Edukalibre project: exploring libre software models to produce educational materials

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SIGOSSEE Meeting
Barcelona, UPF, November 2nd, 2004

Basics of libre software developing models

- Collaboration by groups of people
- Sporadic contributions (bugs, patches) by anybody
- Heavily dependent on software (CVS, SourceForge, bug tracking systems, mail lists, etc.)
- Asynchronous, geographically distributed
- Frequent releases, feedback quickly considered
- Many actors in the distribution chain

Differences when translating to education

- Materials are usually the product of little people working together
- Not many contributions from people other than authors
- Basic software usage (and experience): word processor
- Infrequent releases, feedback only seldom considered
- Distribution dependent on publishers

However...

- Education is a cooperative process by nature
- Students and other teachers have similar needs
- Curricula is similar for the same studies (even across countries)
- Education is more and more supported by web-based systems
- Use in many places is rewarding enough (in some cases)
- Some seminal experiences (such as MIT OpenCourseWare)

Main barriers

- Philosophical:
  - shared authorship vs “my toy”
  - others (even students) can contribute
- Legal:
  - New licences (GNU FDL, Creative Commons, Open Documentation License, etc.)
- Practical:
  - Software support with smooth learning curve is needed

Edukalibre project

- Building and testing a software system for collaborative production of educational materials (books, manuals, tutorials, etc.)
- Simple to use, environment common to educators
- Built with free software (mainly by glue-scripting)
- In one sentence: “combine the good of wiki, cvs and structured markup with common word processors”

Edukalibre system

- Repository based on subversion (version control system)
- Access:
  - Direct, via WebDAV
  - Web based (standalone PHP application)
  - Moodle based (two Moodle modules, one includes workgroup facilities)
- Main supported format: DocBook/XML
  - Edited using: DocBook editors, OpenOffice
  - Generated formats: PDF, HTML, OpenOffice, text (others in the work)
- Other formats: LaTeX, OpenOffice (soon)

Edukalibre system: regular way of working

- Create a document (or select an existing one) in a repository
- Access it through one or several interfaces (Moodle, PHP app, editor)
- Upload new versions, all formats are generated
- Access to the history of versions
- Casual readers can also send modified versions to the authors
- Anyone can install a repository
- Interfaces can access documents in any repository

Edukalibre system: current development

- RDF feed for documents in a repository
- Better support of OpenOffice DocBook style
- Tree-like structure of versions (using svn branches)
- Improvements in the access control methods
- More usability
- More simple to install

Conclusions

Come and give Edukalibre a try!

First public release soon!
Meanwhile, we can provide you with a snapshot
And we have available space in our stabe repostitory for you

References

- Main site:
  `http://edukalibre.org`
- Stable repository:
  `http://edukalibre.org/stable`
- Moodle with simple Edukalibre module:
  `http://edukalibre.org/moodle`
- Moodle with workgroup Edukalibre module:
  `http://edukalibre.comp.leeds.ac.uk/`