



Migrating to OpenOffice.org
or
How you can stop living in fear and embrace
free standards
and
open source

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What I want to say

Forget fear. Embrace open standards and open source.

That is the message of OpenOffice.org and the point of my presentation.

The argument I make is that the open standard file format OpenOffice.org uses, OpenDocument Format (ODF), coupled with its open-source code, will not only create wealth but also ensure that the intellectual riches of a nation are not lost.

This not a trivial issue. It is very serious. And you can play a role in this drama.

Free and Open Source Software and Open Standards...

Some definitions:

Free and open source software (FOSS) denotes production and distribution strategies predicated on a set of licenses maintained by the Open Source Initiative

- For developers, these licenses remove the artificial limits to the exchange of ideas
- For endusers, these licenses eliminate nasty EULAs: the product is the user's

Open standards are standards determined by an impartial body and open for examination by anyone and implementation in any suitable application

- Impartially maintained, they counter format archaism
- License agnostic, proprietary and open applications may use them

Why Open Standards

Because the stakes are high: a nation's intellectual wealth.

- All digital documents generated by government and corporate offices, by individuals, by you. These could include things ranging from financial analyses to military reviews to the novel you are writing: *all will be lost...*
- ... *if written with Microsoft ink*

Proprietary de facto standards, like Microsoft's, depend on one company's interest and economic health, not on your desires or interests: formats can change, be abandoned. Many have, already

- Even if Microsoft succeeds in making its XML Reference Schema an ISO standard, it will really only benefit Microsoft, not even its customers.
- The drive to standardize the XML RS is to preserve backward compatibility, that is, preserve MS's user base. The same could have been done by adopting and adding to the ODF.
- MS wants to retain control of its format. That means you do not have control.

How Open Standards Help

In contrast, with ODF, the files are yours and you can control the technology.
Furthermore,

- Files created today by application X using the OpenDocument Format (ODF) will be legible well into the future
- Files created today by application X will be legible by any other application Y, free or not, using the open standard
- Files created by X will be accessible by any vendor: there is no vendor lock in
- Open standards do not depend on the market but on the technology and the collective interest of the independent standards body
- A nation's intellectual wealth should not depend on the interest of a remote and foreign company
- A nation's archives, an enterprise's files, a schools documents: the wealth of a nation, all will be preserved with open standards
- Chance interoperability is not enough for the future: One needs the collective stability of an open standard like OpenDocument Format

FOSS + Open Standards

But open standards are ONE element in making the wealth of a nation available to her people today and tomorrow

If proprietary software is required to read a nation's intellectual wealth then the cost of that software is like a tax on the citizens

- A tax whose proceeds probably leave Denmark
- A tax that limits access to elites
- A tax that limits the flow of ideas and thus the wealth of a nation

What is wanted is software that is both Free and Open and is using open standards

- In this way, the wealth of a nation is open to her people without legal encumbrance

Why OpenOffice.org Is Important

OpenOffice.org is free, open, standardized. That means:

- It is free both as in beer and in speech

It uses an open standard, the OASIS Standard OpenDocument Format, for its files, which means:

- It is proof against the future

- It can work with *any* other application using that standard

- It is no one person's or one company's: it is everyone's

- If a government uses it, the citizen is not required to buy it; she can get it for free

- if a company uses it, they are not forced to spend and spend to avoid obsolescence; there are no nasty EULAs

OpenOffice.org is therefore the responsible choice

But is it any good?

Yes

Technologically, it is robust, secure and is developed by hundreds of developers from Sun, Intel, Novell, Google, Propylon, Debian, and many other companies

For users, OpenOffice.org 2.0 is easy to use. It is a lot like Microsoft Office while combining features such as save to PDF, Shockwave Flash, XForms, and so on

Users take about...ten minutes...an hour... a day... to learn how to use it. There are no significant issues to using it

- It can open Microsoft Office files instantly, and it can by default save as an Office file
- It can open WordPerfect files
- It can create and edit Web pages, create and edit drawings, edit photographs, create and edit large spreadsheets, and many other things in individuals, corporate users, and public sector users want

Problems?

With OpenOffice.org 2.0, the community has resolved a lot of the compatibility problems with Microsoft Office and other suites...

...and the problems are now seen as equally Microsoft's to solve

- It works with WordPerfect
- Macros can be translated over
- Extensions can be created easily
- And the small incompatibilities that remain...
 - Cheaper to address these now than to have a bigger library that is incompatible forever
 - And if there are more...Well: it's open source



Why else should I use it?

OpenOffice.org runs on Linux, Solaris, Windows, Mac OS X, Free BSD, and numerous other platforms

It is available in more than 60 languages besides Danish.

My thanks to Søren Thing Pedersen for leading the effort to localize it to Danish.

Probably more than 50 million persons use it

There is professional support, professional training, professional certification in numerous languages

There is global interest in using the application and format, meaning...

- For international competition, for EU use, you may very shortly have to use the OpenDocument Format
- It is free; gratis to use, free to modify, open to one and all

Migration

How does one migrate a company or government to OpenOffice.org?

Company:

- You go slowly: at the user's pace
- You keep Windows
- You buy support
- You use software in the user's language
- And show how well it works with other applications and systems
- NOTE: Migrating to OpenOffice.org is not the same as migrating to Linux