

Science, Education & Learning in Freedom

SELF is an international project aiming to provide a platform for the collaborative sharing and creation of free educational and training materials on Free Software and Open Standards.

Free Software

In contrast to proprietary software, Free Software can be freely used, copied, studied, modified and redistributed. Free Software offers the freedom to learn and to teach without any proprietary barriers – the basic requirement for the self-enabled human in the information society. Open Standards and the ability to exchange data and to share information and knowledge have become essential for cost-effective, flexible and transparent support of government and business processes.

Background

Free Software applications are available in all fields and can be obtained from many sources. However, to use them you must first know of their existence and practical value. In addition, the lack of technical support has been called upon as a reason to failure or delay for the adoption of Free Software applications. The real and long term technological change from private to Free Software can only come by investing in education and training. The SELF Platform creates awareness on the advantages of the use of Free Software and provides educational and training materials to learn how to use Free Software applications.

The SELF Platform is

- a repository with free educational and training materials on Free Software and Open Standards
- an environment for the collaborative creation of new materials

Inspired by Wikipedia, the SELF Platform provides the materials in different languages and forms. The SELF Platform is also an instrument for evaluation, adaptation, creation and translation of these materials. Most importantly, the SELF Platform is a tool to unite community and professional efforts for public benefit.

The SELF Community

The SELF Platform aims to be a community of all interested parties associated with educational and training materials about Free Software and Open Standards. The SELF Platform specifically embraces universities, schools, training centres, Free Software communities, software companies, publishers and government bodies. All users are encouraged to participate in the production process and the exploitation of results.

Those who participate in the platform can improve their own contents collaboratively while gaining expertise, prestige and recognition within the community. Simultaneously their participation helps to improve the SELF materials enhancing the SELF community. As a result the community model of the SELF Platform assures a prevailing situation for those who provide efforts to the platform and those who use it.

Organisation

The SELF Platform is initiated by an international consortium of seven partners in Europe, Asia and Latin America. Three universities and four non-profit organisations work closely together to facilitate communities as well as to raise awareness and to contribute to the building of critical mass for the use of Free Software and Open Standards.

Initial set up

The European Commission supports the SELF project for the initial set up of the platform and the first educational and training materials. Additional funding is expected from national and local governments for localisation, dissemination and specific activities. Once established, participating members from target groups will benefit from the platform and exploit its results freely. The aim is to produce a snow ball effect starting with public funding.

Contribute!

In order to achieve its goal, it is important that as many organisations, companies and individuals as possible take part in the SELF Platform. We are looking to work with people with a whole host of skills such as training, developing, distribution and media. We are also keen to speak to Free Software-loving companies and organisations about sponsoring or partnering with the platform to achieve our wider ambitions.

There is a wide range of activities you could carry out or participate in, from simple to more ambitious ones. If you feel you can and want to help, please visit our website and subscribe to an appropriate mailing list. You can also send an email to self@selfproject.eu.

