



EuroBSDCon 2022

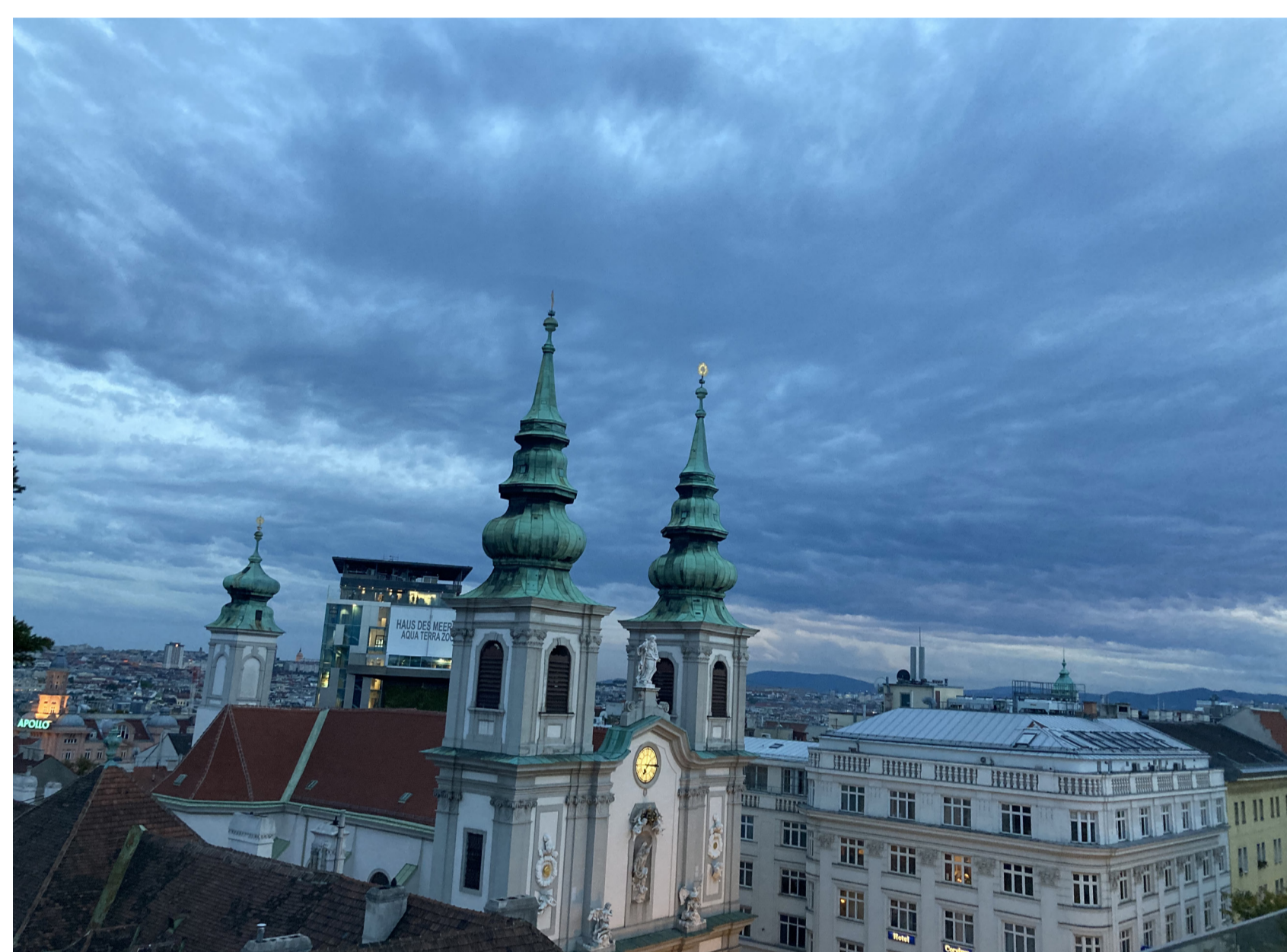
BY KYLE EVANS

In September, I visited the beautiful city of Vienna for EuroBSDCon 2022; many thanks to my employer, Klara, for covering enough of my travel expenses to make this trip possible. This was my second BSD conference (and certainly not my last), but it was definitely the more exciting of the two for a number of reasons. This particular trip was my first flight across an ocean, a full seven time zones east of home, and I brought my wife and toddler along with me. My last conference was BSDCan 2018, so I was quite excited to meet—in person—a lot of the folks I've worked with online over the years.

We arrived later in the day, one day before the dev summit began. Our trip was generally uneventful until we got stuck on the tarmac at our last leg, AMS, for an extra two or three hours. dch@ was kind enough to offer transport from the airport and gave us a brief tour of the city before dropping us off at Hotel Erzherzog Rainer. We were generally exhausted by the time we got there, so I was quite relieved that I forgot to RSVP for the casual core dinner that was scheduled for only an hour or two after we had arrived.

The first day was the FreeBSD developer summit and the associated group dinner. I met up with some other folks from Klara and hung out near the back of the room where the summit was held. At the back, I ran into Eirik Øverby from Modirum, who had some more Apple hardware for me to take home and add to the literal tower of Apple Silicon hardware for porting, and I also met one of the Apple engineers, Cosimo Cecchi, who came early and attended the devsummit. We listened to talks from the FreeBSD Foundation as well as presentations from various developers on the state of their work (Workflow issues, ALTQ, Netlink, CI). Lunch and coffee breaks scattered throughout the day offered a good hallway track for the early days.

There was a designated chunk of time for hacking groups, but—in all of the pre-travel chaos—I had apparently left my laptop charger at home, so I took advantage of the time and went for a walk with my family to pick up a USB-C charger before the devsummit dinner. The hosts of the dinner were kind enough to allow my wife and daughter to attend for which I was very grateful since I was effectively abandoning them half the time we were



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there. The other attendees were incredibly awesome with our young one, despite her being a bit cranky at times.

The second day of the developer summit was much like the first, with more talks and working groups along with more scheduled time for unstructured hacking. jhb@ spent ten minutes and solved an issue we had—for a lot longer than ten minutes—with PCI on Apple Silicon, which was simultaneously exciting and depressing. After the devsummit, my family met me outside of the TU building and we walked around a bit to explore the area.

Day one of EuroBSDCon started off with a very interesting keynote from Frank Karlitschek. Next, I attended Taylor R Campbell's talk on "How I learned to stop worrying and yank the USB", in which he discussed many of the interesting ways he broke and fixed USB hotplug in NetBSD, and how he fixed those issues in a pretty clean way.

I needed to catch up a branch or two in one of my local trees, so I wandered over to Brooks' session on how to add a system call in FreeBSD, since I had a decent amount of knowledge on the topic already. Despite this, it was still chock full of interesting tidbits about other ABIs and compatibility concerns.

For the final two talks I attended that day, I checked out Mateusz's presentation on measuring performance overhead of tracing and Allan's talk on scaling ZFS. I hadn't spent much time tracing in the years I've worked on operating systems, but I was still curious as to how dtrace and ebpf compared for the task, overhead-wise, in real-world scenarios. I wanted to attend Ken's talk on OpenBSD filesystem blocks, but I got caught up socializing in the hallway track instead.

My wife and daughter met me outside again, and this time we hunted down some döner kebab I had been anxious to try. Disaster struck that night as our young one finally realized she was jet lagged and barely slept. On the final day, I rolled onto the locked campus at around 07:00 after about an hour of sleep (but not wanting to wake anyone else), and within 30 minutes or so a staff member inside the building (security, I think?) noticed that I was standing outside, patiently awaiting the conference start, and allowed me to enter.

I realized after staring at my laptop for a while that I wasn't likely going to comprehend much during the talks, so I admitted defeat and hung out in the lobby for the day, intermittently hacking on various things.



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Despite the appearance that I was losing value by not attending talks on the final day, I feel that I actually gained a lot more from that decision. I ended up meeting a lot of not-yet-familiar faces I otherwise would not have if I had attended talks. I brought along the MacBook that Eirik was lending me for the porting cause along, and a couple of us in the hallway battled with the laptop to get the Norwegian keyboard remapped in software to a layout that I was more familiar with. macOS' keyboard mapping does 98% of the job, but it doesn't remap what's easily one of my top-five keys used: tilde/backtick. If you stumble across this for similar reasons, the answer is to use ``hidutil`` to finish the job and get your tilde back.

As the conference wrapped up and we bid one another farewell, I managed to get a list of family-friendly things to do with our remaining three days in Vienna from `krion@`, whom I had met in-person back in Allan's talk about scaling ZFS. The list was, indeed, full of great suggestions, though sadly we didn't get to all of them as the weather didn't quite cooperate.

My general advice for conferences a longer distance away from "home" is what Allan Jude had tried to tell me: book your flight a bit earlier to give yourself a day or two before the conference to try and get your sleep schedule somewhat normalized. It's hard not to recommend also booking a couple of days after a conference for tourist activities in case you end up learning of more exciting sights to see from conference attendees.

KYLE EVANS is a FreeBSD developer currently employed by Klara, Inc. He has been a part of the FreeBSD project since 2017 working on a wide variety of projects in base.

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