The XoopsDEM 2005 or When we meet the Xoops Gods - XOOPS

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NEWS_PDF_DATE: 2005/2/27 23:26:08

Right on time ! It's 9.00 am and we are in the D building… But nobody's in there! We all came together. The French speaking community decided to attend the meeting massively : Christian, Philou, Hervé, Marco and myself. The day was starting really bad, though. Anyway, after a shot walk around the place, we felt on a French guy who suddenly calls us in the street. Who was that guy? Does he know us? Do we know him? Yes, of course, he is Skalpa. One of the Xoops Development Core Team members. One of those guys you hear a lot about but never would expect to meet in the street… except here in Belgium, at the 2005 XOOPSDEM.

[...]

9.30. At last we reach our destination. We were driven to the wrong place at first, but seeing how those two guys above there were glad to see Skalpa was reassuring us all. A young guy with little round glasses aside a great blond haired man are welcoming us. They are Herko and Mithrandir. Yes, now we are sure! We have reached the Xoops gods' meeting.

In the room, about 15 guys and one girl are already discussing. The first guy I met and say hello in my very best English is… French (Doh!). Xavier tells us he is quite new in the community, but decided to come from Lille and meet the Xoops community: Rowdy, jegelstaff, jan304, mercibe and pdaddict are some of them.

10.00. Herko officially starts the meeting. After a short introduction about himself and our favourite CMS, he informes us about the new community developments: the creation of the Xoops Foundation. How is this going to work, who are our representatives and their objectives? Things probably still need some tweaking, but for sure now the Xoops Gods have their Olympus. What about the community and local communities? Herko stresses again the fact that Xoops IS his community first. Doors are open to every collaborative suggestions. This has been heard, you can be sure of it.

11.00. Things are really getting serious now. Herko introduces Skalpa. The guy is in charge of the development of XOOPS 3, and even though he hasn't the public relation talents of Herko, he certainly has an idea on how would be Xoops in its next version: different, innovative and turned to future. Unfortunately, no Internet connection is available in the room. Thus, no possibility to display the sample site Skalpa is currently working on. We just have to imagine, website with less mySQL queries, the possibility to define specific templates for each and every modules, totally rewritten core code which will provide many new functionalities for module developers, compatibility with the current web standard, of course, but with future ones, like XHTML2. Xoops has an ambition with this project: being a real Content Manager System.

Some questions are arising quickly: what about compatibility with the existing modules? If Xoops 3 is turned to the future, past won't be forgotten. Skalpa assures us that all the existing modules will be compatible with the new version. Amongst the developers in the room feeling are difficult to describe. At this stage of the project, it's still hard to see what this change will mean. One thing is sure, though, Xoops has a future.

12.00 Herko ask whether we want to make a break, and if people are interested to visit the FOSDEM, or want to stay and carry on the discussion. No one leaves. Of course. Skalpa enters in more technical discussions, describing new class functionalities, describing templates inheritance systems, how themes are going to work. Even though explanations can be confusing for non hardcore coders, we all see the advantages of this system: the possibility to personalise each and every created pages. It sounds like now only imagination would be your limits.

14.15. The French connection. It's our turn to say a word about www.frxoops and the French speaking community. Some of the most interesting points were about the growing success of this community, its organisation and the dedication of its members to the Xoops project. It was also about the fusion of the 4 different support sites www.frxoops.org, Xoops-Modules, Xoops Themes, Xoops-Docs. How we did proceed, the difficulties we met, and the final success of the operation. The discussion turned around the way we considered Xoops support, the hack we made on the newBB2 version to strengthen the help provided to users. Discussions almost flamed when it came about communication between the xoops.org and the local support sites. We had the feeling the community was heard.

15.00. It's jegelstaff's turn. The guy especially came from Canada to talk to us about the freeform project. Julian has developed a very impressive module which allows creating custom forms. From start to conclusion, the module project leader conducted a conclusive demonstration of his module possibilities.

17.00. Time for conclusions. The only deception for the day was probably who didn't performed his dressed up show. Ah well… The day was over. Even though discussions were carrying on the rest of the evening, we all believed XoopsDEM 2005 was very successful, and hopefully we would meet more of us next year.

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