688 Fourth Avenue
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94118

415.750.8352 telephone

Component Integration Laboratories

Dear Prospective Member,

Thank you for your interest in Component Integration Laboratories. CI Labs is a nonprofit association dedicated to advancing OpenDoc as a vendor-neutral industry standard for software integration and component software.

Organizations and individuals who want to participate in the move to a component software model are invited to join CI Labs. Membership benefits include open access to the process of setting the future direction of OpenDoc technology, as well as product and platform validation and comarketing activities.

We hope you will find the enclosed information useful in helping you learn more about CI Labs and OpenDoc.

If you would like more information, please call (415) 750-8352 or send e-mail to info@cil.org.

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CI Labs: Creating the Future of Software – Today

Software is becoming more complex and cumbersome.

OpenDoc is designed to simplify the way software is developed and used.

OpenDoc enables tight software intergration and component software—"software that fits".

CI Labs is a group ven -ture of industry leaders, founded to promote OpenDoc.

The challenge of software complexity

Today, people are using computer-based technology to do more things than ever before. This sounds good, but there's a catch: The process of working with software is growing increasingly complex and challenging.

In fact, most of today's software applications have become so multipurpose and feature-packed that most users need only a fraction of the application's functionality to do their work. In addition, in a world in which communication is central to most endeavors, sharing data and documents across a continually expanding and changing universe of systems and networks can be a dauntingly difficult task.

The road to simplicity—and productivity

OpenDoc was developed to reverse the growing complexity of today's software technology. The OpenDoc architecture provides a new model for software interoperability that enables the creation of distributed, cross-platform component software.

OpenDoc will make the kinds of applications most people use today work together seamlessly. But, that's just the beginning. OpenDoc is designed to enable the creation of simple, single-fuction component applications that better fit the way people work—components can be "mixed and matched" to assemble custom, integrated solutions. This modular approach has broad implications for streamlining and simplifying the process of sharing information, by allowing users to work with and exchange compound documents—documents that integrate text, graphics, tables, video, sound, animation, and other data parts—easily and intuitively.

How to get there from here

Clearly, the process of creating a new model for computing is no small task, nor is it one that could be undertaken by any single company. Component Integration Laboratories (CI Labs) unites many of the leaders in the world of computer technology. It was jointly founded by Apple Computer, Inc.; IBM Corporation; Novell, Inc.; SunSoft, a Sun Microsystems Business: Taligent, Inc.; WordPerfect Corporation; and XSoft, A Division of Xerox Corporation. Its goal: to provide the specifications and foundation technology necessary for software interoperability and an open component software architecture.

CI Labs is a nonprofit industry association whose purpose is to adopt, maintain, license, and support essential software component technologies. The group will provide reference source code, technical documentation, example software, and validation services for these technologies—openly, without nondisclosure requirements. This will ensure the rapid implementation of a component software architecture across all major industry platforms.

The benefits of being involved

Organizations and individuals who want to participate in the move to a component software model are invited to join CI Labs. Membership benefits include developer support, as well as product and platform validation and comarketing activities. (For details on how to become involved, see last page.)

Welcome to the world of component software
Component software benefits individuals, organizations, and software developers alike. For individuals, it means software that's tailored precisely to their specific jobs, more flexible, and easier to use. For organizations, it means enhanced collaboration and improved work flow, resulting in a more cost-effective operation. And for developers, it means shorter development cycles and quicker time to market, coupled with the ability to focus more clearly on their particular areas of expertise.

CI Labs was founded to support the movement toward widespread, cross-platform implementation of OpenDoc, a component software architecture that will allow all three groups to realize these benefits soon—not years in the future.

OpenDoc and component software offers benefits to individuals, organizations, and developers.

Open Doc will be available on Windows, Macintosh, OS/2 and UNIX platforms.

OpenDoc interoperates with Microsoft OLE 2.0.

More about OpenDoc and supporting technologies
OpenDoc is a vendor-neutral industry standard for software integration that enables the development of distributed, cross-platform component software. It will initially be available on the Microsoft Windows, Macintosh, and OS/2 platforms, with UNIX implementations to follow. No matter which platform you use, it is important to note that OpenDoc is designed for incremental adoption: OpenDoc will provide a smooth transition for component software, protecting customers' and developers' investments in software and training.

OpenDoc is designed to support information integration across entire organizations through the use of software components on notebook systems, desktop computers, servers, and mainframes. It enables the construction of collaborative and customizable documents, which are interoperable across plat-forms, as well as with proprietary APIs for desktop application integration such as Microsoft OLE 2.0.

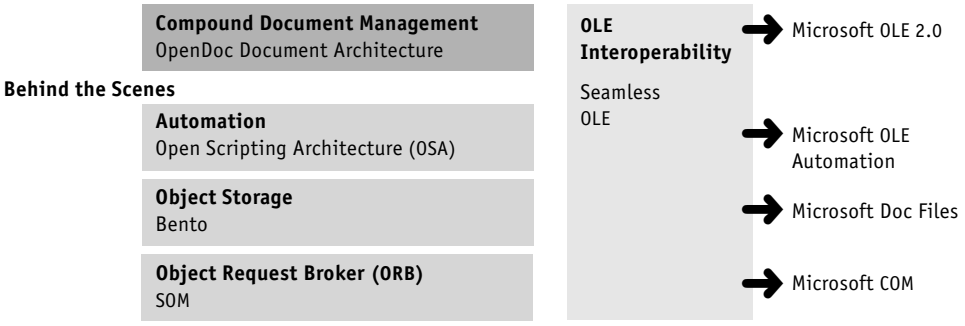
OpenDoc Technologies:
The OpenDoc Document Architecture: This is a platform-independent compound document architecture that supports the integration of multiple software components into seamless documents and custom applications.

Bento: Bento is a portable object storage library and format that allows OpenDoc to store and exchange compound documents and multimedia.

The Open Scripting Architecture (OSA): The OSA is an automation and scripting API that supports application-independent scripting, distributed automation, and work-flow applications.

System Object Model (SOM): SOM is a highly efficient dynamic linking mechanism for objects, which supports multiple languages and provides a gateway to distributed object services. It complies with the Object Management Group's Common Object Request Broker (CORBA).

Seamless OLE: This is an API that enables seamless interoperability with Microsoft Corporations Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) technology for desktop interapplication communications.



The OpenDoc Architecture

CI Labs facilitates the implementation of OpenDoc as a standard.

CI Labs is an open venture—anyone can join.

More about CI Labs

The basic technologies for a component software architecture have existed for some time, scattered throughout the industry. But to achieve a complete, open architecture—one that can be pervasive across platforms—the industry converged on a set of specifications to integrate and build upon this existing technology.

CI Labs exists to foster that necessary convergence, facilitating the rapid adoption and implementation of OpenDoc on all major desktop platforms,including Microsoft Windows, Macintosh, OS/2, and UNIX systems. Working toward this objective, CI Labs will do the following:

Adopt and share the key technologies essential for software components to integrate information and media from different applications within a heterogeneous networked environment.

Provide open access to the process of setting the future direction of OpenDoc technology in a vendor-neutral forum for systems manufacturers, software vendors, in-house developers, and purchasers of software.

Manage and facilitate software contributions, design discussions, and technology definition and evolution.

License reference source code to developers and systems vendors.

Support developers in adopting these new technologies by providing test suites, documentation, and training.

Validate interoperability of components and platforms through a testing program.

Provide marketing materials and assist in comarketing compliant products and technologies.

Collaborate with existing standards organizations that are handling relevant issues.

How to get involved

Whether you're the CEO of a technology firm, an IS manager, a systems integrator, or an independent software vendor, the move toward a common component software architecture offers a host of potential benefits. For those who want to get involved in the effort, CI Labs offers two membership levels:

Members are organizations with a strong interest in building upon the technologies and services provided by CI Labs. They include both systems vendors and independent software vendors, as well as systems integrators and value-added resellers (VARs).

Members pay a membership fee proportional to their revenues. CI Labs sets this fee low enough to allow small vendors to join at this level.

Members may participate in all aspects of the evaluation of technology—including the setting of development priorities and early access to technology through pre-alpha seeds, alpha and beta exchange programs, and other activities related to software development based on CI Labs specifications. This provides them with a significant competitive advantage in the design of new products based on CI Labs technologies. Members also have certain voting rights in CI Labs activities.

Sponsors are firms with long-term strategic interest in the future and governance of CI Labs and its adopted technologies.

Sponsors pay a fixed initial membership fee, calculated without reference to their revenues. In addition, Sponsors pay an annual membership fee. (Members can become Sponsors at any time by paying the Sponsor initial membership fee.)

Only Sponsors can nominate and serve on the board of directors, which means that they have significant control over the development and deployment of OpenDoc and related technologies.

Call CI Labs today

To find out more about becoming involved in CI Labs and the move toward OpenDoc, please call us at (415) 750-8352 or send an e-mail message to info@cil.org.

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