

# LUGS ON TOUR

## PHP Day & JavaScript Day

**Cesare d'Amico** on the irresistible rise of PHP in Italy.

**P**HP Day is an international conference about the PHP programming language; it was born in 2003 as a one-day conference, as a means of gathering the scattered Italian PHP community. It's always been a community conference, with the purpose of helping developers improve their skills and knowledge. Over the years, the conference has grown to a two-day conference with two tracks of talks and one track of workshops, with speakers coming from all over the world to talk about the latest technologies and methodologies in the PHP world. Past speakers include Rasmus Lerdorf, Zeev Suraski, Lorna Mitchell, Derick Rethans, Sebastian Bergmann and many more influencers.

Initially we targeted students, amateurs and professionals alike; that was because the community in Italy at the time was scattered among various packages (phpNuke, Drupal, Joomla etc) and a real PHP community simply didn't exist. Conference after conference, we've seen the number of developers increase, so we also raised the level of the talks. To open the Italian community to Europe and to the world, we also began to accept talks in English, moving from 30% in 2009 to 70% in 2011; since 2012, we only accept talks in English. We also always accept new speakers, ie at their first experience in an international conference, to help the Italian and European community grow. We also try to invite the most diverse speaker panel possible.

Another important change happened in 2009: until 2008 the conference was free (as in beer): the

purpose, again, was to help developers grow, making the conference accessible to everyone. This led to several problems, so in 2009 we made the big change, asking people to buy a ticket to see the conference. Many left us, but many more came.

All in all it was a really good move since the conference has improved a lot! We can now offer lunch, coffee breaks and a social night where pizza, pasta and beer are free for all the attendees, who now have a great opportunity to get to know more people. We also have a big aperitif with Aperol spritz before the social nights: as the phpDay T-shirts say, "in Spritz we trust".

The conference should be fun, and we try our best to create informal moments, but in order to make sure that everyone has fun we delivered a code of conduct that everyone is expected to follow. This can be summarised in two words: "respect everyone".

In 2011 jsDay was born as the "JS track" of that year's phpDay: the response was so big that since 2012 jsDay has become a full conference completely focused on JavaScript and related technologies: web performances, methodologies, server side technologies, testing, wrapper languages and all the new and exciting faces that JavaScript has taken over the years.

### GrUSP

GrUSP is a non-profit association that was born in 2004; it was founded to support the organisation of phpDay and made a presentation to the phpDay attendees in October 2004. Over the years it has attracted



Verona was a Roman trade centre. They also left an amphitheatre, which today hosts opera performances (not shown).

more and more Italian developers, and now it has more than 300 associates.

During the last five years, the main focus of GrUSP, apart from organizing phpDay and jsDay, has been to create local PHP user groups around Italy, and help them run smaller one-day conferences in Italian. Many PUGs have popped up, and we currently have around 10 groups all across Italy. All those groups have helped organise a great number of conferences in the last couple of years, including Symfony day, ZF day, WP day, Mage day, NoSQL day and more.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR LUG!

We want to know more about your LUG or hackerspace, so please write to us at [lugs@linuxvoice.com](mailto:lugs@linuxvoice.com) and we might send one of our roving reporters to your next LUG meeting

# Open Tech Calendar 2nd birthday party

**James Baster** shares a development that could help us all.

**E**dinburgh-based website Open Tech Calendar lists technology events, and is going to be two years old on 24 July 2014. It's had a brilliant two years, listing more than 1,500 events from Aberdeen to Manchester, London to Norway and attracting 92,000 page views.

The site lets anyone sign up to add or edit events using the same model as Wikipedia, and thus relies on people adding events themselves. So far over 360 people have signed up. Open Tech Calendar has embraced the principle of open data, allowing anyone to use the events data they have collected and providing open APIs to make this possible.

In January this year the engine behind the site was made available to other communities to use. This is offered through a platform at <https://ican.hasacalendar.co.uk> and made available as an open source product at <http://ican.openacalendar.org>. This has been used by:

- Edinburgh Council for Edinburgh

Outdoors.

- A calendar listing Jazz events (JazzCal).
- A calendar of cycling events.
- We will shortly announce a calendar of civil rights events.

Kirstin Leath, of NHS Hack Scotland, said: "Open Tech Calendar is fantastic! It makes organising, advertising and finding tech events so easy."

Al Bennet from Edinburgh Hacklab said "Open Tech Calendar is a great way to find tech events in Edinburgh. We've found many interesting events to attend through it. We switched to putting Hacklab events on OTC earlier this year rather than on a shared Google Calendar, as OTC allows any of us to put an event online in our group. This has made it much easier to manage rather than having only a few people managing the Google Calendar. The wiki-style editing of OTC really helps as it's easy to throw an event on when we're early in the planning and then others can easily refine the listing later on when we have more information to add. We're



using the OTC WordPress widget on our site, so all our events appear on our site with no effort."

The birthday will be celebrated in the Pear Tree to which the local tech community is invited:

<http://opentechcalendar.co.uk/event/1457-open-tech-calendars-2nd-birthday>  
<http://opentechcalendar.co.uk>

The Peartree pub in Edinburgh's wonderful beer garden will play host to Open Tech Calendar's birthday celebrations, on Thursday 24 July.

## Bristol and Bath LUG

Bristol's more than just cider and bridges, claims **Ben Everard**.

**T**he Bristol and Bath LUG meet at the Knights Templar pub next to Temple Meads railway station on the last Saturday of the month. Both pub and station are named after an oval Knights Templar church that once stood nearby. The church was destroyed after the order was suppressed in 1312, and a rectangular church was built where it once stood. Much of this later church remains, but it was put out of use by a German bomb during the Second World War.

Bristol, though, is more famous for its technology than its religion. Previously the home of Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the location for some of the greatest Victorian

engineering, it's now a digital powerhouse. A recent McKinsey report singled out Bristol and Bath as a globally significant technology cluster because of the network of tech companies working there.

It's hardly surprising, then, that the region has produced a thriving Linux community. The Bristol and Bath Linux User Group has links with the Bristol Hackspace, and brings together a diverse crowd of geeks. We joined them for their June meet up where we discussed BeagleBones, Raspberry Pis, Arduinos, old-fashioned programming and the advantages and disadvantages of cover mounted DVDs.



If you're in the south west of England and fancy joining some other Linux users for a few drinks and a natter, you'll find all their details at [www.bristol.lug.org.uk](http://www.bristol.lug.org.uk).