Open Source Software

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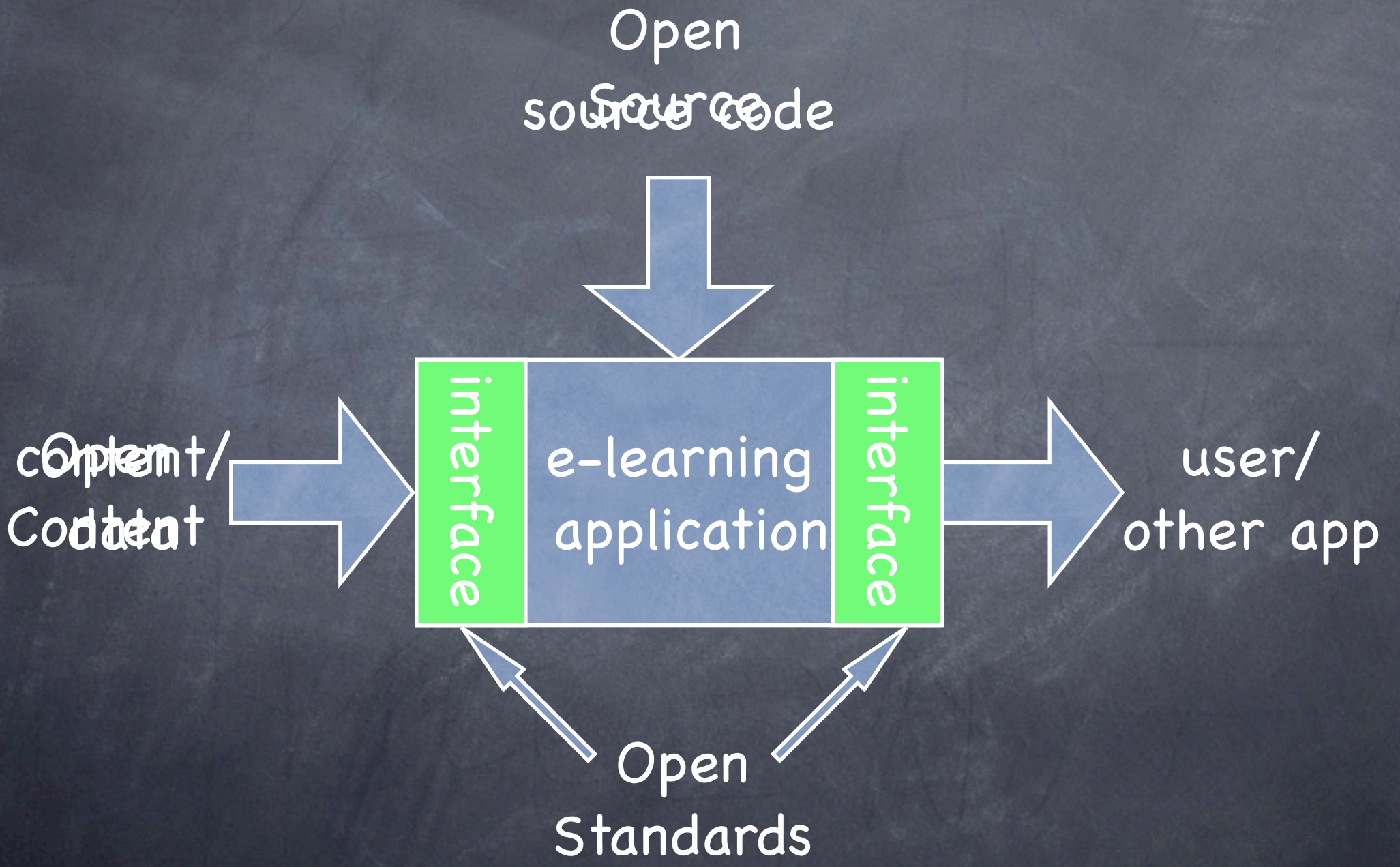
Open source code
Open Content/ Content
interface
e-learning application
interface
user/ other app
Open Standards

Overview

- Open Standards
- Open Source and Open content
- What role they play in the e-learning economy
- Some examples of initiatives, emphasis on OUNL's Learning Design work

Open Standards

- standardise formats, not applications: interoperability
- consumer benefits
  - no lock in, hence less risky
  - more competition, hence cheaper
- vendor benefits
  - less risky to enter market and invest
  - larger market

Important differences

- Open standards are fully compliant with the vendor-consumer model: invest & earn back
- But open standards are necessary for open source and open content to work
- Open source and open content operate on the basis of a mixed model:
  - reciprocal altruism (close-knit community!)
  - pay for added value (offer services)

Open standards

- industry, universities (research spin-off), and public bodies collaborate in
- old, official (ISO, CEN, DIN, NEN) and new standardisation bodies (IMS, ADL, AICC)
- local dissemination (EUN, Surf Six, Jisc CETIS)
- (W3C for web standards)

Example: Unfold

- EU sponsored project
- Valkenburg group
- dissemination of IMS Learning Design
- OUNL, JISC-CETIS, Pompeu Fabra, EUCEN (EU Continuing Education Network)

Open source

- less well institutionally entrenched (no decades-long history like standards)
- but see: http://scourceforge.net
- opposition from those who stand to loose, hence politically sensitive subject
- decision makers are reluctant to adopt it

Considerations

- requirement based versus best of breed approach: get what you need, not what is available
- control over cost (not necessarily cheaper!)
- opportunity to collaborate (pool resources and compete on front-end, collaborate on middleware layer)
- (open source needs open standards!)

Examples

- CopperCore: OUNL project, LD reference implementation, no interface, (http://www.learningnetworks.org)
- Reload: Cetis project, LD, CP and SCORM runtime engine, built into p2p based VLE (Colloquia) (http://www.reload.ac.uk)
- many opportunities for collaboration: Educ. Software, VLEs, LMSs, desktop software (FreeDUC).

Open content

- Freely publish, read and share
- Licensing schemes available (Creative Commons)
- Mission: devoted to expanding the range of creative work available for other to build upon and share

Open content

- Helps building a learning object economy if combined with low threshold, decentralised, easily accessible technologies (open source! closed source has no interest in decentralisation)
- Fosters easy re-use and modification of learning objects
- May put the teacher back in the developer's role

Examples

- Creative commons (http://creativecommons.org)
- Wikiwiki, especially wiki encyclopedia: wikipedia (http://wikipedia.org) localised variants
- Here too the pay-for-added-value-only model of open source might work (no examples yet)

Conclusion

- In spite of differences, common underlying philosophy
- create a level playing field so that everbody may join in
- foster a decentralised, bottum-up approach rather than a centralised, top-down approach
- rely on collaboration, on pooling efforts, which in itself is valuable.

Thank you!

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