

Impress: Create a business slideshow

What good is Impress if it doesn't impress? Learn how to use OpenOffice.org's presentation tool to look prepared and professional in the business world...

Anyone can slap together a few slides and call it a presentation, but it takes some skill, some forethought and some experience to make a slide for business purposes. The problem is a mix of things, but the largest part of it is that business presentations naturally need a more serious tone, so people either create presentations that use too many colours and fonts and look more suited to a children's party, or they create very dull presentations that put even the most hardened *PowerPoint* jockey to sleep. The aim is to find a happy middle ground: presentations that don't look like they were made for Barney the Dinosaur, but equally don't have slides where the main interest is what colour of shade was chosen.

In this tutorial you'll learn how to add some pep to your presentations by creating notes for yourself so that even if the occasional slide is dull you at least have some interesting things to say about it. You'll also learn how to create hand outs so that people can follow along as you speak and also have reminders to

take away with them. And finally we'll be looking at how to embed spreadsheets and charts into your presentations, so that your audience can see facts to back up what you say. The goal isn't to overload your audience with information from every

“Boost retention of your information: present data in different ways.”

possible angle, but it does boost retention if you present your data in different ways. If all you do is talk, they'll forget most of it. If you back up talk with slides, that will help. If you add in hand outs and charts, it will help even more, which means your presentations are better received and better remembered, and therefore are more successful.

If you have the funds, one of the easiest ways to improve your presenting skills is to get a second monitor or projector. When working with two screens, *OOo Impress* can use one screen to show your notes, and the other screen to show the live presentation to your audience. If you've ever found yourself wondering, "Uh-oh – what slide comes next?," having multiple monitors is exactly what you need, because you can write all the prompts you need directly into the presentation file. But be careful: some people have been caught out in the past by distributing presentations containing notes that were meant for internal use only. For example, if your notes say, "of course, this graph is a great big lie, but don't tell the audience that!" it's probably best if you delete the notes before releasing the file!

Multiple masters

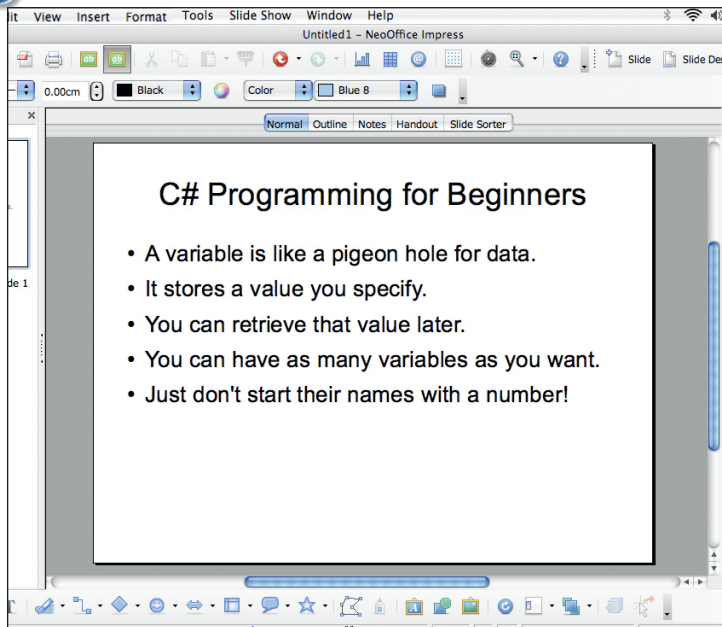
Master slides are templates that *Impress* uses to create normal slides. These can save you a lot of time, not only because they let you create new slides quickly, but also because one change to the master slide automatically gets replicated to all slides based on it. However, as you create larger presentations, you'll find the need to have multiple slide masters: a selection of templates that fit the needs for a particular presentation. To create a new master, go to View > Master > Slide Master, then look for the Master View toolbar that appears. Click the button on the far left (New Master), then click the third button (Rename Master) so that you can give each master template a unique name that's easy to remember. You can then apply a particular master design by looking under Master Pages under the Tasks pane.



➤ Selecting what sort of slide you want to create. Note that the checkboxes remain in the same place even when the language reads right to left! For more on localisation, see p96.

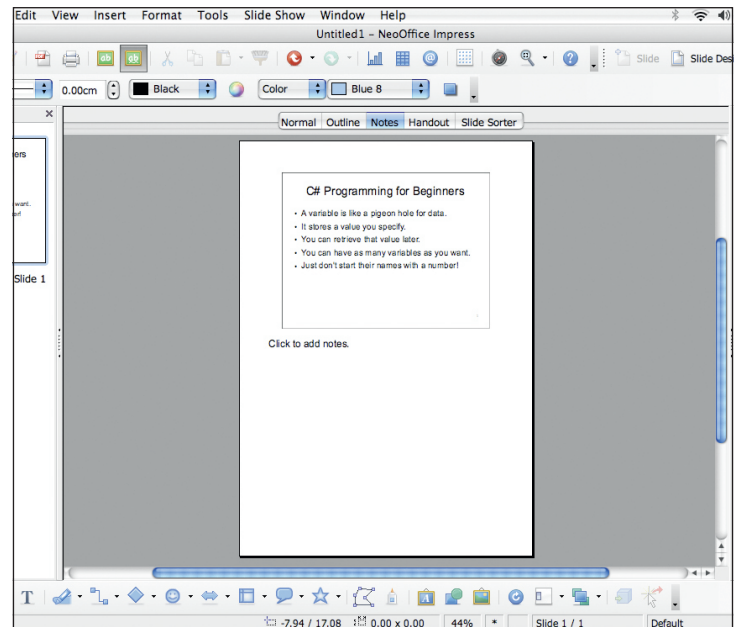


Impress: adding notes to your presentation



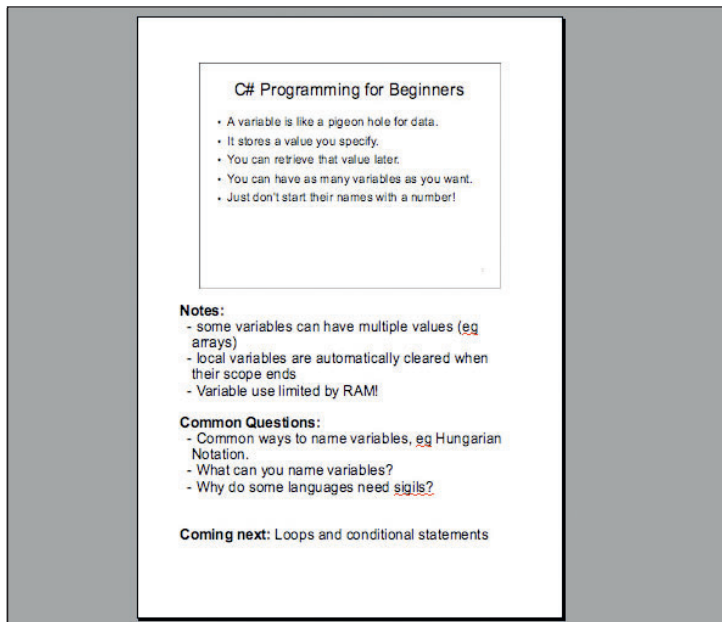
1 Enter some information

First, create an example slide. If you have a presentation already, great – we can use that. If not, the fastest way to get something usable is to leave the default option selected in the wizard that appears when *Impress* first loads, and click Create – this should give you an empty presentation. Then open up Layouts in the task pane and choose the basic Title/Text box (second row, first column) and enter some text.



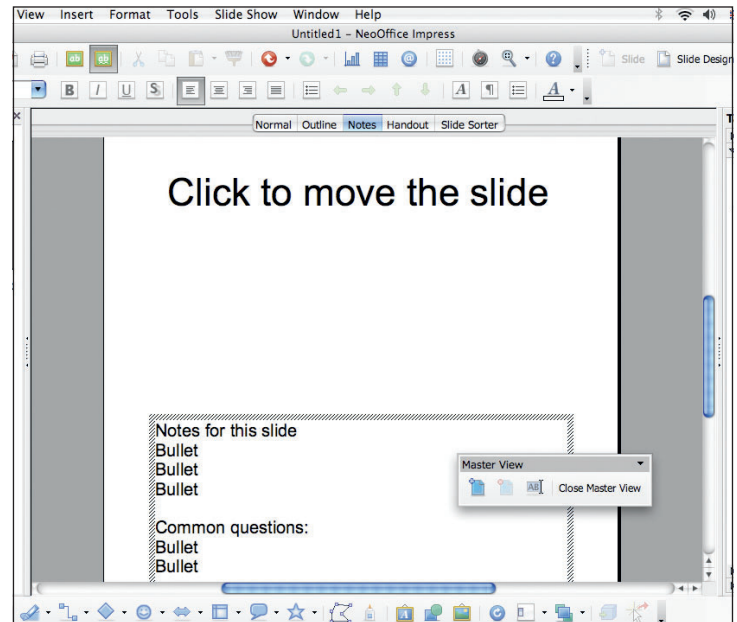
2 Formatting your layout

Above your slide, you'll see the various View tabs – Normal, Outline, Notes, Handout and Slide Sorter. Select the Notes view, and *Impress* will show you a page preview where you can see a small version of your slide at the top and the text "Click to add notes" at the bottom. This shows you how your notes will appear when they are printed, and you can drag around both the slide view and the text view to use the space as you see fit.



3 Notes and prompts

The text area at the bottom is yours to play with: you can write lots of text in there, you can add your own styling, pictures, colours and more. But generally it's better to use the space to elaborate on the key points presented above. You might also want to add prompts for yourself so that you don't forget to mention things, or add a brief reminder of what's coming on the next slide so you can move smoothly between them.



4 Master designs for notes

Just as with slides, there are also notes master designs that allow you to design your notes once and have that design used in all your notes automatically. You can also have multiple notes master designs to suit the different kinds of slides – notes for slides with charts, for example, generally need larger slides and smaller notes on the page, so that you can read any numbers easily, without having to walk to a position where you can see the screen like everyone else!

Working with spreadsheets and charts

Use the power of Calc to present your figures in a clear and understandable fashion; and remember: from a design point of view, less is more!

As you've probably noticed, *OpenOffice.org's* components work closely together, and actually get better when you start to use them as an integrated tool. With *Impress*, you can draw upon the power of *Calc* to present attractive and colourful charts to your audience, which can do a lot more to get your point across than hours of droning on about EBITAE and other financial jargon. But your goal with a chart isn't to overwhelm with numbers, and neither is it to use the most advanced 3D textured charting options available to mankind. Just as with text on a slide, the rule with charts is: "less is more". Put as little information on them as you can get away with, so that your point is clear: people shouldn't have to spend more than a second or two figuring out what your graph means.

Working with data

To add a spreadsheet to a slide, click the Title, Spreadsheet layout from the Tasks pane – it's the

fourth row in the second column. A large placeholder will appear in the middle of your slide, saying "Double-click to add a spreadsheet", so go ahead and do that – *Impress* will think for a few seconds, then create a large, editable spreadsheet for you to work on. This is actually an embedded version of *Calc*, which means you can do all the formula magic you want and it will just work. By default, the default font for cells is size 10, which might look OK when you're creating the slide, but will be tiny when your audience is sitting further away – aim for size 20+, with an absolute minimum of 18.

Any data you type into your spreadsheet is saved immediately, so that as soon as you click outside the spreadsheet to close it, your new data will be shown. Note, though, that only you see the spreadsheet borders around the cells: as soon as you click away from the sheet, the row and columns, numbers, the scroll bars and the cell borders will all disappear. If you want to change this

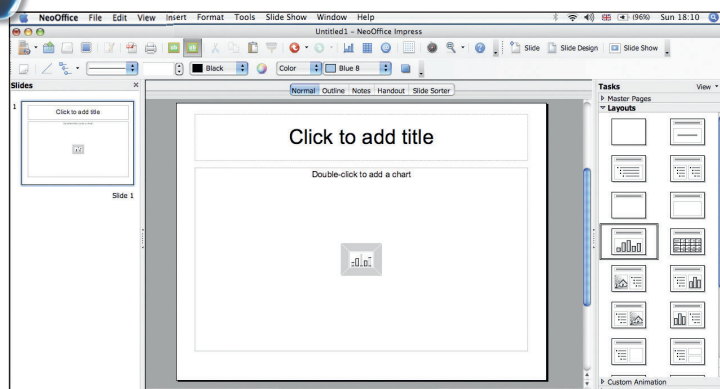
(and it really is a smart idea to do so if you have several rows and columns), add a border to the cells by going to Format > Cells and choosing the Borders tab.

Working with data

One particularly cool feature of the *Calc/Impress* integration is the ability to 'break' embedded spreadsheets. This feature can be found by right-clicking on an embedded spreadsheet and choosing Break. What it does is it turns the embedded spreadsheet into native *Impress* objects: each cell becomes a floating text box all of its own. Yes, you will lose the ability to run calculations, because *Impress* basically flattens the cell contents into plain text. But it means you can style them up as much as you want, reposition them, animate them (if you absolutely must!) and more. Your *Calc* spreadsheet ends up being a first-class *Impress* citizen!

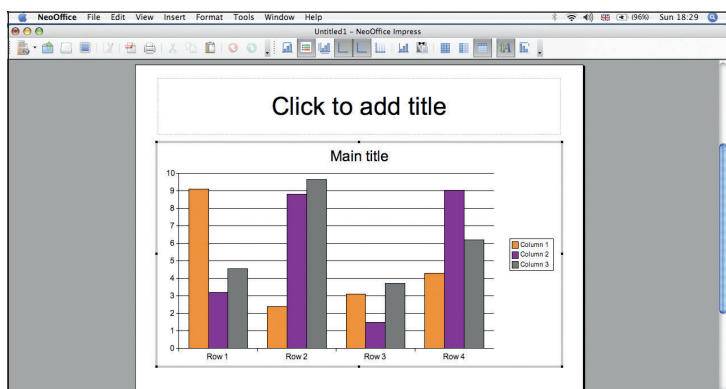


Impress: embedded Calc charts



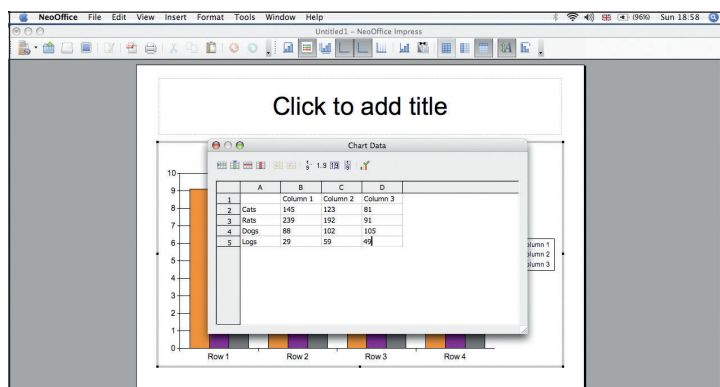
1 Start with chart

To work with a chart, choose the Title, Chart slide layout – it's in the fourth row of the first column in the Layouts area of the Tasks pane as highlighted here.



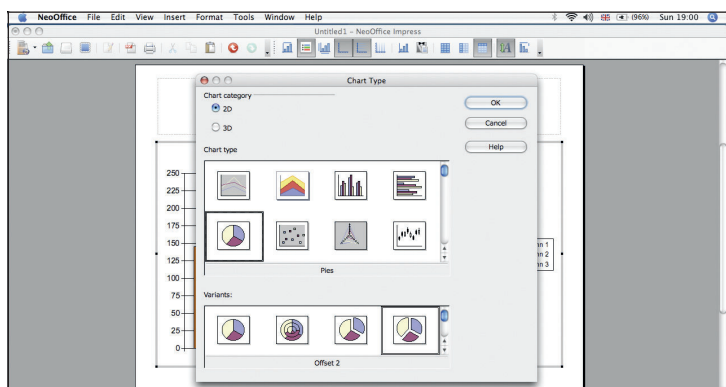
2 Simple preview

Double-click the large placeholder in the centre of your slide – *Impress* will create a basic chart for you so you can see how it will look.



3 Entering data

To change data used, right-click it and go to Chart Data. When you're done, click the arrow at the far right of the Chart Data toolbar to save your changes.

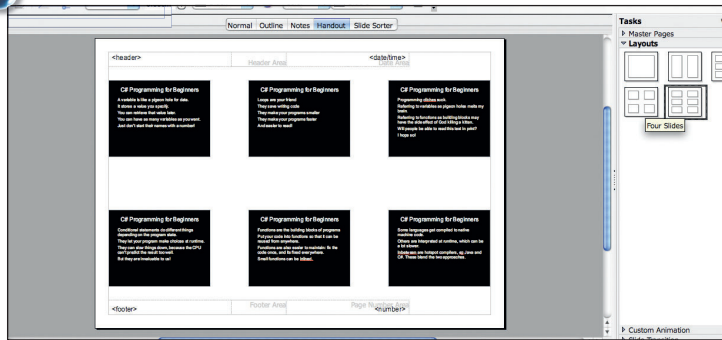


4 Choose a chart type

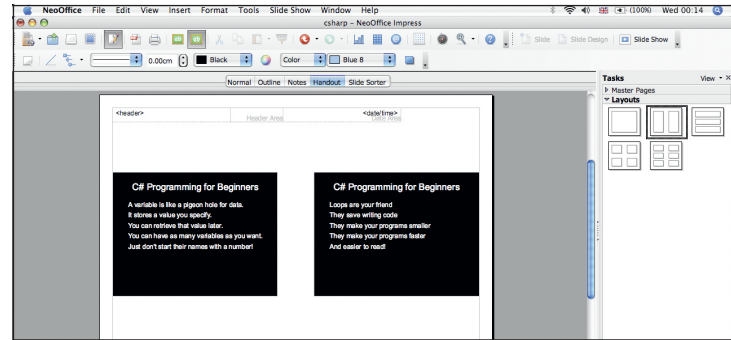
Just as with charts in *Calc*, you can right-click on an *Impress* chart and choose Chart Type to change it from being a bar chart (the default) to a pie chart.



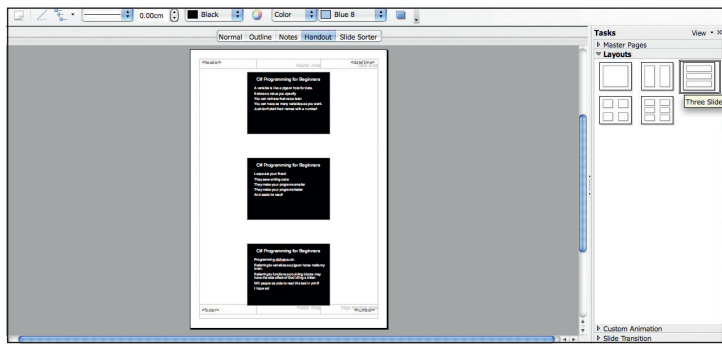
Impress: print hand-outs to give to your audience



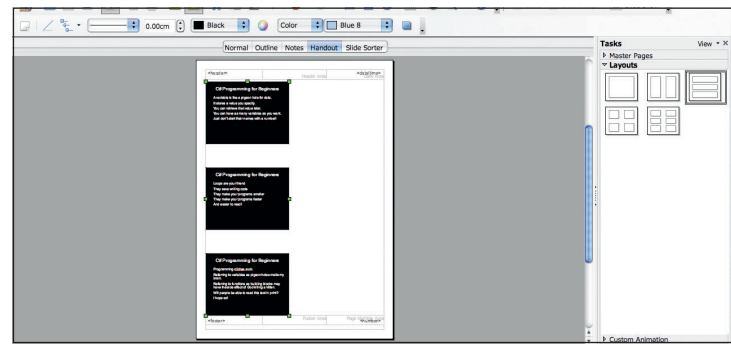
1 From the list of tabs above your slide, choose Handout. The default handout view has three columns and two rows, showing six slides in total – this probably makes your slides too small for people to read easily.



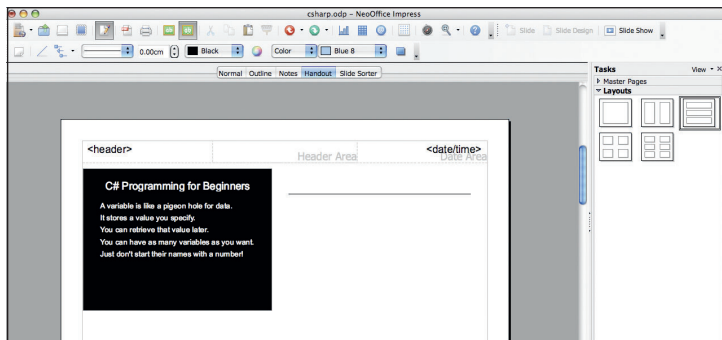
2 In the Layouts section of the task pane, you should see four other styles for handouts, show one slide per page, or two, three or four slides per page. This, for example, is how two slides per page looks.



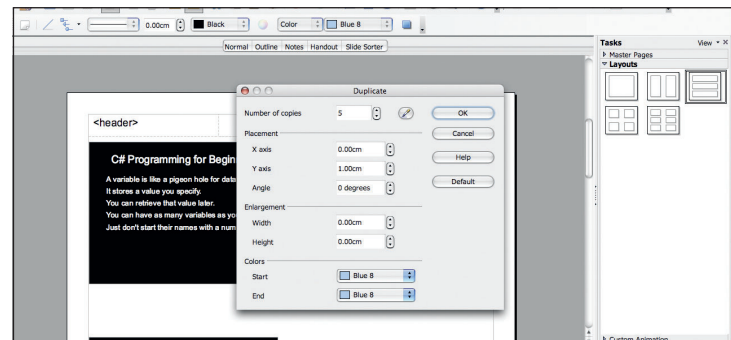
3 Go to Format > Page and change the orientation for your handouts to Portrait, then click OK. Now choose the Three Slides layout from the Tasks pane, which will show three slides stack on top of each other.



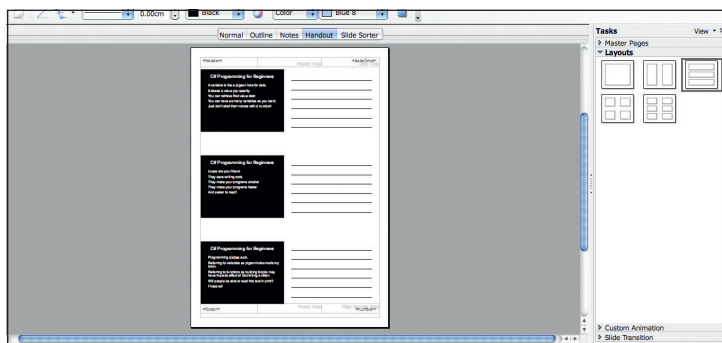
4 Select the three slides in the handout preview by clicking on the first one, holding down the Shift key, then clicking on the other two. Drag the slides over to the left edge of the page, leaving the right half empty.



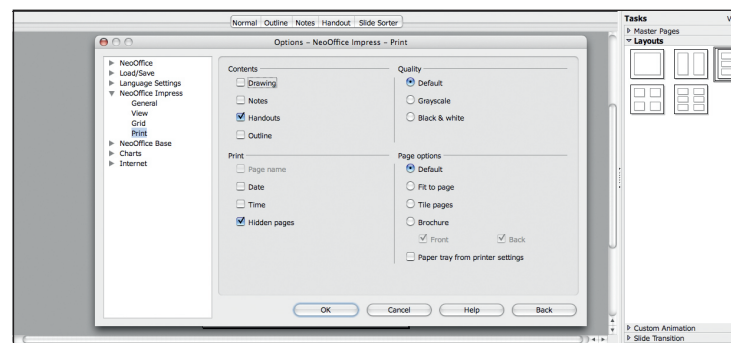
5 Choose View > Zoom from the menu, then zoom into 100% view. Click the line tool from the drawing toolbar (at the bottom of the screen), and draw a single horizontal line to the right of the slide as shown above.



6 With your new line selected, go to the Edit > Duplicate menu item. From the window that appears, change X Axis to be 0.00cm and Y Axis to be 1.00cm. Set the number of copies to be 5, then click OK.



7 Drag your mouse from the top left of the lines to the bottom right of them, so you select them all. Now go to Edit > Duplicate again, but this time ask for 2 copies with a Y-Axis placement offset of 9.00cm.



8 That's it – your handout is ready to print! Go to Tools > Options, then look under the Impress > Print options. The default is to print Drawing (your slides); choose Handouts, deselect Drawing, then print normally. **LXF**