Open Impress. OpenOffice.org presentations

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Introduction

OpenOffice.org comes with a component for presentations called Open Impress, which can be used to create professional presentations in the style of Microsoft PowerPoint. Impress has the same drawing features as the Open Draw component, which we will see in the next unit. Before getting down to work with the program, we will run through some of its key features:

- **Creating presentations from other sources.** With the Open Impress AutoPilot, we can collect attributes, introduction pages, formats, presentation backgrounds and more from templates and examples.

- **Different formats.** OpenOffice.org can import different document formats such as PowerPoint and export presentations created in many others, such as Macromedia Flash.

- **Exporting to HTML or WebCast.** The program can export presentations and drawings created in HTML format, with or without frames. The exported documents can be run automatically or they can be used in webcasts.

- **Special effects.** Objects and animated texts, sounds and custom transitions can be inserted in documents to enhance their appearance.

- **Text format.** Impress offers the same text formatting capabilities as Writer. The FontWork tool can also be used for the creation and advanced handling of text effects.

- **Custom presentations.** You can save different versions of a presentation in a single document without losing or modifying the existing slides. Notes can even be added to each one.

- **Inserting other documents.** One of the top features of Impress is the possibility of inserting other documents into a presentation. We can insert a range of documents, from spreadsheets to graphics such as OLE objects, which means that we can edit their contents even after they have been embedded. We can also add a graphic either by inserting it or by using the drawing functions of Open Draw, available in Open Impress.

The main aims of this unit are:

1) to explain how to use the AutoPilot feature to create presentations and slides quickly with templates from the program, and

2) to study the process of inserting graphics and texts in presentations to add content.

1. Basic use of the program

Open Impress can be launched from any OpenOffice.org application by selecting the File -> New -> Presentation menu option.

Tips can be very useful for learning about the different features of the program. Tips are displayed for each of the labels and buttons on the screen. You can enable or disable this option using the Help -> Tips menu option.

1.1.　The working environment

As with the other applications, if you need help with a dialog box or window, you can always click on the Help button or press F1.

Figure 1. The Impress working environment
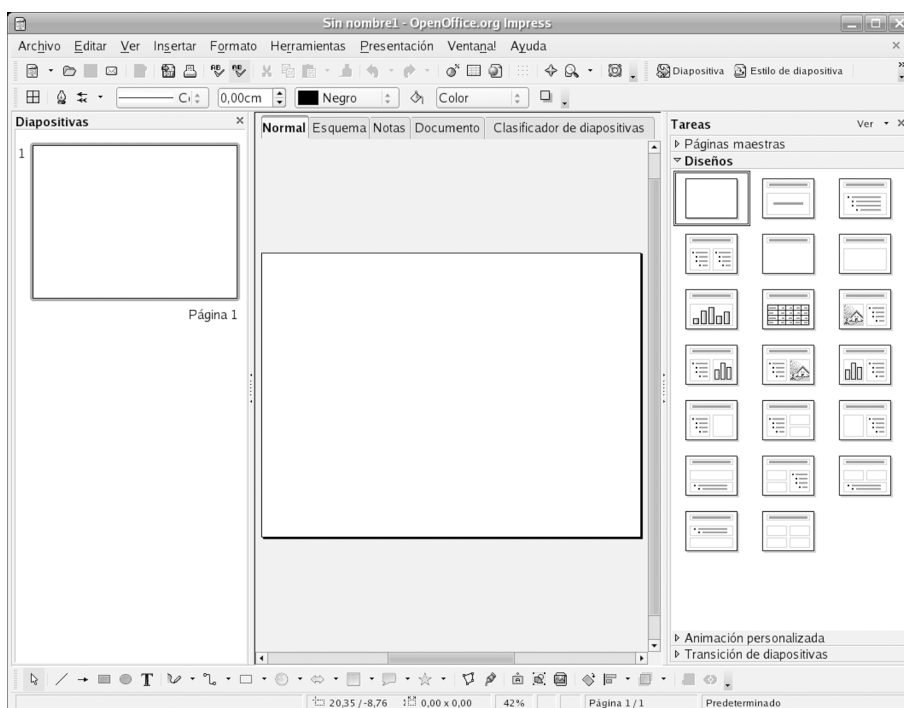
We will now look at the different elements of the workspace in Open Impress: Impress has five possible display modes and not all of the elements are available in each.

- The **Menu bar** contains the various actions that can be carried out globally across the OpenOffice.org program and those that are specific to Open Impress.

- The **Function bar** indicates the full path of the file being edited and provides a shortcut to the program's global features.

- The **Object bar** is used to apply formatting to the objects you are working with at a given time. In Impress, it is almost identical to Open Draw and gives the user access to the drawing functions.

- The **workspace view buttons** are located in the top right of the window, just above the scroll bar, and are used to select the different modes available in Open Impress.

- The **Presentation menu** is used to move through, edit and insert new slides. To display this window, select the View -> Toolbars -> Presentation main menu option.

- The **Main toolbar**, positioned vertically down the left-hand side of the document, gives quick access to the most common drawing functions and 3D and animation effects.

- The **Status bar**, located at the bottom of the screen has a number of functions, which include displaying the number of the slide being viewed and the total number of slides in the presentation, applying page styles (by right-clicking on Standard), changing the *zoom* percentage and changing the default type of text selection.

- The **tabs** can be used for easy scrolling through the slides of a presentation.

- The **Stylist** is used to apply automatic styles and effects to program objects. To show or hide the Stylist, press **F11** or use the Format -> Stylist menu option.

- The **Navigator** is used to switch from one slide to another, insert new slides etc. To display the Navigator, press **F5** or click on the Navigator button in the Function bar.

## 1.2. Creating a sample presentation using AutoPilot

In this section, we will look at how to create presentations using the AutoPilot Presentation tool. To do this, we will use a fictitious presentation to help us to try and understand the basics of Open Impress.

1.2.1. Creating the presentation

In this section, we will discover the features of the AutoPilot tool by creating a sample presentation. The selected options will determine whether the program displays all of the dialog boxes described.

1) In the OpenOffice.org main menu, select the File -> AutoPilot -> Presentation option, which will bring up the first AutoPilot dialog box.

Figure 2. First AutoPilot dialog box
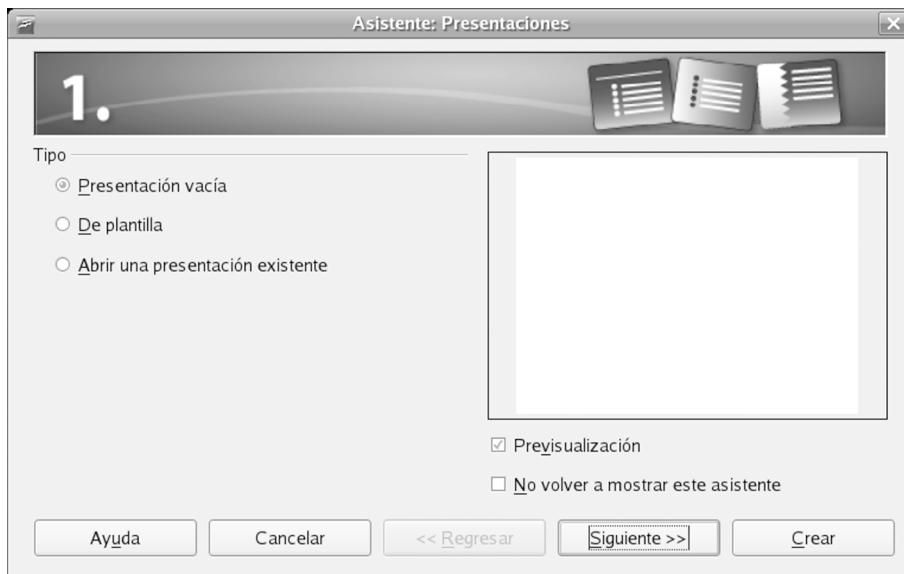
In this dialog box, we can choose whether to create a blank presentation for a presentation of our own or to create a presentation from a template. The third option simply allows the user to open an existing presentation. If you select the Template option, you will need to select a category followed by a name.

It is important to keep the Preview option checked to see how the template we are creating is going to look.

2) For our example, we will select the Template option and Introducing a New Product from the list of presentations. Click on Next.

In the second AutoPilot dialog box, we select a style for our presentation background. If using a template, we can select <Original> to use the template's default background.

We can also tell the system how we are going to display the presentation. If we are going to use a computer for this, we will need to select Screen. If we are using a template, we can use the default option by checking Original. However, in the more recent versions of OpenOffice.org, these settings generally do not have a major impact on the presentation.

Figure 3. Second AutoPilot dialog box
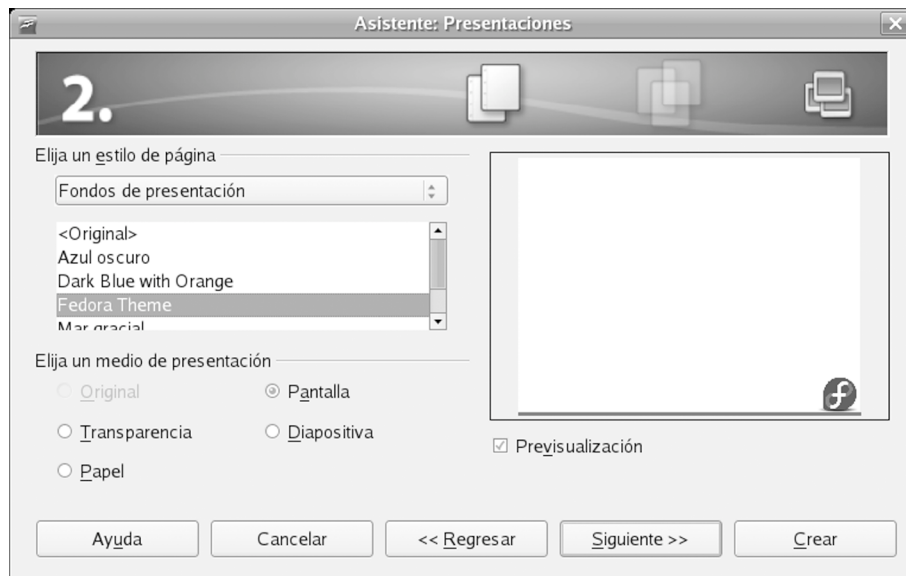
3) Select one of the options from the Select a slide design field. This will be the background for your presentation. Click on Next.
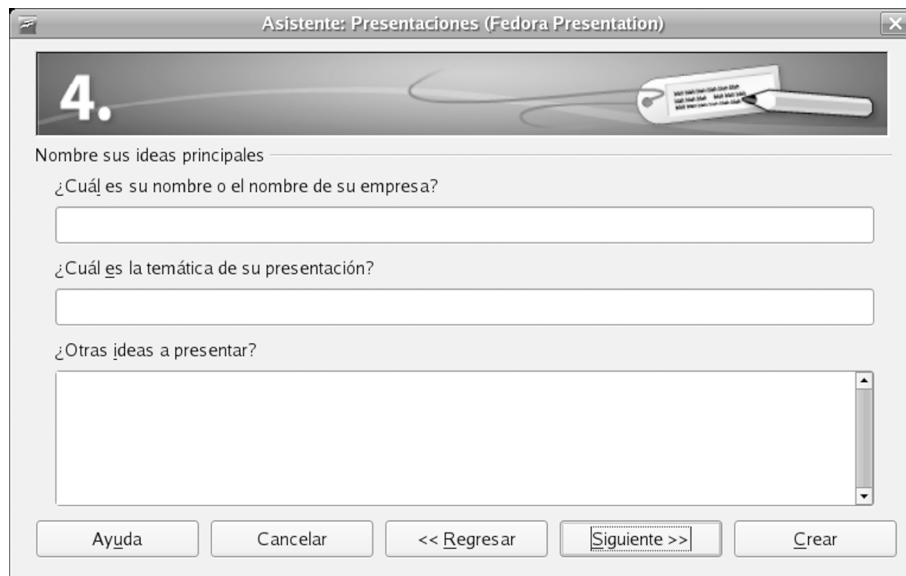
Figure 4. Third AutoPilot dialog box
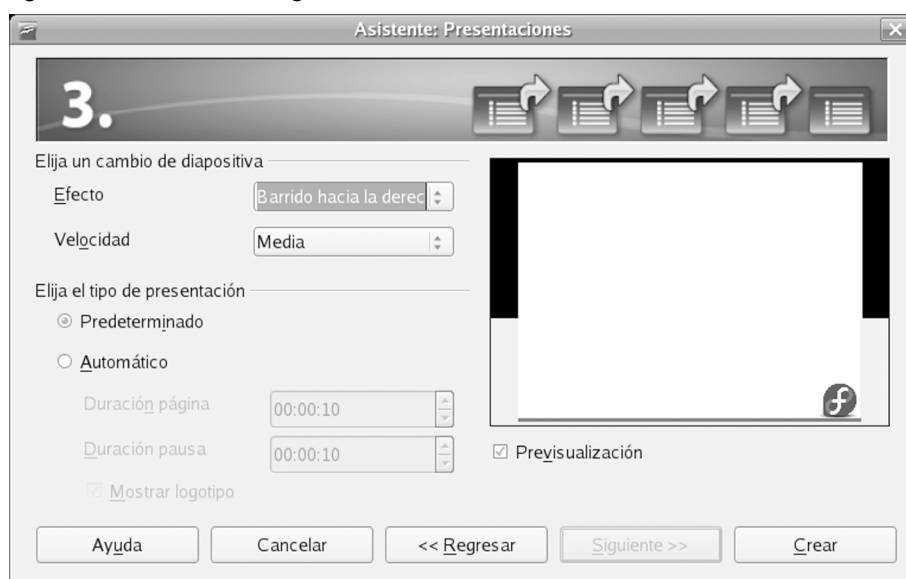
Unless we are advanced users of this program, it is very important in this screen to mark the Preview option to view a live demo of the effects that we can select from the Effect field. You can try them all out until you find an effect you like although the descriptions are clear enough.

You can change slides manually but you can tell the program to do it for you after a specified time interval.

4) From this list of effects, select Fly in From Left and in type of presentation, select automatic with a 5-second duration of page. Once you have made your selection, click on Next.

Figure 5. Fourth AutoPilot dialog box

In the fourth window, we need to enter a description of the presentation. The What is your name or the name of your company field will be positioned below the main title of the presentation, which will be the text entered in the What is the subject of your presentation? field.

In the Further ideas to be presented? field, you can type in the text that will be used as a secondary point, below the presentation title.

5) Type in your name and the following product presentation. "Open Calculation Tutorial". In the Further ideas to be presented? field, type "Learning to use AutoPilot to create presentations". Click on Next to continue.

Figure 6. Fifth AutoPilot dialog box

Each template contains predefined slides. In this screen, you select the ones you wish to use. If you are not sure at this point, you can come back to this step later, since the program allows slides to be added or deleted at any time. The result with the text entered in the previous screen is displayed on the right-hand side of the window, so long as the Preview option is enabled.

If you do not want to use any of the predefined slides, simply unmark the list. The text in each slide is displayed when it is collapsed using the arrow to the left of its name.

You can automatically create a table of contents at the end of the presentation by marking the Create summary option.

6) For our presentation, unmark the Customer Wishes slide and mark the Create summary option. Then click on the Create button to display the presentation.

1.2.2.   Modifying the presentation

In this section, we will modify the presentation we created automatically in the previous section, which only described the process of creating presentations. The steps that we will take to do this are:

1) Press the **F5** key to open the Navigator and select the Next Steps of Action slide. If the Navigator gets in your way when you are working, you can hide it again by pressing the same key.

Figure 7. Navigator window
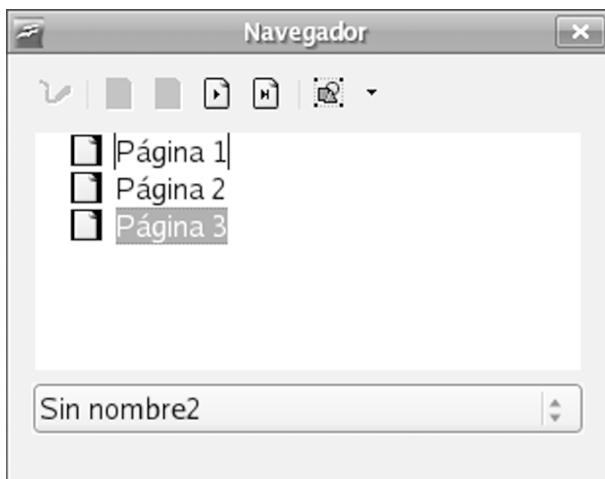
2) In the Next Steps of Action slide, type: "Study a lot", "Write up my notes" and "Cram for my exam". Each of these texts needs to go on a different line. Select the second and third lines and click on the Demote button in the Object bar. You will see that the Object bar has changed now that you are inside an item of text.

3) We will now change some elements of the presentation's formatting. To do this, go to the Format -> Numbering/Bullets main menu option and select a new bullet style. Then click on OK to exit this dialog box.

Figure 8. Numbering/Bullets Bullets tab
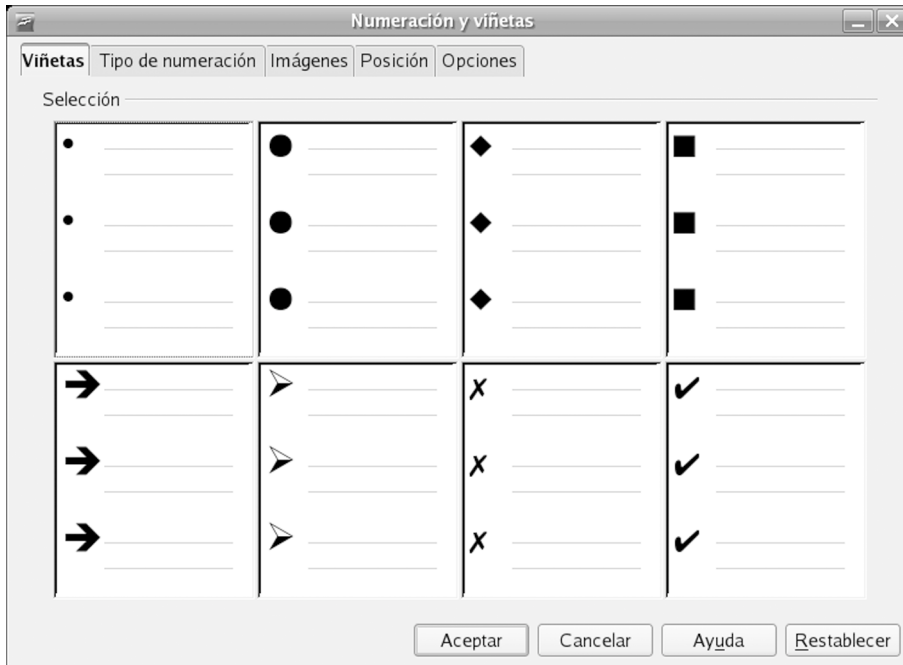
4) Select the last item of text in the slide and change the typeface. To do this, right-click the selected text and select the Character option from the context menu. Select a new font and click on the OK button.

Figure 9. Font tab in the Character formatting dialog box

5) So far, we have seen how we can change the default format of elements of a slide. We will now look at how to change format settings globally for the whole presentation. Select the View -> Master -> Drawing option from the main menu. Using the tools you are now familiar with, modify the title text to make it smaller and change the colour to green. When you have finished formatting, return to the previous screen using the View -> Slide menu option. All of the slide titles in the presentation should have changed.

6) Position the cursor on a slide and right-click. In the context menu, select the Slide -> Insert Slide option. In the Insert Slide dialog box, enter the name New Slide and select your preferred autolayout. Click on the OK button to create the new slide and insert it in the presentation.

Figure 10. Insert Slide dialog box
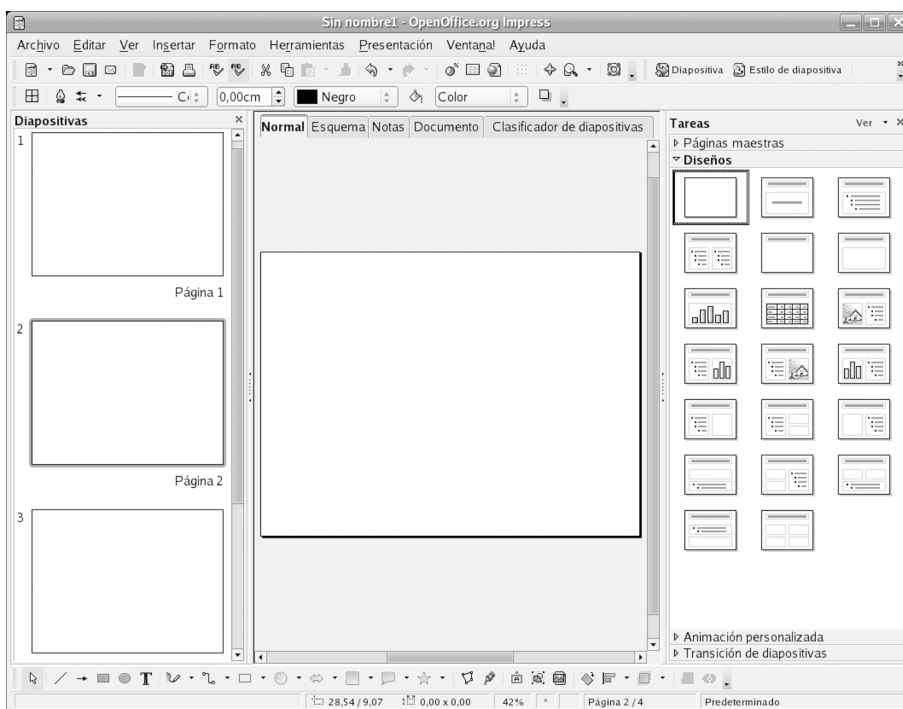
7) Now, using the Navigator, go to the Strengths and Advantages slide and change the layout from one column to two. For this, select the Format -> Modify layout main menu option, which will bring up the dialog box we saw earlier when we inserted a new slide. Select a two-column design like Title, 2 text blocks and click on OK. This may bring up a warning dialog box.

8) In this step, we will create an effect for an element of a slide. To do this, select the title of the current Strengths and Advantages slide and click on the Animation Effects button on the Main toolbar. Select your chosen effect from those available in the different categories and click on the green tick to apply it to the selected item.

Figure 11. Animation Effects dialog box
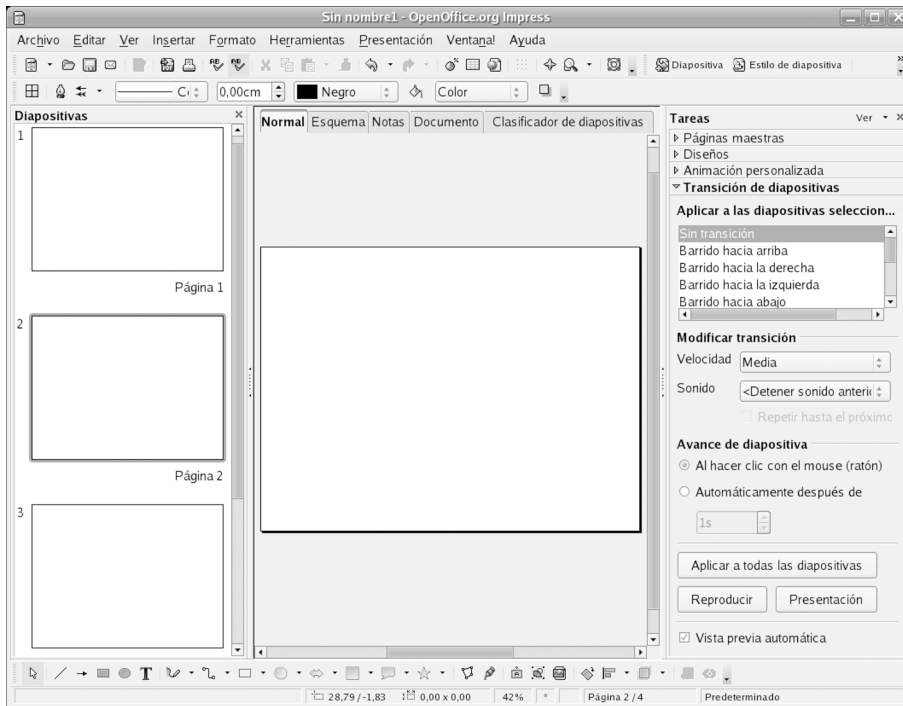
9) We will now look at how we can change the order in which slides are presented. To do this, click on the Slide View button in the workspace view buttons. You can drag any slide you wish to another part of the presentation. You can also change the time and effects between one slide and the next using the Object bar of this workspace.

10) In this step, we will save the presentation we created. To do so, go to the main menu and select the File -> Save option. The file Save As dialog box will appear. In this dialog box, check that the Automatic file name extension option is marked. Enter the name you wish to use to save the presentation without adding an extension and click on Save.

Figure 12. File Save As dialog box

1.2.3. Displaying the presentation

We can view the presentation we have created by clicking on the Start Slide Show button of the workspace view buttons in the top right of the screen, by pressing **F9** or by selecting the Presentation -> Presentation main menu option.

We can quit the presentation by pressing **ESC**.

2. Adding content to the presentation

One of the keys to working with presentations is the correct use of text, as these are the items that will allow us to explain concepts and express our ideas to our target audience.

2.1. Adding items of text

To add text to presentations created from scratch, the required steps are: to define the editing options, create a text frame (if necessary) and, lastly, to write the text.

2.1.1.   Defining editing options

To define the editing options, go to the program's Option bar. To enable the Option bar, select the View -> Toolbars -> Option Bar menu option. An option is turned on if the corresponding button is recessed.

When you use Open Impress and Open Draw, you will probably find that the best option is to mark only the option Double-click to edit text to avoid confusion when working with other items.

The available options are as follows:

- The **Allow Quick Editing** option is used to edit a text simply by clicking once on it. This option can make it difficult to interact with the other elements of the slide. One of the things it does, for example, is that it makes it much harder to select text frames.

- **Select Text Area Only** is an option that, when enabled, tells the program that we cannot click on a text to select the entire text frame and move or delete it. To select a frame, we must first switch to text editing mode by clicking or double-clicking on the text frame. It is best not to use this option unless you very rarely use text frames.

- **Double-click to edit Text** allows us to edit texts quickly by double-clicking on them with the mouse. With this option, we will never accidentally select text when we actually wanted to work on other elements of the slide.

Now that we have seen all of the options available in the program, we need to set our editing options. To make life easier, we generally recommend only selecting the last option and turning the other two off.

2.1.2. Creating a text frame

Text frames are the spaces in which the slide text is inserted and which let us know its position inside the composition. OpenOffice.org can create horizontal and vertical text frames. To turn on vertical text, choose the Tools -> Options -> Language Settings -> Language main menu option and check the Enabled option in the Asian languages support section.

Figure 13. Language settings dialog box
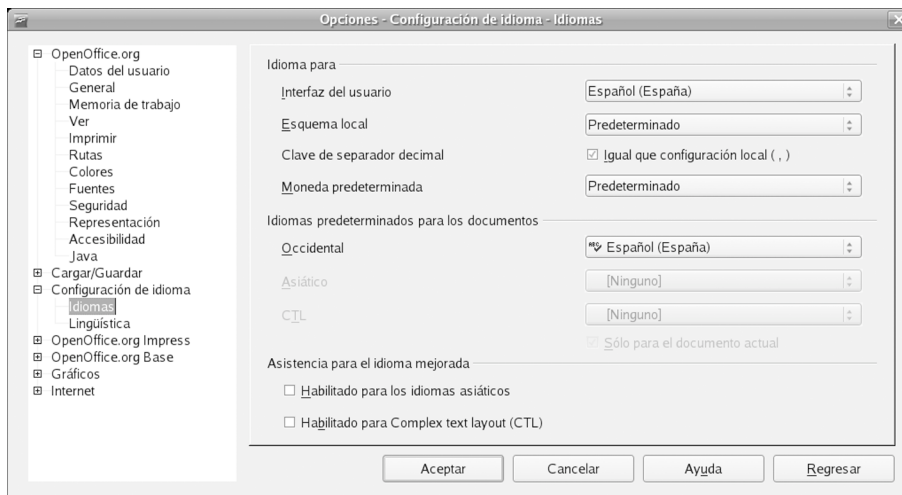
We do not generally recommend creating your own text frames for presentations because the slides or templates you use already come with their own text frames. There is a very simple reason for this. It is much quicker and easier to create professional presentations using predefined text frames than it is to create text frames with the program's tools.

This is because the templates and slides contain a wide range of formatting options that would take a long time to reproduce. Another feature of templates is that the text frames are visible even when they have no text inside, which is not the case when we create new text frames with the text tools.

The items needed to work with text frames are located in the Text button of the Main toolbar, to the left of the workspace. When you click and hold the left mouse button on the text button, the Text items bar will appear.

Figure 14. Text items bar

The three buttons on the text items bar are as follows:

- The **Text** button creates a text frame, which is very useful when we want to control text wrapping in the frame, such as when we want to define a specific line size. This will generally be the tool to use for creating most text frames in presentation slides.

- The **Fit Text to Frame** tool can be useful in small text frames or if we want to quickly and roughly define the size of the text in a frame. The text adapts more or less to the size of the frame we draw. However, the lines of text do not adjust to the frame. The text begins in the centre of the frame and extends both left and right as you type, even spilling outside the borders of the workspace.

- The **Callouts** button draws a line and a text frame at the same time. To use this feature, click on the spot where you would like the line to begin and drag it to the area where you want to enter the text. You can adjust the size of the frame and double-click inside it to enter the text. By default, the lines of text do not wrap to the frame but this can be changed by right-clicking the text and selecting Text from the context menu, followed by Fit width to text in the Text tab. We shall see this dialog box in a moment.

If you have enabled Asian languages support, these buttons will be duplicated for horizontal and vertical text.

2.1.3. Modifying text frame options

The following procedure can be used to modify the options for any text frame, regardless of whether you created it yourself or it came from a presentation or slide template. These options also apply if you have inserted text in an object by double-clicking on it. The steps required to modify these options are as follows:

1) Go to Drawing View by clicking on the Drawing View button in the workspace view buttons.

2) Select the text frame or object you wish to customise and choose the Format -> Text option from the application's main menu. This will bring up the Text frame properties dialog box. After making the necessary changes, click on OK and close the window.

Figure 15. Text frame properties dialog box
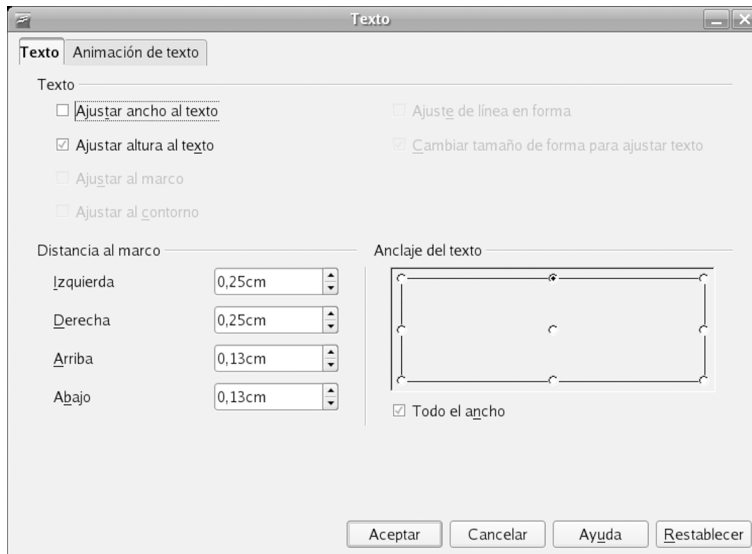
We will now look at the configuration options in this dialog box:

- The **Fit width to text** expands or narrows the text frame to adjust the widest line of text to the text frame. If the width of the text changes, the frame will adjust to fit while the number of lines of text will remain the same.

- If you select the **Fit height to text**option, the text frame will be lengthened or shortened to fit the highest text in the text frame. The frame will adjust to changes in text height.

- The **Fit to frame** option adjusts the size of the text to fit the area of the drawing or text object.

- The **Adjust to contour** option is related to the FontWork tool contour. When this option is selected, the text disappears and only its outline is visible.

- The **Spacing to borders** section is used to enter the distance required between the text and the selected object. Negative values can be used, which will make the text spill out of the text frame.

- In the **Text anchor**section, you can indicate the position of the text in the text frame. If you select the Full width option, the text will be scaled to fill the entire object.

2.1.4. Writing the text

This is clearly the most important part of creating the presentation because this is where we write the ideas we want to get across. There are several ways of entering text in OpenOffice.org, which we shall now look at in turn.

- The first is the most obvious option: we can **type** the text inside a text frame by double-clicking on the frame to enter the contents of our presentation. Remember that the way we access the text inside the frame may vary according to the editing options we defined.

- We can also add content **by inserting a file** in the presentation. The contents of this file will be automatically imported into a new frame. If you import contents from a file in HTML format, links to web addresses will continue to work in the presentation, which can be a bonus. To insert a text file, click on the Insert File button that appears when you click and hold on the Insert button of the program's Main toolbar. In the Insert File dialog box, you can select the file you wish to insert. The Insert Text dialog box will appear.

Figure 16. Insert Text dialog box
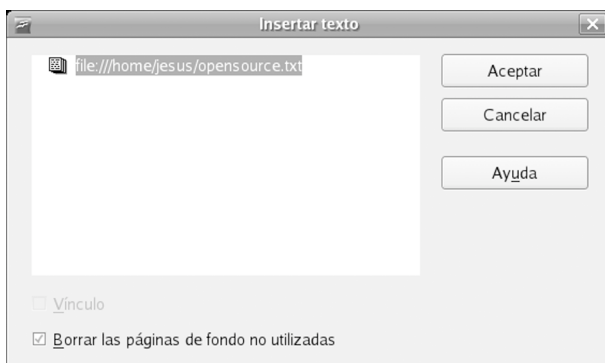
The selected file will appear in the Insert Text dialog box. You can check the Link option here if you need to. When you create a link, you are only linking the inserted file to the presentation; the file contents will be automatically updated in the presentation every time this file is edited. On the downside, problems will occur if you change the location of the file as the presentation will no longer be able to display it. Therefore, be very cautious about linking to remote websites, since you will need a permanent Internet connection to access their contents.

- The **pasting text** from another document option is usually quicker and more satisfactory than importing a file. To paste text, simply position the cursor inside the text frame and use the **Ctrl+V** key combination or use the Edit -> Paste menu option. If you do this outside a text frame, the program will create a new frame.

- A less orthodox option is to **write text inside an object.**. Simply double-click and start writing. The text will spill outside the borders of the object, so you need to keep an eye on the size of the font. You can also right-click the text and select the Text -> Fit to frame option we looked at earlier.

2.2. Inserting graphics

We can insert empty graphics frames in presentation slides, which we can then manually edit, or we can insert existing graphics files, which is the method that we will describe here. The steps for inserting graphics from files are as follows:

1) Click on the Insert Graphics button from the toolbar displayed when you click and hold the Insert button of the program's Main toolbar. You can also use the Insert -> Graphics main menu option.

2) Select the file you wish to insert and click on Open.

If, on the other hand, you would like to insert a drawing in the current slide, the steps are as follows:

1) Go to Drawing View by clicking on the Drawing View button in the workspace view buttons.

2) Choose the Insert -> Object -> OLE Object main menu option.

Figure 17. Insert OLE object dialog box
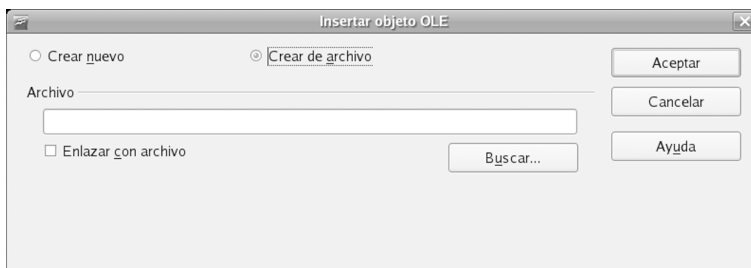
3) In the OLE object dialog box, you can create a new object or you can create one from an existing file. If you choose to create one from an existing file, the contents of the selected file will be inserted in the current slide.

Summary

In this introduction to Open Impress, we have seen how to create slides and presentations quickly and easily using OpenOffice.org's program for the creation of presentations. We now know that these are available on the Internet and that we can create our own.

We have also seen the procedure for adding content to presentations created automatically. With what we have learnt in this unit, although merely an introduction, we should now have a solid basis for creating a whole range of presentations with this program.