

Introduction



Free office software **OpenOffice.org**

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Why pay huge fees to use office software when you can use OpenOffice.org for free? If you are new to open source software, you might suspect that there is a catch - surely this software can't be any good? Perhaps at some point the software will become 'proprietary' and the makers will start charging? Well, prepare to be surprised and proved wrong on both counts. OpenOffice.org (or OOo as we shall call it much of



the time in this special magazine) is not identical to commercial software such as Microsoft Office, but it is fully compatible with it and does have a similar range of tools available - word processor, spreadsheet, presentation tool, drawing tool, database, formula editor - and they are not some second-rate efforts either. OOo also works on Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X or Linux, and supports the latest, standard open file formats, which means that should you at some point decide to start using other software, you can take all your documents and data with you.

As for the idea that OOo will become commercial too, let us put your mind at rest – it can't. The software is published under an open source license, and it simply wouldn't be legal to take that code and make it 'closed' again; if you want paid-for support though, you can have it. OOo gives you all the benefits of a modern productivity suite without you having to pay a penny. In this special we have put together guides on using the basic and advanced features of all the components. You will find more tutorials on OOo regularly in Linux Format and other Future Publishing magazines such as PC Answers, PC Plus and Mac Format. If you have any ideas or questions on OOo, please email me at the address below.

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