

# Why do I prefer OpenOffice, NeoOffice, or AbiWord?

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I use OpenOffice (for Windows and Linux), NeoOffice (on the Mac) and AbiWord (in the three OSs) more often than Microsoft Office, and I many people recently asked me why. My choice has to do with many reasons, that might or might not apply to you:

- They are open-source; not that I have compiled my own version or committed patches, but at least using them I somehow thank all the guys that spent hours getting this software right. And boy they did.
- They are free. You get an extraordinary value for nothing. Nada. Zero.
- OpenOffice and NeoOffice work extraordinary well. Version 2 of OpenOffice / NeoOffice is really stable and has a feature set similar to that of Microsoft Office 1997, which is far more than what I need anyway. So far I've had more crashes with Office 2003 and 2004 for Mac than with OpenOffice and NeoOffice, with a comparable usage. Many people who had used (and disliked) the previous versions should give it a try now; they might be surprised (as many friends of mine did recently!)
- It is cross-platform; I use Linux, Mac and Windows systems, sometimes simultaneously, and I need to read, write and share documents in the three platforms; OpenOffice, NeoOffice and AbiWord use the same document formats in the three platforms, and can open and read Microsoft Office documents as well.
- I tend to do documents with diagrams, and the drawing module of OpenOffice / NeoOffice is very handy and easy to use.
- I do not use many Excel files with "macros"; I know that this is a big problem for many people, since OpenOffice / NeoOffice does not do a good work of "translating" Excel to Calc macros; maybe it'll get fixed in the future, but it's not a problem for me.
- I prefer to use Keynote for creating my presentations, which does not happen that often anyway. OpenOffice Impress has a similar workflow to PowerPoint, and I prefer a tool like Keynote, much more targeted to create stunning, fun, eye-catching presentations, than the usual bullet-point stuff that PowerPoint tends to have you do. However, Impress opens the occasional PowerPoint files that I receive, and in case of a problem, I

prefer using a tool like SlideShare to see and share them.

- Integrated one-button PDF export. This is very handy, and you do not need an external plugin for that. And of course, all the programs in the OpenOffice / NeoOffice suite can export documents in a lot of different formats, even RTF, LaTeX, SWF, SVG, JPG, PNG or HTML!

Personally, I do not see a reason use Microsoft Office anymore; actually in my job we use OpenOffice / NeoOffice as well, as the standard office suite, and I have uninstalled any version of Office Mac in my own computer at home. I just don't need another Office suite; OpenOffice, NeoOffice and AbiWord are perfect for me in every sense.

Of course, the same reasoning applies to Gimpshop, Inkscape or VLC, for that matter!