Thank you tojocky

I agree they are good samples of accesing directly Microsoft formats.

Other good effort is Jakarta POI. The problem of it is that it is addressed to Java.

When thinking in Automation package I was tempted to access directly the files. The advantage was clear: you do not need the Office software to do it and you do not depend on the OS (how to access Microsoft files from GNU/Linux?).

The problem I had was that .xls, .doc, .ods, .otd are from complex to very complex formats and I did not found libraries that covered their main features.

Finally I chose to go through Ole automation and UNO api. For me they have not been easy to use. Bad documented from a C point of view after many efforts I had to refuse to use UNO to handle OpenOffice and so to handle it from Linux as there is no Ole clone.

Well, that is my experience. More ideas are acknowledged.

Best regards
Koldo