



Writer Guide

Chapter 17
Customizing Writer

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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 OpenOffice.org, 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 OpenOffice.org 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), you can add and rearrange items on the menu bar, add items to menus, and make other changes.

To customize menus:

- 1) Choose **Tools > Customize**.
- 2) On the **Customize** dialog, pick the **Menus** page (Figure 1).
- 3) In the Save In drop-down list, choose whether to save this changed menu for the application (for example, Writer) or for a selected document.
- 4) In the section **OpenOffice.org <name of the program (example: 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 sub-menus, 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 available for 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.

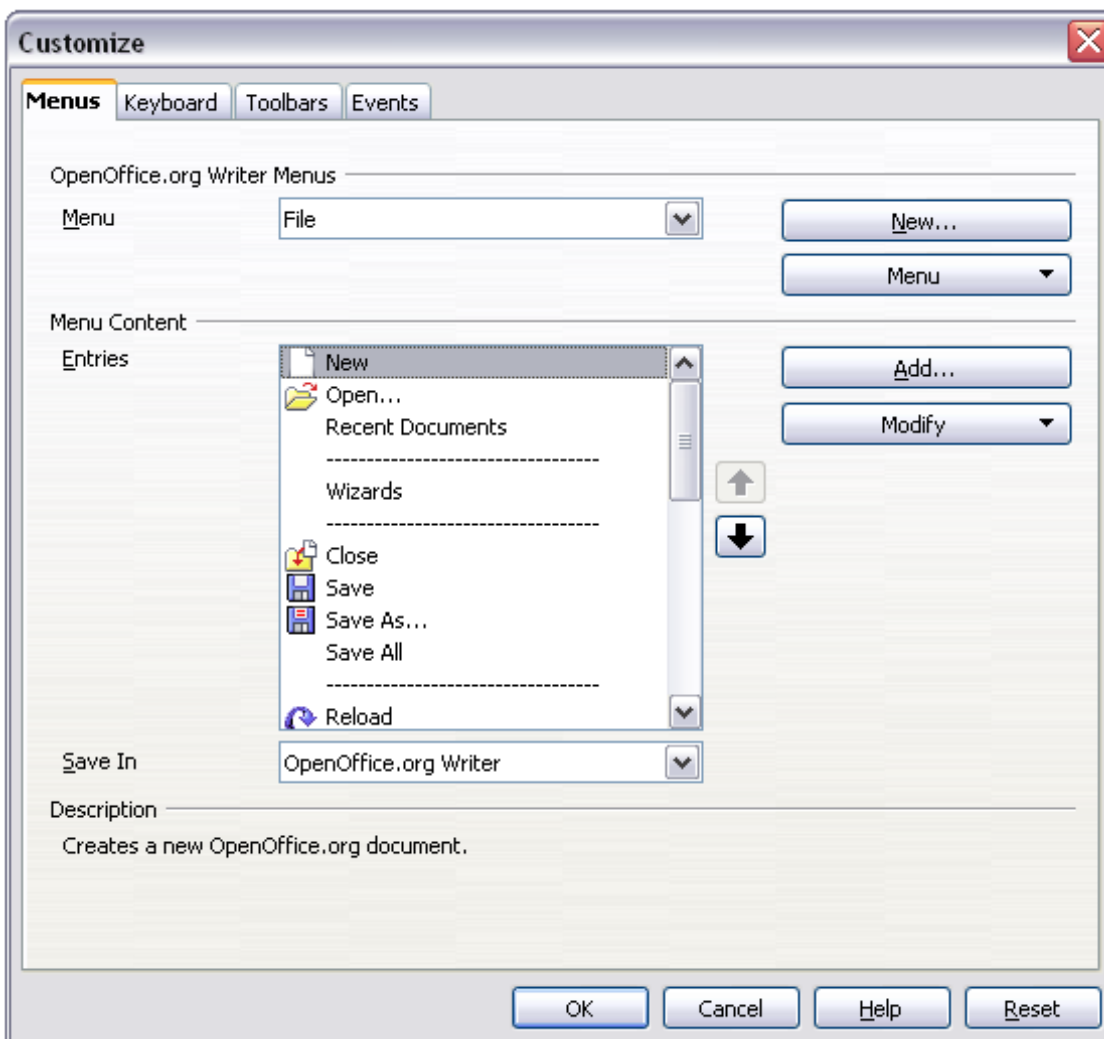


Figure 1. The Menus page of the Customize dialog

Creating a new menu

In the Customize dialog, click **New** to display the 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 7.

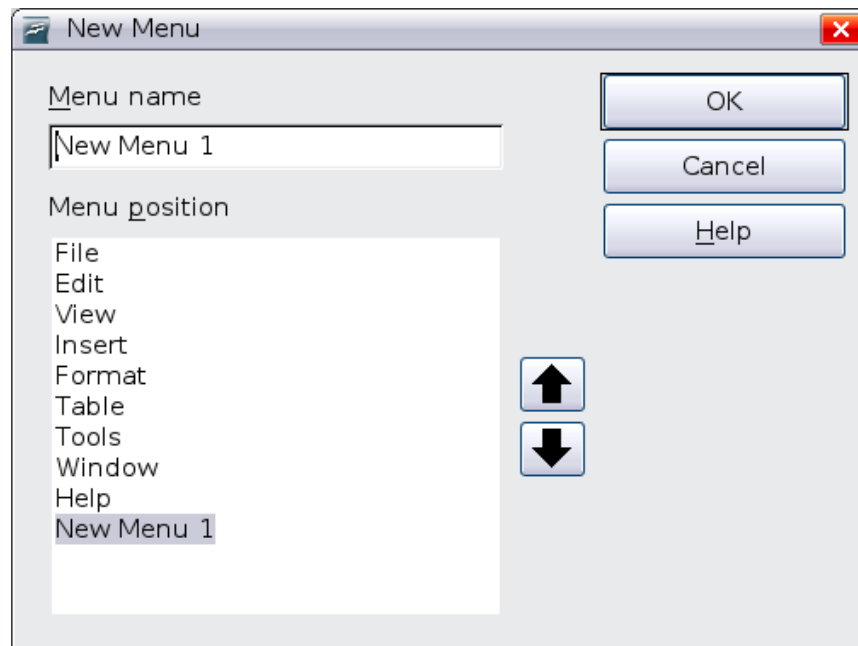


Figure 2: Adding a new menu

Modifying existing menus

To modify an existing menu, 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.

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.

In addition to renaming, you can specify a keyboard shortcut that allows you to select a menu command when you press *Alt+* an underlined letter in a menu command.

- 1) Select a menu or menu entry.
- 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 Save All command by pressing *Alt+V*, enter **Sa~ve All**.

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.

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.

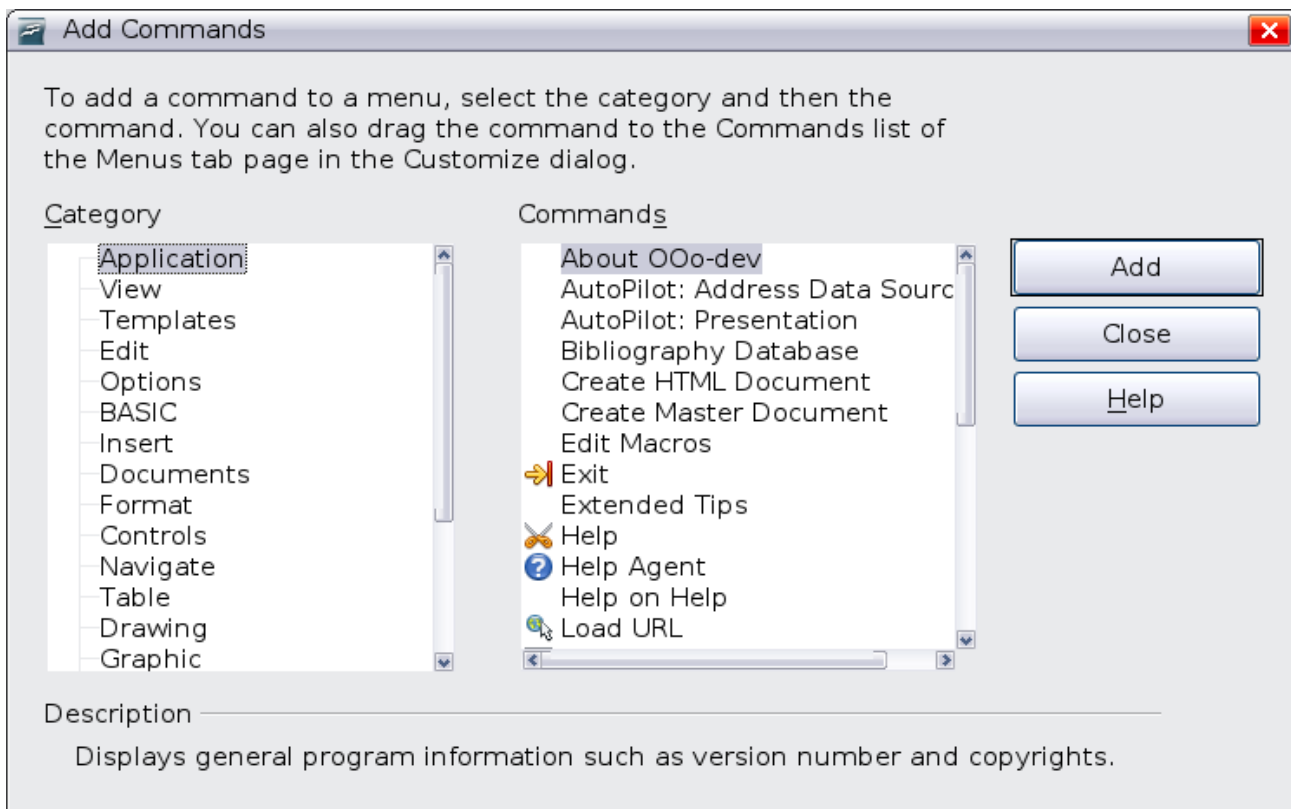


Figure 3: Adding a command to a menu

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 in 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.

Most of the actions should be self-explanatory. **Begin a group** adds a separator line after the highlighted entry.

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). This section describes how to create new toolbars and add other icons (commands) to the list of those available on a toolbar.

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 pick the **Toolbars** page (Figure 4).

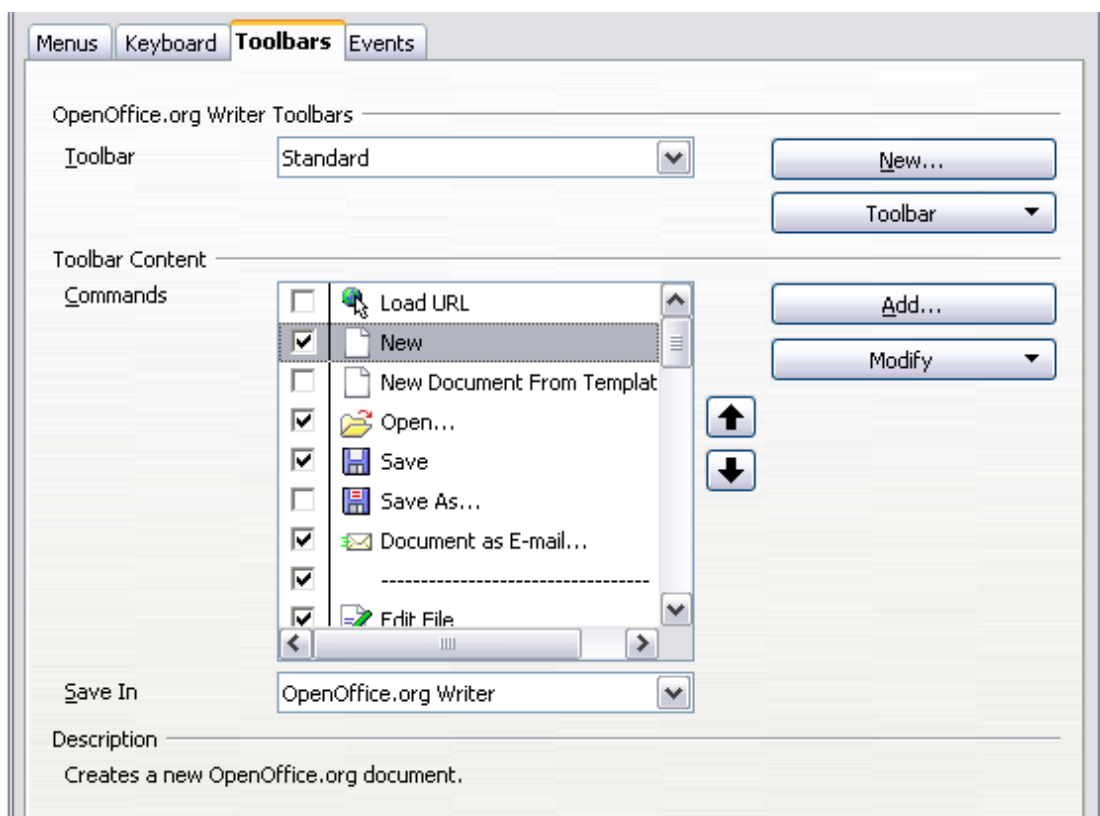


Figure 4. The Toolbars page of the Customize dialog

To customize toolbars:

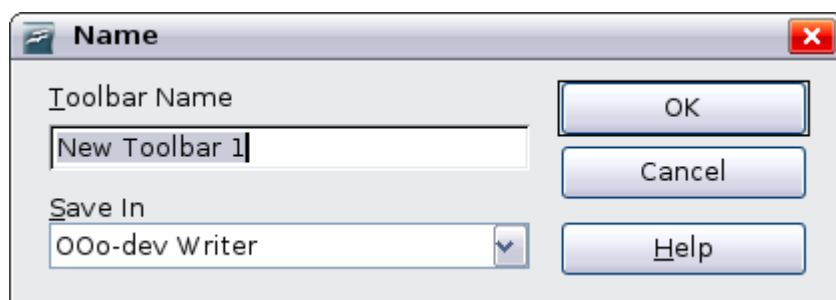
- 1) In the Save In drop-down list, choose whether to save this changed toolbar for the application (Writer) or for a selected document.
- 2) In the section **OpenOffice.org Writer > Toolbars**, select from the **Toolbar** drop-down list the toolbar that you want to customize.

- 3) You can create a new toolbar by clicking on the **New** button, or customize existing toolbars by clicking on the **Toolbar** or **Modify** buttons, and add commands to a toolbar by clicking on the **Add** button. These actions are described below.
- 4) When you have finished making all your changes, click **OK** to save them.

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 below.

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 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.

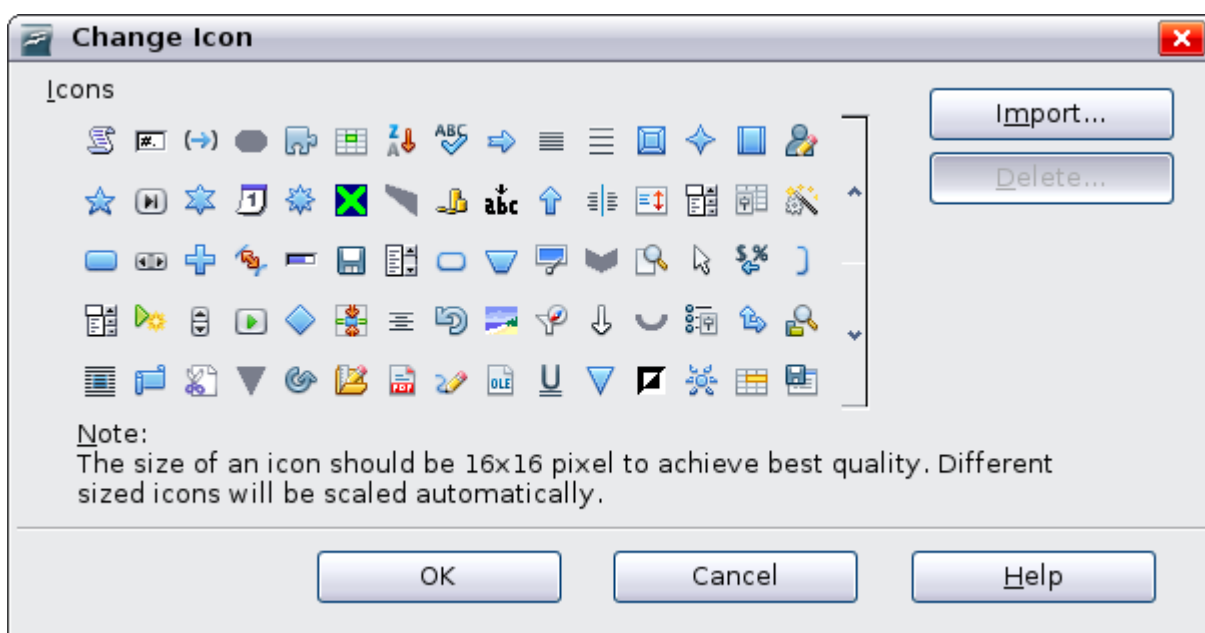


Figure 5: Change Icon dialog

To use a custom icon, create it in a graphics program and import it into OOO by clicking the **Import** button on the Change Icon dialog. Custom icons must be 16 x 16 or 26 x 26 pixels in size and cannot contain more than 256 colors.

Example: Adding a Fax icon to a toolbar

You can customize OpenOffice.org 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.
 - a) Choose **Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org Writer > Print**. The dialog shown in Figure 6 opens.

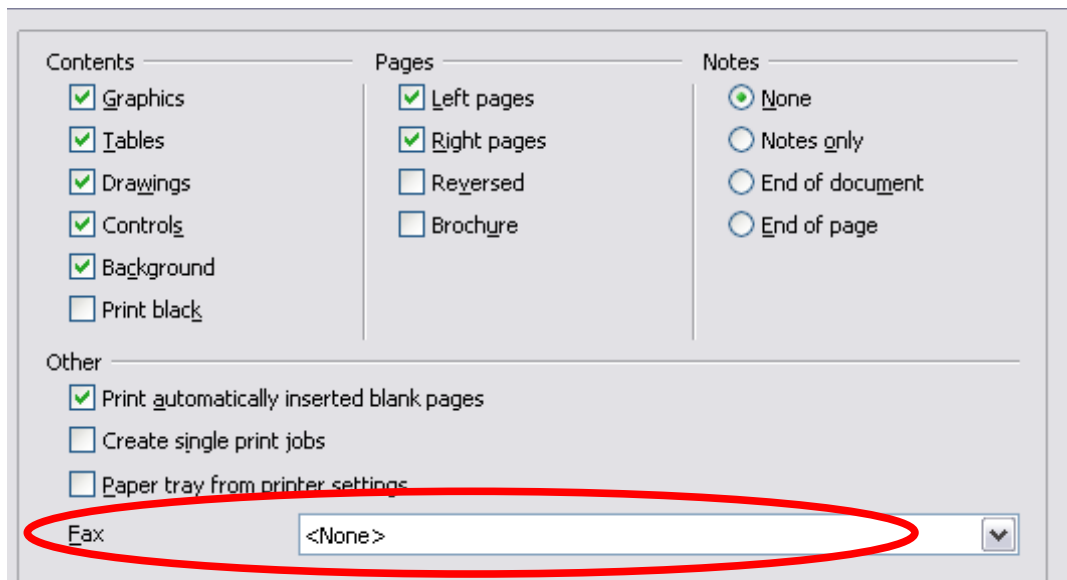


Figure 6: Setting up OOo for sending faxes

- b) Select the fax driver from the **Fax** list and click **OK**.
- 2) 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**.
- 3) 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.
- 4) 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.

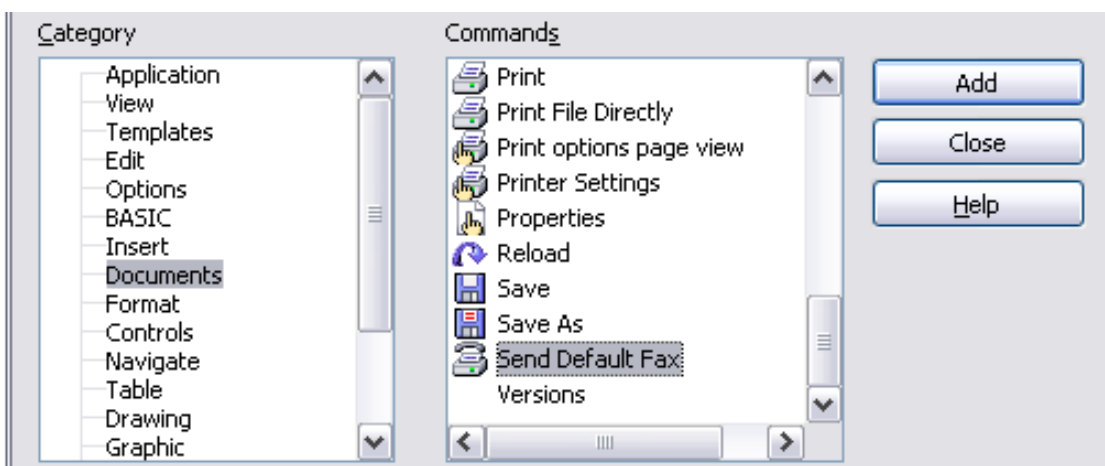


Figure 7: Adding a Send Fax command to a toolbar

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 OOO functions or your own macros and save them for use with the entire OpenOffice.org suite.

Caution



Be careful when reassigning your operating system's or OOO'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 OOO defaults, changing some common shortcut keys can cause confusion, frustration and possible data loss or corruption, especially if other users share your computer.

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

- 1) Select **Tools > Customize > Keyboard**. The Customize dialog opens.
- 2) To have the shortcut key assignment available in all components of OpenOffice.org, select the **OpenOffice.org** button.
- 3) Next select the required function from the *Category* and *Function* lists.
- 4) Now select the desired shortcut keys in the *Shortcut keys* list and click the **Modify** button at the upper right.
- 5) Click **OK** to accept the change. Now the chosen shortcut keys will execute the function chosen in step 3 above whenever they are pressed.

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.

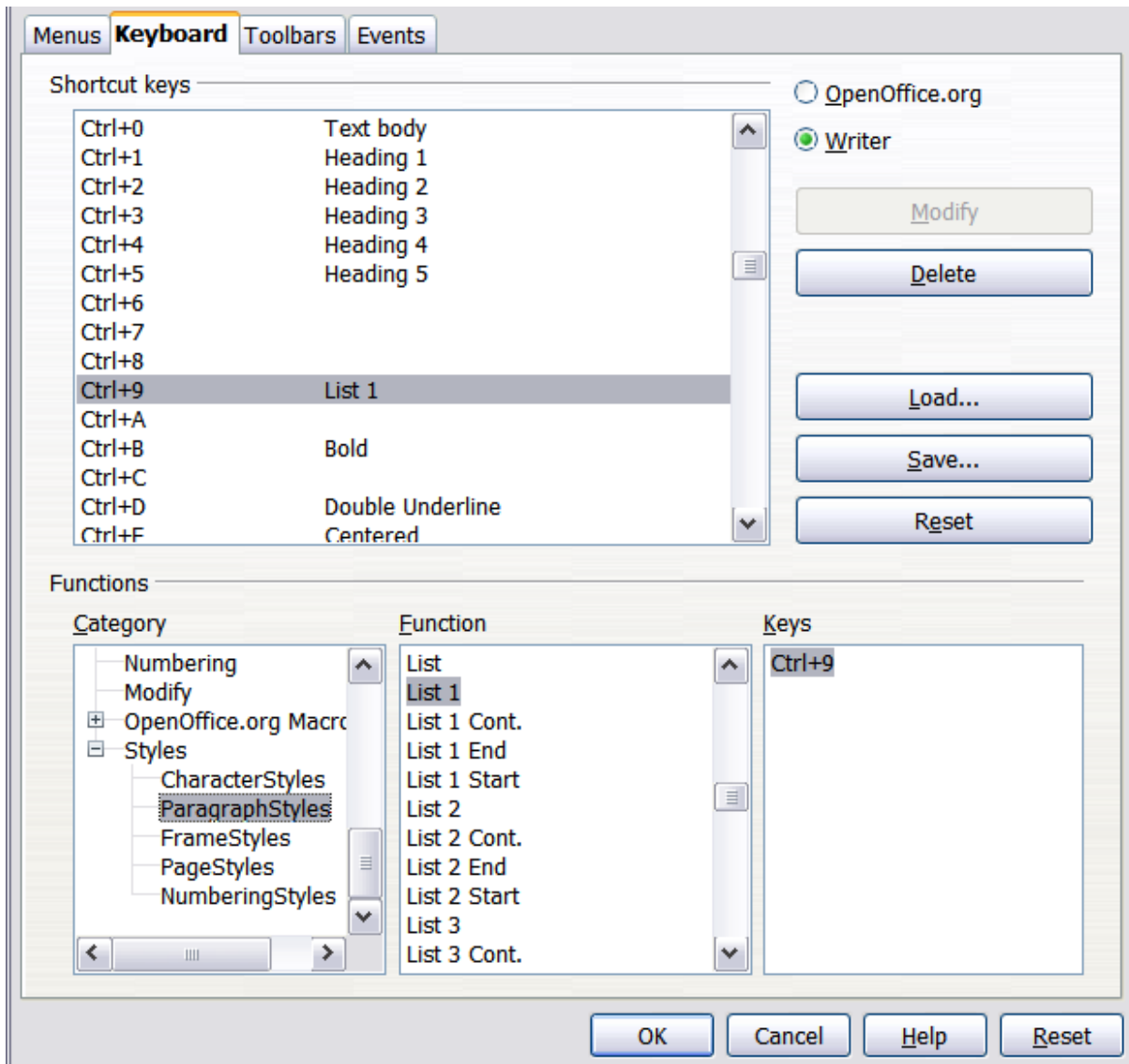


Figure 8. Defining keyboard shortcuts for applying styles

- 2) To have the shortcut key assignment available only for Writer, select **Writer** in the upper right corner of the page; otherwise select **OpenOffice.org** to make it available to every component.
- 3) Choose the shortcut keys you want to assign a style to. In this example, we have chosen *Ctrl+9*.

- 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 OOO'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.

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

- 1) Use **Tools > Macros > Record Macro** to start recording a macro.

A small window is displayed so you know that OpenOffice.org is recording.



- 2) Use **Insert > Special Characters** to open the Special Characters dialog box (Figure 9). Scroll down until you find the en-dash (U+2013) and em-dash (U+2014) characters. Select one of them and click **OK**.
- 3) Click the **Stop Recording** button to stop recording, save the macro, and display the OpenOffice.org Basic Macros dialog (see Figure 10). Type a descriptive name for the new macro in the **Macro name** box on the upper left.
- 4) Be sure to open the library container named *My Macros*. Find the library named *Standard* under My Macros. Select Module1 and click Save.
- 5) Repeat steps 1–4 to create other macros, for example to insert an em-dash.

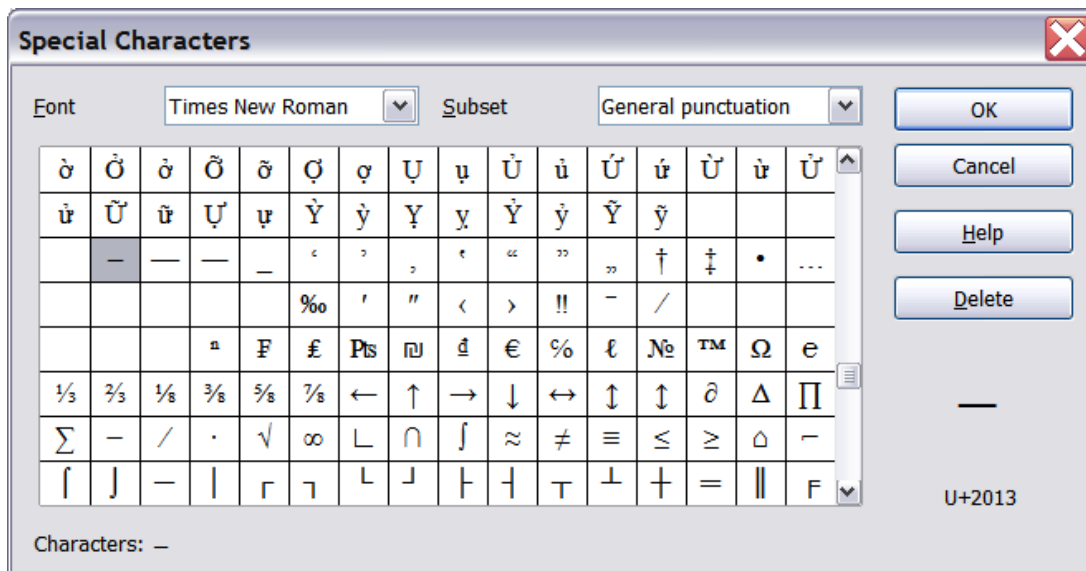


Figure 9: Find and choose the en-dash.

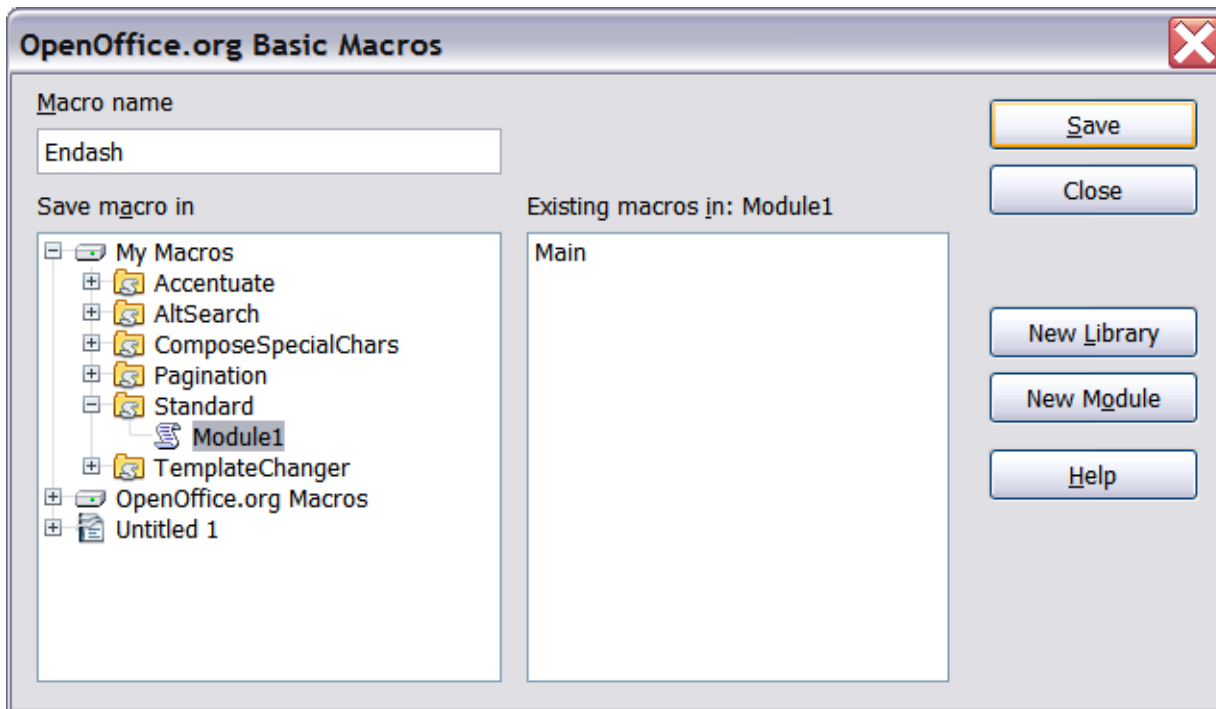


Figure 10: Naming the new macro and storing it

- 6) Use **Tools > Customize > Keyboard** tab (Figure 11). In the Shortcut keys list, pick an unused combination (for example, *Ctrl+Shift+N* for an en-dash). In the Category list, scroll down to OpenOffice.org Macros, click the + sign, then click the + next to the Standard library and choose Module1. In the Function list, choose **Endash** and click the **Modify** button on the upper right. The selected key combination now appears in the Keys list on the lower right, and Endash appears next to *Ctrl+Shift+N* in the Shortcut keys list.
- 7) Repeat for the em-dash macro, then click **OK**.

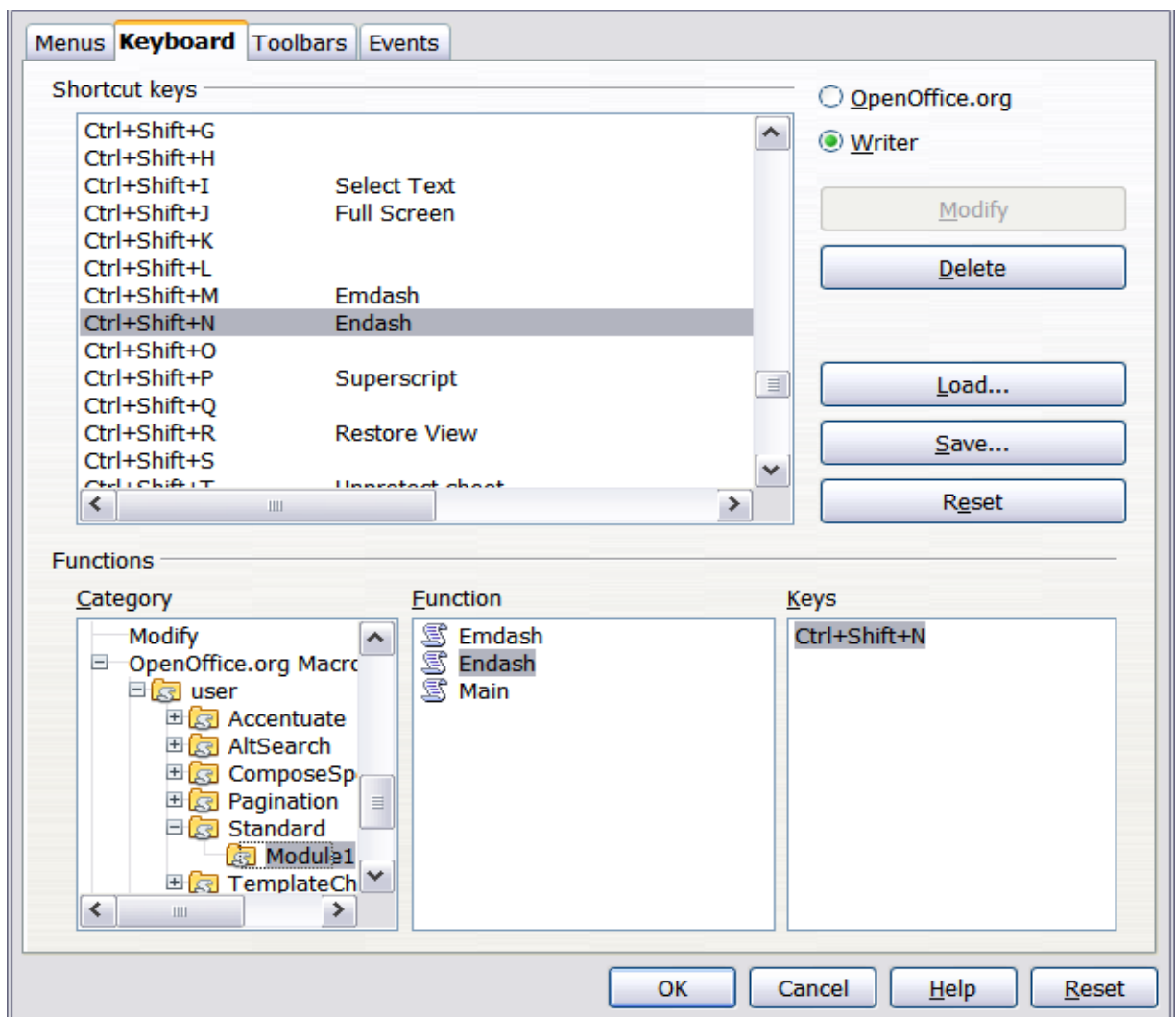


Figure 11: Defining keyboard shortcuts for running macros

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 17.

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 near the bottom right of 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 near the bottom right of 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 OOo, 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 OpenOffice.org to add new functionality.

Although individual extensions can be found in different places, the official OpenOffice.org extension repository is at <http://extensions.services.openoffice.org/>. Some extensions 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 OOO, 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 Extension Manager dialog.

Tip

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

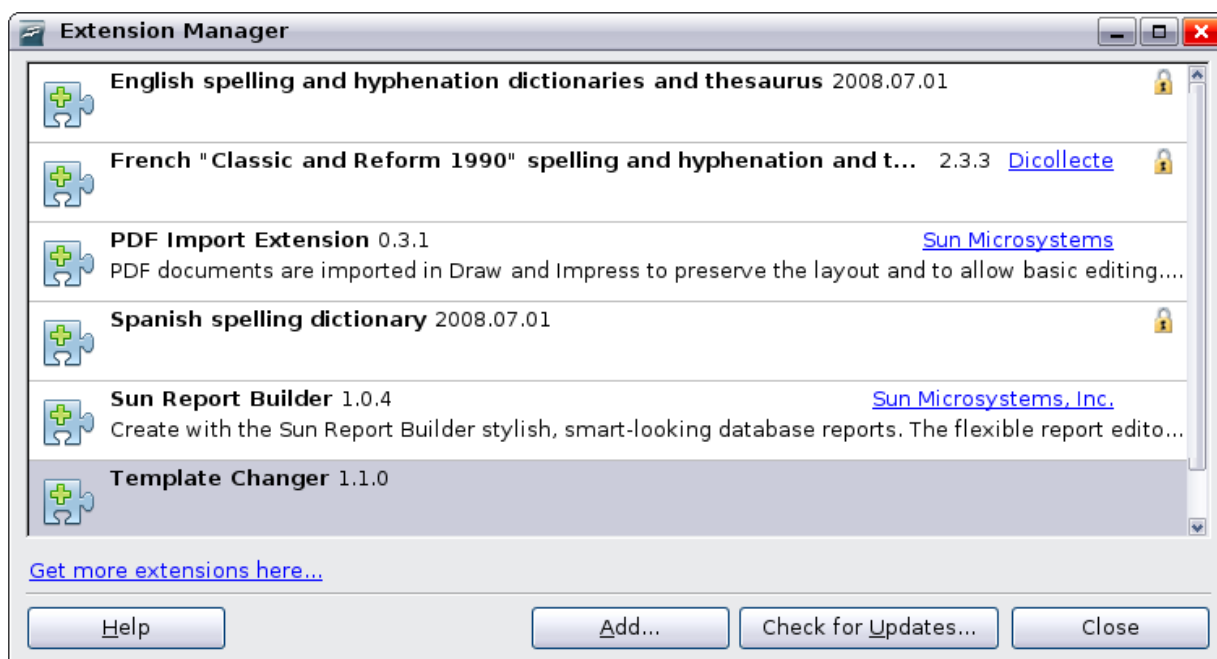


Figure 12: Installing an extension

Note

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

Using extensions

This section describes a few of the more important and popular extensions to Writer. All are available from the OOO extensions repository. In each case, you need to first install the extension as described in the previous section.

Template Changer

Adds two new items to the **File > Templates** menu that allow you to assign a new template to the current document or to a folder of documents. All styles and formatting will be loaded from that template and the document will behave as it was created using that template. Open source.

Compose Special Characters

Provides a facility for inserting accented and special characters using key combinations. Adds an entry (**Compose Character**) to the **Insert** menu, which opens a dialog where you can view the list of key combinations and choose the keystroke you want to use to run the macro. Once setup is done, simply press the appropriate key combination, followed by the keystroke to run the macro. Open source.

Professional Template Pack II

Provides more than 120 templates for Writer, Calc, and Impress. Available in several languages. After you have installed this extension, you will find the templates under **File > New > Templates and Documents**. From Sun Microsystems. Freeware.

PDF Import

Imported PDF documents open in Draw, not Writer.

This extension enables you to make minor modifications to the text of existing PDF files when the original source files do not exist or you are unable to open the source files. (Whenever possible, modify the source and regenerate the PDF to obtain the best results.)

When the extension is installed, PDF is listed as a choice in the File Type drop-down list in the **File > Open** dialog.

Many PDFs can be edited and resaved with no problems. However, depending on the complexity of the layout, the fonts used, the graphics included, and other factors, changes may be difficult to make, font substitution may occur, and the saved result may not preserve the original layout.

Each line of text appears in a separate text box. If part of the text is in a different font or font variation (for example, bold or italic), that part of the line is in a separate text box. Thus a single line of text may contain several separate text boxes. If you edit the text in one box, the result may overlap the text in the following box or leave a conspicuous gap between the two portions of text. If this occurs, you need to manually adjust the spacing between the boxes.

Graphics with transparent backgrounds are imported with colored (usually black) backgrounds, and these colored backgrounds remain when the edited PDF is saved again. Graphics and frames anchored “to paragraph” may move away from their positions during import; any incorrect positioning remains when the PDF is saved again.

From Sun Microsystems. Open source.

Writer's Tools

A set of utilities designed to help OpenOffice.org users perform a wide range of tasks. Using Writer's Tools, you can back up documents, look up and translate words and phrases, manage text snippets, and keep tabs on document statistics. Open source.