



Firebird Foundation

(Incorporated)

Incorporated as a Non-profit Association by the Department of Fair Trading, NSW, Australia
to promote the interests of the Firebird Open Source RDBMS Project

15 Oakhampton Road
Maitland
NSW 2320
AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61(0)402 967 603

President's Report

Annual General Meeting

18 October 2010

Firebird 2.5 is here and the Foundation can take pride in having reached its goal this year to promote and advance the development effort of the Firebird Project. Thanks again to all the contributors who managed together to deliver the fifth major release of Firebird this month.

The financial situation is a little better than the Treasurer's Annual report would suggest, describing as it does the position in June. Recent months have seen the appearance of new sponsorships, albeit we are still under a lot of pressure in terms of funds and time resources. The wild fluctuations of exchange rates between currencies are not helping to paint a rosy picture.

I suggest that the next Committee coordinate with the Project members to initiate a combined campaign to get more contributors and more members. Can we set up the goal of 500 or more members for the Firebird Foundation's 10th anniversary in 2012?

Donations and Fund-raising

Brazilian developers meeting for their annual Firebird Developers' Day surpassed their efforts of past years, by chipping in \$2,445 for the Foundation pool when the hat was passed around. Thank you, Brazil!

We have started to use some of the funds raised two years ago for website redevelopment. We expect we will need to do some more fund-raising as this project progresses in the coming weeks and months.

Sponsorships

A huge "Thank You" is due to all of our sponsors whose contributions accounted for about 75 per cent of income in this difficult year. You have done us proud.

The past year has seen the initiation of two new Platinum sponsorships, by ObjectMastery Pty Ltd of Melbourne, Australia and Development-X Ltd, of Auckland, New Zealand. Broadview Software, which also provides hosting for all of the Firebird Project's Internet web, Tracker, database, mail and list services, upgraded its sponsorship from Gold to Platinum.

Adept Software, of Cape Town, South Africa, upgraded its sponsorship from Silver to Gold, Communicare in Australia renewed its Gold sponsorship for another year and Martens & Prahl in Germany resumed its Gold. Together with our longer-term sponsors - Great Lakes Data Systems, IBPhoenix, Tabulex, Bas-X, DRB Systems, UVData, QuickEasy and Passfield, you have sustained our funding prospects admirably through the bad times and we cannot thank you enough for that.

Memberships

About 22 per cent of income came from membership subscriptions. Currently we have 240 members: 112 voting (25 overdue or unpaid) and 128 associate (38 overdue or unpaid). We have 24 voting members who don't pay membership subscriptions, these are the honorary members and the Platinum and Gold sponsors.

To the 25 voting members overdue with annual subscriptions or defaulting on monthly ones, the good news is: you still have time to renew and do some voting!

We can always do with more members, so I would like to remind you that we have Foundation member logos that paid-up members can display on their websites to encourage site visitors to think about becoming a member. You can pick these logos up from the menus on the Foundation's web-pages.

The Committee

This year the Committee finally came to the point regarding trademark usage and developed a proposal for a formal Trademark Usage Policy document to resolve the confusion concerning the ways people may and may not use our trademark and logos. The final draft will be presented for discussion and ratification by the membership during this Annual General Meeting.

Thanks to IBPhoenix (Pavel Cisar) and Alan McDonald, we have now a monthly email news bulletin that I hope has been welcomed by all of our members.

As a committee we came to the conclusion that refurbishing our tired web site was not likely to happen under the existing disjointed organisation it has endured to date. We took on the job of coordinating all of the parties who have an interest as site users and content contributors. The intention was (and still is) to determine the functional requirements and find a new team to refurbish and maintain the site. A small group, representing the various interest groups within the community, along with designers, has been working on it, in fits and starts, since April. The process has been slow and subject to stalling regularly. Nevertheless, the group is currently assessing some prototypes and hopes to have the concrete proposal ready soon. We will certainly call for volunteers to work on the infrastructure and the maintenance of a new website.

The Technical Task Group reconvened this year for a meeting. This is the place where sponsors and Foundation member representatives can assemble periodically to share their perspectives about the roadmap with the Firebird Project administrators. Thanks to Dmitry Yemanov, the project's coordinator, for his kind and efficient contributions to this meeting. Dmitry published an updated roadmap in October 2010.

Treasurership

We continued to benefit from the orderly and detailed manner in which Alan McDonald conducts his role as Treasurer. The annual reports he will table today are very similar to the ones he presents at each committee meeting, budgets and all. It means that, under Alan's tenure, we have a much better view of our finances than we have had in the past.

On behalf of the committee and the Foundation, I want to thank Alan for his great work over the past two years or so. I really regret that he has decided not to run for another term in the role of Treasurer.

Codeworker Grants

Our sitting Vice-President and Gold sponsor, DRB Systems CEO Steve Summers, offered extra funds to "kick-start" the resumption of the neglected ODBC driver development, viz., completion of the v.2.0 release and to get the v.2.1 driver well under way. The offer was tied to the reassignment of the Foundation's grant allocation for this project, which has been lying fallow for a few years.

A proposal was made to Alexander Potapchenko, who had already demonstrated his skill and interest in the project in the past. I am pleased to learn that Alexander accepted the proposal a few days ago.

Events

This year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Firebird project and I think we can say that the Firebird community is well alive. Ten years on, I believe we, as a community, can take real pride in the challenge we took up when we rallied around the source code and formed the Firebird Project back in year 2000. I would like to thank all the past and actual core developers, contributors, sponsors and Foundation members for what we all achieved since then.

I want to thank the promoters of the "MindTheBird!" initiative for their efforts to have Firebird ambassadors around the world. The Firebird project is coordinating with the "MindTheBird!" leaders now, recognising the need to improve Firebird's visibility.

No Firebird International Conference was staged this year, but we had events all around the world. The recent Firebird Day in Brazil had more than 500 attendees and gatherings in Firebird's name in Ukraine, Russia and France were enthusiastically supported. A Firebird-related conference in Germany is planned for next month. We have had several webinars, staged by MindTheBird!, with more to come.

My thanks go to all the people who organize such events. If you want to set one up, it does not have to be hard to do and we can help.

Conclusion

To repeat what I said at the tenth anniversary mark, we always need people to write code and documentation, review and triage bug report submissions, maintain the servers that the Firebird Project infrastructure depends on. We need more people creating new applications to smoothe the development of Firebird, more people involved in strategies to promote the usage and support of Firebird worldwide, more people capable of supporting other users, more people to contribute funds to the Foundation, more people to set up Firebird events ...

Need I go on? It is not just empty words to state that there really is a place for everyone in our Firebird ecosystem.

Philippe Makowski, President

18th October 2010