



Press Release

Wizards of OS 4 Conference – Taking Stock of a Freedom Movement

From September 14 to 16, 2006, Berlin's Columbia Hall and Columbia Club will host the international conference Wizards of OS 4 (WOS4), covering the fields of free software and free knowledge. For three days, more than 90 renowned scientists, technologists, artists and activists from around the world will examine the technological, legal, cultural and artistic developments of the last years in light of free culture.

Berlin, September 12, 2006 – The success of free software seems unstoppable: By now, 70% of webservers run on the free operating system GNU/Linux, the open-source browser Firefox is winning the hearts of web surfers, and OpenOffice is winning over business after business. IBM, Google, Sun and many other companies invest millions in the development of free software. Each day, the number of people freely creating and sharing cultural goods of all kinds is growing. Does free information rule or is it just a niche? 15 years after the GNU General Public Licence was devised, ten years after Grateful Dead songwriter and founding member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation John Perry Barlow declared the independence of cyberspace, and five years after the founding of the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia, the time for taking stock has come.

From September 14 to 16, 2006, Berlin's Columbia Hall and Columbia Club will provide the setting for a gathering of minds from a wide range of scholarship and cultural practices. What brings them together to debate across the boundaries of disciplines is a common interest in information, in freedom and in the emerging rules that make information freedom sustainable. The more than 90 speakers include Lawrence Lessig, renowned Internet law scholar at Stanford and creative pioneer of free knowledge, Hal Varian, internationally acclaimed economist and Google consultant, chief organiser of Wikipedia in its first year Larry Sanger, as well as Yochai Benkler from the Yale Law School, a new star on the scene, who coined the widely used term *commons-based peer production*. Main points of interest at WOS4 are Brazil as a leader in promoting free culture domestically and internationally, the dynamics of copyright law and copyright licences, and the million Euro question: how to generate income with free information.

On September 16, the German-language „Show des freien Wissens“ (Show of Free Knowledge) will take place at 3 pm in Columbia Hall. The show, in parallel to the conference, is open at no charge to the general public. Helge Haas, well-known as the host of the ARD science programmes *Q21* and *Kopfball*, will present some of the most thrilling free culture projects and their protagonists. Among them are the phantasy animation film „Elephants Dream,“ which has been downloaded more than half a million times and was produced solely with free software, and netlabels that offer their music for free download. The Freifunk project will demonstrate how easy it is to set up a free wireless network and connect all your neighbours. Lawrence Lessig, the “Elvis of Cyberspace” (Wired) whose Creative Commons licences have led to free content spreading at a breathtaking pace will also be part of the show.

In addition to the conference and the show there will be workshops and community meetings, film programmes and artistic interventions. On Friday and Saturday night, netlabel artists will rock the house with free beats.

Wizards of OS 4 - Information Freedom Rules

International Conference

September 14 to 16, 2006 , Columbia Hall and Columbia Club, Columbiadamm 13-21, 10965

Berlin

wizards-of-os.org

WOS4 is organised by WOS e.V. in cooperation with the Working Group Informatics in Education & Society of Humboldt University Berlin as well as the Berlin media-culture centers Tesla and c-base. As part of the *Year of Informatics*, WOS4 is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Hauptstadt Kulturfonds (Capital Cultural Fund) and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) Federal Agency for Civic Education. It takes place under the auspices of Minister Dr. Annette Schavan.



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