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owpedia - An Overview

Welcome to the Open Workshop Handbook - owpedia.org

The project - owpedia

There is a rising number of Open Workshops (OW) and insitutions with a similar structure, like fablabs, in Germany and worldwide. Mainly, those projects were started by people in their spare time and will grow organically in relation to the user groups, aims and location. During the process, a lot of experiential knowledge is created which is crucial to running an Open Workshop. This knowledge is wide-ranging and sometimes the result of hard work or paid-for solutions from experts. Legal issues, accountancy, general workshop operational processes and documents as well as information concerning suitable software solutions are just a small part of the huge wealth of information that every workshop creates over time.

This knowledge is often freely shared with other workshop operators via personal visits, E-mail or phone calls. This presents a huge effort for those seeking information as well as those who compile information, visit other workshops and to be ready to answer questions. In order to reduce these efforts, document knowledge and improve collective learning, OWpedia was created.

Objective

The platform is aimed at becoming a central point of contact for those seeking information and those who can provide it. Workshop operators can write up their compiled knowledge concerning their workshop processes and provide transparent and low-level access for their fellows and other operators. This knowledge database (although DokuWiki runs without one) is supposed to offer a starting point to everyone interested in topics related to Open Workshops (OW) and to search specifically for similar projects and their solutions. In short: a key place to store knowledge and experience around the operation of Open Workshops and to document it in an easily accessible manner. Open-source as free access to knowledge and the collaborative development are paramount.

Target groups

On one hand, the main target groups are prospective workshop operators, who are confronted with a huge amount of questions in the beginning and for those they will find answers here. On the other hand it is for those already operating a workshop, who would like to document their own processes for their fellows or are in the process of reworking their documents/processes/information and need inspiration, templates or simply help.

Creation

The idea came into being during the initial planning phase of HOBBYHIMMEL, the first Open Workshop in Stuttgart. From the start, the project was planned as a social franchising concept which includes the documentation of all required information. This was openly communicated from the beginning and subsequently ca. 30 future workshop projects/initiators were advised on topics concerning Open Workshops in the first five years after formation in 2015. This was achieved partly on-site in the workshop, by phone or E-mail. Documents were sent, questions answered and a lot of time went into facilitating the start for others. After contact with many other workshops and with the Verbund Offener Werkstätten and the anstiftung and is now at its current state. The launch took place on XXXXXX via social media channels. the idea was developed further to create a platform not only for this one particular concept but as an opportunity for all workhop operators to document and disseminate their diverse approaches, add to the discussion and help others accordingly. This idea was finally put into reality at the end of 2020 with project funds by anstiftung and is now at its current state. The launch took place on XXXXXX via social media channels.

Participate

Open Workshops can often only be realised by the commitment of volunteers, like in this case. Everyone can contribute a small part to the dissemination and improvement of this page. Starting from content creation via revision works towards marketing and advertisement within the community.

Structure

The main structure is up and running and has been divided into 12 namespaces/areas which are a means to avoid chaos. Most pages are built in a manner that the will give an overview to the subject area including a sortable table containing entries from different workshops. Content can be filtered according to certain criteria and access the detailed page of every workshop. The detail page can be created by the workhop fellows themselves and they can choose whether to use the existing template of the front page or use their own structure.



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