



Project title: Free Open Source Software for SMEs

Project activity:
Training Course (O2/A1)

Berlin, Germany



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CONTEXT

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Action	Strategic Partnerships
Project acronym	FOSS4SMEs
Project title	Free Open Source Software for SMEs
Project starting date	01/10/2017
Project duration	24 months
Project end date	30/09/2019
Project Activity (A) Intellectual Output (IO) Multiplier Event (E) Short-term joint staff training events (C)	O2/A1 – Training Course
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Guidelines for content style improvements after 1st peer review

The units as reviewed by FSFE and OFE per the date of 08 January are a good basis for the course, but show significant inconsistencies. These pertain to the approach, the applied style and content. We have provided each partner with a reviewed document with individual comments and suggestions for the specific sections of their texts. It is necessary, however, to unify the previously mentioned aspects so that the texts do not appear as disjointed pieces written by different organisations, but as one consistent course.

Style

Currently, the style is the most pressing aspect to focus on. After having reviewed all texts, we are of the opinion that a guiding, friendly, informal, pedagogical and easy to read style is most effective way of addressing the reader. We think we will be most helpful to those using the course, if we position ourselves as a friendly guide, taking the hand of the reader in pragmatic, but informal way. Unnecessarily complicated sentences should be avoided. The sentences should be as simple as possible.

We suggest to simply address the reader as "you". Avoiding passive speech will also avoid the need to build sentences like "the reader should make sure..." and make the text more engaging.

Statements that are not uncontroversial should be presented in a neutral way and we should not take a position. We can, though, provide context. For many statements it is better to avoid saying "Linux is a lightweight kernel", but better say "Linux is considered to be a lightweight kernel"

Terminology

We should try to use clear and common terminology. The clearest example is what term to use for Free and Open Source Software, as there are many different terms. We suggest to orient ourselves around the name of the course and use either the terms "FOSS" or "Free and Open Source Software", but to avoid "FLOSS", "Open Source" etc. This should improve the clarity of the text.

Non-FOSS software should usually be referred to as "proprietary software", as for example not all non-FOSS software is commercial or other examples. This makes it clear that the dimension we are dividing the two types on is the licensing.

Comparison FOSS and proprietary software

Another important aspect is to avoid painting FOSS as "the" alternative to proprietary software, as this implies an "incumbent" status to proprietary software. In some areas proprietary software may be more wide-spread, but in some others FOSS is the norm. We therefore advise to avoid this distinction in general and just refer to "FOSS" and "proprietary" software in a non-normative way.

Sources

It is important to make sure your text is well sourced. Part of that is to name the sources of your sections. As previewed in the Dublin meeting, a practical way to do this is to provide, per lesson sources for the text. These can be added as a separate "file" in the learning course, so that the reader can review the sources if he/she chooses to. In the final text, no sources should remain in the actual text. When referring to sources, it is advisable to use phrases such as "On this question Ernie & Bert have provided a compelling, but not universally accepted argument - they have...".

Tests and Exercises

Unit 4 has introduced great exercises that engage the reader to apply the learned knowledge to his/her daily work environment. We suggest that every lesson in every unit should have at least one of these exercises.

We also agreed that each lesson should have at least three multiple choice questions to test the learners knowledge.