



LibreOffice

The Document Foundation

Getting Started Guide

Appendix B
Open Source,
Open Standards,
OpenDocument

Copyright

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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. On January 26, 2010, Oracle Corporation acquired Sun Microsystems.

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

Major updates to OpenOffice.org include version 2.0 in October 2005 and version 3.0 in October 2008. The release of LibreOffice 3.3, the first release by the newly formed The Document Foundation community, is expected in early 2011. Since version 2.0, OpenOffice.org has supported the open standard OASIS OpenDocument as its default file format.

You can read more about The Document Foundation at: <http://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 Canonical, The GNOME Foundation, Google, Novell and Red Hat. 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 licence, 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 the Open Source Initiative (OSI) approved Lesser General Public License (LGPL).

The LGPL license is available at The Document Foundation's website at:

<http://www.documentfoundation.org/lgpl/>

What is “open source”?

The four essential rights of open-source software are embodied within the Free Software Foundation's *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): <http://www.opensource.org>

Free Software Foundation (FSF): <http://www.gnu.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 publically 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 (<http://www.oasis-open.org/who/>), an independent, international standards group.

Unlike other file formats, ODF 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.

LibreOffice saves documents in Open Document Format by default. LibreOffice 3 has adopted version 1.2 of the OpenDocument standard. LibreOffice can also open and save many other file formats; see “File formats LibreOffice can open” on page 7, “File formats LibreOffice can save to” on page 9, and “Exporting to other formats” on page 10.

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)
- *.odf for formulas (mathematical equations)

Frequently asked questions

May I distribute LibreOffice to anyone?	Yes.
How many computers may I install it on?	As many as you like.
May I sell it?	Yes.
May I use LibreOffice in my business?	Yes.
Is LibreOffice available in my language?	LibreOffice has been translated (localized) into over 40 languages, so your language probably is supported. Additionally, there are over 70 <i>spelling</i> , <i>hyphenation</i> , and <i>thesaurus</i> dictionaries available for languages, and dialects that do not have a localized program interface. The dictionaries are available from the LibreOffice website at: www.libreoffice.org or at (http://extensions.services.openoffice.org/en/dictionaries)
How can you make it for free?	LibreOffice is developed and maintained by volunteers and has the backing of several organizations.
What if I need technical support?	Read the section titled “How to get help” in Chapter 1 (Introducing LibreOffice).
Who owns the software?	
Does that mean that they can take away the software?	No. The licenses under which LibreOffice is developed and distributed can never be revoked, so it cannot be taken away.
I am writing a software application. May I use programming code from LibreOffice in my program?	You may, within the parameters set in the LGPL. Read the license: http://www.documentfoundation.org/lgpl/

Why do I need Java to run LibreOffice? Is it written in Java?	<p>LibreOffice is not written in Java; it is written in the C++ language. Java is one of several languages that can be used to extend the software. The Java JDK/JRE is only required for some features. The most notable one is the HSQLDB relational database engine.</p> <p>Note: Java is available at no cost. If you do not want to use Java, you can still use nearly all of the features of LibreOffice.</p>
How can I contribute to LibreOffice?	<p>You can help with the development of LibreOffice in many ways, and you do not need to be a programmer. To start, check out this webpage: http://www.documentfoundation.org/contribution/</p>
What's the catch?	<p>There really is none; you can read the licenses here: http://www.documentfoundation.org/lgpl/</p>

File formats LibreOffice can open

LibreOffice can open a wide variety of file formats in addition to the OpenDocument formats.

Opening text documents

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odt, .ott, .oth, and .odm), Writer 3 can open the formats used by OOo 1.x (.sxw, .stw, and .sxc) and the following text document formats:

- Microsoft Word 6.0/95/97/2000/XP) (.doc and .dot)
- Microsoft Word 2003 XML (.xml)
- Microsoft Word 2007 XML (.docx, .docm, .dotx, .dotm)
- Microsoft WinWord 5 (.doc)
- WordPerfect Document (.wpd)
- WPS 2000/Office 1.0 (.wps)
- Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- Text CSV (.csv and .txt)
- StarWriter formats (.sdw, .sgl, .vor)
- DocBook (.xml)
- Unified Office Format text (.uot, .uof)
- Ichitaro 8/9/10/11 (.jtd and .jtt)
- Hangul WP 97 (.hwp)
- T602 Document (.602, .txt)
- AportisDoc (Palm) (.pdb)
- Pocket Word (.psw)
- HTML Document (.htm, .html)

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 and .ots), Calc 3 can open the formats used by LibreOffice 1.x (.sxc and .stc) and 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 2003 XML (.xml)
- Microsoft Excel 2007 XML (.xlsx, .xlsm, .xlts, .xltm)
- Microsoft Excel 2007 binary (.xlsb)
- Lotus 1-2-3 (.wk1, .wks, and .123)
- Data Interchange Format (.dif)
- Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- Text CSV (.csv and .txt)
- StarCalc formats (.sdc and .vor)
- dBASE (.dbf)
- SYLK (.slk)
- Unified Office Format spreadsheet (.uos, .uof)
- HTML Document (.htm and .html files, including Web page queries)
- Pocket Excel (.pxl)
- Quattro Pro 6.0 (.wb2)

Opening presentations

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odp, .odg, and .otp), Impress 3 can open the formats used by OOo 1.x (.sxi and .sti) and the following presentation formats:

- Microsoft PowerPoint 97/2000/XP (.ppt and .pot)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2007 (.pptx, .pptm, .potx, .potm)
- StarDraw and StarImpress (.sda, .sdd, .sdp, and .vor)
- Unified Office Format presentation (.uop, .uof)
- CGM – Computer Graphics Metafile (.cgm)
- Portable Document Format (.pdf)

Opening graphic files

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odg and .otg), Draw 3 can open the formats used by OOo 1.x (.sxd and .std) and the following graphic formats:

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

Opening formula files

In addition to OpenDocument Formula (.odf) files, Math 3 can open the format used by OOo 1.x (.sxm), StarMath, (.smf), and MathML (.mml) files.

When opening a Word document that contains an embedded equation editor object, if the option for it (MathType to LibreOffice Math or reverse) is checked in **Tools** → **Options** → **Load/Save** → **Microsoft Office**, the object will be automatically converted to an 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 re-opened with a later version of LibreOffice. It is strongly recommended that you use ODF as default file format. However, you can save files in other formats, if you wish.

Tip

When sharing a document that you do not expect or want the recipient to modify, the safest option is to convert the document to PDF. LibreOffice provides a very straightforward way to convert documents to PDF. See Chapter 10 (Printing, Exporting, and E-Mailing) in this book.

Saving text documents

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odt and .ott), Writer 3 can save in these formats:

- OpenOffice.org 1.x Text Document (.sxw)
- OpenOffice.org 1.x Text Document Template (.stw)
- Microsoft Word 6.0, 95, and 97/2000/XP (.doc)
- Microsoft Word 2003 XML (.xml)
- Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- StarWriter 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 (.sdw)
- StarWriter 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 Template (.vor)
- Text (.txt)
- Text Encoded (.txt)
- Unified Office Format text (.uot, .uof)
- HTML Document (OpenOffice.org Writer) (.html and .htm)
- DocBook (.xml)
- AportisDoc (Palm) (.pdb)
- Pocket Word (.psw)

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 and .ots), Calc 3 can save in these formats:

- OpenOffice.org 1.x Spreadsheet (.sxc)
- OpenOffice.org 1.x Spreadsheet Template (.stc)
- Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP (.xls and .xlw)
- Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP Template (.xlt)
- Microsoft Excel 5.0 and 95 (.xls and .xlw)
- Microsoft Excel 2003 XML (.xml)
- Data Interchange Format (.dif)
- dBase (.dbf)
- SYLK (.slk)
- Text CSV (.csv and .txt)
- StarCalc 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 formats (.sdc and .vor)
- Unified Office Format spreadsheet (.uos)

HTML Document (OpenOffice.org Calc) (.html and .htm)
Pocket Excel (.pxl)

Note

The Java Runtime Environment is required to use the mobile device filters for AportisDoc (Palm), Pocket Word, and Pocket Excel.

Saving presentations

In addition to OpenDocument formats (.odp, .otp, and .odg), Impress 3 can save in these formats:

- OpenOffice.org 1.x Presentation (.sxi)
- OpenOffice.org 1.x Presentation Template (.sti)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 97/2000/XP (.ppt)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 97/2000/XP Template (.pot)
- StarDraw, StarImpress (.sda, .sdd, and .vor)
- Unified Office Format presentation (.uop)

Impress can also export to MacroMedia Flash (.swf) and any of the graphics formats listed for Draw.

Saving drawings

Draw 3 can only save in the OpenDocument Drawing formats (.odg and .otg), the OpenOffice.org 1.x formats (.sxd and .std) and StarDraw format (.sda, .sdd, and .vor).

However, Draw can also export to BMP, EMF, EPS, GIF, JPEG, MET, PBM, PCT, PGM, PNG, PPM, RAS, SVG, SVM, TIFF, WMF, and XPM.

Writer/Web can save in these formats

- HTML document (.html and .htm), as HTML 4.0 Transitional
- OpenOffice.org 1.0 HTML Template (.stw)
- OpenOffice.org 2.x HTML Template (.oth)
- StarWriter/Web 4.0 and 5.0 (.vor)
- Text (LibreOffice Writer/Web) (.txt)
- 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 the filetype you're looking for under **Save As**, look under **Export** for additional types.

LibreOffice can export files to XHTML. In addition, Draw and Impress can export to Adobe Flash (.swf) and 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** button.