



FREE  
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ACADEMY



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

# FTA: a Joint Venture of Free Software and OER

OpenED Conference - November 2010 - Barcelona

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# Introduction

- The FTA aims to set up an **International Master Programme on Free Technologies**
- Freedom and Cooperation:
  - **Distance Learning through a Virtual Campus:** 100% free / libre / open source technology.
  - All course materials are published as **free educational materials (OER)**.
  - All courses are about concepts and vendor-independent, **free technologies** (FS, OS).
  - Creation of an **international partnership** for recognition of courses and sharing of the FTA programme and network.

# Who's behind it

Consortium partners:

- **Free Knowledge Institute** (FKI) - Netherlands
- **Universitat Oberta de Catalunya** (UOC) - Spain
- **Open Universiteit** (OUNL) - Netherlands
- **University of Agder** (UIA) - Norway

Associate Partners

- **Seed** - Switzerland
- **Gleducar** - Argentina
- **Foundation for P2P Alternatives**
- **Free Software Foundation**

...

Supported by the **European Commission** (Lifelong Learning Programme)

# Business model

- FLOSSmetrics (of 451 FS projects researched): the dominant model: “fully Free Software”
- Revenue based on services
- Educational services: tutoring, assessment, certification, ...
- FTA: “fully Free Knowledge” model: all materials published openly and under free licenses, while receiving contributions from the learners for participation in courses.
- Tuition fee in 2010, 2011: 380 €/5 ECTS course\*
- Print-on-Demand of the course books

\* discounts may apply

# Distance Education Methodology

- Tutor from one of the universities guides, facilitates and evaluates a group of learners
- Duration: 12-13 weeks (5 ECTS)
- Online and Asynchronous
- Activities, assignments, projects, debates, Guest Lectures
- 2010 pilots exceed expectations: 160 learners in 7 courses

# FTA Certificate



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[www.ftacademy.org](http://www.ftacademy.org)



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Lifelong Learning Programme

This Certificate is issued for the successful participation in the course  
**"The concepts of Free Software and Open Standards"**  
on the Free Technology Academy.

**Learner:** WOUTER TEBBENS

**Grade level obtained:** 8 (out of 10)

**FTA Representative:**

  
Lex Bijlsma

FTA Quality Assurance Leader  
Professor of Computer Science at OUNL

**Date:** 01/07/2010

on behalf of the following institutions:



Open Universiteit  
[www.ou.nl](http://www.ou.nl)



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER



freeknowledgeinstitute

With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union.

Validation code: ZIGWEv8jrs



# Study Programme 2010

V0.5		1 <sup>st</sup> Round Jan-april	2 <sup>nd</sup> Round April-July	3 <sup>rd</sup> Round Sept-Nov
Intro FS + OS	mod1	FKI		UIA
GNU/Linux	mod2	OUNL		
Network Technologies	mod3			OUNL
Web Apps	mod4		UIA	
Economical Aspects	mod5		FKI	
Legal Aspects	mod6			UOC
Software Dev	mod7		UOC	
Case Studies	mod8			t.b.d.

courses
  evaluation

# Study Programme 2011

<i>Tentative programme 2011</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> Round	2 <sup>nd</sup> Round	3 <sup>rd</sup> Round
	<i>Jan-April</i>	<i>April-July</i>	<i>Sept-Dec</i>
Concepts FS + OS	█	█	█
GNU/Linux Basic	█	█	█
GNU/Linux Advanced Admin		█	█
Free Software Utilities	█	█	█
Network Technologies	█		█
Web App Development	█		█
Software Development	█		
Implementation	█		█
Economic Aspects		█	
Legal Aspects		█	█
Software Architecture		█	
Assessment of FS projects		█	
FS in Public Administrations			█
SW Engineering in FS			█



# Course Materials

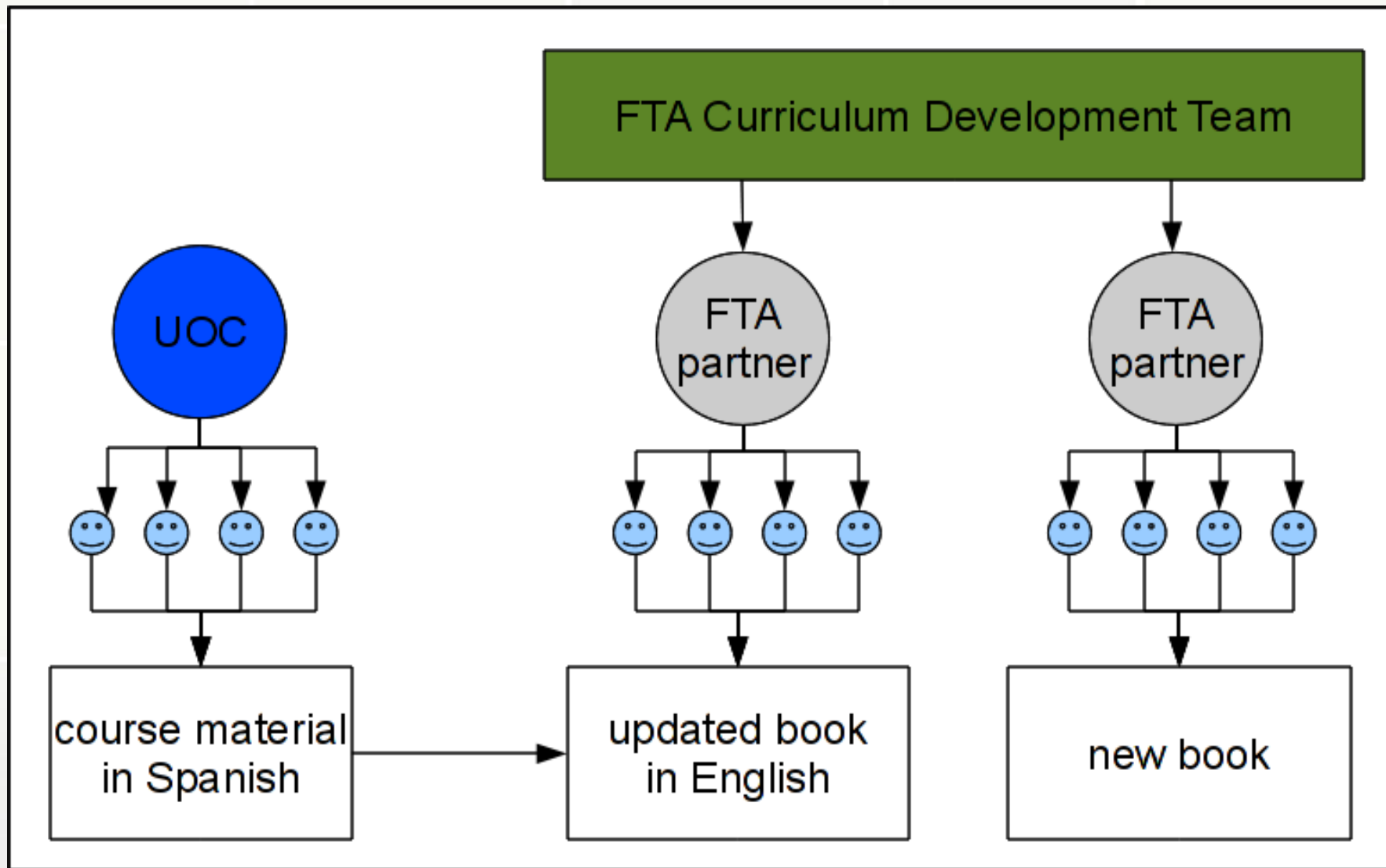
- All FTA materials are published openly and under free licenses:
  - **Module 1: The concepts of Free Software and Open Standards**
  - **Module 2: The GNU/Linux Operating System**
  - **Module 3: Open Networks**
  - **Module 4: Web applications development**
  - **Module 5: Economic Aspects and Business Models**
  - **Module 6: Legal Aspects of the Information Society**
  - **Module 7: Software development**
- **URL: <http://ftacademy.org/materials>**

# FTA course books - example

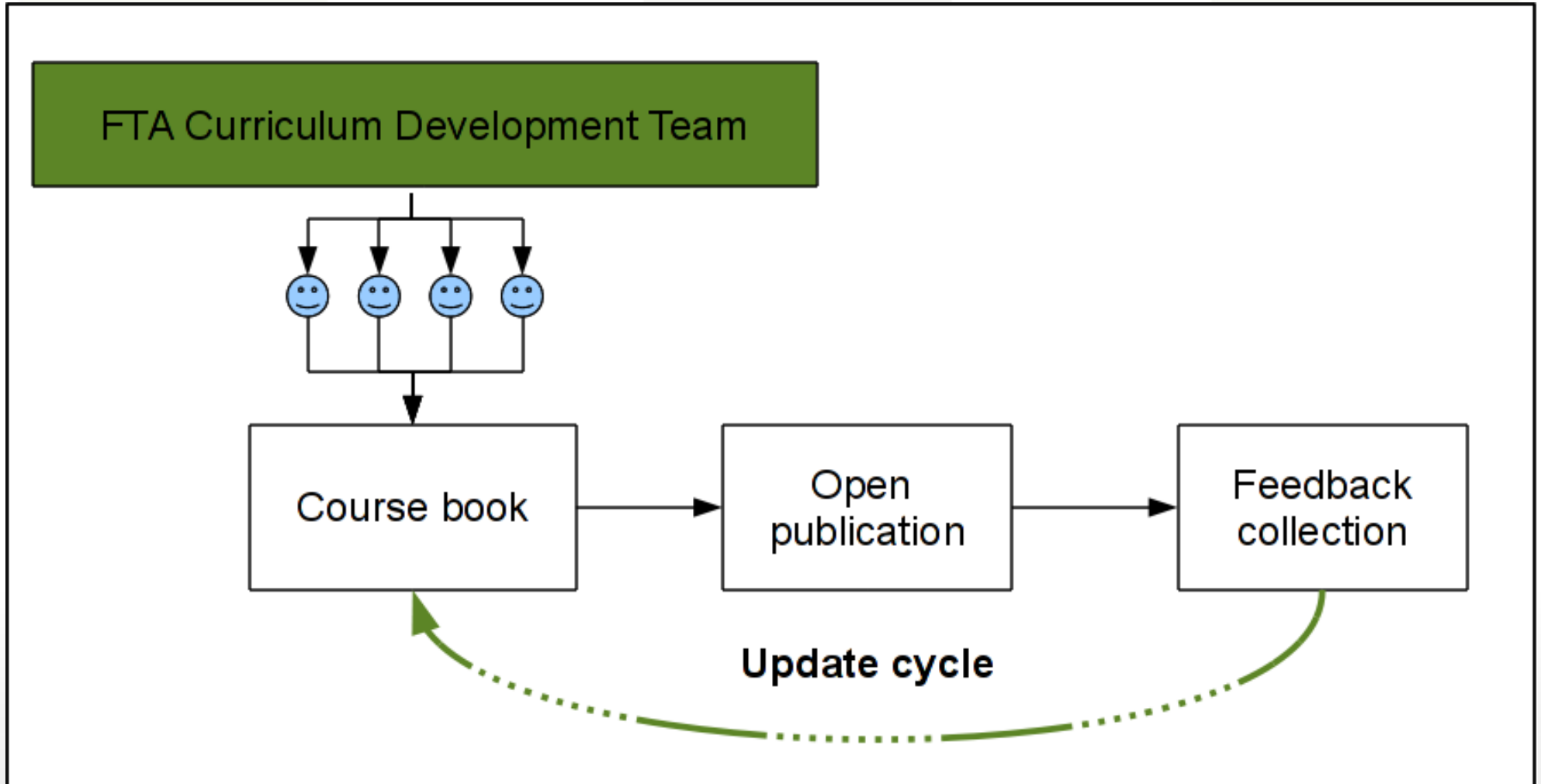
- **Title:** Introduction to Free Software
- **Authors:** Jesús M. González-Barahona, Joaquín Seoane Pascual, Gregorio Robles
- **Coordinators:** Jordi Mas Hernández, David Megías Jiménez
- **Licenses:** GNU Free Documentation License, Creative Commons Attribute ShareAlike License
- 291 Pages; 3.2Mb
- Download: <http://ftacademy.org/materials/fsm/1#1>



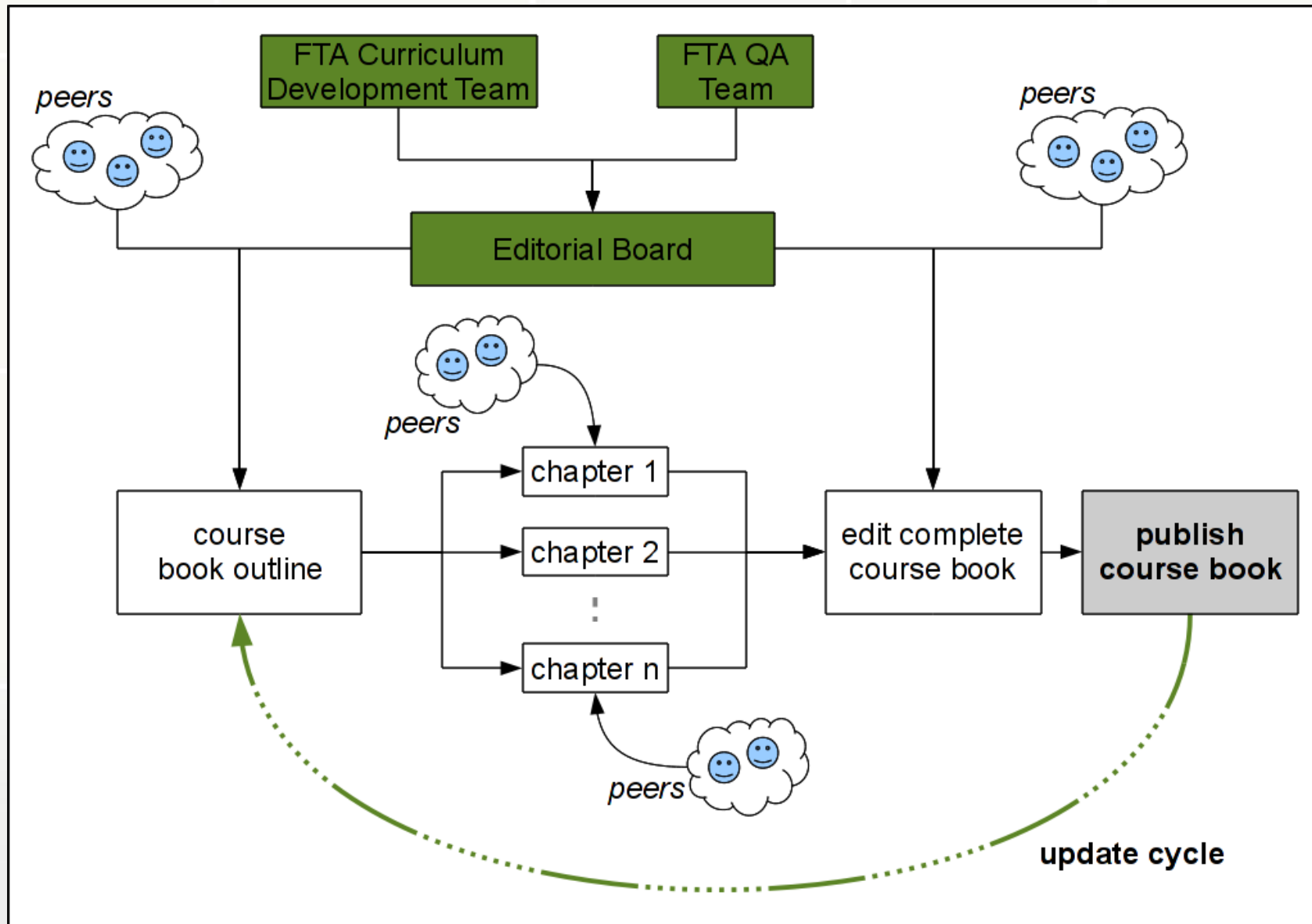
# Evolution FTA course book production



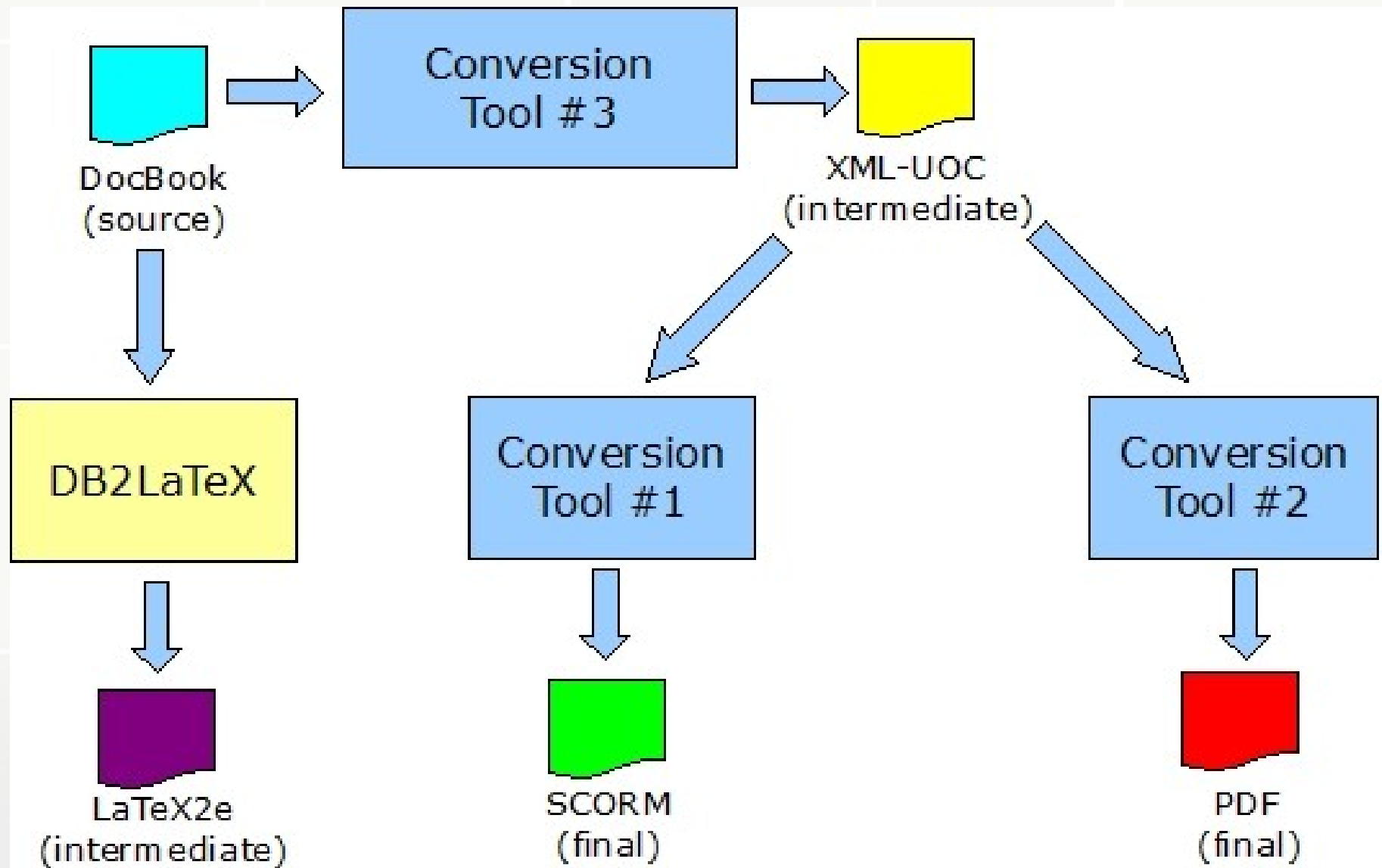
# Evolution FTA course book production (2)



# Evolution FTA course book production (3)



# Formats Overview



# Feedback loop

The screenshot shows a web interface with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Home', 'Introduction...', 'Course book', 'test -...', 'Settings', 'Logout', and a page indicator '7/291'. A 'Download original file' link is also present. The main content area is split into two panes. The left pane, titled 'test heading', contains a list of comments. Comment 3, by Jesus Barahona Wouter Tebbens (dated 09-07-10), is highlighted with a red box and contains the text 'long time researcher and teacher of Libre Software; co-founder of LibreSoft'. Comment 2, by David (dated 08-10-10), contains 'this is the body of the comment'. Comment 3, by David (dated 08-10-10), contains 'a critical comment'. Comment 4, by David (dated 14-10-10), is marked as 'New!' and contains 'I like them'. Below the comments are links for 'Fold out', 'Print discussion', and 'Print article with annotations'. A 'Help:' section is also visible, providing instructions on 'Creating Comments' and 'Viewing comments'. The right pane displays the document content, starting with 'GNUFDL • PID\_00148366' and 'Introduction to Free'. The document title is 'Introduction'. The text includes a quote: '"Anyone who hears this, if he can sing, may add and change at pleasure. Let it go from hand to hand: let those who request it have it. As a ball among young women, catch it if you can."'. It then states: 'Since this is of 'Good Love', lend it out gladly: do not make a mockery of its name by keeping it in reserve; nor exchange it for money by selling or renting it; for 'Good Love' when bought, loses its charm.''. A citation follows: 'Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita. *The Book of Good Love* (14<sup>th</sup> century, original in Ancient Spanish)'. The final paragraph states: 'The first version of these notes was written by Jesús M. González-Barahonã, Joaquín Seoane Pascual and Gregorio Robles between April and September 2003. Although we had been discussing for a while preparing a document of this type for the Free Software course that Joaquín and Jesús teach as part of the PhD programs of their respective departments, it was the initiative of the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) that commissioned us to prepare material to introduce the free software masters course, which finally encouraged us to get started. The involvement of Jordi Mas, the academic coordinator of the masters course, in this task was crucial, in that he proposed us for the job and put us in contact with the UOC, additionally supporting our relations with

# Conclusions

- The FTA draws lessons from the successful Free Software ecosystems and presents an economic model for sustainable distance education based on OER
- Production and maintenance of FTA learning materials is moving towards a more open and collaborative model
- These production models are not mutually exclusive and will probably coexist in the future.



<http://ftacademy.org/>  
<http://campus.ftacademy.org/>

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