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Tuesday, 8 July, 2003

Arabeyes Arabises apps

by [Matthew Southwell](#)

Arabeyes is looking to create a fully functional, Arabised version of OpenOffice. The project, which will take approximately six months, will see the addition of the correct bi-directional algorithm, Arabic fonts, and a spellchecker to the Linux-based desktop application.

Although the current version of OpenOffice already supports some Arabic features, the local open source community believes it needs improving if it is to be adopted by end users around the region.

"OpenOffice is a good alternative to Microsoft. The problem is that IBM submitted patches to fix up the Arabic and while it kind of worked, it was only useable if you were testing. However, Sun rejected them [the changes] and as Sun leads this development it just didn't happen," explains Arabeyes spokesperson, Mohammed Elzubeir.

"We thought full Arabic support was important... so, we decided to move it to the top of our [Arabeyes'] agenda and make a fully useable Arabic application with proper bi-directional algorithms, shaping and so on," he continues.

Currently, the Linux user group (LUG) is reviewing OpenOffice and identifying what is needed on a technical level to make the desktop application fully functional in Arabic and robust enough for commercial deployment.

"We are still in review mode, as we only decided to take this on a couple of weeks ago. [However,] we'd like to see it happen in a matter of months, and I expect it will be useable within six months. By then we will have pretty decent Arab OpenOffice support," says Elzubeir.

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