

Ohio Linux Fest Columbus OH

2-3 October 2015

This is an annual event we all enjoy attending as ambassadors. Although the expo is only open for one day we all thoroughly enjoy. This year we have sufficient Ambassador Coverage. Attending ambassadors for this event included Ben Williams, Cathy Williams, Jamie Williams, Andrew Ward, and Julie Ward. The event was scheduled for two days, day one contained various talks and lectures and, day two reserved for talks and expo hall exhibits.

Ben, Cathy, and Jamie arrived Friday afternoon to scope the location and event venue out prior to the main event the next day. Andrew and Julie arrived the morning of the event to set up and commence the day's events. The event was located in the Greater Columbus Center downtown Columbus Ohio. The official expo hall booth was scheduled to be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Although the expo hall did not officially open until 9 a.m. we were set up and ready to go by 8 a.m. As usual even though the expo hall was not open until 9 a.m. we had customers already stopping by the booth taking media and asking questions. We came prepared with plenty of media and a small selection of swag which included some pens, stickers and case badges. We held off handing out the T shirts until about 2 p.m. We also had a few ball caps left that went to those who were enthusiastic about our product.



Once the day got started we saw a slow and steady increase of visitors to our booth. During the first sessions of talks showed a few more visitors waiting for later talks were hanging around the expo hall and steadily increased as the day went on. This event usually draws a large crowd and has a loyal showing of some usual visitors that we see year after year. Every event that I have been to, it seems that the OLPC draws some attention, in fact a lot of attention. Most visitors are not aware of what is actually running on the OLPC until we explain the parameters and installed software. Several of the visitors inquired on how to get one of the OLPC's.



Throughout the day the questions that we fielded were unique and differed from some of the other events I have attended. We received many of the usual questions that concern what's new with Fedora, and why should I use Fedora were some of the usual questions that we all answered during the event. But one did stick out

with me and the group. One visitor asked tell me why I should use Fedora over what I am already using. That question struck me that it was similar to the one we always get of why should I use Fedora. But the lead in question carried a different tone and began simple soon turned to a complicated and one sided question. Once we found out what the visitor was using as an operating system it became clear where this was heading. The individual was currently using Ubuntu and was very set in with what they had in place. I could see that this was going to be a difficult sell to get our product in their hand. Once we had got the actual reason why this individual was asking particularly difficult questions. We soon discovered that the person had become unhappy with the desktop environment he was currently using and was canvassing for a new operating system. We then began with the four foundations. Freedom was our selling point, since we offer more desktop environments than those of our competitors. Once we had this person's ear, we began with choices and showed the various desktops available. We also demonstrated the spins available such as the Fedora labs, and demonstrated that there were various options in design, scientific and security as well. In return we asked does your current operating system offer such a wide variety, the Freedom foundation is the basis for choice and Features drove many talking points with what is available in each spin. Then we got into the First of our four foundations, leading the way for our community. Friends were our final talking point with helping each other in solving problems. Once explained that if you need help there is a vast knowledge base that is accessible through many chat rooms, ask Fedora, and the vast array of mailing lists to get help. This person did pick up one of our media DVD's before leaving the table. If we were successful in showing this individual that there was more to offer and do with our product, we were successful in our job as an ambassadors.

The usual amount of questions for those who were already Fedora users did ask some interesting questions. In particular we were asked what the future was for Fedora. Our answer is that we were going to continue setting the example for all the others and lead.



We did manage to get some media to educational organizations during the event. A total of 3 boxes were given to three different educational organizations before the day was out. Most of our swag, T Shirts and media were gone by 430 p.m.

After a long day of talking to people, we wrapped up the event giving away approximately 300 DVD's, 3 boxes (450 pieces) of Media for education, about 2 hundred stickers, 100 case badges, and a whole lot of Fedora knowledge.



The event drew a fairly good crowd. I believe that throughout the day we had anywhere from 700 to 900 visit the event. The crowd did seem a little smaller than last year, and the venue was limited to one section down from the two we had the previous year. Even though smaller, the opportunity to spend more time in a one on one with people visiting the booth allowed us to explore and promote Fedora.

Some of the sponsors that were also present; HP, Expedient, SUSE, IBM, TekSystems, Pogo, FreeBSD, and Think Penguin. Fedora was represented with a vast diverse range of experience from novice to expert that really helped demonstrate the ease in which an everyday users showed they could use the applications with no issues to the experienced command line and terminal users.

I believe the Ohio Linux Fest was a complete and informative event for both linux enthusiasts and the novice computer user wanting a change from the windows environment.