

Tools and utilities in free software

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Introduction

The term **free software** refers not only to software that enables users to freely run programs but also to that which allows source code access, adaptation of the latter to user needs, distribution of copies of the software to others and the publication of new versions of this software.

When we talk about free software, we often think of applications in text mode that are run on servers, but the movement also offers a wide range of utilities for the average desktop user.

This tools and utilities course will introduce students to some of the programs designed for the desktop environments of end users. We can use these programs to browse the Internet securely (Mozilla), manage our e-mail and work in groups (Ximian Evolution) and to create Microsoft-Office style text documents, spreadsheets and presentations (OpenOffice.org).

On this course, students will also discover how to work with these free tools in proprietary environments such as Microsoft Windows, as well as GNU/Linux of course.

The course contents are organised into two main parts. The first, which covers Units 1 and 2, deals with Internet tools, while the second focuses on the OpenOffice.org program, which needs more units due to its complexity.

Objectives

At the end of this subject, students should have:

1. Witnessed the advantages of free tools in terms of cost, security and features.
2. Learned how to use tools in environments such as Windows and GNU/Linux.
3. Discovered how these utilities can replace their proprietary equivalents without a loss of productivity.

Contents

Module 1

Firefox: using and configuring the browser

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Firefox installation and setup
2. Interface and general use of the program
3. Basic browser configuration
4. Privacy and security in Firefox

Module 2

Novell Evolution. E-mail manager and personal information manager

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Installation and setup
2. E-mail
3. Contact manager
4. Calendar
5. Tasks

Module 3

OpenOffice.org. Program installation

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Installing the program
2. Installing OpenOffice.org 1.x
3. Installing OpenOffice.org 2.x
4. Advanced installation topics

Module 4

OpenOffice.org. Basic program setup

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Installing and configuring printers in GNU/Linux
2. Document interchange issues
3. Installing and configuring spellcheckers

Module 5

Open Writer. OpenOffice.org word processor

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. The Writer working environment
2. Basic Open Writer functionality
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4. Word Completion and AutoFormat
5. Using graphics and sounds

Module 6

Open Calc. The OpenOffice.org spreadsheet application

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Basic use of the program
2. Calculations and functions
3. Creating graphs from data

Module 7

Open Impress. OpenOffice.org presentations

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Basic use of the program
2. Adding content to the presentation

Module 8

Open Draw. Drawing with OpenOffice.org

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Basic use of the program
2. Creating drawings with basic objects

Module 9

Databases in OpenOffice.org

David Megías Jiménez, Jordi Mas, Ana-Elena Guerrero Roldán and Jesús Corrius i Llavina

1. Creating a new database
2. Forms

Glossary

cookie / Small text file stored by the browser on our computer when requested by an Internet server.

Javascript / Programming language interpreted by our browser used to create websites with advanced features.

plug-in / Small program integrated into the browser that adds further functionality.

SSL / Open protocol allowing secure communication between the browser and a web server.

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