Wrestling a Giant C++ desktop app into your browser and making LibreOffice sing Michael Meeks CEO michael.meeks@collabora.com



"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls..." - Jeremiah 6:16



FLOSS is uniquely fascinating !

You can see everything ...

- The mass of code underneath is quite amazing
- You can read & understand & become an expert easily.

Wrestling this code-base & platform for 25+ years

• Stories – up & down the stack.

OpenOffice.org \rightarrow LibreOffice & then Collabora Online (COOL)

• A browser-based tool ...

Gritty technical detail...



Why is OO.o slow to start ? #1

the easy to measure bit: CPU





ELF run-time linking: Id-linux.so.2

For every dynamic symbol we lookup:







Towards a fix:

Prototyped several fixes:

- -Bdirect \rightarrow at compile-time remember the library to look up symbols in
 - Except for 'Vague' symbols etc. etc. remove a 100x factor.
- Various improved symbol hash storage schemes
- Avoiding lots of named-relocations $\dots \rightarrow$ not finalized.

Large apps:

- Default is not to have the symbol so optimize for that.
- Much sparser & smaller 'bloom filter' in front of symbol lookup
 - A big bit-field mask for "do we have an entry"
 - Only if so go on to touch the symbol.

.gnu.hash

• New linking standard



Why is OO.o slow to start ? #2

oh dear, no good tools exist: I/O



$I/O \rightarrow cold vs.$ warm start:

eg. OpenOffice.org startup really sucks: Amdahl asks Why?







Happy page-cache users chip-in:

Google: "openoffice startup graphics cache"

~about 1.830.000 hits ...

Tom Adelstein – "Linux Journal" (or earlier?)

re-printed in Linux Format, the Inquirerer.net, PC Pro forums...

"Under Ubuntu, I found that OO Writer opened in three seconds, and in Fedora it opened in less than six seconds. Previously, it took 30 and 26 seconds"

How is it achieved ?!

Increase the graphics cache ram, I upped mine to 64 for "Use for OO.org" and 5 for "memory per object"



Loading times will *increase*[sic.] dramatically. (20 seconds to 7 seconds on one computer I've used)"



More satisfied page-cache users ...

Is it just Gentoo syndrome run wild ? ...

"very effective change. Having run knoppix **from the cd drive** for over a year on a few computers, this increase in memory setting cuts anywhere from 30 seconds to more than several minutes"

"Ubuntu Forums HOWTO: Speed up OO.o start up"

Not bad My **speed about doubled**, and I've only got 128 MB of RAM. - Hikaru79

I did see a speed up of about **50%,** or 3 seconds to startup on my PC. - wallijonn

... this has sped up OOo loading tremendously ... it now loads up in **4 seconds** instead of the old **8 seconds**. ... [this should be] "Howto of the Year". - thepoch



Never profile without measuring: so write a (~throw-away) measuring tool:

Warning



Warning - the results of the simulation you are about to (foolishly) believe, are generated almost entirely from thermal noise.

Any similarity between the fictional version of the program portrayed here and the actual program is purely coincidental. This is a work of fiction, this is not an attempt to defame the character, or authors of said software. Terms and conditions may apply, do not operate heavy machinery while keeping up payments on your home...

Please not use this to optimise your software (yet).





logrind – a valgrind tool + GUI

Now Obsolete / Under-used but fun:

- Traced system-call I/O
- Traced memory-map first-page touching
- Generated a trace.

Disk-simulator / re-run-trace ...

- Aggregate stack traces, and visualize result:
- Split the trace from the file-system layout:
 - Different layouts \rightarrow better or worse etc.



What can we see: stack mode

I/O profile tests/gedit.prf

stack view file view address view block view

● time ○ space ✓ view as tree

 $\overline{}$



libpangocairo-1.0.so.0.100

FcFontSort - libfontconfig.sc

FcFontSetSort - libfontcon

FcCharSetGetLeaf - I

Ibfontconfig.so.1.0.4

◊ gsort - libc-2.4.so

malloc - libc-2.4.so

FcPatternBuild - libfontconfid pango_fontset_simple_new

g hash table lookup - libgl libfontconfig.so.1.0.4 FcPatternAddString - libfont pango map get engines - libpa g unichar isgraph - libglib-2.0. pango_script_iter_new - libpang pango find map - libpango-1.0 🖵

What can we see: address view



.

Time: 20.2s Addr: 0x04b22c5d Map: /opt/gnome/lib/libgtk-x11-2.0.so.0.800.11 - 11.9%

766

0

VM address (Shift+wheel to zoom)

0

4



Vhat can we see: disk view





Towards a fix:

Pre-loading sorted by inode ...

libmerged \rightarrow major component re-work ...

Linux Hackers

- Plumbers talk → pointed at their file-system problems ...
- Ultimately: SSDs ...
- Empty writer: today: 2.37s cold, 2.17sec warm
 - 80% I/O to 8% I/O ...
 - psychologically referent: web-pages



Perceived slowness to start ? #3

Where is the splash-screen ?



splashx.c ...

Split out the 'draw a splash'

- Draws splash
- Renders progress-bar
 - No bevel, no AA text, no CSS animated progress, no theming ...
 - data from a pipe to the main app
- \$ ldd oosplash | wc -l
 11 (shared libraries)







LibreOffice happened: freeing developers to re-factor & improve aggressively

shortly afterwards TDF setup

Code re-structuring ...



Why re-structure at all ?

A ~40 year old code-base

- Object Orientation mania
 - The silver-bullet
- OO toolkit less interesting
- Demo / Office apps \rightarrow very interesting.

What languages should we use ?

What platforms should we target ?

"Technology – the only industry that is more fashion driven than women's fashion" – Larry Ellison



Lets re-write all 8 million lines in <insert-language>:

Java, Javascript, Rust, Haskell ... !!!

#1 indicator of engineering immaturity

Tip#1 - don't buy a silver bullet:

"there is no single development, in either technology or management technique, which by itself promises even one order of magnitude improvement within a decade in productivity, in reliability, in simplicity." Fred Brooks – The Mythical Man Month

23



Sample 10x productivity wins

Object Oriented programming !

Java \rightarrow develop 10x faster

• Garbage collection ! It rocks.

$C# \rightarrow develop 10x faster$

• Syntactic sugar! It rocks.

"As such, whilst Vala is a modern language with all of the features you would expect, it gains its power from ..."

• Language augmenting pre-processors are great



And on ... and on.

A personal favourite

"We encourage the OpenOffice group to quickly build their version of a spread sheet or a word app using JavaFX," - Larry Ellison (according to theregister) - June 2009

• Fatal mistake: using a unique name

Collabora

Online

- Hot Tip your vanity language / platform project should have a non-google-trend-able name eg. 'ruby', 'rust', 'go' not eg. 'zsquat'
- JavaFX's Classic Hype-Cycle trajectory / google trend





Lucking out on language ?

"The point I'm trying to make is that **the only reason** why all of this was possible, where we build ... [**Microsoft Office**] ... for 30 years, not only ship those applications but **evolve** them - **picked C/C++ - tremendously lucked out**. All the other languages - two categories:

1. language would have been re-invented 3 times and had to re-write the thing 3 times.

2. authors of language & industry lost interest and it would have stagnated"

- Igor Zaika (Microsoft, Distinguished Eng.) CppCon 2014





Language bits.

Language bigotry:

- Almost totally pointless
- The leading driver of pointless duplication
 - Wins over even license choice ... ?
- Lots of it out there.

We're still slowly writing out Java

- can't guarantee it is on the platform in the same way that binaries are.
- The embedded Rhino JS-in-Java impl ? ...
- Default HSQLDB format \rightarrow in databases ...





Cross Platform-ness: Churn

Windows rendering APIs:

- **GDI:** basic version with windows 1.0~1985
 - Made the 16bit \rightarrow 64bit transition well.

GDI+ in XP - 2001

DirectWrite Win7/2007

• finally a physical font API.

Direct2D: 2012

Easy to churn faster than big apps can handle

Linux toolkits

- gtk+1, Qt2 1999
- gtk+2, Qt3 2000
- **Qt4** 2005
- Gtk+3 2011
- Qt5 2012
- **Gtk+4 -** 2021
- Qt6 2023

Apple: churn to match

Bold: in-use ...



Object Orientation !



Historic Object Orientation mania ...

"...let's take the desktop computer revolution to the next stage. What we need are true object-oriented environments."

Philippe Kahn, Borland founder & CEO, 1991..

The New York Times, August 18, 1991, Section 3, Page 9.





Object Oriented programming #2 +1 year

Borland's - Philippe Kahn:

"Creating the initial "objects" is difficult, especially for programmers who are used to designing the old-fashioned way."

"But ultimately the payoff will be faster, less costly development of new programs and upgrades."

The New York Times (July 26, **1992,** Section 3, Page 1)

"**If** the objects approach is so great, **Mr. Gates** has said, why are Borland's Windows products **so late**?"





How (not) to Design:

Look at the screen: what you see is objects !

- Epic Object Oriented blunders:
 - I see a spreadsheet cell $! \rightarrow object$
 - I see a paragraph $! \rightarrow object$
 - I see a table $! \rightarrow object$
 - Power ideas:

Show changes

Do you want to show changes to avoid delays?

In the current document, changes are being recorded but not shown as such. In large documents, delays can occur when the document is edited. Showing changes will avoid delays.

No Yes

- Our file format can just be a recursive serialization of all our objects !!!!
- Change-tracking makes this too complex: so tack it on the side & mutate the model.
- Oh dear ! Oh dear ...





Fixed many of these things in recentish time.

- Binfilter \rightarrow changing object graph ...
 - hideous hack ... removed in LibreOffice 4.0



- Massive re-factoring for AMD of the Calc core.
- Sensible, contiguous type span data structures (MDDS)
- Huge memory reductions, significant performance improvements
 - Thanks to Kohei Yoshida (Collabora)
- Writer
 - Red-lining turned into a view state not model fiddling festival
 - Thanks to Michael Stahl (CIB) for Munich City.



Top Tip: try to spot the panaceas of today and critically examine their claims. Hold onto the good.



Threading



2017 Crash reporting trend

Thanks to Markus Mohrhard



Frustratingly 'cores' not threads.



Reports from large core count machines.

100.00% 90.00% 48 80.00% 36 70.00% 32 24 60.00% 16 12 50.00% 10 40.00% 8 30.00% 6 4 20.00% 2 10.00% **1** 0.00% 201700010101 2017.04.01 2017-02-01 2017-03-01 2017/05/01 2018-01-01 2017.02.02 Sat Bala at Bat Bat that 201

Crash report % by CPU core count over time.



Threading fun:

Config Management

- Hideous example of 2nd system problem
- A path/key value store
 - Plus some smarts.
- 55 mutexes taken & released on each key fetch.
 - And not thread-safe.

Replaced with a single big code-lock

• Beware of granular locking ...



• Faster, smaller, simpler, reasonable code.


O(~1) XML parsing ...

Parsing XML is a significantly costly pain

- Format is needlessly complex; cf. JSON.
- Namespace handling & tokenization is a pain.
- Double checking for duplicate attributes bad too ...
- SAX API really poor for CPU cache usage:
 - a heavily fragmented workload.





Calc: extreme coupling & threads.





Calc parallelism results ...

re-calculating 100k formulae on 1m doubles



Extreme care & choice of threading granularity

- Mostly lock-less, but lots of assertions.
- Would love more language support to help; C++ weak here.

Some good improvements

- Plenty more to do to expand the scope & reliability
- Embarrassing atomic operation thrash.



LibreOffice Cleanups ...



Tastier code - easier to chew

Seven years in – all German comments were gone

Thanks to:

Jens Carl, Johnny_M, Michael Stahl (RedHat), Katerina Behrens (CIB), Thomas Beck (CIB), Lukas Röllin, Gabor Kelemen, Stephan Bergmann (RedHat), dennisroczek, and many others.

Detected lines of German comment





Security: Coverity ... score 0.00

Excellent static checker.





Systematic load crash testing: 100k+ files (now 350k+)

Import crashes over time







Systematic save crash testing: 100k+ files

Export crashes over time





Callgrind based automated performance testing.





Code quality improvement ...

New tools find new bugs - and over time that reduces

Use lots of different fuzzers / checkers !



COVERITY® A Synopsys Company FORCEPOINT

Google: OSS-Fuzz



Less eye-strain horror

Code-base pre-dates templates: C-pre-processor generics instead left & right.

enum cleanup & strings ...

```
-case BUTTON_ABORT: aText = rtl::OUString(
- RTL_CONSTASCII_USTRINGPARAM( "Abort" ) );
+case StandardButtonType::Abort: aText = "Abort";
```

Pretty iterators & auto

- for(std::unordered_map< Atom, Selection* >::iterator it =
This->m_aSelections.begin(); it != This->m_aSelections.end();
++it)
+ for (auto const? selection : This >m_aSelections)

+ for (auto const& selection : This->m_aSelections)



And tons more – still ongoing ...



Clang plugins ...

Expanding C++ checking:

- unexpected bool conversion hunting
- flatten: look for large if statement at end of function
- cast cleanups / re-writing

Wider scope of understanding

- Unused-fields checking
- count all users of default params
- un-necessary-virtual detection
- Use-unique-ptr

And tons more: thanks to



• Noel Grandin (Collabora) & Stephan Bergman (RedHat)



Real Native Widgets / Layout ...

Cartoon - Native Widgets ...

- Used for years on Win/Mac/Linux
- **Twist** widgets into rendering bits of themselves
- Missing: theming details, animations

Plus Native Menu-bar, File-selector, Tool-tips

A human can always lay-out a dialog better than auto-layout ! (or not)

• Now: finished converting all dialogs to glade / XML years back: **1200+** .ui files ...

Now starting to load native gtk+ dialogs, widgets & wrapping API - WxWidgets style

• Thanks to Caolan McNamara (RedHat)





Core Infrastructure Initiative

OSS-Fuzz

- Huge Testing infrastructure provided by Google
 - Used for Chrome & many other OSS projects.
 - ~1000 core cluster to hugely accelerate testing.
- Manual auditing killed by AI ?
 - Finds newly introduced problems rapidly before they can escape (CVEs)

Coverity - still a score of ~0.00

Thanks to Caolan McNamara (was at RedHat)

Collabora Online

THE LINUX FOUNDATION



Avoiding deja-vu in bug-fixing

Fix each bug just once;

Thanks to: Miklos Vajna (Collabora), Stephan Bergmann (RedHat), Noel Grandin (Collabora), Zdeněk Crhonek, Caolán McNamara (RedHat), Ashod Nakashian (Collabora), Justin Luth (SIL), Tamás Zolnai (Collabora), Andrea Gelmini, Jan Holesovsky (Collabora), Markus Mohrhard, Eike Rathke (RedHat), Mike Kaganski (Collabora), Jens Carl, Michael Stahl (RedHat), Szymon Kłos (Collabora), Tor Lillqvist (Collabora), Chris Sherlock, Pranav Kant (Collabora), Winfried Donkers, David Tardon (RedHat)

with >20 unit test commits in 5.4/6.0

Growth in unit tests over time



count of various CPPUNIT macros



The Web as a platform:



The web as a platform freak-show:

We know how to create languages

• To enable quality software development.

Javascript !

- No types
 - Not just un-checked & un-safe
 - Consider the JIT { 'x': 3, 'y': 5 }

No class / object orientation

• No encapsulation

"Built with Global Variables !"

• Monster global: the DOM

"Access it through regular expressions !"

• All the worst features of perl ...

Split your JS code into modules:

- Then you can't tell which executes in what order
- So bundle-ify them together again

Can't draw hair-lines in firefox:

• Canvas sizes beyond 127 x 127 can antialias paths when they shouldn't



Different between browsers

But still – ubiquity is a killer feature

Built with LibreOffice technology

Rich, interoperable, collaborative editing, everywhere



~105 million docker image downloads



What is Collabora Online?

OU editing

Documents + Spreadsheets + Slides + Drawings

- Viewing and collaborative editing
- Feature rich

Interoperability with Microsoft formats

• docx, doc, rtf, xlsx, xls, pptx, ppt

Import filters and viewing for

PDF, Visio, Publisher and many more
 Powerful WYSIWYG rendering
 On-premise integration
 Architecture – a bet on CPU threads and network
 getting cheaper over time



What is Collabora Online?

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Sailing yacht

A sailing yacht (US ship prefixes SY or S/Y), is a leisure craft that uses sails as its primary means of propulsion. A <u>yacht</u> may be a sail or power vessel used for pleasure, cruising, or racing.[1][2][3] There is no standard definition, so the term applies here to sailing vessels that have a cabin with amenities that accommodate overnight use. To be termed a "yacht", as opposed to a "boat", such a vessel is likely to be at least 33 feet (10 m) in length and have been judged to have good aesthetic qualities.[4] <u>Sailboats</u> that do not accommodate overnight use or are smaller than 30 feet (9.1 m) are not universally called yachts. Sailing yachts in excess of 130 feet (40 m) are generally considered to be <u>supervachts.[5]</u>

Sailing yachts are actively used in sport and are among categories recognized by the governing body of sailing sports, World Sailing.[6]

Etymology

Sailing yachts are actively used in sport and are among categories recognized by the governing body of sailing sports, World Sailing.[6]

The term, yacht, originates from the <u>Dutch</u> word jacht (pl. jachten, which means "hunt"), boat", such a vessel is likely to d have been judged to have that do not accommodate eet (9.1 m) are not universally s of 130 feet (40 m) are s.[5] and originally referred to light, fast sailing vessels that the <u>Dutch</u>. <u>Republic</u> navy used to pursue <u>pirates</u> and other transgressors around and into the shallow waters of the <u>Low Countries.[7]</u>

History

The history of pleasure boats begins with rowed craft in Pharaonic Egyptian times. The history of sailing vachts begins in Europe in the beginning of the 1600s with the building of a pleasure vessel for the son of King James I of England. Pleasure vessels acquired the name yacht

after the time of <u>Charles II</u>, who spent time exiled in Europe and visited the Netherlands, where a variety of *jachten* were already well developed as pleasure boats for the elite classes since the beginning of the 17th century. Upon his restoration to the English crown, Charles commissioned a size of seven weaker, which included to least one experimental <u>c</u> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki... **(b) (b)** between two vessels occurred in 1001, 1010web <u>c</u> une first open sailing competition in 1663 in English waters.[**B**]





Search

Collaborative Spreadsheets

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Collaborative Drawing

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Collaborative Presentations



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Sailing vachts are actively used in sport and are among categories recognized by the governing body of sailing sports, World Sailing.[6]



Document Security

Online





Different optimizations

Online

- dlopens ~world (RTLD_BIND_NOW)
- Loads ~all dictionaries & hyphenation
- then forks children
 - Copy-on-write-ness everywhere.
- waste memory in pre-init to save in children
- Waste CPU time on startup to save it later.

Catching bad behaviour:

• Touching / un-sharing pages:





Compare memory: loolmap

Useful tool for eg. kdeinit, webservers?

 heap page: 0x011e9000 (310/967) - touched: 17 - was shared - from [heap]

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M.a.t.h.

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Ref-count in a Unicode string incremented

Also dumps all strings it can find with -strings

Drove pre-init string staticization

Totals for heap

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Collabora Online Powerful Online Collaboration



Collabora Online

Long Running Demo Profiles: A Week

What does it mean?

- 17% of a week of profiling:
- Detecting: "is it a ý caller Hybrid PDF"?
- Unbelievably
- Unbelievably wasteful Scan last 4k block 'AdditionalStream Scan last 4k block s' +17%





Online

Rendering Tiles 40% of Your Profile ?

Lots of unnecessary re-rendering

• Pruning the simple cases out

Silliness in various places

Now much improved





The Magic of AVX2 – Branch Free RLE



Which ones ? RLE Mask → LUT + AVX2 gather permutevar8x32_epi32 ... is your friend



Automatic Documents

- Create final PDFs or
- Create prefilled ODP/DOCX documents to continue working on

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Other Recent Updates




Need smart people to help us create the future

• An Artificial Intelligence

of stunning subtlety,

of conversational brilliance



- That can understand what you're doing
- And can suggest cool new things to do.
- "Trained on Documents" (TM)



Conclusions



FLOSS is amazing

Such a lot of interesting code

• No barriers to finding & fixing the real problems

Increasingly - Open Source Rocks

- Now two platforms to wrestle
 - Linux on the server
 - FLOSS browsers

Real heros work on the giant & fascinating problems

• One-code-change to ~200million LibreOffice users + ~100m COOL users

Join us to help recover people's Digital Sovereignty

- Control over and ownership of their data
- Easy hacks to get involved COOL, LibreOffice





Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock for ever! I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And though this body has been destroyed yet in my flesh I will see God, I myself will see him, with my own eyes - I and not another. How my heart yearns within me. - Job 19: 23-27

Thank you!



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