

Competence Centers: at the core of tomorrow's FLOSS education

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FLOSS: a maturing field

- Libre software has gained a lot of attention from companies, public administrations, users of software in general
- Libre software is a complex (and new) world
- We're starting to know facts (not just opinions) about it
- Many expert professionals are needed
- It seems about the right timing to talk about education about libre software (not only specific technologies)

Lack of understanding as a barrier

- FLOSS is becoming mainstream
- Many motivators, but (perception of) cost remains at the top
- However:
 - FLOSS is much more than low cost
 - many opportunities lost for lack of understanding
 - difficult to find people capable of strategic thinking
 - new world, difficult to understand with “traditional” assumptions

How to improve understanding?

- The “regular” FLOSS expert:
 - Self-taught, learn by experience
 - Long and steep learning curve
 - Shortage of people with enough experience
 - Difficult to “become” expert
- The way to improve that:
 - Education
 - Help professionals to become experts in FLOSS the easy way

The role of Competence Centers

- Centers of knowledge and reliable information about FLOSS
- Network of FLOSS experts available
- Good links with real-world experience about FLOSS
- Good links to academia and latest developments in the field
- Important role in transferring knowledge
- Good place to improve education in:
 - specific FLOSS technologies, in partnership with experienced parties
 - general and strategic understanding about FLOSS
- Target: provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary education on the matter
- “To reach, as a result of the master, the level of a person with good knowledge of the libre software world”

Topics to be addressed (general)

- Introduction: general background
- Economy and business models: economic models, business cases
- Legal matters: licensing, legislative initiatives, legal implications
- Sociology and ethics: motivation, communities, ethics of the libre software movement
- Development environments and tools: what is used in libre software development
- Project management: how are libre software projects managed
- Case studies: broad and comprehensive study of libre software projects, companies, organizations, etc.

Topics to be addressed (specific technologies)

Open, ever evolving list, depending on demand, partnerships and available expertise:

- Languages common in FLOSS projects
- Advanced project development
- Installation and administration of usual libre software platforms
- Libre software web based systems
- Security; Office tools; Multimedia; Mathematic tools
- Database systems; Embedded systems
- FLOSS in other specific domains
- FLOSS research results in specific fields

How to implement that

- Producing materials and franchising actual courses
(eg: Morfeo Formacion)
- Partnership with interested institutions and delivering seminars
(eg: Mozilla Technologies Seminar)
- Specific seminars and consultancy
(eg: Jornadas Morfeo)
- Formal training
(eg: Master's on Libre Software)

All of these already being run by our Competence Center

The future is here

- Education on FLOSS as a way of understanding a new reality
- Competence Centers are especially well positioned for becoming active in this area
- Continuous transfer of knowledge from academia and practice needed
- Improve the learning curve of want-to-be experts
- Provide facilities for having the experts needed
- Partnership with other institutions and communities is key

<http://master.libresoft.es>

<http://cc.morfeo-project.org>