

20 Impactful Indian Open Source Projects Recognised At Open Source India Week

Winners of "FOSS India Awards" display exemplary potential to bridge the digital divide and change the way the common India computes.

New Delhi, Delhi, February 22, 2008 /[India PRwire](#)/ -- Open source solutions and projects that can dramatically change the day-to-day lives of the average citizen were recognized at the conclusion of the recently held Open Source India Week 2008 (OSIW). Twenty of the best projects from entries received through the last one year, were declared winners of the **FOSS India Awards for 2008**. OSIW, India's largest Linux and Open Source conference and expo, formerly held under the banner of LinuxAsia for four years at Delhi, showcased solutions for business, mobility and human welfare.

Based on an idea seeded by Nandkumar Pradhan, CEO, Red Hat India, the Awards were instituted in January 2007 by the **Forum for Open Source Innovation in India** (FOSII) and *Linux for You* magazine, with the goal of recognising Indians' contributions to free and open source software, and to dispel the myth that India consumes more than it contributes to the free software world.

The primary criterion for evaluating the projects was the impact they would have on mankind, especially the role they would play in bridging the digital divide in India and their potential to change the way the average Indian computes. Community participation (or the potential to attract community participation, in the case of newly-launched projects) was another key criterion on which the 10-member jury evaluated the projects.

Close to 50 projects contended for the 20 awards, which were sponsored by the National Resource Centre for Open Source Software (NRCFOSS), a unit of CDAC. Said M.R. Rajagopalan, Director, NRCFOSS, "Through such incentives, NRCFOSS expects to stimulate young minds, encourage innovative contributions to the FOSS ecosystem and address the digital divide." Each of the 20 winners was awarded Rs 25,000.

The lead award was taken by "Hindawi", a project submitted by developers Abhishek Chaudhary and Sweta Chaudhary. Hindawi enables system level programming in Indic languages, shattering the myth that full-fledged systems programming is not feasible in non-English languages. "Let us think of our brothers and sisters who have not been privileged enough to go to English-medium schools. Even they have a right to benefit from the ICT revolution. Software is certainly being written for them, but we could liken that to a Mercedes car without a steering wheel. What it means is that the non-English software available today is of wonderful quality, like a Mercedes in the world of automobiles, but it only allows a user to perform a predetermined function... hence no steering wheel. Say the user wants to do something of his own desire, how does he do it? The answer lies in providing them with programming languages in their mother tongue. One in which even the highest levels of technical programs may be written, besides of course the simple ones. Hindawi is just that," say Abhishek and Sweta.

Other top honours were taken by the "Zmanda Recovery Manager", which simplifies the life of a database administrator with a simple-to-use yet robust recovery manager for the MySQL Server; and "Dhvani" – a framework to develop Indian Language text to speech systems – that works in Hindi, Kannada and Malayalam now.

Apart from its technical merits, Zmanda also has a social impact as its key developer K K George highlights: "There is also a social impact as this software is available for free from the company website. Most NGOs and government agencies today have websites and live data that is customer generated. Backup of these is extremely critical."

A spin-off of the Simputer project headed by Dr Ramesh Hariharan of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Dhvani displays an obviously great potential. "The project's primary focus is to enable accessibility features for physically-handicapped users. So, the users are Indians who want screen-readers in their own mother tongue. Separating out the illiterate, handicapped people will widen the digital divide. Access to information technology and its advantages has a vital role in their education and life. There are many text to speech systems in the market – free/open source and proprietary - but Dhvani is designed

only for addressing Indian languages and it is the first project of this kind,” says key developer Santosh Thottingal.

Other awardees included KDE 2.5 Hindi, the games and localisation spins of Fedora, etc. It is interesting to note that some of the projects were initiated, executed or supported by leading IT companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (WanEM) and Satyam Computers (JTrac). In a way, this indicates the role of free/open source software in the future of the IT industry.

Scorecard of the 20 winners

Project Score

Hindawi Indic Programming System 82.67

Zmanda Recover Manager for MySQL 78.25

Dhvani Indian Language Text to Speech System 76.00

Fedora (games and localization spins) 73.80

KDE 3.5 Hindi 72.50

MayaVi 71.33

Jtrac 69.67

DeepOfix 68.33

Tuxtype 67.33

WanEM 63.60

Mac4Lin 63.33

OpenLX 61.40

Anjuta 61.00

HarvestMan 60.00

Get it I say 59.00

KIWI-LTSP 57.67

Ffmpeginstall 57.33

Belenix 57.00

TVTK: Traited VTK 55.67

GNUSim8085 55.00

More information about the entries can be had from <http://www.openitis.com/openitis/project.php>

Notes to Editor

The Open Source India Week (formerly LinuxAsia) Conference and Expo is an initiative of the FOSII. The event is managed by the EFY Group, a multi-faceted media house, publishers of *LINUX for You* and *Electronics for You* magazines.

About FOSII

The Forum for Open Source Initiatives in India (FOSII) is a body that aims to accelerate the adoption of Open Source (OS) by fostering innovation and development within the country. Set up by a group of individuals from the Linux/Open Source community, its membership comprises senior industry professionals, technology journalists, enthusiasts, media-persons and others from the OS community.

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About NRCFOSS

The National Resource Centre for Free/Open Source Software (NRCFOSS) aims to contribute to the growth of FOSS in India through Research and Development, Human Resource Development, Networking and Entrepreneurship Development, as well as serve as the reference point for all FOSS related activities in the country. It is funded by the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), Govt. of India, and is being managed jointly by the Chennai division of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing(C-DAC) and AU-KBC Research Centre, Anna University, Chennai. C-DAC is an Autonomous Scientific Society of the DIT, Govt. of India and AU-KBC Research Centre is an Autonomous Research Centre of the Anna University.

About LINUX For You (LFY)

A monthly publication of the EFY Group, LFY caters to newbies, power-users, administrators, developers and those belonging to the IT industry. Its main goal is to enhance the return on investment (RoI) for organisations by deploying Linux and other open-source solutions. Accompanied by a CD, which carries source code, white-papers, software tools, Linux distributions, and even games -- the magazine aims to be a complete reference on open source in India.

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