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Bill Gates: Office Is a Platform too, Not Just Windows

New tools and resources are available for Office development



Office
Microsoft

In an effort to underline the relevance of the Office System as a platform for developers and not just an application, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates introduced during his keynote address at the Office System Developers Conference 2008, in San Jose, new software, services and tools designed to make Office an equivalent of Windows. At least from a development platform perspective. But unlike Windows, Gates emphasized the opportunity for developers to leverage Office, in order to build business applications. And to prove his point, the Microsoft Chairman also showcased a number of Microsoft Office Business Applications (OBAs) from various producers, including FedEx and Dell. "I wanted to talk a little bit about some of the development platform directions, and why I see Office as continuing to innovate at a very rapid pace. The opportunity to make workers more productive is really a phenomenal opportunity, and I believe we're just at the beginning of that, and a key element is the broad set of software we use to empower those workers. And there's no more important piece of software for that than Office, and making this a platform is very important for us. In fact, if you look at the success of our software or any software, this emphasis on it being a platform, reaching out to developers, having great tools has been the key to its success," Gates stated. Gates brought to the attention of the public no less than seven developer resources and tools tailored to the Office System. OBA Sample Application Kit enabled the creation of solutions connected with Office, while the Financial Services Reference Application Pack brings to the table over 75 OBA components that use Open XML and other Office system technologies for products aimed at the financial sector. Via the OBA Composition Toolkit developers can put together Office and SharePoint Server 2007 mash-ups, and the BizTalk Adapter Pack and BizTalk Adapter Pack: Office Developer Program offer new opportunities in terms of line-of-business systems connectivity. The Visual Studio extensions for Windows SharePoint Services 3.0, v1.1 simplify the development process for SharePoint Server 2007, while the Metro for Unified Communications permits leveraging Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 for the integration of unified communications capabilities into third-party products. "Almost half of ISVs and IT developers worldwide are using the Microsoft Office system to build business applications because Microsoft Office is such an effective way to unlock business data stored in back-end systems," Gates added. "With applications and services built on the Microsoft Office system, developers can make it easier for employees to connect to information and business processes."