

Report on First Free/Open Source Software (FOSS) Day

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1. Introduction

Tonga Online carries out some minimal maintenance chores for the Binga community. During these activities it was discovered that some people use certain software packages at a high cost due to their lack of knowledge of the existence of cheaper alternatives. Some individuals even use software without proper licenses-piracy. Tonga Online carried out a software publicity event, called Free/Open Source Software Day on the 13th of December 2008, to educate the public on various options that exist around the use of software.

2. Objectives of FOSS Day

The aims and objectives of the FOSS Day are:

- a. to make the Binga community aware of the existence of FOSS
- b. to share the empowerment & freedoms that FOSS brings to the community
- c. to make the community aware of the negative effects and impact piracy
- d. to make the community aware of the various types of FOSS solutions
- e. to build the community confidence in using FOSS
- f. to make FOSS software CDs available to the community for free
- g. to give Tonga Online an opportunity to talk to the community
- h. to encourage artists to use FOSS in their work
- i. to encourage the use of FOSS in education and Business
- j. to encourage the use of FOSS within the Christian community

3. Planning

Planning for the event was easy and yet a time requiring process as participants needed to be trained to understand and be able to facilitate the achievement of set objectives. Participants took part in the event out of their interest and love for FOSS. Picture below shows volunteers who are non Tonga Online employees who assisted in the event.



Moden, the Tonga Online studio trainee



Nomsa and Nomalanga, Teachers at Binga High School



Tendayi Ngundu, Teacher at Manjolo Secondary School and Kingdom a former student of Binga High School



Mrs. Sarudzai Simango wife to Richard of Tonga Online



B.Z. Siasweka, Teacher in charge of the Binga High School ITC

*Catering was volunteered by:
Mrs. Mandiopera,
Mrs. Maposa and
Ms. Thandazile Munsaka
from the Binga Community*

On the day, tables were going to be setup with computers and volunteers in different places, to form stations, within the Tonga Online office. Each station would demonstrate at least one concept to the public. Concepts to be demonstrated were: Foss in business, Foss on the company front office, Foss in education, Foss in creative arts, Foss in music and the studio and Foss for Christians. Volunteers were trained and they gained enough experience and confidence to educate the public.

The day was to be kick started by a Foss march, where the Foss participants would march from the two extremely distant apart points of Binga. One group (Govera group) would march from Govera Shops (Hospital side) and the other (BHS Group) from Binga High Secondary side. The Govera group was to be organized and led by Theo Sianyuka, an Employee of TO and the BHS group was to be led by Mrs. Mandiopera, a Foss enthusiast and community volunteer.

The event was however going to be a whole day event starting from 0800hrs and ending at 1630hrs. Visitors were expected to come and out any time during the day.

4. Events

a. The FOSS March

Foss day was on the 13th of December 2008. It rained heavily in the early hours of the day. One march could not take off due to the wet weather and pools of water on the roads. Few people who gathered were ferried to beef up the Govera Group. The police were ready with their escort and the hospital nurses were also on standby in the event of the unexpected. Pictures below show the procession in progress.





The march was meant to spread the message that Foss day had arrived and people were expected to visit the Tonga Online offices as per the invitations and posters.

b. FOSS in Business

This desk communicated to the public what business solutions are available in Foss. Ubuntu, Gnucash, Nolar Pro, Evolution, Writer, Calc, Presenter are examples of software solutions whose use in business was demonstrated. This desk was manned by Sarudzai. This desk issued out about 120 Ubuntu CDs to the public.



Visitors learning about Foss in Business from Sarudzai

c. FOSS in Front Office

This desk talked about the use of Calc, Writer, Impress, Evolution, and Base in the front office. It also talked about Ubuntu, printing, scanning and faxing using Foss. The issue of viruses was also dealt with. This desk was manned by Nomalanga.



Visitors enquiries about the use of Foss in the Front Office from Namalanga, a Teacher at Binga High School

d. Tonga Online

The community also has an opportunity to make enquiries to Tonga Online, ask about the Tonga Online Project or any other issues of interest. This desk was manned by Pottar Muzamba and Theo Sianyuka of Tonga Online.



Visitors asking questions and listening to presentations from Pottar Muzamba about Tonga Online

e. FOSS in Education

Education is one area of the community that has equipment donated by various donors including The Government of Zimbabwe and Tonga Online but lacks the resources to buy appropriate software licenses. This desk imparted information that included the use of kalzium, kanagram, kbruch, keduka, kig, kletters, kpercentage, kTouch and many more like Ubuntu, writer, Calc, Impress, base in education. This desk was manned by Nomsa Dube a Teacher at Binga High School.



Visitors learn what, how and where to use educational Foss with Nomsa

f. FOSS in Creative Arts

The use of Foss in creative arts is a huge requirement for the communities. A lot of people wanted to know how to use their cameras, cell phones with Foss. Visitors were exposed to how Foss tools like Dia, Gimp image editor, GNUpaint, gThump image viewers and Drawing are used by creative artists. This desk was manned by Tendayi Ngundu, a Teacher at Manjolo Secondary School and Kingdom Sinampande a former student of Binga High School.



Visitors learning how to do creative arts with Tendai and Kingdom

g. FOSS and Music in the Studio

Visitors wanted to know how Foss is used in the making of music. Modern, the Tonga Online studio trainee was at the centre of showing music enthusiasts how to make notes, play back and record music.



Visitors learning how to record, edit and play back music using Foss with Modern

h. FOSS for Christians

Religious Foss was also covered by B.Z. Siasweka, a Teacher at Binga High. Interested members of the community were exposed to how they can access the eSword the electronic bible, e-Rosary for the Catholics and numerous tools that come with Christian Ubuntu. Visitors were informed about how unchristian it is to Pirate software.



Learning about Christian Ubuntu from B.Z. Siasweka

5. Feedback from Community

The community had an opportunity to give feedback on the event. Almost every person who visited learnt something new. The event was the greatest the community had ever had and they wished if more events of a similar nature could be held. It was suggested that similar events should be done in other places like, Tinde, Lubimbi, Tyunga and Siabuwa to help the communities understand technology. Similar events should go even outside Binga like Hwange, Bulawayo to empower the communities that side.

A lot of requests for software like Gnucash, Open Project were left with Tonga Online. These will be prepared and delivered to people who left the requests.

6. Conclusion

This big event was made successful through the cooperation of Tonga Online staff, the community and Foss enthusiasts.

About **one hundred and twenty** people passed through the Tonga Online office to learn about Foss on the 13th of December 2008.