Encourage *OpenOffice.org*

Open Source Software Help the nation save money

From the **ICT for All-Symposium 2011 on "Success Factors of Migration to OpenOffice.org in Organizations"** April 22, 2011, at Meeting Room, The Walailak University, Bangkok campus, 979/42-46 , SM Tower, Floor 19, Phahonyothin road, Phayathai district, Bangkok Metro, Kingdom of Thailand, organized by the **Information and Communication Technology for All Club (ICT for All Club—www.ictforall.org).** The goal of this focus group discussion is to bring together interested academics from all sides to share their knowledge and exchange their experiences of migrating to OpenOffice.org and to discuss topics related to the area of OpenOffice.org adoption. The key success factor of migrating to OpenOffice.org for organizations is that it is open source and free software. The migration to OpenOffice.org will enable the reduction of software piracy and expenditure on enterprise software, which directly provides good images of the organizations and increases their global competitiveness in the world.

Santi Suraratana, deputy director of research and technology development and acting director of the National Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA, a public organization) under the Ministry of Information & Communication Technology of Thailand, said **"Strategies for using Open Source Software in Thailand: To reduce the piracy rate in Software Business in Thailand (which still has a high piracy rate of 75% in 2009), to save our foreign money for making the Thai economy stronger, to help the Thai software industry to have more solutions for their customers, and they do not start from zero. That led to sustainable Open Source Software development in Thailand as well as abroad."**

According to Valve Corporation, 14.63% of Steam users have OpenOffice.org installed on their machines as of July 2010. A market-share analysis conducted by a web analytics service in 2010, based on over 200,000 internet users, showed a wide range of adoption in different countries: from 0.2% in China, 9% in the US and the UK to more than 20% in Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany. Countries in ASEAN using the software: Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore. Although Microsoft Office retained 72% of the general market in 2010, OpenOffice.org had secured 21.5% of the market[1]. The OpenOffice.org web site reported more than 98 million downloads as of September 2007. OpenOffice.org 3.x reached one hundred million downloads, just over a year since its release.[2]

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[1] Webmasterpro. 2010. OpenOffice tops 20% market share: 2010-02-02. [Online]. Available:
http://www.webmasterpro.de/portal/news/2010/02/05/international-openofficemarket-shares.html/. (Accessed date: June 21, 2010).

[2] OpenOffice.org clocks up one hundred million downloads, retrieved: 2009-11-28

In Thailand, the developer community has been working with OpenOffice.org since the source was released in 2000. At the same time, National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC), a government agency, started to work on the development and promotion of OSS in Thailand. OpenOffice.org was promoted long before it supported complex text languages (CTL) so it was necessary to modify the source code to add features such as character clustering and context-dependent word-breaking. In 2001, the two Thai-enabled OpenOffice.org derivatives, OfficeTLE and Pladao, drew much attention from the public. Many SMEs and some corporations tried to migrate to the two OpenOffice.org derivatives during that period but only a few succeeded due to the lack of good migration planning.

The first large-scale migration showed up in 2006. Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT),a 10,000-seat state enterprise, successfully migrated 70% of their PCs to OpenOffice.org with some help from NECTEC. That first success case led to another migration at S&P Syndicate, a public company. However, OpenOffice.org adoption was still slow until supporting businesses such as migration consultants and training providers started to appear. Since 2008, Thailand has achieved migration to OpenOffice.org in a few state enterprises, two banks, and one agro-industrial group. One observation is that, while OpenOffice.org tends to be popular among SMEs and government agencies in many countries, in Thailand only large enterprises with thousands of seats care about OpenOffice.org migration. Due to a 75% piracy ratio, Thai SMEs and government agencies are rarely interested in OpenOffice.org.[3]

The ICT for All Symposium 2011 reached a roadmap to develop Open Source Software (OSS) in Thailand, to be strong as well as aboard. The Government must seriously promote Open Source Software in all parts of the country, from individuals to enterprises, starting with an OSS office suite like OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice. It should also encourage students to study this software from childhood, so that children can grow in the context of OSS, which would make adoption of OSS easier in countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, etc.

Organizations (government and commercial) migrating to OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice must have a good migration plan, which must be regarded as the organization(s) change and is not only the mission of the IT division because it affects all users in organizations. For this reason, a significant key success factor of migrating to OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice is a good processing of communications and the participation of all sides in the organization(s).

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[3] Raruenrom, Samphan. 2010. Large scale OpenOffice.org Migrations in Thailand. [Online]. Available: http://www.ooocon.org/index.php/ooocon/2010/paper/view/295/. (Accessed date: October 11, 2010).

In addition, the symposium also has recommendations on OSS development in Thailand:

• To improve Thai national fonts (13 fonts) to effectively support OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice and the fonts should be free to use or develop, without permission from the copyright owner (SIPA and the Department of Intellectual Property of Thailand).

• To educate the trainer about effective teaching methods in using OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice. This differs from the training in the use of Microsoft Office, which most users have used previously.

• To facilitate all Enterprise Resource Planning Software (ERP licensed software) users or organizations to set up the company or organization to negotiate with the vendor(s) to unlock ERP software, it must import data from the OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice's file(s) format. The problem in current ERP software which has been locked cannot be associated with OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice (except in the newer version of ERP Software). If the problem can be solved, 100% of the organizations' computer users can use OpenOffice.org (without proprietary software).

• In promoting an OpenDocument Format and 100% migration to OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice in government agencies, the programme will save these agencies millions of Baht per year in their software budgets.

• Thailand should promote LibreOffice which is an extension of OpenOffice.org (by Document Foundation) after Oracle announced it is handing out the support and development of OpenOffice.org (OpenOffice.org will be handed to the community).

The most important success factor in the adoption of OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice is to get all computer users started. From a small beginning, it will lead to the overall success of the country.

Free download at www.openoffice.org or www.libreoffice.org

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