



LibreOffice
Community



Getting Started Guide

Appendix B
Open Source,
Open Standards,
OpenDocument

Copyright

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Feedback

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Note

Everything you send to a mailing list, including your email address and any other personal information that is written in the message, is publicly archived and cannot be deleted.

Publication date and software version

Published June 2021. Based on LibreOffice 7.1 Community.
Other versions of LibreOffice may differ in appearance and functionality.

Using LibreOffice on macOS

Some keystrokes and menu items are different on macOS from those used in Windows and Linux. The table below gives some common substitutions for the instructions in this document. For a detailed list, see the application Help.

<i>Windows or Linux</i>	<i>macOS equivalent</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Tools > Options menu selection	LibreOffice > Preferences	Access setup options
Right-click	<i>Control</i> +click or right-click depending on computer setup	Open a context menu
<i>Ctrl</i> (Control)	⌘ (Command)	Used with other keys
<i>F11</i>	⌘+T	Open the Styles deck in the Sidebar

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Introduction

LibreOffice is a productivity suite that is compatible with other major office suites and available on a variety of platforms. It is open source software and therefore free to download, use, and distribute. If you are new to LibreOffice, this appendix will provide some information regarding its history, its community, and some of its technical specifications.

A short history of LibreOffice

The OpenOffice.org project began when Sun Microsystems released the source code (“blueprints”) for its StarOffice® software to the open source community on October 13, 2000. OpenOffice.org 1.0, the product, was released on April 30, 2002. Major updates to OpenOffice.org included version 2.0 in October 2005 and version 3.0 in October 2008. On January 26, 2010, Oracle Corporation acquired Sun Microsystems.

On September 28, 2010, the community of volunteers who develop and promote OpenOffice.org announced a major change in project structure. After ten years’ successful growth with Sun Microsystems as founding and principle sponsor, the project launched an independent foundation called The Document Foundation, to fulfill the promise of independence written in the original charter. This foundation is the cornerstone of a new ecosystem where individuals and organizations can contribute to and benefit from the availability of a truly free office suite.

Unable to acquire the trademarked OpenOffice.org name from Oracle Corporation, The Document Foundation named its product LibreOffice. Continuing the version numbers from OpenOffice.org, LibreOffice 3.3 was released in January 2011 and version 7.0 was released in August 2020.

In February 2012, The Document Foundation was incorporated in Berlin as a German Stiftung. You can read more about The Document Foundation at: www.documentfoundation.org.

The LibreOffice community

The Document Foundation’s mission is:

“...to facilitate the evolution of the OpenOffice.org Community into a new open, independent, and meritocratic organizational structure within the next few months. An independent Foundation is a better match to the values of our contributors, users, and supporters, and will enable a more effective, efficient, transparent, and inclusive Community. We will protect past investments by building on the solid achievements of our first decade, encourage wide participation in the Community, and co-ordinate activity across the Community.”

Some of our corporate supporters include GNOME Foundation, Google, Red Hat, and Collabora. Additionally, over 450,000 people from nearly every part of the globe have joined this project with the idea of creating the best possible office suite that all can use. This is the essence of an “open source” community!

With its open source software license, LibreOffice is key in the drive to provide an office suite that is available to anyone, anywhere, for commercial or personal use. The software has been translated into many languages and runs on all major operating systems. New functionality can be added in the form of extensions.

The LibreOffice community invites contributors in all areas, including translators, software developers, graphic artists, technical writers, editors, donors, and end-user support. Whatever you do best, you can make a difference in LibreOffice. The community operates internationally in all time zones and in many languages, linked through the internet at www.libreoffice.org and www.documentfoundation.org.

How is LibreOffice licensed?

LibreOffice is distributed under both the Mozilla Public License (MPL) 2.0 (www.libreoffice.org/about-us/licenses/) and the GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL) 3.0+ (www.gnu.org/licenses/lgpl-3.0.en.html).

What is open source?

The four essential rights of open-source software are embodied within the Free Software Foundation's family of the GNU General Public License (GPL):

- The right to use the software for any purpose.
- Freedom to redistribute the software for free or for a fee.
- Access to the complete source code of the program (that is, the "blueprints").
- The right to modify any part of the source, or use portions of it in other programs.

The basic idea behind open source is very simple: When programmers can read, redistribute, and modify the source code for a piece of software, the software evolves. People improve it, people adapt it, people fix bugs.

For more information on Free and Open Source software, visit these websites:

- Open Source Initiative (OSI): www.opensource.org
- Free Software Foundation (FSF): www.fsf.org

What are open standards?

An open standard provides a means of doing something that is independent of manufacturer or vendor, thus enabling competing software programs to freely use the same file formats. HTML, XML, and ODF are examples of open standards for documents.

An open standard meets the following requirements:

- It is well documented with the complete specification publicly available, either free or at a nominal charge.
- It can be freely copied, distributed and used. The intellectual property of the standard is made irrevocably available on a royalty-free basis.
- It is standardized and maintained in an independent, open forum (also called "standards organization") using an open process.

What is OpenDocument?

OpenDocument (ODF) is an XML-based file format for office documents (text documents, spreadsheets, drawings, presentations, and more), developed at OASIS (www.oasis-open.org), an independent, international standards group. OpenDocument version 1.2 was adopted by the International Standards Organization and named ISO/IEC 26300:2015 standard¹. In December 2019, ODF 1.3 was approved as a committee specification.

Unlike other file formats, ODF (ISO/IEC 26300:2015) is an open standard. It is publicly available, royalty-free, and without legal or other restrictions; therefore ODF files are not tied to a specific office suite and anybody can build a program that interprets these files. For this reason ODF is quickly becoming the preferred file format for government agencies, schools and other companies who prefer not to be too dependent on any one software supplier.

1 www.iso.org/standard/66363.html, www.iso.org/standard/66375.html, and www.iso.org/standard/66376.html

LibreOffice 7.1 saves documents in ODF 1.3 Extended by default. LibreOffice can also open and save in earlier versions of the ODF standard, as well as many other file formats, as summarized below.

For a full list of file formats that LibreOffice can read and write, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LibreOffice#Supported_file_formats

OpenDocument filename extensions

The most common filename extensions used for OpenDocument documents are:

- *.odt for word processing (text) documents
- *.ods for spreadsheets
- *.odp for presentations
- *.odb for databases
- *.odg for graphics (vector drawings)
- *.odc for charts
- *.odf for formulas (scientific formulas and equations)

File formats LibreOffice can open

LibreOffice can open a wide variety of file formats in addition to the OpenDocument formats, including Portable Document Format (PDF).

Opening text documents

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odt, .ott, .oth, .odm, and .fodt), Writer can open the following text document formats, and a variety of legacy formats not listed below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Microsoft Word 6.0/95/97/2000/XP/Mac (.doc and .dot) | |
| Microsoft Word 2003 XML (.xml) | |
| Microsoft Word 2007/2010 XML (.docx, .docm, .dotx, .dotm) | |
| Microsoft WinWord 5 (.doc) | WordPerfect Document (.wpd) |
| Microsoft Works (.wps) | Lotus WordPro (.lwp) |
| Abiword Document (.abw, .zabw) | ClarisWorks/Appleworks Document (.cwk) |
| MacWrite Document (.mw, .mcw) | Rich Text Format (.rtf) |
| Text CSV (.csv and .txt) | StarWriter formats (.sdw, .sgl, .vor) |
| DocBook (.xml) | Unified Office Format text (.uot, .uof) |
| T602 Document (.602, .txt) | Hangul WP 97 (.hwp) |
| Apple Pages 4 (.pages) | eBook (.pdb) |
| HTML Document (.htm, .html) | OpenOffice.org 1.x (.sxw, .stw, and .sxd) |
| ... and many others | |

Most of these file types are automatically detected by LibreOffice, so they can be opened without explicitly selecting the document type in the file picker.

When opening .htm or .html files (used for web pages), LibreOffice customizes Writer for working with these files.

Opening spreadsheets

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.ods, .ots, and .fods), Calc can open the following spreadsheet formats:

- Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP (.xls, .xlw, and .xlt)
- Microsoft Excel 4.x–5.0/95 (.xls, .xlw, and .xlt)
- Microsoft Excel 97-2003 (.xml)
- Microsoft Excel 2007-365 (.xlsx, .xlsm, .xltx, .xltm)
- Microsoft Excel 2007-2010 binary (.xlsb)
- Lotus 1-2-3 (.wk1, .wks, and .123)
- Data Interchange Format (.dif)
- Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- Text CSV (.csv and .txt)
- StarCalc (.sdc and .vor)
- OpenOffice.org 1.x (.sxc and .stc)
- dBASE (.dbf)
- SYLK (.slk)
- Unified Office Format spreadsheet (.uos, .uof)
- HTML Document (.htm and .html files, including Web page queries)
- Quattro Pro 6.0 (.wb2)
- Apple Numbers 2 (.numbers)
- ... and many others

Opening presentations

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odp, .odg, .otp, and .fopd), Impress can open the following presentation formats:

- Microsoft PowerPoint 97/2000/XP (.ppt and .pot)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2007-365 (.pptx, .pptm, .potx, .potm)
- StarDraw and StarImpress (.sda, .sdd, .sdp, and .vor)
- OpenOffice.org 1.x (.sxi and .sti)
- Unified Office Format presentation (.uop, .uof)
- CGM – Computer Graphics Metafile (.cgm)
- Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Apple Keynote 5 (.key)
- ... and many others

Opening graphic files

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odg and .otg) and Portable Document Format (.pdf), Draw can open the following graphic formats:

- Adobe Photoshop (*.psd)
- AutoCAD Interchange Format (*.dxf)
- Corel Draw (*.cdr)
- Corel Presentation Exchange (*.cmx)
- Microsoft Publisher 98-2010 (*.pub)
- Microsoft Visio 2000-2013 (*.vdx; *.vsd; *.vsdm; *.vsdx)
- WordPerfect Graphics (*.wpg)
- OpenOffice.org 1.x (.sxd and .std)

BMP	JPEG, JPG	PCX	RAS	TGA
DXF	MET	PGM	SDA	TIF, TIFF
EMF	PBM	PNG	SDD	WMF
EPS	PCD	PPM	SVG	XBM
GIF	PCT	PSD	SVM	XPM

Opening formula files

In addition to OpenDocument Formula (.odf) files, Math can open the formats used by OpenOffice.org 1.x (.sxm), StarMath (.smf), and MathML (.mml) files.

When opening a Word document that contains an embedded equation editor object, if the option **MathType to LibreOffice Math or reverse** is checked in **Tools > Options > Load/Save > Microsoft Office**, the object will be automatically converted to a LibreOffice Math object.

File formats LibreOffice can save to

Saving in an OpenDocument format guarantees the correct rendering of the file when it is transferred to another person or when the file is reopened with a later version of LibreOffice or with another program. It is strongly recommended that you use OpenDocument as the default file formats. However, you can save files in other formats, if you wish.

Tip

When sharing a document that you do not expect the recipient to modify, the preferred option is to convert the document to PDF. LibreOffice provides a straightforward way to convert documents to PDF. See Chapter 10, Printing, Exporting, Emailing, and Signing, in this guide.

Saving text documents

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odt, .ott, and .fodt), Writer can save in these formats:

Office Open XML Text (.docx)	Microsoft Word 2007–365 (.docx, .dotx)
Microsoft Word 97–2003 (.doc)	Microsoft Word 2003 XML (.xml)
Rich Text Format (.rtf)	Text (.txt)
Text Encoded (.txt)	Unified Office Format text (.uot, .uof)
HTML Document (.html and .htm)	DocBook (.xml)

Encryption support within the Microsoft Word 97/2000/XP filter allows password protected Microsoft Word documents to be saved.

Note

The .rtf format is a common format for transferring text files between applications, but you are likely to experience loss of formatting and images. For this reason, other formats should be used.

Saving spreadsheet files

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.ods, .ots, and .fods), Calc can save in these formats:

Office Open XML Spreadsheet (.xlsx)	Data Interchange Format (.dif)
Microsoft Excel 2007–365 XML (.xlsx)	dBase (.dbf)
Microsoft Excel 97–2003 (.xls and .xlw)	SYLK (.slk)
Microsoft Excel 97–2003 Template (.xlt)	Text CSV (.csv and .txt)
Microsoft Excel 2003 XML (.xml)	Unified Office Format spreadsheet (.uos)
HTML Document (Calc) (.html and .htm)	

Saving presentations

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odp, .otp, .fodp, and .odg), Impress can save in these formats:

- Microsoft PowerPoint 2007–365 (.pptx, .potm)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2007–365 AutoPlay (.ppsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 97–2003 (.ppt)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 97–2003 Template (.pot)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 97–2003 AutoPlay (.pps)
- Office Open XML Presentation (.pptx, .potm, .ppsx)
- Unified Office Format presentation (.uop)

Impress can also export to any of the graphics formats listed for Draw.

Saving drawings

Draw can save in the OpenDocument Drawing formats (.odg, .otg, and .fodg).

Draw can export to any of the following graphics formats: BMP, EMF, EPS, GIF, JPEG, PNG, SVG, TIFF, and WMF.

Note

Adobe [Macromedia] Flash (.swf) export has been removed from LibreOffice 7. Flash Player reached end-of-life in December 2020.

Saving Writer/Web documents

Writer/Web can save to these formats:

- HTML document (.html and .htm), as HTML 4.0 Transitional Text and Text Encoded (LibreOffice Writer/Web) (.txt)

Exporting to other formats

LibreOffice uses the term “export” for some file operations involving a change of file type. If you cannot find what you want under **File > Save As**, look under **File > Export** (not available in Math) for additional types.

Two popular formats that LibreOffice can export to are PDF (Writer, Calc, Impress, and Draw) and EPUB (Writer only). See Chapter 10, Printing, Exporting, Emailing, and Signing Documents, for more information about exporting to those formats.

LibreOffice can also export files to HTML and XHTML. In addition, Draw and Impress can export to a range of image formats.

To export to one of these formats, choose **File > Export**. On the Export dialog, specify a file name for the exported document, then select the desired format in the file format list and click the **Export** or **Save** button as appropriate.