

Hackers meet in Jakarta

Jaromil's Journal of Musings

10 February 2008

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Meeting in TIM at 18:00, present Jaromil¹, Bono², Philippe Langlois³; later joining Kugutsumen, Jim Geovedi⁴.

This account of the discussion was written by Jaromil and Philippe.

0.1 Introduction

A small introduction of the meeting

J: We're here for a roundup of initiatives, to draw a panorama of things happening this year in Indonesia, as it seems there is a very hacktive scene coming up and lots of things being organized. We are all involved in similar projects that can be well related to each other, this meeting aims to update all of us and share ideas about what we are doing and what we are going to do.

PL: Is there a network gathering all FOSS and free network efforts in Indonesia?

B: not really, there are groups forming as Penguin Merah for instance

¹<http://jaromil.dyne.org>

²<http://dynebolic.org>

³<http://www.tmplab.org/>

⁴<http://jim.giovedi.com>

0.2 Infrastructure

Discussion starts about network infrastructure present in Indonesia

PL: Is the spectrum free?

B: yes, 2.4Ghz is free to be used unlicensed

PL: for inspirations have a look at freifunk⁵...

J: ...and funkfeuer⁶. A reference documentation on building antennas is published on bricolabs⁷.

PL: in France we have 20Mbit/s connection over ADSL for 30EU per month (~400k IDR); this made wireless communities not so important. Still interesting to ack that first operator to do that was very aggressively challenging the law and France Telecom monopoly.

B: Indonesian Telecom shares are quite much owned by Singapore

J: ID put the first asian satellite in the sky... and is now mostly owned by SG

B: at present in ID the network infrastructure available is:

- satellite clear channel SCPC (Single Channel Per Carrier) (Palapa)
- satellite IP based network
- HDSL (over copper wire)
- DVB over satellite
- radio wifi links on 2.4Ghz
- 5.8Ghz licensed frequencies for the backbone
- optical fibers (for limited areas)

J: an important infrastructure are also Warnet points. Their role in development of open cultural discourse in Indonesia was crucial in the past 10 years. Interesting to note that while Wartel is a governmental initiative, Warnet is a grassroots community of small businesses. More details can be found in a publication⁸ printed by *Antropologi Indonesia Journal* in 2004.

0.3 A friend of Philippe arrives

Kugutsumen joins us

K: Hi all. I'm originally from France, i work in security assessment and pentest for various companies, Jim Giovedi is my friend.

J, PL and K rapidly find out they share several hacker acquaintances

K: I'm based in Jakarta now since several years...

discussion about Jakarta, Jogja and Bali

PL: i want to visit Jogja! next time, i'm back in April

slow discussion, we order food

PL: Jim will come later, he is a similar figure as me, artist/techie - art and tech are closer eh.

⁵<http://start.freifunk.net/>

⁶<http://www.funkfeuer.at/>

⁷<http://lab.dyne.org/AntennaDIY>

⁸documents/Internet_in_Indonesia_MerlynaLim2004.pdf

0.4 Gaming culture

Gaming is the most widespread social phenomenon in technology, also and especially in Asia.

J: what is the role of games in /tmp/lab?

PL: we don't play any corporate produced games, we have our own, like hacking water counters can be challenging :)

K: games rapidly gain more importance as they mix with reality, they are more and more a way to interact for people

PL: what i don't like is that corporate designed interaction steps into social environments, as social becomes also private this is dangerous. Second Life can be fascinating but on a second analysis very scary. Coding games can be amazing in bringing people together..

J: brainfuck⁹? :)

PL: yes. also crazy games, simple shell games terminal based, designing new weird protocols... in /tmp/lab we have the one day blast¹⁰: for one day, anybody can come to the lab, put his laptop on a desk, connect to the net and code all day. People show up, start new projects, join projects started earlier that day, and all code, create, design, cut video etc... At the end of the day, people just show what they did in one day and everybody discuss the projects, their use, the orientation.

J: striking resemblance with what in the freaknet poetry hacklab has called Troppo caffe', Poco cervello¹¹.

0.5 Hacking spaces

About physical spaces where we can hack and develop ideas.

PL: what about your space in Amsterdam?

J: ASCII¹² was a kind of internet cafe, a toko on da street, but is now atomized in a network of places in A'dam. so now my place is a living space/hacklab, we hack in our rooms, mix living space and hacking space.

PL: very similar to /tmp/lab

K: problems with behaviours?

PL: no probs. /tmp/lab is also a living space for two of us, usual episodes, always solvable, of giving people some responsibility

K: i had bad experiences...

J: nothing that cannot be kept under control and loosely regulated with some agreed rules that make sense to everyone.

PL: an important thing in developing such spaces is concentrating on the infrastructure rather than specific projects, as outlined in the Hacker Space Design Patterns¹³ presentation made by CCC¹⁴ in 2007.

0.6 What hackers use

A few impressions on what OS platform most hackers use

B: and what hackers like most as a OS?

PL: definitely gnu/linux. what about ID?

B: here there are many geeks/hackers, mostly in campus...

J: but what they do?

B: ... nasty things, viruses and such...

PL: ... good old days.

J: LOL

⁹<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search?search=brainfuck>

¹⁰<http://www.onedayblast.org>

¹¹<http://poetry.freaknet.org/troppocaffepococervello/>

¹²<http://www.scii.nl>

¹³<documents/Hacker-Space-Design-Patterns.pdf>

¹⁴<http://www.ccc.de>

0.7 Migrations to GNU/Linux

Like Exodus, an important step for freedom.

B: very often here if you use windows. actually most people spend all their time scanning for viruses and loosing your data!

K: one interesting phenomenon is that m\$ is cracking down on piracy everywhere, and here too, where piracy is widespread. the good effect of this is that everyone switches to gnu/linux then. In our company we even banned m\$ office for cost/efficiency reasons, most people uses osx or gnu/linux, only two people are left on win now.

PL: my problem on OSX is that openoffice is too slow...

J: what about neooffice¹⁵?

PL: neooffice too. slow :|

B: in my company we had problems with compatibility of systems, accessing databases, security and network traffic, this was a hassle all the time. When i met J last month and i decided to switch to d:b: that was done in one day, all the office is now running d:b as a desktop :) no problems at all, engineers are already mastering the platform and we even printed our own CDs. Only problem left is compatibility for two office tasks: presentations (M\$ PowerPoint files are not fully supported by OpenOffice) and databases access (again M\$ files are not well compatible for OpenOffice).

J: B is mentioning the biggest success story i had experienced about d:b in my life. B works in a professional engineering environment, i am astonished to see how d:b can be useful for them.. and in all that i had to do nothing.

B: by now we are saving a lot of money for software licenses.

0.8 Education

We all know the quality of academies is degrading, but some of us are optimistic and all of us are doing something to make it better.

K: one big prob. not only in ID, but in USA, is what people learn at school, young people are told how to use commercial programs, Oracle, VB and such.. and they don't even know algorithms. when we recruit now we specify "no VB" and we get some better result.

PL: for me this is an old problem, this is the old paradigm of schools, is gone.

K: you say that because your academic background is optimal... but the problem is still there.

PL: yea, ok. anyway. now there is agile development, incremental education, open courseware (from MIT), everything is different, those days are gone.

K: When i look to find programmers to work for me the main problem, in Indonesia or France, is that they don't have passion. there is very few people with passion to work with computers.

PL: this is a distorted view. for sure there is a pyramid, for security, protocol engineering, hard stuff like that, when you mention passion you are referring to the top of the pyramid, where there will be surely less people. the top of the pyramid carries an holistic vision, an organic higher vision, actually these are the people able to mix interests and abilities. below them there is the industry, the workers, and that is also necessary to be there, they are important as well.

PL & K debating hard on the issue, then food arrives: makan!

0.9 What we'll never transcribe

J, PL and K share lots of european hackers stories that cannot be fully transcribed. Among the topics was the founder of <http://zone-h.org> who was arrested in Italy some time ago, after coming back from Jakarta the week before (hopefully won't happen to us!), as well the italian telecom scandal¹⁶.

¹⁵<http://www.neooffice.org/>

¹⁶http://www.quintessenz.at/harkank/Death_at_the_surveillance_interface/Telecom_Italia_affair/

Back to Indonesia, where security hacking is also quite widespread, Onno Purbo has held a brilliant presentation¹⁷ where he demonstrates with statistical analysis how the hacker community is growing and especially how it grows more after every new police bust.

0.10 Miscommunication issues

Where we discuss the problems of loose collectives or networks where theoretically anyone can speak in the name of everyone, or not.

PL: What about mis-communication and fake information about your lab and activity? sometimes people really have to come to us to understand what we do, most information circulating is very misleading. or like gossip mailinglists. . . a counter-hitting Bolkenstein project.

J: at the freaknet we had press releases to negate misleading myths, plus rely on full information on online websites. About Amsterdam, that is like a little town, everyone knows about each other, so i prefer to hide nothing and seek open dialog with anyone, that works.

0.11 Hacking birds

Hacks done on the Indonesian satellite “Palapa”

K. shows us a video documentary on “hacking a bird in the sky” done in Bandung: live hacking of VSAT satellite systems. Will upload and link here where more bandwidth is available.

B: hacked only on receive?

K: yes. fact is that ATM transactions here go in clear channel to lower latency. . .

0.12 Again about hacker spaces

More discussion about having a space where people can hack

PL: a hack meeting space, like a fixed space for meetings like 2600 in london and such.

K: we once thought of DMZ cafe, a place with a data center in the middle of the room, free internet but a disclaimer: if you connect there is people that might try to hack you. not really commercially run, just an open cafe’ and a good meeting point for hackers. . .

J: good to raise awareness about privacy

PL: still the economy needs to be there to roll in, so you might want to run also a cafe. economy is not at the center of the picture, but should be in the picture.

0.13 About OLPC

The one laptop per child project and what we think about it

PL: OLPC is an education project, in /tmp/lab we like to develop for both OLPC and EEEPC¹⁸, for us is basically the same. on OLPC we focus on distribution, awareness, campaigning with local government, development of any kind of software, translation.

K: i am critical about OLPC educational approach: kids can learn alphabet on books. in schools i saw kids forced on educational programs and they were disgusted by machines..

J: i’m also critical about the top-down “evangelical” approach of OLPC.

PL: i agree, but you see: we are mutating the project¹⁹, as we are local people in local place, 500 meters from one of the poorest areas of france, one thing is important for us is to start acting practical and just locally. we don’t plan a tmp/lab everywhere else in france, we won’t bring our OLPC around, we just want to show the people in our neighborhood that they can do the same and mutate further, we concentrate on being local.

J: so you basically use and develop it locally accepting it as a de facto existing infrastructure.

¹⁷documents/BCS2006-Purbo.pdf

¹⁸<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search?search=EEPC>

¹⁹<http://www.olpcfrance.org>

PL: with any kind of project good or bad things will happen, the important question to be posed is: enabling or disabling? ... anyway i think OLPC will not be deployed so much. EEEPC will be deployed as a real thing.

J and K nod

J: right. EEEPC rocks: that is really horizontal, no need to be certified by academics in USA to have a prototype, just go buy it. sometimes making a cheap business distribution is way more democratic.

K: I have another good example of a project with poor kids here in Indonesia: they run a school, normal, afternoon they run activities: they teach them astronomy, mechanics, computers... those kind of projects i am keen in participating. they sponsor kids that are not really rich, in the context of schools, get them involved in things they might never have a chance to get in touch. More experiences in the field show that there are many limits are into organizing infrastructure.

0.14 Organization setups

PL: i use Trac as organization tool²⁰, very effective, very important to have such a good tool for organizing. I believe is best to focus on infrastructure instead of specific projects: you never know when the energy is ready to flow in which direction, so we'd best try to open the space (like with a wiki, that is infinite) and give it a structure. chaos can be destructive in these cases, we always need an infrastructure for an ecosystem that is free..

K: you use wiki with the trac?

PL: i use all features of trac: wiki, ticketing and subversion integration.

J: i also find trac very useful, we use it on dyne.org and it had made much lighter administration tasks. before we used to have moinmoin, mantis and cvs which are 3 different systems all written in different languages: an administration hassle. Trac merges all that.

0.15 Chitchat on wiki technologies

K: how trac is written?

J: python. good language for server side pages

everyone nods

J: and i'm very enthusiastic about emacs, org-mode and muse.el - client side CMS²¹.

PL: yes, but what about collective wikis and collective CMS?

J: lab.dyne.org²² runs on heavy load moin-moin²³ wiki. holds well.

PL: true. i tried quite some wiki engines and moinmoin is good. mediawiki sucks, pmwiki²⁴ way better: stores pages as flat files and upgrading it is as simple as detaring the new version in the root of the pmwiki install. That's good technological fluidity.

J: ahah. agree. mediawiki sucks :)

My laptop battery finishes, minutes get less precise.

We talk about P2P technologies, telephone network, hacking of existing mobile phones (and how little has been done so far in that direction), the bricophone project and more...

0.16 Jim arrives

Jim joins us wearing a t-shirt: "because ninjas are too busy."

²⁰<http://trac.edgewall.org>

²¹<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search?search=CMS>

²²<http://lab.dyne.org>

²³<http://moinmoin.wikiwikiweb.de/>

²⁴<http://www.pmwiki.org>

J2: Hi all.

PL: Jim is doing electronic music and is a computer expert.

J: we were now discussing about P2P. (*quick resume of the meeting*)

J2: I like p2p in relation to worm networks :)

more discussion about how worms nowadays work and communicate

J: Jim you should check the Cellsbutton festival in Jogja organized by HONF, i guess you'd be a good presence there, performing maybe.

J2: never heard about, interesting.

more discussion lacking notes

J: something i didn't mentioned yet is Transmission.cc²⁵, Andy from engagemedia²⁶ is organizing the asian edition of this meeting this summer in collaboration with RuangRupa²⁷. Meeting is about independent TV station, very important topic here. Was first organized in Rome at Forte Prenestino, then London, then Amsterdam a few weeks ago .. next here.

So that's all for now, see you around in cyberspace ;)

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²⁵<http://www.transmission.cc>

²⁶<http://engagemedia.org>

²⁷<http://ruangrupa.org>