Updates from the WikiToLearn project

WikiToLearn is an open source project, part of KDE, which wants to provide free, collaborative and accessible textbooks to the whole world. Its philosophy can be summarized as: "knowledge only grows if shared". It provides a platform where learners and teachers can complete, refine and re-assemble lecture notes in order to create textbooks, tailored precisely to their needs so that you can "stand on the shoulders of giants". The project is promoted and coordinated by a community of people, often experts in their own field, who write, review and organize the content. WikiToLearn is a project made from the KDE community.

In December 2016, the project will be just a little more than one year old. It is now leaving its experimental phase, and it is getting ready to be implemented in production on a number of real case scenarios. This year we will see, for the first time, several university courses that will host the collaborative note taking on WikiToLearn. The GARR network has been key to its development, by providing a robust and scalable infrastructure, which we use to test, develop and deploy both software and content to our users.

As a member of the WikiToLearn community and Founder of the project, I will share updates about our activities, our community building efforts and the status of the creation of content. We will discuss our program of local "hives", a project to increase participation from students, that aims to create local groups of contributors that coordinate and plan activities in an autonomous way. We will discuss achieved institutional agreements and other, more formal, plans to further the impact of WikiToLearn.

I will also share updates on the technical platform, in particular the new setup of the "Visual Editor", a piece of software that turns editing rich text in a WYSIWYG experience, the challenges found in implementing it, and the infrastructure required to run it smoothly. I will speak of the new microservices which composes the new infrastructure that we're deploying, and the services needed for keeping such a diverse community in the same place.

After this talk, you will know how, as a professor, you can run a "wiki" course, how to make your educational institution join officially WikiToLearn and how you can help the development of the project in many different situations. You will know how to share already existing material and how to edit new one directly on the platform. You will also know how to get in touch with the existing community, how to start your local hive, and how to connect with other contributors from the rest of the world.