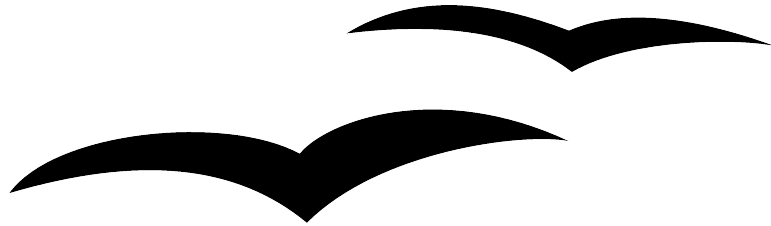


Writer Basics



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Overview

This document is intended for first-time users of OpenOffice.org. In it, you will learn the most basic functions of OpenOffice.org Writer (also called OOo Writer or just plain Writer). If you've used Writer before, chances are you will not find any new and useful information in this document. You can still proof-read it for mistakes, though!

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The Original Documentation is Writer Basics. The Initial Writer of the Original Documentation is Laurent Duperval © 2004. All Rights Reserved. (Initial Writer contact: lduperval@yahoo.com.)

Contributor(s): G. Roderick Singleton, Tim Kampa, Tamblyne, Daniel Carrera.

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Feedback

Please direct any comments or suggestions about this document to: lduperval@yahoo.com.

Acknowledgments

Thanks go out to the OpenOffice.org developers for providing us all with a cool product. Thanks go out to all the User Guide authors for support and getting the project up and running. Thanks to the community for being so patient and helpful.

Modifications and updates

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Description of Change</i>
1.0	2004-10-04	First published edition.

What is Writer?

Writer is the word processor of the OpenOffice.org suite. OpenOffice.org has five main components:

- 1) Writer is the word processor.
- 2) Calc is the spreadsheet.
- 3) Impress is the presentation package.
- 4) Draw is the tool to create graphics and drawings.
- 5) Math is used to create mathematical equations.

In this document, we will only cover Writer. However, most of the concepts covered here are also applicable to the other components of OpenOffice.org.

Starting Writer

Starting Writer is the easiest portion of this entire document. If you are reading this document in OpenOffice.org, you already know how to start Writer. However, if this is a printed version or a PDF version, you may not know how to start Writer. So let's look at three ways to do that:

- 1) From the system menu,
- 2) From an existing document, and
- 3) From the command line.

Starting from the system menu

Using the system menu is the most common way to launch Writer. The system menu is the standard menu from which most applications are started. On Windows, it is called the **Start** menu. On GNOME, it is called the **Applications** menu. On KDE it is identified by the KDE logo. On Mac OS X, it is the **Applications** menu.

When you installed OpenOffice.org, a menu entry was added to your system menu. The exact name and location of this menu entry will depend on your graphical environment. We will look at Windows, GNOME, KDE and Mac OS X. The concepts should easily be applicable to another operating system.

Windows

On Windows, the OpenOffice.org menu is located in **Programs > OpenOffice.org X.X.X**, where "X.X.X" corresponds to the version number of OpenOffice.org. Select **Text Document** to start Writer with a blank document. See Figure 1. If you look closely at the menus in the figure, you will notice that there are two versions of OpenOffice.org available, version 1.1.0 and version 1.1.1



Figure 1: Starting OpenOffice.org Writer from the Windows Start menu.

Linux/GNOME

GNOME installations will differ from one distribution to the next. Most modern distributions come with OpenOffice.org already installed. You will find OpenOffice.org under **Applications > Office**. See Figure 2.

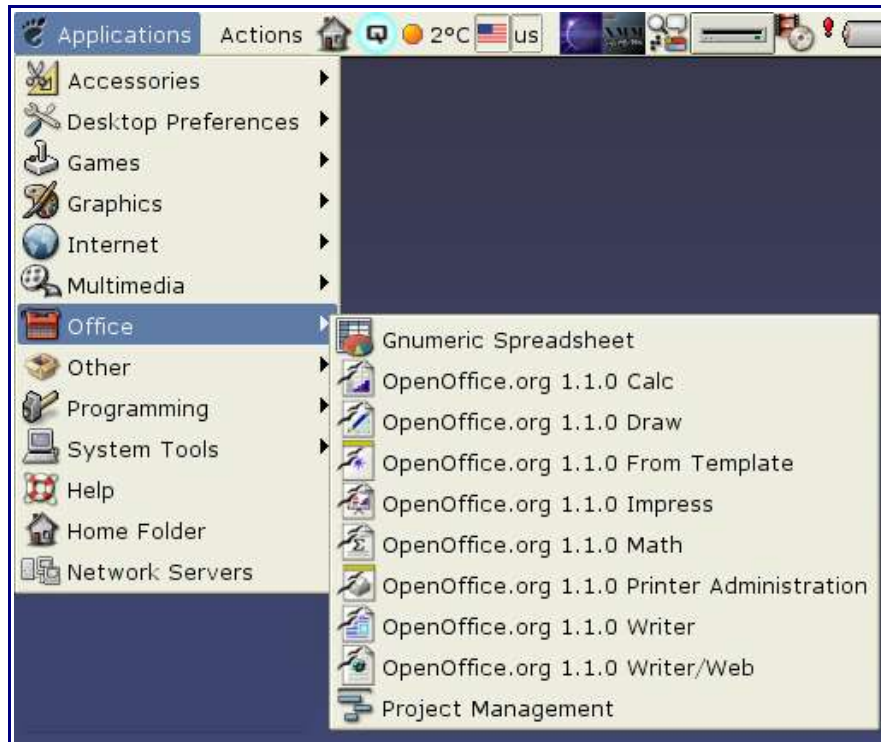


Figure 2: Writer in Office menu

Red Hat 9 comes with OpenOffice.org 1.0.2 installed. On the GNOME desktop, you will find this version under Red Hat's **Main Menu > Office**. If you have installed a newer version of OpenOffice.org, you will find it under **Main Menu > Office > More Office Applications**.

If you installed by downloading from the <http://www.openoffice.org> site, you will find it under **Applications > Other**. See Figure 3.

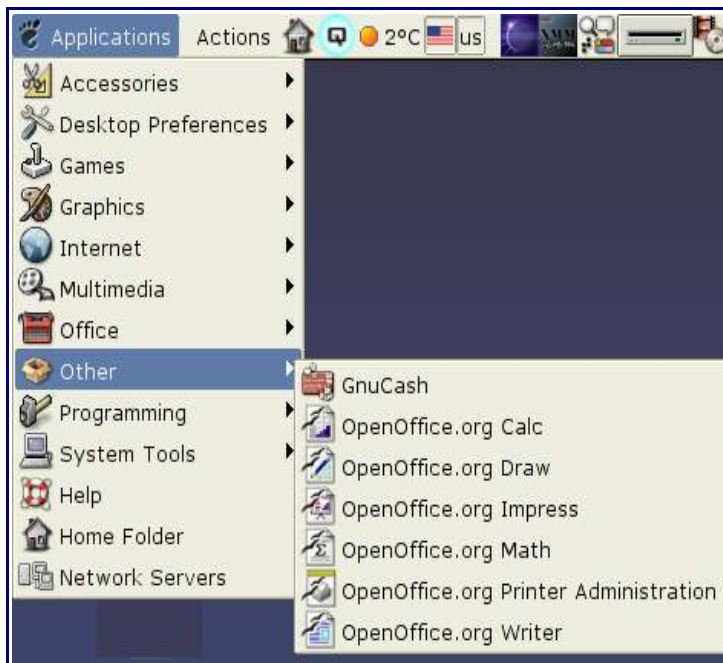


Figure 3: Writer from the Application > Other menu.

Linux/KDE

On KDE, OpenOffice.org is installed in its own menu, called “OpenOffice.org 1.1.1” (see Figure 4). If you are using a different version, then “1.1.1” will be replaced with the correct version number.

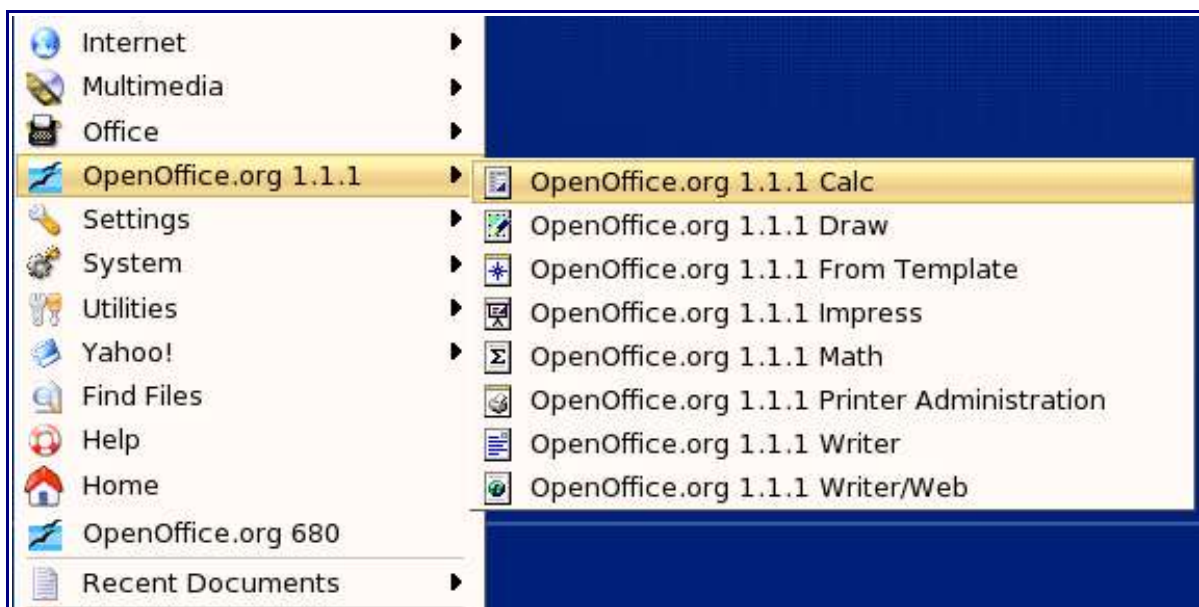


Figure 4: KDE menu for OpenOffice.org

Certain Linux distributions install OpenOffice.org in the Office sub-menu. Mandrake is such a distribution. In this case, to launch Writer, you will need to choose **Office > Word processors > OpenOffice.org Writer**. Figure 5 illustrates this.



Figure 5: OpenOffice.org from Mandrake's KDE menu.

Mac

OpenOffice.org 1.1.1 on OS X 10.3 or later installs the OpenOffice.org1.1.1 folder in **Applications** (see Figure 6). From within this folder, either double-click the **Begin_OOorg** icon, or drag the icon to the Dock and single-click it. Apple's X11 will launch, followed by OpenOffice.org.

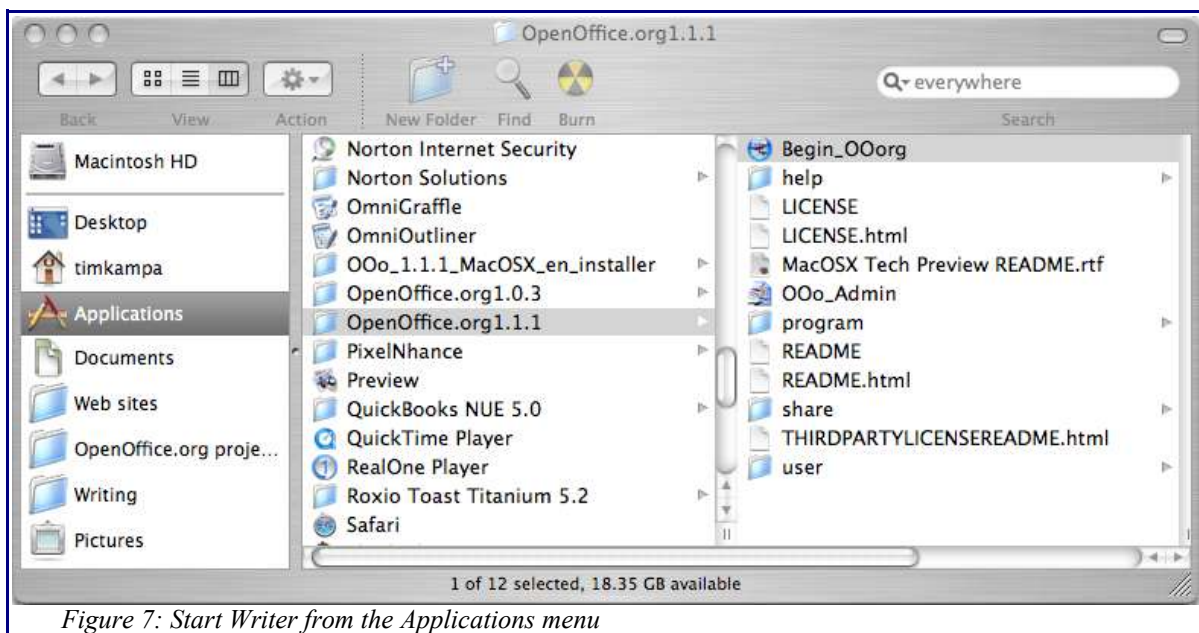


Figure 7: Start Writer from the Applications menu





Figure 8: Empty desktop after starting Writer.

After you have successfully launched OpenOffice.org, you will either have an empty desktop like the one in Figure 8, or you will have a blank document into which you can type immediately, as in Figure 7.

Starting from an existing document

If you installed OpenOffice.org correctly, all Writer documents should be associated with the Writer application. This means that you can start OpenOffice.org automatically, simply by double-clicking a Writer document in your favorite file manager.

You can spot a Writer document by its icon: . Double-clicking on a document with this icon will automatically start Writer, and the document will be loaded.

On Mac, Double-clicking an OpenOffice.org icon  will automatically launch X11 and OpenOffice.org. The document will be loaded.

Starting from the command line

You may want to start Writer from the command line (that's right, using the keyboard instead of the mouse). Why? Well, by using the command line, you have more control over what happens when Writer is started. For example, using the command line, you can tell Writer to load a document and print it immediately, or to start without showing the splash screen.

Note: Most users will never need to do this.

There is more than one way to start Writer from the command line, depending on whether you have installed a customized version or whether you installed the standard download from the OpenOffice.org web site.

If you installed using the downloads on the OpenOffice.org web site, you can start Writer by typing at the command line:

```
soffice -writer
or  writer
```

Writer will start and create a new document for you. You will be able to type immediately.

If you have a customized version of OpenOffice.org (such as the one provided by Linux Mandrake or Gentoo), you can start Writer by typing at the command line:

```
oowriter
```

Although the command syntax differs, the effect is identical: it starts OpenOffice.org with an empty Writer document.


Creating a new document

So now you have started Writer and you want to write your first document. If you asked Writer to give you a blank document, you are ready to start typing away and creating your first document. In that case, you can skip to the next section, “Saving a document”.

Otherwise, you will need to create a new document. Mind you, even if you have a blank document ready, you're still allowed to read this section!

Creating a blank document

You can create a new, blank document in Writer in a number of ways. We will look at three ways of doing it (we like doing things in threes):

- By using the *Control+N* keystroke. When you press *Control+N* you get a new empty document to work with. If you already have a document open, a new document window will be created.
- By using **File > New > Text Document**. The result is similar to using the *Control+N* keystroke.
- Finally, by clicking a button on the main toolbar. It looks like this: .

Document from a template

Writer can use templates to create new documents. Templates serve as the the foundation of a series of documents, to make sure they all have a similar layout. For example, all the documents of this User Guide are based on the same template. By doing this, all the documents will look alike. They will have the same headers and footers, use the same fonts, and so on.

Unfortunately, a brand-new OpenOffice.org installation does not contain many templates. The only templates you get are for creating presentations. It is possible for you to add new templates to your installation and use them for new documents. However, this is explained in another document called “Using Templates.”

Once you do have templates on your system, you will be able to create new documents based on your template by using **File > New > Templates and Documents**. This brings up a window that allows you to choose the template you want to use for your document.

In Figure 9, you see that there is only one template available, OOoGuide. By selecting the OOoGuide template, then pressing the **Open** button, a new document will be created. Its look will be based on the formats defined in the template. In effect, it would look much like the document you are reading now.

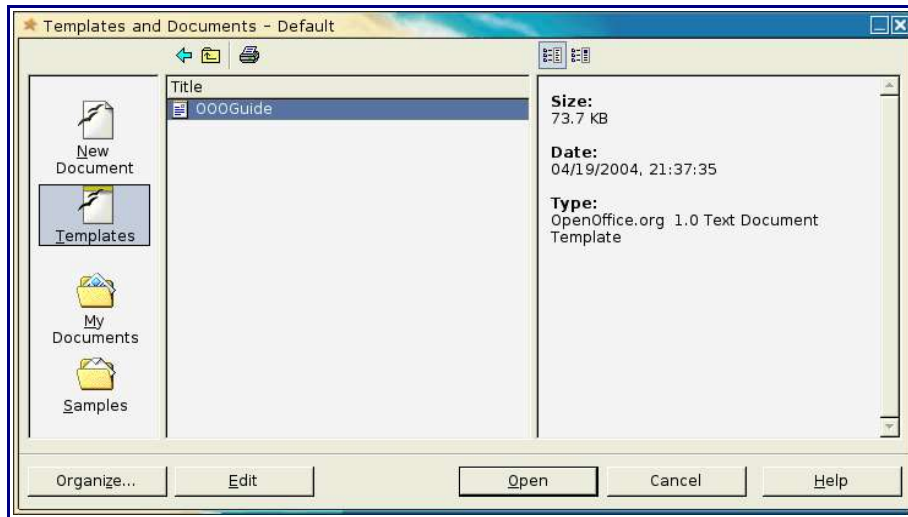


Figure 9 Choosing a template for a new document

If you plan on writing a lot of documents with a similar look, templates are a great way to achieve this. Pick up the User Guide chapter on templates and learn about them!

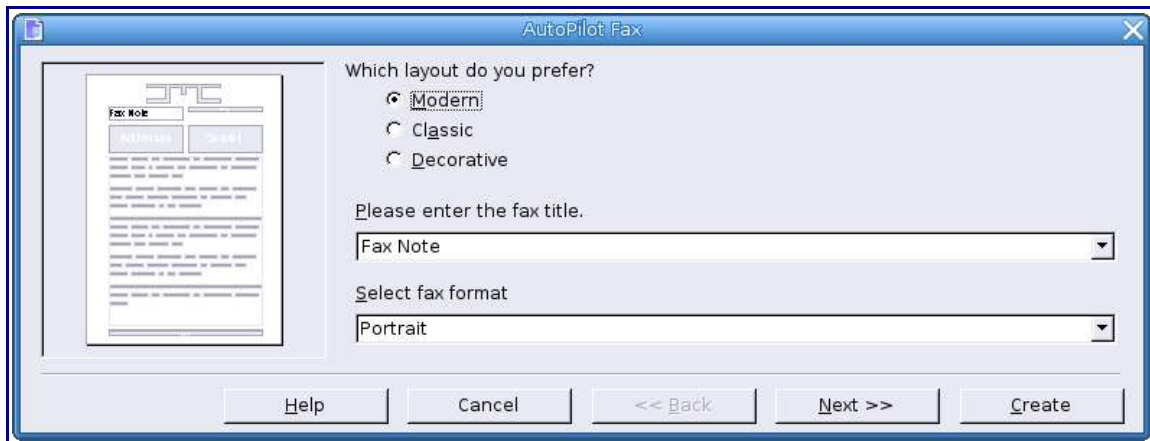
Creating a document with the Autopilot

Autopilot allows you to create a new document based on existing templates. You can create four types of Writer documents with the Autopilot:

- Letter
- Fax
- Agenda
- Memo

The following example shows how you can create a new fax document using the Autopilot.

- 1) Select **File > Autopilot > Fax**. You will get this window:
- 2) Enter a title for your fax and a fax format.



- 3) Click on **Next >>** if you want to see what other options you can set. Experiment, have fun!
- 4) At any time, you can press the **Create** button to create the new document.
- 5) After pressing the Create button, you will get a new document, filled with the information you entered in the Autopilot.

Loading an existing document

Of course, you can load existing documents in Writer to modify them. To do so:

- 1) Select **File > Open**.
- 2) In the file chooser, select the type of file you are looking for. You can reduce the list by choosing the proper File Type (see Figure 10). If you choose **Text documents** as the file type, you will only see documents Writer understands.
- 3) Select the file you want, then click Open.

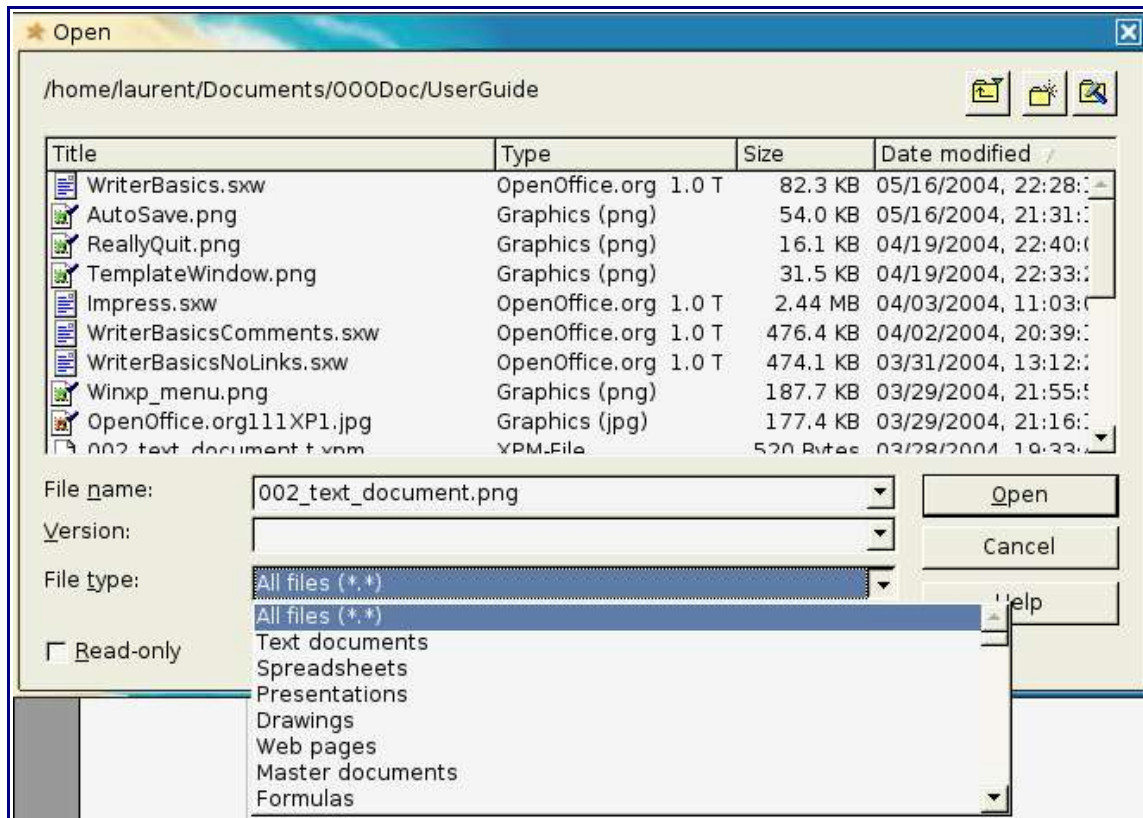


Figure 10: Opening an existing document.

Saving a document

You have created a document, you've modified it, and it looks great! Now, you want to save it, before moving on to bigger and better documents. There are two ways to save in Writer:

- Press *Control-S*.
- Select **File > Save**.

You also can tell Writer to save your document automatically at regular intervals. To enable this, you must configure OpenOffice.org to save all documents automatically.

- 1) Select **Tools > Options**. The option window appears.
- 2) Select **Load/Save > General**. See Figure 11.
- 3) Click on **AutoSave every**. This will activate the spinbox to set the interval. The default value is 15 minutes. Enter the value you want by typing it or by pressing the up/down arrow keys.

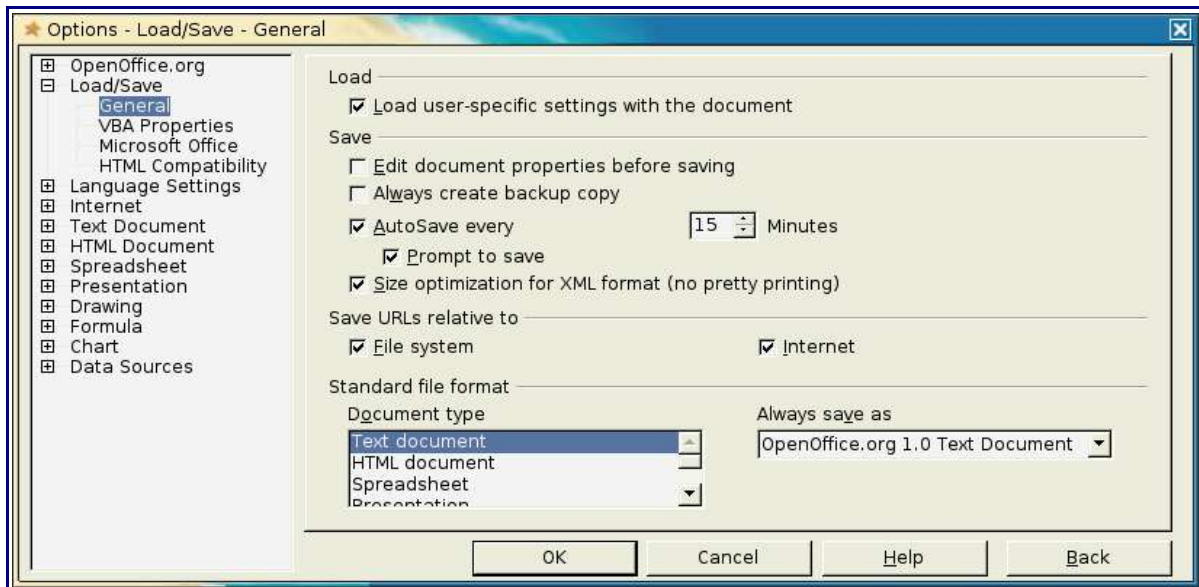


Figure 11: Option window to save automatically

- 4) The default setting makes OpenOffice.org ask you for a confirmation every time it is about to save a file automatically. If you don't want OpenOffice.org to ask, remove the checkmark beside **Prompt to save**, by clicking on it.

Saving as a Microsoft Word document

You may need to share your documents with other people who don't use OpenOffice.org, but use Microsoft Word instead. Fortunately, OpenOffice.org understands Microsoft Word files. It can read and write Word files. To save a document as a Microsoft Word file:

- 1) Save your document (see “Saving a document”). If you don't, any changes you made since the last time you saved will only appear in the Microsoft Word version of the document.
- 2) Select **File > Save As**. A file browser appears. See Figure 12.
- 3) In the **File type** drop-down menu, select the type of Word format you need.
- 4) Click **Save**.

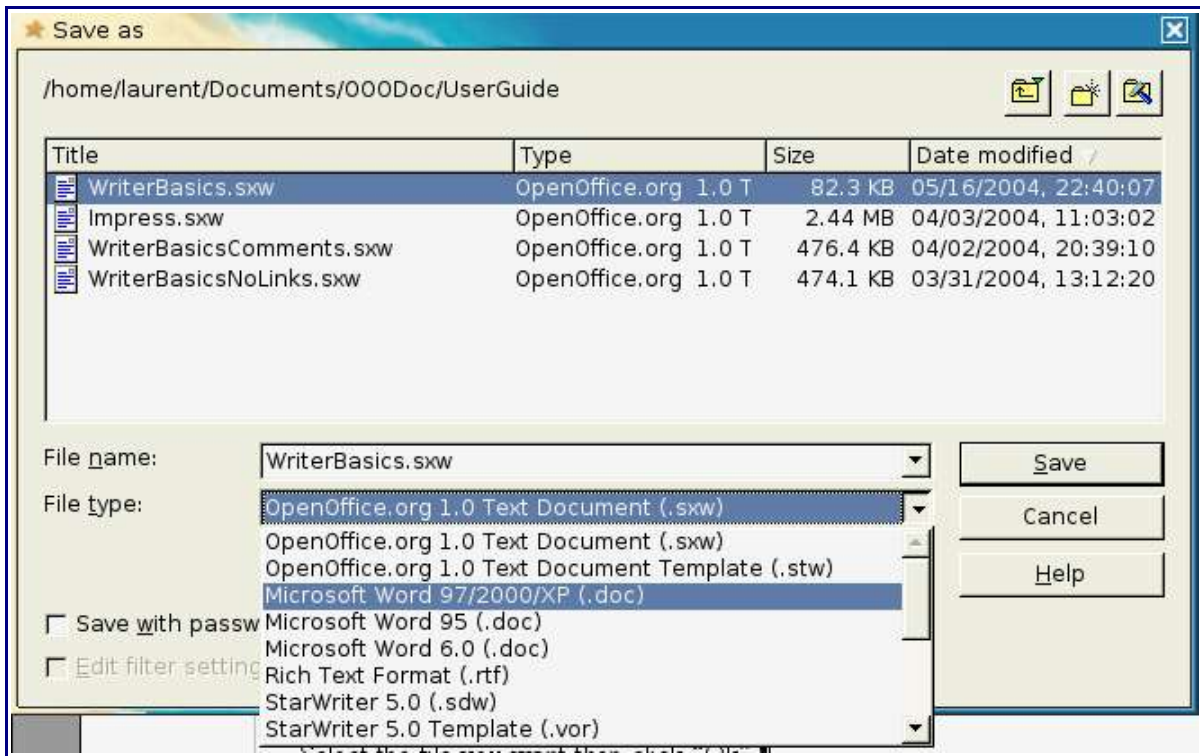
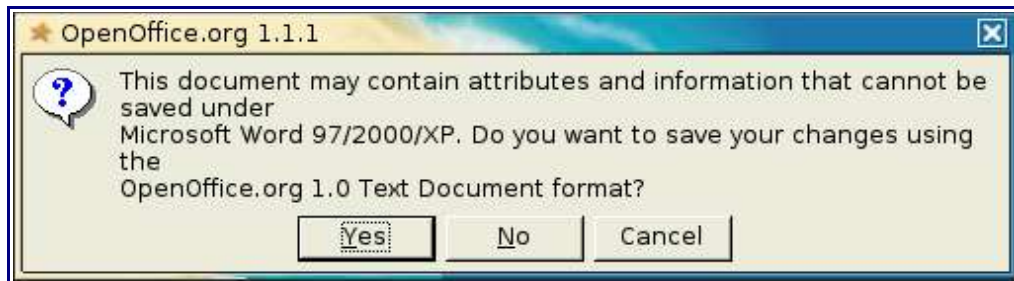


Figure 12: Saving as a Word document.

From this moment on, *all changes you make to the document will occur only in the Microsoft Word document*. You have actually changed the name of your document. If you want to go back to working with the OpenOffice.org version of your document, you must open it again.

If you decide to continue to work with the Word document instead of the Writer, the next time you try to save, you will see this message:



This is a warning saying that if you do not save your document as a Writer document, you may lose some formatting. If you still want to work with the Word document, press **No**. If you want to work in the Writer format, press **Yes**.

This warning will only appear the first time you try to save a document in Word format. Once you say **No** to the question, Writer will remember your answer and will save without asking for a confirmation.

Closing a document

You may want to stop working on one document and close it, while still remaining in OpenOffice.org. Once again, you can do this in more ways than one.

- Press *Control-W*, or
- Select **File > Close**, or
- Click on the “X” in the upper right-hand of the OpenOffice.org window. Make sure you don't click the “X” of the window border: if you do so and this is your last open document, Writer will close completely and you will need to start it again to work on a new document. Figure 13 shows which “X” to click.

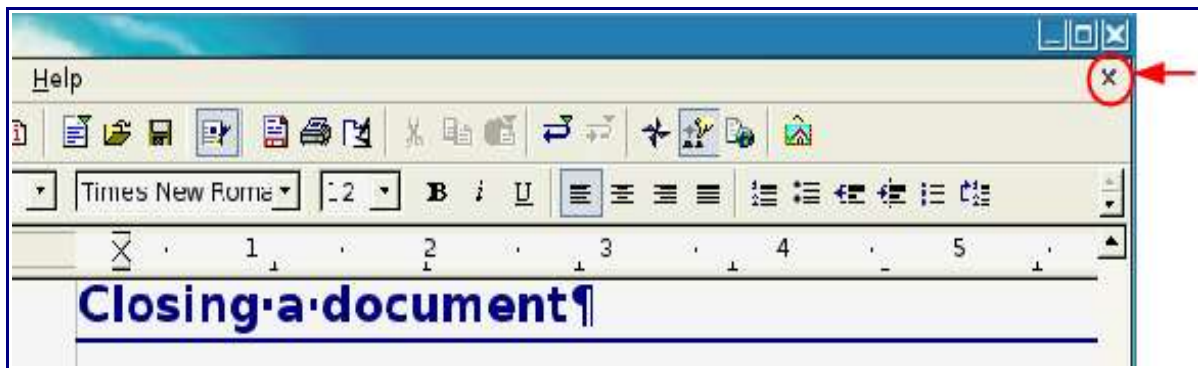
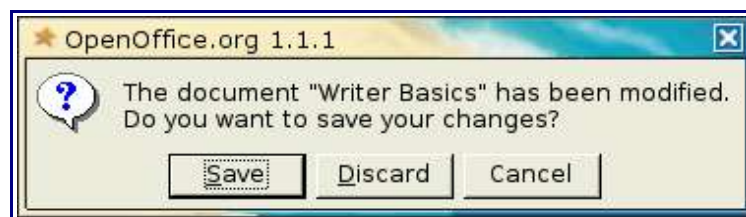


Figure 13: Closing a document.

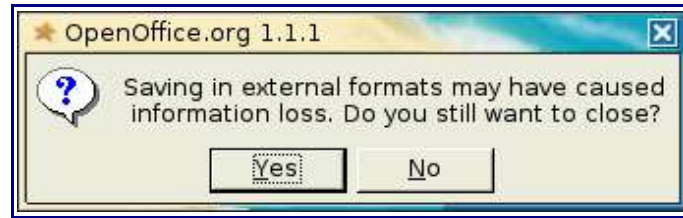
If you have more than one document open, the “X” in Figure 13 will not appear. It appears when there is only one opened document. It will not appear if you have no documents or if you have more than one document opened.

If you try to close a document which has been modified but has not been saved yet, you will get this message:



- If you click **Save**, your document will be saved, then closed.
- If you choose **Discard**, your document will be closed and all modifications since the last save will be lost.
- If you click **Cancel**, nothing will happen and you will be able to go back to your document.

If you try to close a document that was last saved as a Microsoft Word document, you will see this warning:



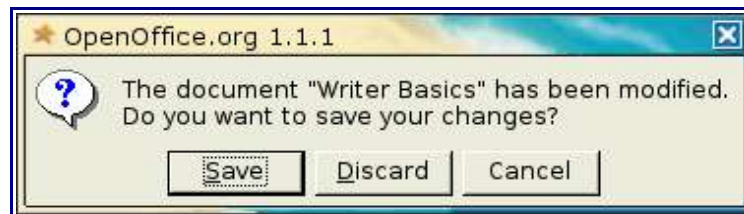
With this message, Writer is warning you that the last time you saved, you did not save in Writer's native format. When Writer tries to open the file again, you may lose some formatting. If you have already saved a copy as a regular Writer document (with your most recent changes), you can safely ignore this warning and click on **Yes**.

Exiting Writer

Well, working with Writer is a lot of fun, but you do have a life! When you are done and you want to quit, do one of the following:

- Press *Control+Q*, or
- Select **File > Exit**.

If you have saved all your documents, Writer will close immediately. If you have documents that have been modified but haven't been saved to disk, you will get a warning window that looks like this:



With this message, Writer is warning you that one of your documents has been modified but has not been saved.

- If you press the **Save** button, your document will be saved to disk.
- If you press the **Discard** button, all the modifications you have done to the document will be lost.
- If you press the **Cancel** button, Writer will go back to your modified document and will not exit. At that point, you may make changes to your document, if needed, then try exiting again.

Go forth and write!

You now know the basic elements of creating, modifying, and saving Writer documents. The rest will come with practice and a little help from your friends at the OpenOffice.org community.

If you require more help than is provided in this document, please have a look at the OpenOffice.org User Guide website. A mailing list is available where you can ask specific questions. A large community of volunteers will try to help you as much as possible. Please see the “Resources” section below for more resources available to you.

Welcome to OpenOffice.org. Have fun and happy writing!

Resources

OpenOffice.org Web site: <http://www.openoffice.org>

User Guide Web site: <http://www.oooauthors.org>

To subscribe to the OpenOffice.org Users List, send an email to users-subscribe@openoffice.org. Be warned that this mailing list is very active: you can often receive more than 100 messages per day. If you would rather use newsgroups, the mailing list is available as a newsgroup at <news://news.gmane.org/gmane.comp.openoffice.questions>.