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by Benedict Reuschling

MeetBSD 2018 and FreeBSD Developer Summit

Conference Recap

MeetBSD 2018 was held at Intel's Santa Clara Campus in California. I was looking forward to the event for a number of reasons: first, I was part of the program committee that selected the talks for the main conference; second was the venue at the Intel Campus; and third, it provided a good opportunity to see and talk to some people in the BSD community that I normally only see once a year at BSDCan.

On the day I arrived, I met Michael Dexter, Rod Grimes, and Michael Lucas for dinner. Dan Langille joined us a bit later. The Mexican food was excellent, and it was great to talk about various topics in a smaller circle. The next morning, Deb Goodkin and Anne Dickison drove me and the rest of the Foundation folks (Ed Maste, Scott Lamons, and Li-Wen Hsu) to the Intel Campus.

Arriving at the venue, I was greeted by JT, our BSDNow.tv producer and he handed me my badge and conference bag before I could take a look around. I also met Denise Ebery, who had put a lot of effort into organizing the event and making sure everything was running smoothly. The first day before the main conference, there was a one-day FreeBSD Devsummit sponsored by the FreeBSD Foundation. Intel provided us with a large auditorium (which reminded me more of a cinema), a podium for giving the talks, and an area next to the entrance for food and drinks. You could basically spend the whole day in there without missing anything except for bathroom breaks. Before the talks started, there was plenty of opportunity to meet and greet developers, and it didn't take long for us to engage in familiar conversations about BSD, travel, and tech.

The devsummit talks started with *LWPMFS: LightWeight Persistent Memory Filesystem* by Ravi Pokala. The topic was interesting and completely new to me. After a short coffee break, Ed Maste continued with *Evaluating GIT* for FreeBSD, covering the arguments for and against it. I think he managed not to incite too much heated discussion, while still engaging people in considering the various points. Discussions continued well into the lunch break. During the break, I got a chance to talk with Devin Teske and saw the updates she'd done to her dwatch tool since her well-received presentation at BSDCan in July 2018. Mark Johnston gave a talk about *NUMA* after the lunch break, detailing the progress the project has made in scalability and increases in performance. After another coffee break, we had the famous "Have, Need, Want" session to hear what people would like to see (or could offer) as features in the next major FreeBSD release. While this may sound boring, John Baldwin and George Neville-Neil, who hosted the session, are a unique combination that make these sessions both entertaining and engaging.

The next day, *MeetBSD* started in the same venue, but with a lot more attendees. After an introduction round led by JT and Michael Dexter, Kris Moore showed us *How to Use TrueOS to Bootstrap Your FreeBSD-based Project*, detailing some of the things he and his team at iXsystems (that sponsored the event and made the Intel venue possible) had done. I always find it interesting to see the different ways people can transform the operating system for various purposes. Next, Ben Widawsky presented *Intel & FreeBSD: Better Together*, a very engaging talk about his way into the community and what kinds of opportunities there are in the partnership with Intel.

The nice thing about this MeetBSD was that it wasn't just talks the whole day. The single-track conference style made it possible for everyone to stay in the same room and we were able to enjoy discussions, lightning talks, panels, and other fun ways of engaging with each other. For me, this made the day seem much less rushed without having to wait for the next break to talk with someone.

The social event that evening was held in Intel's cafeteria just a few doors down from our venue in

the same building. Another great opportunity to mingle and talk to people over pizza and drinks. It was a lot of fun and it felt good to be within the BSD crowd yet again.

The next day began with the *Why BSD?* keynote by Michael W Lucas as only he could give it: funny, entertaining, and thoughtful. Kirk McKusick made a surprise appearance as the next speaker and even allowed us to pick which talk we would like to hear by a show of hands. *The Early History of BSD* won and Kirk delivered a talk that does not seem to get boring, even though you might have heard it before. I guess that's the mark of a good speaker.

After my third variety of lunch box (each day I tried a different one and could never decide which was best), G. Clifford Williams delivered his talk about *A Curmudgeon's Language Selection Criteria*. While there are a lot of languages you might learn over the years as a programmer, there is a tendency to use your most familiar and try to apply it to every problem you encounter. I see that a lot in my students, and Mr. Williams elaborated some excellent points to be aware of and how to not fall into this trap.

Before the virtualization panel discussion, Mariusz Zaborski delivered his talk on *Capsicum*. He's done a lot of work converting FreeBSD utilities one by one to this sandboxing framework. The talk he gave provided a good introduction to Capsicum and gave pointers for people who want to help out in that area.

Nick Principe told us cautionary tales about doing *Performance Measurements*, which is part of his job at iXsystems. I thought the talk was well done, with good slides and a lot of lessons about proper performance benchmarking. We closed with a group picture and thanked all the organizers and sponsors for making MeetBSD such a success. The FreeBSD 25th anniversary party was held in the Intel cafeteria, and it was definitely a celebration. During the evening, some people took the microphone and told us what FreeBSD and its community meant to them. It was a very heartwarming celebration, and I had a chance to talk to some new people that night. I returned home very satisfied, having participated in an amazingly successful conference. It was an excellent way to conclude my BSD conference travels for this year. •

BENEDICT REUSCHLING joined the FreeBSD Project in 2009. After receiving his full documentation commit bit in 2010, he actively began mentoring other people to become FreeBSD committers. He is a proctor for the BSD Certification Group and joined the FreeBSD Foundation in 2015, where he is currently serving as vice president. Benedict has a Master of Science degree in Computer Science and is teaching a UNIX for software developers class at the University of Applied Sciences, Darmstadt, Germany.