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[Microsoft goes XML with Office 12](#)

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The compatibility problems the .doc, .xls or .ppt-type documents used to have when accessed by other applications or Office type suites will become history once the new Office version is released. Microsoft declared that, for Office 12, it is preparing a new version of the file saving system, called Microsoft Open XML Format. Practically, when the user gives the Save As command in Word, Excel or PowerPoint, the program will offer as standard option the .XML format save. In this way, the files' size will be reduced up to 75%, as estimated by Microsoft, and the documents will be much easier to be read, even by older Office version, which will be updated free-of-charge in order to be able to handle Microsoft Open XML Format. The possibility to save as .XML is already implemented in the current Word and Excel versions, but the advantage of the new Microsoft Open XML Format is that Microsoft intends to present it in the form of royalty-free downloads. Other details regarding this subject are to be given next week, at the TechEd 2005 conference. Microsoft considers that the new format will also allow the implementation of more advanced security options, and an easier recovery of files that have been corrupted or destroyed. Office 12 is scheduled to be released for the second half of 2006 and a beta version will be available this autumn. Office 12 was initially designed to run only on Windows Longhorn, but Microsoft has reconsidered the project such that the future suite will also be compatible with Windows XP.