An ICE like ODF based web publishing system

From Kay Ramme at the GullFOSS blog at Sun comes this demo[1] of a wiki-like system using ODF as a document format and OpenOffice.org as an editor.

It's seems to be using WebDAV to allow users to edit documents on a server, then convert them to HTML automatically when they load the document in a browser.

Good idea to have the user change a document and automatically render it to HTML on request.

Same idea, in fact as the ICE system.[2]

Some differences with ICE:

- ICE doesn't use WebDAV because, well, it doesn't work with Windows reliably and it doesn't work with the Mac too well either.
- ICE doesn't rely on OpenOffice's native save as HTML feature which will produce awful results on all but the simplest text documents. A few of several reasons not to use it:
    - It gets list formatting badly wrong.
    - It exports photos at full resolution and puts height and width attributes on them to resize them meaning that you end up shipping megabytes when you should be shipping kilobytes.
    - It is not styles-based so you have no way of configuring it to do things like use pre formatted text in the right places.
- ICE is styles-driven which means it produces very clean HTML compared the rubbish that office suites spit out.
- ICE uses templates to help people apply styles.
- ICE can deal with Microsoft Word documents and has cleanup code to correct some of the interop issues with OpenOffice.org.
- ICE has a version-controlled back end courtesy of Subversion so it can be used by distributed teams.
- ICE can create IMS content packages for courseware.
- ICE has an Atom Publishing Protocol button which can send stuff to a blog – and do a much better job of formatting than the Sun Weblog Publisher addin too.
- ICE has a plugin architecture and a growing number of hooks for integrating other content types like chemistry data.
- ICE doesn't deal with spreadsheets, but we could add that pretty easily.
- ICE doesn't have a mechanism to create new pages by linking to a target that doesn't exist – if we add that we'll make it a bit smoother than what's shown in the demo.
- ICE can be used as a conversion service by other systems.

I could go on.

If you like the demo, check out some of ours[3] although I note that we don't have a really basic one that shows what Kay shows in hers. We'll get on to that.

1   http://blogs.sun.com/GullFOSS/entry/odf_www_an_odf_wiki

2   http://ice.usq.edu.au/

3   http://ice.usq.edu.au/presentations/demos/index.htm