

Maldives Open Source Society

Minutes of Meeting

Date time and venue: 04th January 2009, 09:00 PM at Raanbaa Café

Title: 1st Meetup of Maldives Open Source Society.

Attendees: Sofwath, Yaship, Rhipha, Shafiu, Shaff, Razzan, Abdul Hameed Ahmed, (one other guy sorry don't remb the name)

Meeting Notes:

- We lightly discussed about the proposed new name "Maldives Open Source Society". Several participants highlighted that MLUG is not the appropriate name for a movement of this scale. It was suggested reconsidering the name with an involvement of FOSS as there is Commercial but open source software and if we are to advocate on Open source in general it is getting broader. It was decided to first line down the scale at which we are to operate and afterwards decide on the name and logo and whatever follows.

- We considered about formally registering the society and discussed options and procedures. A Non-profit organization would be the best option to have our voice heard. Several factors need to be addressed before we approach for formalizing the society.

- We then discussed on how we can move forward with events / awareness programs. The best and most effective approach could be to discriminate costly alternatives. Infiltrating in to the minds of Maldivians could be hard as most of them have a fear of using open source or linux options.

- Hosting free lectures or training at educational institutes could result in a fast spread of the open source software. We could approach local computer institutes and Ministry of Education for such events.

- Another very potential target is the female gender. As most of them indulge in chatting, simple document processing (rarely), web browsing and listening to music or watching movies. All these could be achieved with a Linux system. Hence identifying and pushing FOSS in to the lives of potential users could be a better approach as we are not going to get any progress if we are to sell this product to the heavy gamers or the unlikely users.

- A Major difficulty in pushing FOSS in to the community is the easy availability of Pirated software's. This is an issue we need to address in order to achieve our objectives. We need to voice for prompt implementation of copy right laws and work to eliminate software piracy in Maldives. For this we even need to conduct anti-piracy protests and directly criticize the government and corporate for stealing by using pirated software's. It was also suggested that we could approach with the religious point of view and advice the religious extremists against the use of pirated software.

- As discussed in the Google group for several reasons it is very important to complete a survey on linux and open source usage. Collecting horror stories by user experience on OSS or Other Softwares and comparing them. Mostly used softwares currently and FOSS alternative for them. We could involve NCIT or the Minister of Civil Aviation and Communication.

- A close involvement with media is required for the long term success of the society.

- A test and trial campaign with the involvement of good designers, and developers was suggested. It was discussed that we encourage the designers for the use of an open source alternative for the designer applications they use for some period and document the work done during the period. These documents could be used on any campaigns we launch.

- Sysadmin's need to be more ethical by taking responsibility and advocate against the use of pirated software's. Become more ethical by not choosing the easy option (pirated software) rather than choosing an option they have a slight doubt on operating (linux or open source). MOSS could provide consultancy to overcome such situations.

- Educating the policy makers on the benefits of choosing an Open Source Software and involving them to get the word out. Some influential people named in the meet up were Finance Minister Ali Hashim, Auditor General, Economic Development Minister, Min of Communication Jameel, ROL MD Sobah.

- We also talked about the importance of having a localized linux. we agreed that the Maldives government will not drop Dhivehi usage in office ever hence to make them more acceptable to a FOSS a local product would be good.

Concluding: The meetup concluded with the high hopes of making all what we discussed a reality and to meetup soon.

Rifaq Rasheed

06th January 2009