

# **Special Interest Group Open Source Software for Education in Europe**

*The Sig group is supported by the EU Action Plan  
SIGOSSEE and JOIN projects*

## **Newsletter No 1 – May 2004**

### **1. About the newsletter**

Welcome to the first edition of the Special Interest Group on Open Source Software for Education newsletter. It is planned to produce a copy of the newsletter every two months. The newsletter will contain information and an update on the activities of the special Interest Group. In the future we hope to extend more content about OSS itself.

If you have an item you would like to include in the newsletter please send it to the editor, Graham Attwell, - [graham@theknownet.com](mailto:graham@theknownet.com) or add a News Item on the web site - [www.ossite.org](http://www.ossite.org) (see the how-to note at the end of the newsletter).

### **2. Meeting of the Special Interest Group**

The next meeting of the Special Interest Group will be on Wednesday 2 and Thursday 3 of June in Limerick in Ireland.

Please note that this is a change of venue. The previous plan had been to hold a pre-conference seminar in conjunction with the Irish Technology in Education (EdTech) conference. However, some controversy has erupted over the inclusion of the US Department of Army's Director of Education, Ms. L. Dian Stoskopf, as the conference's keynote speaker. This has led to the withdrawal of a number of participants. In view of this, the project steering committee felt it better to relocate the workshop and seminar.

Members of the European Action Plan project have funding to attend the meeting. There is also some funding to assist with travel expenses for other members of the SIG who want to attend the seminar and SIG meeting. Preference will be given to applicants from Ireland. For queries about funding contact Graham Attwell.

The seminar and SIG meeting will take place at Limerick University. More details on the venue will be sent out next week.

Delegates to the workshop should book their own accommodation. There is a hotel near the University called the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel - [www.kilmurrylodge.com](http://www.kilmurrylodge.com). There is also a wide range of accommodation available in Limerick - including hotels, bed and breakfast and pubs. Information about accommodation in Limerick can easily be found on the internet - see for example [www.limerick.com](http://www.limerick.com)

The nearest airport is Shannon. Limerick can also be reached by train from Dublin. Participants in the SIG group should aim to arrive in Limerick on

Tuesday 1 June as the meeting starts at 9.30 on the Wednesday.

To help us plan the meeting, could those of you who will be attending please send Graham an email including the information indicated in the form at the end of this newsletter.

### **3. Agenda**

The draft agenda for the SIG group meeting and seminar is as follows.

## **Special Interest Group on Open Source Software for Education in Europe (SIGOSSEE)**

### **Second project workshop – Limerick, Ireland June 2 – 3, 2004**

#### **Draft Agenda**

Day 1 – June 2

9.30 Welcome to the workshop – Tim Hall (University of Limerick)

9.45 Introduction to the workshop agenda Graham Attwell (KnowNet)

10.00 Brief reports on work of the research groups: (10 Minutes each)

a) Standards and architectures for OSS – Soren Johanssen (New Media Lab)

b) User requirements and usability issues in the development of OSS - Tim Hall (University of Limerick)

c) Social, cultural and legal issues in OSS - Joachim Dietrich, (ITB, University of Bremen)

d) Organisation and management issues, sustainability and support infrastructural needs for OSS - Dai Griffith (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

10.40 Coffee

11.00 Meeting of working groups

12.30 Report on progress in building the SIG consideration of next steps  
- Graham Attwell (KnowNet)

1300 Lunch

1400 Developing the directory of Open source products - Alexandra Tödt (University of Cologne)

1500 Public seminar.

The seminar will be chaired by Timothy Hall from the University of Limerick. Speakers will be Raymond Elferink from RayCom, a Dutch Open Source software company and Dai Griffiths, an expert on standards, from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona.

The seminar will be followed by a reception and refreshments.

Day 2

9.15 Review of day 1

9.30 Identifying best practice – Ferran Cabrer (CONSEN)

10.00 Report from working groups

10.45 Coffee

11.00 Developing OSSite – demonstration of new functionality – Mike Malloch (KnowNet)

12.00 Report on conference – Alexandra Tödt (University of Cologne)

12.30 Management and administration – Raymond Elferink and Sara Zondergeld (RayCom)

13.00 Planning next workshops

13.45 End of meeting

#### **4. The Special Interest Group**

Many thanks to all of you who have joined the Special Interest Group. To be honest, we have been overwhelmed by the response. Our aim was to gain 150 members over 2 years but we already have 120 members signed up in 3 months. One item on the agenda for the meeting is to discuss how we can best organise the SIG. This newsletter is a first step towards this. In the next few months we hope to establish national or regional groups and will contact SIG members further on this.

#### **5. Working groups**

The SIG has formed four research groups

To become involved in the work of these groups contact the conveners:

a) Standards and architectures for OSS – Søren Johansen (New Media Lab) - johansen@newmedia-lab.dk

b) User requirements and usability issues in the development of OSS - Tim Hall (University of Limerick) – timothy.hall@ul.ie

c) Social, cultural and legal issues in OSS - Joachim Dietrich, (ITB, University of Bremen) - dittrich@uni-bremen.de

d) Organisation and management issues, sustainability and support infrastructural needs for OSS - Dai Griffith (Universitat Pompeu Fabra) - david.griffiths@upf.edu

The work of the groups will be published on OSSite as soon as it becomes available. If you would like to join any of the working groups or contribute to their work please contact the relevant convener.

#### **6. Study of effective practice**

Ferran Cabrer from CONSEN is organising a study of best practice in the use of Open Source Software in education. If you have any examples of good practice you think should be included please contact Ferran - Ferran@econsen.com.

## **7. Products Directory**

Alexandra Tödt from the JOIN project is organising a directory of Open Source Virtual Learning Environments. For more details please contact Alexandra - alexandra.toedt@uni-koeln.de

## **8. Web site tools**

Over the past three months we have been enhancing the functionality of the SIG web site – [www.ossite.org](http://www.ossite.org). The site has been developed using Plone. However, KnowNet has extensively customised the Content Management system. All members have access to the tools for creating content through you home page whilst logged in. In some cases there are short cuts as on the news page to create content in line.

To prevent spamming, content is moderated. Please do feel free to experiment with the tools and add material to the site. If you feel the need for new navigation buttons we will be happy to create these. If you have any queries please contact Mike Malloch from KnowNet – mike@theknownet.com

## **9. Presentations and collaboration**

If you would like a presentation about the ideas and work of the SIG please contact Graham Attwell – [graham@theknownet.com](mailto:graham@theknownet.com). We are also very happy to collaborate with other projects and organisations. Please get in touch.

## **10. Form for SIGOSSEE workshop – Limerick, Ireland, June 2-3**

If you plan to come to the SIGOSSEE workshop in Limerick, June 2-3, please send the information requested in the following brief form in an email message to Graham Attwell – [graham@theknownet.com](mailto:graham@theknownet.com).

### **\*\* How to add a news item to ossite:**

To add your own news item to <http://www.ossite.org>, just click the 'Create a new item' button on the frontpage of the site. Once you have filled in the details and saved the news item, you will also have to 'submit' it for review before it appears in the main news and events listings; to do so, choose 'submit' from the 'State' drop-down menu at the top right of the content area.

**Form for SIGOSSEE workshop – Limerick, Ireland June 2–3**

I will attend the SIGOSSEE workshop 2-3 June

I will attend the SIGOSSEE seminar 2 June

Name

Organisation

Email address