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My Weekend at Warpstock

It was geekfest in the Great White North and I loved it. While it is always good to meet with a bunch of other people that actually know what OS/2 is, it is even better to see the great things coming out for OS/2. And there were a number of new products demonstrated. I will give you my impressions of this year's peace, love and OS/2 festival. First the products and demos that I attended or know about.

Ktrace is a new product in beta, to be released at the end of October by [GoldenCode](#). This is a companion product to their Net-trace product. Ktrace latches onto hooks provided by IBM in the OS/2 kernel for implementing additional security, except GoldenCode uses those hooks to trace what the kernel is doing. This allows Ktrace to get visibility into actions that normally wouldn't be visible, even with a debugger, since it can trace some events in already compiled programs that you don't have the source to. Basically anytime the program interacts with the kernel, Ktrace keeps track of what happens. These trace files are displayed by a Java program that interprets the trace and allows you to select areas of interest, ignoring the clutter of events you aren't interested in. I hope to do a review when Ktrace is released.

[House/2](#), a product for controlling home automation appliances from OS/2, was demonstrated by the author in the exhibit area. This works through a device that is plugged into the serial port of a computer. The device, a CM11A controller, is programmed by House/2. The CM11A controller then controls other switches and devices in the house communicating with those devices through the household current, or by wireless transmission. Devices exist for turning on and off anything that is plugged into an outlet, in addition to thermostats and dimmer light switches. Some of those devices can also report their status back to the CM11A controller and hence back to House/2.

The latest versions of Workspace on Demand and [Odin](#) were demonstrated. Workspace on Demand is a product that remotely boots and controls workstations, both OS/2 and Windows, from a server. It is an attempt to reduce support costs by controlling machine support costs through centralized support. The contents and configuration of the machine and desktop are stored on the server so that if the a client machine breaks, a new one can be inserted and it will boot to the same spot that broken machine was at before it broke. Odin is the project that is attempting to run Win32 applications as native OS/2 applications. It does this through a program loader that converts the Windows executable into an OS/2 executable as it loads. The "converted" application then calls both normal OS/2 and special DLLs as it runs. The special DLLs come from the Odin project and IBM's project to provide Windows application a portion of the Win32 API on OS/2. It appears that the Odin team has both made progress and scaled back their expectations. This year there was a clear emphasis that Odin will not run all Win32 applications, but rather specific applications that have been concentrated on. The Odin project is soliciting companies willing to pay for specific applications to be Odin-ized. The benefit to the OS/2 community is that as more of these specific products are concentrated on, more sections of the Odin code will be perfected.

A completely different approach was also demonstrated by the same person that did

the Odin demo, Achim Hasenmüller. That approach is [Virtual PC - an OS/2 application](#) emulates a PC, which in turn runs Windows NT/2000. Virtual PC is a product built on technology licensed from [Connectix Corporation](#), who has built other emulators in the past. The idea is that an entire PC is virtualized in OS/2, which allows *anything* that runs on an Intel PC to run under OS/2. Two different companies are looking at releasing and marketing this Virtual PC (VPC): [Innotek](#) and [Serenity Systems](#). Innotek is a German company which wants to market VPC to companies currently running OS/2 as a transition step from OS/2 to Windows, and therefore is planning a release of VPC that runs on OS/2 for running Windows applications on OS/2, and a version that runs on Windows for running OS/2 applications on Windows. Having both products allows them to market themselves to companies that don't want to spend money rewriting their OS/2 applications - their potential customers can either continue to run OS/2 with the Windows applications they need, or Windows with the OS/2 applications that are too expensive to rewrite. Serenity Systems, the maker of eComStation, has a different outlook: they don't want people migrating off of OS/2 (read eComStation) and hence aren't interested in the Windows version of VPC. We saw demonstrated OS/2 running in VPC on a Windows 2000 laptop, and WinOS2 running in OS/2 in VPC. We also saw Windows 2000 running in VPC on an OS/2 desktop. InnoTech's plan is to start selling VPC in the first part of next year for around \$199.

[Data Representations](#) was in the exhibit area demonstrating their Simplicity Java Development tool. They recently released a version that builds applications on the Palm Pilot. I didn't stop by their booth this year since I purchased Simplicity for OS/2 last year. But I did attend the presentation on [ManplatoSync](#), which is a Palm Pilot hot-sync replacement written in Java. ManplatoSync, despite the funny name, is a nice GUI and API for synchronizing a Palm Pilot. It fully backs up all the existing Palm applications and any other application that uses the hot-sync process. It has the full hot-sync capability, including installing applications onto the pilot from OS/2. There is an API for conduit builders to build conduits for other applications - a conduit is a sync program that synchronizes data between a Palm application and a desktop application. ManplatoSync includes a conduit that syncs data between the Palm applications (calendar, memo pad, etc.) and Lotus Notes.

There was also presentations on USB, the Convenience Pack (the Convenience Pack is a grouping of all the updates IBM has and will release for OS/2), XML, and web site development, among others.

The [Warpstock](#) board solicited input this year on whether there should continue to be a Warpstock in the future. Attendance this year was somewhere around 100-110 people - I counted 91 people at a late evening session on Sunday and I figure that a number of people had left before that session. Last year apparently had a larger attendance - although I could never find anyone to give me an official count. But when asked for a show of hands, about 15-25 people indicated that this was their first Warpstock. That response, along with a strong desire from the audience convinced the board to do another Warpstock.

[Previous Article](#)

[Home](#)

[Next Article](#)