Some more detail on the ODF support coming in Word 2007

2008-08-07

In my last petulant and possibly unreasonable post I took another picky look at the Article Authoring Add-in for Microsoft Office Word 2007. I wondered whether the forthcoming support for the Open Document Format in Office 2007 would include the new extension mechanism coming in ODF 1.2. Well, it won't:

> We're implementing ODF 1.1 in our initial release of ODF support. We chose this version because it is the most current approved ODF specification, and because it is the version of ODF that current release versions of most other applications such as OpenOffice also support. We will support ODF in Word, Excel and PowerPoint, using the file extensions .odt, .ods, and .odp. The exact release date for Office 2007 SP2 has not been announced yet, but we expect ODF support to be available sometime in the first half of 2009.
>
> http://blogs.msdn.com/dmahugh/archive/2008/08/05/guiding-principles-for-office-s-odf-implementation.aspx

This means that good interop between Word 2007 and OpenOffice.org via ODF 1.2 is not going to be with us for at least a couple of years – I suppose maybe it will get added to the open source ODF converter but that has never worked very well for me and I would expect momentum on that to drop once the new built-in support is released, so I'm not holding my breath.

Doug Mahugh on the Microsoft Office Interoperability sets out in the post quoted above how they're going about building the ODF support. Sounds good to me. I asked in the comments about document outlines and lists, which are an ongoing interop problem at the moment (via the .doc format). Doug says he'll follow up. I look forward to hearing more.