The OpenOffice.org Project

Foundations of Office Productivity
in a Networked Age

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Preface

The purpose of this paper is to provide a strategic overview of the OpenOffice.org project. It is designed to deliver an introduction to the details of the principles and mechanisms involved in the operation project. Having a good understanding of these principles and mechanisms is key for anyone interested in becoming involved in the OpenOffice.org project.

It is expected that as the OpenOffice.org project matures, some of these details will evolve. This document will be updated periodically to reflect the nature of these changes to the strategies of the OpenOffice.org project.

History

Version	Publication Date	Change Notes
Version 1.0	7/19/00	First version of this paper. Released at the OpenOffice.org launch.

Introduction

The OpenOffice.org project is an historic development for the open systems world and the open source movement. In a networked age, the rules by which software is created, defined, and distributed are being redefined. Software, in essence a powerful form of expressing human knowledge and logic, is entering the realm of other free and open forms for the expression of human ideas. The pervasiveness of the network has been central in driving this redefinition of the qualities of software. The need for certain forms of software to be available in an equitable form becomes very apparent, especially when related to the creation, exchange, and communication of information. It is important to note that in recent times, some of the most significant forces that have influenced change in our information-centric world have resulted from the use of tools and formats for mechanisms such as e-mail, Web servers and Web browser, IRC, and even the very recent Instant Messenger service. All of these software-based infrastructures have shifted to be foundational in nature, based upon technology standards and formats available to all innovators, without restriction.

The OpenOffice.org project establishes these same freedoms for the software technology used for information collection commonly called *office documents*. As a result of these office document formats and the implementation of their accompanying software application utilities becoming foundational technologies — freely available to all through the OpenOffice.org project — office documents have made the important transition from the proprietary world to become universal, incorporated into the foundational network information standards. The OpenOffice.org project marks the beginning of an era of universality for office productivity documents as well as their arrival as network standard formats and services.

What is OpenOffice.org?

OpenOffice.org is the open source project through which Sun Microsystems is releasing the technology that powers the globally popular StarOffice™ productivity suite. The OpenOffice.org project establishes the necessary facilities to make this open source technology available to the developer communities worldwide. Source code technology will be made publicly available via the Internet in both *tar-ball and CVS* formats. The project site will provide forums for direct communications and discussions among developers. Plus, the project site is constructed to provide a center for full and comprehensive information regarding all aspects of the project and its technology. This includes details on the technology and how it can be used as a basis for further innovation, for example, from API and architectural documentation through to planning, news, and promotional information.

The OpenOffice.org network hosted community can be found at http://www.openoffice.org.

Why is Sun Microsystems doing this?

Strategic Background

Sun Microsystems was founded in 1982 upon three principles. First, that open systems' strategies for technology will ultimately expand the markets for information technology products more successfully than those derived from a proprietary basis. Second, that the network was to become the foundation upon which all computing platforms would be constructed in such an open systems world, expressed by Sun's visionary slogan "*The Network is the Computer* ™". And third, the law of innovation commonly described by Bill Joy, (co-founder of Sun Microsystems and original leader of the seminal open source BSD project) as "*Innovation will occur*" and its corollary, "*that it will occur elsewhere*" requires that strategies must be sought to embrace the concepts of the innovators who will be "elsewhere" by definition.

Sun recognizes that all the successful software and network technologies it uses and develops must have these foundational principles at their core. A brief review of Sun's statements and actions from its beginning will show a consistency in developing the means to build itself upon these same principles.

Office Productivity for a Networked Age

Because future computing is being designed and built with the network as its foundation, Sun Microsystems has been committed to the development, adoption, and deployment of the network-based Open Information Architecture. From the core of TCP/IP to e-mail, NFS™, XML, and Java™ technologies establishing the standards for this Open Information Architecture has always been a primary goal for contributing towards open systems and enabling a viable and compelling information computing future.

By 1998, it became clear that the *office suite* formats and utilities would need to become standardized and fully open definitions of the Open Information Architecture. The knowledge that the diverse forms of devices by which people would access and use the network and its computing resources would expand far beyond today's PC-class device meant that this would become a critical requirement. In August 1999, Sun acquired Star Division, Inc., the developer of a comprehensive, multiplatform, office productivity suite technology that was gaining momentum on open systems platforms. The Star Division technology offered the ideal technology basis and engineering talent to deliver on Sun's strategic objectives for an open definition of these formats and utilities. The component-based language and platform-neutral architecture of the StarOffice utilities were ideally suited to form the basis for an open office productivity suite. Prior to the acquisition, work towards XML-based office document file formats had also been progressing.

Since then, a focussed effort has been placed upon development of both the technologies and the details of the strategy necessary to introduce this next critical piece of the network-based Open Information Architecture. The launch of the OpenOffice.org project introduces this initiative.

Future StarOffice Productivity Suite from Sun Microsystems

Sun Microsystems' engineering efforts that will deliver future versions of the StarOffice productivity suite will be derived directly from the OpenOffice.org technology base. Sun will use the single OpenOffice.org master CVS source base as its own engineering master source base. Thus, developers from all communities will be able to see Sun's development contributions on a daily basis and be able to become directly involved in the development of the OpenOffice.org technology as well as the branded StarOffice productivity suite.

For more detail regarding OpenOffice.org technology, a complementary white paper will be available that provides an in-depth overview of the component features, component system, XML formats, APIs, and environment enabling.

Licensing Strategy

OpenOffice.org uses a dual-license strategy for the source code of the projects technology. The two licenses are:

■ GNU General Public License (GPL)

■ Sun Industry Standard Source License (SISSL)

The dual-license mechanism enables the fullest degree of open and free access to the technology for both the GPL community as well as other developer communities that all wish to develop and deliver compatible, high-quality products for a networked world — powered with open office productivity services technology.

The Dual-License Strategy

The key objectives for licensing the OpenOffice.org project source code are to enable it to:

1. Be compatible and accessible to projects using the GNU GPL. The diversity, innovation, and momentum of projects within the GPL community mandate that the OpenOffice.org technology use the GPL licensing.

2. Provide a licensing structure for other open communities that are incompatible with GNU GPL licensing. Again, the extensiveness of such projects and their diversity of application require OpenOffice.org to be accessible to these communities.

3. Be available for licensing to commercial companies wanting to utilize the technology within their products and/or provide branded versions of the technology as products to their customers. Many of these companies require more traditional commercial license terms and ancillary support services from another commercial vendor.

4. Support compliance with standards for the OpenOffice.org APIs and XML-based file formats. Keeping a cohesive adherence to these standards is recognized as key for the viability of such office productivity in a universal manner. Here, the use of a reference standard, open publishing of the reference specifications and any changes to such references, compliance testing mechanisms, and marks of compliance are the desirable tools required to achieve this goal for products and services.

Through dual licensing of OpenOffice.org technology, the first three points can be satisfied by choosing the companion license to the GPL. The second license must be able to specify requirements of compliance, while providing freedom of innovation by requiring that incompatible changes to the standard be openly published as source code. The second license also needs to provide adequate flexibility for enabling OpenOffice.org technology to be used within commercial products without compromise of the commercial vendors' other licenses used in such products. The Sun Industry Standard Source License (SISSL) satisfies these requirements. The SISSL specification of a Standard (Exhibit B) to which compliance is required provides the clause to which licensees must retain compliance for their use of technology in distributed products. If a licensee makes incompatible modifications, the license specifies that a reference implementation of the modifications must be published back to Sun Microsystems under the original SISSL terms and conditions.

Specifics of the OpenOffice.org License Strategy

Dual Licensing and Standards Compatibility

All source code of the OpenOffice.org project is dual licensed using the GNU GPL licenses[1] and the OpenOffice.org SISSL. Exhibit B of the OpenOffice.org SISSL will specify that the GNU GPL or LGPL source code, with the same version number, is the reference standard for that specific SISSL-licensed source code version.

This circular mechanism ensures that SISSL licensees are required to maintain compatibility with the GPL community versions of the same source code APIs and file formats. Sun Microsystems will publish any supplied modification reference implementations under the dual license (GPL/LGPL + SISSL) so that all communities have access to such modifications.

[1] **Note:** All libraries and embeddable components of the OpenOffice.org dual license will use the Lesser GPL(LGPL).

The SISSL License will be issued by Sun Microsystems, Inc., to SISSL licensees via a click-thru license hosted at the OpenOffice.org source code repository. This license is granted to the licensee for no fee or royalty charge.

Specification of Standard Versions

The specification for each Standard Version as used by the licensing mechanism will be specified and published by the OpenOffice.org project under the governance of the OpenOffice.org Steering Committee.

StarOffice Brand Usage

In conjunction with the dual-license scheme, Sun Microsystems will provide a compatibility testing service to OpenOffice.org licensees for a fee. This service will be charged on a per-platform, per-version basis. Upon achieving compatibility certification for the specific product, the licensee will be authorized to use the StarOffice brand on the version of their product for that specifically tested platform version.

The provisions for use of the well-known StarOffice mark on a licensee's compatible products benefits them by delivering the market recognition already established by the mark and leveraging expanding market recognition of the mark developed by Sun Microsystems and other StarOffice mark vendors.

Additionally, the StarOffice mark conveys a signature of compatibility and confidence to users. This delivers a significant value to the vendor, their product, and the user.

Making Contributions to the OpenOffice.org Project

The use of the dual-license scheme is both open and beneficial for the development, access, distribution, and compatibility of OpenOffice.org technologies and standards. For contributions of technology from the open communities, it is necessary to use the identical mechanisms and terms already in use by the OpenOffice.org project. Specifically, the following two requirements regarding the terms under which such contributions are made must be met in order to allow a contribution to be accepted into the OpenOffice.org Project technology base.

1. Dual-License Usage

The contributing individual or organization should issue their contributions for inclusion within the OpenOffice.org project technology base using the dual-license mechanism of GPL/LGPL + OpenOffice.org SISSL, without modification to the license terms and conditions. Contributions that cannot be made available under this dual-licensing mechanism will be incompatible with the required open access to the OpenOffice.org technology, and thus cannot be incorporated into the OpenOffice.org technology base.

Such dual-licensing practices are now common within the open source communities. Examples include technology projects such as Perl (Artistic + GPL) Mozilla™ (MPL + NPL), and various others.

2. Copyright Assignment

To enable Sun Microsystems to effectively provide license management, enforce legal compliance, and issue technology adequately to commercial licensees, all contributions being made for inclusion in the OpenOffice.org technology base must make a copyright assignment of the source code to Sun Microsystems, Inc. This follows the same principals as recommended by the Free Software Foundation regarding copyright assignment for contributions to the GNU Project. Copyright assignment is a common requirement within open source projects for legal indemnification management and for flexibility of second licensing.

The OpenOffice.org Foundation

The OpenOffice.org project will establish the OpenOffice.org Foundation, a non-profit organization that will oversee the operations, technology strategy, incorporation of technology contributions, and establishment of standards in conjunction with other standards bodies and open source projects as appropriate. The intention is that this foundation will be modeled after the Apache Software Foundation. A Steering Committee (or board) will be established with members from the open development community and SISSL licensees. Sun Microsystems will hold a minority representation in this governance structure.

OpenOffice.org Standards Process

The key objectives of the OpenOffice.org project include:

- Establishment of standard, open productivity, XML-based file formats and component application programming interfaces (APIs).

- Creation of standard implementation source code for the open office productivity utilities that implement the APIs and utilize the XML-based file format standards.

At various times, the OpenOffice.org Foundation will specify new versions of these standards. In the case of the file formats and the APIs, it is the intent to publish and submit these standards to appropriate standards bodies such as OASIS, IETF, and/or the W3C. As previously specified, these standards will bear specific version specifications, allowing the compliance testing of implementations and products against these standards.

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