



Open Document Format Delivery and Adoption Strategy

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1. Introduction

Following the government adoption of the Open Standards for document formats in July 2014, the Ministry of Justice requires an implementation strategy and plan to adopt the format across all platforms. This change of standards will affect document production, both manual and automatic, as well as converting some existing documents to conform.

The ODF adoption plan is part of the wider government vision of making services digital by default; utilising open standards and where possible, accessing data entirely through a web browser. Where possible it is intended that the creation of documents be avoided, moving information for reading, collaboration and transactions online using HTML5 as the open standard. Where this is not feasible, Open Document Formats will be used.

The purpose of this document is to identify all applications and services that produce or view office documents and identify what is required to ensure their ability to process the open document format.

2. Scope

This paper classifies the documents and applications that require migration, configuration or modification in order to process or edit Open Document Formats. All methods of access, including mobile platforms, laptops, desktops, virtual environments as well as automated services are to be included, ensuring that all areas of document creation are addressed.

This document identifies the tasks necessary to ascertain where documents are created and utilised within the Authority¹, what issues exist in providing holistic processing of ODF, what blockers may limit its adoption and what fixes or workarounds are required for adoption of ODF.

The decision and rationale behind the adoption of ODF is not covered within this paper. This decision has been made and the arguments for it can be found in the relative discussion and decision documentation.

3. Assumptions

It is assumed that:

- The MoJ will comply with HMG Standards.
- ODF will be used for live, editable documents produced by the Authority.
- HTML5 is the preferred format for closed documents. PDF/A-1 or PDF/A-2 will be used as an interim and where HTML5 is not possible.
- Where open formats cannot be used, a waiver will be required from the MoJ Technology Architecture Board to use proprietary formats.
- The MoJ will need to process documents from sources that do not comply with HMG standards.

4. Caveats

Not all applications are capable of handling ODF formats; where an application cannot be configured, modified or replaced, a workaround will be required, or the acceptance of an alternate format.

¹ For the purpose of this paper, the Authority refers to the Ministry of Justice and its component executive agencies. While Arm's Length Bodies are in the scope of the policy, their implementation of this strategy has not been discussed.

5. Format Definition

In accordance with the cross government Open Standards, documents fall into two main categories²: 'Editable' and 'Viewable'. 'Editable' documents are those which should be available for edit and the contents are not fixed. A document is considered 'Viewable' when its contents have been agreed, signed off or where they will not change without the creation of a subsequent document. This would typically be at completion or defined steps in a process.

Editable documents therefore are to be saved in an editable ODF format (.odt, .ods etc.); this will allow any authorised person within the Authority to edit the document as required, using any tools conforming to the Open Document Standards.

Viewable Documents should be published as HTML5 if possible, or as PDF/A-1 or A-2 if HTML is not practical or possible.

6. Identification of Usage

The areas of use have been split into where it is being used - 'Document Source' - and how it is being used - 'Document Toolset':

Document Source

- **Incoming:** Documents sent to the Authority from non-Authority sources, including the public.
- **Outgoing:** Documents that are required to be sent by the Authority to non-Authority parties, including the public.
- **Existing Internal:** Documents previously created by the Authority in proprietary formats (such as Microsoft's .doc, .xls etc. formats).
- **New Internal:** Documents that have not yet been created, but will only be used for internal Authority purposes.

Document Toolsets

- **Desktop Office Tools:** Tools for creating new content on desktop or laptop devices. Includes MS Word/Excel etc. and LibreOffice
- **Mobile Office Tools:** Various mobile tools across all mobile platforms and formats for creating new content.
- **Mobile Viewing Tools:** Tools installed on mobile devices to view content, such as mail attachments, but with no or minimal editing capability.
- **Automated Document Processing:** Tools and business applications that auto-generate documents or process content from within documents, for internal or external users.

Document Source

Incoming Documents

The source of the document will greatly determine the process needed to ensure it conforms to the Open Document Standards; documents being sent into the Authority will need to be either processed as-is, in whatever format they are sent in, or converted into the appropriate ODF.

While it is advantageous for the Authority to utilise ODF internally, it is not feasible to stipulate that all external bodies, suppliers and the public adhere to these requirements in all circumstances. Given the number of documents received, it is recommended that incoming documents remain in their original form, unless they are to be modified internally. Should this be the case, they should be converted as part of the editing processes.

² These category names have been suggested by Cabinet Office and will be used as they have been defined.

Where documents are submitted based on templates downloaded or otherwise provided by the MoJ, these templates will be converted and submission in ODF format made mandatory.

Outgoing Documents

Documents being sent out to external bodies or the public, should, where possible, utilise the PDF format, which is universally accepted by document readers of all platforms. However, where a live document is required, the Authority cannot necessarily insist on ODF and may need to conform to the format requested by the other party. The MoJ should explicitly request ODF in the first instance but support other formats by agreement.

The immediate policy change will be with documents and communications released by the department. MoJ Corporate Communications will be engaged immediately so that they can revise their MoJ wide policy in line with this strategy.

Existing Internal Documents

The Authority currently holds a significant number of documents, which would be impractical to convert to ODF in their entirety; as such it should fall to each department to identify those documents that by their nature are live and those that are archived with infrequent usage.

It is the consideration of this paper that documents without modification within the previous 12 months are to be deemed archived and as such will be left in their original format, unless overriding conditions stipulate that a conversion would be worthwhile. Documents created under this timeframe (excluding PDFs), should be converted to the relevant ODF or HTML5 format, according to their type.

New Internal Documents

Where a document is created, it should always be saved in the ODF format in line with the cross government open standards, if the tools creating it allow for such. This may not be possible, if the editing tool does not permit or provide the ability to do so.

Internal Templates

As part of the ODF usage, all internal templates should be converted to the open format, to enable the creation of new documents. As with the document conversion process, each department should assess all live internal templates and convert them as a matter of priority.

Document Toolset

Below is a list of the current toolsets used to create live documents (Historically, Adobe Writer is used internally for creating PDF files and is not available on the current mobile platform); some of these tools do not support ODF and will need to be addressed as part of the migration:

Desktop Office Tools

- Microsoft Office 2003: Requires Add-in for ODF support
- Microsoft Office 2007: Requires Add-in for ODF support
- Microsoft Office 2013: Supports ODF natively
- LibreOffice 4.2: Supports ODF natively

Mobile Office Tools

- **Android**
 - XenMobile Inbuilt Reader
 - Supports reading and annotation of: PDF, .doc, .xls
 - No support for ODF
 - Polaris Office Viewer. doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx

- No support for ODF
 - As the native tool does not support ODF, a 3rd party application is being investigated to provide the functionality to the mobile platform.
- **Apple**
 - XenMobile inbuilt Reader
 - Supports reading and annotation of: PDF, .doc, .xls
 - No support for ODF
 - As the native tool does not support ODF, a 3rd party application is being investigated to provide the functionality to the mobile platform.

Automated Document Creation

The Authority has myriad automated solutions that create office files. These solutions and applications exist across the authority, touching most departments, either as internal, team only, department, or MoJ-wide.

It is the responsibility of each department to locate their respective applications and assess the feasibility of changing them to produce ODF documents.