

A Report on the Smalltalk Solutions Conference in Toronto

The Cincom Smalltalk contingent took center stage at the Smalltalk Solutions Conference, which was held April 24-26 in conjunction with LinuxWorld NetworkWorld (LWNW) in Toronto.

Following a unanimous vote of conferees last June to roll Smalltalk Solutions (STS) into a larger event, Marketing Manager **Suzanne Fortman** worked with the Smalltalk Industry Council (STIC) and contacted various conferences, which led ultimately to the LWNW scheduled for Toronto. “LWNW said yes, and we started promoting Smalltalk Solutions with LWNW in November 2005,” Suzanne recalled.

The payoff was immediate. Whereas STS was formerly marketed to just 200-250 Smalltalk customers, vendors and partners, the association with LWNW meant that STS marketing reached more than 100,000. “The word ‘Smalltalk’ and thus Cincom Smalltalk and Cincom really gained a lot of exposure, and the conference was promoted in *ComputerWorld*, *CRN Canada*, *Canada IT* and several other publications,” Suzanne said.

The Smalltalk Solutions Pavilion had three exhibit sponsors – Cincom was one – and three other exhibitors, allowing attendees to learn, listen and share with some of the top Smalltalkers available. Suzanne credits **Joy Murray**, who manages Cincom’s trade shows and corporate events, for obtaining the best location on the show floor and ensuring that Cincom had the most polished presence in the Smalltalk area. “We had an excellent location and the Cincom booth quickly became the meeting point for attendees, thanks to Joy,” Suzanne said.





Cincom Smalltalk representatives prepared presentations for the conference.

- **Alan Knight** offered a tutorial, “Using GLORP,” the open-source library for object-relational persistence, and discussed Cincom’s plans for its incorporation in the core mapping layer of the Cincom Smalltalk database toolset.
- **Martin Kobetic** presented “Cryptography of Smalltalkers 2,” introducing the cryptographic hash functions and public key algorithms. He included demos using the Cincom Smalltalk VisualWorks security library.
- **James Robertson** spoke on “Building a Blog Server,” which described the building, maintenance, updating and scaling of a Smalltalk web applications server and showed the related technologies XML RSS, and XML-RPC.

Representing Cincom at the Smalltalk booth were **MaryAnn Nelson, Doug Rogers, Michel Sarkis, and Ron Berry** from sales; **John Sarkela, Peter Hatch, Mark Grinnell, Eliot Miranda, and Sam Shuster** from the Cincom Smalltalk Team; and **Barney Kwok** from the MANTIS Team.

According to Suzanne, the LWNW management said that the Smalltalk Solutions sessions were better attended than any of the LinuxWorld or NetworkWorld sessions, singling out Alan Knight, Cincom Smalltalk engineer and conference chairman for STIC, for an excellent program that assembled 20 sessions and two invited industry speakers.

To open this larger audience to all that Smalltalk has to offer, STIC invited all Smalltalk dialects to participate, thus engaging Squeak, Seaside, Ruby, and Ruby on Rails to join Cincom Smalltalk and others. “Rolling STS into this larger event allowed us for the first time to introduce Smalltalk to strangers,” Suzanne explained. “Most other Smalltalk and OO events allow us to speak to current customers and former customers, but rarely any new folks. This year was completely different. The Smalltalk community was apprehensive at first, but at the event they felt this was the best thing we could have done for STS and Smalltalk,” Suzanne said.



Suzanne Fortman

One obvious measure of Cincom Smalltalk’s success was that LWNW invited STS back in 2007 for the conference April 29-May 3, again in Toronto; Cincom and STIC have accepted. “As this was the first event, we did pretty well, but we have a lot of improvements for next year,” Suzanne predicted. “We have a lot of work to do, a full year to promote the event, and we already have industry leaders preparing their talks for next year to make 2007 even better.”

Cincom Smalltalk customers attending STS included Key Technology, Penn State, JP Morgan, SOOPs, Des Jardines, OOCL, and Securitas. Among partners, elevensoft (Italy), Georg Heeg (Germany), Cherniak (Canada), DataBasics (U.S.), GemStone (global), and Refactory (U.S.) also participated.



The press appeared at STS for the first time, already producing one article. Journalists were invited to Georg Heeg's presentation for a partner's view and history of Smalltalk. Other news included the recent announcement of a new executive director for STIC, Bob Nemeč of NorthWater Objects, a VisualAge Smalltalk and Cincom Smalltalk ObjectStudio user. Three Cincomers represent Cincom on the STIC board: Suzanne chairs the marketing panel for STIC; James Robertson, who is the primary representative for Cincom; and Alan Knight, who as the Smalltalk Solutions conference chair is responsible for inviting, reviewing, and selecting speakers.

Suzanne said that feedback on the event was uniformly excellent, and that attendees, speakers and show management agreed it was the right vehicle for propelling Smalltalk and dynamic languages awareness and growing Smalltalk revenue. "The new Cincom Smalltalk name-dropping brochure was used as our bag drop in the conference bag and attendees loved it," Suzanne said. "They were all so impressed with the number of organizations using Smalltalk and working with Cincom."

Suzanne said she wanted to say a big "Thank you!" to all of the Cincomers who dedicated their time, energy and enthusiasm to making this another successful Cincom event.