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Notes from the SIGOSSEE meeting in Athens February 21-22 2005

February 21 2005

1. Attendance

Graham Attwell (the Knownet); Kevin Johnson (University of Limerick); Sara Zondergeld, Raymond Elferink (RayCom B.V.); Joachim Dittrich (ITB); George Bekiaridis (ERGON K.E.K.); Søren Johansen (NewMediaLab); Ferran Cabrer (MUFICATA CONSEN); Peter Becker (Interactive Institute).

2. Welcome to the Workshop in Athens and review of the Agenda

A welcome to the workshop in Athens is expressed by Graham Attwell and the draft agenda is modified to a permanent one. A map with information about the public seminar and the agenda is handed out by George. After phone-contact it is confirmed that there is no representative coming from Pompeu Fabra.

3. Good things, Bad things

Graham Attwell summarised what we as SIGOSSEE did well, are doing well, are doing half well and are doing badly.

Good things: the seminars were very good. A lot turned up (± 50) at the first one in Limerick where we even had changed venues. We had roughly the same turn-up in Barcelona, which is unusual for projects like this. The website is large and lively (although there are some technical problems). There is some good individual resource, with emphasis on individual!. There is lots of dissemination. There is lots of collaboration with external EU projects, like JOIN, UNFOLD, etc. And there are lots of members in the SIG.

Bad things: not all the partners are fully involved. There is lack of collaboration in studies and the research on practice cases of OSS. It is noted that it can be difficult to work through e-mail and cultures and language cross. Proposed is to use a Wiki, so everybody can work on it and contribute into it. There are problems with the website, which is non-transparent. There is lack of services to SIG members: we don't have enough resources to support them all. There are lots of ideas but we are poor on delivery to deadlines.

New Years' resolutions:

- be realistic, set deadlines and stick to them
- provide new collaboration tools (such as wiki's)
- improve services to the SIG members: more and regular newsletters.

We didn't want them (newsletters) in the beginning, because we thought that the SIG members would be involved in the work-process by themselves, but that didn't work. Raymond suggested to e-mail around short summaries, with links to the site, so people go to the site from there. Georges requested a possible greek corner on the website (and spanish or catalan too?) and said that he already

translated things but can't put them up. Agreed is that the problems with putting up files and so on have to be solved quickly. And that permission for this has to be extended. 'Deadline' would be first of march. Raymond stated that the newsletter should at least be translated into some languages and put up on the website with for instance flag-icons.

3. Report back what is done after Barcelona

Raymond Elferink: reported about the internal FLOSS Workshop on december 1 2004 at the **NESTA Futurelab**, Bristol, UK, where he and Dai Griffiths and Timothy Hall were speakers. **NESTA Futurelab** organised this workshop because of their interest in open source as a concept. The aim of the workshop was to provide an opportunity to learn about open source and free software and how it impacts on educational ICT. One of the other speakers was Richard Rothwell of Schoolforge UK who are providing schools with old computers with OS software on it. This is an example of the kind of services SIGOSSEE could provide.

Peter Becker: is working on an idea for focusing on open content on the upcoming Stockholm conference. He is going a bit slow, but is planning a thematic study, a sort of follow up on creative commons work done by group c) (=Social, cultural and legal issues in OSS). Will be about open processes and open content.

Ferran Cabrer: mentioned that they are positively looking for getting more funds. On workshops (e.g. The Hague, The Netherlands) he talked about SIGOSSEE. He stressed that the project Edukalibre (which was presented at the Barcelona public seminar) is important for OS. They joint up with 47 partners in regional OS innovations. He said he tested the Best Practice template with Alexandra Tödt for the work on Best Practices and said he sees the template as still not finished because he wants less fields in the form and makes it more generic. Graham moved the discussion about the template towards the Best Practice item on the agenda.

Søren Johansen: reported that he translated documents (the Briefing Notes which were explained by Stuart Yeates at the Barcelona meeting) from OSSWatch into Danish with the purpose of implementing them into the OSSite. He mentioned that there will be a big OSS conference in spring in Denmark were not anything public is really going on on OSS, but mostly small interest groups. He was on the ICT conference in the Hague in the Netherlands and stressed that he still needs the 'Speaker Notes' sheets which were promised to him and the others already at the meeting in Limerick. To represent SIGOSSEE anywhere these 'speaker notes' are needed. This is noted.

Ferran mentioned that there is a project (part of Edukalibre) in Kopenhagen where 300 desktops (municipal) are moved to Open Office for cutting down costs. In reaction to this Søren said he did throw Microsoft out of the office and has his whole company now working in Open Office. Graham said that Søren's organisation then is very interesting as a case study.

Kevin Johnson: explained that Fiona Concannon (who was together with Mark Campbell the representative of University of Limerick at the Barcelona meeting) changed office. He mentioned that Timothy Hall was also speaking about the NESTA Futurelab workshop. Also he mentioned a new project, called Heatsun

(<http://www.dlrcoco.ie/env/updated/HEATSUN.HTM>) in Dublin where back-end operation system in Open Office is proposed instead of Microsoft and which has set up a social enterprise called switch, which endeavours to collect, recycling and refurbish IT equipment to sell back into the community. Timothy is also working on a new project under framework 6, OS for public administration, about bringing the understanding that there are alternatives out there.

Joachim Dittrich: reported that the in Barcelona promised case study of ITB is in process now. One or two teachers will use a LMS tool to support their lectures and set up several project groups in an international context (with Asia) using collaborational platforms in OS because there is no money for proprietary software anyway.

George Bekiaridis: prepared the seminar all over Greece (vocational training, public sector, Greek information society et cetera) and said that there are already 100 people who signed up for it. The seminar is also announced at the Greek opensource community site. The planned programme for tomorrow is mentioned. George also translated SIGOSSEE texts into Greek but can't publish them on the OSSite yet.

The point of making the permissions on The OSSite easier is noted again. Discussed is also now the idea that it should be possible to put a document under your own workgroup. Søren proposed to put up a notice in the mailbox of the SIG members everytime that something new has been put up, because if you don't get a notice how do you know if and where something new has been put up? Raymond added we want people to make comments we can put up abstracts of newsletters with links. This is about an interface over a file system. It is do-able. Idea: there will be a rss feet out over every week.

Coffee Break

4. Relook Key Issues

The Key Issues (confusingly also called Key Notes at the meeting, but Key Issues was agreed on being the term) which were planned to be written, were not written. So, after a lengthy discussion in which new Key Issues were thought of too, deadlines were set and agreed upon by authors to write them, and for others to translate them in their own languages. The deadline for the template of these Key Issues is first of april and will be developed by Raymond Elferink. The inserted list below of the planned Key Issues (thought up in the steering group meeting of august 2004 and further discussed at the Barcelona meeting) with **in red** the deadlines assigned to each one. Dai and Alexandra will be mailed about this.

- 1) What is LMS? (Alexandra Tödt)
- 2) How do I run Windows Applications on Linux? (Dai Griffiths)
- 3) What are OSS security options?
- 4) How do I substitute Microsoft Office with OSS (Open Office)? (Dai Griffiths)
- 5) How do I get OSS in my organisation? (Dai Griffiths)
- 5a) Changing to OSS –a case study – (Søren Johansen) **may 1**
- 6) What is SourceForge and what does it do? (Raymond Elferink) **april 1**
- 7) What are standards and why are they important? (Dai Griffiths)

- 8) How do Open Source Software licenses work? (Alexandra Tödt)
- 9) How do I get learning content which operates in OSS environments? (Graham Attwell) **may 1**
- 10) What are the alternatives to running a LMS? (Graham Attwell) **april 1**
- 11) What skills and support do I need to operate OS for learning? (Raymond Elferink)
- 12) Is OSS really cheaper than proprietary software? (one time costs as in licenses; consultancy costs; server costs) (Raymond Elferink)
- 13) Creative Commons and Open Content (Peter Becker) **august 1**

5. Discuss new ideas

Søren pointed out we should do a session about what we did at presentations representing SIGOSSEE and re-shoot them with a videocamera. The idea is launched to have an extra session in Kopenhagen. This will be content too for our SIGOSSEE work. Suggested is to do content on conferences and a studio session with an interviewer idea. The plan is to combine this extra video-session with a steering group meeting. Raymond suggested an 'ask the expert' - chatsession with the interviewer getting questions in and putting them through and you see the 'expert' sitting there. There will be follow up on this idea.

Søren also proposed to bring his videocamera to next meeting in Stockholm. George said a part of the Athens seminar the next day is going to be taped and Søren volunteered to edit and stream that.

A list of suggestions on where to find Open Source alternatives for proprietary software, an 'alternatives-tool' is suggested to be needed too, because people like to have an alternative choice of software. As well as a glossary. A discussion started on making a list of all possible alternatives and the problem of keeping this up-to-date with a concluding remark of Søren that a 'collection of links for dummies' with final releases, so-called stable beta's, is at least needed. This theme will become one of the Key Issues. Joachim said that there is already on the web a lot of stuff about this but Raymond replied that a lot is either too technical or too much of a crusade against proprietary software and that it is for people very hard to find what is the 'best' way to introduce OSS in their organisation. Peter mentioned on this an norwegian article which was interestingly about case studies of introducing OSS in public schoolsystem, which we all agreed would be good, if translated (by him), to be put on the OSSite.

6. Revise schedule of upcoming workshops

We discussed the schedule for the upcoming seminars and workshops and agreed upon changing this into the following:

in the first week of june -**(5), 6-7 june 2005**- there will be a project meeting in Århus (instead of the scheduled Kopenhagen, since Søren Johansens' company is in Århus) and the video-shooting (discussed under point 5), followed by the scheduled public seminar.

The next and final SIGOSSEE workshop and public seminar combination (same format as in Athens and Barcelona: 1 day workshop meeting, 1 day public seminar) is scheduled for **15-16 september 2005** in Stockholm.

The scheduled Bremen public seminar and Amsterdam public seminar are skipped in favor of a final conference (see item 7).

7. Project Conference

Raymond and Graham proposed to organise a real conference with a call for papers scheduled in the Netherlands with as preferred venue the Open University (contact will be Fred de Vries who attended the Barcelona meeting and was speaker there on the public seminar) in Heerlen. This is agreed upon. Dates for this will be **two days at least (with a possibility to extend to 2½ days) in probably second half of november or in december 2005**. The conference will also be held together with the JOIN project. The call for papers will be on the four working group subjects: Standards and Architecture for OSS; User requirements and usability issues in the development of OSS; Social, cultural and legal issues in OSS; Organisation and management issues, sustainability and support infrastructural needs for OSS and on the Practice Cases of OSS-theme. The papers will be published on the web and in paper form (if possible). The outcome of this will be a product of our project too. A contract amendment will have to be made for this **in two weeks time**.

The conference software to use will be open course open conference software: <http://www.openconference.net/>

Graham Attwell will write the call for papers by **march 15th** and calls will go out on **april 1 with a deadline of june 30**. Successful applicants will be notified on **sep 1**. SIGOSSEE will be the review board, every workgroup will review the papers which are sent in under their theme. We are not aiming at the big names and hollow speeches but the conference will be scientific in orientation. We are not solely aiming at researchers from universities but are also expecting proposals from people from schools, businesses et cetera. We want to widen the scope a bit.

Lunchbreak

During lunchbreak a discussion started on how and if Alexandra was able to do her presentation on the Athens Seminar. Nobody could do her presentation for her but since people were maybe coming for her specially it is decided that Raymond Elferink will do an extra 10 minutes introductory SIGOSSEE presentation.

Søren tried to set Alexandra up with a video conferencing tool but that didn't work out and then we decided on using Skype: <http://www.skype.com/> Søren arranged through downloading Skype that Alexandra will be able to present realtime after all with Raymond assisting her in showing the right slides to the public when she speaks.

8. Report on work on (Best) Practices

As was agreed at the Barcelona meeting it is agreed again that each partner will produce (at least – more is nice but quality is more important than quantity) one **snapshot** with the template of JOIN with as deadline **may 1**. There was some discussion about what was really the idea of Best Practices and that it was actually not named Best Practices in the project proposal at all, but Practice Cases in general on OSS. Ferran thought more in line of judging good or bad practices and coming up with best ones, but it was and is a survey of practices which was decided upon.

Graham summed up from the application that we were going to track the use of OSS in some selective institutions over the lifetime of the project and put their data in but **not** the best practices. The outcome was to be a report on this take up. To do this we produced the template. Since Consen MUFICATA had more time in the project proposal for this the idea was that they would analyse the filled in templates. We agreed on this already in Barcelona and now too. Ferran is not happy with every part of the template and wants less questions and more general ones. A discussion started on the way to use the template: as a questionnaire to send to people and filled in by themselves or use the questions in it as a guideline to interview them. Explained is that the template is to be used as a 'guideline' to go to people and ask them face-to-face about their experiences in their company, **not** a hand-out tickbox questionnaire form. As the interviewer you don't necessarily have to ask every single question. One of the questions about LMS in your company is made more general as Ferran requested. We decided to do this because that question was a bit over-specific, so the question is now: What technology do you use to support learning? Stressed is that we don't look at best practices, we don't score the system, but we look at the experience.

Graham Attwell will send the slightly modified template out.

9. Thematic studies

It is noted that the work levels of the working groups are uneven. Two working groups (c) Social, cultural and legal issues in OSS and d) Organisation and management issues, sustainability and support infrastructural needs for OSS) were relatively advanced and did some papers already, but the other two (a) Standards and Architecture for OSS and b) User requirements and usability issues in the development of OSS) led by the KnowNet and the University of Limerick were behind schedule. Discussed was that the format can be a bit problematic and difficult for collaboration and that maybe extra collaboration tools are needed. Raymond and Graham tested and showed their idea they had for this: a kind of wiki tool on the community portal allowing people to collaboratively contribute to things. Not everybody is completely confident in using this. Printing things out, sitting down, looking at it and doing some resource and putting it up again for each other seems more attractive. Peter said that we could at least use this tool for making the Key Issues than for articles or papers. There is agreement on this point. Graham concluded in saying that the writing for the working groups should be done by now: 'get the #&*\$ together and get on with it'. Mike Malloch and Timothy Hall responsible for working group a) and b) should

be reminded of their commitment and should give a 20 minutes or so presentation of their findings at the planned Århus seminar in June. Søren stressed that he can't drive his working group (a)). It is said that Mike should drive this and start the research and provide Søren with the points and guide him in the right direction.

10. Speaker Notes

The Speaker Notes to help people speak about OSS, which were already mentioned as needed by Søren when he reported back from what was done after Barcelona, are going to be written and put up on the OSSite.

11. Upcoming events and dissemination

Graham said he is going on a 'Finland-tour' to speak about OSS and SIGOSSEE on several events and conferences. Agreed is that we need a space for seminar dissemination on the OSSite. It is noted that there is a need for local dissemination. The eChallenge 2005 conference in Uppsala in September is noted. Graham will try to get us invited on a large conference organised by the European Commission.

12. Planning of future activities

What happens after 2005? Some partners may want to go further, apart from funding, by means of an exploratory action we can see the support et cetera which is needed for this. We have to search for new applications, although we don't have a lot of time to write, each partner has certain contacts. Raymond mentioned that the eContentPlus program would be interesting for us. We can seek to support other projects by providing them with the needed information on OSS. Graham mentioned the interim report which has to be written and asked for any ideas on this.

13. Specific goals for each partner

The specific to-do lists of each partner in the upcoming months are summed up:
Raymond Elferink:

Develop Key Issues template **april 1**

Write Key Issue nr.6: What is SourceForge and what does it do? **april 1**

Set up wiki system

Contact Open University in the Netherlands to organise the newly planned Conference

Do one practice case on OSS in institutions (Open University) with the template of guidelines which Graham will send around **may 1**

Peter Becker:

Do a thematic study **august 1**

Do one practice case on OSS in institutions **may 1**

Prepare Stockholm seminar

Ferran Cabrer:

Do one practice case on OSS in institutions **may 1**

Translate Key Issues in catalan (and/ or spanish)

Mentioned a manifest which is interesting when translated (Ferran is going to translate that?)

Søren Johansen:

Write Key Issue nr. 5a: Changing to OSS –a case study – **april 1**

Set up conference in Århus, Denmark and video shoot

Push his own working group, or notify us if nothing happens

Do small study of major players in OSS in Denmark

Do one practice case on OSS in institutions (own company)

Volunteered to help with the new newsletters

Kevin Johnson:

Will brief Timothy Hall about what he has to do and about the planned presentation he has to give at the Århus seminar

Joachim Dittrich:

Do one practice case on OSS in institutions

Try to keep the collaboration going in the working group

George Bekiaridis:

Translate publications on the OSSite as much as possible in Greek, the Key Issues at least

Do one practice case on OSS in institutions (Greek School Network)

Keep people involved (over 100 registrations so far!) who registered to come to the seminar the next day. Match the list of these people who registered with the people who actually came, and with the people who after a week (from February 22 till now) became a SIG member on the OSSite.

Upload the presentations

Graham Attwell:

Work on the permission of the OSSite

Write interim report

Write Key Issue nr. 9: How do I get learning content which operates in OSS environments? **may 1**

Write Key Issue nr. 10: What are the alternatives to running a LMS? **april 1**

Write Call for Papers for the Conference **march 15**

February 22 2005

14. Public Seminar

The public seminar focused on the issues in the development of OSS for education and on standards. The seminar was divided in two sessions with a panel discussion after each session with the presenters. The presentations were simultaneously translated in Greek and English. A welcome and short introduction about ERGON KEK and SIGOSSEE was expressed by Margarita Defingou, director of ERGON KEK. **First speaker Raymond Elferink** gave an introductory presentation about OSS and SIGOSSEE and the importance of having an european structure which helps to support the use of OSS. OSS is mainly created by technical people while non-technical people have the knowledge of what the software should do. They should work more closely together and maybe even lead sometimes the technical people. He invited the people present to sign up on:

www.ossite.org and become SIG members. On February 21 there were 249 members to the SIG. **Second speaker Graham Attwell** spoke about the pedagogy of eLearning. He gave a short history about eLearning and what is happening and that eLearning is changing the traditional control over learning. There are more and different 'players' now such as the game markets, the

software producers, the content contributors, the media, the large companies such as IBM et cetera, and where the control is going, is difficult to see. The problem with eLearning is that it is mainly still text on a page and that there is no attention being paid to the pedagogy of eLearning. We have to recognise the different types of learning and the different and new roles. Searching on the internet for example is generally not seen as learning by people but it is discovery based learning. Raymond Elferink introduced **the third speaker Alexandra Tödt**, who presented realtime through Skype with the assistance of Raymond showing the right slides to the public when she spoke about the SCORM 2004 specification. SCORM, being a Learning Management System, is originally an abbreviation for Sharable Courseware Object Reference Model, now changed into: Sharable Content Object Reference Model. The new version of SCORM is much more flexible. There were some questions asked and answered by Alexandra about the implementation of the new SCORM. **Fourth speaker is Simos Retalis** about designing Open Source LMSs based on experience and good practices. He gave as example Claroline and explained that they are interested in the utility of the systems and want to provide learning apart from the technical features. Just as we need different chairs for different purposes we do need different pedagogical scenarios. Formulate an appropriate and consistent model is the hard part. **Fifth speaker is Nikos Zigouritsas** about e-Paideia Net. This is the most important and ambitious educational portal in Greece with a large eCollection. A short panel discussion followed. *Coffeebreak*
First speaker after the break is Thalys Chaidopoulos about Cambridge ICT Core Certification with Open Source Software. The courses are in Open Office. He mentioned that Open Office is actually more dependable than Microsoft Office with new patches every 5 or 6 hours. Although everyone likes to be trained on products of the market leader, which is logical, it is also important to show the alternatives which are out there and OSS is alive and kicking in the university context. The speaker is asked if it is possible to introduce a course on the use of OSS and that is possible but will take some time. **Next and seventh speaker is Vaggelis Kapoulas** about the asynchronous learning platform that was set up for the Greek School Network, which is based on Moodle. Their learning vision about OSS: more accessible, more effective, cheaper, shared experiences. The intention of the community is to promote communication and knowledge exchange. Problems are put up in the web, solutions come up, and everybody learns from the others. There is no need to re-invent the wheel so they examined all kinds of OSS platforms and they opted for Moodle 1.08.1 (which came out as fourth, the first was Ilias 2.3). **Last speaker was George Bekiaridis from ERGON KEK** about developing eLearning sessions. Creating learning material is much more complex than developing a Power Point presentation only.

A lively panel discussion started with a general agreement on the fact that choice is important when it comes to use software and that people can use for instance Open Office just as easily as Microsoft Office when they receive some guidance. Søren added on this that his own company changed to Open Office and that it went easy enough with just a short course. Raymond Elferink closed the seminar with some concluding remarks.

The public seminar was attended by 47 people.