

# 34C3 - tuwat!

ZENO KOLLER - TUT WAT BY WRITING THIS ARTICLE

**Between Christmas and New Year's Eve, me and some other ETH students attended the 34th Chaos Communication Congress (34C3) in Leipzig. This article contains some of my observations at the event, and some tips in case you want to attend next year's congress and a list of recommended talks with recordings.**

## What is the 34C3?

To quote the 34C3 wiki [1]:

The 34th Chaos Communication Congress (34C3) is an annual four-day conference [organized by the Chaos Computer Club] on technology, society and utopia. The Congress offers lectures and workshops and various events on a multitude of topics including (but not limited to) information technology and generally a critical-creative attitude towards technology and the discussion about the effects of technological advances on society.

This description is fairly accurate, but to understand the awesomeness of a Chaos Communication Congress (CCC / C3 in short), one has to be there. It's a sensory overflow of colorful people (not only neckbeards), thought-provoking to mindblowing talks with breadcrumbs of small but awesome stuff sprinkled in between.

This year's congress was held at the Congress Center Leipzig (Leipziger Messe) - a totally new venue. Before, it took place in Hamburg for five consecutive years. Having also attended last year's congress, I was not sure what to expect: CCH, the Hamburg venue, provided an almost perfect experience: Comfortable lecture halls,

organizers and audience that knew the ins and outs of the venue like the back of their hands. How would it be in Leipzig? Before the event, rumor had it that Messe Leipzig would have not industrial rather than lecture halls, long walking distances were to be expected, and the main building, a greenhouse-shaped glass condom, would be a study of bad acoustics and heating design with the charm of a railway station. It did not turn out to be that bad. Okay, the lecture halls could have been a bit more cozy, but the long walking distances provided welcome exercise between hour-long sitting. The most movement-resistant of nerds coped with kickboards, skateboards and various electrical personal transport devices. The large and open spaces spread the mass of people much thinner (also, due to the first-time use of the venue, fewer tickets were sold than before).

## What can you do at the 34C3?

The backbone of today's congress are four concurrent tracks with talks. (Re-)Live-streaming is available, so if there are no seats left, you're not out of luck. This way, you could also join the congress from the comforts of your sofa, but then you'd miss out on all the action. In addition to the main tracks, self-organized sessions and workshops cover various topics like communism, parenting or latin. →

That is not all. A lot of floor space is dedicated to like-minded groups to join forces in so-called assemblies. Many of them are meetups of \$TECHNOLOGY users, but political groups like the Digitale Gesellschaft or creative ones like the Sendezentrum (for podcasts) are also present. Or, the Coffee Nerds, who let you prepare a coffee from freshly ground beans. In the Hack-center, you'll find art installations, 3D printers, the Kidspace with its huge ball pit, and the food hacking base, where I attended cheese and cider tastings and helped bottle probiotic drinks.

Of course, there are also parties. It is said that some famous DJs who like the vibe do sets anonymously, just because they like the vibe.

### How does it even work?

The congress is entirely funded by ticket sales and has no corporate sponsors [2]. How can an event with more than 10k people work? Usually, congress centers employ staff to route people flows, sell tickets and, most importantly, provide Internet access. This costs a lot of money. The CCC, however, only rents the bare building and does almost all the work on its own, from organization to teardown. At the event itself, about three thousand so-called Angels do volunteer work. They are congress visitors who paid for a ticket!



ANZEIGE



Matthias Hobi liebt es, in der Freizeit steil aufzusteigen, besonders gerne aufs Zinalrothorn (4221 m.ü.M.) im Wallis. Als Software-Entwickler bei BSI in Zürich (408 m.ü.M.) liebt er hingegen die flachen Hierarchien. Die sind bei BSI nicht nur Blabla, sondern gelebte Realität mit echten Vorteilen: 360°-Blick statt Teilprojekte, direkter Kundenkontakt, Beteiligung am Unternehmen und vieles mehr.

Erfahre mehr über dein zukünftiges Team: [www.bsi-software.com/kollegen](http://www.bsi-software.com/kollegen)

Speaking of Internet access: At the C3, you won't need to access the watered-down congress center connection. The C3's connection is a fiber-optic firehose: a 400-gigabit/s uplink [3] that the attendees did not manage to saturate. Being directly connected to the internet means that there will be a lot of shady activity like port scanning, not like at home, where your service provider might protect you. Better patch your devices. Considering the size of the event, wireless network access is second to none. Some locals I've met who also attended Leipziger Buchmesse were quite baffled at that: At regular events, the Wi-Fi would usually not work in the weirdly-shaped building.

### Tips for attendees

If you've never been to congress but want to go, here are some tips that might make your life easier. By the start the start of autumn semester, convince some friends to go with you for sharing accommodation [4]. Try to find a room

from the 26th till the 30 of December minimum. Then, around October, starts checking the CCC event blog [5] for announcements of ticket sales dates. Set an alarm for these dates and have your laptop ready (it's like reserving a spot for some of the more popular VIS events!). Tickets are limited and sell out fast.

A few days before the event, think about security. If you want to bring your laptop to the event, create a backup and lock down the OS (install a firewall and patches, disable remote access, etc...). Bonus: When you get back home, reinstall from said backup. Consider not bringing your laptop at all to save you the hassle. There will be enough interesting stuff at the event, even without the hacking. For example volunteering: You can sign up to become an Angel before or at the event.

## Recommended Talks

This is a collection of talks I've seen and can recommend. Favorites are starred. I only watched a fraction of the talks, so make sure to also skim the complete "Fahrplan" [6] if you're interested. Talks are either in English or German but the recordings come with translations and subtitles. To access the recordings, visit <https://media.ccc.de/> and search for the title.

### Day 1

***Dude, you broke the future*** - A rant on the 21st century

***Gamified Control?*** - How China gamifies citizenship with the Social Credit System

***Unleash your smart home devices: Vacuum Cleaning Robot Hacking*** - Better not buy used vacuum cleaning robots. This is why

***Der PC-Wahl-Hack*** - CCC's analysis of the German voting software "PC-Wahl" which is so loaded with vulnerabilities that it almost seems satirical



★ **Social Cooling** - big data's unintended side effects - In a reputation economy, users will engage in self-censorship

★ **QualityLand** - Is it a reading? Is it a performance? This dystopia is a lot of fun for sure

Die fabelhafte Welt des Mobilebankings - Two-factor what?

**Apollo Guidance Computer** - If you ever wondered what computer architecture it takes to land on the moon, here you go

## Day 2

**Social Bots, Fake News und Filterblasen** - Research on Twitter that visualizes filter bubbles and challenges the existence of effective bot accounts

★ **May contain dtraces of FreeBSD** - Debugging your kernel? Dtrace makes it possible

**The Snowden Refugees under Surveillance in Hong Kong** - The heartbreaking story of how the people who provided refuge to Edward Snowden are being persecuted by Hong Kong government

**How to drift with any car** - Two french dudes hacking their relatives' cars - to play video games?

**Growing Up Software Development** - A plea for a more sustainable approach to teaching programming

## Day 3

**Coming Soon: Machine-Checked Mathematical Proofs in Everyday Software** - Let's envision a future where debugging is a thing of the past

★ **cryptocurrencies, smart contracts, etc** - The current state of coins

## Day 4

**library operating systems** - Unikernels in OCaml

**The Internet in Cuba: A Story of Community Resilience** - Internet restrictions in Cuba and how locals deal with them



### Links

- [1] <https://events.ccc.de/congress/2017>
- [2] Internet access, video and network equipment are sponsored by several companies.
- [3] <https://twitter.com/momorientes/status/944837541198483456>
- [4] If nobody wants to come, ask in the VIS RocketChat.
- [5] <https://events.ccc.de/>
- [6] <https://fahrplan.events.ccc.de>