

# AWARD WINNERS!



No red carpet, no revealing frocks and no boring speeches, but plenty of recognition for a job well done – it's the *Linux Format* awards.

**B**ack in LXF35 we printed the shortlist for the *Linux Format* Awards 2002. The list of nominations came from our website, where many hundreds had put forward

their favourites for selection in the named categories. A few months of frantic voting has followed, but now the virtual ballot boxes have been opened, the votes counted and it's time to announce the winners!

These are, to the best of our knowledge, the only Linux awards nominated and voted for entirely by the readership of a publication, so winning them is a great source of pride, and a small reward for those who have toiled

hard over the year for the good of the Linux community as a whole. And give yourself a pat on the back for taking the time to vote. All we need to round things off are some uncomfortable truths from a famous documentary maker...

## BEST GAME

**It's easy to think that the Linux faithful don't have time to play games, but nothing could be further from the truth – the people that do play games on Linux seem to be up there with the most itchy trigger-fingered fanatics on any platform. In recent years, the demise of Loki has been a blow to Linux gaming**

generally, but the game releases are still coming, both from the Open Source and proprietary sectors. This is borne out by the nominations in this category, which included a little of everything.

In the end there has to be a winner though, and in this category it seems that nothing could stop the

momentum of *Unreal Tournament 2003*. In spite of being a 'stealth' release (there was no mention of Linux compatibility on the box, and the installer is hidden on disk three), *UT2003* managed a massive 39% of the vote. Second place goes to the addictive *Frozen Bubble* game, which managed 29% of overall votes cast.



## BEST SUPPORT RESOURCE

**Finding good, accurate, and reliable support for your various Linux problems isn't as hard as it once was, but it's still worth recognising those who provide these services with an award. Many thanks to you all for the massive number of nominations for *Linux Format* and the LXF website in this category, but we felt uncomfortable putting these through to the voting stage, as the success of our site**

depends equally on the readers as it does the magazine and its staff.

The major distros were represented by their respected support sites and services, and the voting reflected their popularity from the distro category.

Last year's winner became this year's runner-up. The Linux Documentation Project continues to play host to the widest range of HOWTOs available, providing an

indispensable reference resource for all Linux users.

The surprise newcomer in this category romped home to victory. And in some ways, they owe their success to the other nominees here, and everyone in the Linux community who has ever posted an answer to a users question. The overwhelming winners here are Google! With such a wide array of material already available on the

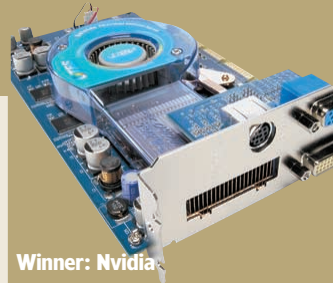
internet, many people are finding that the answer to their question is already out there somewhere, and to get a quick answer without causing any trouble to anyone else, all they need to do is search for it. Google's newsgroup search engine, as well as the main search site make this a quick and surprisingly reliable way of getting the right answers, though of course, it really is just a front end to the resources built by others.

## BEST HARDWARE SUPPORT

**This was a difficult category,** because it meant different things to different people. The nominations seemed to follow the line that proper hardware support meant good drivers for products, and consequently Nvidia, Matrox and others made their presence felt. For others it meant expanding Linux onto new architectures, servers or processors, which seemed to have been behind the support for IBM, Intel, AMD and others. From the beginning, it could have been anyone's award.

In the end the award went to Nvidia, by a large margin (42%). The driver support for its graphics chipsets is pretty good, and using the unified architecture on Linux just makes things easier. Nvidia has come in for some criticism for keeping the drivers closed source, but in the end there are so many ways to install them, and they work so well that it can be (almost) excused by most.

IBM was a worthy runner up in this category, one of the many they received nominations for!



Winner: Nvidia



Runner up: IBM

## BEST SERVER SOFTWARE

**This was a fairly open category in** that many different products and projects could have been, and were, nominated. From web servers to databases and mail servers, nominations poured in, but in fact the main contenders for this category became clear early on.

MySQL has made a huge impact on the web, and are a company transformed since its relatively recent (2000) entry into the Open Source world. While many nominated the PostgreSQL database, it didn't get quite enough votes to make it to the shortlist. *Qmail* and *Postfix* both did though, along with the excellent *Samba*, which has grown in

usefulness and importance in recent times. So many people seemed to depend on *Samba* that it narrowly pipped MySQL to the second place spot with 22% of the vote.

The triumphant winner though, with just 10 votes short of a full 50% share of all the votes cast, was none other than the *Apache HTTP Server, version 2*. An update to the old 1.3.x series was perhaps overdue, but the developers used this as an opportunity to add loads of fundamentally important features. As well as IPv6 support, *Apache 2* works with POSIX thread support and offers a range of engine options to get the best performance from the processor configuration you



Winner: Apache



Runner up: Samba

are running on. A new API and module structure allows for more complex modules and less problems with loading orders. Filters allow multi-pass processing of content streams. As well as all this, it's actually easier to build and configure too.

## BEST DEVELOPMENT TOOL

**For many Linux users, the real** strength of the operating system is in its rich development environment. A plethora of tools, IDEs and languages compete for the coders attention, so this was always going to be a category where people made their opinions known. Excellent IDEs such as *Anjuta*, *Kylix* and *Kdevelop* had a very good showing, particularly the latter, which has shown tremendous improvement over the last year (and *Gideon* looks pretty good too).

The virtually indispensable *autoconf/automake* tools also had a fairly strong showing in the polls. In the end though, the award went to the particular development tool without which the others probably wouldn't exist – the *GCC* compiler suite – which won't be a surprise to many *Linux Format* readers.

It has been a year of transition for *GCC*, as it moved towards the 3.2 base. This wasn't without problems for some distribution vendors, but now we're at the other side, and the enhanced features and performance have been well worth the effort. *GCC* deservedly romped this category, with 40% of the vote.

## BEST LINUX ADVOCACY

**The title of 'Best Linux Advocate'** must surely be an ego boost if nothing else. This is an award which recognises the selfless efforts to promote the Linux OS and all things associated with it.

The nominees this year followed a familiar pattern. Leading light of the Free Software movement Richard M Stallman was a cert for the shortlist, as was kernel veteran and welsh-speaking diary maintainer Alan Cox,

both of whom are pretty active members of the Linux community. Even though he lost his job at HP, Bruce Perens must have taken some solace from his nomination, his showing in the polls no doubt boosted by his DVD-playing antics.

In the end though, this category was narrowly won by a complete newcomer to this category. In a further break from tradition, it isn't an individual either, but a corporation,

and indeed, one not involved even slightly in the creation or promotion of the Linux OS. Quite the reverse in fact, for their name is Microsoft.

Nominated for the compelling speeches by management figures (Balmer *et al*), the real reason for their popularity in this category seems to have been the new licensing model, which aims to deliver a friendly and flexible but regular and reliable way to transfer



Thanks for all your hard work Bill and co. Same time next year?!

customers wealth to the Redmond-based company. With 38% of the vote, Microsoft is Linux's best advocate for 2002.

# Awards2002

## « BEST DESKTOP APPLICATION

**This is another category** where thousands of software projects could have been nominated, from window managers to the sort of cool apps that make it worthwhile running Linux.

*Fluxbox* made the shortlist, but all the others were, maybe unsurprisingly, graphics and multimedia app. *XMMS* may have been around for some time but it still manages to lead the pack for small, easy-to-use audio players. *Mplayer* and *Xine* both featured in the shortlist and also polled strongly, with the nod going to *Mplayer* at the moment in the battle of the media players. Both *Xine* and *Mplayer* have had a lot of development during 2002, and have really excelled in supporting, in a flexible way, the myriad of formats and codecs in use.

The winner in this category, with 37% of the vote though, is *The GIMP*. In many ways, this has been one of the 'flagship' free software applications. For as long as anyone can remember



Winner: *The GIMP*

(well, at least for as long as we can, your mileage may vary), *The GIMP* has been hailed as an example of how you don't need a proprietary OS and software to be able to 'do real stuff'. Although it isn't everyone's idea of a well-rounded piece of desktop software, there is no denying its features and robustness, which has pretty much dominated the graphics creation arena to the extent that there are few competitors. Development continues, and the latest developer release of the GIMP includes new dialogs using a tree view structure.

## BEST ISP OR HOST

**This is a new category** for the awards this time around so pretty much anything could have happened. There were a huge range of nominations here, and we accepted hosting services, resellers and ISPs for nomination in this category. There were so many different nominations with similar levels of support that we extended the shortlist in this category to cover the most popular eight.

Being a good ISP is one of those areas of life where often you'll find if you are doing a good job, people just don't notice you. On the other hand, when they run into difficulties, they expect rapid and positive results. For Linux users, they also expect their ISP to be aware of Linux issues, and to be able to provide at least some level support.

While there was ultimately a winner in this category, it wasn't a conclusive victory, with the vote split

almost equally between the top four. Polling slightly lower than the main group were Telewest, possibly due to the limited extent of their coverage; perhaps not surprisingly, given the recent capping controversy, NTL weren't even among those ISPs nominated. Speakeasy, Rackspace, and Freeserve all received fairly even shares, with Demon and UKLinux.net just inching ahead. In the end the nod went to UKLinux.net with 20% overall, but there really were only a handful of votes in it.



Winner: *UKLinux.net*

## BEST OFFICE SOFTWARE

**At first glance this may seem to** be a narrow category, but we encouraged and received nominations for any app used as part of a corporate desktop environment. The main office suites won out in the shortlist, but in the company of *Evolution*, which certainly lived up to some of its early hype.

This category also saw one of the still rare proprietary entries in the form of *Crossover Office*. Based on Codeweavers implementation of *Wine*, the *Crossover Office* has been a great boon for those who want to switch to Linux but have a desperate need for some *MS Office* functions and compatibility not yet provided on Linux (eg macro-intensive spreadsheets, or custom *Access* databases).

The loose confederation of GNOME office applications, which includes the excellent *Gnumeric*, and the venerable but still functionally incomplete *KOffice* struggled for

OpenOffice.org 1.0

Winner: *OpenOffice.org*

second place, though they both lost out eventually, after a few recounts, to *Evolution*, which achieved the worthy runner up spot in this category.

The outright winner probably won't come as a big surprise. We say that because the great majority of you voted for it, in one of the best represented categories in the whole awards (less than 10% of voters declined to pick an option in this category). In the end it achieved a massive 69% of all the votes cast, which only goes to show how much you all like *OpenOffice.org*. *OOo* as we like to call it, has rocketed from the newcomer spot to the most popular office software in a very short space of time. It has done this mainly by being very good indeed.

## BEST INTERNET SOFTWARE

**This category was slightly** adjusted from previous years to allow for more than just web browsers, but unsurprisingly they still dominated the nominations and the voting. The exception was the *GAIM* instant messaging client, which had a pretty good showing in the voting, given that it was up against much more widely used software.

Four browsers dominated the voting though. Towards the rear of the field were *Opera* and *Galeon*. *Opera* had a better showing than last year in this category, and certainly seems to be getting more popular with Linux users. We expect the main reason for choosing other browsers here is that *Opera* is not Open Source. *Galeon*, the lightweight reworking of *Mozilla* also had a strong showing.

*Konqueror* has improved by leaps and bounds over the last year, and is sure to increase in popularity again this year thanks to the great



Winner: *Mozilla*

improvements in *KDE 3.1*. As a file-manager and web browser it manages a degree of integration with the desktop environment (understandably) far in advance of anything you could expect from the others in this category. With 24% of the vote, it was the worthy runner up.

The runaway winner in this category was, as last year, *Mozilla* itself. Since the 1.0 release, the developers have proved that they still have the desire and ability to build on top of this base and provide more features and greater usability to a demanding audience. We're sure that with the release of 1.3, we'll probably be seeing *Mozilla* in next year's awards too.



## BEST TEA/COFFEE

**Apparently you can't be a proper** Linux hacker without consuming a lot of hot caffeine-based beverages. This category was originally Best Coffee, but we had to change it due to the sheer number of nominations for types of tea (that's Linux users for you). This was a pretty close race, with PG Tips putting in a good showing for the leaf-based drinks and ending up

with a very respectable 21% of the vote. Inching ahead of them were two competing coffee brands. Lavazza beaten into second place by Cafédirect, the Fairtrade coffee. We suspect that their ideology of paying more money to the (often impoverished) bean growers struck a chord with Linux idealists, who gave them their winning 25% of the vote.



Find out more about Fair Trade coffee, tea and cocoa at [www.cafedirect.co.uk](http://www.cafedirect.co.uk)

## BEST DISTRIBUTION

**Another category that attracts a** large response, and a lot of discussion throughout the rest of the year. As the fundamental differences between distributions are quite small, this usually comes down to personal preference. Is the installer easy to use? Are the configuration tools comprehensive? Does it have the best possible support for your hardware?

Although Slackware and Libranet did get a reasonable showing in the polls, this was pretty much a four horse race between the main Linux distributions – Red Hat, SuSE, Mandrake and Debian.

Debian has long been a favourite amongst the LXF team and seems to have picked up quite a lot of support in the last year. The fact that it is based on a charitable organisation

structure may explain why Debian has a very different way of approaching the market. Different package support (once you get the hang of apt, it is hard to live without) and a rather different approach to the speed of new releases are the main differentiators here. It is said to be harder to get to grips with than most, but it just managed to pip SuSE for third place and wasn't that far behind Red Hat.

The overall winner here was Mandrake. Very much at the leading/bleeding edge of the Linux scene, Mandrake has always tried to include the very latest available software and release regular new versions. But it isn't all about the package selection, but also the effort that goes into the installer and tools that make Mandrake stand out.



Winner:  
Mandrake

## EMBEDDED AWARD

**The embedded arena may often** be overlooked, but it's one where Linux has made stunning inroads in the last few years. This award should go to those who have done the most to promote and adapt Linux in this demanding marketplace. Last year this award was dominated by actual devices, whereas this year the nominations have leant more to the underlying technologies, with the likes of Montavista, uClinux and Bayonne being represented. The awards were pretty close amongst the runners up,

Winner:  
Trolltech Qtopia

but a clear winner emerged. Providing the power behind the Sharp Zaurus, and extending their reach further into the embedded market, Trolltech's Qtopia environment has proved a real winner, not the least because it allows Qt code to be easily repurposed on the smallest of devices. We'll have more of Qtopia in a future issue, but for the meantime, well done Trolltech!



## ENTERPRISE AWARD

**The enterprise award is a new** category this year, to recognise the achievements of those pushing Linux as an Enterprise platform. This can take many different forms, from development of software, contributions to the kernel or just sheer marketing muscle applied to this area. Nominees here included Intel, HP, Sun and even

United Linux, but the outright winner, with its fingers in many pies and possibly the biggest force pushing Linux forward in high-end enterprise was, according to your votes, IBM. From its facilities partnerships, development work, code contributions, and initiatives in promoting Linux on 'Big Iron', it is thoroughly deserved.

## FREE SOFTWARE PROJECT OF THE YEAR

**The final category is surely the** most prestigious. Entry requirements are simple – which free software project was the best? It's no surprise that the shortlist contained nominees and winners from other categories, and some nominees from last year.

GNOME and Wine both featured, but GNOME will probably fare better in the next awards if the great features of GNOME 2.2 are anything to go by. Apache 2 also put in a spirited performance. The winner of our Internet category, Mozilla, got third place overall with just over 18% of the total votes cast in this category (which as you might expect was the).

OpenOffice.org, ended up a fairly close second place. Consistent good performance in polls for this software just underlines how good it is, and how much work has gone into it.



Winner: KDE

The winner though, for the second year in a row, was KDE. The project involves a lot of developers working on a lot of different projects. From docs and artwork to solid C coding, from applets and utilities to complex apps, the KDE project encompasses a lot of code and a lot of effort. This probably explains why it just keeps getting better in all sorts of ways, and as you have proved with your votes, that is the opinion of the Linux community as a whole. Congratulations to KDE, and to all our winners! May you all be inspired to surpass yourselves once again over the next 12 months.