



Open Office

Description

Open Office is a free downloadable suite of office products. The suite began as Star Office in the 1980's. It was acquired by Sun Microsystems. It is now a fully developed free office suite. Open office may be located at <http://www.openoffice.org/>. It can be a real cost saver for libraries.

Benefits

Free

Can be downloaded on many platforms – Windows, Linux, Mac

Programmers can customize the software

Can open materials from most other platforms

Doesn't impose perceived formatting

Text tool bar as opposed to Office 2007 ribbon

Drawbacks

Lacks grammar checker

Lacks some of the features and add-ons provided by Microsoft Office

Takes longer to load

Not compatible with .docx

Features

Writer—word processing program

Users have ranked it as being as good as Word. The program has most of the same features as Microsoft Word. Some unique features include a number of backgrounds, a PDF save feature, mathematical formulas and web formatting.

Calc—spreadsheet program

Users have ranked it as highly as Excel. It includes a range of functions and has charting options similar to Excel.

Impress—presentation program

Users rank PowerPoint as a better program. It provides basic presentation tools. Adding text boxes is difficult.

Base—Database program

Has a database creation wizard as well as a query and report wizard.

You need to be familiar with database construction to easily use this feature

Math—Equation programs

This unique application allows you to construct math equations that may be used in the word processors, the spreadsheet applications and the presentation program.

Draw—Vector graphic editor

This is a basic drawing program. Its closest equivalent is Microsoft Paint, which comes with Windows. It lacks a lot of bells and whistles.

Help – Each of the programs has built in help information. This is open source software so formal help is not provided.