

# OpenOffice.org 3.1: The next generation

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Created *11/05/2009 - 9:56pm*

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 11th of May 2009 09:56:56 PM Filed under [OOo](#) [1]

The latest version of the open-source office suite OpenOffice.org 3.1 has just arrived, and it's a good one. While some of the improvements are visible to the naked eye, I found that the most important changes were hidden under the hood.

What is it? OpenOffice.org 3.1 is a set of office productivity applications: Writer (word processor), Calc (spreadsheet), Impress (presentation manager) and Base (database manager). It's missing an Outlook substitute, but otherwise it's a complete replacement for Microsoft Office. The suite is available as a free download for Linux, Mac OS X, Solaris, and Windows; there are versions for most major languages.

What does it do? The first thing you'll notice about the new OpenOffice.org is that it just looks better. Thanks to its use of anti-aliasing, the program menus, letters and images it displays are sharper and clearer. (You can see examples at Sun's OpenOffice.org engineering blog.)

I tested the suite on a Windows XP system and one running MEPIS 8, a Debian-based Linux distribution. What really caught my attention after a few minutes of using the various OpenOffice.org apps was how much faster this version is than version 3.0.

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