# 7.2 Customizing the Libre Office Writer Main Menu

The benefit of customizing a toolbar is to add any icons you like to use and hide any icons you never use.

In this section, we will describe how to customize the main menu of LibreOffice Writer. After installing Linux Mint 15 and before starting to use LibreOffice, go to the Linux Mint control panel and click on Appearances. Here you can install a better background image – slightly darker so it is not so glaring on the eyes. You can also changed the theme to a Win_Me Theme to make the contrast in the Window screen shots better. You should also right clicked on three applications to put them on the desktop. These are LibreOffice Writer, Firefox Web Browser and Take Screenshot. Then click on LibreOffice Writer to open a new document. Here is my first screen shot of my new desktop – taking while writing this article.
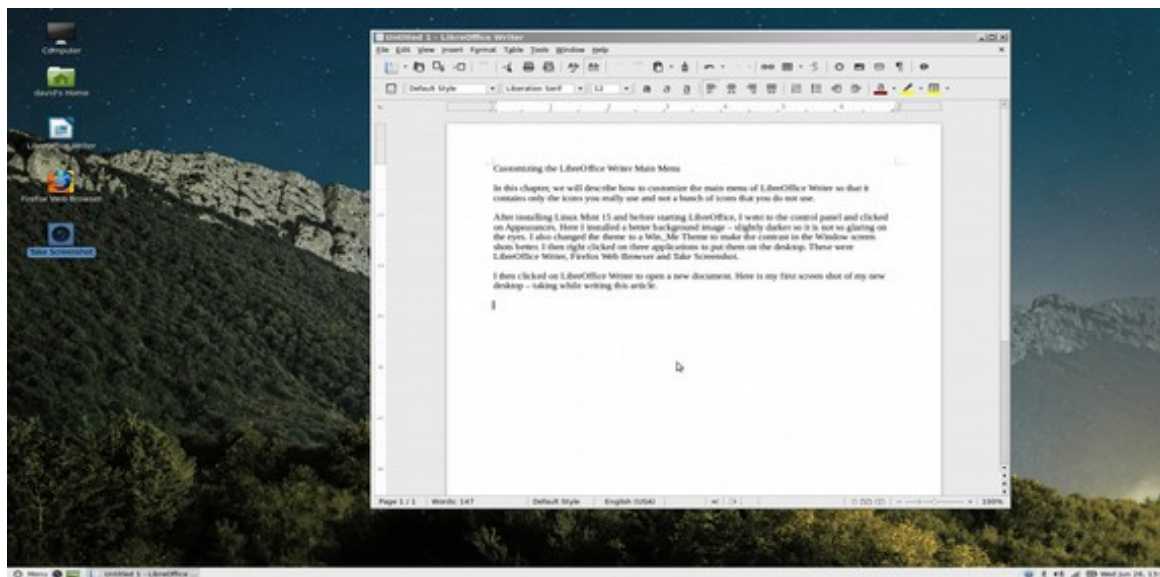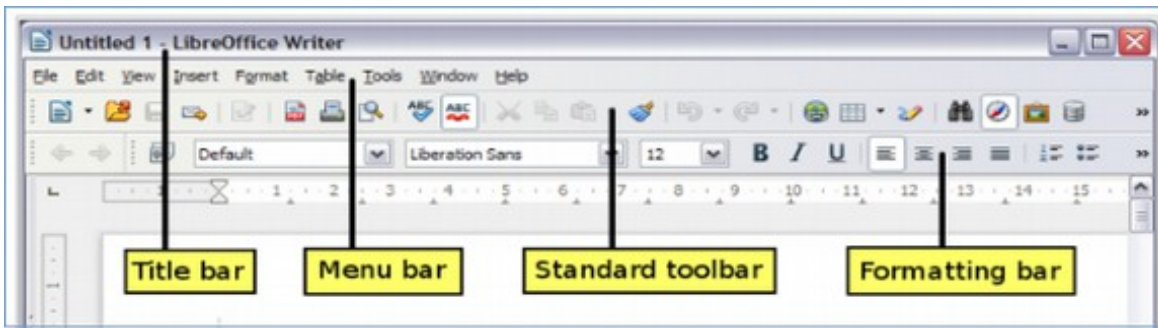

**Title Bar, Main Menu, Standard Toolbar and Formatting Toolbar**
Before we begin changing the top menu, we should first outline the four rows in the top menu.


The top row is the title bar. The second row is the menu bar. The third row is the standard toolbar and the fourth row is the formatting toolbar.

We changed the color of Title bar by clicking on Mint Menu, Control Center, Appearances, Themes.
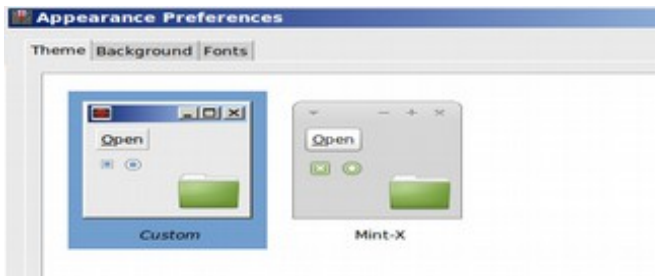

The second row is the Main Menu. It has nine menu items which work in almost the same way as Word 2003. The third row is the Standard Toolbar. The fourth row is the Formatting Toolbar. These last two toolbars can be deleted or modified by going to the Main Menu and clicking on View, Toolbars.
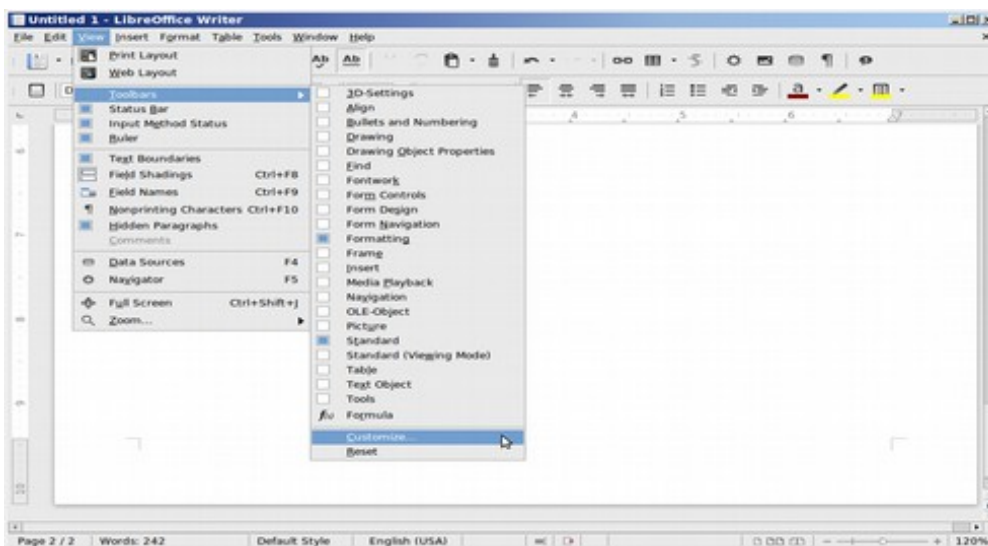

The first thing we will do is turn off the ruler by going to View, Ruler and unchecking the box to the left of the word Ruler. This will give us more space in the Workspace and make our display screen and screen shots less confusing. Next, we will customize the Standard Toolbar. We will then customize the Formatting Toolbar.

Customize the Standard Toolbar
The benefit of customizing a toolbar is to add any icons you like to use and hide any icons you never use. To customize any toolbar, go to View, Toolbars, Customize. This brings up the Customize Window.
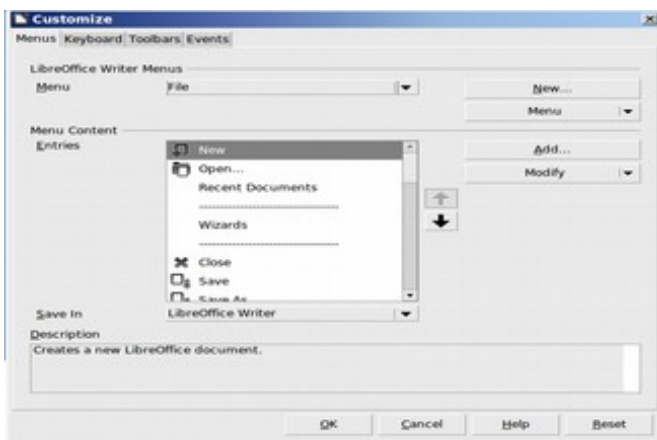
Click on the Toolbars tab.
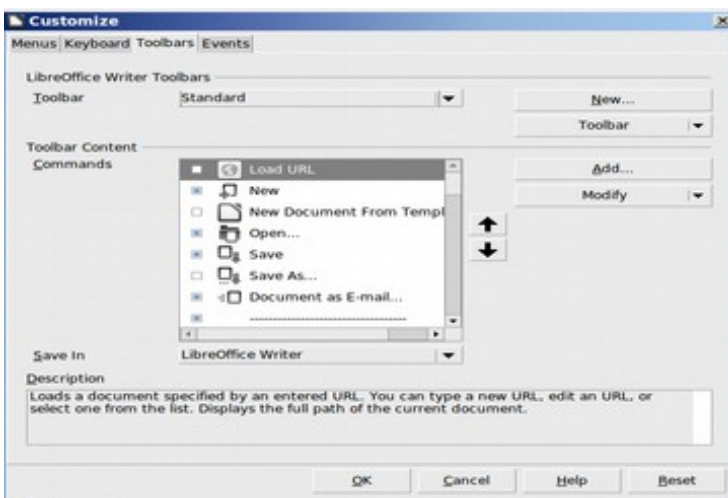
To add a command or icon, check on it. To remove an existing command, uncheck its box. We will remove four commands: Document send as email, Format Paintbrush, Data Sources and Nonprinting characters. Then click OK.

Customize the Formatting Toolbar
To customize the formatting toolbar, click View, Toolbars, Customize to go back to the Toolbars Tab. Then use the Drop down arrow to the right of the word Standard to select the Formatting Toolbar. We will uncheck 8 commands. These are Justify, Left to Right, Right to Left, Numbering, Bullets, Decrease Indent, Increase Indent and Highlighting. Then we will add one very useful command called Select All. Then click OK. We now have a much simpler menu that will be easier to work with.
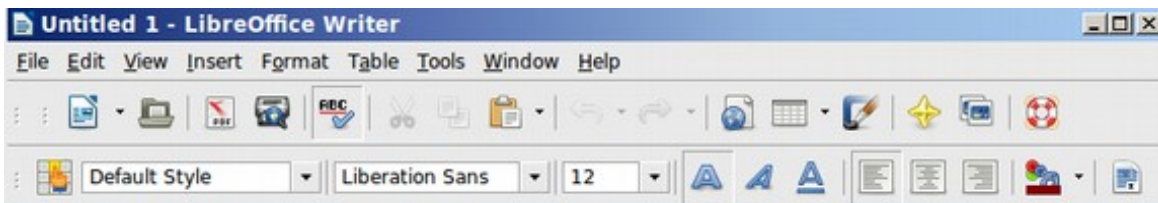
Having fewer icons on the menu also allows us to narrow the screen size of the LibreOffice Writer window. The benefit of this is that we can have two documents open side by side – to transfer content from one document to another. Or we can have one or more documents open in a cascade on the right side of our screen while having our web browser open on the left side of our screen.

Below is a screen shot of what my desktop looks like with three documents on the right in a cascade and the web browser on the left.
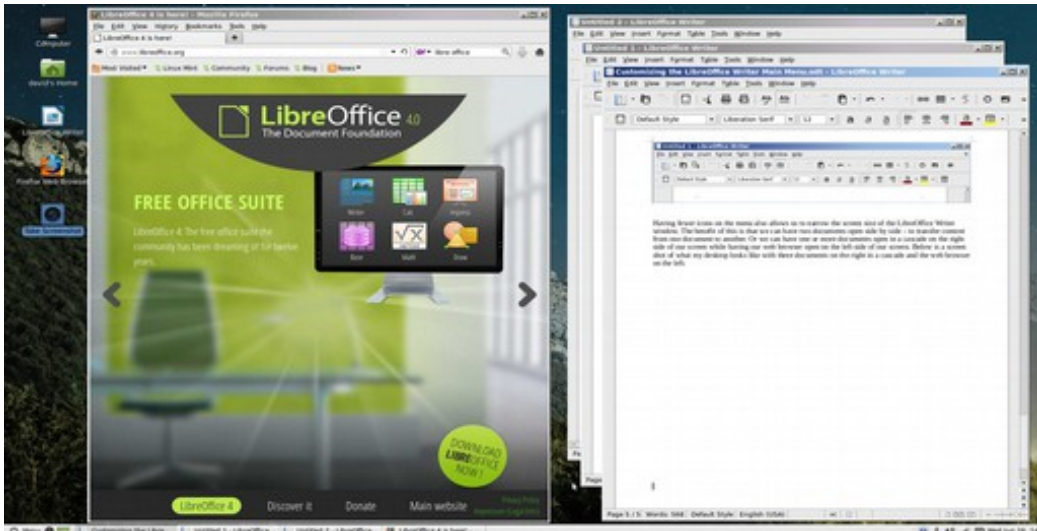
Being able to have multiple windows open side by side is one of the most important reasons to turn off any unneeded icons. It will also make it easier for you to remember where the remaining icons are on your main menu.

Turn off Word Completion
A common complaint about LibreOffice Writer is the very annoying word completion function. This is a function which tries to complete long words for you. The problem is that most of the time, it guesses wrong and makes it harder for you to type in the word you really want to use. To turn off Word Completion, go to Tools, AutoCorrect Options. Then click on the Word Completion tab.
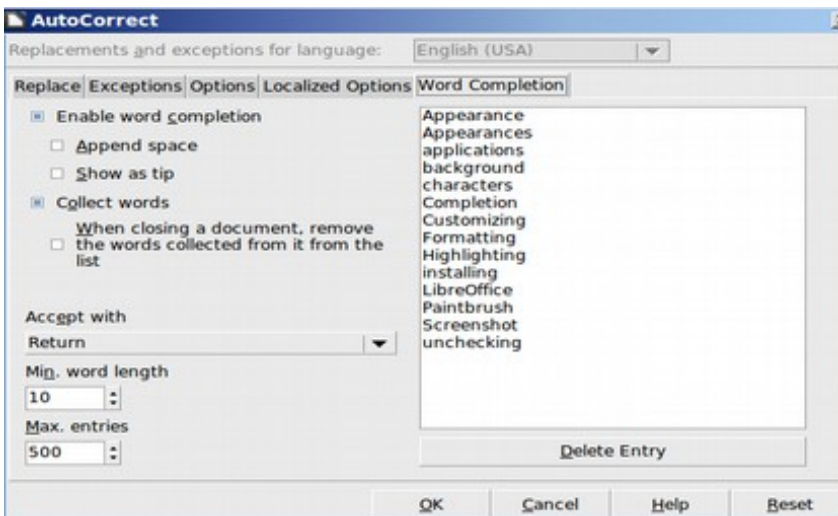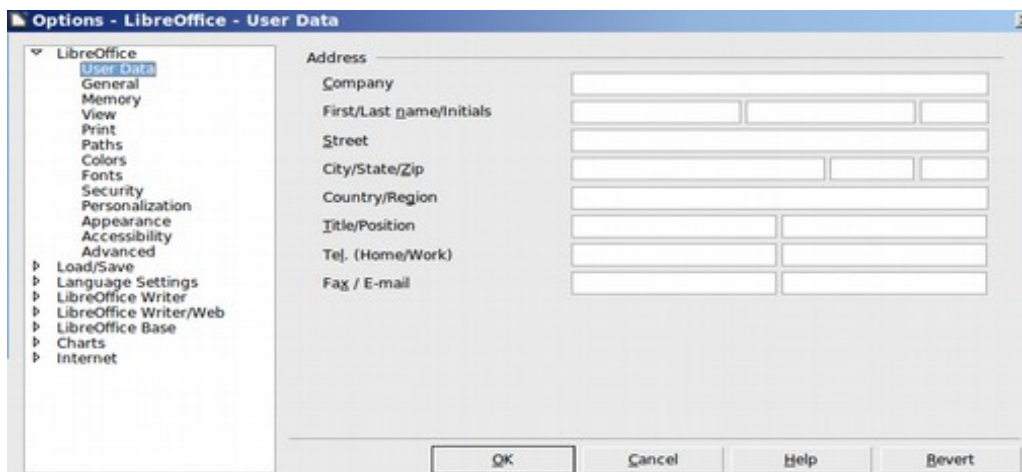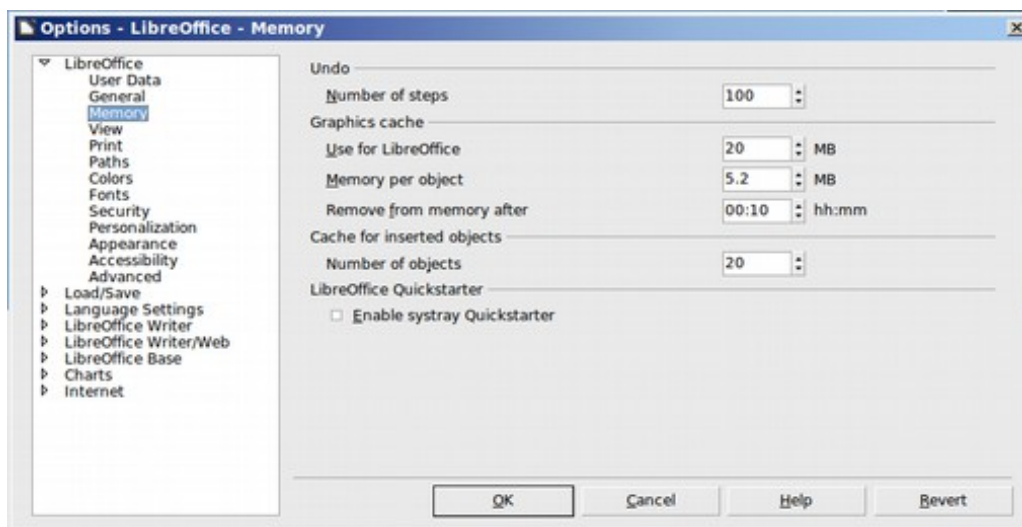

Uncheck Enable Word Completion. Then click OK.

Customize Tools Options
Our next task is to modify a few of the settings on the Tools, Options window. Click on Tools, Options.

Type in your name. Then click on the Memory tab.

If you insert a lot of images in your documents and write rather large and complex documents, one of the biggest problems with the default settings on LibreOffice Writer is the lack of memory. This can slow down your word processing and even crash the application. Another problem is that LibreOffice will try to remember your last 100 steps. This will also use up memory. To solve both of these problems, reduce the number of steps to 20. Then increase the Graphics Cache to 100 MB and increase the time to 50 minutes. Then click on Load/Save, General and raise the AutoSave time from 15 minutes to every 30 minutes.
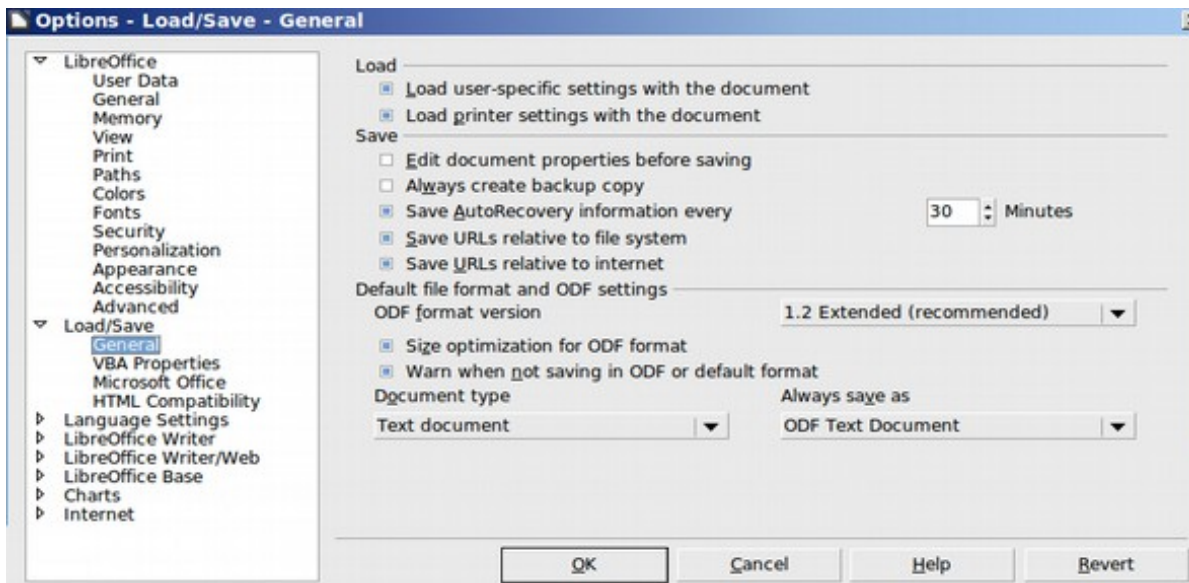
Adding Extensions

Below is an example of how to install a free extension. To reach the Libre Office Extensions directory, go to**http://extensions.libreoffice.org/**

Then click on **Extensions.**

There are currently 198 extensions which are listed by "Highest Rated", "Most Downloads" "Recently Updated" and "Newest" You can also change the category to just display extensions for Writer, Impress or Calc. To check out the extensions for Writer, select these and then click on Search. Scroll down a couple of pages and you will find the following clip art extension:


This extension not only gives you clip art, it also helps improve the appearance of your tool bar icons. Click on the Extension to go to its page:

All Releases

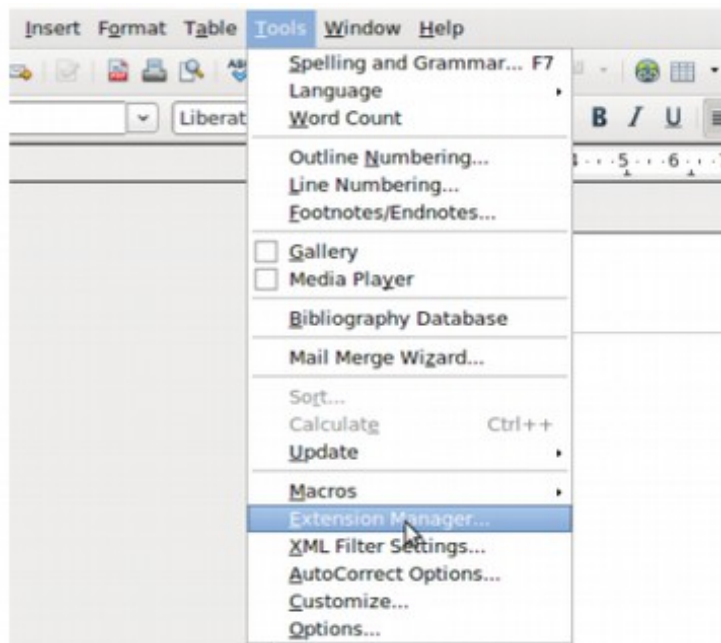| Version	Released	Description	Compatibility
0.2.7	Mar 01, 2013	Now it also works on Windows.	LibreOffice 4.0

Click on the latest release to download it. Save the in your Downloads folder. Then open Libre Office:
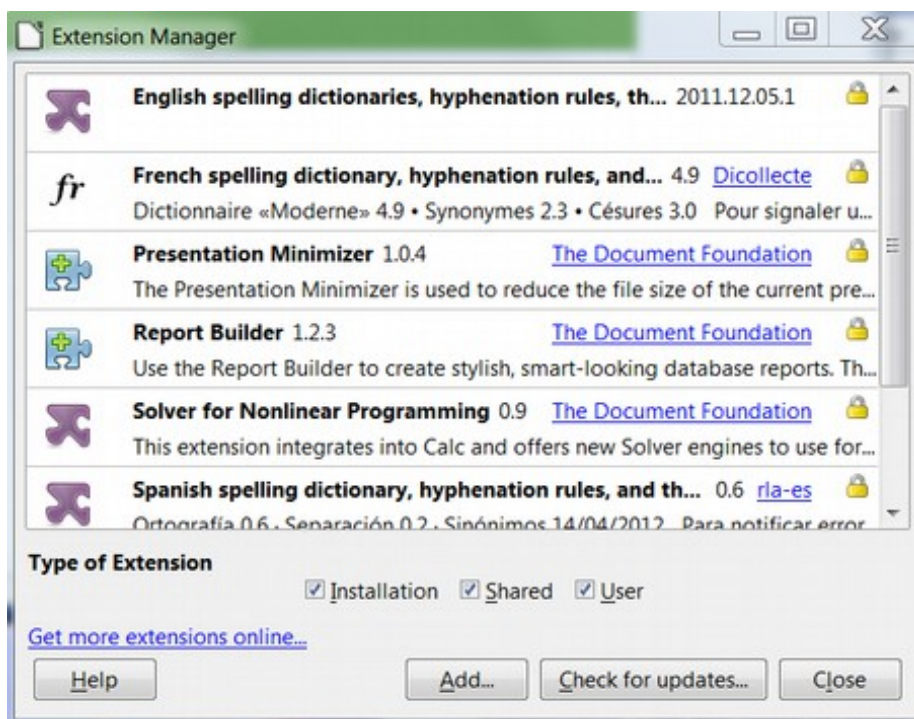

Then select Tools, Extension Manager.
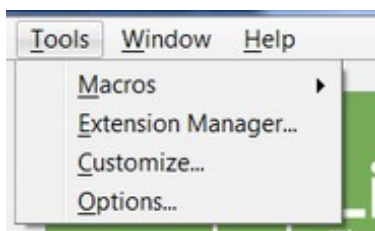
You can also reach the Extension Manager inside of Libre Writer by clicking on Tools, Extension Manager.

In the Extension Manager screen, click ADD:

This opens up a browser window. Find the extension in your Downloads folder and select it. Then click OK. Then select **All Users**. Then **Accept** the License Agreement. Click on the Close button at the bottom of the screen. You will need to restart Libre Office to access the extension. After installation, the extension will be listed in the Extension Manager which can be reached from the Tools Menu on the Libre Office screen or the Libre Writer screen. After restarting Libre Office, click on Text Document to open Libre Writer:
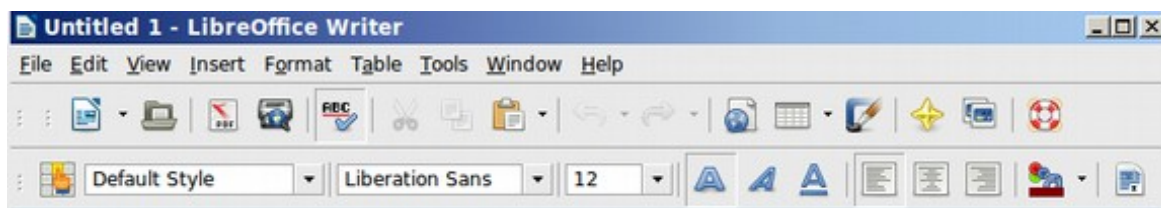
We now have much nicer icons on the main menu – and a bunch of clip art in the "Gallery" folder.

Other popular extension
Below are just a few of the many extensions you can add to Libre Office.

PDF Import

This extension enables you to make minor modifications to the text of existing PDF files when the original source files do not exist or you are unable to open the source files. (Whenever possible, modify the source and regenerate the PDF to obtain the best results.) When the extension is installed, PDF is listed as a choice in the File Type drop-down list in the File → Open dialog. The best results can be achieved with the PDF/ODF hybrid file format, which this extension also enables. Hybrid PDF/ODF files will be opened in LibreOffice as an ODF file without any layout changes.

Presenter Console

Provides extra control over Impress presentations; for example, the presenter has ability to see the upcoming slide, the slide notes, and a presentation timer—while the audience sees only the current slide.

Professional Template Pack II

Provides more than 120 templates for Writer, Calc, and Impress. Available in several languages. After you have installed this extension, you will find the templates under File → New → Templates and Documents.

Template Changer (for Writer)

Adds two new items to the File → Templates menu in Writer that allow you to assign a new template to the current document or to a folder of documents. All styles and formatting will be loaded from that template and the document will behave as it was created using that template.