Sun ODF Plugin for MS Office

Malte Timmermann

Technical Architect

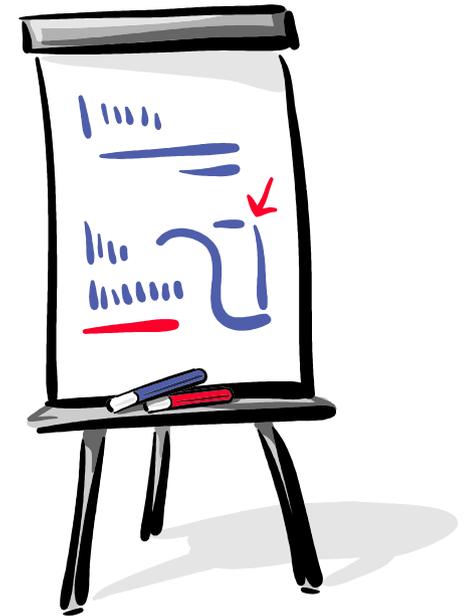StarOffice/OpenOffice.org Development

Sun Microsystems

About the Speaker

- Technical Architect in StarOffice/OpenOffice.org Development

- Working on StarOffice since 1991

- Main focus: Core Development
  - Accessibility
  - Security
  - Architecture and Performance
  - Currently doing the Sun ODF Plugin for MS Office ;)

- http://blogs.sun.com/malte

Agenda

- Sun ODF Plugin for MS Office
  - > What does it?
  - > Why does it exist?
  - > Some Technical Details
  - > Demonstration
  - > Q&A
  - > (On demand: Bonus slides - Why ODF?)

What does it?

- Enable MS Office to read and write ODF
  - > ODF is a good citizen in Word
    - > Just another file format, available in the file open/save dialog
    - > Use ODF files the same way as you use DOC files
    - > System integration, Word registers itself for handling *.odt files
    - > ODF can even be chosen to be the default file format for Word!
  - > ODF Import and Export for PowerPoint and Excel
    - > The same neat integration like in Word is not possible
    - > Adding toolbar and menu items for triggering ODF import and export
  - > Supports MS Office 2000, XP, 2003
    - > Not fully working with Office 2007 only because of an issue in Word's filter handling

4

Why does it exist?

- Help solving ODF Accessibility issues
  - > Most people who are using Assistive Technology (AT) work on Windows, where AT is optimized for MS Office, which doesn't support ODF
  - > AT support for ODF capable applications like StarOffice or OpenOffice.org is not sufficient
  - > People are uncomfortable with changing AT or Office applications
    - > This might also be difficult, expensive or even impossible because of missing alternatives

  - > Some comments on ODF Accessibility
    - > Some people say ODF is not accessible, which is not true!
    - > ODF is well accessible, but the support from AT for ODF *applications* is poor
    - > Investigations done by the OASIS OpenDocument Accessibility SC even led to some enhancements for Accessibility in ODF 1.1
    - > This kind of public Accessibility assessment was never done for OOXML

5

Why does it exist?

- Other solutions in use are based on MS Office
  - > Many commercial products and inhouse solutions are based on MS Office applications like Word or Excel
  - > People don't want to use multiple Office applications
  - > Most solutions are MS Office API dependent, not file format dependent, so they might still work when using ODF files
- Ease migration to ODF
  - > People can start migrating to ODF w/o changing the office suite
  - > No learning or training, just use the new and open, not proprietary, ISO file format
  - > Free your data from the vendor lock, migrate to some other office suite like StarOffice or OpenOffice.org later, anytime

Some Technical Details

- ODF / MS conversion
  - > Conversion is done with StarOffice code, using it's proven and high quality filters
    - > No new development from scratch
  - > No pre-requirements
    - > Some other plugins are XSLT based and do the transformation based on OOXML, so they need the "Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack" for supporting older versions of MS Office, and an additional conversion step
  - > Conversion quality
    - > ODF and MS/OOXML have a different feature set
    - > Some things can't be mapped with XSLT, but can be transformed with some program logic based on a the calculated layout
    - > Example: Images anchored to page

Some Technical Details

- Implementation in Word
  - > Supporting Word's API for 3rd party filters
  - > You really work on the ODT file, pressing Ctrl+S saves it

- Implementation in Excel and PowerPoint
  - > No API for 3rd party filters
  - > Toolbar and menu items are triggering macros for doing the conversion via StarOffice
  - > Disadvantage: You can only import/export ODF, but you don't really work on the ODF file, so pressing Ctrl+S doesn't save ODF

8

Demonstration

- Sun ODF Plugin for MS Office

Q & A

Malte.Timmermann@sun.com
blogs.sun.com/Malte

Bonus slides - Why ODF?

- Open, not proprietary, ISO standard
  - > Defined in an open and transparent process
    - > Mailing lists are open to the public
    - > Individual members allowed
    - > Public meeting agendas and minutes
    - > Received public comments are publicly visible
- Reuse of Established Standards
  - > SVG, MathML, XForms, XLS:FO, XLink, SMIL, ...

OASIS

Open Document Format for Office Applications (OpenDocument) v1.0

OASIS Standard, 1 May 2005

Bonus slides - Why ODF?

- Supported from multiple applications, on multiple platforms
  - > Sun StarOffice, OpenOffice.org, IBM Workplace, Google Docs & Spreadsheets, KOffice, TextMaker, AbiWord, Gnumeric, AjaxWrite, ...
  - > Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, Solaris OS, FreeBSD, OS/2, Symbian, PalmOS
  - > OASIS ODF TC and ODF Adoption TC members include Adobe, IBM, Intel, Novell, Oracle and Sun
  - > ODF Alliance: More than 370 members in less than 12 month
- Gartner says:
  - > „By 2010, ODF document exchange will be required by 50 percent of government and 20 percent of commercial organizations (0.7 probability)."
    http://www.gartner.com/resources/140100/140101/iso_approval_of_oasis_opendo_140101.pdf

Sun ODF Plugin for MS Office

Malte Timmermann

malte.timmermann@sun.com