



OOoCon 2004 - Berlin

OpenOffice.org Year 4

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Agenda

- Issue: OpenOffice.org is popular. How are we benefiting from that? How are others?
- How we are popular, with a discussion on the maturity, size, and complexity of the project
- How we are benefiting, how others are, how we can improve things, and how we can lose everything
- Some ideas about what we can do and not do



Maturation...?

- We are 4 years old. We have grown politically. How?
 - We have a Community Council. It represents your views.
 - We have the recently announced Engineering Steering Committee. It helps shape issues related to code, including contributions to OpenOffice.org. It is your ESC.
- The Project is in short more than the expression of just one company; it is a community project with a large degree of autonomy.
- But the community has only weakly exercised it. Why?



Size

- More than 161,000 registered members
- Over 50 active projects in many languages
- 3,000 posts/week
- Hundreds (if not thousands) of active contributors, including more than 450 who have signed the JCA (we do not count PDL signatories)
- Developers: These are counted in with contributors. OpenOffice.org's structure makes it difficult to count individual developers.
- Downloads: We passed 31 million a while ago. That number is cumulative but does not include all who download via Cnet, or who obtain the application through a Linux distributor, such as RedHat, SuSE, Mandrakesoft, etc.
- We are confident that there are tens of millions of OpenOffice.org users



Contributing

- OpenOffice.org is the bridge to other open software. It also can bridge the digital divide.
- The goal though is not just more users. (The world has enough consumers.) It is rather users who can also see themselves as contributors.
- What have we done, what are we doing to make it easier for contributors?
 - The ESC, to start with
 - A task (to-do) list
 - Aggressive school and college outreach programs
 - For developers, the child workspace tooling
 - The increased modularity of 2.0
 - A developing mentoring program
 - The new Contributing page
 - An apparatus for accepting cash contributions



Contributing (cont'd)

- The number of corporate contributors is rising. They include Sun, RedHat, Novell, Propylon, TerraSoft, Good-Day, Inc., and numerous others (and I'm not counting the sponsors of this conference).
- But not all corporations working on OpenOffice.org publish their patches, let alone submit them back to the Project. They use them for their own profit.
- We can approach these companies—when we know of them—and we have, but to little effect.
- To name them here would be tedious. But they include those who are selling OpenOffice.org throughout the world (or otherwise distributing it) without also supporting the project.



Future

- The future lies with the OASIS file format that 2.0 and beyond will use
- 2.0 will be popular and many new companies will likely want to sell binaries for their own profit—not ours
- Solutions: Change the license
 - Drop SISSL
 - Change LGPL to GPL
- This license change would limit exploitation
- But it radically affects the way a company can work with OpenOffice.org. It precludes exploitation.
- But this is only a start. We need also to work with those who want to create add ons, plug-ins, etc., and wish to sell their enhanced products.



Commercial...

- I would like then to suggest we consider deploying a commercial license to complement the free one. It would work optionally.
 - User pays nothing for OpenOffice.org
 - Contributor who works with GPL pays nothing and project benefits
 - Contributor who wishes to add proprietary elements and not contribute to the project pays
- Possible gains...
 - Any organization could add its own proprietary enhancements, provided it pays the license fee. They do this now, they just don't pay any fees
 - OpenOffice.org could use some of the funds so generated
- And possible losses...
 - We lose credibility
 - We lose corporate developers
 - We get a fork



What to do

- OpenOffice.org is right now losing out on development. Changing the license will resolve much of this. Adding a commercial license will further ensure that OpenOffice.org is sustained
- Any license change of this sort affects more than just Sun, who holds copyright, and must also be considered by the community
- Questions: Where are the faults in changing the license to GPL? In adding a commercial option?
- Who loses? Who gains?