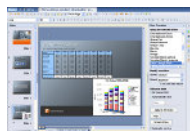


IBM launches Lotus Symphony 3 beta; Office alternatives pile up

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IBM on Thursday rolled out the beta of Lotus Symphony 3.0, its free office productivity suite built on the OpenOffice.org code base.

The company launched Lotus Symphony as a free alternative in 2007. From that beta, IBM took Symphony to a general release in 2008. Jeannette Barlow, Symphony's product manager, called the latest release of IBM's free office suite "the most significant investment and enhancement from that original delivery."

Lotus Symphony 3 Beta 2 introduces support for Visual Basic Macros, OLE Objects, and embedded audio/video as well as delivering business card and label templates commonly used. Users will also find enhanced support for and interoperability with Microsoft Office 2007 files and OpenOffice.org file formats.

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