

Better multimedia support for OpenOffice.org on Unix systems

By *srlinuxx*

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Playing back audio and video content on Unix system was and is still a matter of choices.

On the one hand, this is a good thing for the user. It offers a wide range of frameworks that best suit his/her needs. But on the other hand, this also brings a developer of a multi platform, general purpose Office productivity suite like OpenOffice.org (OOo) into the situation to make a choice. The choice needs to be made just to ensure that we don't have to provide a different backend for all multimedia frameworks that already exist. This just doesn't work for resource reasons. So, a framework needs to be chosen that meets the needs of a group of users as large as possible.

A few years ago, we created a flexible multimedia solution for OOo that offers the chance to extend the set of supported external frameworks in an easy way and with only little development effort.

Our first choice for a backend was the support for Sun's 'Java Media Framework' (JMF) at that time. A framework that is platform independent in general and that offers a good performance. Especially when using the - then platform dependent - performance extension, performance is on par with other frameworks.

Time has shown that JMF seems to be a bit outdated today and that support for appropriate decoders is still not as good as expected. Enabling the support for JMF within OOo was also a not so easy task for the user, since the appropriate jmf.jar archive had to be added by hand by the user to the OOo classpath.

So, we took a closer look at other frameworks and decided to create a completely new backend from scratch.

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