Free Software in the Hungarian Government Office
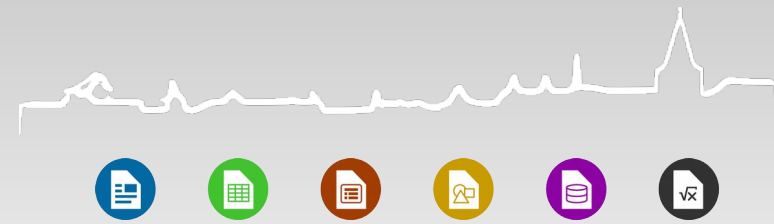
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Agenda

- About the organization
- About the project
  - Background
  - Services to be deployed
- Free Software?
- LibreOffice
- EuroOffice
- Expectations
- The experience
- Lessons learned

This talk is not about a success story

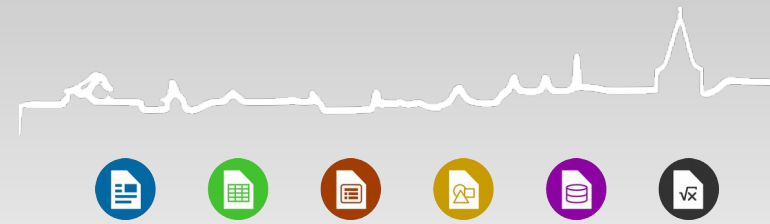# About the organization

- What's the Government Office?
  - Umbrella organization since 2011
  - 15+ formerly independent administrative bodies for state-citizen interaction
  - Not regulatory body, but executive
  - Topics: Health insurance, Pension insurance, Unemployment insurance, Labor safety, Construction and Heritage protection, Welfare and Child protection, Food security and animal health, Land ownership, Forestry, Land cultivation, Plant and soil protection, Customer protection, Healthcare, Rehabilitation, Justice services, Metrology Authority, Transport Authority. Since this year: Mining, Environment protection, Family support
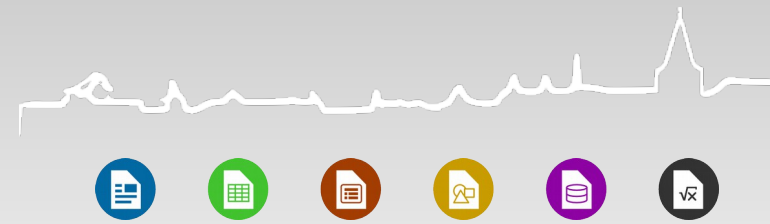 - 32000+ employees, 36000+ machines

About the project - Background

- New, much more centralized organization with old responsibilities, staff, infrastructure → Old hardware, no centralized services
- IT solutions / operation on the county level (20)
- Backend: Gov. Office. Frontend: Gov. Window (new!)
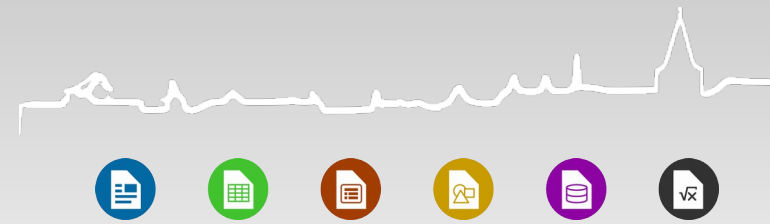- Legal situation of software used: best not to talk about it.

- Need to improve the infrastructure, better integrate backend and frontend customer service
- Funding: EU funds from the Electronic Public Administration Operative Programme, projects 1.2.26 and 2.1.23
  - ~35 Million €
- Project scope (**Indicators)**
  - 18 000 workstations
  - Servers
  - Printers
  - Switches
  - Tablets
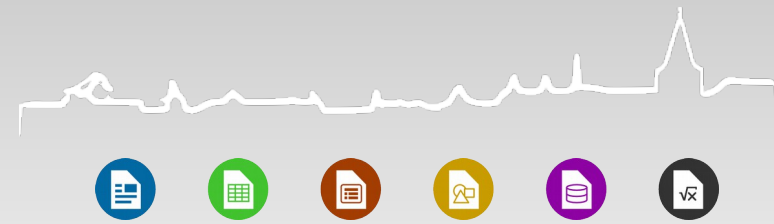
- Central management for 20k workstations (Novell ZenWorks)
- Groupware (Novell Vibe), Directory (Novell eDirectory), Mail (Novell Groupwise), DNS, DHCP, NTP
- New applications: Unified Client Call (Time slot booking), Virtual Customer Service, Workflow Management, E-payment, Knowledge base
  - Employee training in the use of the above
  - New cases started using the new applications

Free Software?

- Server side: SLES 11, Ilias
- Client side: SLED 11
  - + LibreOffice $Latest&Greatest, also for Windows
- Reasons: Vendor independence → "Standing on multiple feet"; increasing competition, thus: cost saving
- NOT indicator!
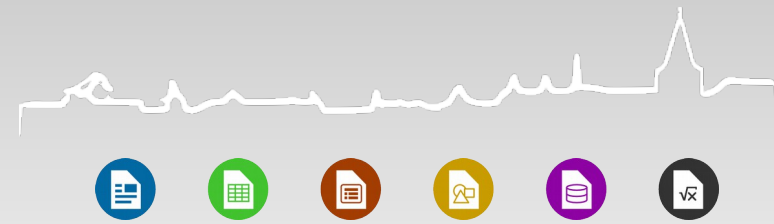 - When time is short, these can be ditched! Also if decision maker's support evaporates.

Free Software? - Ilias!

- Quick detour: a successful example
- Ilias: E-learning framework
  - **Indicator**: educating people is a must!
  - Pros: Free software, localized, no paid license needed, no need for backwards compatibility
  - **Local** expertise is available!
    - We contracted a company to develop the education material and set up the Ilias instance, provide user support
    - Local company
      - able to participate in public procurement
      - weekly personal meetings

Free Software? - SLED

- Another detour: Linux still sucks (thanks Bryan Lunduke)
- Expectation: everything works like on Windows… except:
  - Filename encoding is broken in zip files (File-roller - bgo #306403 – 10 years old)
  - Evince can't verify (let alone: add) digital signatures (bgo #614929 – 5 years old)
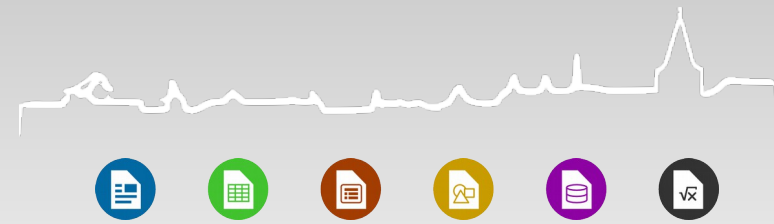 - Legacy Windows apps under Wine
  - Some hardware

LibreOffice

Free Software? - LibreOffice!

- Part of SLED, newer packages from TDF
  - On Windows as well: because we don't have enough money for MS licenses
- + User training was / is provided: Personal for key users, E-learning for everyone interested.
- - Not a priority – "It will surely just work"
- - No LO-specific support contract with anyone
- - No assessment of document templates, macros etc.
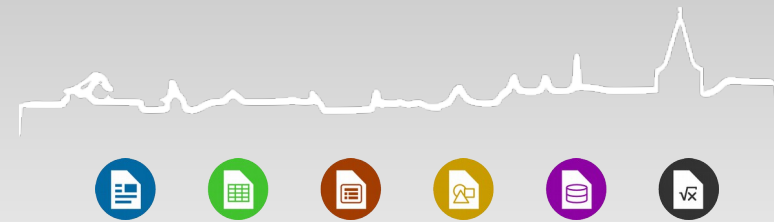- - No serious effort to convince local IT leaders

Free Software? - EuroOffice

- Office product by Multiracio Kft, a Hungarian company
  - v2014: AOO (4.0.1) rebranded + custom extensions
    - Terrible, really
  - v2015: LO (4.3) rebranded + custom extensions
    - Not bad, but added value is still minimal
    - No third level support – first build we got didn't even start on SLED 11 :D
    - Paid license is necessary for extensions (5-10€), and for the base package as well (~35€)
  - Good lobby power!
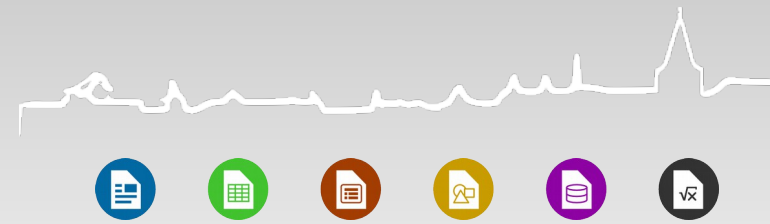   - „There is government will to use EuroOffice" – our CTO

Free Software? - Expectations

- "Free" equals "Gratis" !!!
  - Maybe we should stop using this word?
- 100% interoperability
  - With OOXML, binary MSO, RTF - everything
- No regressions
  - Same .doc file looks differently broken in 4.0, 4.1, 4.2…
    - → LTS release. But that's not Gratis :(.
    - Counterargument: "Price for MSO 365 went down greatly lately" - /o\

LibreOffice

The experience

- Interoperability is an everyday trouble even inside the project team (~20 people on MSO for Mac, MSO for Win8, LO for Linux)
- Switching everything to ODF is impossible
  - Many ISV's develop custom applications for the "system", we need to adapt **to them**
  - Surprisingly, only a small fraction of them produces problematic docs
  - Then, there is the outside world
- Third level support would have been necessary
  - Convincing decision makers about this is hard, case studies from ~TDF would have been useful

LibreOffice

Lessons learned - 1

- Political support can't be on only one person
    - If your supporter is fired, abandon ship!
- Interoperability matters most
- Local support company is a must
- Internal marketing is a must
    - Convincing county level decision makers – they showed the most internal opposition
    - Paying local IT to do extra project work is a must
    - Employees were unexpectedly open to change

Lessons learned - 2

- Better ISV support is needed
  - We have ~700 applications in daily/monthly use, made by a lot of ISV's
  - They mostly store data in databases and spew out documents in various formats
  - Can we easily show them how to make their applications spew out ODF?
- The Migration Protocol rocks – when followed ;)

LibreOffice

Thank you for listening – Questions?