

By: [Marco Caviglia](#), Technology News Editor

[Microsoft Looks to Open Source for Inspiration on Interoperability](#)

For Open XML

Microsoft turns to the open source world for inspiration on interoperability and multi-platform compatibility. At least as far as its Open XML file format is concerned. The Redmond company's Italian branch has teamed up with Sourcesense, a European open source systems integrator in order to deliver additional support for the Office Open XML file format (ECMA 376 standard), the default file format for the Office 2007 System. This support would be provided through a developer community built around the standard and with the development of open source libraries for Open XML. It is not a coincidence that by 29 March, 2008, the ISO/IEC's 87 National Body members will have to deliver all official modifications to their position on Open XML. Chris Capossela, Senior Vice President, Microsoft Office has already come out with an [open letter](#) reiterating Microsoft's focus on interoperability with Open XML, or Ecma 376 which is in the process of being ratified as an ISO/IEC standard. Together with Sourcesense, Microsoft will provide an open source Java library set up for the management of Office binary formats. "Interoperability and multi-platform compatibility are the requirements that customers, partners and developers are demanding on a daily basis from the main players of the Information Technology market. Thanks to the collaboration with Sourcesense, we further confirm our commitment to develop interoperability standard solutions for multi-platform environments. We are especially proud that such a community is starting in our country as it will help developers to create applications in an open and standard document format, such as Office Open XML," Pierpaolo Boccadamo, Platform Strategy Director, Microsoft Italy. The Open XML Java library is essentially a new version of Apache POI, which will be at the heart of interoperability scenarios. According to Microsoft, the Java libraries will be made available under the Apache license 2.0. At the bottom of this article you will be able to see Microsoft Chairman, Bill Gates arguing the necessity for yet another ISO standard, and while some agree and support Microsoft, others simply fail to see the real consumer benefit of adding an extra item to a list which already contains PDF/A, HTML, ODF, CDF and UOF. "Our successful track record in connecting enterprise IT with both open source computing environments and collaborative development communities is proving to be an essential step to the interoperability and support of most popular technologies. As Apache POI libraries are used in numerous Open Source projects and enterprise applications that deal with Office documents, support for Office Open XML will meet the future needs for application interoperability. Microsoft's participation with the Apache community reinforces its commitment to bridging open standards to Open Source," added Gianugo Rabellino, CEO of Sourcesense.