



Thank you for downloading the first episode of Student Tech. I'm Catherine Ford and I'm just like you - a student, an employee, a spouse, a person with responsibilities. I am currently working on my doctoral degree in Management and Organizational Leadership through the [University of Phoenix Online](#). I've had several people call me a "professional student" so I want to use that "professional" knowledge to help others avoid the pitfalls I've

experienced. Over the years of my education, I have learned about tools and ways to cut costs and get my work and assignments done quickly. In each episode of this series I will share one of these tools with you. Some may be web sites, while others are free or low cost programs. Still others may be community-based groups where you can gain experience and skills while giving back.

In this episode, the first tool I'm going to tell you about is a productivity software called [Open Office](#). This is a free office suite that anyone can download from the Open Office web site. This suite includes Writer (similar to Word), Spreadsheet (like Excel), Presentation (think PowerPoint), Drawing (a simpler version of Photoshop or Fireworks), Formula (which is like a digital whiteboard that processes mathematical functions), and Database (which is a relational database program similar to Access). Each of these programs functions in a manner very similar to Microsoft Office programs without the huge price tag. I checked with [Fry's Electronics](#) and as of today, July 26th, Microsoft Home & Student (which doesn't include Outlook) costs \$109.99 and Microsoft Office Standard (which is the only package that does include Outlook) costs a whopping \$369.99! Now, I'm not bad-mouthing Microsoft Office. I'm a big fan of the 2007 version of Office. However, if you are a student with limited resources, can't you think of better things to spend \$110 - \$370 on?

## OpenOffice.org

Create a new document



Text Document



Spreadsheet



Presentation



Drawing



Database



Formula

So, you might be wondering how Open Office can get away with giving away a product that Microsoft charges so much for. Open Office was developed by the [Open Source Community](#). For anyone who doesn't know what this means, the Open Source Community is a group of programmers from around the world who apply their skills to creating useful programs together. These programs are published on the Internet for anyone to download, use, and tinker with. Anyone that makes changes

to the program is expected to make their changes available, again free of charge, to the community. There are thousands of people who have contributed over the years. According to the Open Office website, "You may install it on as many computers as you like. You may make copies and give them away to family, friends, students, employees -

anyone you like." There is no catch! Anyone can use it. Anyone can report bugs. Anyone can request new features - all free of charge.

When you use Open Office applications, and need to save documents for electronic submission to your employer or instructor, you will need to use the Save As... feature and remember to save as, for example, Microsoft Word 97/2000/XP which will give your document the .doc extension. This will allow your employer or instructor to open the document using any of the latest 4 versions (including 2007) of Microsoft Word. The same is true for the other programs in Open Office. You can find a link to the Open Office website on StudentTech.info. That's S-T-U-D-E-N-T-T-E-C-H-I-N-F-O.

And now a word from our sponsor...



The further you go in your education and career, the more you will find yourself having to give presentations and speaking before groups. Being able to think on your feet during an interview or networking event or speaking at public or corporate events is no longer an optional skill. If you cannot do this comfortably and convincingly, you may not get that desired assignment, promotion, or job. Start working on this skill now by joining one of your local Toastmasters clubs. Toastmasters will provide the best public speaking education at the lowest cost available. You'll be able to improve your presentation and leadership skills in a safe, friendly, and supportive

environment with people just like you. A link to the [Toastmasters International](#) site can also be found on StudentTech.info as well. Here you will be able to find a local club that is currently accepting new members. I'm a member of two clubs ([Good to Great](#) & GO Speakers!) and have found their program invaluable!

Finally, if you have any tools that you use to make your education easier, then please send a link and some info to me through [my site](#), StudentTech.info. You can also reach me on Twitter and Facebook. You can find links to these pages on StudentTech.info as well along with the show notes. If you enjoyed this episode, please subscribe to the podcast through iTunes and let your friends and family know about it too.

This is Catherine Ford for Student Tech. If you learned something new today, then it's been a great day!

Your comments, questions, and suggestions are always welcome!