

OpenOffice & Libre Office Opening & Saving Microsoft Office files

Loading/Opening files

Microsoft Office files (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) are still very much the *de facto* standard file formats (.doc or .docx, .xls, .ppt) so it is essential that you know how to import and export these files into and from OpenOffice and LibreOffice applications. At this point we would advise that LibreOffice is the most secure option for interfacing with Microsoft Offices latest file types – those that end in 'x'.

In this introduction, we will explore several different ways to import a Microsoft *Word* text document:

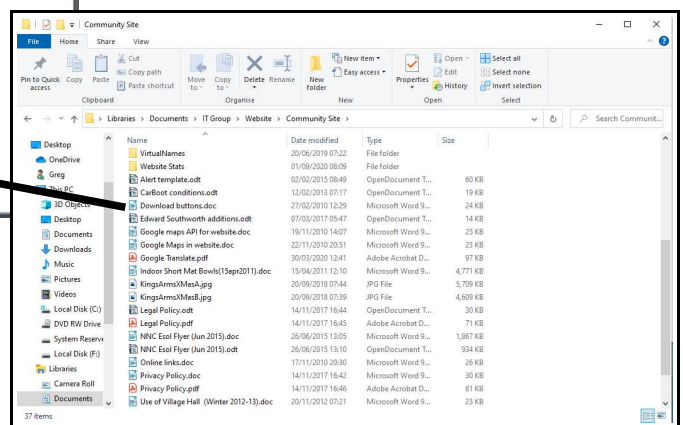
1. Drag-and-drop onto LibreOffice or OpenOffice

With your chosen MS *Word* file visible in a filer window, **Launch** OpenOffice.org in the usual way and make sure the **Welcome to OpenOffice.org** screen is toggled to less than full screen.



A very similar 'Welcome' screen appears for LibreOffice.

Now drag-and-drop the *Word* document onto the blank area of Open or Libre Office's window from the filer window containing your *Word* document...



2. File ► Open

Launch *Writer* in the usual way. Click on **File** then **Open**. A filer window will open.

Use the filer to search for your chosen *Word* document.

Click once on your chosen file to mark it, then click on **Open** at the bottom right-hand corner of the filer window. Your document will be launched in *Writer*.

Starting a new document

The foregoing is fine if we want to open a document that already exists, but to start a new, blank document, the route is simply: **File ► New ► Text Document**

You will note that the sub-menu hints at a range of keyboard shortcuts built into Libre and OpenOffice – in this case **CTRL-N** (hold down the Control (Ctrl) key while tapping the letter N) instantly opens a blank document.

Saving a LibreOffice or OpenOffice document in MS Office formats

As always, we strongly recommend you use Save As... from the File menu rather than just Save...

This is where LibreOffice's strengths compared to OpenOffice become apparent.

1. Once you have defined the **File name** to be your chosen title look for **Save as type:** bar just below the File name. **Save as type** has a drop-down arrow at the extreme right-hand end of the box – click on this arrow.
2. A drop-down list appears from which you should choose the most appropriate version of Microsoft Word file-types shown – probably the one nearest the top of this list.
LibreOffice has the latest Microsoft Word (and Excel, Powerpoint, etc) file types – ending in 'x' whereas OpenOffice only has the 'legacy' types such as .doc for a Word document.
3. Once that has been selected, check that the destination folder – possibly not the standard **Documents** one, is selected in the filer window. If necessary, navigate to your chosen destination folder.
4. Finally, click on **Save** at the foot of the dialogue box.

What this shows, particularly with LibreOffice, is that you can have a dialogue with anyone using Microsoft Office because you can read and write files in their format. The author has been doing that for years when corresponding with organisations such as District or County Council organisations – and all without shelling out for Microsoft Office!

Getting Help

Many applications, including OpenOffice makes use of the **F1 key** (function key 1) to access its substantial help facility – try it now!

The help window pops up over your current document – which will be untouched by the Help screen and restored when you exit Help. Look at the lefthand pane of Help's window – it has four **tabs** labelled **Contents**, **Index**, **Find** and **Bookmarks**. Probably the most generally useful is the **Find** tab – try entering **Open** in the **Search term** box, then click **Find**; a very long list will be displayed! If you click once on one of these items and then click on **Display** at the foot of the window, you will see the appropriate result in the righthand pane.

You can **close** Help by clicking on the red cross at top right of its window or, if you think you will need to refer to it again in the near future, you can minimise it to sit ready on the task bar.

Footnote: How were the images used above obtained?

A little-known facility available from the keyboard is that of **screen-grabbing**. If you tap the **Print Screen** key, a copy of the current screen is saved to your computer's **clipboard** – a temporary part of memory that can be accessed again later. If you subsequently ask to paste it into an image manipulation program such as Gimp, you will get an image that you can process further. Try it like this:

- a) Set your screen suitably. Tap the **Print Screen** key.
- b) **Launch** Gimp (or any other image editor).
- c) **Edit ► Paste as... ► New Image**

That's it! Now you can edit your image as necessary.