
OSGeo Journal

The Journal of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation

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Community Event Reports

Events of the OSGeo India Chapter

by V.Ravi Kumar

Free and Open Source Software In Science

4-6 January, 2007, Union Christian College, Alwaye, Kochi

In this programme by an educational institution, the participants were introduced to Free and Open Source GIS software, and the organisations that promote them. A dataset prepared for the city of Hyderabad, using freely available satellite imagery along with free downloads of SRTM data was demonstrated by V.Ravi Kumar, emphasising FOSS GIS. For more information see the online report of the course.¹

OSGeo Workshop

22-25 January, 2007, Map World Forum, Hyderabad

The very first OSGeo India Workshop was held at the Map World Forum, Hyderabad 22-25 January 2007. This well attended event was also attended by OSGeo delegates from China, Vietnam and Japan. This event has been covered in several other reports.²

National Conference on Biodiversity Conservation

8-10 February, 2007, Osmania University

The National Conference on Biodiversity Conservation and Human Well-Being was organized by Department of Zoology, Osmania University and co-sponsored by SACON Deccan Regional Station, Hyderabad. The conference was held at Osmania University, February 8-10, 2007.

SACON conducted a workshop on Wetland Informatics. It was aimed to address some of the issues related to spatial information generation, processing and data base design, dissemination and software development. In this workshop SACON presented the *Wetlands of India* website and its future with the extensive use of FOSS tools.

V.Ravi Kumar, Joint Secretary of the OSGeo India Chapter presented about the various FOSS4G's GIS software and their use, taking the City of Hyderabad as an example. Prof K.S.Rajan, Treasurer of OSGeo India chapter also actively participated in the proceedings. P.K.Sinha and A.V.Satya Kumar demonstrated FOSS GIS by showing OpenJUMP and its user-friendly capabilities in performing vector GIS

¹Free and Open Source Software In Science site: <http://www.space-kerala.org/fsc/index.php/Fsc/FreeAndOpenSourceGIS>

²OSGeo India Workshop event coverage in Geospatial blog: http://geospatial.blogs.com/geospatial/2007/01/map_world_forum.html, GIS Development Magazine: <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/magazine/years/2007/march/46.htm>, OSGeo Journal: http://www.osgeo.org/files/journal/final_pdfs/OSGeo_vol1_Events.pdf

tasks like onscreen digitization of raster images into a shape file with attribution.

National Convention On Free Software

3-4 March, 2007, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

The National Convention On Free Software event included a session on *Geospatial data*. Dr. K.S.Rajan, and V.Ravi Kumar of OSGeo India chapter, presented *OSGeo Philosophy*, and Open Source GIS alternatives respectively, which was attended by Free Software Foundation (FSF) enthusiasts from around the country.³

Geohorizon 2007 Symposium

16-17 March, 2007, Anna University, Chennai

Society of Geoinformatics Engineering at Anna University⁴, Chennai, conducted a two-day Geohorizon 2007 Symposium.

There were four participants from the OSGeo India chapter, two on each day. Sri Neeraj Deekshith of Autodesk India and Santosh Gaekwad of SACON Hyderabad, presented use of Open Source Geospatial software in their organisations.

Mr V.Ravi Kumar, and Mrs Mahalakshmi Narayanan presented *Open Source GIS Galore*, and *Open Source GIS for web-services* respectively.

Santosh Gaikwad presented the use of GeoServer for Internet mapping of Wetlands of India. He delivered the SACON's experience while studying GeoServer – a open source server for Web-GIS. Use of uDig and GeoServer for publishing vector or raster maps onto web by storing the spatial data into Post-GIS was also demonstrated.

OSGeo Workshop

11 May, 2007, GIS Development, Noida

This one day OSGeo India workshop was held at, *GIS Development*, Noida (Delhi) with participants from the Indian geospatial community. They represented organizations such as the National Remote Sensing Agency, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Tata Consultancy

Servicesv (TCS), MapInfo, Adroitec, GIS Consortium, Eicher, 5Map, Infosys, Autodesk, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, and Bharti Vidyapeeth's Institute of Computer Applications and Management (BVICAM).

The workshop was opened by OSGeo India representative Dr. P.S.Roy, gave the opening remark that, "*GIS has emerged as an important technology tool. GIS initiatives need to be upscaled in terms of outreach and this is where OSGeo comes into play.*" One of the most important objectives, from an Indian context, is to convert the free GIS tools like GRASS and MapServer into local vernacular languages to form a large interest group. Dr. Roy also elaborated upon some of the noteworthy initiatives taken by organizations in India in the open source domain.

Mr. V. Ravi Kumar, who is a founding member of OSGeo India, spoke about various FOSS GIS tools, such as GRASS, Quantum GIS, uDig, OpenJUMP – all available today. The demonstration on *Locating a Nuclear Power Plant*, using OpenJUMP, was not only interesting but also testified to how FOSS GIS can be equally useful as commercial GIS software. Ravi Kumar also talked at length about utility of FOSS GIS in India. The most pertinent point raised by him was that FOSS GIS is cost effective and can, therefore, become popular in a developing country like India. It can also provide employment through promotion of Village Cadastral GIS where all that one has to pay for is a branded computer (available for less than Rs.20,000) as no cost is incurred on the software because it is, free and open.

Sridhar Saraswati of Autodesk India, also gave a presentation, which answered a vital question – why is Autodesk supporting free and open source software? The reason is that firstly, Autodesk wants a broader adoption of Internet mapping technology and secondly, FOSS would create higher demand for related products. It would also be beneficial for the customers as the frequency of software releases will increase, cost of ownership will come down and there will be more innovation and support for standards.

Satyajit Rath from CDAC, Noida presented *CDAC's Initiatives on Open Source GIS*. A talk entitled *Geospatial Convergence with Open Source* was presented by Amit Jain, of Infosys. The workshop came to an end with the closing remarks by Dr. P.S Roy. He expressed hope that "*commercial software should invest in open source to make it a win-win situation for all.*"

³National Convention On Free Software: <http://www.swecha.org/node/29>

⁴Society of Geoinformatics Engineering: <http://societyofgeoinformaticsenigneers.blogspot.com/index.html>

OSGeo Capacity Building Workshop

26-28 June, 2007, Salim Ali Centre For Ornithology & Natural History (SACON), Hyderabad

The OSGeo India Chapter conducted its 1st Capacity Building 3 day workshop. The workshop was attended by 18 participants from NIC, NRSA, IIIT, Spec Systems, Army and Survey of India. All the participants were conversant with commercial GIS software and were eager to be acquainted with FOSS alternatives.

The 1st day included demonstration and hands-on practice with OpenJUMP GIS and map composition through Inkscape. The 2nd day was devoted to ILWIS GIS through raster analysis and generation of a stereo pair and 3D visualization. The 3rd day was for using GRASS GIS for network analysis and the creation of 3D visualisation and fly-throughs. The participants were shown how one can join the OSGeo as a member and help spread the awareness. The resource persons were from Geological Survey

of India.

Open Source GIS Lecture

A two hour lecture and demonstration of *Open Source GIS GALORE*, was presented by V.Ravi Kumar of OSGeo India, for the students of Geoinformatics post graduation course Nannaya University, Rajahmundry on 3 July, 2007. GRASS GIS and OpenJUMP were demonstrated using sample data. The students who could interact well in the question and answer session were presented with GRASS 6.2 Live CDs.

Photographs

Several event photographs are available online.⁵

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Géoévénement 2007

by Yves Jacolin

Géoévénement is the annual French geomatics tradeshow. In 2007, it took place at **Porte de Versailles** in Paris. It offered booth exhibits, thematic presentations and Birds of a Feather sessions. This year, more than 35 companies had a booth of which 13 were from the open source community. These 13 companies created an open source village which provided more than 30 free presentations, free as in free beer and in free mind. Some companies proposed workshops about Mapserver, CartoWeb and OpenLayers installation.

OSGeo participated in this village with a booth and two presentations. There was also a Birds of a Feather (BoF) meeting about starting an OSGeo Francophone Local Chapter. Topics discussed included: how to organise it, how to manage the election of officers, which organisations need to be contacted, etc.

⁵Event photographs: <http://www.kodakgallery.com/I.jsp?c=cjns10h3.batchqkn&x=0&y=o6f4mq>

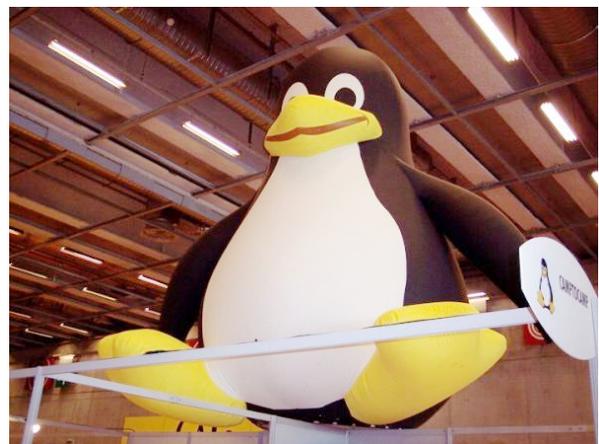


Figure 1: Tux welcomed people in the Open Source Village

This report aims at presenting the results of the booth, presentations and BoF. First of all, here is a presentation of the Francophone Local Chapter.

The Francophone Local Chapter

The idea of creating a Francophone Local Chapter first emerged at FOSS4G 2006, Lausanne. In October 2006 the Francophone mailing list and the Francophone wiki page were created. People subscribed to the mailing list and the number of members grew to more than 75 people (still growing). Following the Local Chapter Guidelines, the next step, after the self-organisation, is to define the group's missions. Here they are:

Free Organisation

- Create a portal for the Francophone users of open source geomatics (data, software, jobs, ...)
- Set up meetings and tradeshows
- Promote OSGeo and its missions

Free Data

- Promote open source licensing
- Host, share and create free data

Free Software

- Promote and demonstrate open source software
- Localise/translate software
- Translate and share documentation
- Provide support in French (mailing-list and forum)

For more on the activities of the Francophone Local Chapter, see the Local Chapter Reports section of this Journal.

Promotion of OSGeo

Exhibition Booth

The Francophone Local Chapter put up an exhibition booth to promote the OSGeo mission and its hosted projects. We focused on FOSS and missions promotion rather than demonstrate some projects which will be possible next time using some LiveCD (i.e. Omniverdi LiveCD⁶, Geolive⁷). In order to promote OSGeo missions and projects the Francophone Local Chapter ran a *sprint translation* project to translate the OSGeo Flyer,⁸ created a poster and showed a presentation on two laptops.

The booth welcomed a continuous stream of people who showed a lot of interest in the OSGeo and its projects, here are some frequently asked questions:

- What is OSGeo?
- Is OSGeo different than AFIGEO? (AFIGEO is a French geomatics association)
- What is the difference between OSGeo and OGC?
- Do I have to pay something or subscribe to become an OSGeo member?
- How can I contribute?
 - How can I find what help is needed?
 - Where can I learn how to contribute?
 - Who should I contact?
- Do you have some project demonstrations on LiveCD or anywhere?
- Do you have any examples of projects?
 - Example of contribution?
 - Example of funding projects?
- What is the equivalent of MapInfo/*Cartes et Bases* in Open Source? (*Cartes et Base* is a proprietary GIS analysis tool)
- Do you think you will create a summary of projects with a comparison of each?
- Does a simple tool exist to create a WMS web service?
- Does OSGeo plan to provide training?
- Does OSGeo fund any external projects?

Some questions focused on the migration from proprietary software to FOSS and to learn if this software is good enough for their use, if they can find some training, etc.

Birds of a Feather (BoF) Meeting

This meeting took place at the GéoCafé (an open central place in the tradeshow) on the Wednesday 4th of April at 14h00. About 20 people participated. The content included an OSGeo Presentation, Presentation of Local Chapters and the development of the Francophone one. Discussion also included:

- How can we organise ourselves? Organisation, election, ...
- Who can help support the Francophone Chapter? Contact some associations that share common missions (join, organise, structure, ...)

⁶<http://livecd.omniverdi.org/index.php?page=LiveCD&toc=livecd>

⁷<http://geolive.cartography.st/geolive/wiki/FrenchDesc>

⁸OSGeo Fliers: <http://www.osgeo.org/visibility>

Topics of the meeting were free and was larger than expected.



Figure 2: A presentation at the Open Source Village

Some ideas discussed on the Francophone mailing list were accepted: companies have the same place as inside OSGeo (sponsor role), members are only physical individual people. Others ideas were proposed, such as, the creation of a webring which can promote each other and running a poll to know more about user and contributor interests.

Structure of the proposed Francophone Local Chapter followed closely to its missions: a lead manager to connect the local chapter to the OSGeo (providing monthly reports, etc.) and three other committee managers to lead one of the three main missions: organisation, free data and open source software. Each of them have active projects (translating OSGeo Journal for example). If one of these projects is especially important a project manager will be chosen by the committee manager with agreement of the list. Election of this structure ran at this end of June - results are reported in the Local Chapter Report of this Journal.

Free data is a part of the mission that seems to get the main interest from Francophone communities: How to host data? Where? Do we need to set up a data catalog? It seems that some datasets could be free in the current year.

Another meeting aims to do a synthesis about the Open Source Village. Everybody seems to agree about its success and will renew next year. We hope that OSGeo-fr may manage this to get stronger.

Presentations

Géoévénement organised some thematic presentations, one of them focused on *How to get your hands on Open Source technologies*:

⁹OSGeo Library: <http://www.osgeo.org/switchuilocale/fr?destination=library>

- *Rising of a FOSS industrial ecosystem* - David Jonglez, Camptocamp France SAS and François Badet, WaynaSoft
- *OSGeo: why a Francophone Local Chapter is important* - Yves Jacolin, Géorezo and Gwenael Bachelot, Autodesk
- *Free GIS: freeness for reachness?* - Nicolas Klein, SI17
- *Some elements to compare 3 GFOSS* - Olivier Ertz, Erwan Bocher, Nicolas Ribot and Yves Jacolin
- *Development of an Information System for Water (SGBD - SIG) in the Charente county* - Harold Rethoret, EPTB Charente

The Open Source Village also organised more than 35 presentations. Themes of this session covered testimonials, presentation of OSGeo or Open Source projects (OpenLayers, CartoWeb, GeoNetwork, etc.), free data, Web Services, open source licences, and project presentations. Almost all presentations are publicly available in the French translation of the OSGeo Library.⁹



Figure 3: A presentation at the Open Source Village

Conclusion

The start-up of this Local Chapter project is allowing us to inform others about the OSGeo Foundation, and about the future Francophone Local Chapter. This is a success with 3 presentations about the OSGeo, a lot of people meeting at the booth, and a great richness in the discussion. Furthermore, a first contact between some contributors of the future Francophone Local Chapter gave some great ideas for future project (e.g. about free data topics, among others).

And now? We need to send OSGeo a proposal about the Local Chapter structure and organisation.

For the next tradeshow we aim to translate many more brochures and fliers into French, share Geomatics LiveCD and present some workshops in addition to presentations.

Some media reported the success of the Open Source Village: "*An Open Source Village in the Géo-événement 2007 tradeshow*" (Le Monde Informatique), "*Rendez-vous at Géo Événement 2007*" (SIG la lettre), portailsig which relays OSGeo-fr informations to the geomatics community.

All this effort has been made possible by the generous financial support of AutoDesk inc, Camptocamp SAS and Autodesk France. I would like to

thank them for that.

Some links:

- Conference papers are available online in French¹⁰ and mentioned also in English.¹¹
- For more information about the Francophone Local Chapter, see the OSGeo wiki page.¹²
- For more information about the Géoévénement, see the conference web site.¹³

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¹⁰Conference papers (French): http://wiki.osgeo.org/index.php/Fr_geoevenement2007

¹¹Conference papers (English): <http://wiki.osgeo.org/index.php/GeoEvenement2007>

¹²Francophone Local Chapter: <http://wiki.osgeo.org/index.php/Francophone>

¹³Géoévénement, see the conference web site: <http://www.ortech.fr/geo-evenement/index.php>

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