



Getting Started Guide

Chapter 14
Customizing LibreOffice

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Acknowledgments

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Note for Mac users

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 chapter. For a more detailed list, see the application Help.

<i>Windows or Linux</i>	<i>Mac equivalent</i>	<i>Effect</i>
Tools > Options menu selection	LibreOffice > Preferences	Access setup options
<i>Right-click</i>	<i>Control+click</i> or <i>right-click</i> depending on computer setup	Opens a context menu
<i>Ctrl (Control)</i>	⌘ (<i>Command</i>)	Used with other keys
<i>F5</i>	<i>Shift+⌘+F5</i>	Open the Navigator
<i>F11</i>	⌘+T	Open the Styles and Formatting window

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Introduction

This chapter describes some common customizations that you may wish to carry out.

You can customize menus, toolbars, and keyboard shortcuts in LibreOffice, 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 LibreOffice website or from other providers.



Note

The menu bars in LibreOffice 5.1 Writer, Calc, and Impress have been reorganized to improve the usability of the application. The most used application commands were put together in the Styles, Sheets, and Slide menus, respectively.



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 3, Using Styles and Templates.

Customizing menu content

In addition to changing the menu font (described in Chapter 2, Setting up LibreOffice), you can add and rearrange categories on the menu bar, add commands to menus, and make other changes.

To customize menus:

- 1) Choose **Tools > Customize** to display the Customize dialog. Choose the **Menus** page (Figure 1).

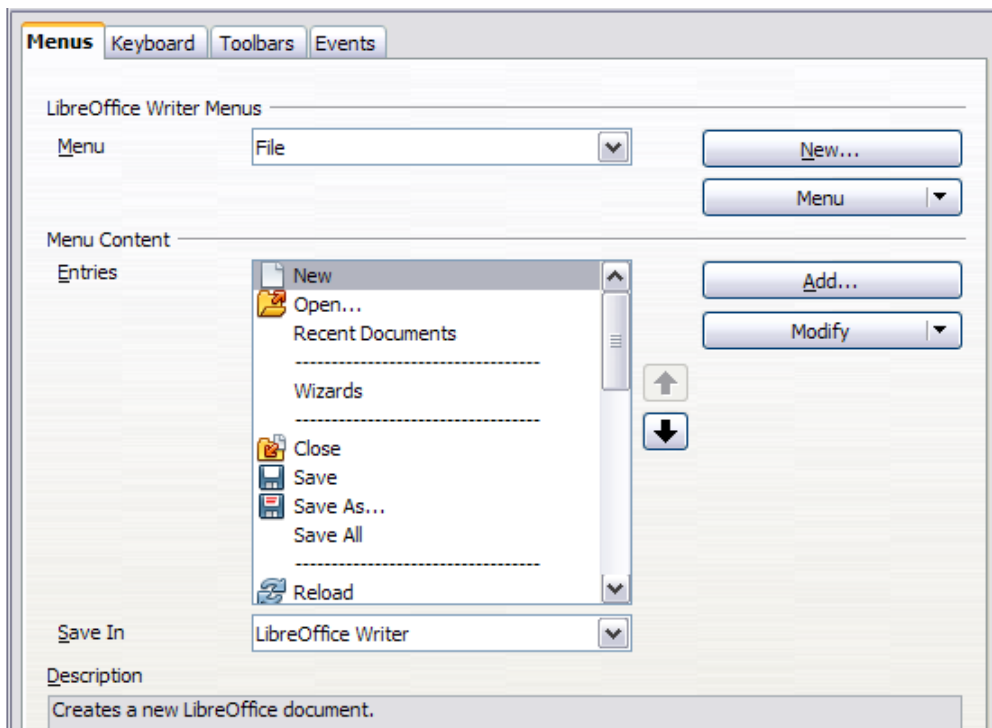


Figure 1: The Menus page of the Customize dialog

- 2) In the *Save In* drop-down list, choose whether to save this changed menu for the application (for example, LibreOffice Writer) or for a selected document (for example, SampleDocument.odt).
- 3) In the section **LibreOffice [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 submenus (menus that are contained under another menu). For example, in addition to *File*, *Edit*, *View*, and so on, there is *File | Send* and *Edit | Changes*. The commands available for the selected menu are shown in the central part of the dialog.
- 4) **To** customize the selected menu, click on the **Modify** button. 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.
- 5) When you have finished making all your changes, click **OK** (not shown in illustration) to save them.

Creating a new menu

In the *Menus* page of the Customize dialog, click **New** to display the New Menu dialog (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** (not shown in illustration) 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 6.

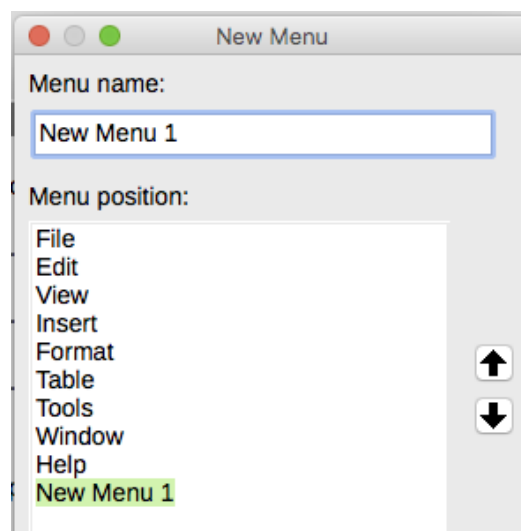


Figure 2: Adding a new menu

Modifying existing menus

To modify an existing menu, either user-made or inbuilt, 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, and **Move** is not available for submenus.

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 allocate a letter in a custom menu's name, which will become underlined, to be used as a keyboard shortcut, allowing you to select that menu by pressing *Alt+* that letter. Existing submenus can be edited to change the letter which is used to select their default shortcut.

- 1) Select a custom menu or a submenu in the *Menu* drop-down list.
- 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 **Send** submenu command by pressing *S* (after opening the *File* menu using *Alt+F*), enter **~Send**. This changes it from the default *d*.



Note

It is possible to use a letter already in use in the menu list (for example, in the *Insert* menu, the letter *v* is used in *Envelope* and in *Movie and sound* as an accelerator). However, you should use an unused letter if possible, to make it simpler to navigate.

Adding a command to a menu

You can add commands to both the supplied menus and 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 (Figure 3), 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.

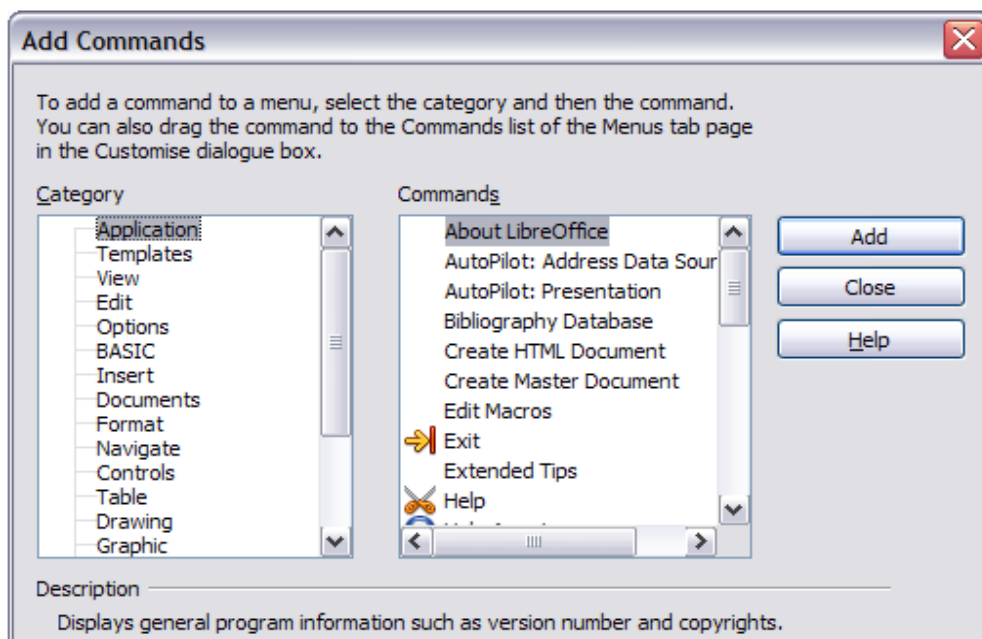


Figure 3: Adding a command to a menu

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 to be modified from 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 LibreOffice), and adding or deleting icons (commands) in the list of those available on a toolbar. You can also create new toolbars. This section describes how to create new toolbars and add or delete icons on existing ones.

To get to the toolbar customization dialog (Figure 4), do any of the following:

- On the toolbar, right-click in the toolbar and choose **Customize Toolbar**.
- Choose **View > Toolbars > Customize** from the menu bar.
- Choose **Tools > Customize** from the menu bar and go to the *Toolbars* page.

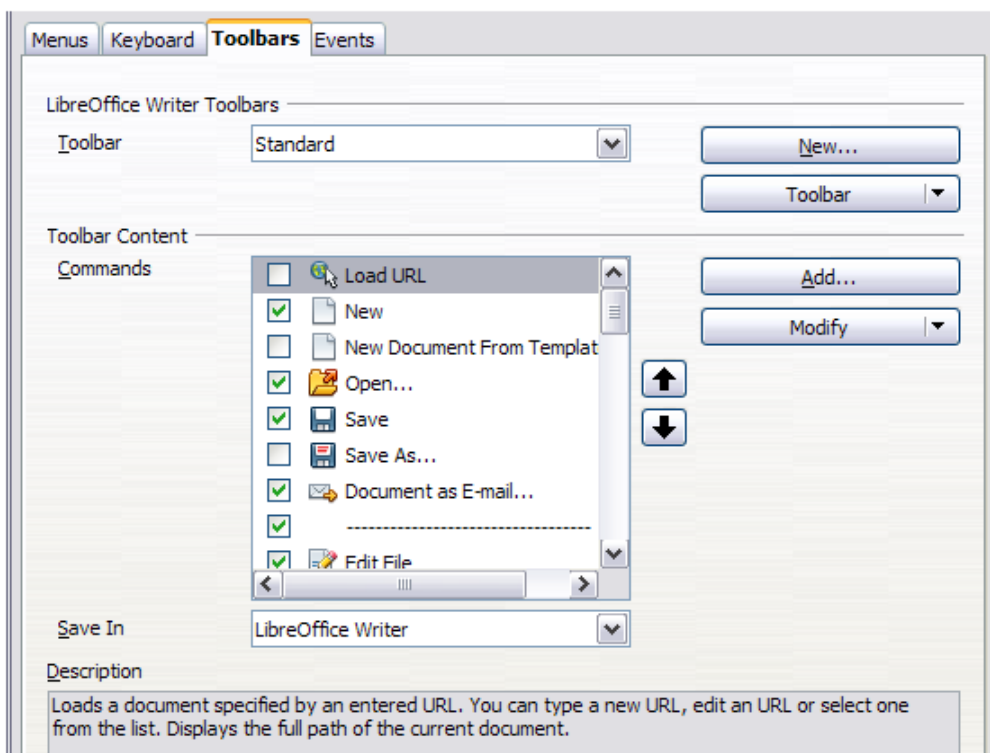


Figure 4: The Toolbars page of the Customize dialog

Modifying existing toolbars

To modify an existing toolbar:

- 1) In the *Save In* drop-down list, choose whether to save this changed toolbar for the application (for example, Writer) or for a selected document.
- 2) In the section **LibreOffice [name of the program (example: Writer)] > Toolbars**, select from the *Toolbar* drop-down list the toolbar that you want to customize.
- 3) Click on the **Toolbar** or **Modify** buttons, and add commands to a toolbar by clicking on the **Add** button. You can also create a new toolbar by clicking on the **New** button. These actions are described in the following sections.
- 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 (Figure 5), type the new toolbar's name and choose from the **Save In** drop-down list where to save this changed menu: for the application (for example, Writer) or for a selected document.
- 3) Click **OK**.

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.

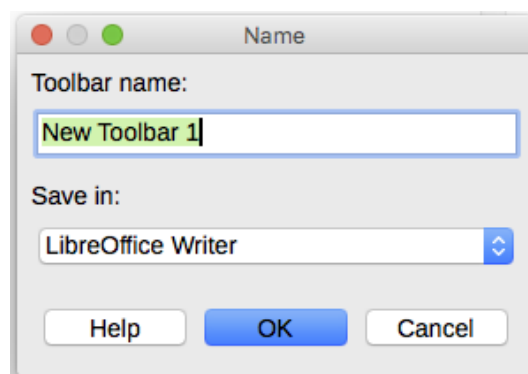


Figure 5: Naming a new toolbar

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 is the same as for adding commands to menus (Figure 3). 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 have finished 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 6).

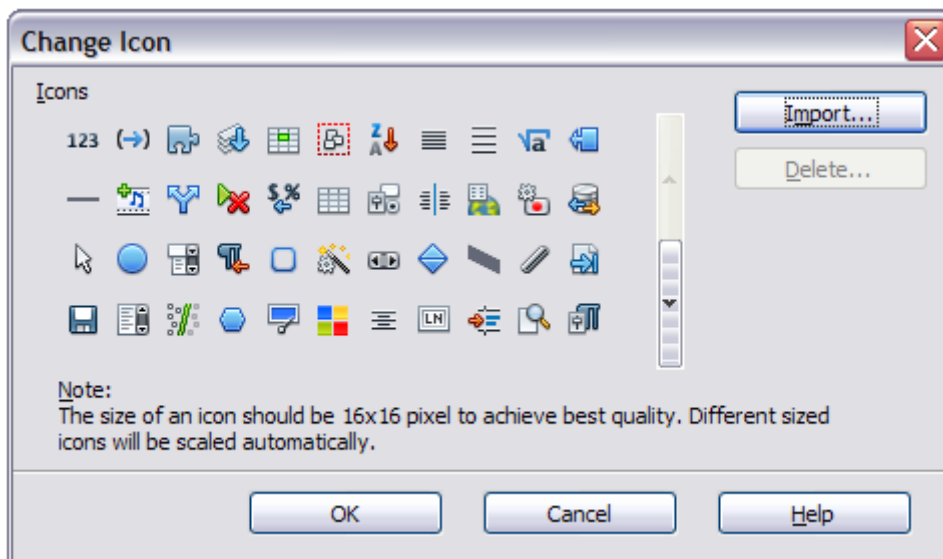


Figure 6: Change Icon dialog

To use a custom icon, create it in a graphics program and import it into LibreOffice by clicking the **Import** button on the Change Icon dialog. Custom icons should be 16 x 16 pixels in size to achieve the best quality and should not contain more than 256 colors.

Example: Adding a Fax icon to a toolbar

You can customize LibreOffice 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.
- 2) Choose **Tools > Options > LibreOffice Writer > Print**. The dialog shown in Figure 7 opens.
- 3) Select the fax driver from the **Fax** list and click **OK**.
- 4) Right-click in the Standard toolbar. In the drop-down menu, choose **Customize Toolbar**. The *Toolbars* page of the Customize dialog appears (Figure 4). Click **Add**.
- 5) On the Add Commands dialog (Figure 8), 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.
- 6) 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.

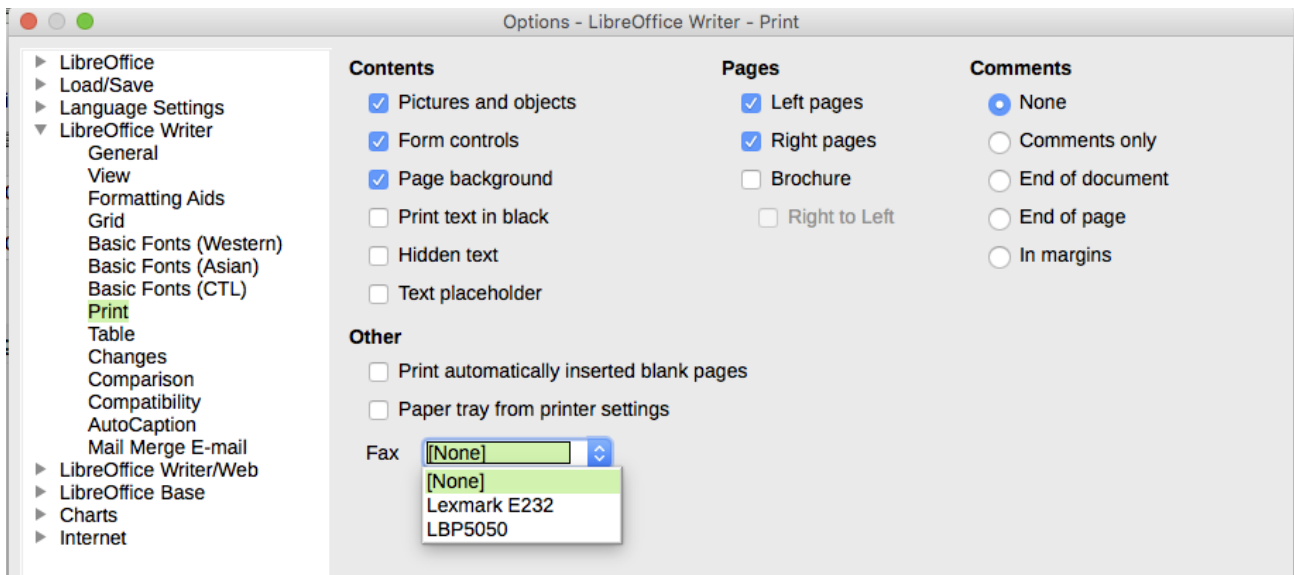


Figure 7: Setting up LibreOffice for sending faxes

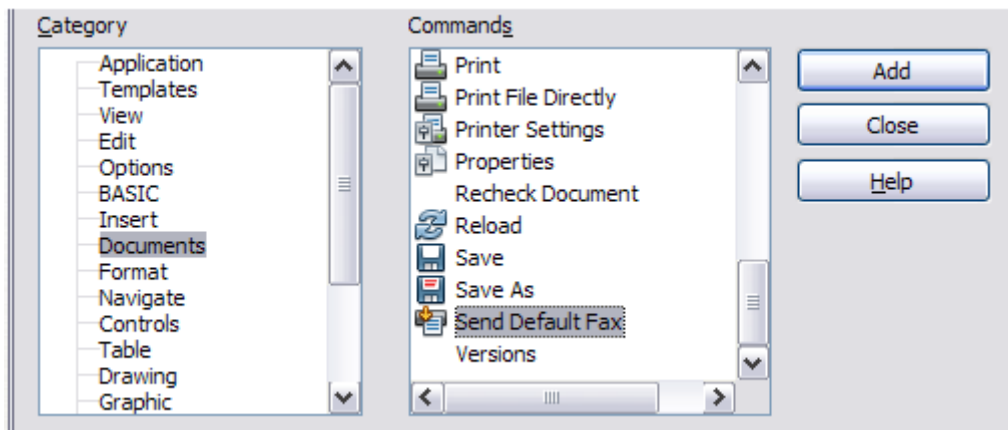


Figure 8: Adding a Send Fax command to a toolbar

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 LibreOffice functions or your own macros and save them for use with the entire LibreOffice suite.



Caution

Be careful when reassigning your operating system's or LibreOffice'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 LibreOffice defaults, changing some common shortcut keys can cause confusion, 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 LibreOffice select the **LibreOffice** 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 grayed-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 opens.

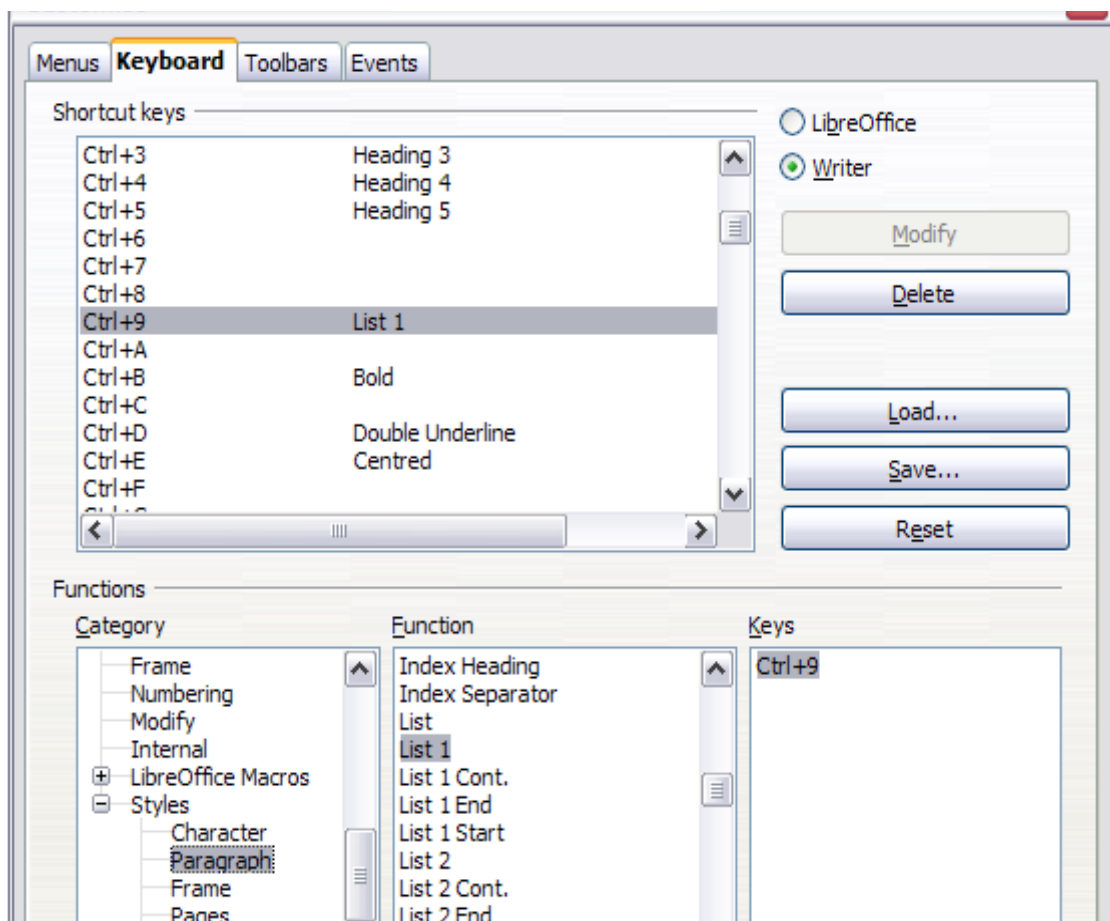


Figure 9: Defining keyboard shortcuts for applying styles

- 2) To have the shortcut key assignment available only with one component (for example, Writer), select that component's name in the upper right corner of the page; otherwise select **LibreOffice** 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*. This enables the **Modify** button.
- 4) In the *Functions* section at the bottom of the dialog, scroll down in the *Category* list to *Styles*. Click the expansion symbol (usually a + sign or triangle) 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 LibreOffice'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.

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 at the right of the Customize dialog (Figure 9).
- 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 at the 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 LibreOffice, 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. 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.

Adding functionality with extensions

An extension is a package that can be installed into LibreOffice to add new functionality and improve your productivity with LibreOffice. Template sets, spelling dictionaries, clipart galleries, macros, and dialog libraries can be packaged as LibreOffice extensions.

Several extensions are shipped bundled with LibreOffice and are installed with the program. These can only be removed by changing the installation options. Others can be downloaded from various websites. The official extension repository is located at <http://extensions.libreoffice.org/>. These extensions are free of charge.

Some extensions from other sources 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

Extensions can be installed in any of these ways:

- Directly from the *.oxt file in your system's file browser.
- From your web browser, if it can be configured to open this file type from a web page hyperlink.
- Directly from **Tools > Extension Manager** by clicking **Add** (Figure 10).

To install directly from a saved *.oxt file on your system, double-click the file.

To install from a suitably enabled web browser, select the hyperlink, and then select to Open the file.

In both cases, after the Extension Manager opens, a warning dialog opens for you to verify the installation and then continue. The file is installed as a “user only” file in a multi-user system.

To install directly from Extension Manager:

- 1) In LibreOffice, select **Tools > Extension Manager** from the menu bar. The option to view the extensions bundled with LibreOffice can be deselected to view more easily those installations that have been added by a user.
- 2) In the Extension Manager dialog (Figure 10), click **Add**.
- 3) A file browser window opens. Find and select the extension you want to install and click **Open**.
- 4) Users with administrator or root privileges will see a dialog where they can choose to install extensions “for all users” (**shared**) or “only for me” (**user**). Normal users without those privileges can install, remove, or modify extensions only for their own use (**user**).
- 5) The extension begins installing.

In all cases, during the process you may be asked to accept a license agreement. 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 online** link. You do not need to download them separately.

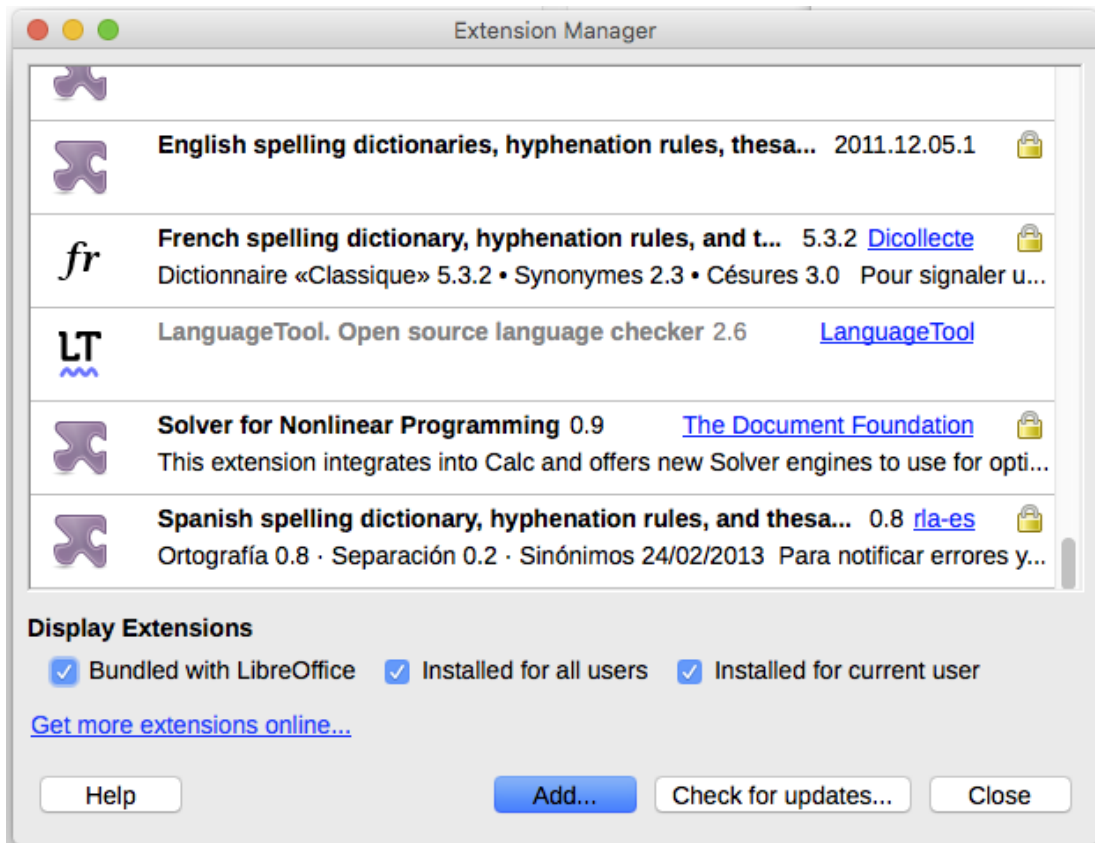


Figure 10: Using the Extension Manager