Make OpenOffice Work Like MS Office

By NathanC, eHow Contributor updated: January 24, 2010
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OpenOffice is an increasingly popular, free, open-source alternative to Microsoft Office. Much like Microsoft's product, it can do word processing, create spreadsheets and make presentations. The main problem, however, with OpenOffice is that its default file formats cannot be opened in MS Office. This makes it a little tricky to use OpenOffice if you need to share files with users of MS Office. However, it is fairly easy to rig OpenOffice to save files in an MS Office-compatible format.

The trick is to get OpenOffice to stop saving files using its own formats and start using Microsoft's formats. Change a setting that will force OpenOffice to save its files in Microsoft-compatible formats.

1. Start up OpenOffice Writer.

2. Click on the "Tools" toolbar at the top of the window and select "Options."
3. This opens up the Options dialog box. On the left-hand side, click on "Load/Save" and then select "General."
4. Under "Document Type" there will be a drop-down menu. Select "Text Document" from this menu.
5. To the right, you will see another drop-down menu labeled "Always Save As." Change the section in this menu from "ODF Text Document" to "Microsoft Word 97/2000/XP." Click "OK." Now all of your text documents in OpenOffice will be automatically saved in the DOC format.
6. Go back to the Options dialog box in order to change the file formats for spreadsheets and presentations. Once you have navigated back to the "General" section under "Load/Save," select "Spreadsheet" under "Document Type." Under "Always Save As," change the value to "Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP." Click "OK." All spreadsheets will now be automatically saved as XLS files.
7. Go back to the Options dialog box a third time, but select "Presentation" under "Document type." Change the value under "Always Save As" to "Microsoft PowerPoint 97/2000/XP." Click "OK." Now all of your word processing files, spreadsheets and presentations will be automatically saved in formats that are easily opened and edited by any version of Microsoft Office.

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