

The Spanish Experiment, Year IV

A Survey of Spanish Institutional Distributions for Education

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FOUR YEARS OF FREE SOFTWARE IN SPANISH SCHOOLS

Maybe the most important experimental laboratory of the usage of free educational software in the world is Spain's. Nevertheless the data of the experiment are badly known. Do we know the evolution of the process? How are these computers administered? How are the teachers trained to use them? Is the experience successful?

I asked these and more questions to the people responsible for the distributions. Here are their answers.



SOME OF THE QUESTIONS

A detailed list of questions was sent, covering the following fields:

- I The distribution: who created it, who maintains it. . . ?
- II In the school: who installs it, who administers it?
- III How many schools involved?
- IV Educational characteristics
- V Changes in the school: people involved, hardware. . .
- VI Training and collaborative resources available
- VII Usage by the teachers and the students



GNU LINEX AT EXTREMADURA

The First Institutional Distribution



- A project started in 2002, new version Gnu Linex 2006.
- A Debian Sarge derivative + DCC
- A computer for every two students in all the Secondary schools and several computer rooms in all the Primary schools
- A team led by two teachers, many new educational packages (atnag, jclic, squeak...)
- One or two computer administrators (Secondary School), area admins (Primary Schools).



GUADALINEX AT ANDALUCÍA

The Largest Experiment

- “ICT school” projects since year 2003-2004
- Guadalinex v3, created by a group of companies after Ubuntu Breezy

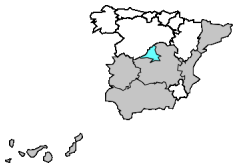
Year	No. schools
2003-2004	100
2004-2005	300
• 2005-2006	543
2006-2007	858 (180 000 computers)



- Remote centralized administration, pedagogical coordinator in every school



MAX AT MADRID



- MAX distribution, since 2003, created by the local educational authorities and a company
- 2.0, based on Debian Sarge and Knoppix; 3.0 will be based on Ubuntu
- Dual computers in Computer Labs



VALENCIA, CASTILLA LA MANCHA, CATALONIA, CANARY ISLANDS...

The Newest Distributions



- mEDUXa for the Canary Islands (beta now, from Kubuntu)
- MolinuX for Castilla la Mancha (Ubuntu based)
- Linkat at Catalonia (OpenSuse derivative; 20 experimental schools now, with ICT coordinators. Most important: Catalanian localization)
- Lliurex at Valencia (Custom Debian; first 181 schools with “Lliurex computer labs” next year. Most important: localization to *Valenciano*)



ASSESSMENT I.

Comparison of Features



- 1 OpenSuse, 2 Debian Sarge, 4 Ubuntu Breezy; all but one created by contract with companies
- Very different targets: all the schools != some schools; all the rooms != some computer rooms
- Different administration scenarios: remote and centralized != local administrator != one teacher



ASSESSMENT II

Aspects To Improve

- Free software in schools, two independent challenges often mixed up:
 - ① becoming familiar with free software
 - ② learn how to use the computers for teaching
- Need for real educational distributions: tools to **share resources** (browse, find, use, assess, adapt, improve, comment. . .)
- Very local targets (lack of internationalization and exportation of packages and resources)
- Teachers need the same software at home and at school (to prepare lessons and gain self-confidence)



REFERENCES AND LINKS

- The whole survey, in Spanish
- GNU Linex
- Guadalinex
- MAX
- Linkat
- mEDUXa
- MoLinuX
- Lliurex

