



LibreOffice
The Document Foundation

Writer Guide

Chapter 16

Customizing Writer

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Acknowledgments

This chapter is based on Chapter 16 of the *OpenOffice.org 3.3 Writer Guide*. The contributors to that chapter are:

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Publication date and software version

Published 11 March 2012. Based on LibreOffice 3.4.5.

Note for Mac users

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

Windows or Linux	Mac equivalent	Effect
Tools > Options menu selection	LibreOffice > Preferences	Access setup options
<i>Right-click</i>	<i>Control+click</i>	Open context menu
<i>Ctrl (Control)</i>	<i>⌘ (Command)</i>	Used with other keys
<i>F5</i>	<i>Shift+⌘+F5</i>	Open the Navigator
<i>F11</i>	<i>⌘+T</i>	Open Styles & Formatting window

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Introduction

This chapter describes some common customizations that you may wish to do.

You can customize menus, toolbars, and keyboard shortcuts in LibreOffice, add new menus and toolbars, and assign macros to events. However, you cannot customize context (right-click) menus.

Other customizations are made easy by extensions that you can install from the LibreOffice website or from other providers.

Note

Customizations to menus and toolbars can be saved in a template. To do so, first save them in a document and then save the document as a template as described in Chapter 10, Working with Templates.

Customizing menu content

In addition to changing the menu font (described in Chapter 2, Setting up Writer), you can add to and rearrange categories on the menu bar, add commands to menus, and make other changes.

To customize menus:

- 1) Choose **Tools > Customize**.
- 2) On the Customize dialog, go to the **Menus** page.

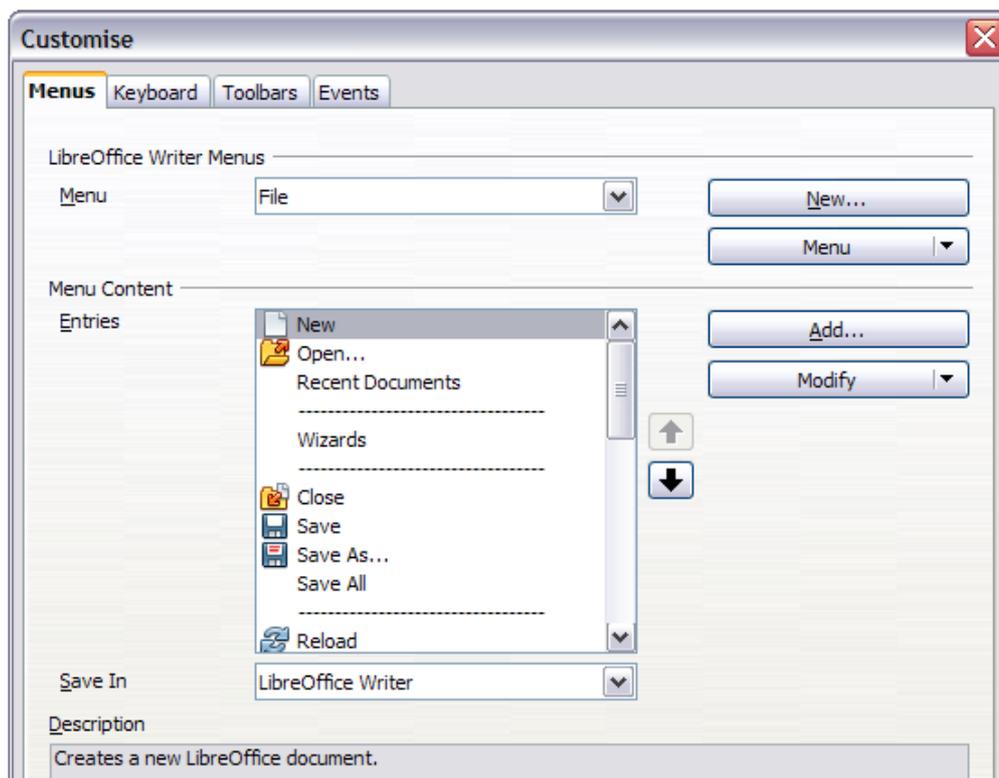


Figure 1. The Menus page of the Customize dialog

- 3) In the *Save In* drop-down list, choose whether to save this changed menu for the application (Writer) or for a selected document.
- 4) In the section *LibreOffice Writer Menus*, select from the **Menu** drop-down list the menu that you want to customize. The list includes all the main menus as well as submenus, that is menus that are contained under another menu. For example, in addition to *File*, *Edit*, *View*,

and so on, there is *File | Send* and *File | Templates*. The commands contained in the selected menu are shown in the central part of the dialog.

- 5) To customize the selected menu, click on the **Menu** or **Modify** buttons. You can also add commands to a menu by clicking on the **Add** button. These actions are described in the following sections. Use the up and down arrows next to the *Entries* list to move the selected menu item to a different position.
- 6) When you have finished making all your changes, click **OK** to save them.

Creating a new menu

In the *Menus* page of the Customize dialog, click **New** to display the New Menu dialog, shown in Figure 2.

- 1) Type a name for your new menu in the *Menu name* box.
- 2) Use the up and down arrow buttons to move the new menu into the required position on the menu bar.
- 3) Click **OK** to save.

The new menu now appears on the list of menus in the Customize dialog. (It will appear on the menu bar itself after you save your customizations.)

After creating a new menu, you need to add some commands to it, as described in “Adding a command to a menu” on page 6.

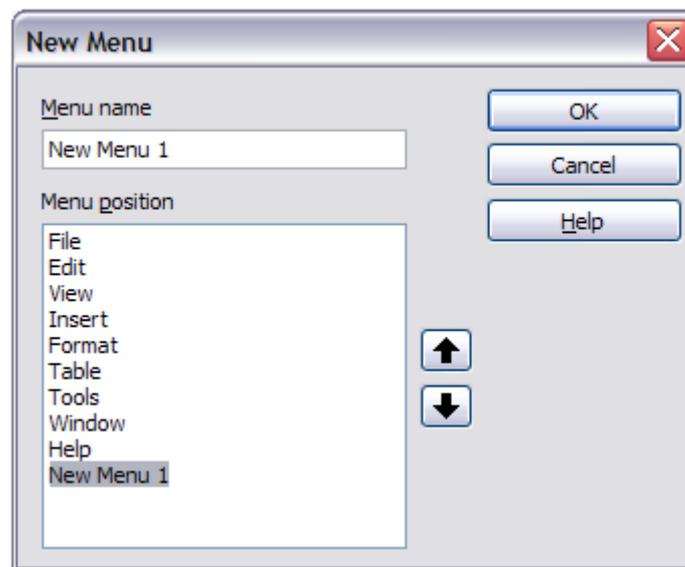


Figure 2: Adding a new menu

Modifying existing menus

To modify an existing menu, either user-made or inbuilt, select it in the *Menu* list and click the **Menu** button to drop down a list of modifications: **Move**, **Rename**, **Delete**. Not all of these modifications can be applied to all the entries in the *Menu* list. For example, **Rename** and **Delete** are not available for the supplied menus, and **Move** is not available for submenus.

To move a menu (such as *File*), choose **Menu > Move**. A dialog similar to the one shown in Figure 2 (but without the *Menu name* box) opens. Use the up and down arrow buttons to move the menu into the required position.

To move submenus (such as *File | Send*), select the main menu (**File**) in the *Menu list* and then, in the *Menu Content* section of the dialog, select the submenu (**Send**) in the *Entries* list and use the

arrow keys to move it up or down in the sequence. Submenus are easily identified in the *Entries* list by a small black triangle on the right hand side of the name.

Custom menus, and supplied submenus, can be renamed by pressing the **Menu** button in the upper section of the page and selecting **Rename**.

In addition to renaming, you can allocate a letter in a custom menu's name, which will become underlined, to be used as a keyboard shortcut, that allows you to select that menu when you press *Alt+* that letter. Existing submenus can be edited to change the letter which is used to select them from the keyboard once the menu is open.

- 1) Select a custom menu or a submenu in the *Menu* drop-down list.
- 2) Click the **Menu** button and select **Rename**.
- 3) Add a tilde (~) in front of the letter that you want to use as an accelerator. For example, to select the **Send** submenu command by pressing S (after opening the File menu using *Alt+F*), enter ~**Send**. This changes it from the default d.

Caution



When allocating a shortcut to custom menus, be careful to not use an existing shortcut letter.

Adding a command to a menu

You can add commands to the supplied menus and to menus you have created. On the Customize dialog, select the menu in the *Menu* list and click the **Add** button in the *Menu Content* section of the dialog. The Add Commands dialog is displayed.

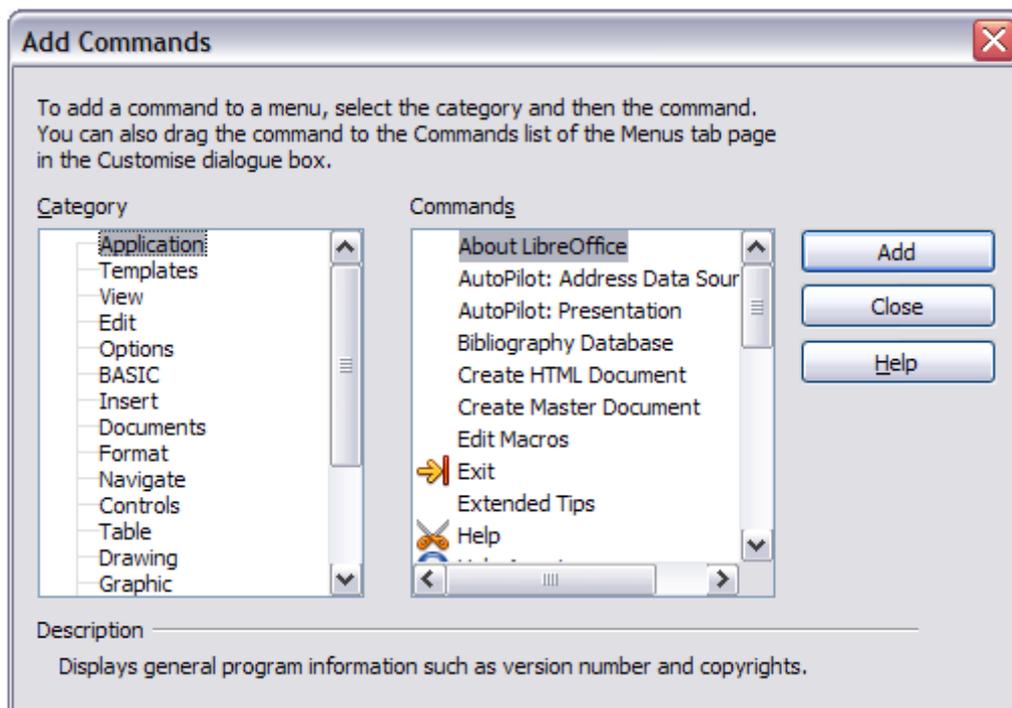


Figure 3: Adding a command to a menu

On the Add Commands dialog, select a category and then the command, and click **Add**. The dialog remains open, so you can select several commands. When you have finished adding commands, click **Close**. Back on the Customize dialog, you can use the up and down arrow buttons to arrange the commands in your preferred sequence.

Modifying menu entries

In addition to changing the sequence of entries on a menu or submenu, you can add submenus, rename or delete the entries, and add group separators.

To begin, select the menu or submenu to be modified, from the *Menu* list near the top of the Customize page, then select the entry in the *Entries* list under *Menu Content*. Click the **Modify** button and choose the required action from the drop-down list of actions.

Add Submenu does just that. After adding a submenu, it can be selected in the *Menu* list in the top section of the page and another submenu can be nested within it.

Begin a group adds a separator line after the highlighted entry.

Rename allows you to rename the entries and to modify the accelerator letter used in the menu entry for items other than submenus (see “Modifying existing menus“ on page 5).

Delete removes the selected entry from the *Entries* list.

Customizing toolbars

You can customize toolbars in several ways, including choosing which icons are visible and locking the position of a docked toolbar (as described in Chapter 1, Introducing Writer), and adding or deleting icons (commands) in the list of those available on a toolbar. You can also create new toolbars. This section describes how to create new toolbars and add or delete icons on existing ones.

To get to the toolbar customization dialog, do any of the following:

- On the toolbar, click the arrow at the end of the toolbar and choose **Customize Toolbar**.
- Choose **View > Toolbars > Customize** from the menu bar.
- Choose **Tools > Customize** from the menu bar and go to the *Toolbars* page.

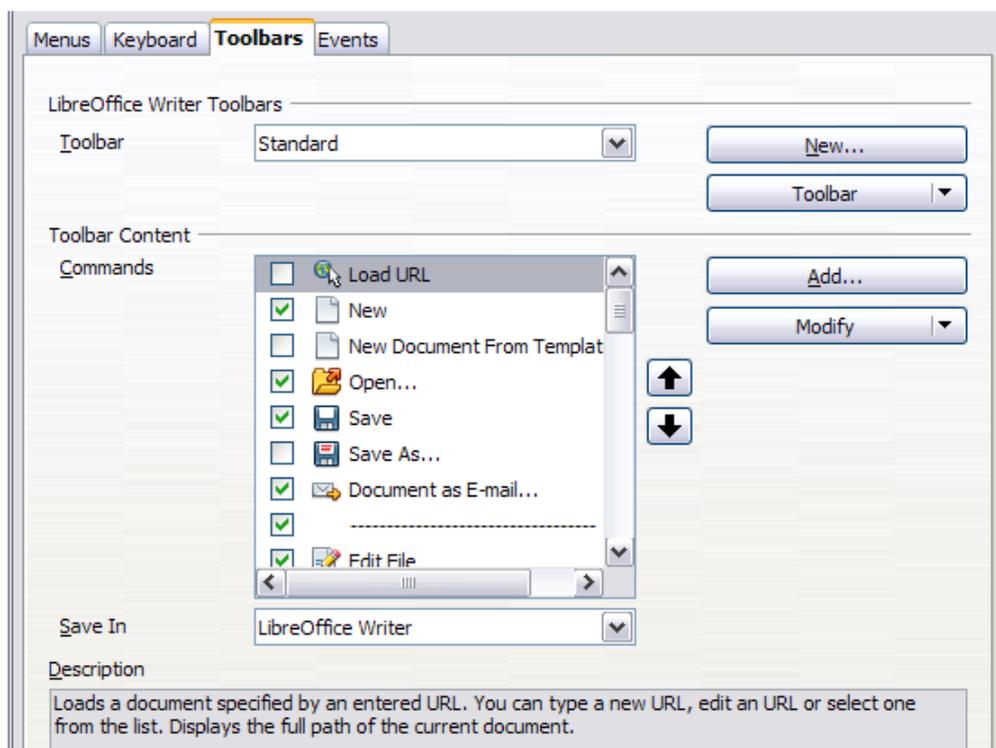


Figure 4. The Toolbars page of the Customize dialog

Modifying existing toolbars

To modify an existing toolbar:

- 1) In the *Save In* drop-down list, choose whether to save this changed toolbar for the application (Writer) or for a selected document.
- 2) In the section *LibreOffice Writer Toolbars*, select from the *Toolbar* drop-down list the toolbar that you want to modify.
- 3) Click on the **Toolbar** or **Modify** buttons, and add commands to a toolbar by clicking on the **Add** button. You can also create a new toolbar by clicking on the **New** button. These actions are described in the following sections.
- 4) When you have finished making all your changes, click **OK** to save them.

Adding a command to a toolbar

If the list of available buttons for a toolbar does not include all the commands you want on that toolbar, you can add commands. When you create a new toolbar, you need to add commands to it.

- 1) On the *Toolbars* page of the Customize dialog, select the toolbar in the **Toolbar** list and click the **Add** button in the *Toolbar Content* section of the dialog.
- 2) The Add Commands dialog (Figure 3) is the same as for adding commands to menus. Select a category and then the command, and click **Add**. The dialog remains open, so you can select several commands. When you have finished adding commands, click **Close**. If you insert an item which does not have an associated icon, the toolbar will display the full name of the item: the next section describes how to choose an icon for a toolbar command.
- 3) Back on the Customize dialog, you can use the up and down arrow buttons to arrange the commands in your preferred sequence.
- 4) When you are done making changes, click **OK** to save.

Choosing icons for toolbar commands

Toolbar buttons usually have icons, not words, on them, but not all of the commands have associated icons.

To choose an icon for a command, select the command in the *Toolbar Content – Commands* list in the Customize dialog, and click **Modify > Change icon**. On the Change Icon dialog, you can scroll through the available icons, select one, and click **OK** to assign it to the command.

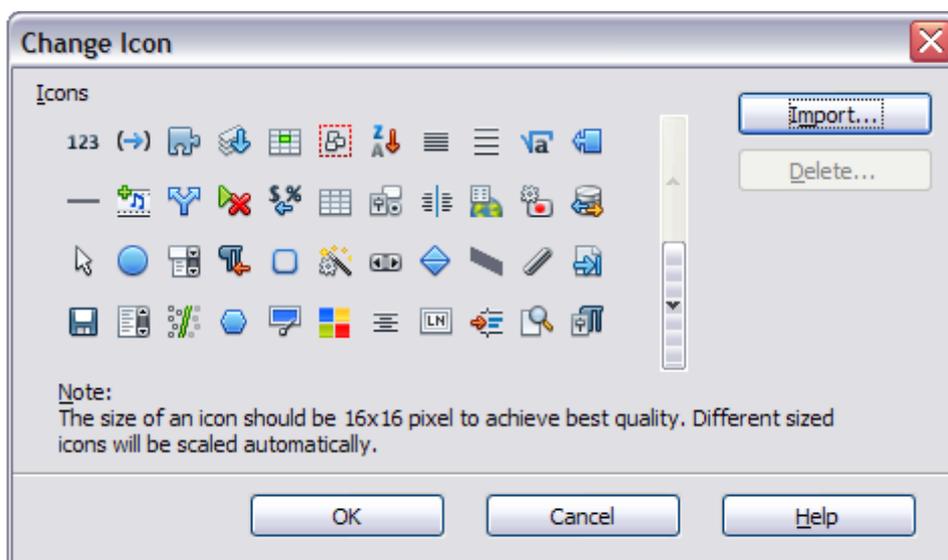


Figure 5: Change Icon dialog

To use a custom icon, create it in a graphics program and import it into LibreOffice by clicking the **Import** button on the Change Icon dialog. Custom icons must be 16 x 16 in size and cannot contain more than 256 colors.

Example: Adding a Fax icon to a toolbar

You can customize LibreOffice so that a single click on an icon automatically sends the current document as a fax.

- 1) Be sure the fax driver is installed. Consult the documentation for your fax modem for more information.
- 2) Choose **Tools > Options > LibreOffice Writer > Print**. The dialog shown in Figure 6 opens.

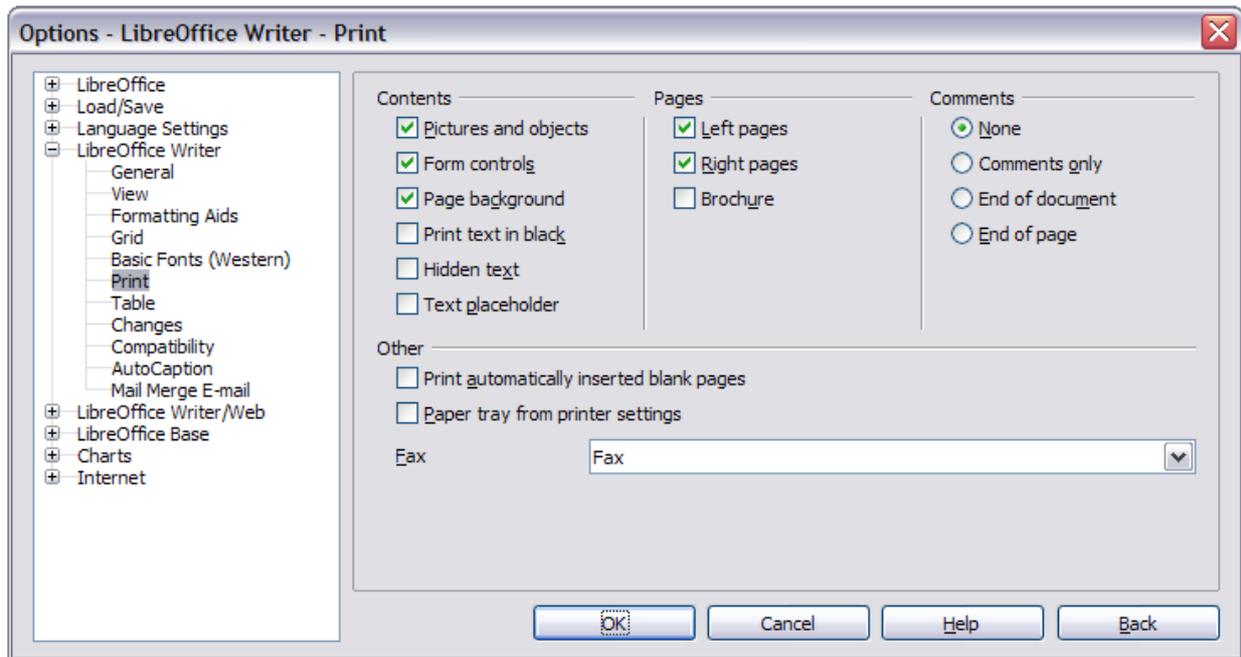


Figure 6: Setting up LibreOffice for sending faxes

- 3) Select the fax driver from the **Fax** list and click **OK**.
- 4) Click the arrow icon at the end of the Standard toolbar. In the drop-down menu, choose **Customize Toolbar**. The *Toolbars* page of the Customize dialog appears (Figure 4). Click **Add**.
- 5) On the Add Commands dialog (Figure 7), select **Documents** in the *Category* list, then select **Send Default Fax** in the *Commands* list. Click **Add**. Now you can see the new icon in the *Commands* list of the *Toolbars* page.
- 6) In the *Commands* list, click the up or down arrow button to position the new icon where you want it. Click **OK** and then click **Close**. Your toolbar now has a new icon to send the current document as a fax.

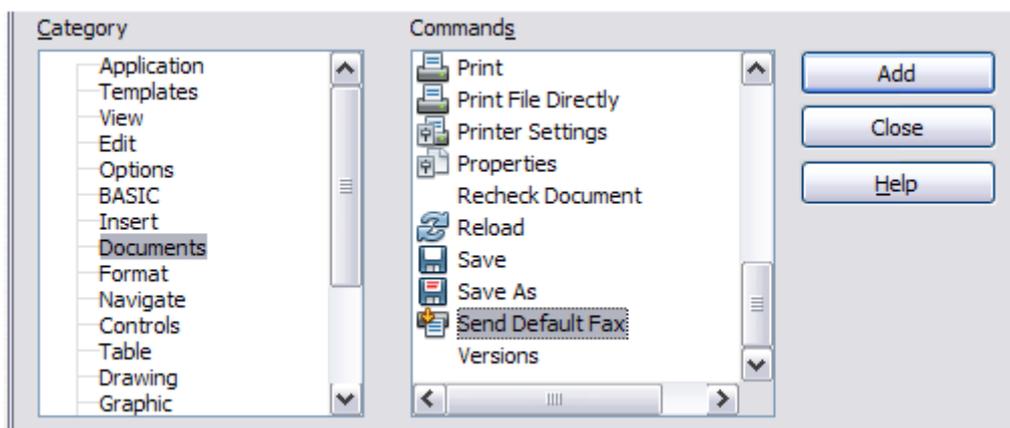


Figure 7: Adding a Send Fax command to a toolbar

Creating a new toolbar

To create a new toolbar:

- 1) Choose **Tools > Customize > Toolbars** from the menu bar.
- 2) Click **New**. On the Name dialog, type the new toolbar's name and choose from the *Save In* drop-down list where to save this changed menu: for the application (Writer) or for a selected document.



The new toolbar now appears on the list of toolbars in the Customize dialog. After creating a new toolbar, you need to add some commands to it, as described above.

Assigning shortcut keys

In addition to using the built-in keyboard shortcuts (listed in Appendix A), you can define your own. You can assign shortcuts to standard LibreOffice functions or your own macros and save them for use with the entire LibreOffice suite.

Caution



Be careful when reassigning your operating system's or LibreOffice's predefined shortcut keys. Many key assignments are universally understood shortcuts, such as *F1* for Help, and are always expected to provide certain results. Although you can easily reset the shortcut key assignments to the LibreOffice defaults, changing some common shortcut keys can cause confusion, especially if other users share your computer.

To adapt shortcut keys to your needs, use the Customize dialog, as described below.

- 1) Choose **Tools > Customize > Keyboard**. The Customize dialog opens.
- 2) To have the shortcut key assignment available in all components of LibreOffice, select the **LibreOffice** button.

- 3) Next select the required function from the *Category* and *Function* lists.
- 4) Now select the desired shortcut key in the *Shortcut keys* list at the top of the page and click the **Modify** button on the right. The selection now appears in the *Keys* list on the lower right.
- 5) Click **OK** to accept the change. Now the chosen shortcut key will execute the function chosen in step 3 above whenever it is pressed.

Repeat as required.

Note

All existing shortcut keys for the currently selected *Function* are listed in the *Keys* selection box. If the *Keys* list is empty, it indicates that the chosen key combination is free for use. If it were not, and you wanted to reassign a shortcut key combination that is already in use, you must first delete the existing key.

Shortcut keys that are greyed-out in the listing on the *Customize* dialog, such as *F1* and *F10*, are not available for reassignment.

Example: Assigning styles to shortcut keys

You can configure shortcut keys to quickly assign styles in your document. Some shortcuts are predefined, such as *Ctrl+0* for the *Text body* paragraph style, *Ctrl+1* for the *Heading 1* style and *Ctrl+2* for *Heading 2*. You can modify these shortcuts and create your own.

- 1) Click **Tools > Customize > Keyboard**. The *Keyboard* page of the *Customize* dialog (Figure 8) opens.

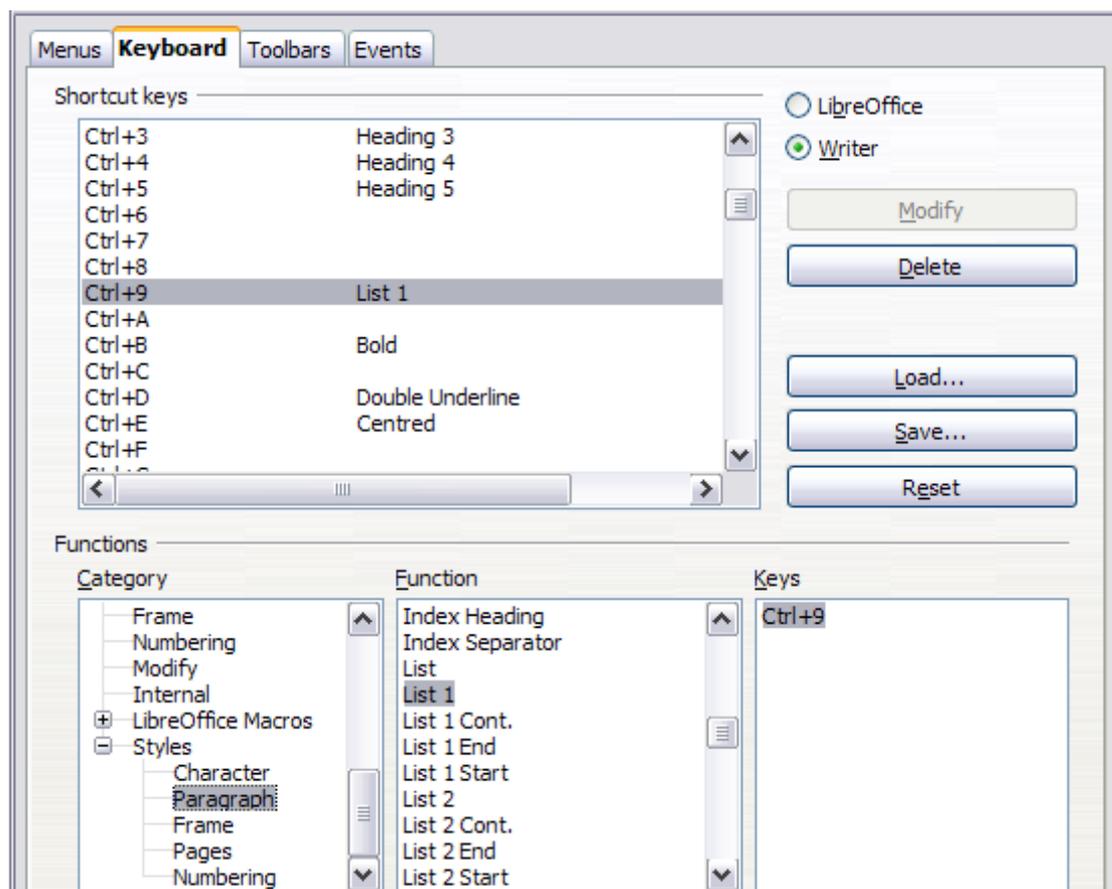


Figure 8. Defining keyboard shortcuts for applying styles

- 2) To have the shortcut key assignment available only for Writer, select **Writer** in the upper right corner of the page; otherwise select **LibreOffice** to make it available to every component.
- 3) Choose the shortcut key you want to assign a style to. In this example, we have chosen *Ctrl+9*. This enables the **Modify** button.
- 4) In the *Functions* section at the bottom of the dialog, scroll down in the *Category* list to *Styles*. Click the **+** sign to expand the list of styles.
- 5) Choose the category of style. (This example uses a paragraph style, but you can also choose character styles and others.) The *Function* list will display the names of the available styles for the selected category. The example shows some of LibreOffice's predefined styles.
- 6) To assign *Ctrl+9* to be the shortcut key combination for the *List 1* style, select *List 1* in the *Function* list, and then click **Modify**. *Ctrl+9* now appears in the *Keys* list on the right, and *List 1* appears next to *Ctrl+9* in the *Shortcut keys* box at the top.
- 7) Make any other required changes, and then click **OK** to save these settings and close the dialog.

Example: Assigning macros to shortcut keys

A common use for assigning macros to shortcut keys is to enable quick and easy insertion of special characters. This example shows how to set up keyboard shortcuts for inserting en-dashes and em-dashes.

Note

To enable macro recording, go to **Tools > Options > LibreOffice > General** and select the **Enable experimental (unstable) features** option.

Year (two digits)

Interpret as years between

1930

and 2029

Enable experimental (unstable) features

First, you need to record a macro for inserting each type of dash. Then, you need to assign those macros to shortcut key combinations.

- 1) Choose **Tools > Macros > Record Macro** to start recording a macro.
- 2) A small window is displayed so you know that LibreOffice is recording.
- 3) Choose **Insert > Special Characters** to open the Special Characters dialog. Scroll down until you find the en-dash (U+2013) and em-dash (U+2014) characters. Select one of them and click **OK**.



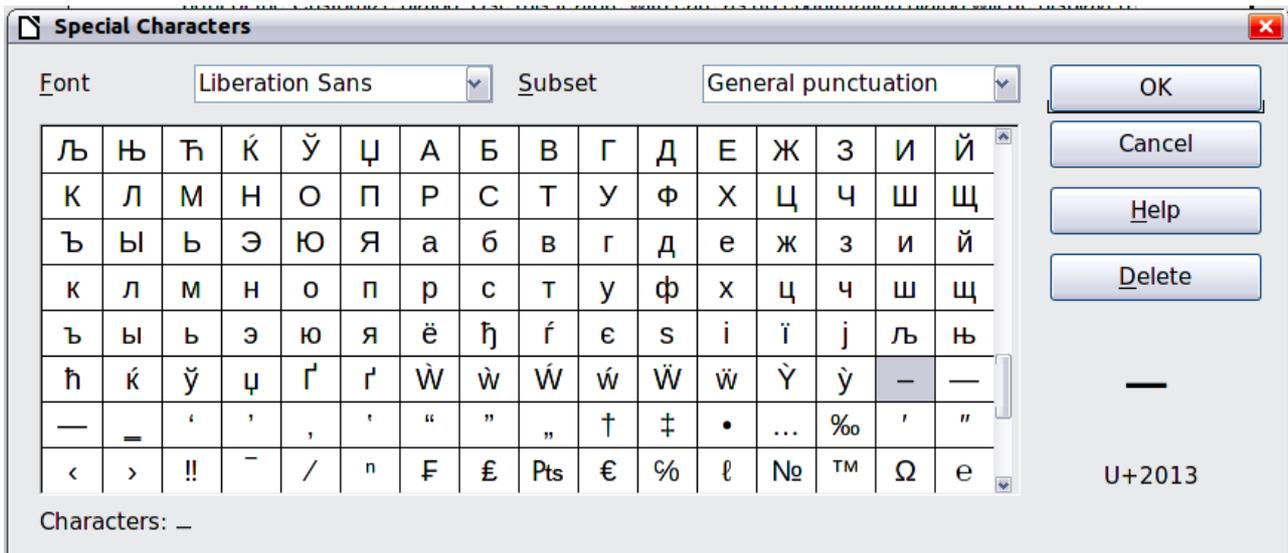


Figure 9: Find and choose the en-dash

- 4) Click the **Stop Recording** button to stop recording, save the macro, and display the LibreOffice Basic Macros dialog (see Figure 10). Type a descriptive name for the new macro in the **Macro name** box on the upper left.

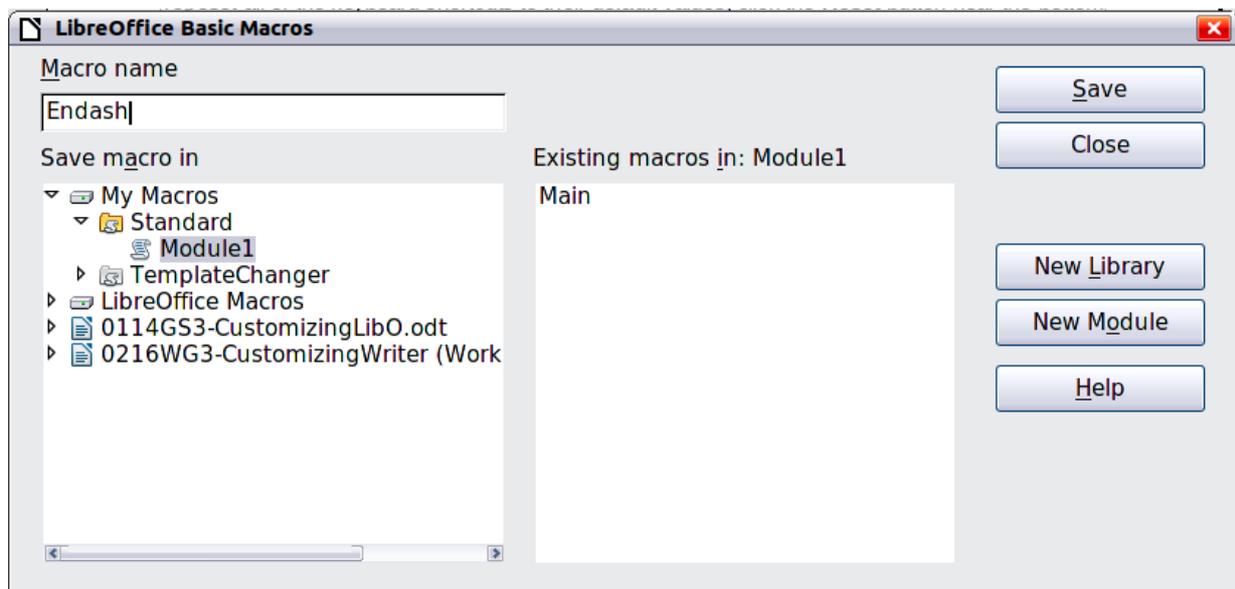


Figure 10: Naming the new macro and storing it

- 5) Be sure to open the library container named **My Macros**. Find the library named **Standard** under **My Macros**. Select **Module1** and click **Save**.
- 6) Repeat steps 1–4 to create other macros, for example to insert an em-dash.
- 7) Choose **Tools > Customize > Keyboard** tab (Figure 11). In the *Shortcut keys* list, pick an unused combination (for example, *Ctrl+Shift+M* for an emdash). In the *Category* list, scroll down to **LibreOffice Macros**, click the + sign (or small triangle, depending on your operating system), then click the + (or triangle) next to the **Standard** library and choose **Module1**. In the *Function* list, choose **Emdash** and click the **Modify** button on the upper right. The selected key combination now appears in the *Keys* list on the lower right, and Emdash appears next to *Ctrl+Shift+N* in the *Shortcut keys* list.
- 8) Repeat for the endash macro, then click **OK**.

Tip

For inserting en- and em-dashes, and other special characters, you may find extensions such as Compose Special Characters useful. See “Adding functionality with extensions” on page 15.

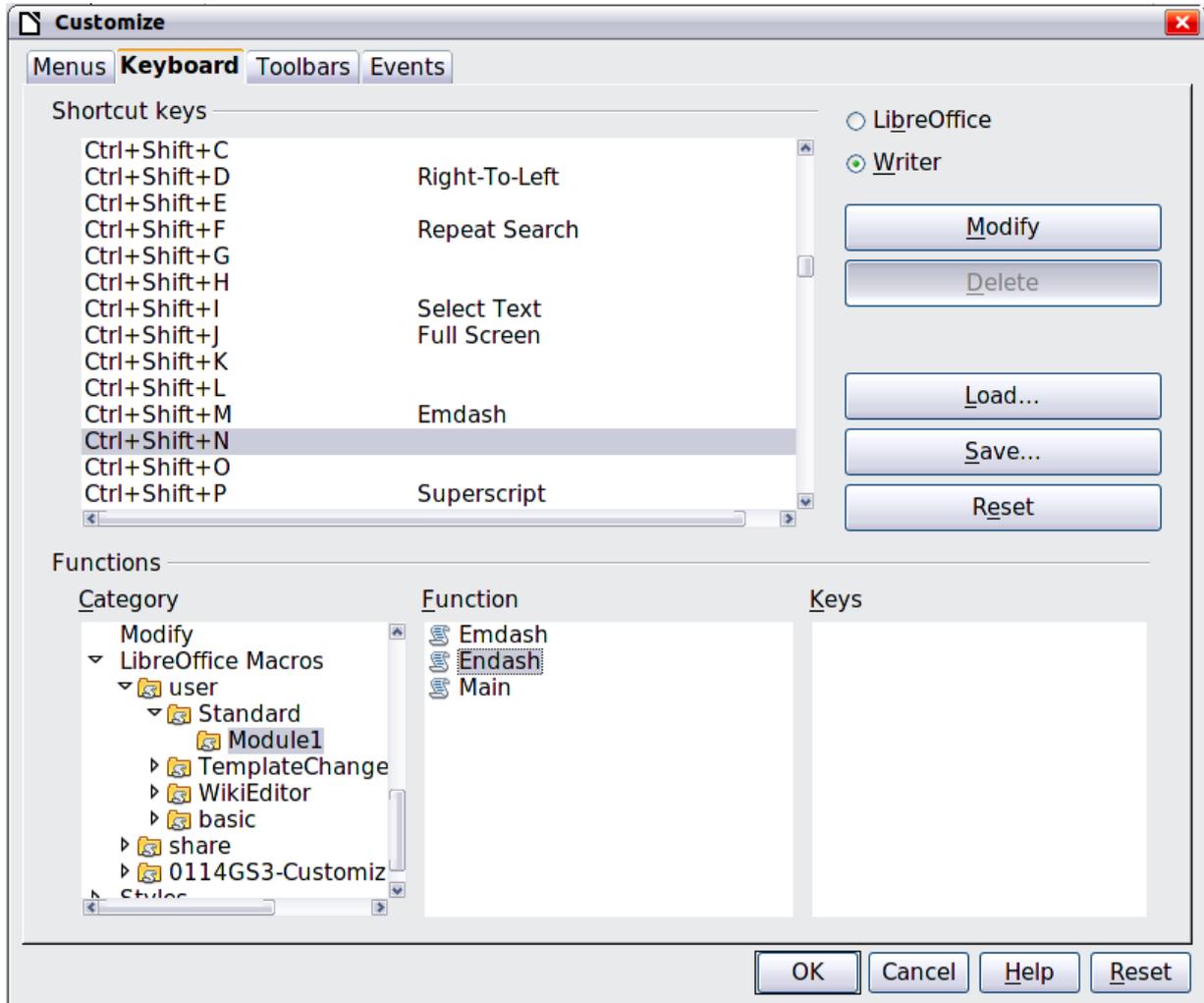


Figure 11: Defining keyboard shortcuts for running macros

Saving changes to a file

Changes to the shortcut key assignments can be saved in a keyboard configuration file for use at a later time, thus permitting you to create and apply different configurations as the need arises. To save keyboard shortcuts to a file:

- 1) After making your keyboard shortcut assignments, click the **Save** button on the Customize dialog (Figure 8).
- 2) In the Save Keyboard Configuration dialog, select *All files* from the **Save as Type** list.
- 3) Next enter a name for the keyboard configuration file in the **File name** box, or select an existing file from the list. If you need to, browse to find a file from another location.
- 4) Click **Save**. A confirmation dialog appears if you are about to overwrite an existing file, otherwise there will be no feedback and the file will be saved.

Loading a saved keyboard configuration

To load a saved keyboard configuration file and replace your existing configuration, click the **Load** button on the Customize dialog, and then select the configuration file from the Load Keyboard Configuration dialog.

Resetting the shortcut keys

To reset all of the keyboard shortcuts to their default values, click the **Reset** button near the bottom right of the Customize dialog. Use this feature with care as no confirmation dialog will be displayed; the defaults will be set without any further notice or user input.

Assigning macros to events

In LibreOffice, when something happens, we say that an event occurred. For example, a document was opened, a key was pressed, or the mouse moved. You can associate a macro with an event, so the macro is run when the event occurs. For example, a common use is to assign the “open document” event to run a macro that performs certain setup tasks for the document.

To associate a macro with an event, use the *Events* page of the Customize dialog. For more information, see Chapter 13, Getting Started with Macros, in the *Getting Started* guide.

Adding functionality with extensions

An extension is a package that can be installed into LibreOffice to add new functionality.

Several popular extensions are shipped bundled with LibreOffice and are installed with the program. Others can be downloaded from various websites. The official extension repository is located at <http://extensions.libreoffice.org/>. These extensions are free of charge.

Some extensions from other sources are free of charge; others are available for a fee. Check the descriptions to see what licenses and fees apply to the ones that interest you.

Installing extensions

To install an extension, follow these steps:

- 1) Download an extension and save it anywhere on your computer.
- 2) In LibreOffice, select **Tools > Extension Manager** from the menu bar. In the Extension Manager dialog (Figure 12), click **Add**.
- 3) A file browser window opens. Find and select the extension you want to install and click **Open**. The extension begins installing. You may be asked to accept a license agreement.
- 4) When the installation is complete, the extension is listed in the dialog. Extension Manager

Tip

To get extensions that are listed in the repository, you can open the Extension Manager and click the **Get more extensions online** link. You do not need to download them separately as in step 1 above.

Note

To install a *shared* extension, you need to have write access to the LibreOffice installation directory.

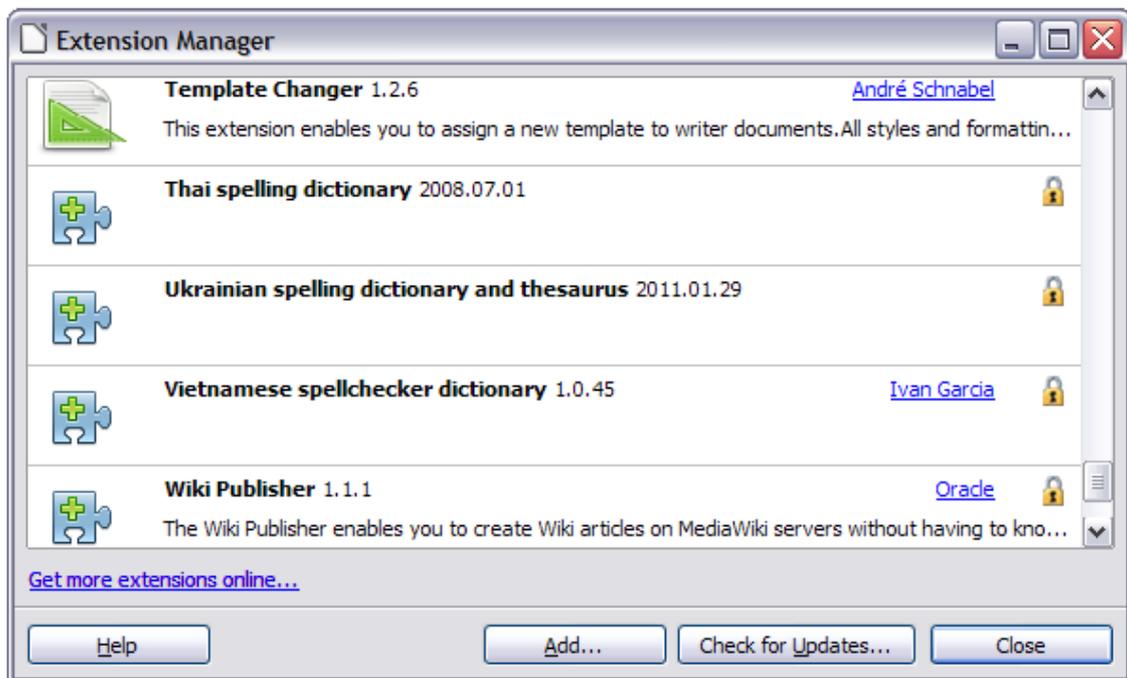


Figure 12: Using the Extension Manager