



# United Linux!

Meet up with like-minded open source fans – both locally and internationally.

## Un-conventional

**T**here seems to be a growing trend to host what are known as 'unconferences'. These are conferences with no fixed agenda, no prepared speakers or tracks and an eclectic schedule that's left until the very last minute. Blackpool's Barcamp, detailed below, is just one such example. Subjects and speakers are decided on the day, according to who turns up and what they want to say.

This is definitely a good thing. It brings the same kind of *ad-hoc* grass-roots motivation we see in user groups and open source development to what has become a rather staid conference environment. It also means, at least here in the UK, it's easier to host a conference that's going to appeal to a broad swathe of geeks, hackers, DIY enthusiasts than it is to focus on a single issue.

## Evolve and adapt

But unconferences can never fully replace the more traditional kind. We still need occasional authority, big names and organised talks from the cutting edge of technology. Most conferences try hard to adapt to the requirements of the socially networked generation, creating birds-of-a-feather sessions, quick-fire presentations and informal areas. But this requires planning and finance. What we really need is the ability to combine the two, reducing the costs of creating a Linux biased conference while at the same time adding the social elements that make unconferences so successful. We then need to find a name. Our suggestion: uniconf.

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## Steam power

### SoSLUG helps to highlight industrial illness.

**D**erek Shaw, from Southend LUG in England's south east, dropped us a line to let us know what they've been up to.

"I thought you would like to know we have come to the assistance of the same artists again (Graham Harwood and Matsuko Yokoji) in collaboration with, and not forgetting, the National Union of Mineworkers and Goldsmith University.

"The artwork SoSLUG was involved in assisting with was called 'Coal Fired Computers'. This was part of the arts and media exhibitions held in Newcastle this year, that we along with Graham and Matsuko held at the Discovery Museum also in Newcastle (12-14 March 2010). SoSLUG together with Graham Harwood have built a computer running an Ubuntu version of Linux that was powered by a steam locomotive traction engine. Nothing to unusual in that I suppose, but we also coupled this to a compressor and two sets of genuine lungs (pigs' lungs). The computer was driving low pressure

pneumatics to inflate and deflate these very real lungs for each record of the tragedy to miners afflicted with black lung disease or injury/death.

"Our aim was to highlight the loss of life or injury as a result of the illness (black lung disease) and the accidents and deaths for the last hundred years suffered by miners."

If you're in the Essex area and would like to meet up with other Linux users, SoSLUG meets up every Monday at a pub in Southend on Sea.

[www.soslug.org](http://www.soslug.org)



› Linux powered lungs! (pic by Graham Harwood)

## Community News

### Blackpool Barcamp 2010

Gemma Camaron got in touch to let us know about an event she's helping to organise. "Barcamp Blackpool is a free unconference with no scheduled speakers. Attendees who wish to host a session arrive on the day and add their session to the schedule.

"With three conference rooms available and multiple thirty-minute slots, there are plenty of opportunities for you to lead a session, and there are

plenty of opportunities for you to take part. The sessions can be on anything from talks to workshops, even a walk down the promenade. Last year we had crowdsourced web development sessions, geocaching and Android application development.

"But you don't have to lead a session – just join in the fun. Speak to like-minded people and learn new and interesting things. There will be free Wi-Fi available on the day, projectors

for presentations, professional audio facilities and PA so your talk can be heard clearly. There will also be morning and afternoon refreshments, lunch, and an evening of entertainment with a sponsored bar, all at Blackpool Pleasure Beach."

This year's event is being held on Saturday 3 July in the white Casino Building at Blackpool Pleasure Beach. You'll need a ticket, but these are free from the following web page: [barcampblackpool.com](http://barcampblackpool.com)



› If you've always harboured a secret desire to visit Blackpool, you've now got the perfect excuse.