Integrating LibreOffice Online in Alfresco

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• Use case: why did we integrate LibreOffice Online in Alfresco?
• Problems to solve
• Difficulties we had
• Our answers
  • Zoom: the LibreOffice Online monitoring capabilities
• Feedback
• Future steps
Short introduction

● Provides collaborative tools that users need
● Helps organizations to keep control of the data
● Develop collaboration and access to information
Open Source software

Collabora Online

LibreOffice

Nextcloud

nayego

elastic

5 décembre 2018
Use case: context

• Alfresco: ECM, mainly used to store and classify documents, and follow their life cycle

• Organizations use it as:
  - As a document collaboration and workflow tool
  - As a basis for specific software (electronic signature, administrative acts management...)

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• Alfresco editing process: a little complicated
  – Many steps: check-out, download, local editing, upload, check-in
    • Sometimes even more: phone call to the person who locks the document 2 months ago, waiting for check-in done, check-out, and so on

• People prefer to edit files directly in LibreOffice
  – Sometimes using a old LibreOffice extension:
    • check out a document, Webdav editing, check in
• Problems:
  - teleworking: no extension to install
  - File locking: only one person can edit the document at the same time
Online and collaborative editing of MSO / ODF documents

Everybody should be able to edit a document when he wants

Nothing to install on the desktop
Solution

- Collabora Online integrated in Alfresco
- Complete the (pending) prototype connector developed by Magenta (Danish company)
- We analyzed:
  - What is to be done to release a first version?
  - Costs?
Main tasks

- File locking management
- Versions management
- Better UI (integration into Alfresco)
- Features to add: download, print
- Fix the display of the list of the editing users
Main difficulties

- Prevent others from deleting a document currently edited by Collabora Online?
  - Alfresco uses a locking mechanism (check out/in)
    - Do we need to use it during an online editing session?
- Do we need to keep all versions sent by Collabora Online?
Our answers

• Focus on one of them
  – Based on the interesting monitoring capability of LibreOffice Online
  – Allowing our connector to know when users enter and leave a editing session
Locking management (1)

- What we chose to do:
  - No check out because of difficulties to edit such a file by different users
  - During a session, removing UI choices allowing users to delete, move, upload a new version, check out
• By monitoring the session
  – A metadata is set on the edited file to indicate a current session

• An Alfresco plugin
  – Removes some UI choices when this metadata is set
  – Displays a message: “ongoing session”

• The metadata is removed when the last user leaves the online session
• Loolmonitor: python, systemd service
• Alfresco modules: Java
• https://github.com/ArawaFr
Great collaboration with Collabora

Collabora made some changes on the monitoring capabilities for our project

One patch on LibreOffice Online from Arawa :-)

09/12/19
Feedback

• Many tests done by users
• Good feedback
• First step: limited deployment (200 users)
Future steps

- Display of the revision history
- Save As implementation
- Alfresco previews based on Collabora Online
- Widget: list of the current online sessions
- Display of the number of editing users on the Alfresco detail page
Questions ?