

BoF - Building a local Eclipse user group

User groups are springing to life all over Europe - and likely elsewhere. In this BoF, we will talk about how to build interest for a local community, tips for events, how to get sponsors for the events and similar essential user group stuff. One hope is that we might be able to setup series of similar events in a region - e.g. Europe - where we can get companies to show they stuff multiple times... Easier for us and likely more interesting for them as they get a bigger audience...

At the end of the meeting we should hopefully setup a mailing list or similar to help exchange ideas for events in the future as well.



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About Me

- Founder and owner of The RCP Company
- 20 years of experience in system development in major companies
 - Regnecentralen (now ICL)
 - Digital (now HP)
 - Anritsu (previously NetTest)
- 9 years experience as the Systems Architect of an 20+ MLoC project
- 5 years of experience with Eclipse and Eclipse RCP
- Add-in Provider Member of the Eclipse Foundation
- ***Chairman of Eclipse.dk***



Agenda

- Making a user group
 - Who are the intended members?
 - What is the expected benefits for the members?
 - How will you meet?
 - How often will you meet?
 - What type of events do you want?
 - What type of web site do you want or need?
 - How often will you meet?
 - Where do you get the money?
 - Marketing of your User Groups
- How to start?
- How can we all benefit?

Who are the intended members?

- Users of the Eclipse IDE
 - What about users of commercial products based on the Eclipse IDE such as IBM RAD, BEA Workshop, CodeGear JBuilder 2007 or many other products?
- Users of the Eclipse RCP platform
- Providers of commercial products such as IBM, BEA and CodeGear
- Providers of Eclipse based services such as The RCP Company, ProSyst, AvantSoft and many, many others
- Students that use Eclipse in their studies or base their thesis on Eclipse based technologies

- Eclipse.dk:
 - All of the above
 - (for the same reason we call ourselves “the Eclipse.dk society”)

What is the expected benefits for the members?

- Forum for exchange of new ideas
- Forum for discussions of specific problems
 - How do I do this?
 - What is wrong here?
- Forum for introduction of new technologies
 - What is EMF, RCP, Equinox, e4, Maynstall,...
 - How to install and use CDT?
- Informal meeting place for competitors
- Incubator for nerd projects
 - Controlling the coffee machine from the cell phone?
 - Interfacing to Lego Mindstorm?
- Marketing (but don't tell anybody)
 - We do interesting stuff in an interesting environment
 - We hire
 - We...

- Eclipse.dk:
 - Forum for new ideas and technologies
 - Marketing

How will you meet?

- IRC
- Forum
- Mailing lists
- Code Camps
- PluginFests
- After-work events
- All-day events

- Eclipse.dk:
 - After-work events (RCP, RCP business case, OSGi, EMF, EclipseCon '08, CDT, ...)
 - Forum
 - All-day events
 - Mailing lists

How often will you meet?

- Depends on the activities
 - Forums and mailing lists of open always
 - After-work meetings and all-day events needs to be scheduled

- Eclipse.dk:
 - We try to have an after-work meeting every 3-4 weeks
 - And an all-day event every 6 months

What type of web site do you want or need?

- Depends on your activities
- Can be very easy with many free solutions including Google Groups and Google Sites
- Can be mailing list hosted by eclipse.org

- Eclipse.dk:
 - Independent web site (eclipse.dk) – might be migrated to Google Sites soon
 - Open user group site (version2.dk) – with calendar and forum

Where do you get the money?

- Depends on you activities
 - A mailing list costs next to nothing, all-day events can be expensive
- Get donation by bigger companies - hint: ask IBM, BEA and other local Eclipse product providers
- Eclipse.dk:
 - Companies < 20 employees: 1000 DKK (~200\$)
 - Companies >= 20 employees: 5000 DKK (~1000\$)
 - Private members: free

 - After-work meetings: 100 DKK (~20\$)
 - All-day events: 250 DKK (~50\$)

Marketing of your User Groups

- http://wiki.eclipse.org/Regional_Communities
 - Lists all(?) current user groups by region
- Several mailing lists by the Eclipse foundation
- Regional news groups on Google Groups
- News groups at universities
- Your mailing lists and forum
- The networks of the participants
- Your customers(!)

How to start?

- Find 2-3 people that can drive the user group
- Agree on the purpose and wanted type of members
- Gather approximately 10 members
- Select a board
- Set up a schedule for 3-4 after-work meetings with subjects you can manage yourself
- Do marketing

How can we all benefit?

- Setting up events takes time
 - Locations
 - Food
 - Participants
 - And not least: getting the right ideas for events
- Many international companies like to participate in events
 - Even more if they should just repeat the performance
- So what about a mailing list where we share ideas?
 - How can events be done
 - Sharing speakers
- How about exchanging call-for-meetings globally?