OpenOffice.org FOR DUMMIES®

by Gurdy Leete, Ellen Finkelstein, and
Mary Leete

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Mary Leete

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Dedication

To MMY, who showed us that life is a lot like open-source software — unrestricted.

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Introduction

Welcome to *OpenOffice.org For Dummies,* your friendly companion to the free office suite. In this book, we explain in plain English how to make the most of this feature-rich office suite. *OpenOffice.org For Dummies* aims to give you all the information you need to start using OpenOffice.org right away — with no hassle.

About This Book

As though you hadn't guessed, *OpenOffice.org For Dummies* covers the OpenOffice.org office suite of programs, including Writer (word processor), Calc (spreadsheet), and Impress (presentation program). We also explain how to use the HTML editor and Draw, the drawing program.

We comprehensively explain OpenOffice.org's features, including

- ✓ Switching to OpenOffice.org from other office suites
- ✓ Creating, editing, and formatting documents in Writer
- ✓ Creating form letters
- ✓ Working with graphics in all the OpenOffice.org applications
- ✓ Creating Web pages with the HTML editor
- ✓ Creating, editing, and formatting a spreadsheet in Calc
- ✓ Calculating and using functions
- ✓ Manipulating data
- ✓ Creating, editing, and formatting presentations in Impress
- ✓ Animating a presentation
- ✓ Creating graphics in Draw

How to Use This Book

You don't have to read this book from cover to cover. *OpenOffice.org For Dummies* provides just the information you need, when you need it. If you need the spreadsheet, start with Part III, “Using Calc — The Spreadsheet.” If you need to draw something, go to Part V, “Using Draw — The Graphics Program.” Read what you need and save the rest for later.

For extra information, don’t pass up Part VI, “The Part of Tens,” where we explain ten reasons to use OpenOffice.org and ten places to look for support. Our appendixes help you install and configure OpenOffice.org.

Keep *OpenOffice.org For Dummies* by your computer while you work. You’ll find it to be a loyal helper.

Foolish Assumptions

We assume that you know at least a little about what a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation program help you accomplish. We also assume that you know the operating system you use. We wrote this book to cover Windows, Linux, and the Mac OS, all at the same time. Talk about foolish! At any rate, we assume that you can get over any minor differences due to your operating system.

Conventions Used in This Book

Sometimes it helps to know why some text is bold and other is italic so that you can figure out what we’re talking about. New terms are in *italics* to let you know that they’re new. Messages and other text that come from OpenOffice.org are in a `special typeface, like this`.

When we say something like “Choose File⇨Save As,” it means to click the File menu at the top of your screen and then choose Save As from the menu that opens. When we want you to use a toolbar or toolbox button (or tool), we tell you to click it or choose it.

How This Book Is Organized

We start by introducing you to OpenOffice.org and its environment. We also give you some tips about switching to OpenOffice.org from another office suite. Then we plunge right in and start telling you about each application.

To be more specific, this book is divided into six parts. Each part contains two or more chapters that relate to that part. Because some features of OpenOffice.org apply to all the applications, you may find more detail in the part on Writer, which comes early in the book. For example, we don't explain how to spell check three times; instead, we explain it once and then refer to the first mention later on.

Part I: Introducing OpenOffice.org

Part I contains important introductory information about OpenOffice.org, including why it sounds like a Web site, why it's free, how to get it (it's on the CD-ROM that accompanies this book), how it looks, and what applications it includes.

Chapter 2 explains what OpenOffice.org can do for you at home and at work, how OpenOffice.org compares to the other office suites out there, and how to get help.

Part II: Using Writer — The Word Processor

Part II covers everything you need to know about Writer. Chapter 3 explains the basics of opening a document, laying out the page, entering and editing text, navigating through a document, changing views, spell checking, saving, and printing.

Chapter 4 goes more deeply into formatting, including how to use templates and styles, choosing fonts, setting up paragraphs, as well as adding numbered or bulleted lists. Chapter 5 covers how to create complex documents, including setting up personalized form letters (mail merge); adding borders, frames, and graphics; creating tables of contents and indexes; and dividing a page into columns or tables.

Chapter 6 explains how to add hyperlinks and track changes to documents when you collaborate with others. Chapter 7 covers the HTML editor that you use to create Web pages. There's an extra chapter on the CD-ROM with information on setting options, configuring preferences, and making macros.

Part III: Using Calc — The Spreadsheet

Part III covers the Calc application, which enables you to crunch all the numbers in your life. Chapter 8 explains how to input data, navigate around your huge spreadsheets, and save them for posterity. Chapter 9 explains how to select, move, and copy data as well as how to format your data. Chapter 10 is all about printing. Chapter 11 tells you how to make your data look good. Chapter 12 covers the details of calculating formulas and using Calc's built-in functions. On the CD-ROM, a bonus chapter explains how to use Calc to analyze data.

Part IV: Using Impress — The Presentation Package

Part IV explains how to create impressive impressions using Impress. Chapter 13 gives you the basics of creating a new presentation, using the various views, adding slides, and saving. Chapter 14 covers editing and formatting. Chapter 15 explains how to add images, create backgrounds, and work with 3-D effects. Chapter 16 is all about animation. Chapter 17 covers the process of delivering your slide show and printing. On the CD-ROM, a bonus chapter gives you some tips for setting up Impress.

Part V: Using Draw — The Graphics Program

Draw creates great graphics that you can use alone or insert into the other OpenOffice.org applications. Chapter 18 explains the basics of creating and editing shapes. On the CD-ROM, a bonus chapter explains layers, curves, fills, special effects, and 3-D.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

No *For Dummies* book is complete without its Part of Tens — it's a tradition! Chapter 19 gives you ten reasons to use OpenOffice.org, if you're not already convinced. Chapter 20 provides ten places to look for support, in addition to this book, of course.

Appendix

Last, but not least, we come to the appendix. It adds some valuable information to the end of this book, including instructions on installing and configuring OpenOffice.org.

About the CD-ROM

Don’t forget to check out the CD-ROM. It contains OpenOffice.org for Windows, Linux and Mac OS X, so you don’t have to go far to get it. We make it easy!

Icons Used in This Book

If you see little pictures in the margins, you have found an icon. Icons point out special information in the text and quickly let you know if you need to pay attention or can ignore it.

REMEMBER

This icon alerts you to information that you need to keep in mind to avoid wasting time or falling on your face.

TECHNICAL STUFF

OpenOffice.org has some advanced features you may want to know about — or skip over entirely. This icon lets you know when we throw the heavier stuff at you.

TIP

Tips help you finish your work more easily, quickly, or effectively. Don’t miss out on these.

WARNING!

Uh-oh! “Watch out here!” is what this icon is telling you, or else you never know what may happen.

Where to Go from Here

If you don't already have OpenOffice.org installed, get out the CD-ROM and install it. Complete instructions for your operating system are in the appendix. Then open OpenOffice.org, turn to Chapter 1 and take the plunge.

Enough of all this talk. Let's move into the real content of this book and start using OpenOffice.org!

Enjoy!

Part I

Introducing OpenOffice.org

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant

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"The engineers lived on Jolt and cheese sticks putting this product together, but if you wanted to just use 'cola and cheese sticks' in the Users Documentation, that's okay too. We're pretty loose around here."

In this part . . .

Part I introduces you to OpenOffice.org. If you're new to OpenOffice.org, read this part to understand the whole framework of open source software and how OpenOffice.org fits in (and where you fit in, too). This part explains what OpenOffice.org is, how to get started, and how you can use OpenOffice.org.

Chapter 1

Getting to Know OpenOffice.org

In This Chapter

- What is OpenOffice.org?
- Getting started with OpenOffice.org
- Opening OpenOffice.org
- Checking out the applications
- Facing the interface
- Closing OpenOffice.org

OpenOffice.org is an exciting new Office suite program that is extremely powerful and completely free to everyone. It operates on Windows, Linux, Macintosh, and Solaris, and it can easily read and write a plethora of file formats, including Microsoft Office. It is currently available in more than 30 languages, and people all over the world are migrating to OpenOffice.org for their entire office suite needs. Over sixteen million people currently use the program, and the total is increasing daily!

You don't have to pay a single dime to use OpenOffice.org — either now or in the future! Sounds too good to be true? The more you learn about OpenOffice.org, the more fascinated you'll become.

What Is OpenOffice.org?

OpenOffice.org, the Office suite, includes the following four major applications:

- **Writer:** A full-featured word processor that also includes an HTML editor for designing Web pages
- **Calc:** An extremely capable spreadsheet program that also allows you to link to corporate databases
- **Draw:** An excellent drawing and graphics program for both 2-D and 3-D

- **Impress:** A very capable presentation program for creating electronic slide shows

  As its name suggests, OpenOffice.org is also a Web site. The Web site, at `www.openoffice.org`, is the home of the project that creates, markets, and distributes the applications.

What is Writer?

What do you use your word processor for? Jotting down notes to yourself? Writing letters? Or publishing an entire book with style sheets, automated indexing and table of contents generation, as well as bibliographies? Whether your needs are large or small, Writer is up to the job. Figure 1-1 is an example of a Writer document. Look familiar? This book was written in OpenOffice.org.

Of course, Writer does all the basic things that word processors do, but it also allows you to do much more including:

- Design and create your own Web pages.
- Create forms for automatically inputting data into databases.
- Create personalized documents with Mail Merge, and link to your e-mail address book or external database.
- Use Text Frames and Linking to lay out such documents as newsletters and flyers.
- Automatically generate standard documents such as letters, faxes, agendas, minutes, or import or create your own templates.
- Create your own Style Sheets
- Import seventeen different types of text documents with ease, including “doc”, and “dot”; and export nineteen different file formats, including “pdf”, “html” and three kinds of “doc”s.
- Automatic indexing, tables of contents, bibliographical references; plus such details as custom headers, footers, footnotes, and endnotes.
- Track changes; compare documents, Automatic outlining, Spellchecking, and Thesaurus.
- Automatically correct words, or automatically complete words as you type. (This is all completely customizable, of course.)
- Insert Dynamic fields (such as date and time) and hyperlinks.
- Connect to e-mail software.
- Create and use macros.