

Canary Islands to host 2009 KDE-GNOME joint desktop meeting

KDE and GNOME have teamed up for a combined desktop meeting in 2009. The event, which will draw a significant number of open source software community members, will be held at Gran Canaria.

By Troy Unrau | Last updated July 14, 2008 3:05 PM CT

In past years, KDE and GNOME have each had one major annual conference, Akademy and GUADEC, respectively. While these conferences are not run in exactly the same way, the KDE e.V. and the GNOME Foundation boards solicited proposals to host a joint conference for 2009. This new conference will encompass both Akademy and GUADEC to encourage cross-desktop communication and development. Three good proposals were received, and after some consideration by the membership and boards of their respective non-profit councils, the Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain proposal was selected and will be known as the Gran Canaria Desktop Meeting. The event will occur in the first week of July, 2009.

"This is going to be a humongous event. Not the biggest in terms of numbers of attendees or vendor floor, but it's a big event in historic importance -- bringing the two big Free Desktop project conferences together in a joint or co-located week of free exchange of ideas, implementations and of getting work done on each individual project," KDE e.V. vice president Adriaan de Groot told Ars. "The eight and a half days of the conference make it longer than previous events and the breadth of planned activities is impressive as well: it's not just one community conference, or even two together, but also a Free Software event for the entire islands group. That is important for bringing new people into the Free Software desktop community; in turn, that's good for maintaining a vibrant and healthy community in the long-term."

This sentiment is echoed by Behdad Esfahbod, president of the GNOME Foundation. "We're looking forward to having the opportunity to extend those relationships to our KDE colleagues at Akademy/GUADEC," Esfahbod wrote in a statement.

Feedback from within the KDE and GNOME communities has been very positive about this planned event, as it will potentially bring thousands of free desktop developers and enthusiasts to one place to plot, plan, and hack. Additionally, some Linux distributors have been discussing canceling their distro-specific events to send their entire team of developers to the combined event. This event has the right elements in place to make it the biggest developer meeting in the history of FOSS development.

Of course, there are many reasons why this event is going to the Canary Islands, and it's not just because it's warm. The local organization team is pitching in 250,000€ to help cover the costs of the event. FOSS is booming in the Canary Islands, with the schools and governments using FOSS software everywhere. Their commitment to improving the software they use is quite visible in their government's vested interest in this event. The event itself is being organized by their Secretary of Tourism, Technological Innovation and Foreign Trade.

Having attended several free-software developer events in the past, I am certainly looking forward to this one with much anticipation.

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