

FLOSS in distance education

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The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the bottom right corner, there are several faint, concentric circles that resemble ripples in water, creating a decorative effect.

Overview

- What is **FLOSS**?
- Why **FLOSS**?
- Value-added features
- Organization in need of **VLE**
- Why **MOODLE**?
- Planning, selection, implementation
- Real case-study: the **Omega project**

What is FLOSS?

- Free Libre Open Source Software
- Shared knowledge
- **FREE** as in freedom, like "**libre**" in spanish, not as "**free beer**"

Four kinds of freedom

1. The freedom to run the program, for any purpose.
2. The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs. Access to the source code is a precondition for this.
3. The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor.
4. The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits.

Free Software Foundation

Why FLOSS?

- Lower costs
- Reliability, performance, security
- Open philosophy – academic freedom
- Alternative to illegal copying
- Possibility of localization
- Learning from source-code
- Community formation

Value-added features

- It returns control to the end-user.
- You can see the code, change it, learn from it.
- Bugs are more quickly found and fixed.
- No more technology lock-in.
- Open formats, no ties to specific platforms.

Organization in need of VLE

- FFZG in numbers:
 - **6000+** enrolled students
 - more than **500** teachers
 - more than **1500** courses (*offline, traditional*)
 - **80+** PCs in IT labs
 - **90%** students have **@ffzg.hr** e-mail account
 - all teaching staff equipped with PCs & **@ffzg.hr** mail
- **various levels of IT literacy!!!**

Planning, selection, implementation

- Different VLEs tested
 - Learnloop (FLOSS)
 - Blackboard
 - WebCT (through CARNet)
 - **MOODLE** (FLOSS)
- 3rd party online evaluation and assesment
 - CARNet referral center for courseware
 - WCET EduTOOLS

Why MOODLE?

- Because it is:
 - Flexible,
 - Extensible, and
 - well supported (**community!**)
- Also because of:
 - Reasonable HW requirements
 - Ease-of-use (admin, content creators, end-user)
 - Multiple authorization options
 - Easy **BACKUP**

Real case-study: the Omega project

- **NOT** a doomsday device
- **OMEGA** in numbers (Nov. 20, 2005):
 - 1800+ enrolled students
 - more than 150 teachers
 - more than 100 courses (**online!**)
 - IT literacy still an obstacle
 - 80+ computers in IT labs
 - Thin Linux terminals on the way ☺

The Omega project (2)

- Currently running on:
 - MOODLE v.1.5.2+
 - PHP
 - MySQL
 - Debian Sarge
- Authorization through **IMAP** (existing e-mail)
- Additional **LDAP module** developed by D. Penezic (currently in test use)

The Omega project (3)

➤ Statistics:

- avg. **100+** concurrent users online
- more than **3,5 GB** of teaching data produced
- uptime **90%** (thank you, **black-out crew**)
- student user base growth – **150+ / month**
- teacher user base growth – **10+ / month**

Hardware requirements

- **Phase 1:** P3@933, 512MB, SCSI@15000
 - up to 200 users, ~10 courses, no SSL
- **Phase 2:** 2xXeon@2.8Ghz, 2GB, SCSI@15000
 - around 1000 users, 70+ courses, SSL, shared server
- **Phase 3:** 2xXeon@2.4Ghz, 2GB, SCSI@15000
 - over 1800 users, 100+ courses, SSL, nearly dedicated server ☺
- **Future plans - ?**

“Software” requirements

- Social and organization-wide support
- Support must come from:
 - teachers
 - students
 - management
 - IT staff (thank you, **Dragan!**)
- Localized interface (**60-70%** done)
- SRCE (thank you, **Dubravko!** 😊)

Conclusion



Useful links

1. <http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>
2. <http://www.carnet.hr/referalni/obrazovni/oca/>
3. <http://www.edutools.info/course/>
4. <http://www.moodle.org/>
5. <http://www.edukalibre.org>
6. <http://omega.ffzg.hr/>
7. <http://learnloop.sourceforge.net/>



Questions?

Pitanja?



Thank you very much!

Hvala lijepo!

