

Cutting Costs Without Layoffs

To the Assessors
Roberto Bizzo
Sabina Kasslatter Mur
Christian Tommasini
Richard Theiner
Thomas Widmann

In the press conference held on the 20.06.2013, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, the Department of Health and the Consortium of Municipalities committed themselves to introducing free and open source software in the public administration.

On this foundation, the Province of Bolzano has decided to migrate all of its workplaces (about 7000) to LibreOffice within three years, thus ensuring that the exchange of documents between the public administration and citizens are in an open format ODF (Open Document Format). With the Resolution no. 1301 from the 02.09.2013, the Provincial Government is committed to reduce the costs of the public administration through the use of free software / open source with a projected savings of up to € 1,000,000 / year. This decision eliminates the need for anyone to buy expensive software in order to communicate with the public sector, where today the use of these tools have become indispensable.

This is the second phase that began in 2005 with the launch of a project called FUSS. This project has resulted in all Italian schools (about 2,500 workplaces) that have established the transference of the teaching concerning Free Software in classrooms and at home.

The benefits of these choices have much farther reaching implications than just cost savings for the administrations involved, and goes beyond the computer: access to information becomes a sustainable and democratic state for all, the behavioral model released by Free Software completely revolutionizes the right to access knowledge, it exceeds and improves upon the so-called digital divide.

In this forward thinking decision we are not alone: other administrations in Europe have successfully taken the same route, and are now reaping the benefits from their decisions. For a long time in France, the Working Group MIMO, which brings together the ministries of Agriculture, Culture and Communication, Defense, Education, Energy, Finance, Interior and Justice, with a total of 500,000 users, LibreOffice has been certified for the deployment on all desktops. At the same time, the Alliance OSB has joined the efforts of German and Swiss cities and communities as a sponsor for the development of the code base for LibreOffice . The Spanish region of Valencia has

recently completed the migration to LibreOffice for all of its 120,000 workplaces, schools and courts included. The city of Munich in southern Germany , the region of Copenhagen, Umbria Region, the provinces of Cremona and Macerata, Italy and many others are convinced that this is the best way forward.

Public administrations are called upon to invest public money in software products that are made available to the community at no additional cost. The development of the LibreOffice suite, firmly coordinated by the non-profit organization called the "The Document Foundation", is a good example of how the synergy between public resources, private and voluntary organizations have led to the creation of a quality product that originated in Europe and that is now fully operational.

Now government agencies and businesses in the province of Bolzano have the opportunity to become an active part of a center for innovative development at a European level or even become the core driving force.

We therefore call on our elected representatives to actively engage in all areas in the description provided above. This consists of the following: extending the use of free software to schools in German and Ladin, publishing all the documents addressed to businesses and citizens in an open format and actively supporting the improvement and development of the LibreOffice suite.

We hereby expect the definition of a plan / roadmap, that contains long term goals that are clear and transparent, shared among the different departments and that is verifiable in its progress by the citizens.

As the LUGBZ we would like to show our support by making ourselves available during the migration process. We strongly believe that the Province of Bolzano can make the transition successfully and will give the Province all the help that we possibly can.

Shaun Schutte
Präsident der LUGBZ

Contact board@lists.lugbz.org