

# Outfit / Appearance of the Toolbar in LibreOffice and its possibilities to copy or distribute it

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This docu contains considerations how to change the appearance (outfit) of the toolbar, and possible also accelerator keys in LibreOffice Writer. It is explained with a toolbar example working with only indirect formatting (using styles), and thrifty buttons only for the really importance.

This content can be used in a free way in the LibreOffice community.

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## 1.1 Appearance of Menu and Toolbar in LibreOffice Writer

The approach is:

- 1) Have vertical size free for text as soon as possible.
- 2) Do not use direct formatting
- 3) Use the menu for special operations – the menu entries are known and well documented.
- 4) Use only significant permanently necessary Icon-Buttons to work. Prevent rarely or never used Icon-Buttons.
- 5) Use some accelerator keys which are known in the brain or by a simple list for fast handling instead scroll in menus and lists.

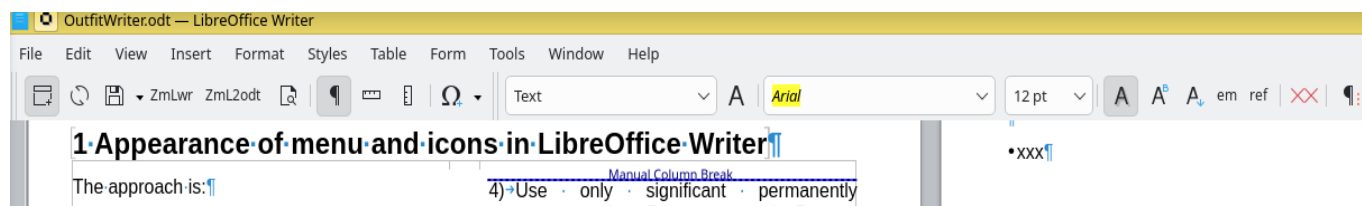


Figure -1:

The image above shows the outfit.

- The menu is possible to fade out even to save space, it can be activated by the left button.
- Next the “Update all” operation can be quickly accessed with a single mouse click.
- “Save as” with the famous floppy symbol is extremely important to see the red point if the document is not saved. The save action itself can be performed more simply by *ctrl-S*.
- The both buttons **ZmLwr** and **ZmL2Odt** invoke specific macros for document conversion to and from a plain text format, which is here necessary as a special operation, see [https://vishia.org/LibreOffc/html/Videos\\_LoffcZmL.html](https://vishia.org/LibreOffc/html/Videos_LoffcZmL.html).
- The next symbol is for the printing preview, also used to get an overview over the document, search some images and chapters while writing.
- Next the ¶ symbol is known to switch on and off the space and line break visibility
- Right from that are the rulers switching on and off. The rulers need space, hence should be shown only if necessary.
- Ω is the important button to insert special characters, also a bullet point for list paragraphs.
- The next field here with content “Text” shows the paragraph style on cursor. It can be used to select the paragraph style. But for that

it is better to go in the styles select list pressing **F11**, which should be sorted to hierarchic. It offers more overview to select the correct style. This field is used only as information.

- Similar it is with the next both fields. They show the current font and size, only for information. Do not change it, because it results in a not desired direct formatting.
- The next field with the **A** symbol sets the character style to “No Character Style” which forces the character style of the selected paragraph style. This is very important for fast click to correct faulty used character styles while typing.
- Next following there are some character styles to set to the selected text. Some more are fast able to set by accelerator keys. For example the key **ctrl-B** is redirected to the style **Strong Emphasis**, which is even presented usual as **bold**. Also **ctrl-I** is **quotation** instead the direct style *italic*. Direct formatting is not recommended.
- The XX Button is used for “Clear Direct Formatting” also known as **ctrl-M** or able to be found in the Format menu. This is the most important button if some is wrong.
- The last button opens the direct paragraph style formatting which is only used to insert a page break on Heading styles.

## 1.2 Dialog to customize the Toolbar

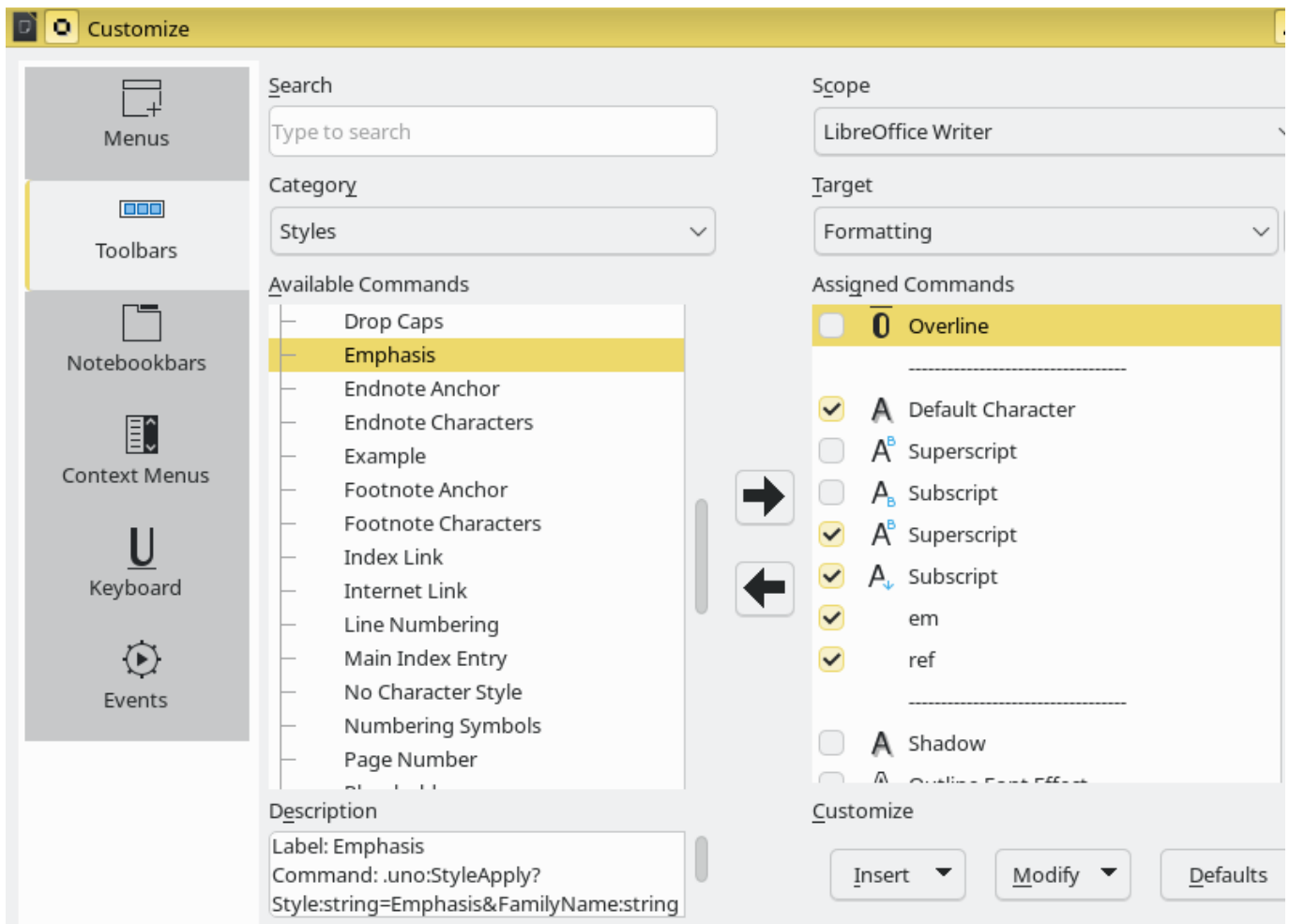


Figure 1: LO-Outfit/DialogStyleIconsEmphasis.png

The image above shows the customisation of the Emphases button, it is a style. Secondary it shows **confusion between names of styles and the name of direct formatting commands *Superscript* and *Subscript***. The unchecked buttons are the direct formatting ones, with the same names as the styles.

**Customising** with this dialogue **needs a long time**, because all should be searched and selected. If it should be done again on another computer, or for another user, it is non acceptable effort and results often in slightly other results.

The **second customisation** is the selecting in menu “*View – Toolbars – Lock Toolbars*”, unlock it, and **shift the both necessary targets for the toolbars “Standard” and “Formatting” horizontal one after another**, and not as often default, in two lines. Last one needs too much space and it is unnecessary for the tight number of buttons. Unfortunately this action, lock after change, needs a restart of LibreOffice.

## 1.3 Customising with set XML files in the users settings

The customisation of the toolbars should not be done by pure writing the XML content, because there are too many non clarified entries. But it is possible to check or uncheck some buttons by writing `true` or `false` on the correct entries. And it is also **possible to merge button entries** between given and a destination XML file. This can be done by someone who is familiar with the XML format (care must be taken with the syntax), which is understandable.

The both used toolbar targets Standard and Formatting results in two files in the directory:

```
/home/.../.config/libreoffice/4/user/config/soffice.cfg/modules/swriter/toolbar/
+-standardbar.xml
+-textobjectbar.xml
```

On windows the same files can be found in `Users/.../AppData/Roaming/LibreOffice/4/...`

The item settings shown in TODO looks in XML like

```
<toolbar:toolbarseparator/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:StyleApply
                        Style:string=Standard&FamilyName:string=CharacterStyles"/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:SuperScript" toolbar:visible="false"/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:SubScript" toolbar:visible="false"/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:StyleApply?
                        Style:string=Superscript&FamilyName:string=CharacterStyles" toolbar:text="Superscript"/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:StyleApply?
                        Style:string=Subscript&FamilyName:string=CharacterStyles" toolbar:text="Subscript"/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:StyleApply?
                        Style:string=Emphasis&FamilyName:string=CharacterStyles" toolbar:text="em"/>
<toolbar:toolbaritem xlink:href=".uno:StyleApply?
                        Style:string=Reference&FamilyName:string=CharacterStyles" toolbar:text="ref"/>
```

Visibility (usage) or not is controlled by the attribute `toolbar:visible="false"` or ... `"true"`. The direct formatting button is the command `xlink:href=".uno:SubScript"` whereas the indirect formatting is here a referenced style `xlink:href=".uno:StyleApply?"` as command and the named style `style:string=Subscript&FamilyName:string=CharacterStyles` with the `toolbar:text=...` adequate the style name, which is the same as the command for direct style (per accident, or not illogical. This is all proper readable for an insider which knows the meaning of `&`; etc. used overall in XML. The meaning of the `uno` commands may be able to estimate.

It means manual edit of this file is possible if anybody decides to do so.

Especially copy of this files to another user config on another PC is possible, tested yet from Linux to Windows to another (older) LibreOffice version, it works.

## 1.4 Outfit on another PC with these same toolbar files

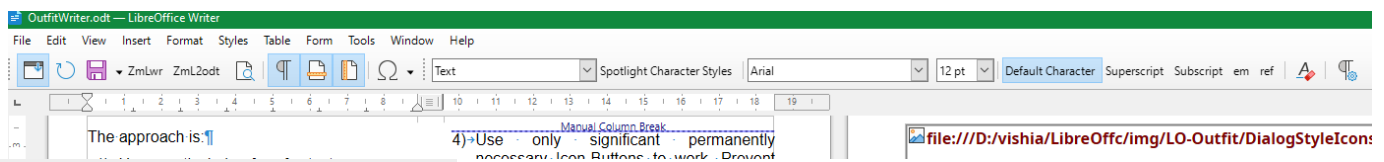


Figure 2: DialogStyleIconsOtherPC.png

This is the screen shot on another PC, with MS-Windows, LibreOffice 25.8, copied toolbar files, adapted to show this both “Standard” and “Formatting” as toolbar, done just now.

The button meaning and order is the same. But unfortunately the path to the png file of the icons is not contained in the XML file. If this path, sensible as relative one, would be contained there, it would only be necessary additionally to copy the icon file.png, which may contained also in a zip file. But it is not so.

Here is a little bit TODO: I have seen that also some icon.png files and a proper config file is anywhere contained in this directory folder. How to copy to adapt it, needs a little bit time to evaluate.

## 1.5 Conclusion, how to copy the outfit of LibreOffice

It may be important not to make hasty changes to the way the configuration is defined by the files in the ‘config’ directory. Changes should only be made once the rationale for them has been established.

But it would be nice if the outfit can be determined by a simple set of files, the best: Only one file and additional necessary image files for the icons.

That is possible by translating (export and import) of this file(s) to the used XML files.

- Setting a configuration should mean, take the specific configuration file, translate it to the XML files outside of LibreOffice (an extra tool), and then start LibreOffice.

- Export a configuration should mean, start a tool which reads the given LibreOffice configuration and produce this one file and copy the appropriate image files. To simple exchange this export, it may be bundled into one zip file.
- It should be possible, it is important to view, compare and change this configuration file (outside LibreOffice). That means it should be proper readable as plain text file with a simple syntax, able to change also without deep XML knowledge. Syntax errors of changes should be reported in an understandable kind from the converter.

This proceeding needs experience.