Frequently Asked Questions on OpenOffice

University of the Philippines Linux Users' Group - www.unplug.org

What is OpenOffice?

OpenOffice is a free office suite. It includes a word processor (Writer), spreadsheet (Calc), presentation program (Impress) and a vector-drawing program (Draw). OpenOffice is available to a variety of platforms. It runs on Linux, FreeBSD, Mac OS X, Solaris and Windows.

Where I can get my copy of OpenOffice?

OpenOffice is freely distributable. You can sell and copy OpenOffice under the terms of either GNU General Public License (GPL), GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL), or Sun Industry Standards Source License (SISSL). It can easily be downloaded on the web at OpenOffice.org. You can also bring blank CDs at the UP Computer Center and ask for a copy.

Can it read Microsoft Office documents?

Yes. OpenOffice can read *.doc, *.ppt and *.xls formats.

Sometimes, reading MS Office files in OpenOffice costs the formatting to be garbled. This is perfectly normal. It is not the fault of OpenOffice. MS Office file formats are Microsoft's secrets. OpenOffice developers *reversed engineered* MS Office file formats so OpenOffice could read them.

Why use OpenOffice?

There are several reasons why UP people, or the Filipino people in general, should use OpenOffice:

1. *Cost* – OpenOffice is free. You can easily obtain and distribute copies. Microsoft Office costs thousands of pesos per copy while OpenOffice costs nothing. The MS Office license states that a copy can only be installed in one computer. OpenOffice can be installed in any number of computers.

   UP couldn't afford to pay MS Office copies, we should use OpenOffice.

2. *Piracy* - MS Office piracy is rampant. You can easily obtain copies of MS Office from your friends, technicians, etc. Filipinos think that installing unlicensed MS Office is perfectly legal. "OK lang naman, di naman mahuhuli.", "Mayaman naman ang Microsoft" or plain ignorance about intellectual property rights are the usual reasons why Filipinos allow such practices. But the question is: is installing illegal MS Office copies right?

   The answer is no. Filipinos should use legal copies of office software. If you could afford to buy MS Office, so be it. But don't use unlicensed MS Office. Since most of us couldn't afford it, OpenOffice is the answer.

3. *File Format* – OpenOffice file formats are considerably smaller than MS Office files. It can drastically reduce disk space and network time transfer.

I am using Microsoft Office for years and I am pretty comfortable with it, is the transition to OpenOffice difficult?

No. Office suites all have the same concepts. You type to your word processor, generate graphs on your spreadsheets, etc. But they differ on the user interface. Try to use it on a day's work and get accustomed on the user interface. Once you get proficient in OpenOffice, you'll realize that it is better than Microsoft Office.