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1. Overview

Why did you start a new codebase instead of using GWP or Maxwell?

Neither GWP nor Maxwell is cross-platform. We believe that for Open Source to reach the next level of success, desktop tools must be able to bridge the gap between Linux and Windows.

Why are you supporting Windows? Isn't Microsoft evil?

One of the strengths of our product is that it is cross-platform. The ability of AbiWord to run on both Linux and Windows is a huge advantage for our user base. We believe that the flexibility to open AbiWord documents on any OS is the critical component in a project of this kind.

Are you going to port AbiWord to my favorite platform?

AbiSource intends to work actively on the Windows and Linux versions of AbiWord. We are looking for outside help in getting ports to all other platforms.

Why are you doing this? If AbiWord is free, how will you make money?

It is our intention that AbiWord will always be Open Source. We will be selling technical support, packaged CDROMs, manuals, companion products, and other resources.

How can I participate in the development of AbiWord?

There are a variety of ways to contribute. Look in our [developer](#) area for more specific information.

2. AbiWord Framework

Why does AbiWord use XML as its native file format?

Because we like XML. Seriously, it seemed silly to invent yet another file format, when XML provides a very nice syntactic structure for our use. There are a variety of other options that didn't make as much sense for our purposes.

Why doesn't AbiWord use HTML, XSL, CSS, DSSSL, etc?

HTML is a web page language. It lacks the features necessary to represent many word processing constructs. Shoehorning those features into HTML would be possible, but not pretty.

CSS was used as the basis for our design. However, CSS2 has weak support for pagination, and its box model breaks down somewhat when designing algorithms for non-rectangular text flow.

At the time of this writing, XSL was a moving target. We may end up moving in that direction over time.

DSSSL is far too complicated for our needs. As for style sheets in general, AbiWord is a word processor, not a structured XML editor. Separation of semantic markup from formatting instructions was never a goal.

Under Linux, why are you using GTK+ instead of Qt?

Politics. Most of the truly nerdy open source people prefer GTK+, since Qt is not quite free enough for the deepest dogma. We want the enthusiasm of those super-geeks right from the beginning, so we are making the choice that will make them happy. Truth be told, we would like to support both. If you would like to help with a Qt port, please let us know.

Why didn't you use LessTif?

Here again, the answer is politics and scarce resources. We'd like a Motif/LessTif port, but we've only got so many coders right now. If you'd like to help, let us know. If not, I'm sure we'll get around to a LessTif port eventually.

Why don't you provide IDE project files for Microsoft Visual C++?

We prefer the convenience of maintaining just one set of Makefiles for both Linux and Win32. Using Makefiles also makes it somewhat easier to do automated builds.

How do I use the Visual C++ debugger without a project file?

Visual C++ can be used as a debugger. Select "Open Workspace" under the File menu. Select "Executable Files" under the dropdown box called "Files of type". Use the dialog box to locate the EXE you want to debug. After doing this, Visual C++ will allow you to debug that EXE, just as if it were built from a project.

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