

# Introduction to OpenOffice.org 1.0

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## One-Minute Guide to OpenOffice.org

OpenOffice.org is your free ticket to ride the Microsoft Office train without actually going anywhere near the station. OpenOffice.org opens all the Microsoft Office formats—Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. And you can save any file in any of those formats, too. You can create a new Microsoft text document, spreadsheet, or set of slides without ever using Microsoft.

**Governments, small businesses, schools, or anyone at all** Any group or individual that wants to get work done without spending \$500 a pop can benefit enormously from simply switching to OpenOffice.org.

### Handles and goes beyond Microsoft Office

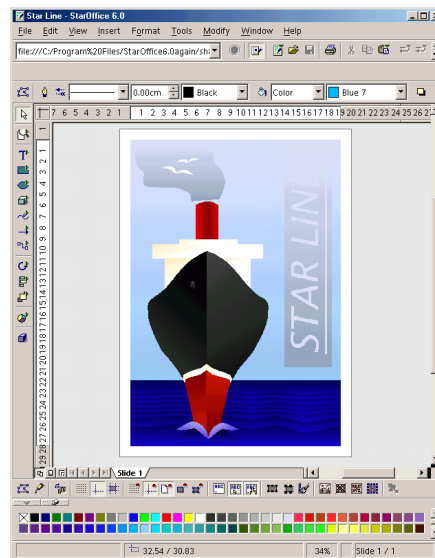
In addition, OpenOffice.org opens dozens of other formats. Lotus 1-2-3, GIFs and SVG and PNG graphics, and handles them beautifully. Not only do you get the ability to open and edit all the files Microsoft does, but you get a whole lot more.

### Going from Microsoft Office to

**OpenOffice.org** If you're an MS Office user, you'll still have to do some learning, but you'll have lots of "Oh, this is the same" moments.

**Professional-level graphics** Plus, with OpenOffice.org you've got a great drawing/image editing program, Draw, which goes way beyond the minor tools you get in Microsoft Office. Draw is an excellent program, simpler for some than Adobe products, but with lots of power and features. Export to EPS, SVG, plus over a dozen other graphics formats, including standards like GIF and JPG.

**Get started** Just hit Chapter 2, *Installation*, on page 19, or to learn more, read "Program Essentials" on page 6. To see what's changed, see "What's New" on page 12.



## Top Ten Reasons to Use OpenOffice.org

Here are the ten best reasons to switch to OpenOffice.org.

- 1 OpenOffice.org: Free. Microsoft Office: Rather more; up to \$550. Not being controlled by whatever Microsoft wants to do with pricing, distribution, licensing, and world domination in general: Priceless.
- 2 Government agencies publish forms in Word and Excel format. Universities require that students submit papers in Word format. Elementary schools publish their school

lunch menus in Word format, for heaven's sake. Who's going to pay \$550 to read a lunch menu? Just get OpenOffice.org. Even if you don't need most of the features, it means you can read everything in the closed Microsoft world without living in it.

- 3 Ever have problems with backward compatibility? You've got Office 97 files around that you can't open with the current version of MS Office. No such problem with OpenOffice.org or StarOffice; they're more compatible with MS Office than MS Office is.
- 4 This just in: It's official. Bill Gates has enough money. Do you? If you and your children in elementary school, your children at college, your small business, medium business, enterprise, educational institution, church, synagogue, library, government agency, law firm, sports league, volunteer organization, or Summons Service'n'Ice Cream Parlor have all the money you need, great. But if not, you need the money more than Bill does. Save it and go with OpenOffice.org instead of other office suites.
- 5 It's the best drawing program you've never used. It's got 3D stuff you've probably not come across in Word's drawing feature, Visio-like connector tools for architectural and electrical diagrams, cool auto-measuring lines that display the measurement of any object in the drawing (1-1 or to scale). And fancy text manipulation through FontWorks. Plus photo editing in all the applications. Go to *Guided Tour of Draw: Vector and Raster Graphics* on page 753.
- 6 No muss, no fuss data sources for mail merge (sending form letters to the 1204 people in your contacts database), etc. All you need is your customer list, in a text file or however you want it. The rest is incredibly slick and easy. We've included a tutorial to prove how easy it is; see page 873.
- 7 UNIX users, get excited. Applix and the other former front office tools lacked a certain something. Anyone who's not an enthusiastic LaTeX user is breathing a huge sigh of relief. Plus UNIX folks can now stay off of Windows 24/7, without a backup system for running PowerPoint presentations.
- 8 OpenOffice.org 1.0 files might be the smallest files you ever create. They're not in a binary format anymore (like pretty much all the other desktop applications). They're XML. So other applications can open and deal with that format. It also means that you can write and write, and import all sorts of graphics, and your file sizes will still be miniscule. We wrote some 6.0 Writer documents that approached 80 pages and were still under 100k. Impress, Draw, and Calc all make really small files too.
- 9 Whatever annoyances you had regarding StarOffice 5.2, forget it. This release rules. Really. (We spent about 1200 hours writing the StarOffice 5.2 Companion. This release is great.)
- 10 It's a great principle, and a great reality. Open standards. XML file format. Nobody has a stranglehold on anyone else. Nobody in Redmond controls anything you do. This is the way software should be. And is.

## Program Essentials

It's a full-featured office suite that you can use to create text documents and Web pages, spreadsheets, slide presentations, and drawings and images. Its three main distinguishing characteristics are that it handles (opens and creates) Microsoft Office formats, as well as nearly 200 other formats; its price is microscopic

compared to Microsoft Office; and it runs on Linux, Lindows, and Solaris as well as Microsoft Windows. And for anyone who's experienced Microsoft's licensing fees and regulations, OpenOffice.org is a breath of fresh air on that front too.

Currency	Amount	1 EUR =	...	= EUR
Euro	EUR	1,000.00 €		
Austrian Schilling	ATS	oS 13,760.30	oS 13.76	oS 10.00 0.73 €
Belgian Franc	BEF	40,339.90 FB	40.34 FB	10.00 FB 0.25 €
German Mark	DEM	1,955.83 DM	1.96 DM	1.00 DM 0.51 €
Spanish Peseta	ESP	Pts 166,386	Pts 166	Pts 100 0.60 €
Finnish Mark	FIM	5,945.73 mk	5.95 mk	1.00 mk 0.17 €
French Franc	FRF	6,559.57 F	6.56 F	1.00 F 0.15 €
Greek Drachmas	GRD	340,750.00 Δpx	340.75 Δpx	1,000.00 Δpx 2.93 €
Irish Pound	IEP	IR£787.56	IR£0.79	IR£1.00 1.27 €

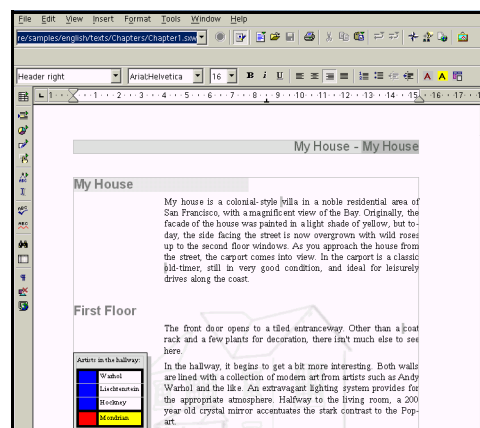
## Applications and Features

There are four main applications:

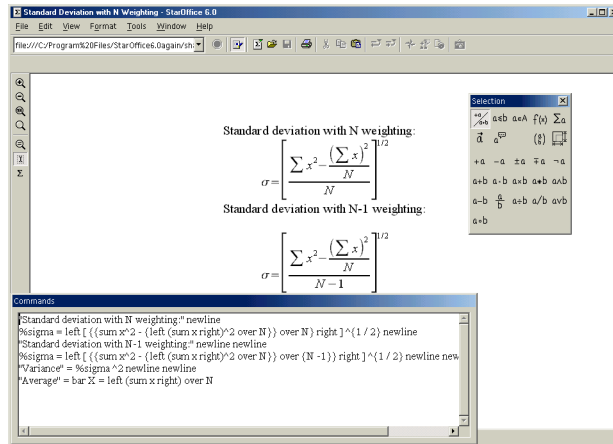
- Writer/Web for producing text documents and Web pages
- Calc for spreadsheets
- Impress for slide presentations
- Draw for professional-quality drawings (vector graphics) and image editing (raster graphics)

Built into some or all of the applications are the following features and add-ons:

- AutoPilots to guide you through creating new documents and importing data
- Charts and equations
- Data source connection capabilities for easy mail merges and access to your existing databases



- XML file formats for easy opening by other applications, plus extremely small file sizes
- Easy, high-quality conversion to and from Microsoft Office and other files
- HTML hotlinks from text or buttons
- Animation in presentations, plus animated GIFs
- Available in 23 languages, plus Asian language support



OpenOffice.org 1.0.1 is the current release at the time this book was written. OpenOffice.org is pretty much the same as StarOffice; OpenOffice.org 1.0 corresponds roughly to StarOffice 6.0. OpenOffice.org and StarOffice started from the same piece of code. Since then, Sun has been working on StarOffice, and an organization of open source programmers, has been working on OpenOffice.org. So there are some differences between them, but they're basically the same program.

## Additional Release With New Features

Mere hours before sending this book to print, build 643 was released. Key features include a macro recorder and native PDF. For more information, and to download build 643, see [http://www.openoffice.org/dev\\_docs/source/643/release\\_notes.html](http://www.openoffice.org/dev_docs/source/643/release_notes.html).

## Participating in Creating OpenOffice.org

When was the last time you sent a Microsoft Word feature request to Bill Gates and got him to put it in?

### How You Can Get Involved

OpenOffice.org is open source, which means anyone can develop and add features. If you want something in the software and you can code, then you can participate. You can also participate in the QA and documentation process, as well. Go to <http://www.openoffice.org/contributing.html> and <http://www.openoffice.org/about.html> to learn more.

## Requesting a Feature

Here's what happened when Rob Pegoraro from the Washington Post submitted a feature request, reprinted by permission.

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"I reported that a complaint I'd filed at the OpenOffice.org Web site about its word processor's inadequate word-count feature had gotten a real, live response....Several e-mails and a month later, a few programmers had cooked up a macro that allowed OpenOffice's word processor to count words in a selected block of text, not just the whole document."

...I was happy to add this tool to my copy of OpenOffice, which has since become my day-to-day word processor, much to my surprise. I know there are real differences between this and Microsoft Office...overall, I don't feel like I'm missing much by not using The Software That Everybody Else Runs."

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## Learning About Newly Developed Features

Sign up for the [allfeatures@openoffice.org](mailto:allfeatures@openoffice.org) mailing list, at [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org).

## Differences Between StarOffice and OpenOffice.org

StarOffice 6.0 is a commercial product aimed at organizations and consumers while OpenOffice.org 1.0 is aimed at users of free software, independent developers and the open source community.

There is an ongoing partnership between Sun and the Open Office community, to develop OpenOffice.org. Sun pays some of the programmers as well as for the [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org) site. Improvements to OpenOffice.org typically are incorporated into StarOffice where possible, and vice versa, where possible.

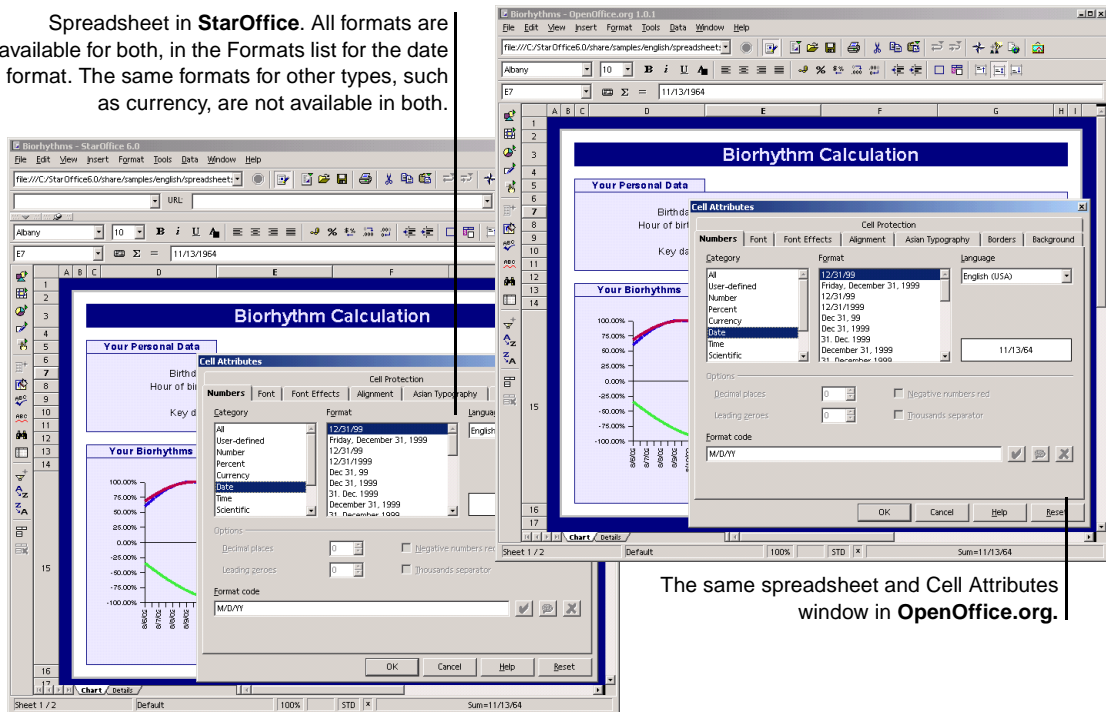
By and large, it's pretty much the same product. Figure 1-1 on page 9 shows the same document in StarOffice and in OpenOffice.org. The key difference is that while the features are generally the same, anything that's a third-party addon in StarOffice, such as the Adabas database or the WordPerfect filter, is missing or different in OpenOffice.org.

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**Note** – The StarOffice spellchecker is an addon feature, created by a third party. Since this feature couldn't be licensed under open source, the OpenOffice.org spellchecker is different. You might notice some differences if you use both programs.

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Spreadsheet in **StarOffice**. All formats are available for both, in the Formats list for the date format. The same formats for other types, such as currency, are not available in both.



The same spreadsheet and Cell Attributes window in **OpenOffice.org**.

**Figure 1-1** The same document in StarOffice and OpenOffice.org

The source code available at OpenOffice.org does not consist of all of the StarOffice code. Usually, the reason for this is that Sun pays to license third party code to include in StarOffice that which it does not have permission to make available in OpenOffice.org. Items in StarOffice but not in OpenOffice.org include:

- Certain fonts
- The database component (Adabas D)
- Some templates (but see [www.ooextras.org](http://www.ooextras.org) and <http://www.getopenoffice.org/templates.html/>)
- The clip art gallery is much smaller
- Some sorting functionality (Asian versions)
- Certain file filters, including WordPerfect (but they're working on it)

**WordPerfect** StarOffice 6 for Windows has WordPerfect filters; these are proprietary to a third party so could not be included in the open source product. Star Office 6.0 for UNIX does not have WordPerfect filters. If you're on WordPerfect and looking for a change right now, get StarOffice 6.0 for Windows.

You'll also see occasional differences in the layout of windows, such as where a certain checkbox option appears, but usually not differences in the options available in a window.

All development on platforms beyond Solaris, Linux, and Windows is being done by OpenOffice.org.

You can find out about features on [allfeatures@openoffice.org](mailto:allfeatures@openoffice.org); to sign up for this or other mailing lists, go to [http://www.openoffice.org/mail\\_list.html](http://www.openoffice.org/mail_list.html).

## OpenOffice.org on Other Platforms

Porting projects—switching OpenOffice.org over to work with other platforms—have been going on for a while. The one receiving the most attention at the time this book was written is the Mac OSX porting project. In May 2002 OpenOffice.org released a pre-alpha “Developer Build” for OpenOffice.org on Mac OSX., targeted at developers familiar with developing for the Mac OS X platform. At that time, the download was available at [http://porting.openoffice.org/mac/ooo-osx\\_downloads.html](http://porting.openoffice.org/mac/ooo-osx_downloads.html). It's also on the CD included with this book.

For information on other porting projects, go to <http://porting.openoffice.org/>

## OpenOffice.org Templates and Other Extras

All the templates, etc. in StarOffice don't come with OpenOffice.org. However, Travis Bauer's Web site, [www.ooextras.org](http://www.ooextras.org), has what might be called a plethora of templates and other “extras.” The OpenOffice.org team has also put together a separate set of templates. They're on the CD included with this book.

You can see all template links, including templates created by the authors, at [www.getopenoffice.org/templates.html](http://www.getopenoffice.org/templates.html)

## Reference Documentation: API and DTD

The OpenOffice.org API is available through [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org). Contact that site for information about joining an OpenOffice.org project.

<http://www.openoffice.org/about.html>

<http://www.openoffice.org/contributing.html>

To get the DTD, the definition of the document formats, go to

<http://xml.openoffice.org>. Go to the Documentation and Resources section, then follow the link to the DTD.

Developers should also go to <http://api.openoffice.org>, in particular:

<http://api.openoffice.org/source/browse/api/devmanual/>

## Switching From Microsoft Office

Are you a dissatisfied Microsoft Office user? Come on in, the software's fine.

**Ten good reasons** If you haven't, read *Top Ten Reasons to Use OpenOffice.org* on page 4.

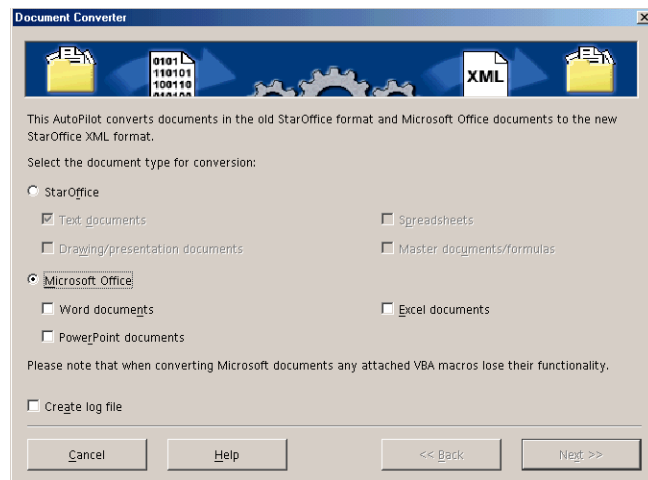
**Take it out for a spin** Dip your toe in the pool. Use the CD with this book to install OpenOffice.org and see how you like it. Note: OpenOffice.org has no WordPerfect import filter at this time, though they're working on it.

### Try converting files

Once you've dipped your toe in the pool, try a test import. We're pretty sure it'll go really well. Just open a Microsoft Office file by simply choosing File > Open and choosing the right format in the format dropdown list.

You can also do a mass import using the AutoPilot, shown at right. It's no-risk experimentation since it

leaves your Microsoft documents intact, just creating converted copies.



**Spend some time with the tutorials** Get to know OpenOffice.org.

- Chapter 5, *Setup and Tips*, on page 95
- *Guided Tour of Writer* on page 170
- *Guided Tour of Web* on page 444
- *Guided Tour of Calc* on page 500
- *Guided Tour of Impress* on page 636
- *Guided Tour of Draw: Vector and Raster Graphics* on page 753
- *Tutorial: Creating a Data Source* on page 873

## What's New

OpenOffice.org is fairly different from StarOffice 5.2. Key differences are that the unified desktop is gone, Schedule Mail and StarBase are gone, and the focus groups they did on usability were taking good notes. There's more detail on those and other changes in the following sections.

### Compatibility and Migration

StarOffice 5.2, StarOffice 6.0, and OpenOffice.org all play nicely together—you don't need to uninstall any of them. Just be sure to uninstall StarOffice 6.0 BETA before you install a later version of OpenOffice.org.

You can open 5.2 files in OpenOffice.org 1.0, plus save new files back to 5.2. There's an AutoPilot for mass import from 5.2.

Migration is pretty good; it doesn't do everything but does take care of customization and mail. See Chapter 3, *Migrating From StarOffice 5.2 to OpenOffice.org 1.0*, on page 43.

### Removed Applications and Features

The new version is leaner and trimmer than the somewhat overburdened 5.2 release. This section gives you a quick overview of what's out, and how to compensate for a few of the removals.

#### What's Gone or Really Different

They took out:

- The whole integrated desktop thing, including Explorer and Beamer and some associated features.
- FTP through Explorer.
- Image as a separate application, though most of the features are still present. Just click on the raster image once or twice in any of the other applications and the image editing toolbar and menus will appear.
- Mail, though you can export your mail and address book, and connect to an existing address book like Netscape or Outlook.
- Schedule, including Palm Pilot.
- Creating databases (though you can still connect to a variety of databases through ODBC, JDBC, etc.).
- Support for creating frames in Web.
- The Pack feature for presentations. It was removed because the files are so small they don't need packing. The Impress Player standalone program was also removed.

## Removal of Database Creation Ability, Except Adabas

Instead of creating and maintaining a proprietary StarOffice database format (.sdb), The current data source connection system works with common database connection standards like JDBC and databases like dBase.

You can still create database tables, queries and forms, though this varies a bit depending on the underlying method of data storage.

## New Application-Wide Features

Here's a somewhat detailed list of what's new. Not a lot is new that will affect how you use the specific features—it's more a case of structure and underpinnings that changed to make the whole experience better.

**XML file format** Remember creating Impress and Writer files that were over 2 MB before you even got going? That's over. You can create a Writer file that's a couple kilobytes per page. Formatting'll kick it up, but it's still really impressive. You'll have to really work hard to get even a 1 MB file.

**SVG and EPS** EPS rendering and reading is better, and you can export drawings to SVG, Scalable Vector Graphics, an XML-based format.

**Font stuff** There are new "metrically compatible" TrueType Microsoft Windows core fonts. Font substitution is better. You can set up font substitution with a new improved algorithm that makes the matching better, including across platforms.

**Asian font support** It's got Unicode support, Ruby text, and double-byte character support.

**Image editing features in all applications** Click on any GIF or other raster object and the editing toolbar, formerly only in Image, appears.

**Gallery** The Gallery of pictures and sounds from 5.2 was moved from the Explorer/Beamer area to Tools > Gallery. You can add to the existing themes, which you couldn't before, and make your own new themes of images and sounds.

**Password encryption** The XML-based file format also supports password encryption for text documents and spreadsheets. Passwords are stored as encrypted hash values. When saving files to the old binary format, passwords aren't encrypted. However, when you load a document from a former version, the password will be encrypted again.

**Standard address book support** You don't have your old 5.2 address book but you can connect to the one you use for mail, or other address books. The AutoPilot steps you through connecting to your address book.

**Improved HTML export** You can define the text encoding for the HTML export choosing from a variety of character sets, including Unicode, using the new Character Set dialog box in the HTML Compatibility dialog box.

**MathML equation support** Supports exports and imports of the W3 XML format.

**Enhanced cut and paste** The Paste button on the Function bar has a drop-down menu where you choose whether you want to paste in the text or object's original format or in a special format. They're the same options you get when you choose Edit > Paste Special.

**Better undo/redo** You can undo a lot farther back than before; set up the number of undo steps by choosing Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org > General.

## Writer and Web

**Better labels** You can modify existing label brands and types and save them as your own label format; includes the latest Avery label specifications.

**Section protection enhanced** You can assign different passwords to individual sections. In previous version, you could only use one password for all sections. Choose Insert > Section > Format > Section > Protect Record.

**Password protection for recording editing changes** The Records feature is typically used to make changes visible when two or more people collaborate on one document. Choose Edit > Changes > Protect Records.

**Improved line numbering** Restart the numbering of lines with every new page. Choose Tools > Line Numbering.

**Negative indents** You can set negative (left or right) indents to paragraphs and tables, and specify the first line indent independently from the left indent of a paragraph. Choose Format > Paragraph > Indents & Spacing.

For tables you can also set negative values for the alignment from left. This lets you align tables independently of the page setup margins.

**Hyphenation** Define the minimal number of characters for hyphenation by choosing Tools > Options > Language Settings > Writing Aids.

**Vertical text** Want to write something down the side of your page? You got it. There are now vertical versions of the three Draw text creation tools, available in Writer through the Show Drawing Tools menu.

## Calc

**ROMAN and ARABIC functions** Convert a value between 0 and 3999 to a Roman style, or convert a text that represents a Roman number into a value (between 0 and 3999).

**Additional new functions** The new functions are:

- **MIRR:** Calculate the modified internal rate of return for a series of cash flows with interest rates for investments and reinvestments.
- **CELL:** Provide information about content, formatting or location of a specific cell.

- **ISPMT:** Calculate the interest of a credit or investment with constant redemption rates.
- **Analysis Addin:** Provide new analysis functionality and improved Excel import.

**Import HTML tables into spreadsheets** Insert data from external sources (like linked areas or WebQueries). Choose Insert > External Data.

**Sort options** Specify language- and locale-dependent sort options. The default sort option depends on the system language setting and locale. Choose Data > Sort > Options.

**Matrix arrays** Improved complex scientific calculations. The number of elements that can be used in a matrix array, has been increased. In former versions this number was limited to 16384 elements per matrix, the new limit is 512k elements.

**New print options** *Suppress output of empty pages:* If this option is active, pages that don't contain cell contents or drawing objects are not printed. Cell attributes (like borders or background color) are an exception and don't count as content. *Print only selected sheets:* If this option is active, choosing All in the print dialog prints only selected sheets.

**Improved calculation time and use less memory** The maximum string length in formulas has been increased from 255 bytes to 64KB.

**Improved operations** Perform multiple operations with greater flexibility. This feature now extends to formulas that contain references to other formulas. A multiple operation is no longer restricted to act only on the formula selected in the dialog box. Instead, cell addresses that are indirectly referred to are replaced in every formula encountered during the calculation of a multiple operation.

**Improved percentage calculations** The percent sign operator is recognized in formulas and the result is displayed formatted as a percent value if appropriate. The percent sign operator divides the preceding subexpression by 100. This helps with Excel conversion.

**Improved recognition of English date formats** This is in addition to the default formats set by the system language, when importing a text file into Calc. This enables you to import formats such as 12-Mar-01 independent of the format used by system language. Choose File > Open > Text filter.

**Improved Import and export of 16-bit Unicode text files** Choose File > Open or File > Save As. and select the Text CSV format.

**Improved display of line breaks** Solve the problem of having different line breaks appear on print and on screen when you select the line break alignment option for cells. Using this option shows line breaks as they appear in print on-screen.

**Hyphenate text in cells** This option is when used with the Line Break wrap option.

## Database Access and Data Source Creation

You can't create new databases anymore, except with Adabas. You can create *data sources*, just hookups to a stored source of data, that connect to something as simple as an address book, a spreadsheet, or a text file. So yes, you can create new *data sources*, plus you can connect via JDBC, etc. to industry standard databases like Oracle. See Chapter 35, *Creating and Modifying Data Sources*, on page 871.

**Connect to data sources instead of making them** Instead of creating and maintaining a proprietary StarOffice database format (.sdb), OpenOffice.org can connect and administer a wide variety of data sources and provide data access to all components.

**Administration** You can also copy tables and queries between data sources, and copy a query as a table.

**Import your StarOffice 5.2 (or earlier) databases** The Database Import AutoPilot will store your existing StarOffice queries, forms, and reports in the new DataAccess.xml configuration file. Form documents will be stored as regular documents.

**Assign a database table to a combo or list box** Pick up data through a field.

**New form events** *Before reloading*: Called before a reload on the form is executed.

*Before unloading*: Called before the form is unloaded.

**Edit table indexes** This component has been completely rewritten. A new Index Design button on the Table Design toolbar gives you one-click access to Indexes dialog box.

**UTF-8 character suite support** This support does not extend to ADO data sources (which don't have a character set), and dBase data sources.

## Draw, Impress, and Image-Editing Features

**Rotate meta files** Used to be, you couldn't rotate metafiles, just bitmaps. Now you can.

**Maximum size for caching** Set an upper limit (in KB) for the total graphics cache size, and cache a single graphic object. Choose Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org > General.

**Vertical text** There are now vertical versions of the three Draw text creation tools, available in Writer as well through the Show Drawing Tools menu.

**Printing options for graphics and gradients** The new options include the following; to get to them, choose Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org > Print.

- Reduced Transparency: Treat all transparent objects as non-transparent.
- No transparency: Always reduces transparency completely.
- Reduce gradients: Decreases the number of gradient steps for easier printing.
- Reduce bitmaps: Prints transparent bitmaps at the maximum resolution (in dpi).

**EPS and SVG export** Create both formats by exporting from Draw.