



Full Circle

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR THE UBUNTU LINUX COMMUNITY

LIBREOFFICE SERIES SPECIAL EDITION

LIBREOFFICE SERIES
SPECIAL EDITION



LibreOffice 3



Text Document



Drawing



Spreadsheet



Database



Presentation



Formula



Open...



Templates...

LIBREOFFICE

Volume One Parts 1-7

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Full Circle Magazine Specials



About Full Circle

Full Circle is a free, independent, magazine dedicated to the Ubuntu family of Linux operating systems. Each month, it contains helpful how-to articles and reader-submitted stories.

Full Circle also features a companion podcast, the Full Circle Podcast which covers the magazine, along with other news of interest.

Please note: this Special Edition is provided with absolutely no warranty whatsoever; neither the contributors nor Full Circle Magazine accept any responsibility or liability for loss or damage resulting from readers choosing to apply this content to theirs or others computers and equipment.

Welcome to another 'single-topic special'

In response to the latest calls, we are assembling another of our serialised articles into dedicated editions.

Here is a straight reprint of the series '**Libre Office**', **Parts 1-7** from issues #46 through #52; thanks to the efforts of Elmer Perry.

Please bear in mind the original publication date; current versions of hardware and software may differ from those illustrated, so check your hardware and software versions before attempting to emulate the tutorials in these special editions. You may have later versions of software installed or available in your distributions' repositories.

Enjoy!

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Editorial Team

Editor: Ronnie Tucker
(aka: RonnieTucker)
ronnie@fullcirclemagazine.org

Webmaster: Rob Kerfia
(aka: admin / linuxgeekery-
admin@fullcirclemagazine.org)

Editing & Proofreading
Mike Kennedy, David Haas,
Gord Campbell, Robert Orsino

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HOW-TO

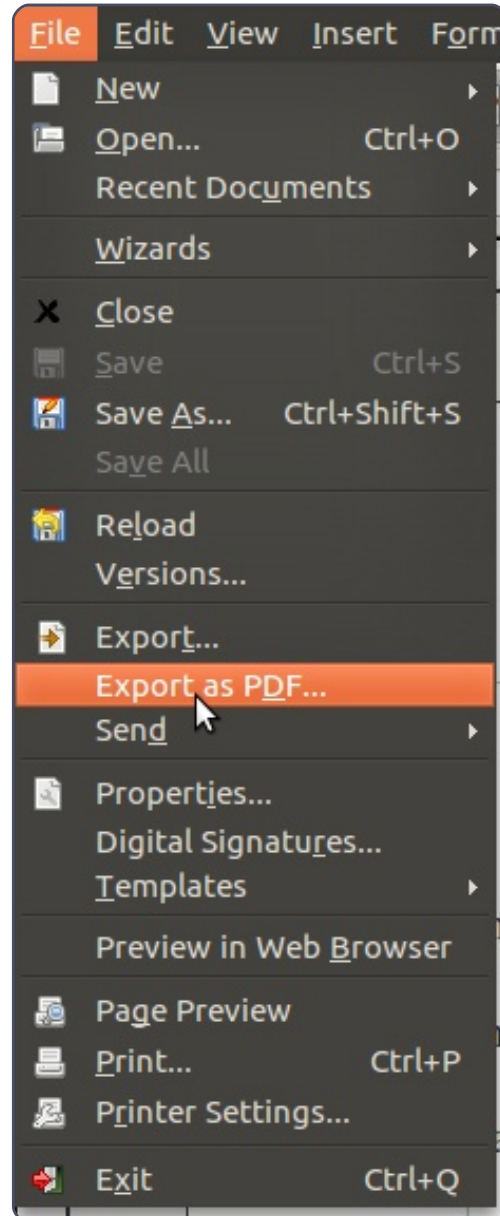
Written by Elmer Perry



In this how-to, I will introduce you to the LibreOffice suite, and give you a description of each of the modules in the suite. As we go through the series, I will go into greater detail on each module of the suite, as well as ways to share information between the modules.

LibreOffice is slated as the default office suite for Ubuntu 11.04, and the suite contains several modules that allow you to create text documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and drawings. The suite is multi-platform, and available for Linux, Windows, and Mac OS. The suite allows you to save and read documents in the default Open Document Format (ODF), as well as several versions of Microsoft Office, rich text format (RTF), and DocBook. This feature alone

makes it a great suite for both the home and office.



Libre Office - Part 1

**NEW
SERIES!**

If you can't wait until April to try LibreOffice in Ubuntu, you can install it through the PPA. Type the following three commands in the terminal (Applications > Accessories > Terminal):

```
sudo add-apt-repository ppa:libreoffice/ppa
```

```
sudo apt-get update
```

```
sudo apt-get install libreoffice
```

The last command may take a while to complete. On my system, I had to completely remove OpenOffice before LibreOffice would install from the PPA. Not sure if this glitch was specific to my machine or if it is impossible to have both installed using PPAs. If you want to use both OpenOffice and LibreOffice, your best choice is to install them manually by downloading them from libreoffice.org and openoffice.org.

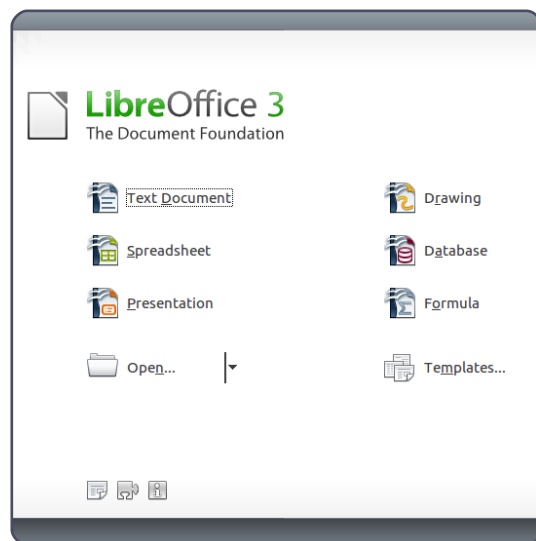
[Editors note: When I installed LibreOffice from the above PPA it automatically uninstalled my OpenOffice.]

One of the most powerful and useful features of the suite is the ability to create a PDF file from the current document. Exporting to PDF gives you greater control over a finished document. The recipient can easily change a file in the ODF or Microsoft Office format. However, the PDF format makes tampering with the

document more difficult. You'll find the Export or Export to PDF in most of the modules under File > Export or File > Export to PDF.

Start LibreOffice from the Applications menu: Applications > Office > LibreOffice. With no documents open, LibreOffice displays the Welcome screen. The

Welcome screen gives you quick access to the different modules in the suite.



Text Document opens the Writer module. Writer is a full-featured word processor. You can write everything from a simple letter to a novel in Writer. With the Writer word processor, you can create layouts for term papers, technical documents, and product or software documentation. Writer sometimes has problems translating complex layouts from Microsoft Word's format, but, as a general rule, you will not have many problems.

Spreadsheet runs Calc. Calc is compatible with Microsoft Excel. Calc allows you to create a

spreadsheet with automatic calculations and formulas. You can also use Calc for data collections to import into other documents. With Calc, you can add graphs and charts to display your data and calculations visually. Tables, graphs, and charts from Calc are easily imported into other LibreOffice documents. Calc gives you the ability to have more than one spreadsheet in one document, allowing you to have monthly, yearly, or other related spreadsheets in one document.

Presentation opens Impress. Impress is LibreOffice's version of Microsoft's PowerPoint, and holds up nicely as a replacement for PowerPoint. Impress has all the features you would expect from a presentation program: slide transitions, object embedding, sound, text effects, graphics, etc. I've used Impress for teaching and seminars, and Impress always gives me what I need.

Drawing starts the Draw module. In Draw, you create simple vector drawings for use in other documents. You could easily make a organizational chart or logo in Draw.

Database opens the Base module. Use Base to create a database using several different engines, depending on what is installed on your system. Base is handy for importing data into other documents in the suite. If you have a need for an inventory or sales database, you might want to give Base a try.

Formula runs the Math module. Have you ever needed to embed a complex math formula into a document? Formula is your answer. Formula gives you the power to create well-formatted formulas for use in other documents. Formula is ideal when you are creating scientific or technical documents, and need to insert a formula or algorithm along with your text.

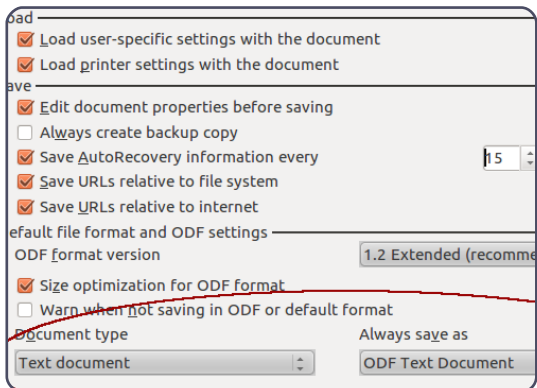
Before we get started with LibreOffice, let's look at some of

the options that relate to all the modules. Open Tools > Options > LibreOffice > User Data. Here you enter what personal data you want to make available to the program. You can transfer some of the information entered here into documents. Some of the document properties come from the data in these fields. For example, the document author is taken from the name fields. The program also uses the name fields for revision authors.

Next, if you are new to LibreOffice, access Tools > Options > LibreOffice > General, and check the Tips and Help Agent. While you learn LibreOffice, you might want to turn on extended tips. Extended tips will show a detailed pop-up balloon for every item as you move the mouse over it.

Without Extended tips, you get a two or three word description for toolbar buttons only. With the Help Agent on, a help box occasionally displays in the bottom right corner. Clicking on the box will take you to the documentation page for the current task. This greatly speeds up the learning process with LibreOffice. The Help Agent is similar to Microsoft's Office Assistant.

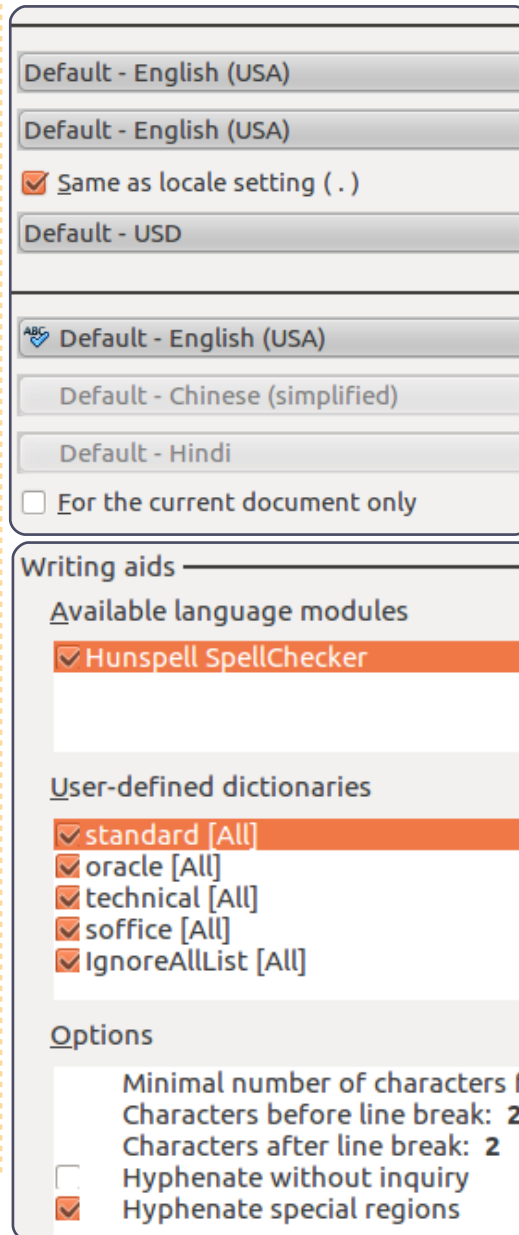
Now, Tools > Options >



Save/Load > General. Here you can set the default format for different document types. If you need to always save in one of the Microsoft formats, you can set LibreOffice to do this automatically rather than having to always select the needed format. Select the document type from the drop-down box under Document Type. Select the default

format for the document type under Always Save As drop-down box.

Under Tools > Options >

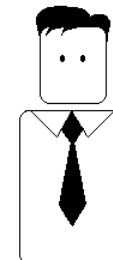
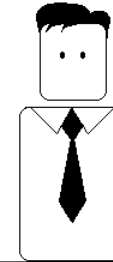


If you need to always save in one of the Microsofts formats, you can set LibreOffice to do this automatically...

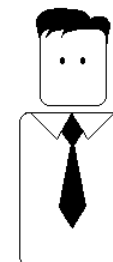
Language Settings > Languages, you set up your language options. There is a check box under the language settings that allow you to change the options only for the current document. Language Settings > Writing Aids sets options for dictionaries, spell check, and hyphenation.

Feel free to browse the rest of the options. We will touch on the options for each module as we get to it. Next time, we will begin with the basics of using the Writer module.

Anything is possible if you have a tablet.



Except for typing, maybe.





HOW-TO

Written by Elmer Perry

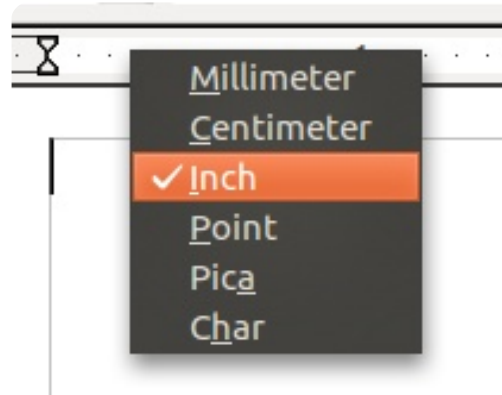
Libre Office - Part 2

In my last article, I introduced you to the different modules of the LibreOffice program.

Today, I want to show you the basic setup and manual formatting methods for the Writer module. The Writer module allows you to create formatted text-based documents. You can use Writer (below) for something as simple as a letter or journal, or something as complex as a manuscript or thesis paper.

First, we will look at the Writer window. Starting from the top, you have the menu bar. The menu bar gives you access to all the different tools and actions you can perform on a document. Below the menu bar sits the standard toolbar. This gives you quick access to common commands such as open,

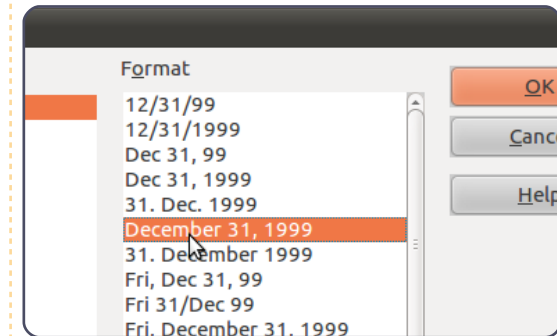
save, and print. Beside the standard toolbar sits the search toolbar. Below the standard toolbar, you find the formatting toolbar - it displays icons for often-used formatting tools. The toolbar is context-sensitive, and will change when you are working with elements like drawing objects. If you have tips turned on, hovering the mouse pointer over the icons in the toolbars will show a pop-up description of what the icon does.



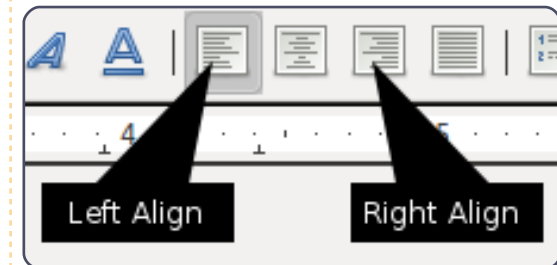
Below the formatting toolbar, and to the left, you have the horizontal and vertical rulers. The rulers are guides to help you when laying out a document. By default for the English language, the rulers display in inches. There are two ways to change the measurement units of the rulers. Right-click anywhere on the rulers (shown left), and Writer displays a pop-up menu of the different measurement units. This method works best when you need the change just for the current document. However, if you need a different measurement unit as the default, you need to change it in the Options. Go to Tools > Options > LibreOffice Writer > View. Here you can set the defaults for the vertical and horizontal rulers, or chose to work without rulers.

Now, we will create a simple letter, and I will show you how to manually format the different paragraphs of the letter. Open LibreOffice and start a new Writer document. We will place the current date at the top of the document, and align it to the right.

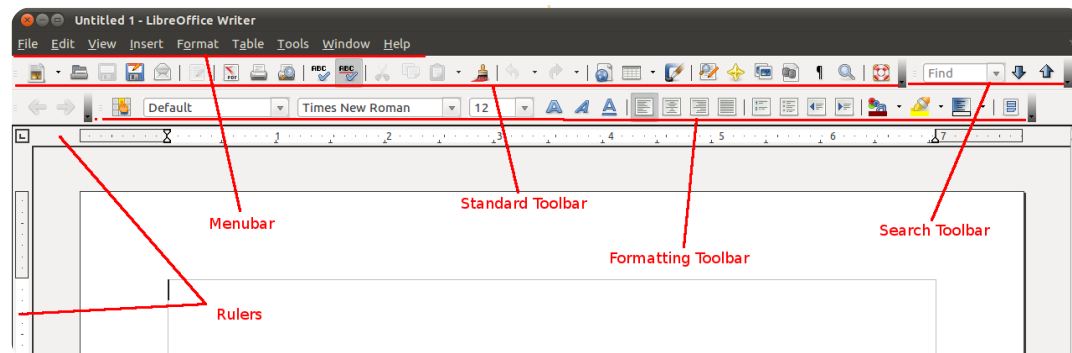
Go to Insert > Field > Date. This will give you the date in the default date format (MM/DD/YY). You will notice the date highlighted in gray. This lets you know it is a field you have inserted into the document.



Let's change the formatting of our date. Double-click the date, and a dialog window (above) will display showing the different options for displaying the date. Select the one you want and click OK.



We need to right-align our date, so, find the alignment icons on the



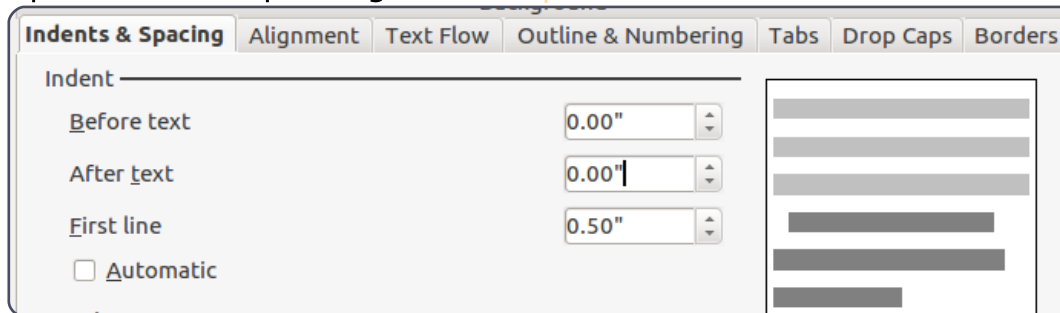


formatting toolbar, and click on the right-align icon. Our date will move to the right margin. Use the End key on your keyboard to move to the end of the current line, and press Enter. We don't want to stay right-aligned for a new paragraph, so click the left-align icon to move the start of the paragraph back to the left. Type in your salutation and press Enter.

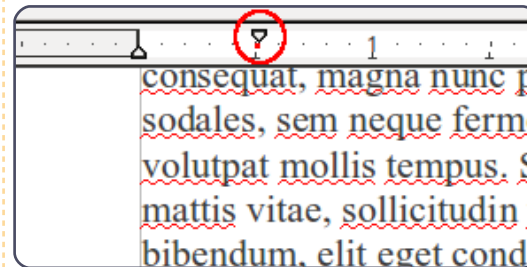
For the body paragraphs of our letter, we want to indent the first line of each paragraph. When you are not concerned with accuracy, you can apply the indentation using the horizontal ruler. On the horizontal ruler, you will notice two triangles on the left margin (above left and right), one pointing up and the other pointing down.

The bottom triangle - the one pointing up - manually adjusts the left indent for the entire paragraph. You will note there is one just like it on the right, which is used to adjust the right indent for the paragraph. The top triangle on the left - the one pointing down - adjusts the paragraph's first-line indent. Click on the top triangle and drag it to about 0.5" (1.27 cm).

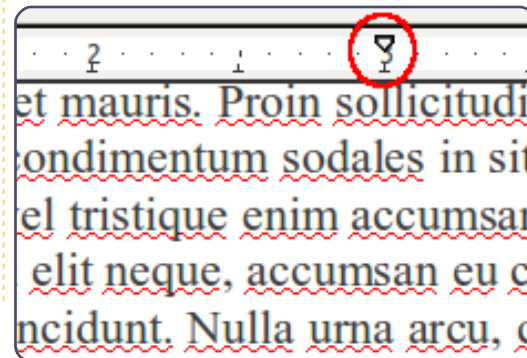
If you need more accurate indents, you can access the paragraph style dialog (below left) by double-clicking on the gray part of the horizontal ruler. You can also access the paragraph style dialog by going to Format > Paragraph. Here you have many options for formatting your paragraph. Today, we are



concerned with only the first line indent, so change First line to 0.5" (1.27 cm). Click OK. You will notice the top triangle (first-line indent, shown below) has changed to the position you gave it in the dialog.



Now, we can type our paragraph. Type in your first paragraph, and press Enter. Notice that the next paragraph is indented just like the previous one. Writer will use this paragraph style until we tell it to do differently.



Once we have typed the body of our letter, we need to add a signature block, but we don't want our signature block the same as the rest of the body paragraphs. Using either the drag method or the paragraph style dialog, change the indent to 3" (7.62 cm). Now, type in your closing and press Enter. Rather than typing in your name, let's use the name field to insert your name. This will work only if you filled out the User data in the options: Insert > Fields > Author. Your letter is now done, and you can print and send it.

While manual formatting is okay on small documents, larger documents need more control. If you decide to change the formatting of paragraphs on a larger document, going through each paragraph and changing the style is tedious. In a larger document, we will need a way to change all like paragraphs at once. Next time, we will talk about using styles to accomplish this.



HOW-TO

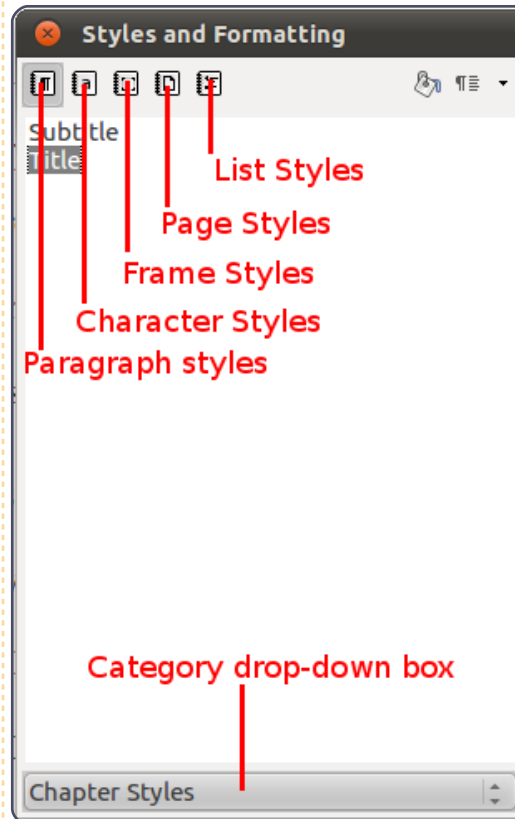
Written by Elmer Perry

Libre Office - Part 3

In my last article, I wrote about changing the layout of paragraphs to format your document. While this approach is okay on short documents, it creates a lot of work should you decide to change something in a large document. This is where the use of styles will make things easier.

LibreOffice writer has five different style types: paragraph, character, frame, page, and list. You can access all the styles by clicking on the Styles and Formatting button on the formatting toolbar. This will pop up the Styles and Formatting window. You can dock the Styles and Formatting window on the left by holding down the Ctrl key and double-clicking the empty space in the Styles and Formatting window toolbar.

The styles toolbar (right) has seven icons. The first five give you access to the different style types. In order from the left, they are paragraph, character, frame, page, and list. We will concentrate on



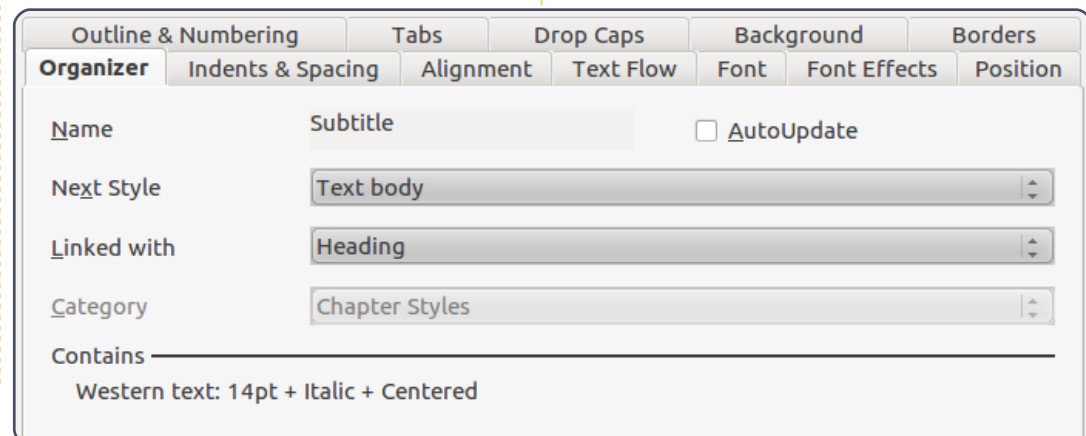
paragraph and character styles in this article.

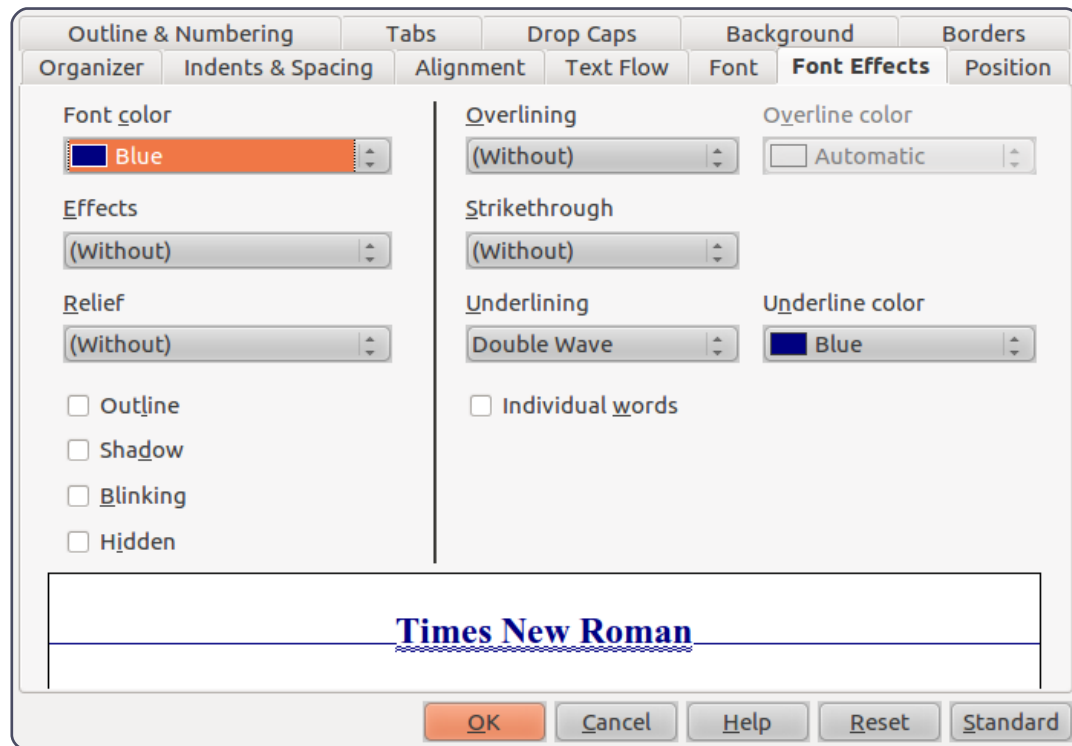
Open a new text document and type in a title. Open the Styles and Formatting window. The paragraph icon should be selected by default. At the bottom of the Styles and Formatting Window is a drop-down box. Click on the box and select Chapter Styles. Double-

click "title". Your title will center, enlarge, and become bold. Now, let's change the default styling for titles. In the Styles and Formatting window, right-click on the "title" style and select modify. The dialog that pops up looks a lot like the dialog from the last article, but there are a few new tabs that are not in the standard paragraph dialog. The first is the organizer. The organizer (below) shows you the name for the style, the next style to use, and the linked style. You will see that the next style is "subtitle", but we don't want to use a subtitle, so we will change this to the "text body" style. This makes it so that when we hit Enter to start a new paragraph the next paragraph will use the "text body"

style. The "title" style is linked with the "Heading" style. When styles are linked, any changes to the parent style affects the styles linked to it. As an example, if you change the text in the "Heading" to blue, all the styles linked to it will have blue text as well.

Now, let's format our title differently from the default. Click on the Font Effects tab. The Font Effects (next page, top left) allow you to change the look of the font, including color, strike-through, underline, shadow, and relief. The dialog shows you how the effects make your text look. Change the color to blue, underlining to Double Wave, and underline color to blue. Click OK.





Press Enter to start a new paragraph. Notice the style changed to "text body" just like we set up in the organizer tab. Now, type in three paragraphs of text to use for our example document.

Next, we will modify the "text body" style and create two new ones based on the "text body" style. Back in the Styles and Formatting window, click the drop-down box and select the Text Styles category. Right-click on "text body" and select modify. On the Indents & Spacing tab, change

the line spacing to 1.5 lines, and the First Line to 0.50. Click OK. Notice that our changes affected all three paragraphs.

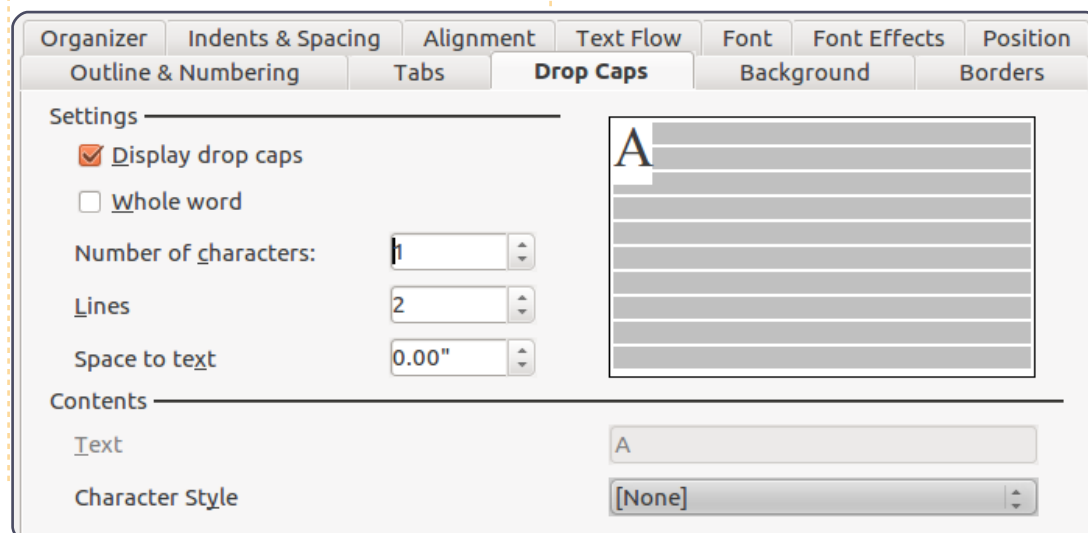
Now, let's create a paragraph for long quotes. Move the cursor to anywhere in the second paragraph. In the styles window, right-click text body and select New. On the organizer tab, give it the name of "Blockquote." Change the next style to "text body", as we rarely have two long quotes in a row. You will notice that because we created the new style by right-clicking on text body, it is

automatically linked to "text body". To create a new style not linked to another, change the Linked with to "None".

Now, let's change the formatting of our new style. On the Indents & Spacing tab, change the "before text" and "after text" to 0.50. Change the First Line back to 0.00. On the Font tab, change the typeface to italic. Click OK, and you will notice a new paragraph named "Blockquote" has been added to your list. Again, move your cursor to anywhere in the second paragraph and double-click "Blockquote." Now, you will see the first line indent has been taken away, the paragraph is indented on both sides, and the text is italicized.

Now, we want to change the first paragraph, giving it some drop caps. Since we want the first paragraph of each chapter to look this way, we will create another style. Again, right-click on "text body" and select New. Name the new style "First Paragraph", and change the next style to "Text Body." On the Indents & Spacing tab, change the First Line back to 0.00. On the Drop Caps tab (shown below), check "Display drop caps", set "Number of characters" to 1 and set "Lines" to 2. Click OK. Again, no changes are seen yet. Move your cursor into the first paragraph and double-click your new style.

We need this new paragraph style to follow every new chapter



title. Modify the "title" style so the next style is "First Paragraph."

Character styles affect only selected text rather than entire paragraphs. In the third paragraph, select some of the text. Click on the character style icon in the styles window, and double-click "Emphasis." This will italicize the text you have selected. You can modify the character styles much

in the same way you do the paragraph styles.

The key advantage to styles is making the formatting of like text the same throughout a document. In the next article, we will talk about adding frames to your document.



Elmer Perry is a children's minister in Asheville, North Carolina whose hobbies include web design, programming, and writing.

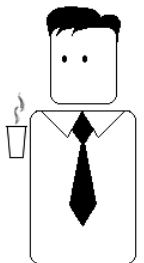
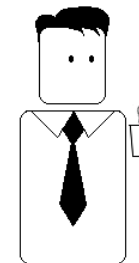
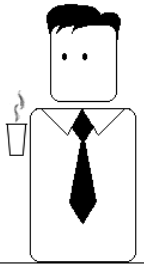
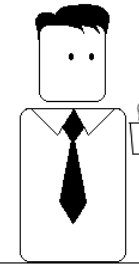
Paragraph Styles Example

He heard quiet steps behind him. That didn't bode well. Who could be following him this late at night and in this deadbeat part of town? And at this particular moment, just after he pulled off the big time and was making off with the greenbacks. Was there another crook who'd had the same idea, and was now watching him and waiting for a chance to grab the fruit of his labor? Or did the steps behind him mean that one of many law officers in town was on to him and just waiting to pounce and snap those cuffs on his wrists? He nervously looked all around. Suddenly he saw the alley.

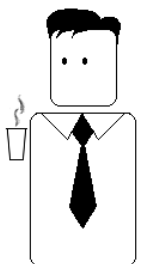
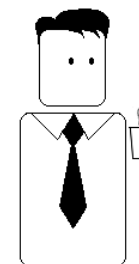
Like lightning he darted off to the left and disappeared between the two warehouses almost falling over the trash can lying in the middle of the sidewalk. He tried to nervously tap his way along in the inky darkness and suddenly stiffened: it was a dead-end, he would have to go back the way he had come. The steps got louder and louder, he saw the black outline of a figure coming around the corner. Is this the end of the line? he thought pressing himself back against the wall trying to make himself invisible in the

Customer Service

'How can I help you?' is a dangerous question to ask.



Most people react by telling the story of their lives.



by Richard Redei



HOW-TO

Written by Elmer Perry

Libre Office - Part 4

In the last article we used paragraph styles to format our document by creating reusable styles for consistency in our document. In this article we will create a more advanced layout using frames. While there are programs, like Scribus, which are designed more specifically toward more advanced layouts, LibreOffice gives us several tools which allow us to produce documents with more than just a simple, letter-style layout. One of the most useful of these tools is the frame.

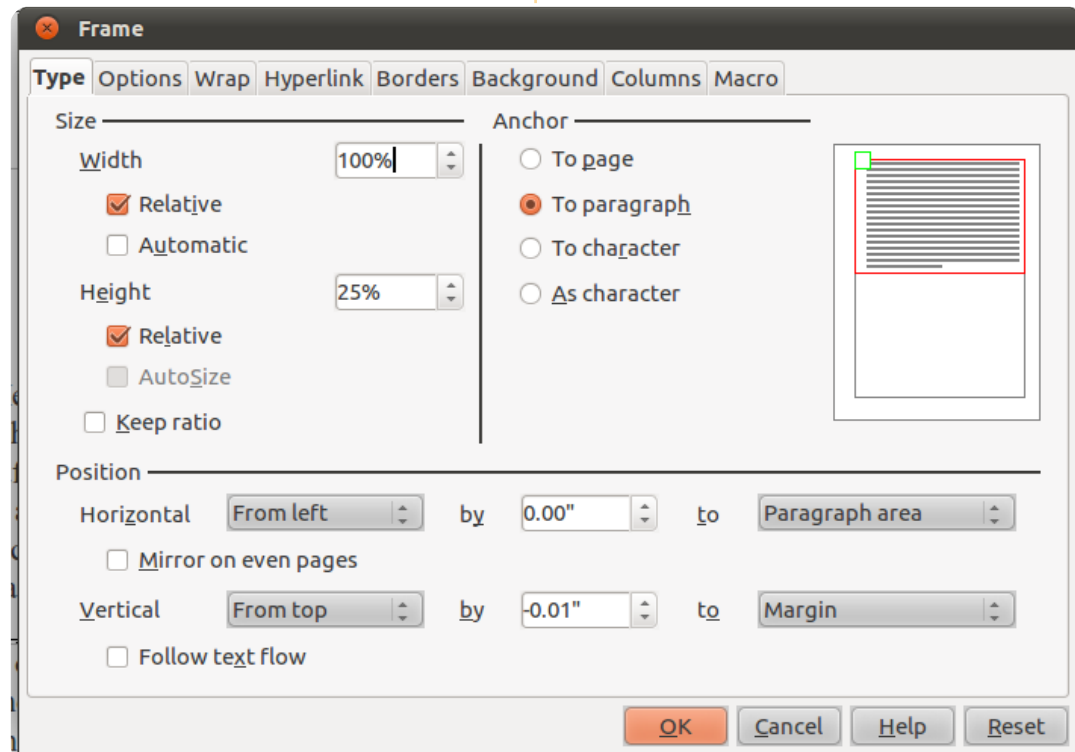
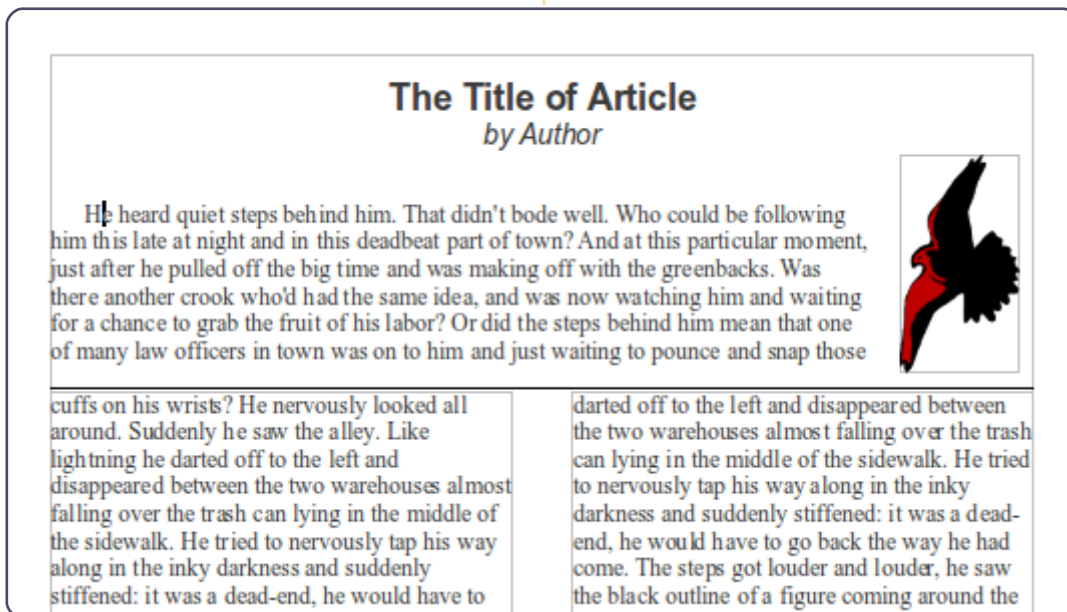
You can think of frames as boxes used to control the flow of text, graphics, and other elements in your document. One of the key features of frames is their ability to link together. When two frames are linked, the text from one frame automatically flows into the other, even if the two frames are on different pages. This feature makes frames ideal for newsletters and other article-based documents.

We will create the beginning article layout, shown in figure 1, using frames to control the flow of

the article text. Start by creating a new document. Now, in the menus, go to Insert > Frame. The frame dialog will pop up. On the type tab, check Relative for both Width and Height. Set the Width to 100% and the Height to 25%. In the position section, set the Horizontal to From Left by 0.00" to Paragraph area. Set the Vertical position to From Top by 0.00" to Margin.

On the Options tab, name the frame "Article Header." The frames are automatically named using the format "Frame#" where # is the number of frames in the document. It is a good practice to give your frames meaningful names to help you remember their purpose.

By default, frames have a border on all four sides, but we want a border only at the bottom

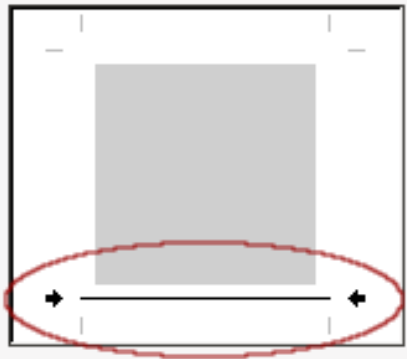


Line arrangement

Default



User-defined



of our frame. On the Borders tab, select the first box under the Line Arrangement defaults. This will clear all the borders. Check at the bottom of the the User-defined box to create a bottom border.

We are now done with the setup of this frame. We will come back to it when we are ready to link our frames together. For now, click on OK. You will see your new frame in your document.

Now, let's create a frame for the bottom half of the article. Click below the header frame. Once again in the menus, choose Insert

Name

Article Header

Previous link

<None>

Next link

Article Body

> Frame. Again, we want a relative width and height. Set the width to 100% and the height to 75%. Set the horizontal position to From Left by 0.00" to Paragraph area. On the Options tab, name the frame "Article Body." On the Borders tab, clear all the borders.

Now, we need the body of our article to have two columns. This is done on the Columns tab. Change the number of columns to 2, and set the spacing to 6%. Click on OK, and your new frame appears. You may need to manually adjust the position of your frames to get them to line up correctly. You adjust the frames position by clicking on the border of the frames. You will see green handles appear on the border. The green handles are used to adjust the size of the frame. We shouldn't need to change the size - just tweak the position. Click and drag on the border where there are no handles to adjust the position of the frames. To make fine adjustments to the position of your frame use

the Alt+Arrow keys.

We now have our frames where we want them. Before we start writing our article, we need to link the two frames together. Double-click on the border of the header frame (the first frame we created). This displays the frame dialog. On the Options tab, click the drop-down box for next link and select the "Article Body" frame. This links our two frames together. Click OK to accept this change and return to the document.

In the document, click inside the header frame. Format a title and byline using any of the methods discussed in previous articles. Now, begin to type the paragraphs for your document. You will notice that when you get to the bottom of the first frame, Writer will automatically move you to the lower frame, and when you reach the bottom of the first column, writer will take you the top of the second. If your article is

Settings

Columns

2



Width and spacing

Column



1

2

Width

47%

47%

Spacing

6%

☒ AutoWidth

more than one page long, you could link “Article Body” frame to a frame on another page. This linking is a powerful way to control the layout and flow of an article to create a very professional looking document.

Let's add a graphic to our header frame: Insert > Picture > From File. Select the graphic you want to insert, and click Open. If the image is too big for your document, you will want to resize it. To keep from distorting the image, hold the Shift key while dragging the handles. To put the image into the frame drag it to the lower right corner of the frame, right-click, and Anchor > To Frame.

Double-click the image to bring up its properties dialog. On the Wrap tab, increase the left spacing to give the image some white space.

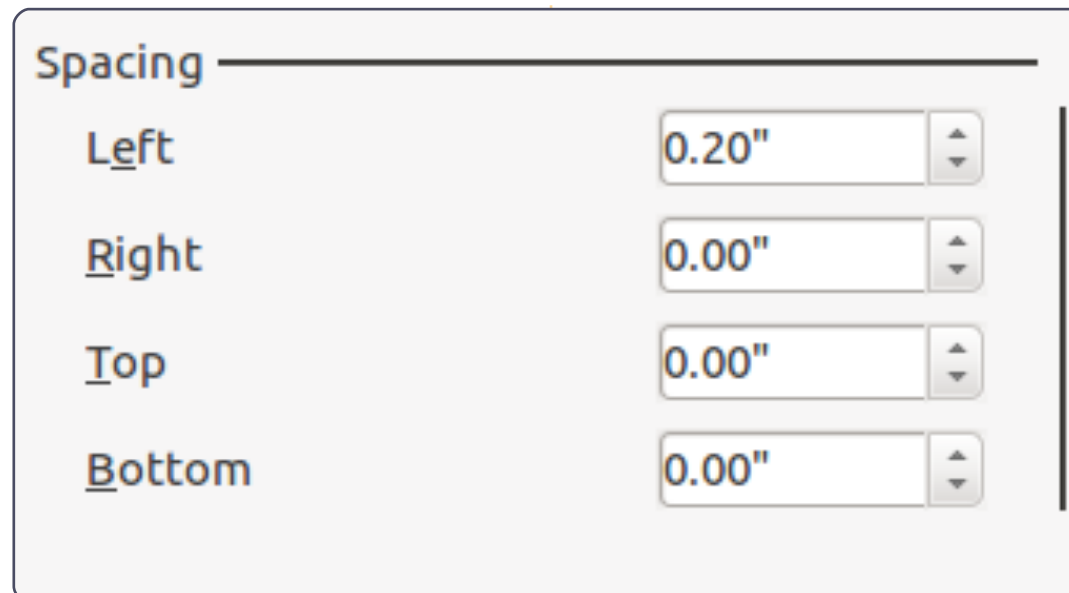
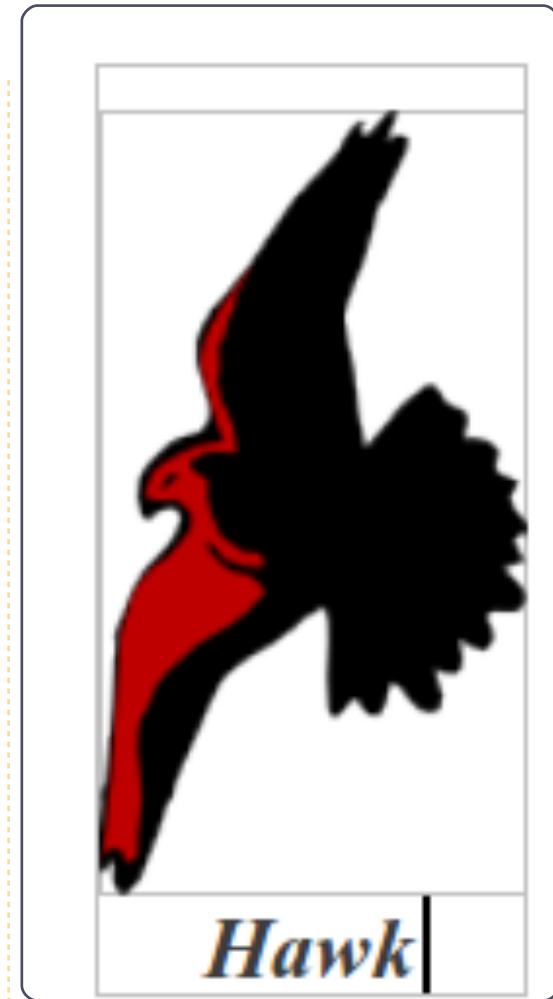
Graphics in LibreOffice are actually frames. When you double-click on a graphic in a document, you get a frame dialog with two new tabs: Picture and Crop. On the Picture tab, you can flip the image vertically or horizontally. You can specify whether the flip happens on just certain pages or on all pages. On the Crop tab, you can adjust the left, right, top, and bottom to crop out certain parts of the image. This is handy when you need only a part of the image, or need to force the image to a certain size without distorting the

image's aspect ratio. Also, you can scale the image to a certain size based on a percentage of the original image size. You can see or change the image size by measurement units as well.

On the right-click menu of an image, you can add a description or caption to the image. Adding a caption creates a text frame around the image with the text at the bottom. This feature is useful for marking illustrations or diagrams in your document. Once you have created the caption, you can highlight it and format it just like you would any other text in a document.

Hopefully, you have gotten some idea of the power of using frames. While our example was fairly simple, you could easily create a more complex document layout using frames. With the ability to link frames, you can create a newsletter layout where articles start on one page, jump to another, and end on yet another.

Next time, we will look at another powerful layout feature available in LibreOffice Writer: Sections.



Elmer Perry is a children's minister in Asheville, North Carolina whose hobbies include web design, programming, and writing.



In the previous part of this series, we discussed using frames for document layout. In this part, we will turn to another useful layout tool in LibreOffice Writer: Sections. Sections differ from frames in several respects, but, in some ways, they can achieve the same results. While both will allow you to divide a portion of your document into columns, when you use sections, you have no control over the width. Sections will take the entire width from the left margin to the right margin. Sections also cannot break in the middle of a paragraph. You cannot link sections together the way you link frames. While you cannot link sections together, sections give you the ability to link to other documents, or to a section in another document.

Perhaps the best way to think about sections is as a way to divide your document into different pieces like introduction, argument 1, argument 2, etc. Sections can also allow you to separate a portion of a document for use in

another document. Sections can become a powerful tool for allowing you to pull content from other documents.

Using Sections

For our example, we will import quotations from a document of quotes. Start a new document, and add a list of different quotes. Do the following for each of the quotes:

Select the entire quote.

On the menus, got to Insert > Section.

Give the quote a name that will

remind you what the quotation is about. (For example, one of my quotes is from Albert Einstein on science. I named it quote_science.)

Once you have made each of the quotes its own section, save the file as quotes.odt.

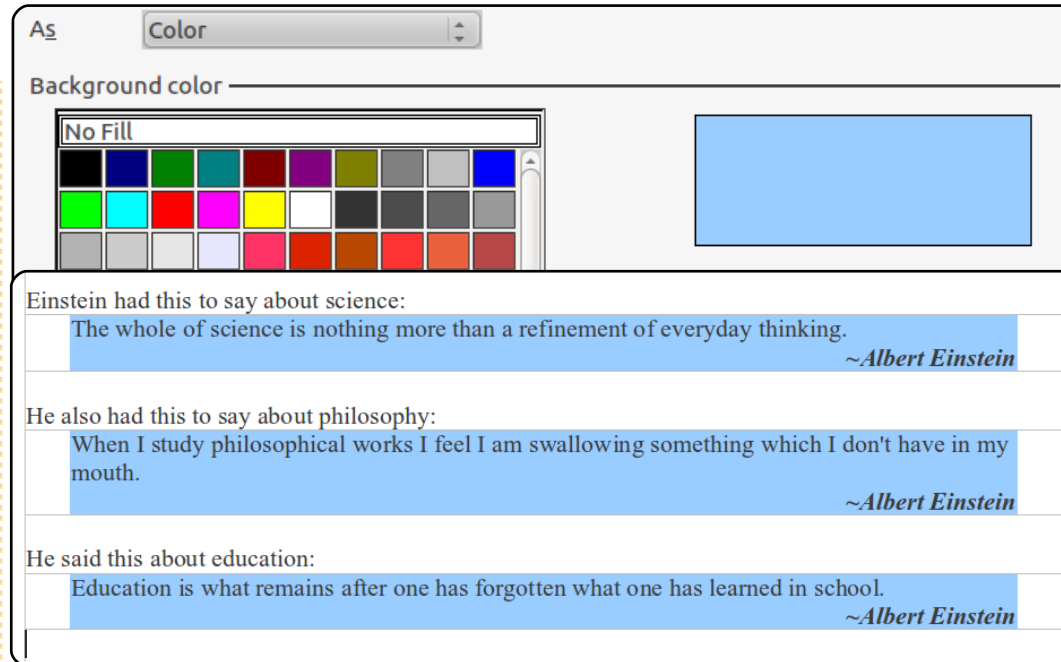
Next, let's create a new document, and add some paragraph body text. (Hint: You can add dummy text to your document by typing "dt" and pressing the F3 key.) Write a lead-in to your quote, and press enter. To get our quote from our quotes

document, Insert > Section. As always, give the section a name that helps you remember what it is. Select the Link checkbox. Click on the file browser button (...) next to File name. Select the document containing your quotes, and Open. Use the Section dropdown box to select the quote you want to insert into your document. If you want to write-protect your quote from editing, check Protected under Write-protection. You can also protect the section from editing with a password. (NOTE: Write protection, even with a password,

does not guarantee someone cannot hack your document and change its content.) You can add the other quotes from your quote document using the same method.

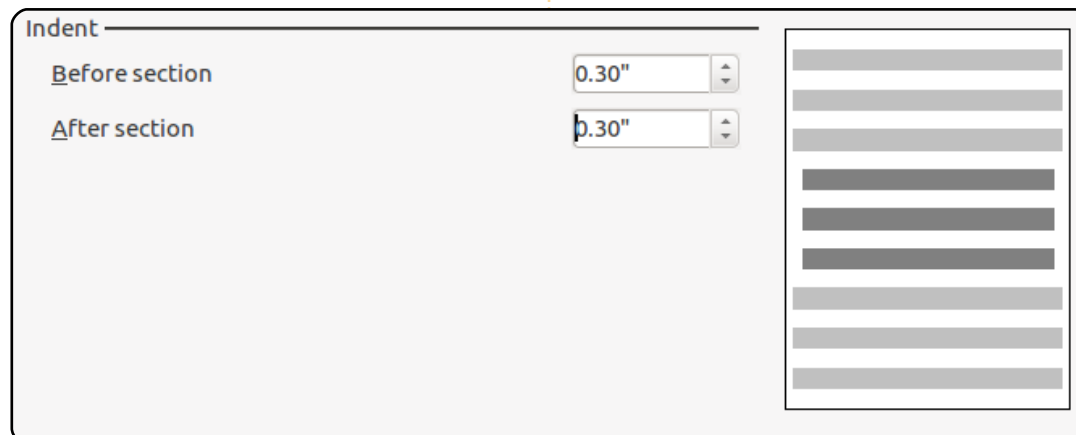
Editing Sections

Now that we have added our quotes, let's make them stand out by indenting them and giving them a background color. Format > Sections. The edit Sections dialog presents you with a list of sections in your document. Select the section you want to edit. In the main window of the dialog, we can change the link document, or the section in the document the section is linked to. Here we can also change the write-protection and visibility of the section. (I can't think of any practical reason why you would hide a portion of the



document, but the option is there should you need it.)

Click the Options... button to bring up the options dialog. On the Indents tab, change the Before

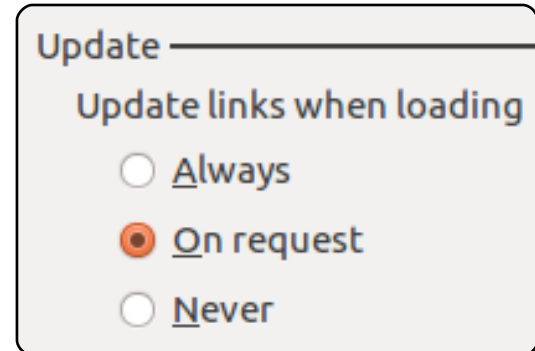


section and After section to 0.30". On the Background tab, select a color for the background of your quote. Click OK. Change the other quotation sections, and then click OK on the Edit Sections dialog. Your quotes now have an indentation and a background color.

Changes Made in Linked Document

If you need to change the information in a section linked to another document, you might ask whether it is better to change the original document or within the

new document. Both are possible. The choice is really yours. The one thing to remember is changing a linked section in a document will



not be reflected in the original document, but changes in the original document may be reflected in the linking document.

You can control how updates are done in the LibreOffice Writer options: Tools > Options > LibreOffice Writer > General. Under Update, you can choose to have links updated automatically, manually, or never. Automatically will update the links when a document with links is opened. Manually will ask you whether you want to update links. Never will not update links when a document with links is opened.

Manually Updating

Links

If you make changes in the original document, and you want to update the linked document to reflect those changes, you have two ways to update the linked document. Edit > Links... will display the Edit Links dialog. Here you can select individual links and update them. To update all the links at once, use Tools > Update > Links.

Frames or Sections?

In some cases, whether you use frames or sections matters little. There are situations where either can accomplish the tasks. However, taking the time to consider the functionality of each can help you make the best choice. For example, if you are doing a research paper, and you have compiled your quotes and data into a Writer document, sections would probably be your best choice for inserting pieces of the data into your paper. However, if you need to start an article on a page, skip a page, and finish it on another page, linked frames is a better choice. Taking some time to think about the purpose, layout,

and content sources of your document, and the functionality of frames and sections, will help you decide the best tool for your document.

While frames and sections are similar in many ways, they have different functionality that makes them suitable for different purposes. The powerful ability to link to portions of another document makes sections unique. Remember to plan your layout and decide ahead which tools you will use to accomplish the task.

In the next article, we will look at page styles, headers, and footers in Writer documents.



Elmer Perry is a children's minister in Asheville, North Carolina whose hobbies include web design, programming, and writing. His website is eeperry.wordpress.com.

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In this month's article, we will discover a few new ways to format our documents using page styles, headers and footers. In past articles, I have discussed the use of paragraph and character styles. Page styles are similar, but deal with the overall geometry and formatting of the entire page. Headers and footers are the area at the top and bottom of the page, and are usually the same on every page of the same style.

We will start by setting up our document and styles. Start a new writer document, File > New. In order to have access to the document's title, we will change some of the document's properties, File > Properties. On the description tab, put "This Is

General	Description	Custom Properties
Title: This Is A Title		
Subject:		
Keywords:		
Comments:		

The Title" as the title of the document. We will use this later when we start creating our headers and footers. Click OK to save your changes.

Now, we need to set up our page styles. We will use three page styles, First Page, Normal Page, and Landscape. First Page and Landscape already exist, but we will modify them. We will create our Normal Page style first. For our normal page style, we want a header area at the top with a light gray background. Open the Styles and Formatting dialog, Tools > Styles and Formatting, or click on the Style and formatting button (right). Click on the page styles button (right), right-click in the window, and select new.



The Page Style dialog appears. On the Organizer tab, name the style "Normal Page." Change the next style to Normal Page. This tells Writer that when we get to the end of the page, it will create a new page with the same style. On the Header tab, check Header On. This inserts a

header area on the page. Still on the Header tab, click the More button. A new dialog comes up. This dialog allows us to add borders and background colors to our header. On the Background tab, pick the light gray color for the background. Click OK on both dialogs, and we are finished with our Normal Page style.

Header

☒ Header on

☒ Same content left/right

For our First Page, we will modify the one that already exists. We want a 3" (7.5cm) margin at the top (for first page graphics added at another time), and a light gray footer area at the bottom. Right-click the First Page style in the Styles and Formatting dialog, and select modify. On the organizer tab, make our Normal Page the next style. The Page tab allows us to change the margins for the page. Make the top margin 3" (7.5cm). This time we will go to the footer tab, check Footer On, click

on the More button, and choose our light gray background.

Margins

Left: 0.79"

Right: 0.79"

Top: 3.00"

Bottom: 0.79"

For our Landscape page style, we will modify the existing Landscape style. For our Landscape style, we will add both a header and footer. Right-click on the Landscape style and modify. Take a few moments to look at the page tab and notice the orientation for the page is landscape, which is exactly what we wanted. Turn on the header and footer on their respective tabs, and select the light gray background for both.

Background color

No Fill

Now, we are ready to create our document. Double-click the First Page style, and the page in your document will change to the formatting we added. You will notice the light gray footer area at the bottom. Click inside the box to edit the footer. We will first add our title, Insert > Fields > Title. This inserts the title we added in the document properties. You can use this method to insert the title of the document anywhere you need it. If you change your title later in the document properties, you can update all instances of the inserted field with Tools > Update > Fields or by pressing F9 on your keyboard. Type "Page", remembering to put spaces on either side of the word Page, and insert the page number, Insert > Fields > Page Number. Move your cursor to the beginning of "Page" and press the tab key on your keyboard until the page number is

flush against the right side of the footer area. Click out of the footer area into the main body of the page.

Once this is done, you can begin to type in your text. Once you reach the end of the page and a new page is inserted, you will notice it is formatted with the Normal Page style with a header area at the top. Fill in the header information just like we did for the footer of the first page. Make sure you use the fields, especially on the page number. The page number field comes in handy when we get to the third page. You will then notice the header information has been copied for you and the page number updated to reflect the current page.

Next, we will insert a Landscape page. Before you get to a new page, Insert > Manual Break. Select Page Break, and under the style, select Landscape. This will

Writer makes it easy to add pages with different styles and orientation, as well as automatic headers and footers.

take you to a new page with a Landscape layout. Because this is a different style from our Normal Page style, we will need to fill in our header and footer information. This is handy should you need different header or footer information on some pages, just insert a page with a different page style. Once you have completed your landscaped page, create another page break (Insert > Manual Break) with a style of Normal Page. You will notice your page numbering continues, including the inserted landscaped page(s). If you do not want the

inserted landscape pages included in the page count, you can manually adjust the page number in the Manual Break dialog.

Writer makes it easy to add pages with different styles and orientation, as well as automatic headers and footers. You can make the headers and footers as big as you want, and they can contain whatever information you want to put in them. Fields help keep certain information consistent in your document, and let you write without worrying about page numbers.

In my next article, I will move away from Writer and show you how to make a poor man's database using a Calc spreadsheet. After that, we will use our spreadsheet to create a form letter.

line? he thought pressing himself back against the wall trying to make himself invisible in the dark, was all that planning and energy wasted? He was dripping with sweat now, cold and wet, he could smell the fear coming off his clothes. Suddenly next to him, with a barely noticeable squeak, a door swung

This Is A Title |

Page 1



Elmer Perry is a children's minister in Asheville, North Carolina whose hobbies include web design, programming, and writing. His website is eeperry.wordpress.com



HOW-TO

Written by Elmer Perry

Libre Office - Part 7

Until now we have been working in LibreOffice Writer, but today we will step away for just a second to do something a little different. We're going to create a poor man's database in Calc and then return to Writer and create a mail merge. This will give you some ideas about how you can use a spreadsheet as a database. In order to do a mail merge, we need to work with some sort of database. We could create our own in Base, but for a simple address book, Calc is an easier solution.

We will start by opening LibreOffice and clicking on Spreadsheet. This will open Calc with a blank spreadsheet. We won't go into a lot of details about the layout of Calc; we'll save that

for another day. What you do need to know is that a spreadsheet is laid out as a series of columns and rows. The columns are labeled above with letters (A,B,C,...) and the rows are down the left side labeled with numbers (1,2,3,...). When we use Calc as a database, the first row must contain the field titles for the database. These are the database field headers. We will put the following field headers in the first row: Title, First Name, Last Name, Street Address, City, State, Postal Code, and Country. Each field must be in a separate column starting at column A, so put the cursor in column A of the first row and type in Title. You can use the right arrow key on the keyboard to move to the next column, and fill in the rest of the fields.

	A	B	C	D	E	
1	Title	First Name	Last Name	Street Address	City	S
2	Mr.	Tom	Jones	123 Some St.	Someplace	NC
3	Dr.	Harry	McMahon	321 No Road	Noplace	NY
4	Rev.	Mike	Mickey	547 Trinity Way	Gospel	CT
5	Ms.	Amber	Sams	54 This Way	Thatplace	CA
6	Mr.	Charlie	Hacker	101 Binary Way	Linux	NJ
7	Ms.	Molly	Holly	22 Harvard Rd	Wally	SD
8						
9						

What do you want to do?

- ☐ Create a new database
- ☐ Open an existing database file

Recently used

Addresses

Open...

- ☒ Connect to an existing database

Spreadsheet

Set up a connection to spreadsheets

Click 'Browse...' to select a LibreOffice spreadsheet or Microsoft Excel workbook. LibreOffice will open this file in read-only mode.

Location and file name

/home/elmer/Documents/Writing/LibreOffice Series/Poorm

Browse

☐ Password required

Decide how to proceed after saving the database

Do you want the wizard to register the database in LibreOffice?

- ☒ Yes, register the database for me
- ☐ No, do not register the database

After the database file has been saved, what do you want to do?

- ☐ Open the database for editing
- ☐ Create tables using the table wizard

Starting with the second row, we begin to fill in our data. Each row is a record. Think of a record as all the information on one person. For our purposes today, you don't need to worry too much if the data is wider than the columns. If you want to adjust the width of the columns while you input your information, just place your mouse over the line separating the two columns. The cursor will become a double arrow, and you can click and drag to increase or decrease the width of the column. Once we have entered all our data, we need to save the spreadsheet. I saved mine as Poorman_db.ods. Once it is saved, close it.

Before we can use our poor man's database, we need to register it in LibreOffice. File > New > Database will bring up the database wizard. Select "connect to an existing database", and in the drop-down box, select spreadsheet. Click the Next button. Use the Browse button to find your spreadsheet. Click Next. Make sure "Yes, register the database for me" is selected, and uncheck "Open database for editing." Click Finish, and give the database a name (I named mine

Addresses). The database you just created is linked to the spreadsheet. Any updates you make to the spreadsheet will show in the database. The only catch is you cannot edit the spreadsheet when you have Writer opened. Basically, your spreadsheet database can be the only LibreOffice document open. Otherwise, LibreOffice will open the spreadsheet in read-only mode.

Now that we have created our database, and registered it in LibreOffice, we can use it to create a mail-merge. Mail-merge is great for sending form letters to customers or prospects. The cool thing is you can put any kind of data you want in your database and then use it in the letter. For example, if you have a rewards program for your customers, you could have a field for points, and include the points each customer has earned in the letter, but you would have to type the letter only once.



Click on the Data Sources icon (shown left), View > Data sources, or press F4. This will display the registered databases below the

Drag field headers into the document

Title	First Name	Last Name	Street Address	City	State	Postal Code
Mr.	Tom	Jones	123 Some St.	Sonoma	CA	94965
Dr.	Harry	McMahon	321 No Road	Norfolk	VA	23502
Rev.	Mike	Mickey	547 Trinity Way	Gosport	NC	27545
Ms.	Amber	Sams	54 This Way	Thames	VA	22086
Mr.	Charlie	Hacker	101 Binary Way	Lynchburg	VA	23804

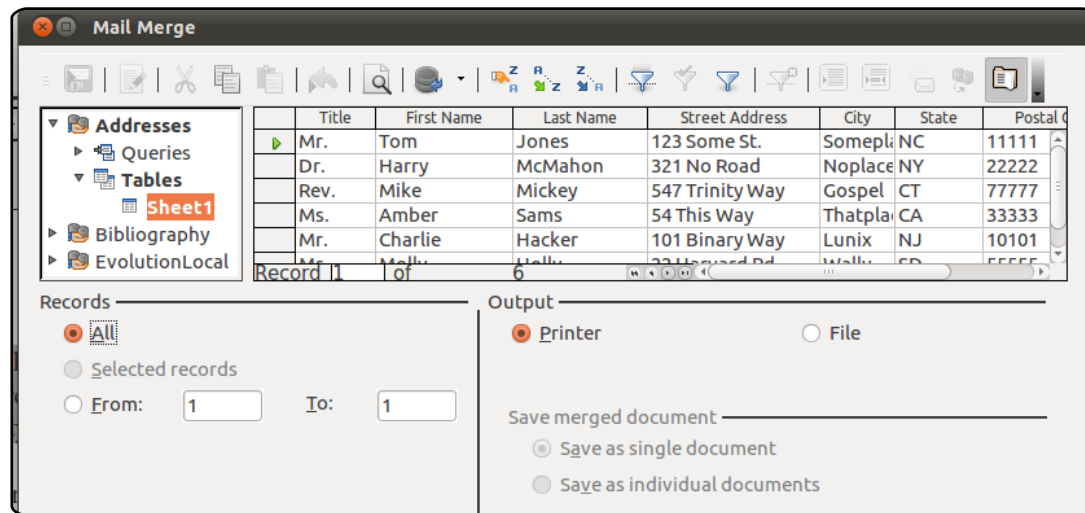
Record 1 of 6

<Title> <First Name> <Last Name>
 <Street Address>
 <City>, <State> <Postal Code>
 Dear <Title> <Last Name>,
 Start of letter..|

formatting toolbar. In the left part of the data sources, Addresses (or whatever you named your database) > Tables > Sheet1. On the right side, you will see your data laid out much like you entered it in the spreadsheet. We insert the fields into the document by clicking on the field header and dragging it into the document. This will create a field placeholder for every field you drag into the document. Make sure you drag the field header and not a data block

in a record.

Now, you can type the body of your letter. When you need a field from the database in your letter, you can drag it into the document. The database fields can be used any place in the document. As I said before, your database can contain whatever information you need it to contain. A teacher could even use it to report students' grades in a letter to parents.



Once you have finished typing your letter, you can print or send to a file. You might want to send a letter to file when you need to go back and add personal information for certain individuals. Like a teacher might want to request a parent-teacher conference for a student failing the class. File > Print, just like you would for a normal document. However, LibreOffice will tell you that your document contains address database fields and asks you if you want to print a form letter. Answer yes. The Mail Merge dialog will appear. In the dialog, you can choose to print to the printer or to a file. Also, you can choose to print a letter only for selected records or a range of records. You select records by clicking on the gray box

at the beginning of the record, or use CTRL-click to select only certain records, or SHIFT-click to select a series of records. When you print to a file, you can choose to print to one file, in which case each letter will begin on a new page, or save as individual files, in which case each letter should have its own file. You can select which database field to use for the file name. On my version of LibreOffice (3.3.3), I got one document whichever I chose. Apparently, they are still working on this feature.

You can also use your database to generate labels. File > New > Labels opens the labels dialog. Select your database and table. Move the fields over into the label

information box. Select your label type and click New Document. As with the form letters, when you get ready to print, you will have an opportunity to select the records you want to print, and you can print to a printer or a document. You can also create envelopes much in the same manner.

There is another way to create a form letter, using the Mail Merge Wizard: Tools > Mail Merge Wizard. The wizard has some restrictions, and when I tried to use the wizard, I found it more difficult to get good results. I found the manual method I have described here to give better results, giving the creator more control over the output.

Mail merge is a great time saver. Bang out your letter, drop in some database fields, and print. Sure beats typing 100s of letters or manually editing each one to change the information. In my next article, we will start to learn more about Calc by creating a simple budget spreadsheet.



Elmer Perry is a children's minister in Asheville, North Carolina whose hobbies include web design, programming, and writing. His website is eeperry.wordpress.com

