



Conference 15th May 2004

# a Free Software Payroll Sense or Suicide ?

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'Systems to Stand the Test of Time'

# Clockwork Software - who we are

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- Midlands Software Company
  - specialising in bespoke applications
  - and complete business systems
  
- Customers include
  - Ford Motor Company
  - Speedy Hire plc
  - Smaller, local, companies

# Clockwork - what we do

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- We do Software
- Business Systems
- Nearly all our business is based on Free Software
- And we run our own business on Free Software
  - Payroll
  - Project management
  - Office "Productivity" software

# Clockwork - what we do

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- Committed to Free Software
- Supply under the GPL
- 'Standing on the shoulders of giants'
- We try to put something back into the pot
  - eg Government Gateway
- Practically all our work is based on GNU/Linux
- Want to see it succeed on the desktop

# Free Software on the Desktop

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- will not succeed on the Business desktop
- until Free core business apps are available
- apps like WP are not Core applications
- just tools...
- we need CORE applications
- like Payroll and Accounts...

# a New Payroll

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- We decided to develop a new payroll
  - Multi-user
  - Multi-platform
  - Fully-featured
    - ▷ All statutory pay elements
  - Flexible
    - ▷ user-configurable
  - Multi-company (eg for bureau use)
  - Multi-payroll (within a company)

# the Development Platform

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- Thyme - our development platform
  - Python-based
    - ▷ with our own C database extensions
  - Uses Qt GUI (via PyQt)
    - ▷ Qt Designer for screen design
  - Our own Custom Widgets
  - Utilities and program generators
  - Licensed under GPL/LGPL
  
- Why 'Thyme'
  - because it's not another herb

# PayThyme - the payroll

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- Written in Python
  - for GUI screens, reports
- and C
  - for the calculation engine
- 'Soft' Configuration
  - infinite number of pay elements
- Powerful
  - SSP Calculator, etc
- No runtime licencing
  - no user limit
- Will be released under the GPL



PayThyme is not a Mickey Mouse product

# PayThyme

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- Powerful
- Comprehensive
- Scalable
- Users like it
- Let's take a quick look...

# PayThyme - current status

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- Version 1 under test since April 2003
  - Durham bakery with over 600 weekly paid employees
  - Smaller payrolls (7-30)
  
- Version 2 being finished
  
- V2 will be the first Free Software release
  - Initially single company, single payroll
  
- V2 will be supplied to a few testers
  
- V2 will be available for free download

# PayThyme - TODO

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- Multi-company, multi-payroll version
  - testing soon on Bureaus
    - ▷ both our own, and a friendly associate
- Improved reporting
- Documentation !
  - On-line help
  - essential for...
- Inland Revenue accreditation
- Government Gateway interface

# Why did we do it ?

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- We see a need for a GNU/Linux payroll
- It's a valuable contribution to the community
  - will help acceptance of open systems
- We had an opportunity :
  - a GNU/Linux-friendly customer
  - (very) partial funding
  - a knowledgeable team
- We think we can make money from it.

# PayThyme - commercial aspects

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- It's cost us a lot of time and money
- It will be freely-downloadable
- So how can we make money out of it ?
- Are we barking mad ?
  - are we committing commercial suicide ?
  - my accountant thinks so !
- Or does this make good sense ?
  - I think so

# How will we make money ?

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- By selling PayThyme :
  - Most people will want it supplied as a working payroll
  - Most companies will want support
  
- We plan to supply 'Payroll in a Box'
  - Complete hardware and software solution
  - Fits in well with customers' security perceptions
  - A nice way of introducing open systems
  
- Support, Training, Custom Implementation
  
- Conversely we won't provide free support

# Benefits of Free Software

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(for developers)

- No need to protect your code
- No need for copy protection
- No need for dongles
- No need for licensing schemes
- No chance of consequential bugs
- No chance of upsetting customers with intrusive licensing



# Sense or Suicide ?

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- we think it makes sense
- we hope you agree...
- time will tell...

Thanks for listening !