Information About OpenOffice 1.0 Suite Freeware

OpenOffice is an effort in the computer and software industry to write quality software that is "open-source," that is, the "code" for the software is published for others to read, tinker with, and take further. Sun Microsystems, a major supplier of Web hardware is the lead company in this effort.

OpenOffice 1.0 is a completely free product that competes well against such "Suite" programs as Microsoft Office, Corel WordPerfect Suite, Lotus Suite, and Microsoft Works, and runs from a variety of operating system platforms including various versions of Windows, Unix, and Linux.   OpenOffice has word processor, spreadsheet, presentation graphics, drawing, and web publishing components that compare well to the industry leading products.

For more information see http://www.openoffice.org

Sun Microsystems also has a low-cost product with technical support called StarOffice that is quite similar to OpenOffice.

For more information about the Sun Microsystems version of OpenOffice, see

http://www.sun.com. I am also including an article from www.infoworld.com on November 14, 2002 about OpenOffice.org.

Charles Duell
Mailto:Charles.Duell@morgancc.edu

PO Box 14
Flagler CO 80815

970-542-3260

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The Open Source
Russell Pavlicek

Switching Offices

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION has a number of older PCs running Microsoft Office, there are now several good reasons to seriously consider switching to the OpenOffice.org office suite. Most of these reasons have been supplied by none other than Microsoft itself.

According to published reports, Office 11 (due next year) won't support Windows 95, 98, or ME. The earliest supported version, per the reports, will be Windows 2000. This means that a substantial number of organizations with pre-W2K systems will have to undergo a serious upgrade path or risk becoming incompatible with new versions of Office.

Compare this with OpenOffice.org, which runs not only on Windows 95 and later, but on Linux, Solaris, and now Mac OS X as well. This gives you compatibility now and options in the future if migration to another OS supports your business needs. OpenOffice.org is continually working to maintain support for new Office file types.

PCs running older OSes may need upgrades or complete replacement to survive the transition to Windows 2000 or XP. More memory and faster processors may be needed to use the newer OS. This would incur a substantial cost.

Many organizations using older versions of Windows are ill-equipped to spend a massive amount of money on new OS and application licenses, and hardware upgrades. This is far different from OpenOffice.org, which demands no licensing fees and allows you to upgrade when your business -- not your software vendor -- demands it.

This announcement makes it clear that Microsoft sees Windows 9x as a true legacy environment. It's not just an old environment that might need upgrading, but an incompatible computing platform no longer suited for office functions. As such, you need to either divorce your organization from just about any use of Windows 9x/ME -- a major concern for some organizations using older custom solutions -- or seek out a solution provider that intends to continue supporting the platform. OpenOffice.org has no plan to abandon the Windows 9x OSes, which gives you a new scenario to evaluate.

During prior upgrades of Office, you ran the risk of being left behind if you didn't upgrade promptly with the rest of the IT world. This time around, you won't be alone if you don't upgrade. Lots of organizations are looking to

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standardize on something other than the latest version of Redmond software.

By switching to OpenOffice.org, you regain control over your hardware and software upgrade cycle. You also regain control over your IT budget. If you want corporate support, check out OpenOffice.org's elder brother, Sun's StarOffice.

If you have older systems in your organization, now is the time to do some homework. It could yield big returns in the long run.

Russell Pavlicek is a contributing editor at InfoWorld. Contact him at pavlicek@linuxprofessionalsolutions.com. Log on to his forum at www.infoworld.com/os.

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