Ohio Linux Festival, Columbus Ohio Oct 24-26, Greater Columbus Convention Center Main Venue section D.

Fedora Ambassadors report for Andrew Ward (award3535) and Julie Ward (jward78)

   We arrived at the Drury Friday afternoon and got settled into the room. We then checked on the event and got our registration stuff all taken care off that afternoon. I checked out where we needed to set up. We had the table right next to the Red Hat table. We were in a good location at the end or the isle for easy access for everyone to get to. This weekend the weather was good and there was not a cloud in the sky. We were hoping for a busy day on Saturday.

Registration Booth

   We got down to the venue at 0730 to get started on setting up. We were shortly joined by the Red Hat Folks and we were all set up by 815. We noticed that while we were getting set up that there were already a lot of people walking around waiting on the first talk session. There were almost no one there yet except us, Red Hat, and the BSD people. This proved to be a great advantage to get their attention. We didn't have anything that flashed, nor did we have any big presentation boards, we only had the product and a few simple items. That was more than enough for us, between the presentation and questions that got answered we did more than was was needed to make some hard core Debian users at least try fedora. That was a 100 percent success to us. The first talk was scheduled for 9 a. m. and we were all set and ready to go, and to say, we did. From 9 a. m. until 4 p. m. The two of us were extremely busy. A special thanks goes to Ricky Elrod (from the Dayton Ohio area) for helping out at the booth with us, an unexpected positive surprise. I had not checked the event wiki page a few days prior to the event. We left on Thursday morning to head up to Ohio, and Ricky had updated and volunteered. A great many thanks to him.

Booth Almost ready

By 930 a. m. the Fedora booth was about 4 deep waiting to get a look at our table. There was many questions posed to us about why should I switch from my current O/S, Ubuntu and Debian seemed to be the hard pressed distributions. Some individuals were very hard to discuss anything concerning Fedora, but if I got through to even one of them, I felt successful. What I found interesting was even though those few individuals who were hard to convince to a change to Fedora, they still picked up the free media anyway. There were other individuals (some of them those hard pressed Debian individuals) were also asking questions about Fedora were unaware of the other media available to them as well. \

The focus seemed to be on GNOME with the default was not what they were looking for, I then explained that there are many others available to them on the DVD or for down load that included KDE, LXDE, and XFCE. That surely got their attention, so I presented that they should try it before making a judgment call on Fedora. That was enough to get those individuals to pick up the multimedia DVD. Again success in getting the word out to others about the diversity of the product we offer.

The morning was going by so fast, we both felt exhausted by 1030 a. m. I had 300 multimedia DVDs that came with me and by 1030 a. m. they were all gone. Lucky Nick Bebout had mailed to boxes to us that arrived at 1145 a. m. In the mean time, the Linux Pro Magazine that featured Fedora to replace the old windows XP came in quite handy. The magazine included an in-depth look at the Fedora, and a installation guide for novice users. This was a wonderful tool for us to use, made great advantage with novice and mid range users, and which in turn we also handed out all of the magazines that we had. I believe that we had over 400 of the magazines and every one of them went. The last one left the table at 4 p. m. I also had approximately 40 USB Keys from the last two events, since I had no multimedia DVDs at the time I handed those out also turn out to be a hit at the table. I would ask a question along the nature of what they were currently using and why, I would then ask what would make it easier for them to at least try Fedora, I got a wide variety of answers but when they found that I would hand them a USB key, their attitude changed quite quickly. Even though they were happy with what they had, a

simple USB Key turned things around.

One the resupply arrived, we went through another entire box that approximately contained 150.

Some of the other vendors in attendance was Chef, HP, Linode, POGO, the Local Ohio Python Group just to name a few.
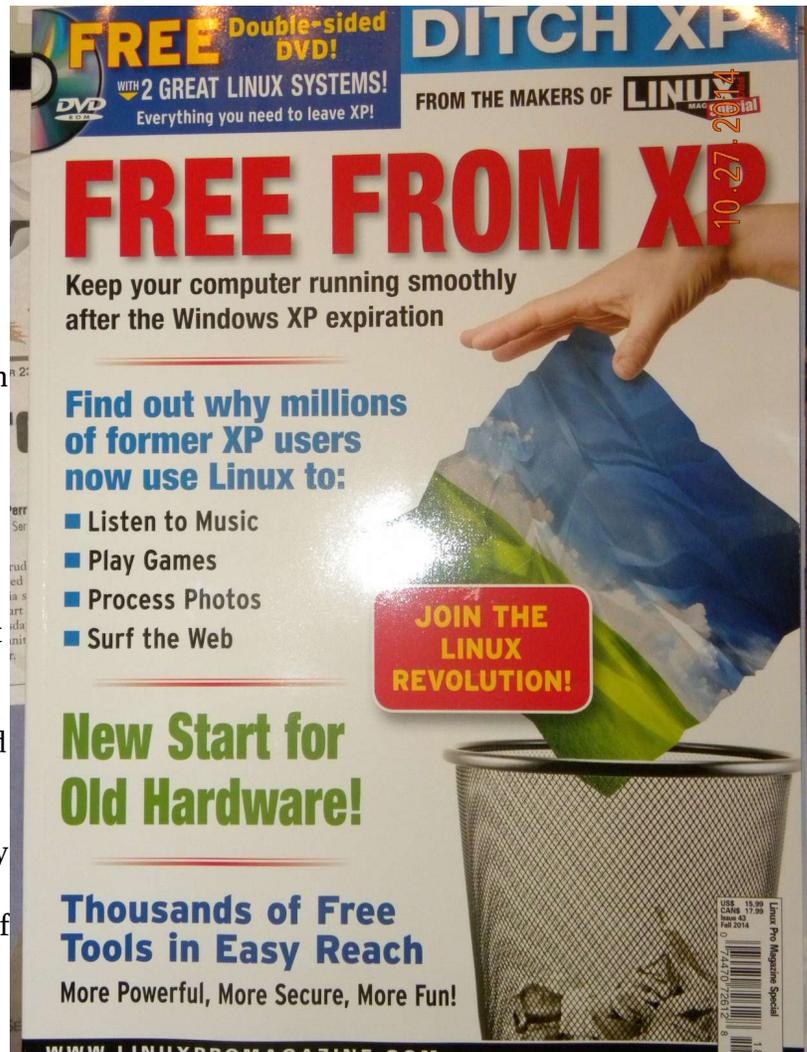
Since the day began we were ready for anything that could be thrown at us, I believe the attendance was approximately 2000 if not more. Since before the booth opened we began to see a steady inflow of people. I can only speculate but here is what we believe that was given out, about 450 Multimedia DVD's, 60 pens, over 500 stickers, 300 case badges, 200 small Fedora pin on buttons, 40 USB Keys, 60 t shirts, all of the LinuxPro Magazines (about 200 or so, maybe more)2 ball caps, 50 tattoos, and the last of the Beefy Miracles. For some reason our booth again seemed to be the most popular in-site. Julie noted that the more items that were on your table for presentation or the more SWAG definitely attracted more people to the tables. In this case she kept a stocked table ensuring that the attraction to the Fedora table continued.

Julie also noted that the facility did not provide enough trash receptacles throughout the venue. To get to a trash can we either had to leave the area or go to the other side where there was one trash can which half was dedicated to recycling materials.

Some of the questions that were asked about Fedora were quite common and some were not so obvious. For some people changing from what they are already using is not an easy task, but for others seamless. There were a few questions that concerned me but I believe they were answered. The most difficult question to answer came about the back support of previous releases. They did not want to be tied to a 12 month or so required upgrade. I pointed them out to our website and towards fedup. The biggest concern was the moving of data back and forth to satisfy new loads of the O/S. That seems to be the main concern of the faithful users of Fedora I spoke with. They were for the most part unaware that they did not need to keep moving data off the machine, but of course I recommended a back up prior to executing just to be safe. There were more than the fair

LinuxPro Magazine that Featured FEDORA as an alternative to XP

share of "why should I change from my current O/S (Debian,Ubuntu) to Fedora"? We did our best to answer everyone of those why should I use Fedora questions, but even those hardcore other distribution people still picked up one of our Multimedia Dvd's, funny how that works.

One person during this event stood out with a few questions. A man from the western part of Kentucky wanted to know if we could give him a few multimedia DVD's so that he could bring them home to his part of the state. He was a local television broadcaster (media personality) with the local TV station in his area. He also asked that if he contacted us would we be willing to send him more of the DVD's. He proceeded to tell me why. This person was trying to get his community involved with some new ideas in computing. There has been a lot of job loss in his area and a lot of really down people trying to get out of and try some new ideas for jobs, hobbies, and skills. I was

more than happy to aide him in is request. He also asked if there were to be an event scheduled in his area would we as Fedora be willing to attend (invited). I let him know that we could surely ask when the time came to make the invite for Fedora through the website or get a hold of an Ambassador to get the request on the schedule. This may turn into a good opportunity to distribute more and help others learn about Linux.

This is all we had left at 430 P. M.

We had a lot more than usual stop by and tell us how much they loved Fedora. We kept getting compliments all day long about how Fedora has been such a great Operating System for them. That was quite pleasing to hear. This was a very successful event for Fedora. I am looking forward to going again next year to Ohio Linux Fest.