

TDF Team Meeting 2023

27-30 June 2023, Munich



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Introduction

The TDF team meeting was held as scheduled on 27-30 June 2023 in Munich. Most of the team members were present in the team meeting in-person, while those who couldn't attend were available via online connection.

All the team members were participating (alphabetically by first name):

- Christian Lohmaier – Release Engineer
- Florian Effenberger – Executive Director
- Guilhem Moulin – Infrastructure & Services
- Heiko Tietze – UX Architect
- Hossein Nourikhah – Developer Community Architect
- Ilmari Laukahangas – Development Marketing
- Italo Vignoli – Marketing & PR
- Juan José González – Web Technology Engineer
- Khaled Hosny – Developer, prioritizing complex text-layout tasks
- Michael Weghorn – Developer, prioritizing accessibility tasks
- Mike Saunders – Marketing and Community Coordinator
- Olivier Hallot – Documentation Coordinator
- Sophie Gautier – Foundation Coordinator
- Stephan – Administrative Assistant
- Stéphane Guillou – QA Analyst
- Xisco Fauli – QA Engineer

In the next sections, topics that were discussed during the four day meeting are presented. In each section, the detailed discussions and the action items that will be followed up by the team members are provided.

Day 1: Opening/Welcome session

1.1 Future of LibreOffice / LibreOffice for Android

The first session in the morning was dedicated to the technical discussions on the future of LibreOffice partially focusing on Android port.

The main discussed issue was that in the current form, LibreOffice is only a desktop-only application, but the community wants more than that: cloud (web/online), mobile, etc. are some of the examples. Although the current situation may not be all-technical, it has its own technical aspects, that were discussed during the session.

The discussion is not completely new, but it is important. Soon after LibreOffice was forked from OpenOffice.org, there was a discussion on having an Android application. Now, 13 years later, it is still not available. Although the notion of office productivity suite seems to remain strong and is still valid, in 10 years there may be a totally different approach to producing documents. Thus, it is important to care about the evolution of computing environments, and adapt accordingly.

The main suggestion was to use paths that can lead to have LibreOffice on different platforms with less effort compared to re-implementation of the application. As an example, the LibreOffice port to web-assembly using Qt was discussed, as this might be an option to do the porting to Android. The output might not be optimal for each and every Android device, but it will be at least usable on tablets, and there are tricks to make it more usable on smaller devices.

There are other paths toward having LibreOffice on Android, including port of x11 and other required libraries to Android. This approach is tested with OpenOffice.org, and is shown to be effective. In the past, there were severe limitation on Android and iOS, but today with much more powerful phones and development tools, it is much easier to develop applications for mobile platforms.

There were also discussions on the Android viewer, and its experimental editing capabilities. The application is available via F-Droid and it was updated recently. It was available via Google Play in the past, but TDF eventually removed it from the store because the users were unhappy due to various problems at the time. One possible option among others is to continue support for the development of the application instead of investing and then forgetting it.

The need to have a rock-solid core product is obvious, and having ecosystem companies develop applications based on that and making it easier for the people to create extensions let the community grow. On the other hand, LibreOffice has to be present on different platforms to remain relevant. The general understanding was that on whatever technological base, LibreOffice needs to have something called LibreOffice on mobile and online to be relevant in the next decade. The fact that the Android app was started as soon as the fork from OpenOffice.org happened, shows the importance of this port.

To address the concerns of the ecosystem companies, this is not direct competition with the companies. The web-assembly port was done by the ecosystem companies, so there is a chance that doing the port to Android can also be done by the ecosystem companies in the form of a tender. In

the end, the board will decide upon the possible tender, hoping that with the decision of the board, this becomes a reality.

There were some action items, including mentioning the availability of Android Viewer on F-Droid on our website. This is now accomplished.

There were further discussions about future of LibreOffice, and the idea to build on our strengths. For example, the large number of languages, and also the value of privacy. Many people are tired of things that collect data, want subscriptions all the time, and annoying users. Providing packages that address these problems including for self-hosting an online version can bring more people, organizations and governments into the community and ecosystem. It would be good to support tenders not just for development, but for expanding language support and many other things.

1.2 Website session

1.2.1 Speed up deploying website changes

The first thing that was discussed in the afternoon was the deployment process for TDF websites. The question was around working on extensions site, as it is updated regularly: “How to speed up the deployment for the changes?”

The review process for code via Gerrit is somehow different with the web development workflow, and this was taken into account. The suggestion provided by the team members was to push it to production after enough testing, and then ask for opinions.

1.2.2 Websites that need work

As TDF infrastructure provides many different websites and applications, the websites that need work were discussed in this session. TDF Redmine is used to track problems and features for these websites.

During the session, Bugzilla and the refund site were among the websites that were discussed. Getting e-mails when there are submissions from the refund website was one of the feature requests. For Bugzilla, the team discussed ideas about how to use Bugzilla as a platform to allocate some of the budget money for community tickets. For example, users on Bugzilla could vote and mark tickets with some sort of “currency”.

There was a discussion regarding the updater and its relation to the LibreOffice website. One idea was to forward the users to the LibreOffice website in order to advertise donations. It will be possible to do that inline with a dialog shown after a new version is announced, telling what is new and how to donate to TDF.

1.2.3 New website and future improvements

Steps needed to get the new website online were discussed during the session. The new website is currently online for testing purpose on newdesign2.libreoffice.org. The idea among the team was the need to get the new website in place before brainstorming changes. Currently, the new site is making progress, and the donate and download pages can be integrated with CiviCRM. Now the team is working on newer screenshots and illustrations.

During this session, some technical details about the OS detection to provide relevant download links and the requirements of that in the new static web site were discussed. Also, there was an exchange of views on localization workflow, based on different approaches, either with Weblate, or without it. In the end, it's all about having translation files in the correct place, so that the website can be shown in different languages.

There was a question about language communities to know if they can create new pages, specific for them, and the answer was positive. That flexibility is something that some active language communities have requested.

In the end, there were discussions about how the donation page should be designed, and also pages for specific purposes. The idea was to have landing pages for specific purposes while having an eye on how marketing works, and how many users are attracted to these pages from different media platforms. The team was in agreement that such pages are needed, but first, the new website should be set up.

There were two general requests for the TDF websites: dark mode and mobile friendly pages. Already, there has been a lot of improvements for making TDF web sites mobile friendly, but the team will keep an eye on TDF sites that do not look good on mobile right now. It is possible to check Matomo to see what sites people are using more on mobile. Dark mode is something attractive for the users, and currently some users use “dark reader”, popular extension to have web pages in dark. But, it would be good to have native dark mode support in TDF websites using appropriate CSS code.

1.2.4 Moving more lists to Discourse Community

It was proposed to move more lists like projects@, website@ to Community. Discourse can bring more visibility, and also it is easier. It is possible to attach documents and pictures. It can be also good for the developers' mailing lists, as Discourse is good at showing code snippets and debug logs, with syntax highlighting and line numbers.

There are limitations like the fact that cross-posting is not possible, but one can use tags instead.

Decision was to move “LibreLadies” and “Projects” to give them more visibility. Now, the infra team is running the scripts to do the migration.

1.2.4 Updating Bugzilla

The update to the upcoming Bugzilla release was also discussed. The new update is sponsored by TDF, and hopefully the TDF's instance of Bugzilla will get the update soon.

There are many new features in the upcoming Bugzilla release, and at last the TDF's instance will get these features that were only available in the development version, and not in a stable build. TDF's instance of Bugzilla is considered a big installation, and some changes in terms of local patches are needed for its deployment.

It will hopefully be done by mid August 2023, but as some time is required to apply the local patches, the availability will be probably by the end of the year 2023.

Day 2: Marketing / Documentation

2.1 Marketing brainstorming session

2.1.1 Communicating security

The question to answer in this session was: “how and what to communicate in term of security?” It is important to know that TDF should talk about security more often, especially with the Cyber Resilience Act. The idea was that LibreOffice actually has a good security process in place, but it should be communicated it effectively.

Evolution of security problems (apps affected, causes) should be discussed publicly, and TDF needs to show how the LibreOffice development process works: the code goes through many tools/checks/analysis/fuzzing before it reaches to the users.

2.1.2 LibreOffice Technology

The discussion was around the idea and the focusing marketing messages on the LibreOffice technology. TDF (via LibreOffice technology) provides the technological basis that empowers other companies to provide other product and services. So, in the end, the ecosystem companies also benefit from these efforts.

The LibreOffice brand is strong, and the new “LibreOffice Technology” which means having a single unified software platform across different products on desktop, mobile and the cloud can be beneficial for the users.

There is a specific page for “LibreOffice Technology” on the LibreOffice website, but it is needed to promote the message more by focusing the marketing messages on this notion. The LibreOffice technology is combined with the idea of Open Document Format (ODF), the true document standard. LibreOffice technology logo was also discussed during this session.

2.1.3 LibreOffice on Windows and macOS app stores

In this session, the discussion was about LibreOffice on app stores for Windows and macOS. The status and number of downloads for each platform was discussed, and the possible things that can be done to bring more visibility of it across different languages and different regions were part of the discussion.

In Microsoft App Store, the usage rate is about 80% of the installs, and stable weekly purchases. In Apple App Store, there are also steady purchase numbers. The crash rate is in the lower 50% percentile, and the retention rate (for the productivity category) is in the higher 50% percentile.

The action items was to find things specific to Windows/Microsoft and Apple/iOS in release notes so that it can be used in the app stores.

Also, another action item was to use localized product descriptions; video clips like introduction and release notes, and screenshots. Also, it is needed to clarify and describe explicitly what the lack of Java support on macOS exactly mean, to avoid creating misunderstanding for the users.

In the end, more presence on Mastodon was planned.

2.2 Community activities plans

In this session, the team had discussions on the regional meetings and the need to evaluate the benefits of such meetings right now, and provide plans for improvement.

The goal is to involve public, private, universities, community at large. There are Benefits for the universities, like improving the public image, and classes on LO-related topics that benefit students like learning git, development, QA, etc.

On the other hand, there are problems like lack of funding, being time consuming to involve private and public sector, so there is a risk of failure. There is a need to have ideas outside of budget dedicated to development.

One idea was to leverage universities, user groups and institutions that the staff has links to. It is also possible to link with other specialties (research, LaTeX, Linux, etc.).

The road shows were discussed: The question was: would it be practical and optimal to send someone skilled in LO on the road to offer workshops, presentations in different cities? Also, should it be just a lecture, or more? Or involve various community members around the world to provide such training in succession in their local area? Live meetings was another suggestion.

For the learning and presentation materials needed, there is a large repository of resources on Nextcloud, ready to be reused, but the presentations have to be adapted to the local community.

A suggestion was to provide easily accessible, readily-translatable, 1-day workshop material, so people involved in a potential roadshow don't have to look through a lot of material and spend time on creating their own with a lot of effort.

The action item was to put together a document explaining the idea, who to involve (community, volunteers, certified trainers, staff, etc.), potential costs, marketing plan. This document can help in further efforts.

The discussions were continued on the next day.

Day3: Welcome Michael!

3.1 Introduction for Michael Weghorn

In the first part of the session, Michael Weghorn, the new in-house TDF developer was introduced to the team. He will focus on the accessibility issues in LibreOffice.

3.2 Community activities plan

The idea was to use live meetings (Jitsi) to leverage LibreOffice awareness. It is useful for bonding and building friendships, which helps in then organizing events and presentations. This can be possibly a cultural thing for people, community might be more likely to enjoy meeting and discussing. This was shown to be the case in south America, Asia and elsewhere.

But, these efforts require leaders, liaison individuals to get those going. Building these lasting relationships needs continued effort, regularly communicating, acknowledging and rewarding contributions. But, on the other hand, some meetups can be a waste of time, especially when the same people who are part of the core are the main ones joining. It would be possible to notice how active community members are, then invite them to formally become a member. Many might not accept, but some will.

One action item was to organize another Reddit "Ask me Anything" section to attract attention of people, with answers from team, Board, or community members.

3.3 Documentation brainstorming session

Documentation was the focus of this session. There are four to five major documentation jobs/areas, with distinct roles and approaches:

- LibreOffice Guides
- LibreOffice Help
- TDF Wiki
- Development related issues, specially api.libreoffice.org
- Other relevant documentation including tutorials, FAQs, etc.

Guides: The idea is that there is a lot of value in these guides, but various form factors are needed. Currently, they are available as PDF, ODF, HTML and print. A script reshuffles contents to make it suitable for a web browser. Issue is it currently needs a fair amount of manual work. An action item is to sync documentation team and the web developer on bookshelf website, and the features that are needed.

Help: There was a discussion on changing XML to Markdown. This is potentially more attractive to newcomers. Pure HTML is another option. One suggestion was using ODT with filter to HTML.

Currently, XML editor helps, which is available via this address on the new LibreOffice website: <https://newdesign.libreoffice.org/xhpeditor/>

Some ideas were brought up to improve our Help website:

- Improve search results by giving more weight to the title, and matching whole string more closely
- Possibility of adding links between help pages and bookshelf
- There is overlap between the right-side menu and the books

TDF Wiki: Recently there were a lot of changes in the TDF Wiki, regarding making pages translatable, and other improvements.

Development related: Currently API documentation is very shallow in terms of examples. The documentation team wants to have better layout. For the end user, it is currently not optimal. It was suggested to add code snippets, but in the end it did not happen. This is a barrier to adoption of the scripting.

Other related documentation (tutorials, FAQs, etc.): Diversity of source brings up the challenge of SEO, so users can find the relevant information quicker. In the past, SEO techniques were used, but it is a moving target that needs constant updating.

The action item was to check if the Wiki pages directed at the development need more guidance around documenting new features during and after implementation. For example Bugzilla ticket, help page, release notes, etc.

3.4 Tenders review process

The tender review process was one of the important things for the meeting that was discussed in the session. The problems with the previous tender process, and the new path that was followed to avoid possible problems were discussed.

One of the things that were discussed was the process for new proposals and review. The idea was to clean up the list of proposals to stop reviewing the same unpopular / incomplete proposals over and over. It was suggested that the solution can be part of the voting system, where negative ratings below a certain threshold could remove the proposal from the list, while transparently archiving them with justifications.

3.5 ESC Call

Part of the session was the Engineering Steering Committee (ESC) meeting dedicated to the actual tender voting. People from the ESC were available online, and the projects were selected during the session according to the details prepared and evaluated before.

3.6 QA plan

QA plan for next 6 months / 1 year was discussed by the QA team and received comments from the team members.

There was feedback from the board members at FOSDEM that were discussed in the session. One of them was to avoid the newer reports, leaving them to the newcomers. It is however useful that

experienced QA team members catch duplicates early in order to avoid duplicating triaging effort. Also, there is no need to verify so many fixes. It was mentioned that bisecting regressions is something useful, and needed, and should be prioritized.

The new QA dashboard that was developed using R and Shiny framework was showcased, which provides interesting graphs and statistical details on the bugs. Feedback on this effort is appreciated. It is available via https://stragu.shinyapps.io/lo_qa_dashboard/.

Also, new ideas were discussed. Based on the features of the upcoming Bugzilla 6 release, it was suggested to provide more UI improvements, and use of bugbug (a platform for machine learning, available via github.com/mozilla/bugbug) which is currently being worked on by GSoC contributor Baole Fang, and general purpose bugdash (available via <https://github.com/mozilla/bugdash>) and also, feature development and maintenance of the crash reporting server by TDF were discussed. It is expected that with Bugzilla 6 and SSO, the number of spams will decrease.

One of the interesting things that was discussed was investigating and communicating areas that need some focus, and can inform future tender proposals. Beyond normal blog posts, publishing "success stories" of how a bug gets resolved thanks to many people was an idea that was presented in this session.

Another idea was adding a potential new Bugzilla field: "estimated effort" populated by a specific group of developers. This has several benefits for tenders and other bug fixing efforts. Ranking and prioritization of tickets was also mentioned, but it is not straightforward., given that giving weight to various factors is a very subjective task. The QA Dashboard attempts to do that, while being transparent about values used.

Asking for help for triaging, with positive angle of reduction in unconfirmed numbers, and asking for help testing and documenting new features was also mentioned as the possible areas for blog posts.

There was a couple of action items, for example reviewing prioritization flowchart, and making it accessible, which has already been done in text form on the wiki. Also, reviewing keywords with subgroup in team and anyone interested in QA. There are many keywords, and improving them will be beneficial for the QA in general. Some of them are listed here: <https://wiki.documentfoundation.org/QA/Bugzilla/Fields/Keywords>. Another action item was to figure out how to make it easier for newbies to get into writing tests, per the MissingUnitTests task.

Day 4: Closing session

4.1 Accessibility

There was a discussion about accessibility (a11y) and potential topics for Michael Weghorn as the new TDF developer focusing on accessibility.

In the a11y area, the focus is on improving LO use with screen readers so far. Work on improving LO a11y also includes submitting changes to other a11y-related projects like NVDA, Orca or Accerciser.

There is an ongoing a11y-related work by other contributors; recent improvements include:

- Accessibility checker/sidebar
- Document a11y and PDF/UA improvements
- New a11y test framework (TDF tender)
- Initial gtk4 a11y
- Improvements to macOS a11y

The goal is to make the default interface more accessible on major platforms, and then improve alternative UIs.

Several action items were enumerated. One item is to give an online demo that team and community can join to learn more about tooling, triaging, etc. There is an action item to look through wiki pages to increase accessibility of howtos and project documentation directed at contributors. Another one is to scan all guides in the LibreOffice bookshelf through an accessibility checker.

TDF is in contact with team members of a project at the City University of Applied Sciences in Bremen that also wants to evaluate and help establish processes to improve accessibility in open source projects (German project description: <https://www.hs-bremen.de/forschen/forschungs-und-transferprofil/forschungsprojekt/digitale-barrierefreiheit-im-arbeitsleben-durch-partizipative-evaluation/>). The title of the project is: “Digital accessibility in working life through participatory evaluation”.

4.2 Planning Conference workshops

4.2.1 Students workshop

The student workshop will be an important part of the LibOCon 2023. Communicating effectively is essential to make sure there are enough attendees. There were couple of ideas, for example talking to the university staff so they get students interested, and also providing certificate to attendees.

Having helpers in the room for all sessions is essential. The team also discussed a place to communicate with everyone involved in teaching, helping and organizing.

In this session, different sections of the student workshop were discussed, and members of the team who are responsible to present each part were finalized.

4.2.2 Community workshop

Community workshop will happen in the afternoon before the conference. One of the things that will be discussed will be liaisons introduction, presenting what they have done. Also, presentation of TDF, explaining different bodies and their roles will be part of the workshop. Getting feedback from the audience, sharing plans and ideas, and also providing helping would be the goal of the workshop. One of the discussed ideas was to encourage communities to build social media activity in their languages.

4.3 Diversity and Inclusion

Next Outreachy program was discussed in this session. Call for communities and mentored projects opens on August, and internship will be from December to March.

It is planned that LibreOffice will be involved in the next internship.

The code of Conduct was an important first step in promoting diversity. The recommendations are to use welcoming language, less acronyms, and this is an action item which need more work. For gender diversity, there is a need to be proactive, as the current imbalance is self-perpetuating.

4.4 Issues/concerns on translation

Machine translation for documentation and other purposes was the topic of this session. Idea of using self-hosted LibreTranslate (<https://github.com/LibreTranslate/LibreTranslate>) was discussed in this topic.

Another discussion was around annoyances and problems with Weblate. The technical aspects were discussed with the infrastructure team, and fixes were also discussed in the next session.

4.5 Weblate fixes

There was a discussion on fixes to Weblate. Most fixes / enhancements funded by TDF are now done, and the new version will be deployed soon.

There was an action item to write a communication about TDF funding of these changes, noting that other organizations and companies also use Weblate.

There are also fixes coming to the next major release.

5. Final words

During the four days of the meeting, several topics have been discussed: plans to grow the community, marketing, documentation, ideas for QA, translating the software and liaisons, the website and the future of LibreOffice. The team shared ideas, action items and achievements, hereby publishing them while welcoming the community's comments on each of them.

Team members appreciate the efforts of the others, including the individual community members and ecosystem companies and other stakeholders, and consider these collaborative efforts necessary for the future sustainability of LibreOffice.

Team members also expressed the urgent need of having better communication among all the stakeholders in order to have a friendly and welcoming work environment. The goal is to be able to create synergy in the efforts of all those who work to improve LibreOffice in different areas: code, documentation, translations, QA, and more.

Taking picture together was the last part of the meeting.