

Using LibreOffice 5 To Email Out Personalised Emails

LibreOffice is the free version of Microsoft Office. It's good but not as good as Office, it's always a step or two behind MS Office's functionality and slickness but when it comes to mail merge it works equally if not better than MS Office as it doesn't require the use of MS Outlook to send the email, it has its own built in email sending program, that's all Outlook is used for, to send the email, nothing more but it requires a lot more configuring.

Requirements.

1. The data that is used in the merge needs to be in either LibreOffice Calc or LibreOffice Base. Calc is the equivalent of MS Excel, Base is the equivalent of MS Access. Calc will read Excel files and Base will read Access files. If your data is in a MS format, load it into Calc or Base and 'Save As' the Calc or Base native format. For Calc this will be 'ODF Spreadsheet *.ods'. For Base it will be 'ODF Database *.odb'.

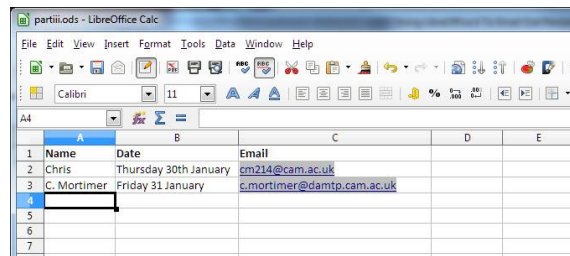
Technical Requirements.

1. By default McAfee VirusScan blocks email being sent from LibreOffice. Within Maths this should be allowed as McAfee VirusScan is centrally managed and LibreOffice is allowed through and not classed as a threat. If McAfee isn't managed then the following needs to be changed:
 - a. As a user with admin rights, open McAfee Console.
 - b. Open the properties of Access Protection.
 - c. Select 'Anti-virus Standard Protection'.
 - d. From the list of rules that appear on the right of the window, select 'Prevent mass mailing worms from sending mail'. Once selected, press the Edit button.
 - e. Add the text ', soffice.bin' to the end of the list of 'Processes to excluded'. Press the OK button.
 - f. Press the OK button to close the Properties box and close the Console window.
2. With LibreOffice Writer, the email server address needs to be configured. This is in Tools -> Options -> LibreOffice Writer -> Mail Merge E-mail. The minimum settings are (change to your name and CRSid):
 - a. Your name e.g. = 'Fred Blogs'
 - b. E-mail address e.g. = fb999@cam.ac.uk
 - c. Server name (enter the name exactly as shown to the right) = ppsw.cam.ac.uk
 - d. Port (enter the number exactly as shown to the right) = 25You can try testing the settings if you wish.

So, let's run through an example of a mail merge to email

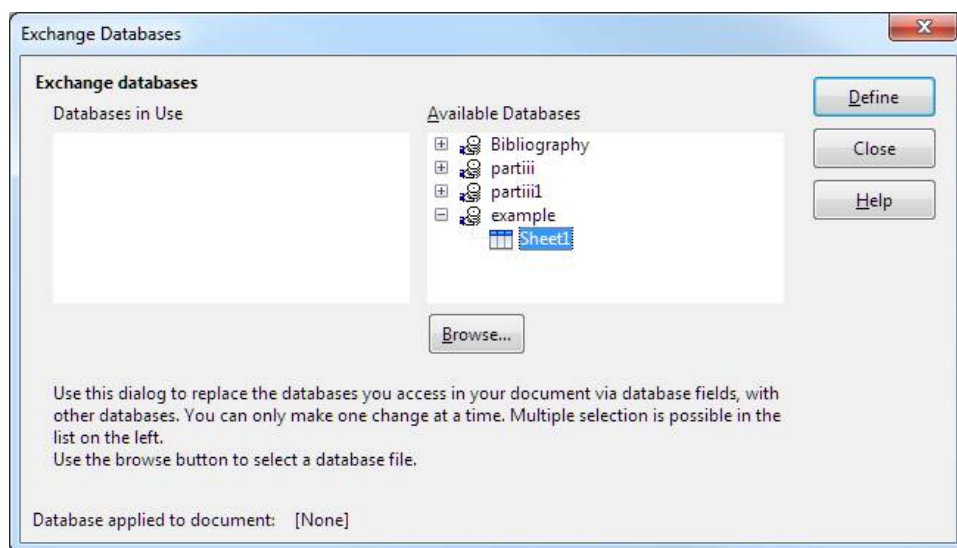
I'm going to send out two emails, one to cm214@cam.ac.uk, the second to c.mortimer@damtp.cam.ac.uk. The emails are very simple, they're going to have the same subject line but the body will be personalised using data from the data source. It will contain a friendly name and a date. All of these pieces of data, the friendly name, the date and the email address will be in a spreadsheet, I'll use LibreOffice Writer – MS Word equivalent, to write and send the email.

- Below is what's in the spreadsheet – in LibreOffice Calc. Note how the columns have been given titles, this is important!



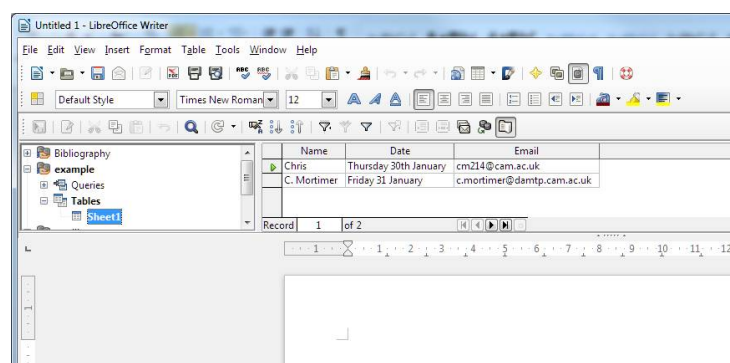
	A	B	C	D	E
1	Name	Date	Email		
2	Chris	Thursday 30th January	cm214@cam.ac.uk		
3	C. Mortimer	Friday 31 January	cmortimer@damp.cam.ac.uk		
4					
5					
6					
7					

- Now start LibreOffice Writer.
- Make sure the email settings have been setup as described above.
- We need to link our document to the data. From the Edit menu -> Exchange Database. Browse and select the spreadsheet, the .ods file. It will then appear in the list of 'Available Databases'. Expand the loaded spreadsheet and select the worksheet containing the data you want to use. Once selected, press the Define button.

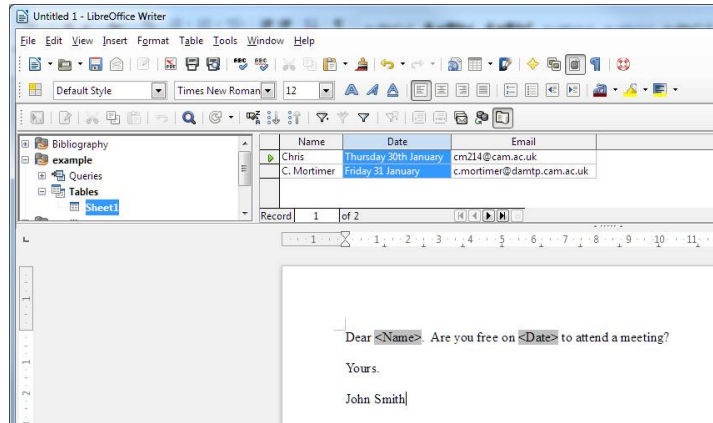


You'll return to your empty document with nothing to show for your efforts, be patient.

- To make our life easier, we're going to display the data, the spreadsheet, in our document. There's a good reason for this, you'll soon see. To do this, from the View menu -> Data Sources.

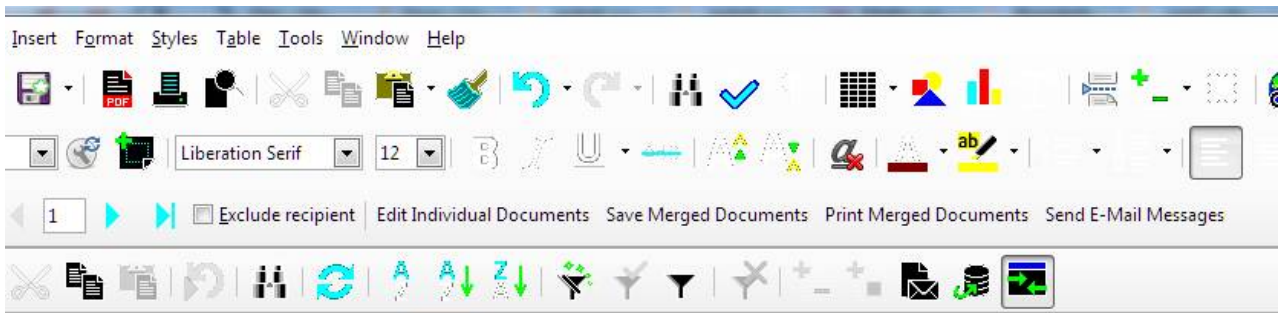


- We're now going to start composing our email and use the data from the spreadsheet. In the blank document start typing 'Dear '. To add some data, drag the **column** of the data you want to add from the data source onto the document at the place you want it to appear. The data will appear in a grey block with opening and closing less and greater than symbols with the name of the column in-between. Continue composing your email dragging in 'data' as required. An example of a complete email could be like below.

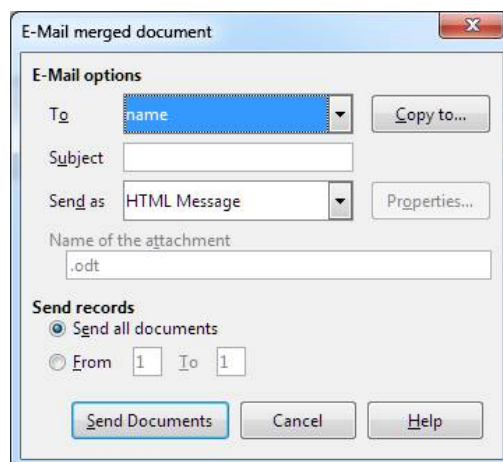


- We now need to email out the merged emails. To do this we will use the Mail Merge Wizard within LibreOffice Writer. Tools menu -> Mail Merge Wizard.
- Step 1 = Use the current document.
- Step 2 = E-mail message.
- Step 3 = If you wish to fine tune who to email you may wish to press the 'Select Address List' button and select and/or filter the recipients otherwise press the Next button to select all in the data source.
- Step 4 = If you wish to add a salutation fill in those sections that apply to your requirements.
- Step 5 is greyed out!
- Press the 'Finish' button.

The wizard will now close and return you to you document. We now need to click on the text 'Send E-Mail Messages' below the toolbars.



Once pressed a new window will appear titled 'E-Mail merged document'.



- Change:
 - To = Email (the name of the column that lists the email address in the spreadsheet)

- Press the 'Copy to...' button and add your email address to the cc or the bcc line. This way you will get a copy of the emails. You will want to do this as we won't be using Thunderbird to send the emails therefore you won't get a copy of the emails in your Send folder.
 - Subject = Type in a subject line.
 - Send as = How to send your mail merged document. As a plain text or HTML document in the body of the email or as a PDF attachment or as a MS Word or OpenDocument attachment.
 - Pressing the 'Send documents' button will send the emails ☺.
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- A window will then appear as the emails are being sent. It will tell you how many emails were sent, how many failed to send. You can close this window when all the emails appear to have been processed.
 - That's it. You can save the document if you think you should need to send the emails again, maybe to another list of people or just close without saving.