

# Borland Conference 2000



**Bob Swart reports from San Diego**

The 11th annual Borland Conference was held from 8th to 12th July in San Diego, USA.

Although the opening keynote was on Sunday evening July 9th, the conference started on Saturday with pre-conference tutorials. In four timeslots (morning and afternoon), you could pick from more tutorials than ever: 36 in total, which was actually a good way to prepare for the conference, with topics ranging from Delphi Component Building and CORBA Basics to MIDAS and, of course, an introduction to Kylix by Charlie Calvert and David Intersimone.

Talking about Charlie: a few days before we heard that he would be leaving Borland at the end of the conference, to join Cary Jensen in a new training and consulting company. A shock for the Borland Community, but at least Charlie isn't lost to the Delphi community, so I wish him all the best in his new job!

## Opening Keynote

The opening keynote contained numerous references to the movie *The Matrix* (if you didn't see it, many of the references to the *red pill*, *blue pill*, *the one*, *lots of guns*, and *'taking experience with you'* would be lost).

Dale Fuller talked about his promises from last year and how Borland has worked hard to fulfil them. Note, by the way, that the new company logo features 'Borland' very prominently, with

► *The new Borland logo.*

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'Inprise Corporation' almost an afterthought. Perhaps Borland felt they couldn't abandon the Inprise name totally, but the Borland brand is very definitely back in front again. Where it belonged all along, if you ask me [*Hear, hear! Ed*]. Dale even handed out (but only on personal request!) special stickers with the *Made in Borland* logo.

A number of guest speakers appeared during the opening keynote. The Enterprise Business Unit of the company showcased AppCenter, and promised a Delphi connection to AppCenter and AppServer next year (the demo wasn't really clear, but the message was promising). The Java Business Unit then demonstrated JBuilder running on an Apple OS X machine. That's right: JBuilder on an iMac, which was really cool to see.

Finally, the Delphi unit talked in length about Kylix, showed the IDE (just loaded it up, nothing adventurous) and directed people to the various Kylix- and Linux-related sessions later in the week. An interesting announcement was the support for Apache web server applications, which was made for both Kylix and future versions of Delphi (and C++Builder, of course).

One of Dale Fuller's remarks was that more Linux applications will be built on the very first night after Kylix ships than are available now. The reason, of course, is that when we get Kylix, we will become Linux developers overnight and be able

to turn out applications real fast [*Hmm, methinks there might be more to creating Linux apps than Dale Fuller realises, even with an amazing tool like*

*Delphi. Ed*]. Yes, certainly got the feeling that Kylix is *The One*...

Other very impressive statements were related to the number of downloads of the 'free' tools from the Borland website. JBuilder Foundation Edition was downloaded over 300,000 times in the past few months, while the free Borland C++ 5 command-line tools were downloaded over 500,000 times. Wow. My guess is that if a Kylix Foundation Edition were created (my speculation entirely: I've no knowledge of whether such a version is planned) it would be downloaded over a million times. But then again Borland really need to sell Kylix and get real revenue from it.

A final promise from Dale was that InterBase 6.0, which should have been Open Source by the time of the conference, would be made Open Source within two weeks from that Opening Keynote. As I write this, less than two weeks later, Dale has fulfilled his promise: InterBase 6.0 is now available as Open Source for Windows, Linux and Solaris.

## Delphi Product Address

The Delphi product address was well attended (as could be expected) and mainly covered Kylix. This time, the IDE was shown and even used by Michael Swindell to create a world first 'live' CLX application in public. Although the IDE froze the first time he attempted it, the second attempt worked fine, and he even went on to produce a data-aware application using dbExpress and a DBGrid. It was nice to see that the IDE is beginning to shape up (and the underlying CLX foundation is settling down as well).

CLX, as explained in detail by Chuck J (who was award with this

► Dale Fuller.



year's Lifetime Achievement Award), consists of four parts: BaseCLX (the system unit, `sysutils`, etc.), VisualCLX (all the visual components), DataCLX (all the data-aware components and data access stuff such as `dbExpress`) and NetCLX (internet and web broker components, including the newly announced Apache support in Web Broker).

Finally, Ben Riga came back to stage and talked a little about Delphi 6. Eddie Churchill did a session on Delphi 6, which showed some new features added to the IDE and some conversion routines in a unit that was made by Eddie himself (so it received a lot of coverage during his session).

### Delphi Meet The Team

Maxim Peresada was announced as the year 2000 winner of the *Spirit of Delphi* year 2000 award, after previous winners were mentioned (Marco Cantù and I were the only ones present in San Diego). It is likely that Charlie Calvert will be nominated next year, by the way.

The remainder of the *Delphi Meet The Team* session consisted of questions and answers (by the team). A number of requests were made to document some of the more 'undocumented' parts of Delphi, such as the Open Tools API, RTTI, etc. It was really good to see the faces behind the names, and the people who work on this product that makes so many developers more productive.

### Industry Keynotes

There were three industry keynotes. The first was by Peter Coffee (from *E-Week*, previously from *PC Week*), who talked about clients moving to the web. The third keynote was by Doc Searls, Linux columnist and guru. Transcripts of the keynote sessions are not yet available as I write this, but will

► *Made in Borland:  
just the way we like it!*



► *Bob Swart (left) and Charlie Calvert (right) at BorCon. Best wishes from all of us at The Delphi Magazine in your new venture, Charlie!*

probably become available on the Borland Community website, just like the on-line chats during the conference.

The second keynote was, with all due respect to the other speakers, the most interesting one for me. It featured the same three guest sessions as in the Opening Keynote (AppCenter, JBuilder and Delphi/Kylix), but this time showing future features.

Blake Stone showed JBuilder Handheld Express, and even showed that Java isn't slow anymore by comparing it with Delphi. Especially in the area of memory management, JBuilder (and the HotSpot optimiser) proved to be more efficient than Delphi. I'm sure he would have been able to prove the same using Visual C++ or Visual Basic (but that wouldn't have been a real contest).

Finally, Ben Riga mentioned a few directions in which future versions of Delphi would take us. These were mainly internet related (which shouldn't be a surprise), and some were really new, like Delphi server-side scripting (Delphi Server Pages?), HTML preview editor views, and more support for XML and SOAP.

Also, when compiling with Kylix (Delphi for Linux), you will get warnings if

any parts of your source code are Linux-specific. The same will happen when compiling with future versions of Delphi to alert you when you write Windows-specific code. Borland is taking the move to cross-platform capability very seriously.

A tool called VCL-Scanner has now been released which scans and parses an entire project, reporting the units and components which are used, the way they are used and (probably) any Windows- or Linux-specific parts that need attention when you want to port your application from one platform to another. While this is not a conversion or translation tool, it is certainly a helpful add-on for people who need to make sure they write cross-platform applications.

### Sessions

For most people, the most interesting sessions were probably those related to Kylix. Most of these were repeated (and all were very well attended, so the repeats were indeed welcome). Some of the material was published (at least partly) before, like Danny

Thorpe's new language and RTL features in Kylix. Some are now published on the web (like the dbExpress Internals session). One thing was made clear: for database stuff, MIDAS will play a very important role in Kylix and future versions of Delphi. So if you don't know MIDAS yet, I urge you to at least re-read my articles on that topic in this very magazine!

It seems that most of the feature set of Kylix is now decided, although not everything is finished. The major hurdle that remains is a fully functional IDE. Apart from that, there may be some work that needs to be done on CLX, but they seem to be pretty far already. The announced 'launch' of Kylix at the Inprise UK conference in September was a bit too soon: they had to remove the word 'launch' afterwards.

Dale Fuller made it clear when Kylix would ship... When it's ready! We all hope that Borland stick to that commitment and ensure the shipping product does not have any major problems. It will be

really important to have a good, stable first version of Kylix available. Which will be Delphi for Linux Standard and Professional only, by the way. There will be no Delphi for Linux Enterprise edition for quite a while: this will be a forthcoming Enterprise Studio, which at the same time will integrate the Delphi and C++Builder IDE features.

### **What Else?**

Apart from numerous sessions, there was also an exhibition area where a few dozen third-party tool vendors and a few publishers displayed their best for the delegates.

This year, the focus was on Kylix, and at least half of the vendors present said they were working on Kylix editions of their tools (although we couldn't really see anything), including TurboPower, Raize Software, devSoft and Nevrona to name but a few.

One of the interesting announcements was Indy (short for Internet Direct), the successor of WinShoes 7, which will replace the Net Master internet components in

future versions of Delphi. This was received with appreciation by many of the Delphi internet developers present.

Another welcome area was the computer lab, where we could try all the (released) Borland products for ourselves and connect to the internet too.

### **Next Year**

At this time it's not clear where next year's conference will be held, although rumour has it that BorCon 2001 will be in San Francisco. One thing is for sure: it will be the West coast again. And regardless of the location, I'll be there and hope to see you as well.

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