

Tony's Tec News

U3A Computer Group

June

Issue No. 1

2018

Using LibreOffice – Lesson 1 Overview and Installation

In this series of “Tony's Tec News” we will be using an Open Source software called “LibreOffice” which is a collection of programs in an Office Suite similar to the well known Microsoft Office Suite, but LibreOffice is completely free and capable performing all the professional abilities of the expensive subscription Microsoft Office.

For anybody wishing to try LibreOffice or to follow the lessons in the Tec News this is a link to the official LibreOffice website <https://www.libreoffice.org/download/download/> this software is free and comes under the group of software called “Open source” created by recognised professional and amateur software developers who create software for free to a high and recognised level by government and educational establishments around the world and is used by many computer users.

The download and installation is the same as any software after the LibreOffice has downloaded successfully (this may take a number of minutes) double click the LibreOffice.exe and follow the instructions this normally requires clicking the “next” button at each stage of the install as with ALL installations of software READ the screen for any unwanted options of extra software that maybe installed, but you may not require or want on your computer these are not harmful but may add or change your browser search engine to a shopping website, there is NO extras or problems when installing LibreOffice, but will take a few minutes to install. If a Windows 10 User Security warning appears click “Yes” to allow the install to continue.

Why are we using LibreOffice?? No! it's not because it's Free the reason LibreOffice is a good choice and it's not the only available free Open Source application but it does allow the editing and saving of documents within the Office suite to be compatible with Microsoft Office documents Word, Excel and PowerPoint and can open a document sent to you or a document created by Microsoft Office or you can select the option to save a LibreOffice document as a Microsoft Office compatible at the point of saving or select the option within LibreOffice settings to default to always save as a Microsoft document. This is very useful if you wish to email a document, a Word document for example to a friend who uses MS Office but not LibreOffice (remember the best format is a PDF (Portable Document Format) if you are sending a document which can be opened by everyone!!).

We will be concentrating on the “Writer” application in LibreOffice in the lessons because this is similar to MS Office Word and for most people writing letters or using a “text editor” is useful for everyday activities. The other applications which make up the LibreOffice suite are not to be overlooked apart from “Calc Spreadsheet” which is the same as MS Excel and is a spreadsheet application, useful if you want to do your finances. The other important and useful applications that can be used will depend on how creative you are? “Draw Drawing” is similar to Desktop Publishing but allows you to insert text, diagrams, photos in an unrestricted method unlike in Writer which is as in all text editors uses styles and text is restricted to paragraph formatting and a page. As the lessons progress we will look at creating different types of documents from writing a letter and inserting a photo to go with the story, or to creating a Birthday/Christmas card using Draw Drawing or use the third option “Impress Presentation” a similar application to MS PowerPoint a widely underused program and always associated with slideshow presentations and job interviews, but has all of the above in one application if you are trying to create something that may not fit into the criteria of a specific option. I use Impress for posters, notices and any bespoke request from U3A groups.

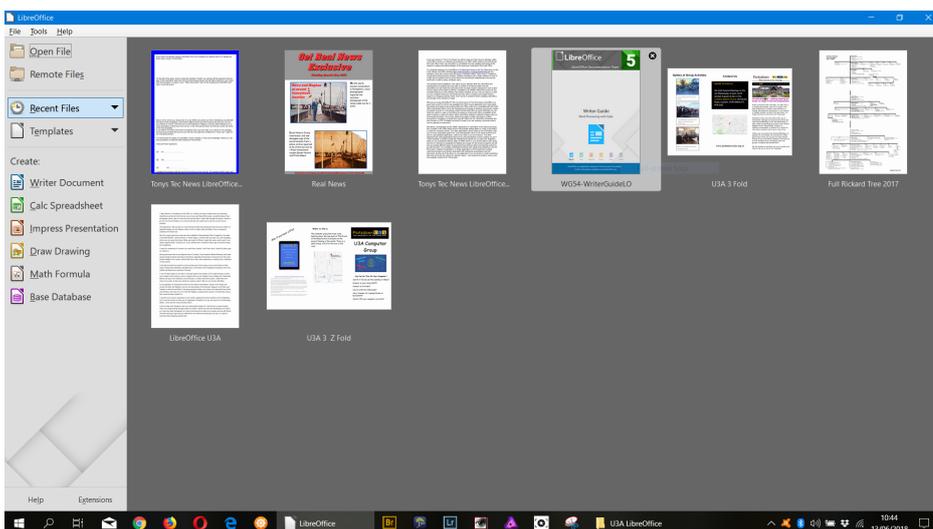
The second reason for the use of LibreOffice is to form the bases to show us how to use “The Computer/Laptop” it’s important to be able to understand the basics of using the Mouse, the Menu toolbar (all applications/Windows) File Management, settings within you chosen application and how to create what you want learning how to use the tools in a given application.

Quick Overview Using LibreOffice Ver 6.xx (Latest 06/2018)

If you have installed LibreOffice on your Laptop you should see the program shortcut icon shown below, and using the double click with the icon selected will open the main opening screen and menu of LibreOffice any previous/recent files you have created will be displayed on the right of the screen.

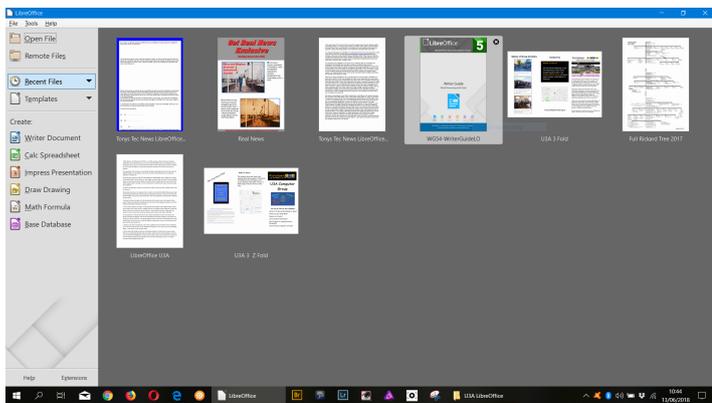


Below is my opening screen (your right-hand screen will be blank until you create a document) if you wish open a recent document on the right screen double click the document and it will open in the application used to create it for you to edit. Remember we are also learning some basic computer user lessons, so before you double click on the LibreOffice icon use your mouse to move the pointer over different program icons do NOT click the mouse button just put the pointer over the icon this is called to “Hover” this will after a few seconds display on the screen a description either of the application or the location of the file on the computer. This simple Hover action you just learnt can be used in most applications we will try it again when we open a Writer Document in LibreOffice its a useful tip when your not sure what a tool is for if you are using a new software program.

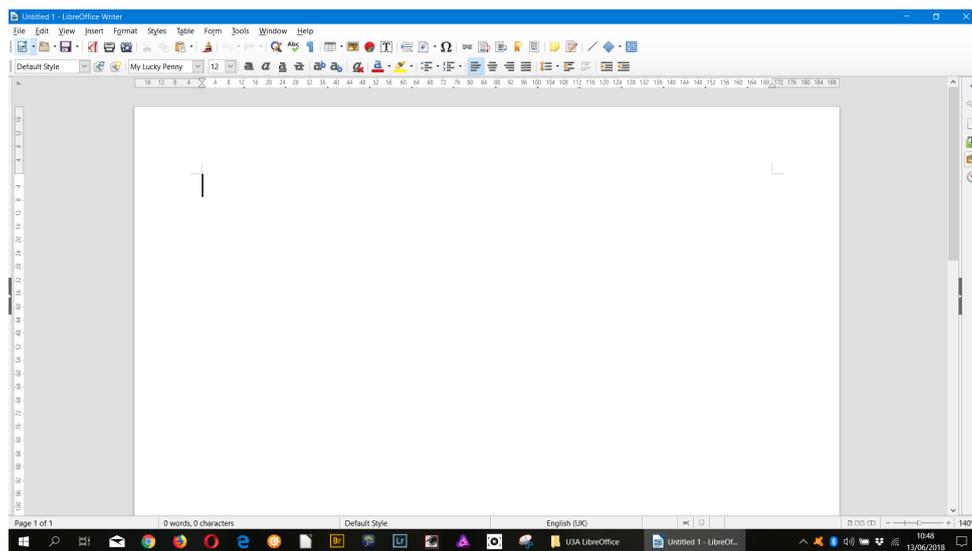


As this is an overview and introduction to LibreOffice we will not be concentrating on lessons in any specific program within the LibreOffice suite, but to give you a chance to look at the style and format LibreOffice uses in its screen layout and toolbars we will have a quick look at the Writer program which you will be using in the following months group lessons and you will have the opportunity to have a look . Some people have commented that the toolbars are similar to the early versions of MS Word before the unfriendly toolbar Ribbon was adopted by later version of MS Office. Hopefully over the next few group lessons we will expand our knowledge on computer skills that are transferable to any task or application you choose to use. We will use the term “Play” to learn how to try new skills in the coming lessons in each program within LibreOffice suite and hopefully the play sessions will turn into a helpful knowledge and allow you to create documents from your own designs with more confidence.

If you have not already opened LibreOffice from your Desktop icon please open it to display the Main menu screen of LibreOffice.



On the left of the menu screen under the Heading “Create” you will see all the programs that are part of the LibreOffice suite and over the future group lessons we will look at what you can create with each program. To open a new “Writer Document” click on this heading and LibreOffice will open a new Writer document.



Above is the screen you should see of a new Writer document use this to familiarise yourself with the layout of the workspace, look at the toolbars at the top of the screen and now you can use your mouse to “Hover” over the icons on the toolbars to display a “tool tip” which will give you a short description of what each tool can do. In the next group lesson we will look at and use some of the tools available. If you wish to try some of the tools yourselves have a go and “play” you cannot do any damage, but by trying out what the tools do you will learn and gain the confidence to “have a go” ready for our next group lesson.

To end this first Tec News on LibreOffice I have included a “Test your knowledge” where you can test yourselves on what we have looked at in this lesson.

3 Mouse Hover Questions

Q1.  A1.....

Q2.  A2.....

Q3.  A3.....

Complete the answers with the text from the Mouse Hover tool tip. The answers will be given and will be part of the next groups lesson.