

By: [Marino Cirio](#) Technology News Editor

[Microsoft Licenses the Office 2007 Interface for Free](#)

For the Partner Community

Want an Office 2007 look and feel visual interface for your application? No problem. Microsoft enables software developers and ISVs to use the real thing free of charge. The only limitation is related to the development of products that would directly compete with the Microsoft Office 2007 System. In anticipation of the Office 2007 launching, Microsoft has introduced a royalty-free licensing program enabling developers to integrate the Office 2007 GUI into their applications. "The new program will license elements of the new UI to software developers and component vendors on a royalty-free basis," reveals Microsoft. "Microsoft is licensing its intellectual property rights in the UI (which cover both design and functionality) and offering a comprehensive Design Guidelines document that is a roadmap for developers implementing the UI. Licensees can sign up on the Web and register their products with us on the Web site as well. We are not licensing any code at this time. As I mentioned before, the program is royalty free," said Takeshi Numoto, Microsoft general manager, Office Client. The simplicity, ease of use and end-user productivity that Microsoft has produced with the new UI following what the Redmond Company refers to as massive R&D investment will be transitioned to developers via a royalty-free license. "The license is available for applications on any platform, except for applications that compete directly with the five Office applications that currently have the new UI (Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Access). We wanted to make the IP available broadly to partners because it has benefits to Microsoft and the Office Ecosystem. At the same time, we wanted to preserve the uniqueness of the Office UI for the core Office productivity components," added Numoto.