Getting Started with Apache OpenOffice

Version 3.4

Preface

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Feedback

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ODFAuthors

Contents

Who is this book for?

Anyone who wants to get up to speed quickly with Apache OpenOffice will find this book valuable. You may be new to office software, or you may be familiar with another office suite.

What's in this book?

This book introduces the main components of Apache OpenOffice:

- Writer (word processing)
- Calc (spreadsheets)
- Impress (presentations)
- Draw (vector graphics)
- Base (database)
- Math (equation editor)

It also covers some of the features common to all components, including setup and customization, styles and templates, and printing. For more detail, see the user guides for the individual components.

Where to get more help

This book, the other Apache OpenOffice user guides, the built-in Help system, and user support systems assume that you are familiar with your computer and basic functions such as starting a program, opening and saving files.

Help system

Apache OpenOffice comes with an extensive Help system. This is your first line of support for using the program.

To display the full Help system, press *F1* or select **OpenOffice.org Help** from the Help menu. In addition, you can choose whether to activate Tips, Extended tips, and the Help Agent (using **Tools > Options > OpenOffice.org > General**).

If Tips are enabled, place the mouse pointer over any of the icons to see a small box ("tooltip") with a brief explanation of the icon's function. For a more detailed explanation, select **Help > What's This?** and hold the pointer over the icon.

Free online support

The Apache OpenOffice community not only develops software, but provides free, volunteer-based support. See this web page: http://support.openoffice.org/index.html

Users can get comprehensive online support from the community through mailing lists. Other websites run by users also offer free tips and tutorials. This forum provides community support for Apache OpenOffice and other programs: http://forum.openoffice.org/en/forum/

Paid support and training

Alternatively, you can pay for support services. Service contracts can be purchased from a vendor or consulting firm specializing in Apache OpenOffice.

What's new in Apache OpenOffice 3.4?

This section summarizes some of the changes since OpenOffice.org 3.3. For details, see the Release Notes for Apache OpenOffice 3.4 and 3.4.1:
http://www.openoffice.org/development/releases/3.4.0.html
http://www.openoffice.org/development/releases/3.4.1.html

- Faster startup
- Support for Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG)
- Enhanced RTF export
- Reduced PDF file size
- Improved ODF 1.2 encryption support
- Improved navigation in Styles and Formatting, Navigator, and options dialogs
- New regular expressions (regexp) engine
- New Color Picker dialog
- Enhanced or additional graphics support (in addition to SVG):
  - Support for Line Cap property for thick lines and 3D objects
  - Support for shear transformations for graphic objects in Draw/Impress and Calc
  - Support for attributes and transformations for OLE objects in Draw/Impress and Calc
  - Enhanced crop support and mirroring for graphical objects
- Calc:
  - DataPilot renamed Pivot Table and no longer limited in the number of fields supported
  - Improved CSV export; new CSV export option, Quote all text cells
  - Support for new conditional functions from ODF 1.2
  - New, faster Linear Programming solver
- Chart:
  - Legend within a chart is now resizable
  - Data axid now available for category charts
  - Time axis now supported
  - Enhanced chart visualization
- Math:
  - Option to save only used symbols for each formula
  - Option to use automatic baseline for Math objects in Writer documents
  - Symbol catalog now supports UTF-32 characters
- Draw/Impress:
  - Better defaults for snap, grid settings, bullet spacing, and indentation
  - Changed default for "copy when moving"
  - Animate outline shapes "By 1st level paragraphs" as default
  - New default colors of drawing objects
  - Setting default shadow distance for shapes
  - Enhancement to the "mouse as pen" feature in impress slideshow
  - Default full width for text in shapes
  - Change outline default bullet symbol order
  - Shortcut for inserting comments changed
  - Set pixel resolution when exporting graphics
- Writer: Asian Language Word Count now correct

What are the advantages of Apache OpenOffice?

Here are some of the advantages of Apache OpenOffice over proprietary office suites:

- **No licensing fees**. Apache OpenOffice is free for anyone to use and distribute at no cost. There are no hidden charges now or in the future.
- **Open source.** You can distribute, copy, and modify the software as much as you wish, in accordance with the Apache 2 license.
- **Cross-platform.** Apache OpenOffice runs on several hardware architectures and under multiple operating systems, such as Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux.
- **Extensive language support**. The user interface for Apache OpenOffice is available in several languages, and more are being added. Apache OpenOffice also supports bi-directional text and complex text layout for many scripts.
- **Consistent user interface.** All the components have a similar "look and feel," making them easy to use and master.
- **Integration.** The components of Apache OpenOffice are well integrated with one another.
    - All the components share a common spelling checker and other tools, which are used consistently across the suite. For example, the drawing tools available in Writer are also found in Calc, with similar but enhanced versions in Impress and Draw.
    - You do not need to know which application was used to create a particular file. For example, you can open a Draw file from Writer.
- **Granularity.** Usually, if you change an option, it affects all components. However, Apache OpenOffice options can be set at a component level or even document level.
- **File compatibility.** In addition to its native OpenDocument formats, Apache OpenOffice includes PDF and Flash export capabilities, as well as support for opening and saving files in many common formats including Microsoft Office, HTML, XML, WordPerfect, and Lotus 1-2-3 formats. An extension provides the ability to import and edit some PDF files.
- **No vendor lock-in.** Apache OpenOffice uses OpenDocument, an XML (eXtensible Markup Language) file format developed as an industry standard by OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards). These files can easily be unzipped and read by any text editor, and their framework is open and published.
- **You have a voice.** Enhancements, software fixes, and release dates are community-driven. You can join the community and affect the course of the product you use.

You can read more about Apache OpenOffice, its mission, history, licensing, and other organizational information on the Apache OpenOffice website, http://www.openoffice.org/.

What you see may be different

Apache OpenOffice runs on Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X operating systems, each of which has several versions and can be customized by users (fonts, colors, themes, window managers).

The pictures in this book were taken from a variety of computers and operating systems. Some pictures will therefore not look exactly like what you see on your computer.

Using Apache OpenOffice on a Mac

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

Windows or Linux	Mac equivalent	Effect
Tools > Options menu selection	**OpenOffice.org > Preferences**	Access setup options
Right-click	*Control+click*	Open a context menu
Ctrl (Control)	*⌘ (Command)*	Used with other keys
F5	*Shift+⌘+F5*	Open the Navigator
F11	*⌘+T*	Open the Styles and Formatting window

Frequently asked questions

How is Apache OpenOffice licensed?
> Apache OpenOffice is distributed under the Apache License, Version 2.0, http://www.apache.org/licenses/LICENSE-2.0.html.

May I distribute Apache OpenOffice to anyone?
> Yes.

How many computers may I install it on?
> As many as you like.

May I sell it?
> Yes.

May I use Apache OpenOffice in my business?
> Yes.

I am writing a software application. May I use programming code from Apache OpenOffice in my program?
> You may, within the parameters set in the Apache 2.0 license (see above).

Why do I need Java to run Apache OpenOffice? Is it written in Java?
> Apache OpenOffice is not written in Java; it is written in the C++ language. Java is one of several languages that can be used to extend the software. The Java JDK/JRE is only required for some features. The most notable one is the HSQLDB relational database engine.
>
> Note: Java is available at no cost. If you do not want to use Java, you can still use nearly all of the features of Apache OpenOffice.

What are all these things called?

The terms used in Apache OpenOffice for most parts of the *user interface* (the parts of the program you see and use, in contrast to the behind-the-scenes code that actually makes it work) are the same as for most other programs.

A *dialog* is a special type of window. Its purpose is to inform you of something, or request input from you, or both. It provides controls for you to use to specify how to carry out an action. The technical names for common controls are shown in Figure 1; not shown is the list box (from which you select an item). In most cases we do not use the technical terms in this book, but it is useful to know them because the Help and other sources of information often use them.

In most cases, you can interact only with the dialog (not the document itself) as long as the dialog remains open. When you close the dialog after use (usually, clicking **OK** or another button saves your changes and closes the dialog), then you can again work with your document.

Some dialogs can be left open as you work, so you can switch back and forth between the dialog and your document. An example of this type is the Find & Replace dialog.
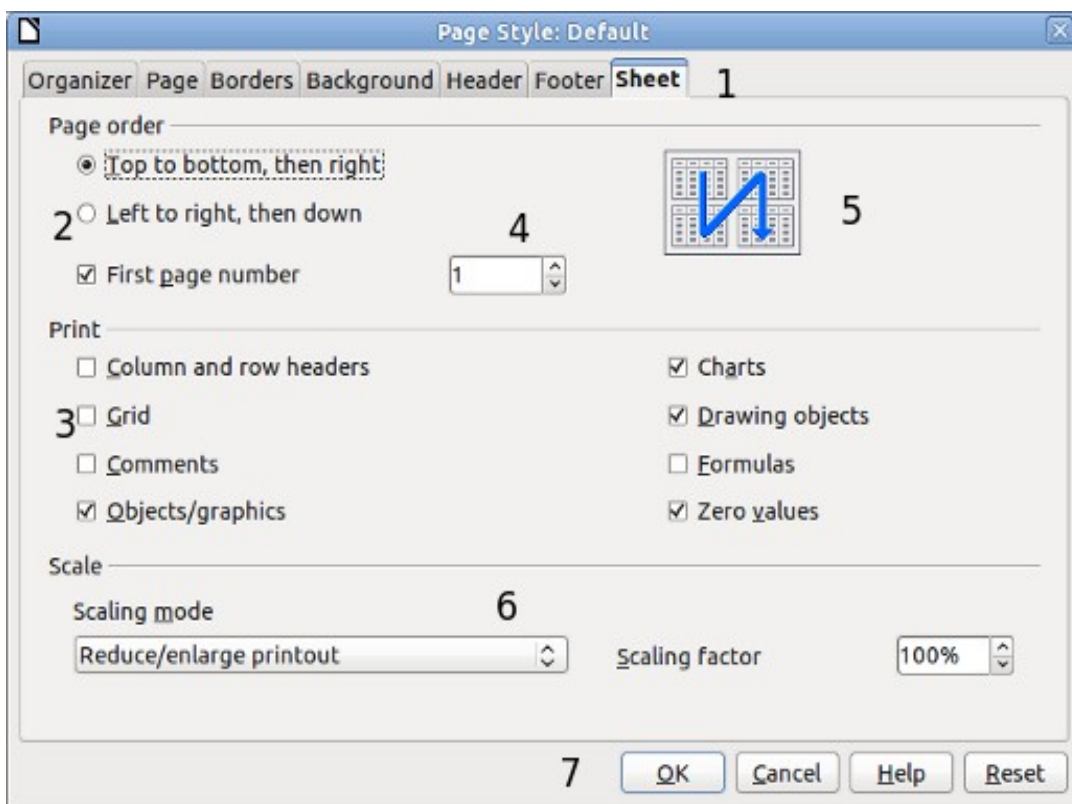

Figure 1: Dialog showing common controls:
1 = Tabbed page (not strictly speaking a control)
2 = Radio buttons (only one can be selected at a time)
3 = Checkbox (more than one can be selected at a time)
4 = Spin box (click the up and down arrows to change the number shown in the
text box next to it, or type in the text box)
5 = Thumbnail or preview
6 = Drop-down list from which to select an item
7 = Push buttons

Who wrote this book?

This book was written by volunteers from the ODFAuthors and Apache OpenOffice communities. Profits from sales of the printed edition will be used to benefit the communities.

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