

Oracle Open Office: Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

You need to cut costs without sacrificing productivity. Because you may have a significant investment in Microsoft Office documents and files, you may feel as if you have no choice but to upgrade to the next version of Microsoft Office or renew your three-year maintenance contract when it comes due.

But there is an alternative to Microsoft Office that is being used by millions of businesses and individuals around the world. Oracle Open Office 3 software is a complete, feature-rich office productivity product that costs approximately 75 percent less than Microsoft Office. It includes powerful programs for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, drawing, database, graphics, and Web publishing. Its user interface is intuitive and easy to use. It offers improved Microsoft Office compatibility, blog and wiki publishing features, and the ability to edit PDF documents—all in a multiplatform office suite that is available on Microsoft Windows, Oracle Solaris, Macintosh OS X, and Linux platforms.

This document will address some of the most frequently asked general and technical questions about Oracle Open Office.

Frequently Asked Questions: General Topics

This section covers frequently asked questions about Oracle Open Office. These questions are divided into four categories: business basics, tools and functionality, Oracle Open Office for the enterprise, and Oracle Open Office for education.

Business Basics

What is Oracle Open Office 3?

Oracle Open Office 3 is a complete, feature-rich office productivity product that's available for a fraction of the cost of similar office suites. It includes powerful programs for word

processing, spreadsheets, presentations, drawing, database, mail and calendar, and Web publishing. Its user interface is intuitive and easy to use. Plus, it's multiplatform and available on the Microsoft Windows, Macintosh OS X, and Linux platforms, as well as on Oracle Solaris operating system (OS).

What are the key features in Oracle Open Office 3?

Briefly, key features include

- Many productivity features that make common tasks much easier to perform
- Support for Microsoft Windows (32 bit and 64 bit), Oracle Solaris, Macintosh OS X, and Linux
- PDF import, editing, and export
- Import of Microsoft Office files, including 2007 XML files
- Web participation tools such as a blogger and wiki publisher
- Antialiasing
- Many usability improvements such as one-click zooming, new Start Center, more-polished icons, and automatic notification and installation of updates

The combination of these features makes this the best release of Oracle Open Office software to date. All the new features are described in detail in the document "Oracle Open Office Suite: Feature Overview" at oracle.com/us/products/applications/open-office/index.html. Note that some of the new features are only available as extensions.

Is Oracle Open Office the new name for StarOffice and StarSuite?

Yes. It was previously known as Sun StarOffice 9 Software and, in select Asian countries, Sun StarSuite 9 Software.

Are there any feature or functionality differences between Oracle Open Office and StarOffice or StarSuite?

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No. The only difference is the name of the product.

Is Oracle Open Office a true alternative to Microsoft Office?

Yes. Oracle Open Office is a full-featured office suite which is compatible with other office suites including Microsoft Office.

Who should consider using Oracle Open Office?

Oracle Open Office provides the functionality to meet the day-to-day office productivity needs for users in homes and in businesses of every size. If you are looking for cost savings and multiplatform support, you should consider Oracle Open Office.

What are extensions, and how do I get them?

Extensions are free add-ons that provide a particular function for Oracle Open Office. The following extensions are available:

- Oracle Connector for Microsoft SharePoint Server (only available with Oracle Open Office Enterprise Edition)
- Oracle Connector for Alfresco CMS
- Oracle Connector for MySQL
- Oracle PDF Import Extension
- Oracle Presenter Console
- Oracle Weblog Publisher
- Oracle Wiki Publisher
- Oracle Presentation Minimizer
- OpenOffice.org/Oracle Open Office eFax Extension
- Oracle Open Office Report Builder
- Professional Template Pack II—English
- Ichitaro Document Filter

Many of the features in Oracle Open Office 3 are available only as extensions. For instructions on downloading, see the extensions subtab the Oracle Open Office Web page at oracle.com. You can also refer to the “Oracle Open Office Suite: Feature Overview” document, also located on the product Website, in the right-hand navigation bar.

What is the mail and calendar client in Oracle Open Office 3, and how do I get it?

The mail and calendar client is actually a Mozilla calendar extension called Lightning that connects to the Mozilla Thunderbird e-mail client. With Lightning, a user receives e-mail, calendaring, scheduling, and to-do lists. It is being referred to as the personal information manager (PIM) for Oracle Open Office. For more details—including how to obtain the PIM—see “Oracle Open Office Suite: Feature Overview.”

What are the differences between Oracle Open Office 3 and OpenOffice.org 3.0?

At the core, binary level, there are no differences. Oracle Open Office 3 is Oracle’s professional distribution of OpenOffice.org. Oracle Open Office also includes

- Enterprise tools such as Oracle Connector for Microsoft SharePoint.
- Migration tools such as Microsoft Office Document Analyzer.
- Bundled extensions including mail/calendar functionality. (With OpenOffice.org, you must download each extension separately.)
- Hot fixes, patches, and updates. (OpenOffice.org requires that users download and reinstall the entire suite to gain the benefits of recent patches and service packs.)
- Committed time lines and roadmaps.
- Oracle warranty and indemnification.

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- Installation support for 60 days from date of purchase for download, e-tail, and retail editions.
- Customization opportunities

Are there any changes to the licensing or upgrade policies?

No. Oracle Open Office remains as a user-based license. A user can install Oracle Open Office on up to five of their machines. Customers always have choice and control with Oracle Open Office, so there are no forced upgrades licensing programs.

What improvements have been made to Microsoft Office compatibility?

Oracle Open Office 3 can read Microsoft Office 2007 files and can convert some Excel macros instantly (no manual conversion needed). In addition, charts, pivot tables, and bullets are easier to import and export.

Is Oracle Open Office 3 compatible with previous versions of Oracle Open Office?

Yes. Oracle Open Office 3 can read/edit StarOffice 5.x, 6.0, 7, and 8 files. StarOffice 7 and 8 will be able to read/edit StarOffice 9 Software files. So users of Oracle Open Office 3 can exchange files with users of StarOffice 7 and 8 Software.

StarOffice 5.x and 6.0 cannot read/edit Oracle Open Office 3 files.

Are there any changes to how Oracle Solaris users obtain Oracle Open Office?

Yes. Beginning with Oracle Solaris 10 Update 9, Oracle Open Office will not be included with Oracle Solaris releases. Oracle Open Office for Solaris can be obtained by purchasing the Enterprise Edition. There is also the option to download and install OpenOffice.org.

What languages are supported by Oracle Open Office 3?

Oracle Open Office provides support for the following languages: Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish.

What is the strategy for Oracle Open Office product updates?

Oracle Open Office offers small patches for security hot fixes, minor updates for cumulative bug fixes, and product updates for new features. Minor updates and product updates are released on an alternating three-month cycle. OpenOffice.org does not provide any update functionality. Users of OpenOffice.org must download and reinstall the entire new software suite to apply recent bug fixes and product updates.

Tools and Functionality

I can't figure out some Oracle Open Office functionality, or maybe I have found a bug. What can I do?

You can review our answers to the technical FAQs within this document or submit a support request.

What enterprise features tools are available in Oracle Open Office Enterprise Edition?

Oracle Open Office 3 Enterprise Edition includes a set of migration tools that significantly lower the cost and time of moving Microsoft Office users to Oracle Open Office. There is also the Oracle Connector for Microsoft SharePoint, which enables integration of Oracle Open Office with the SharePoint Server, and the Oracle Connector for Alfresco, which integrates Oracle Open Office with Alfresco CMS.

What documentation is available for Oracle Open Office?

Oracle Open Office user guides can be downloaded from Oracle's documentation Website at oracle.com/technology/documentation/index.html.

Oracle Open Office for the Enterprise

How does the enterprise software license work?

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The Oracle Open Office enterprise license uses the Right To Use (RTU) license. One RTU allows a user the right to install up to five copies of Oracle Open Office on systems they operate in any of the supported languages and on any of the supported platforms. A user cannot install Oracle Open Office on another user's systems, just their own.

Does the enterprise RTU license include any documentation and media?

No. The RTU license does not include any documentation or media. Documentation and media are available separately to ensure that you can order as many documentation sets and media as needed for your organization.

What is the difference between the standard edition—available through Web and traditional retail outlets, download, and original equipment manufacturers—and the enterprise edition?

The standard edition comes with installation support and is ideal for end users or small offices of less than five users. The standard edition includes the core features (the core applications Writer, Calc, Impress, Base, Draw, and Math), extensions, and e-mail/calendar functionality. The enterprise edition of Oracle Open Office 3 comes with all the functionality of the standard edition as well as migration tools and enterprise tools such as SharePoint and Alfresco connectors, a software development kit (SDK), a NetBeans plug-in, and a MySQL extension.

What service offerings are available for enterprise customers?

Oracle Premier Support is available for enterprise customers.

Oracle Open Office for Education

Oracle Open Office is no longer free of charge to education customers. This new policy applies to both K-12 and higher educational institutions.

If I'm an education customer and I want a free office suite, what are my options?

Users in educational institutions can use OpenOffice.org 3.0—it has the same functionality as Oracle Open Office 3—or may continue using StarOffice 8 software, which remains free of charge.

If education customers have been receiving StarOffice or StarSuite in their previous contracts, can they get Oracle Open Office 3 at no charge if the contract is still in effect?

Yes. Oracle will honor the contracts. If an education customer has a contract for free StarOffice or StarSuite, they can get Oracle Open Office for free.

If an education customer has a service contract for StarOffice or StarSuite, would that customer get Oracle Open Office at no charge?

Yes. As with any customer on a support contract, new versions (and updates) are given at no charge.

Frequently Asked Questions: Technical Topics

The next section reviews frequently asked technical questions including those around security, compatibility, database, language, as well as mail and calendar.

General Technical Questions

What does migration from StarOffice 9 to Oracle Open Office 3 look like?

The StarOffice 9 software configuration changes—along with the document templates, Autotext item, and the database elements—get migrated automatically. No manual migration is necessary.

Can Oracle Open Office create PDF files?

Yes. Oracle Open Office provides the functionality to create PDF files with just one click.

Will there be patches for Oracle Open Office?

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Yes. Patches will be available from Oracle Open Office Web page at oracle.com.

What is the benefit of the OpenDocument file format in Oracle Open Office?

The OpenDocument Format (ODF) is standardized by the ISO/IEC and OASIS standardization organizations and fully published in an open process. The main benefits of adopting ODF are increased interoperability, as a number of vendors and applications support it; continuity in accessing your information, as files created with ODF today can be read years from now, independent of the application used to access them; and lower storage costs resulting from smaller file sizes.

The XML file format specification is published at http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=office.

Security

Can Oracle Open Office 3 applications encrypt documents?

Yes. There is an encryption feature that encrypts the passwords and contents of an ODF document.

Does Oracle Open Office 3 have the ability to sign a document digitally?

Yes. It is possible with ODF; you can obtain a digital certificate from a commercial certification authority such as VeriSign or Web.de.

Can digitally signed Microsoft Office documents be imported?

Yes. The document can be imported, but the signature will not be verified. Oracle Open Office does not support the digital signatures from Microsoft Office.

Can Oracle Open Office 3 import password-protected Microsoft Office files?

Yes. Beginning with Office XP, Microsoft introduced two new password encryption algorithms: RC4 Base and Enhanced.

Although these files cannot be imported by Oracle Open Office, Microsoft Office XP and 2003 don't typically use this new algorithm by default. Therefore, the vast majority of files will be imported successfully.

Compatibility

Is it possible to open WordPerfect (*.wpd) documents in Oracle Open Office 3?

Yes. Oracle Open Office 3 includes import and export filters for WordPerfect.

Does Oracle Open Office 3 include a component similar to the Microsoft Office Equation Editor component to create equations and formulas in reports/presentations?

Yes. Oracle Open Office 3 features Math, an equivalent component to the Microsoft Office equation editor. It is capable of creating equations and formulas in reports/presentations.

Do Oracle Open Office and OpenOffice.org share the same code base? What is the development process?

Yes. Contributions and enhancements to this code base are committed through the worldwide OpenOffice.org developer community, as well as through Sun's development engineers. At regular intervals, Sun takes a snapshot of this code to produce Oracle Open Office. Additional third-party technologies are then added to Oracle Open Office to offer a complete solution that meets the requirements of professionals in today's enterprise environment. Community-provided contributions that match with Oracle's product strategy for future releases are incorporated and become an Oracle-supported product feature, such as the Flash Export feature for Impress and Draw.

How can I view the OpenDocument format?

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The ODF used by Oracle Open Office is a native XML format without any binary data. Subelements, such as pictures, are placed in the original file format in the XML file. The XML format specification is located at http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=office.

ODF files are saved as archive files (ZIP format), because they actually contain several subelements such as pictures, macros, and styles. To explore the real XML content, you need to unpack the document file (ending with .odt). You will then find the XML content in a file named content.xml.

Will Oracle Open Office 3 be compatible with Microsoft Office 2003 XML (WordML, SpreadsheetML) file formats?

Yes. Oracle Open Office 3 can read and write the Microsoft Office 2003 XML file format (WordML, SpreadsheetML).

Oracle Open Office 3 uses an extended OpenDocument file format. What does that mean?

The new features of Oracle Open Office 3 require updates in ODF. Office suites—and this implies StarOffice 8 software and OpenOffice.org 2.x—that do not support these new features might display these documents differently.

Database

How can I create a new database?

The Oracle Open Office 3 database client has powerful database forms, queries, and database table editors. It also includes wizards that simplify the creation of database tables, forms, queries, and reports. Besides the built-in relational database, HSQL, it also has the ability to operate with the following databases:

- MySQL
- JDBC database driver
- ODBC database driver
- dBase

- Text
- Spreadsheet
- Address book

Can data be imported and exported from spreadsheets to databases and vice versa? Which databases are compatible?

The Calc feature in Oracle Open Office 3 provides an import/export filter for dBase. The Oracle Open Office database client provides interfaces for MySQL, JDBC, ODBC, dBase, and address book databases.

How can I have read/write access to a Microsoft Access database?

Oracle Open Office 3 does not include a direct interface to an Access database. It uses the ADO database interface from Microsoft for the communication with Access. The easiest way to allow this capability is to install the Jet database engine from Microsoft.

Language

Does Oracle Open Office 3 support the Hong Kong Supplementary character set?

Yes. The Hong Kong Supplementary character set can be used with Oracle Open Office 3. However, the Chinese font MSung Light, included in Oracle Open Office 3, does not contain this character set. This means that your system needs to have a font installed that contains this additional character set.

Does Oracle Open Office 3 provide any support for languages requiring bidirectional support (for example, Hebrew and Arabic)?

Yes. Oracle Open Office 3 supports these input methods.

Macintosh OS X

Does Oracle Open Office 3 integrate into the Aqua environment of Macintosh OS X?

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Yes. It also provides access to the address book and other system tools.

Does Oracle Open Office 3 work with the PowerPC Macintosh and Macintosh OS versions earlier than X?

No. Oracle Open Office 3 supports only Macintosh OS X 10.4 and Intel-based systems.

Does the Macintosh OS X version support the full set of features?

Yes. The platform-independent architecture allows us to provide the full feature set throughout the different platforms.

Does Oracle Open Office 3 integrate with Macintosh OS X Spotlight?

Yes.

Does Oracle Open Office 3 for Macintosh OS X read and write Microsoft Office documents?

Yes. Oracle Open Office 3 fully supports the binary versions of Microsoft Office documents and can read the new OOXML-based Office 2007/2008 documents.

Personal Information Manager for Mail and Calendar

I have installed Oracle Open Office 3, but I can't find the new e-mail and calendar clients. Where are they?

The e-mail and calendar clients are available for free download from the Mozilla Thunderbird and Mozilla Lightning Web pages. See "Oracle Open Office Suite: Feature Overview" to get information, including where to download.

Note that this is a two-step installation process. First download and install Mozilla Thunderbird and then the Mozilla Lightning calendar add-in. Installation descriptions are available on the Mozilla Thunderbird and Mozilla Lightning download pages.

I am already using Mozilla Thunderbird. How do I install the calendar add-in?

Download the add-in from Mozilla.org to install it in your Mozilla Thunderbird application. The download page also provides detailed installation instructions.

Are calendar servers supported?

Yes. Two types of calendar servers are currently supported: the Sun Java Calendar Server and CalDAV enabled calendar servers. CalDAV is supported by a number of servers, including Apple's iCal Server.

Is Google Calendar supported?

Yes, with the help of the Google Calendar Provider.

How do I add public holidays to my calendar?

The Mozilla community provides a page with public holiday files from dozens of different countries.

How do I sync my calendar with my smartphone or PDA?

Many calendars that are accessible from the internet support the SyncML standard, which is also supported by most smartphones. Using SyncML also has the advantage that you can synchronize from anywhere, without needing a PC. There are also a number of solutions available for synchronizing directly with Mozilla Thunderbird.

I am using a Microsoft Exchange server. Can I replace Microsoft Outlook with Mozilla Thunderbird?

You can use Mozilla Thunderbird for e-mail but not for calendaring. The calendaring add-in does not support Microsoft Exchange servers. However, replacing Microsoft Outlook is in most cases unnecessary; the standard Microsoft Exchange User License (CAL) includes a Microsoft Outlook license valid for Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 and earlier.



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