

Pacific Island Countries Free/Open Source Software Communities and Activities Report

1st Edition – March 22, 2006

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Preface

Welcome to the first edition of the Pacific Island Countries FOSS Communities and Activities Report (PICFOSSCAR)¹. My special thanks go to all the contributors, who – after my initial announcement or my repeated requests – responded and my apologies go to all those who for whatever reason did not make it for this edition. The PICFOSSCAR will be updated several times a year and you are of course invited to contribute to any later edition.

Some administrative details:

- In order to keep the entries up-to-date and relevant, contributors will have to “refresh” their report at least once a year. Re-submitting the same report would be fine, if nothing changed. If there is no response for an entire year, I will remove the entry due to inactivity. To see the entry reappear, re-submit.
- New entries (all of them in this first edition) appear in blue.
- The next edition will appear in August 2006. Please (re-)submit by 15 July, 2006.

As always, feedback and updates are very welcome (schutz_m@usp.ac.fj). Now, I wish you pleasant reading!

Marko Schütz, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands

¹Modeled after the Haskell Communities and Activities Report.

1 User Groups

1.1 Pacific Linux and Unix User Group (PLUG)

Report by: Rajnesh D. Singh

Started in February 2003, this is a group to discuss linux/foss issues (technical or otherwise) with most members based in the Pacific Islands (but there are members from Europe to the US in the group). Subscription to the mailing list is open to anyone interested. Affiliated to the Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society <http://www.picisoc.org>

1.2 Solomon Islands Linux User Group

Report by: Nicholas Reese

Founded in ? the SILUG holds regular meetings, presentations and demonstrations related to FOSS.

2 Enterprises/Regional Organizations

2.1 Carpenters Holding

Report by:	Kamal Gounder
Participants:	?
Country:	Fiji Islands

Since 2001 the company uses Linux for its back-end servers. It developed a Customer Loyalty application using open source software. This has saved the company about F\$200,000 it would otherwise have spent and the project was completed within four months only.

2.2 Forum Fisheries Agency

Report by:	Bryan Scott
Participants:	Ben Hall, Norman Kapun, Bryan Scott, Christina Wini
Country:	Solomon Islands

Open Source Server

- JasperReports engine, using ireports as a designer.
- Koha Library Management Software
- Apache Web Server on Linux (fedora core and GNU/Debian linux)
- Drupal Content Management System (External websites and intranet)
- OpenNMS and Nagios
- OTRS Web based Helpdesk ticketing system
- PHP Horde application framework
- CVS

- Smoothwall Express Firewall

Open Source Client

- Eclipse development environment
- Open Office and Linux on limited clients (6)
- SquirelSQL SQL client
- Samba File Sharing
- uDig GIS Client
- JDiskReport

Possible Future Directions

- Subversion
- OpenLDAP
- Mapserver
- Openreports for web reporting

2.3 PATARA Fiji

Report by:	Rajnish D. Singh
Country:	Fiji

- Implementing a Linux-based Financial Management System with a web-based front-end. System to go fully live March 2006.
- Phased migration to OpenOffice on desk-tops.

2.4 Pacific Island Countries IOSN subnode

Report by: Marko Schütz
Country: all 22 countries and territories
of the Pacific Islands

A consortium consisting of USP, SOPAC, SPC and PICISOC has been selected to manage and operate the Pacific Island Countries IOSN subnode. See also: www.iosn.net.

3 Training/Education

3.1 The University of the South Pacific, School of Computing, Information and Mathematical Sciences

Report by: Marko Schütz
Country: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati,
Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue,
Samoa, Solomon Islands,
Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu,
Vanuatu

The School increasingly uses FOSS in the courses it offers:

- in CS121, starting 2004, Atish Chand gave students a choice to work with Microsoft Office or OpenOffice, this has been continued by Ralf Staudemeyer,
- in CS214, Christian Omlin
- in CS222, Atish Chand lets students use MySQL for their lab work and encourages students to use Dia for their diagramming
- in CS224, Atish Chand lets students use MySQL, PHP and Apache for their lab work
- in CS311, starting semester 1, 2006, Marko Schütz lets students use a FOSS operating system for their lab work
- in CS314, many of the students' projects involve FOSS
- in CS316, Marko Schütz uses FOSS implementations of various programming languages

- in CS492, Christian Omlin

Two courses, CS311 - Operating Systems and CS323 - ..., are prototypically using the FOSS course management "Moodle" in semester 1, 2006.

3.2 The University of the South Pacific, School of Law

Report by: Bob Hughes
Country: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati,
Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue,
Samoa, Solomon Islands,
Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu,
Vanuatu

The School uses eaSOL, a FOSS course management system they implemented using Zope/Plone. All the Schools 40+ courses are offered online on this system.

3.3 The University of the South Pacific

Report by: Marko Schütz
Country: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati,
Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue,
Samoa, Solomon Islands,
Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu,
Vanuatu

A joint initiative between IT Services, the Centre for Educational Development and Technology, the Faculty of Arts and Law, and the School of Computing, Information and Mathematical Sciences has agreed on a roadmap for delivering a FOSS online course management and delivery system

(CMS) that will become the online foundation for the entire University. This follows a management decision in 2005 to migrate to open source software systems for the Universities operations.

3.4 The University of the South Pacific

Report by:	Rajneel Totaram
Country:	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

The USP FOSS Distribution is a repository of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) hosted at the University of the South Pacific's School of Computing, Information, and Mathematical Sciences.

This repository is the result of a project that was completed in January 2006 as part of the USP-IOSN Microgrant Programme, a partnership between the University of the South Pacific and the International Open Source Network (IOSN), an initiative of UNDPs Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP).

There are so many Free and Open Source Software available on the Internet that searching for relevant software of acceptable quality can be very time consuming.

The aim of the USP FOSS Distribution is to give USP staff and students easy and fast access to quality FOSS projects, and to promote the use of Free and Open Source Software in USP.

Only FOSS projects relevant to the USP community are hosted on the Distribution, which greatly reduces the search time, and with the files available locally it saves a lot of USPs bandwidth.

All projects hosted on the Distribution are updated periodically so the users are guaranteed to get the most recent version of the projects.

The Distribution can now be accessed outside USP as well so other software developers in the South Pacific can access the Distribution and utilize the FOSS projects hosted on the site.

The URL for the USP FOSS Distribution is:

<http://riemann.usp.ac.fj/~uspfoass/>

3.5 Tonga Institute of Higher Education

Report by:	Edwin Liava'a
Country:	Tonga

Here at Tonga Institute for Higher Education (TIHE) in conjunction with the Community Training and Development Centre (CTDC) under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, it is our vision "to prepare all Tongans with quality training for our changing world." In the political realm there are discussions on the issue of Tonga joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) as part of the current economic reform. It is adamant, that once registered and become a member of WTO, copyright laws will be enforced to the full extent. Therefore we try at TIHE to continually develop interesting short courses that offer opportunities for learning in the area of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) especially LINUX and its uses. Furthermore, we are also teaching LINUX as part of our Diploma in Information Technology program curriculum. We are confident that Linux and FOSS is the way to go for a developing island nation like Tonga, where there are constraints on financial resources to buy software license

for public schools and other areas of the community. That is why we promote public awareness of LINUX and FOSS.

Visit: <http://www.tihe.org/community/notes.php> for community Linux courses at TIHE.

4 Grants

4.1 USP-IOSN Microgrant Program

Report by: Marko Schütz

The USP-IOSN Microgrant Programme (see <http://www.usp.ac.fj/macs/currentevents.htm>) is a competitive grants scheme resulting from a partnership of the University of the South Pacific (USP, <http://www.usp.ac.fj>) and the International Open Source Network (IOSN, <http://www.iosn.net>). It forms part of both organizations' ongoing activities improving the environment for software development, the awareness of the potential of free/open source software and the development of human resources with expertise in this area (see also <http://www.usp.ac.fj/macs/moa.htm>).

5 Community Resources

5.1 Freswota Computer Resource Center

Report by:	Dan McGarry
Status:	active?
Country:	Vanuatu

The Freswota CRC is unique in Vanuatu, as it is designed to provide computing and Internet services directly to community members in a location close to their homes. Located outside of the commercial center of Port Vila, it is much more accessible than some other commercial services. Likewise its price levels are designed to be affordable to the average working class ni-Vanuatu.

5.2 Community Communications Toolkit

Report by:	Dan McGarry
Participants:	?
Status:	proposal submitted
Country:	Vanuatu

Purpose: Significantly improve the effectiveness and reach of Wan Smolbag and VRDTCA by developing a computer-based Community Communications Toolkit. Ensure that others have the same opportunity to benefit by making the Toolkit freely available.

Objectives:

1. Create the conditions necessary to start an affordable information resource network consisting of low-cost equipment

and easy-to-use technology which communities throughout Vanuatu can join.

2. In partnership with the Vanuatu IT Users Society, identify and validate IT best practices, provide insight and assistance in the selection of equipment, technologies and tools.
3. Develop context-specific management, training and support resources required to make the operation and management of this system viable.
4. Identify, and where necessary develop, the tools and processes required to foster a culture of open communication and information sharing.
5. Define and document the tools and processes required to leverage this information resource as an advocacy, awareness and learning resource, in order that others can benefit from the model.

5.3 Grassroots IT Capacity Building

Report by:	Dan McGarry
Participants:	?
Status:	proposal submitted
Country:	Vanuatu

Purpose: Strengthen Vanuatu IT User Societys (VITUS) community-based ICT technical support services in order to improve sustainability of information and communications technologies in Port Vila and throughout Vanuatu.

Objectives:

1. Identify and hire a coordinator to ensure that VITUS cooperates and communicates effectively with its membership and with other ICT stakeholders, including USP, VIT, TVL, government, grassroots.
2. Focus and coordinate grassroots-level IT-related activities, especially with regards to technical support.
3. Improve sustainability at the grassroots level by providing affordable services to members and contributors.
4. Build skills, knowledge and experience among all participating members.
5. Define and document context-specific tools and processes required to ensure that IT-related activities are appropriate to Vanuatu.