilometer.

Social Activities

Berlin offers lots of sights and attractions that attract millions of tourists every year. It will be an inspiring location for both the Free Software and the touristic aspects of the conference. Ideas for a day trip could be a guided tour along the former Berlin wall, a boat trip through the city, a beach party in one of the beach clubs along the Spree river, and lots more. A perfect choice for a social event would be c-base station, which has played host to several events organised by the Chaos Computer Club, Wikipedia/Wikimedia and others. The building itself is modelled after a space station and offers free wifi access. In any case, with a strong local team, finding the right ideas for social events should be easy.

Venue

Humboldt University has confirmed to host the event in its facilities, free of charge. Humboldt University is a very historic place in the heart of the city center. When you stand in front of it and look to your left, you will look through Brandenburg gate. The hotels and youth hostels will be located in walking distance or within short public transfer rides. The university will supply the rooms, and access to their dining halls. Judging the attractiveness of the location, it is both a very beautiful and historic

place, as well as a amazing center of creativity and research. In my opinion, it is about the most inspiring place that we can possibly find for the conference. When approaching the university representatives, we have been received very positive and with a lot of excitement. There is great motivation to support the event. Humboldt University will be able to host the event between August 8 and 27.

At Humboldt University, we will be provided with

- The Audimax, the central, largest hall of the university where the graduations take place. It seats 700 people.
- The cinema hall, seating 500 people.
- Two lecture halls, seating 280 and 300 people.
- In the second building directly attached to the main building, we will have access to another lecture hall seating 180 people, and to up to 15 lecture rooms seating between 20 and 80 people.

For your convenience, here is a link to a map of Humboldt University and the surrounding area in central Berlin: [Venue and surrounding area](#)

In the event of the conference receiving a greater level of registration than anticipated we have several other potential venues for hosting the keynote sessions: the technical university (1000 seats) and other venues including theatres and opera houses neighbouring the university.

Budget, Sponsors, Supporters

The Berlin Senate department for Commerce, Technology and Women's issues is supporting this proposal, as well as TSB, as stated above. One of the main costs, namely the one for the venue, will be covered by them. The local business networks will be approached to solicit sponsor donations towards the conference.

The Free Software Foundation Europe and SIBB the local IT-business association have also stated their support for this proposal. newthinking communications, the public project lead of Creative Commons Germany and organisers of the Berlin Buzzwords and re:publica conferences, will support the event with their PR channels and experiences in hosting conferences. KDAB Germany will support the local team with office and logistical support before the conference starts, the Openismus team has also indicated that they will support the event. And of course, we're also planning to work with the local Free Software groups and our extended network of supporters to assemble a great team of volunteers.

Local Team

The team that submitted the proposal currently consists of

- Caspar Clemens Mierau, Ubuntu member and c-base e.V. Board Member: Clemens is a Linux consultant, author and ubuntu community marketing specialist. He is a board member of c-base e.V., managed several Ubuntu release parties, the LinuxTag BBQ (200-300 visitors), and is involved in c-

base related event management (e.g. Maemo Developer Summit, Mozilla Labs, Chaos Communication Congress @ c-base) and many others.

- Claudia Rauch, KDE e.V. Business Manager, core organizing team member for Akademy 2008, the Gran Canaria Desktop Summit and Akademy 2010
- Mirko Boehm, KDE e.V. member and former KDE e.V. Board Member, Managing Director of KDAB Germany

The following other people have indicated that they will join the local team to prepare the conference:

- Kenny Dufus: Kenny organized the KDE conference in Glasgow in 2007, and was part of the Akademy team in every year since.
- Jos Poortvliet: Jos has taken care of the Akademy PR work in 2009 and 2010, and will do so again.
- Lydia Pinscher: Lydia is a long-term KDE contributor and coordinated the program committee work this year. She will take care of that in 2011 as well.
- Paul Adams: 4-year contributor to KDE and KDE e.V. Chairman of Akademy and also involved with organizing academic conferences in the past

Many more people have expressed their intention to help out, we can confirm their support once the proposal has been accepted and have specific tasks to assign.

PR and marketing activities for the event

The city of Berlin and TSB have offered their assistance with marketing the event via their various newsletters, press conferences, and press roaster. The Gnome and KDE PR communities will be involved from the beginning. The local team is connected to the PR groups of the local Free Software and industry networks.