

SubConf is the annual conference of the Subversion community. SubConf 2009 was the third such event, held at Munich, Germany, from October 27 to 29, 2009. While it's a user conference where Subversion users from various parts of the world participate, it does feature developer hackathons where the project's core developers come together to discuss the roadmap, hack on code, et al. Developers also meet the users to get feedback, and study their requirements so that future releases can cater to these.

SubConf 2009 had 10 core Subversion developers at the conference venue—Stephen Butler, Stefan Sperling and Neels Hofmeyr (of Elego); Julian Foad of WANDisco; Greg Stein (a popular open source developer); Hyrum K. Wright (Subversion Corp), Lieven Govaerts, Bert Huijben (of The Competence Group), C. Michael Pilato and myself (from Collabnet, Inc).

All of us were locked up in a room (hackathon) at the conference hotel for three days, where we discussed various things related to Subversion development such as the Working Copy Next Generation (WC-NG) library, usage of a scratch pool, itpool in Subversion code base, the release roadmap, interesting issues to work on, etc. Of course, the hackathon was not just a discussion forum; we also undertook some really productive programming—there were approximately 70 commits to the Subversion

repository with close to +46696/-36666 lines of change!

The first day of the conference started officially in the evening around 7:00 pm with the Subversion Round Table, where users from various organisations posted their queries and feedback about the version control system (VCS). They also explored the possibilities of getting some features introduced in future releases of the VCS. This was a fruitful discussion. Every year this results in bringing in new requirements to the project, directly from the target audience.

On the second day of the conference we had many talks regarding VCS. Long-time Subversion developer (from Jan 2001) C. Michael Pilato delivered the keynote address. He spoke on the history of Subversion, the way the community works, why CollabNet chose to make Subversion an open source project, etc. The talk covered the legacy of the Subversion Community and the advancements it had gone through over the years.

Some of the talks delivered on the second and third day of the conference were as follows (there were even more talks, but they were not in English. See reference [4], [5] for presentation slides link):

- *Subversion Release Process* by Subversion release manager Hyrum Wright and Stefan Sperling
- *Bringing Subversion to the Java World* by Alexander Kitaev and Alexander Sinyushkin
- *WC-NG* (Subversion's new working copy management library) by Hyrum Wright
- *Comparing Apples to Oranges—Subversion, git and Mercurial* by Stefan Sperling and Stephen Butler
- *Moving from SVN to Mercurial* by Zsolt Koppány and Janos Koppány

SubConf 2009 *A Report*

Senthil Kumaran S, a full committer to the Subversion project, shares his experiences at the three-day conference held in Munich recently.

- *Server Side Java Bindings for Subversion* by Dave Brown
- *SVN Obliterate* by Julian Foad
- *Coding Control* by Perforce Software's Tony Smith


The message from Subversion developers to the users was to do some real testing of the pre-release versions (we don't want you to try on production data, though) of Subversion software to catch bugs early. The fact is it's difficult for developers to try and mimic the varied environments in which Subversion is deployed in organisations, and only the users can chip in here.

Users also expressed a requirement for pre-release binaries other than the source tarballs (which, currently, the Subversion Community is not engaged in providing). The developers took note of this and expressed a desire to work on some mechanism to get this done in the future. For what it's worth, in the recent past, the project has already started providing nightly tarballs of the latest trunk development sources (see reference [6]).

Another interesting take away from the conference was the community's feeling about Distributed Version Control Systems (DVCS). The community is excited about DVCS, since we are part of advancing the 'state of the art' and we are happy that, ultimately, we have competitors in the version control world. With the latest improvements on the WC-NG library, Subversion will be able to get features like offline commits, shelving, etc. I'd say that it's

premature to talk about this aspect now, but it is possible in the foreseeable future.

It was a nice experience for me to lurk around with the other developers at SubConf, with whom I've only communicated by e-mail till now. We also had a surprise in the week after the conference with the announcement made at ApacheCon 2009, about the Subversion project finding a new home at the Apache Software Foundation!

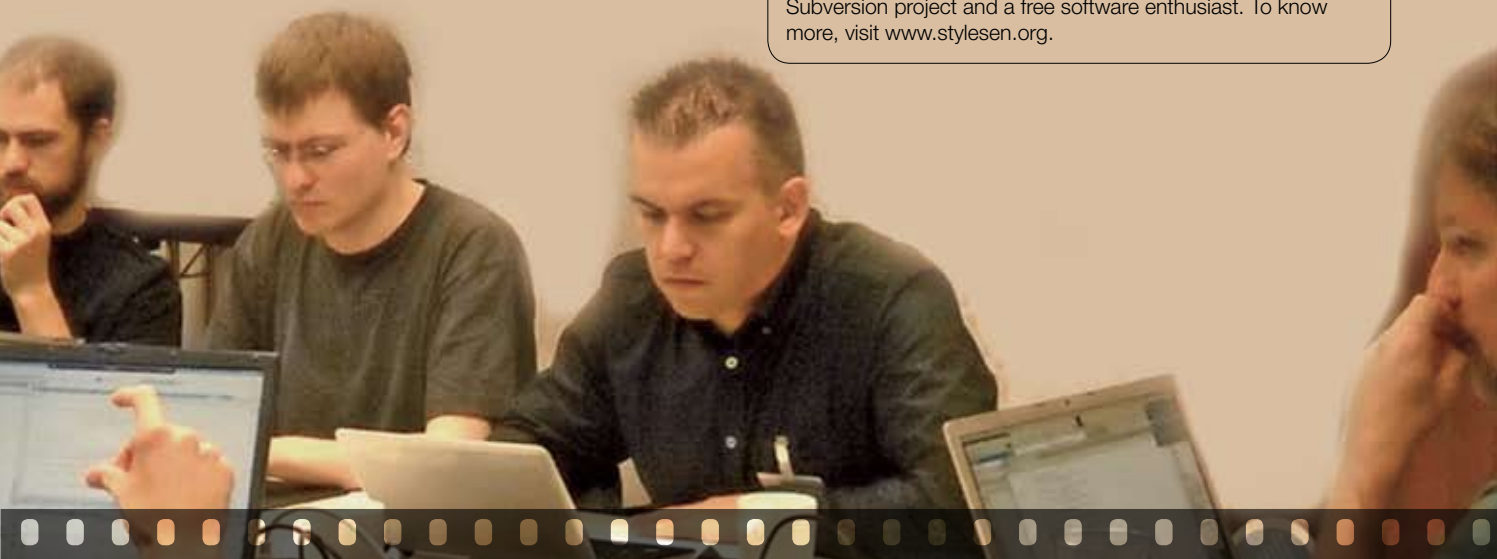
Subversion is a widely used version control system in many free software projects and corporate environments. The latest release of Subversion (1.6.6) source can be downloaded from <http://subversion.tigris.org>. If you want Subversion binaries for different platforms visit <http://open.collab.net>.  **END**

References

- <http://www.linuxforu.com/news/subconf-2009-a-report-day-1>
- <http://www.linuxforu.com/news/subconf-2009-a-report-day-2>
- <http://www.linuxforu.com/news/subconf-2009-a-report-day-3>
- <http://2009.subconf.de/vortraege/1-konferenztag>
- <http://2009.subconf.de/vortraege/2-konferenztag>
- <http://orac.ece.utexas.edu/pub/svn/nightly>
- <http://www.subconf.de>
- <http://www.collab.net>

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The author is currently employed by CollabNet, and is working for the Version Control group. He is a 'full committer' of the Subversion project and a free software enthusiast. To know more, visit www.stylesen.org.



▲ HOOD (conference organizers) stall



▲ CollabNet stall at SubConf 2009



▲ Perforce Stall at SubConf 2009



▲ Subversion Hackathon Room at SubConf 2009