

The SELF Platform: Science, Education and Learning in Freedom

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What is the SELF Platform?

SELF is an international project that aims to provide a platform for the collaborative sharing and creation of open educational and training materials about Free Software and Open Standards. First of all, it will provide information, educational and training materials on Free Software and Open Standards presented in different languages and forms. Secondly, it will offer a platform for the evaluation, adaptation, creation and translation of these materials. The production process of such materials will be based on the organisational model of Wikipedia.

Why the SELF platform?

The SELF project starts from three key reasons: 1) Free Software and Open Standards are crucial to support the competitive position of the European software industry; 2) the real and long term technological change from private to free software can only come by investing in education and training; and 3) the production of educational and training materials on Free Software and Open Standards should be done collaboratively by all the parties involved.

Who is the SELF Consortium?

The SELF platform is initiated by an international consortium of seven partners. Three universities: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain), University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (India). And four non-profit organisations active as Free Software advocates: Internet Society (Netherlands), Free Software Foundation Europe (in all European countries), Internet Society (Bulgaria) and Comit  de Incentivo a Produ o de Software GNU e Alternativo (Brazil).

Who is the SELF Community?

The SELF platform aims to be a community of all interested parties related with educational and training materials of Free Software and Open Standards. This means that the SELF platform especially welcomes universities, 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 collaboratively their own contents while gaining prestige or authority within the community. At the same time their participation will help to improve the SELF materials and enhance the SELF community. The final result is that the community model of the SELF platform will assure a *win win situation* for those who provide efforts to the platform and those who use it.

How will the SELF platform be realised?

Initial funding is expected from the European Commission and national and local governments to set up the platform and the first educational and training materials. Once established, participating members from target groups will benefit from the platform and exploit its results freely. This initial funding will enable a multiplier effect: the more interested parties participate in the SELF platform, the more new interested parties will get involved; the more materials available on the platform, the more interesting it becomes for other parties to include and share their materials. The aim is to produce a snow ball effect starting with public funding.