

OpenOffice at the crossroads

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Created 21/06/2010 - 3:06pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 21st of June 2010 03:06:30 PM Filed under [OOo](#) [1]

OpenOffice.org is a flagship for free and open source software, released under free software licenses and achieving downloads in the hundreds of millions. OO.o is a success by most measurements, but there have long been murmurings of discontent among developers resulting in complaints of "non-responsiveness and lack of leadership" on the project. The argument is not that the project is a failure, but that OpenOffice.org could be so much more, given a less top down approach to project management and a looser rein on developers' ability to get involved.

The code of OpenOffice.org is released under free software licenses but the copyright for all internal and third party contributions are assigned to Oracle/Sun, and the OpenOffice development team within Oracle/Sun dictates the rate of progress.

The most vocal critic of the process has been Novell employee and long time GNOME and OO.o developer, Michael Meeks. Meeks argues that copyright assignment discourages external contributions, and that over zealous control of the project inhibits developer initiative.

Meeks has long contended that OpenOffice.org has failed to attract and keep individual and corporate developers due to "a half-hearted open-source strategy that is not truly 'Open'" and lacks transparency. This has inhibited the potential of OO.o to be "even greater" than it already is.

[The question why](#) [2]

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