

OpenOffice 3.1 ready to lick Microsoft's suite?

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Created *11/05/2009 - 9:40am*

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 11th of May 2009 09:40:03 AM Filed under [OOo](#) [1]

OpenOffice.org remains the most popular open source answer to Microsoft's ubiquitous Office suite, and in these recessionary times, the appeal of "free" software is stronger than ever.

Many individuals are already heeding the call of online suites from Google or Zoho, which offer most of the important features found in their desktop brethren. But business users remain rightfully suspicious of handing their software over to the clouds.

The answer for many is OpenOffice.org, which has - after several push-backs - just released version 3.1. And the good news is that OpenOffice 3.1 meets the most important criteria of any software upgrade: It's considerably snappier than its predecessor.

Ordinary tasks like opening new documents, inserting charts, filtering database records, and more were all quite a bit quicker than what we were used to under version 3.0.

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