Hackers on Holiday Network, Party

By ANN HARRISON
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At the outdoor computing event of the summer, 1,800 hackers gathered at the Chaos Communication Camp in a field outside Berlin last week. Hackers on holiday swapped security tools, viewed lock-picking demonstrations, discussed encryption politics and went for dips in the local lake.

Organized by the Berlin-based Chaos Computer Club (CCC), the camp featured a sculpted spaceship and a "landing area" illuminated by glowing neon pillars.

Hackers in tents were connected by CAMPnet, a switched Gigabit Ethernet that was billed as the largest civilian open-air Internet network ever created. CAMPnet supported 1,500 hosts, a 34M bit/sec. Internet link and an aggregated Internet bandwidth of 20M bit/sec. Seventeen "data toilet" portable potties housed network routers. A camper who attempted to attack the network found himself cleaning toilets.

The camp's featured event was the Linux Death Match, in which teams of network administrators tried to halt one another's network services. The match was won by a team of people from Munich who chose not to attack, but instead to fortify their machine with FreeBSD (an open-source operating system like Linux) tools.

The camp's re-engineering awards went to a group that altered identification numbers on Global System for Mobile Communications cell phones and another team that defeated a biometric fingerprint-scanning system.

CCC spokesman Andy Muller-Maguhn noted that unlike the U.S., which imposes export restrictions on strong encryption, German politicians listened to advice from the hacker community and then chose not to impose similar controls.

"People here are always thinking critically about fascism, so people want to drive the technology, not be driven by it," Muller-Maguhn said.

Wuzz, a waffle vendor from Brandenburg, Germany said he saw no racism at the event, which, he said, is unusual in eastern Germany.

"Look at this place," Wuzz said. "Do you see any

rubbish, any people fighting? This is a very special kind of Woodstock."

Source: Computerworld

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