

OpenOffice 3.3 Beta: The Shape of Things to Come?

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Created 11/08/2010 - 10:08pm

Submitted by srlinuxx on Wednesday 11th of August 2010 10:08:26 PM Filed under [OOo](#) [1]

OpenOffice.org 3.3 will be the third release since Oracle acquired Sun Microsystems in January 2010. The first two, releases 3.2 and 3.2.1 were both relatively minor, and, from the just-released beta, 3.3 looks like more of the same.

The motto for the 3.3 release is "Fit and Trim." The phrase is vague, but suggests a concern with interface improvements. This impression is reinforced by the first item on the features list, which is "First Achievements of the Renaissance Project," an OpenOffice.org sub-project focused on improving the interface. Further confirmation, if any is needed, is provided by the fact that only a few new features are scheduled and the rest are enhancements of existing features.

The 3.3 release is available on the OpenOffice.org site in 323 and 64 bit .RPM and .DEB packages, as well as source tarballs. Regardless of your choice of formats, the release installs into a separate sub-directory of /opt, allowing it to co-exist with other OpenOffice.org releases. To start the release, click /opt/ooo-dev3/program/soffice. The build is relatively stable, and documents created in it can be opened in earlier versions of OpenOffice.org, but you should probably use 3.3 sparingly in case of problems.

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