

# Mail merge with Writer and Base

Got your customer database in one hand and a form letter in the other? Learn how to happily marry the two together with a swift mail merge...

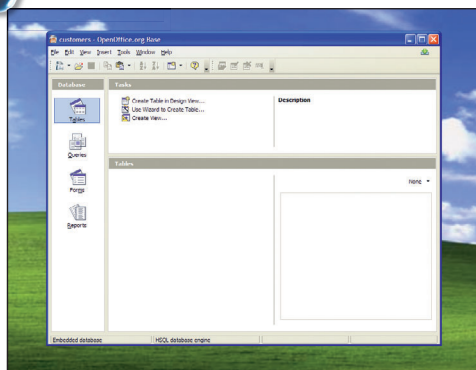
**Y**ou know that *Writer* can set up attractive page designs, and you know that *Base* can store heaps of information to make it more easy to manage. But did you know that bring the two together, to have *Base* and *Writer* print out customised documents for people? This magic technology is called a Mail Merge, so-named as it

merges *Base* data with *Writer* formatting for use in mass mailings – when you want to send the same letter out to lots of different people. The mail merge facility isn't too well implemented in *OOo* yet, so don't be surprised if you have a few problems – particularly with the strange salutations system. The key here is perseverance: save your work

before running the wizard, then try it out a few times to see what different results you can get.

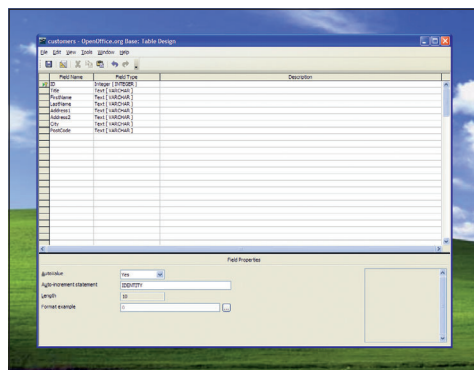
Running a mail merge requires you to be familiar with *Base* and *Writer*, so if you haven't already following our Getting Started guide for both of these, we would recommend you do so now. Still here? OK, let's get on with the project!

## The picture guide to installing new dictionaries



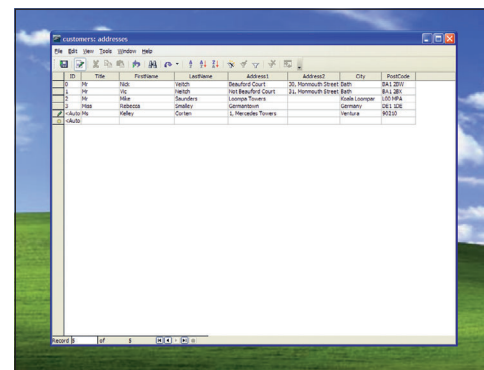
### 1 Fire up Base

First, create a new database called "customers". Inside that, create a new table using the design view – we'll be using that for our mail merge source.



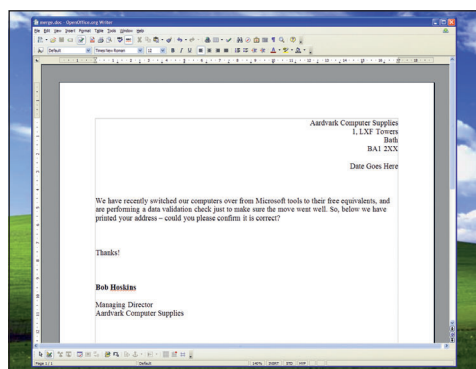
### 2 Fields

Enter these fields: ID (integer, primary key), Title, First Name, Last Name, Address1, Address2, City and PostCode – all **VARCHAR**. Save as "addresses".



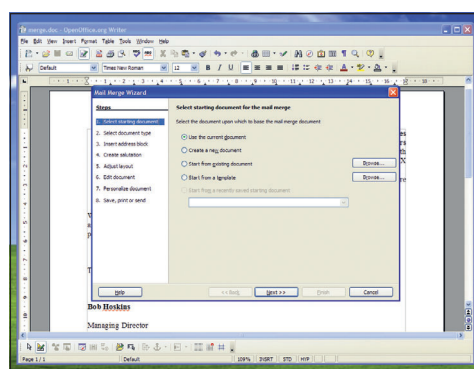
### 3 Data example entry

Go ahead and insert some data into your table – you only need examples in a few rows, so don't spend too much time here.



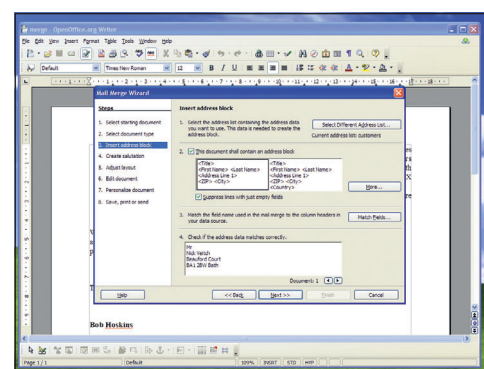
### 4 Fire up Writer

Close *Base*, open *Writer*. Type in the parts of your document that everyone should be able to see. Don't enter a salutation – *Writer* will do that for you.



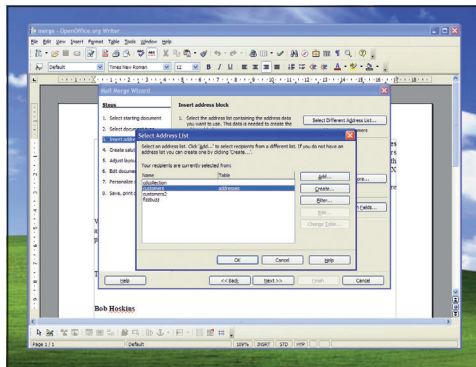
### 5 Mail Merge wizard

Once your document is ready, save it, choose Tools > Mail Merge wizard from the menu bar. When the Mail Merge wizard appears, click Next twice.



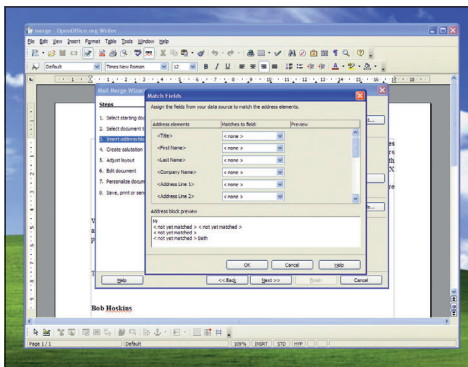
### 6 Main window

This shows what fields have been selected in the Mail Merge wizard, and how it will look. Click Select Different Address List to continue.



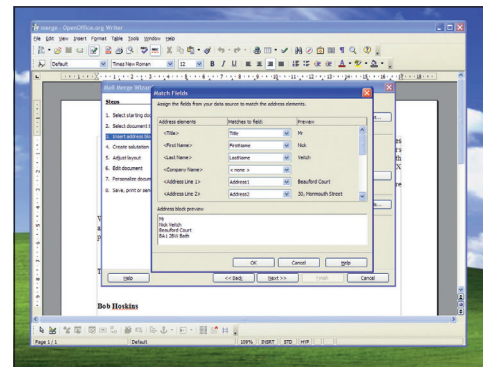
## 7 Select database

You'll see a list of all the databases and tables you have created using *Base* – select the addresses table we created a few minutes ago.



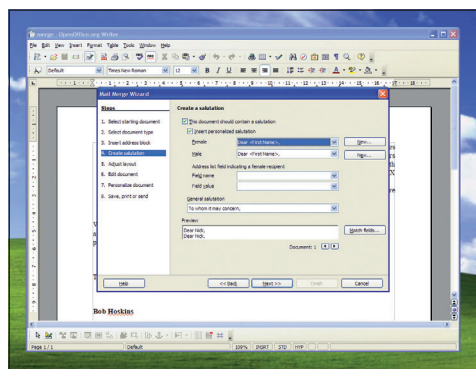
## 8 Matchmaking

The next job is to match fields from your table to mail merge fields, so that *Writer* knows to use *FirstName* for the person's first name. Click the Match Fields button to proceed.



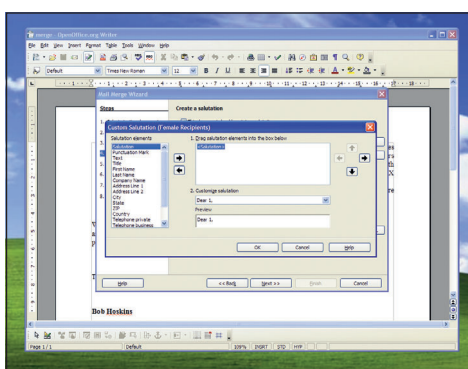
## 9 Preview checking

As you match your database fields to *Writer's* mail merge fields, it will automatically show you a preview so you can be sure the data is correct. Click OK when you're done.



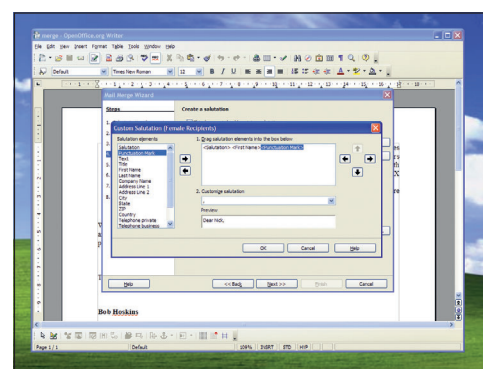
## 10 No hurry!

From the main window of the Mail Merge wizard, click Next and you come to a slightly tricky part: adding salutations. This takes some patience, to take your time!



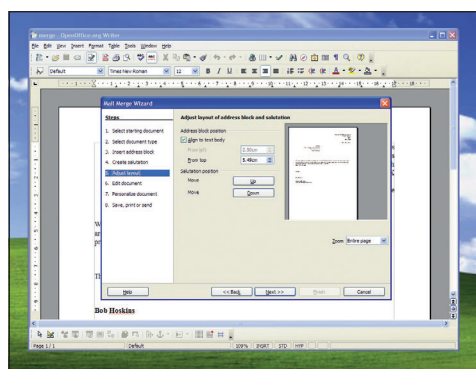
## 11 Salutations, hail, good day

Click the New button next to the female list of salutations. Set the salutation be "Salutation", click the right arrow, then change it to be "Dear <1>,".



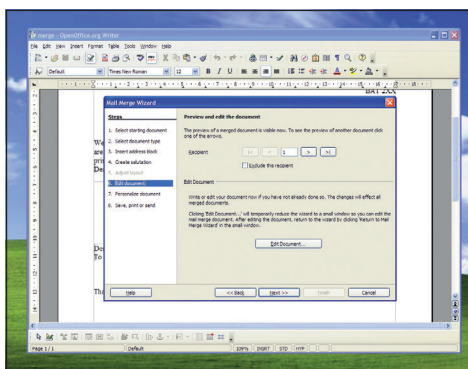
## 12 Counter-intuitive!

Edit the salutation text so it just reads "Dear", then add First Name and Punctuation > Comma. Yes, this is a very stupid way of working – we've no idea why it works this way!



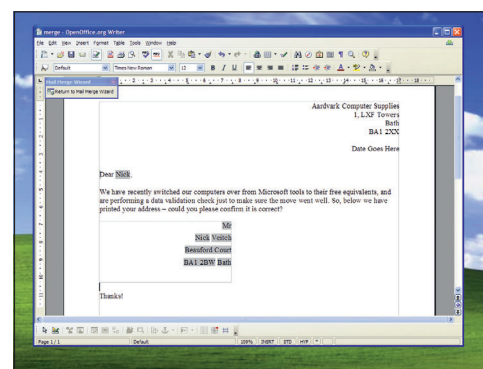
## 13 A new position

Set the male salutation to be the same as the female one, then click Next. Here you have to position the address information and the salutation – it takes a little practice to get it right!



## 14 Final tweaks

When you click Next, *Writer* will create a preview of the document for you to edit. It usually manages to screw it up in various places, so click Edit Document to correct it by hand.



## 15 Ready to print

And we're done: after a little light editing the mail merge is complete, and you're all set to print out the letters! **LXF**