Authorities publish specification for better support of OOXML in LibreOffice/OpenOffice.org

Mittwoch, den 14. Dezember 2011 um 12:16 Uhr

New "Office Interoperability" working group within OSB Alliance to coordinate implementation

Following a workshop in October 2011, the IT authorities in Germany and Switzerland have published a detailed specification regarding how they intend to improve the support available to OOXML in LibreOffice and OpenOffice.org. Interested Open Source service providers now have until January 31st 2012 to submit their proposals to the "Office Interoperability" working group of the Open Source Business Alliance. Additional financial backers for the implementation stages are also being sought.

In an unrivalled initiative, IT authorities from the cities of Munich, Freiburg im Breisgau and Jena, the Swiss canton of Waadt, the Swiss Federal Court and the Schweizer Informatikstrategie Bund (Swiss IT Federation) have together drawn up a specification of how they wish to improve the way that documents in Microsoft OOXML formats are displayed and processed in LibreOffice and OpenOffice.org. The representatives of the various bodies met during a workshop in Zurich on October 10th and 11th 2011 to launch the "Precise reproduction of OOXML documents in Open Source Office applications" project. A new working group, "Office Interoperability", has been formed within the Open Source Business Alliance to coordinate implementation activities. Other members of this working group can register with the OSB Alliance by December 19th 2011 in order to make the final choice of spokesperson and his or her deputy.

The planned improvements primarily embrace corrections and extensions to the OOXML filter of the current version of LibreOffice and OpenOffice, and should in turn be able to be implemented as Open Source software in all open-source Office products. Apache License v2.0 has been selected as the licence for this purpose. To provide improved OOXML support, the OSB Alliance working group has defined the five following work packages: formatting of frames and images in .docx, formatting of tables in .docx, formatting of lists in .docx, formatting of comments in .docx and .xlsx, embedding of fonts in OOXML and ODF. Test documents will be used to check that the specifications are met.

Open Source service providers who are willing to implement the specified requirements in one of their ordinary software development projects are now invited to come forward. Proposals based on the published call for tender should be submitted to the "Office Interoperability" working group of the OSB Alliance by January 31st 2012. Financing for the project will then be decided based on the proposals received.

Members of the OSB Alliance working group have committed themselves to contributing towards the development costs. To cover the implementation activities in full, additional financial backers are being sought to help finance the "Precise reproduction of OOXML documents in Open Source Office applications" project.

The specification, which is publicly available, can be found at: http://www.osb-alliance.com/index.php/de/themen-der-lisog/working-groups

Dr. Matthias Stürmer, the designated spokesperson of the "Office Interoperability" working group of the OSB Alliance, can be contacted to discuss the financing of the project and any other questions (matthias.stuermer@ch.ey.com ; Tel. +41 58 289 61 97).

More information about the project can be found here:

http://www.ch-open.ch/events/archiv/2011/libreofficeooo-workshop/
http://www.slideshare.net/nice/user-initiative-for-improving-ooxml-integration-in-libreofficeopenofficeorg