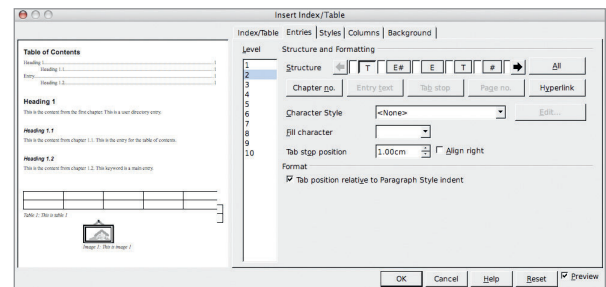


Structuring Content

When you start to use Writer for documents a little longer than a quick few paragraphs, structuring becomes important.

Whether you are embarking on writing a college paper, scientific report or entire book, *Writer* provides all the necessary support to help structure your content.

Structuring content using style and basic navigational aids removes some of the learning pain for whomever your reader may be. It can also help you, as the writer, to keep on top of the various aspects of a multi-page document, and save time when you need to change things that are common to the entire document. For anything that's more than a couple of pages, basic structure and style is going to help. To show off some of *Writer's* structuring features, let's get stuck into a chunky project by structuring a basic scientific report. But don't worry if you're not a scientist – everything we'll cover in the fake report is completely relevant to nearly any document style: it's just a good place to start. We'll use this as a working example to guide you through the main functions you need to consider when applying structure to a report.

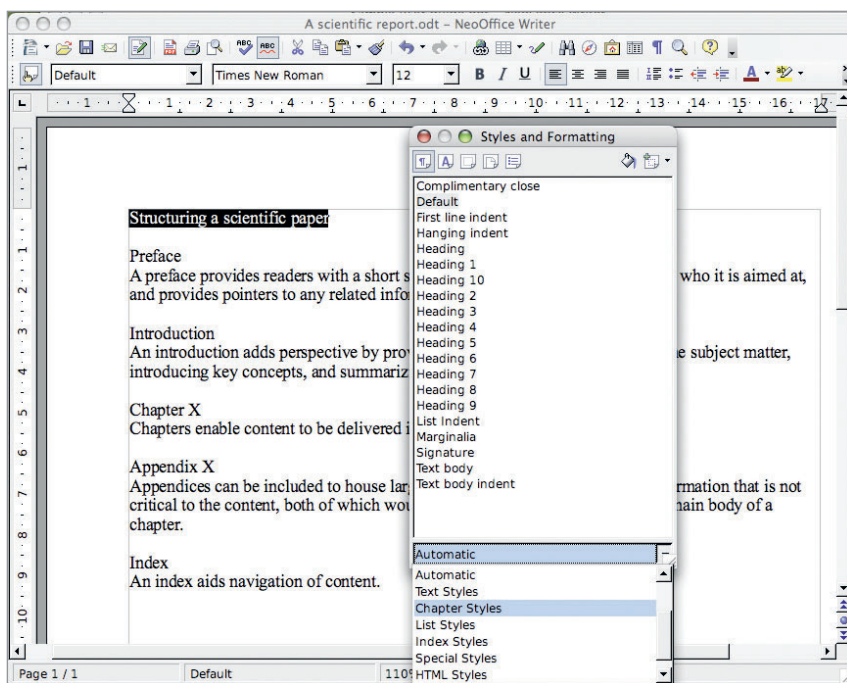


› **Editing the way Header styles appear using the Insert Index/ Table window shows a real-time update to changes you make.**

We'll begin the report by creating a basic outline of its overall structure. This helps to set the layout, and to place the words in the correct place when we come to writing them. To start with, just create a blank new document. In our example we're going to add a title for the report, along with sections headings for each part of our example document. For instance, put the document title on a single line (we've used 'Structuring a scientific paper'), followed by several section headings. Our complete list of sections includes 'Preface', 'Conventions', 'Introduction', 'Chapter X', 'Appendix X' and 'Index', which covers the vast majority of cases. We've also followed the title for each section with a few lines of text to describe the contents of the section.

Applying style

Now that we've created the basic outline of a report, the first step in formatting is to add style to distinguish between the various sections we've just created. Applying a style is akin to marking a section of text with a hidden label. If you've ever edit HTML pages, you'll be used to his idea. You can mark a section as a heading, for example, and then tell *Writer* how you'd like headings to appear in your document. If you change your mind about the appearance of headings, all you have to do is change the formatting of the style, and all the text marked as headings within the document will alter to reflect the changes without any further manual intervention. *Writer* provides an array of default styles that control the appearance sections of text, as well as applying the hidden label. Let's use one of these default styles by triple-clicking the name of your report to highlight it and then selecting Format > Styles and Formatting. The Styles and Formatting window appears, populated with a list of all *Writer's* built-in styles, including ten different kinds of heading (these



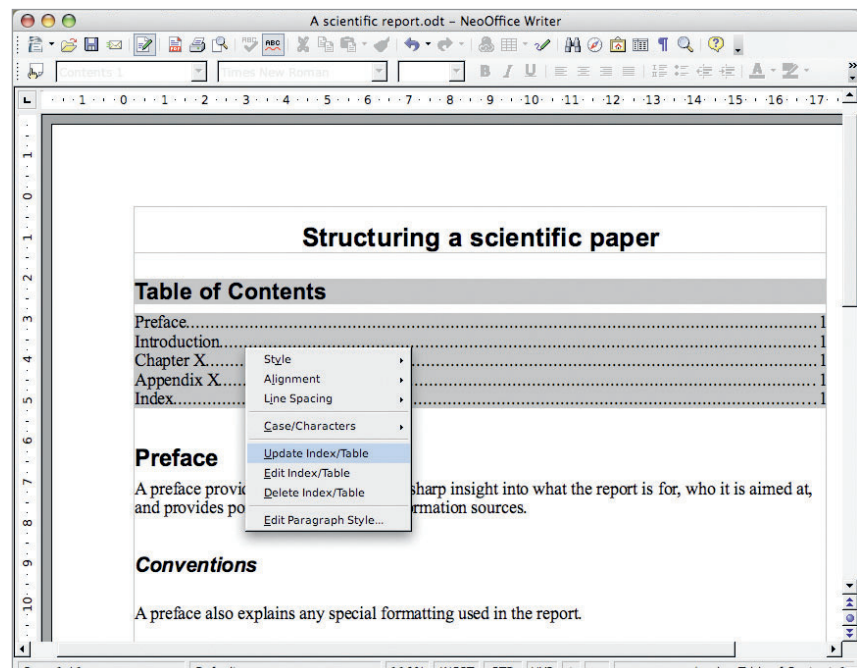
› **The Styles list attempts to guess which kind of text you're editing automatically, but you can also choose from the drop-down list at the bottom.**

vary the prominence of the heading text, just like with HTML). But these are only a fraction of the styles available, and *Writer* has actually tried to guess what kind you'll need. In the small drop-down menu at the bottom of the Styles and Formatting window, you'll see that it says 'Automatic'. If you select this, you will see a smaller list of subcategories for the remainder of *Writer's* styles. We're looking for 'Chapter Styles', and when this is selected, you can then choose the Title style for the text we've highlighted. Excellent! You've just applied the Title style to the title sentence in your document. The name of your report is now the title of the book, and the title style has been added to the style menu in the formatting bar in the main *Writer* window. This is often the easiest way to work with styles after you've created a few definitions, and you can use this drop-down menu to apply Heading1 style to the section headings in the document outline.

Table of Contents

To help your reader jump to the information they need, we're going to add a table of contents. Traditionally, this would have been one of the last jobs to do when working on a document because you might think you'd need to finish writing your text before a table of contents makes any sense. But thanks to the wonders of computing, it actually makes a lot of sense to create a table of contents early on. You can then use this to jump around your document as you're writing it. *Writer* will keep on top of the page numbers and where everything lives.

We'll start with the document title. Position the cursor after your title and select Indexes and Tables > Indexes and Tables (that's not a typo!) from the Insert menu. The Insert Index/Table window will appear. By default, this window is configured to create a table of contents and we just need to press OK. A block of grey text will appear after your title – you have just inserted a table of contents into your document! This block of grey will not be editable, and has automatically included each Heading style section of marked text in your document into the contents, along with a link to the page that each heading is on. As you add more sections and subsections to your report, you can update the table of contents to reflect these changes. To demonstrate this, add a subsection to one of your sections and format it using the Heading2 style. Now update the table of contents by right-clicking on the table of contents and selecting Update

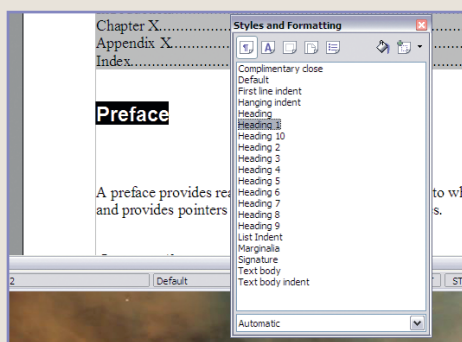


› Don't forget that you need to update the dynamic contents of your document to reflect any changes that result from further edits to the document text.

Index/Table. Your new section will be added to the chapter that preceded it, and more importantly if you used Heading2 style, it will be indented further into the page to show that it's a subsection within a chapter. You should be able to see now how useful styles are for structuring your document. Not only will they give a consistent look to the same elements within your document, they let you create things like the table of contents with very little effort.

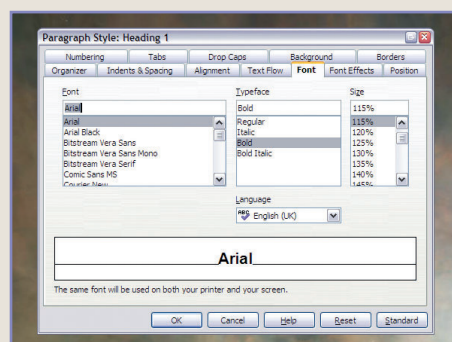
You can't edit the table of contents directly, but you do have a good degree of control over what it looks like and you can change the format of the table of contents using the same right-click menu we used to update the table earlier. Let's say you want to increase the indent of all Heading2 entries. To do this you need to right-click the table of contents and select Edit Index/Table. This will open the Index/Table window we used to create the table of »

Writer: change your style



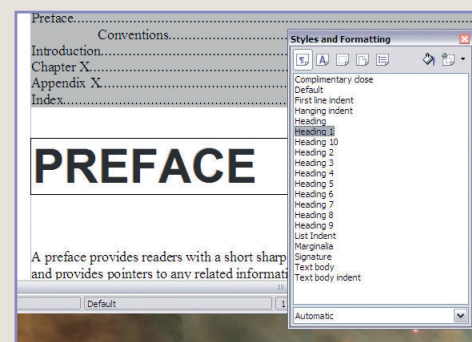
1 Document-wide changes

Either select the styled text you want to edit or just open the Styles and Formatting window directly from the toolbar or the Format menu as above. This window lists the available styles. Make sure you select the one you want to edit and right-click to select Modify.



2 Paragraph style window title

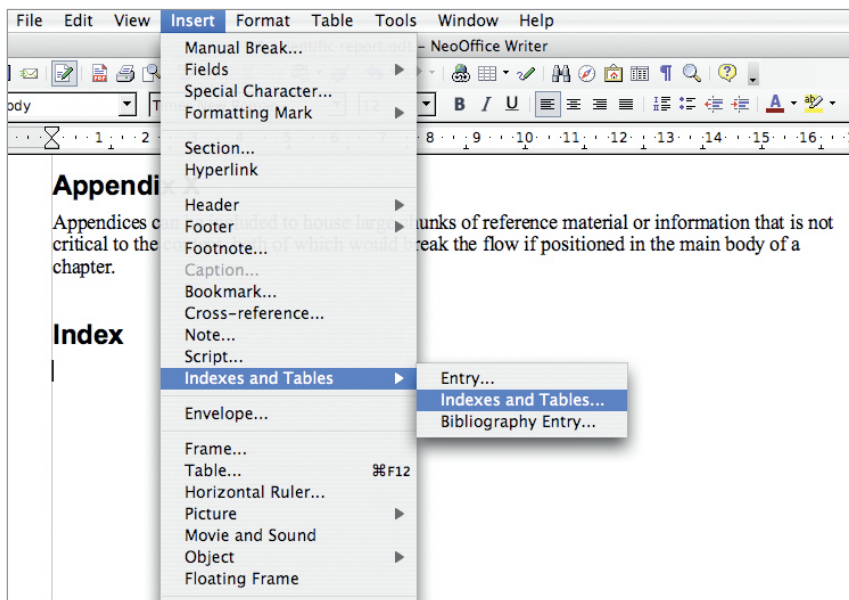
This will list the style you're editing in the title of the window. The main thing you might want to change about a style is the font. Switch to the Font tab, and change the font and the size according to your wishes. You might also want to change the alignment of your style.



3 Add your own styles

When you're satisfied with the changes you've made, just click on OK to apply the style. Any sections of text in your document that have had the style applied will change according to the changes you've made. You can also add your own styles if the default ones don't suit your needs.

Writer: navigation & structure



› First position your cursor where you want your tables and indexes to be situated.

» contents earlier. Next, select the Entries tab, select Level 2, and click Tab Stop to insert a tab. Enter 1.00cm as the Tab Stop Position. The real-time preview in the left of the window will update to show you the consequences of your changes, moving Heading 1.1.1.1 and Heading 1.2.1.1 (both defined as Heading2 styles) further into the document. Clicking on OK will apply the same changes to your original document, and don't forget you can Undo and Redo those changes to make sure you get the effect you were looking for.

Indexing

Now that you have a table of contents and the main sections in place, you can add an index. Indexing is an art in itself: many folks argue that it's the index that makes or breaks a good book. We feel that the only rule worth working to when building an index is that you either do it well, or not at all. There's nothing more frustrating than a thoughtless index that has been included in a book to simply tick a requirement rather than add an extra layer of value. When an index is implemented well, they're the closest you're going to get to an internet search engine in a printed medium; we think that's A Good Thing. In *Writer*, indexing works by marking key words within the body of your content. These key words then get built into a final index. This means that before you can add the index itself, you need to create at least one index entry within your report first. To make this clearer, let's create an index entry by marking a key word within our text. Start by selecting a word that summarizes what a particular paragraph or page is all about. Now select Indexes and Tables > Entry from the Insert menu. The Insert Index Entry window appears, containing the word you highlighted in your document. Click on the Insert button to add this to the index. As with the table of contents, you will now find that *Writer* has added a section to your document that contains the new index along with the single entry you've just added. It will have added the index at the point where your cursor was. Befitting an index, this should be at the end of your document, and the single entry will include the page number of your highlighted word. Also like the table of contents, you need to remember when you've made further edits to your document and right-click in the index section and select Update Index/Table to automatically update the index with any changed page numbers.

This should all sound fairly straightforward. But *Writer* can't help with the most important part, and that's the usefulness of the words you select to be in the index. You need to consider how

helpful the key words you are adding to your index really are. You don't want to send readers into your text only to find a passing reference to the subject they are really interested in. This is a common problem with documentation. Whenever you add an index entry, try to imagine your reader desperately scanning your index in order to find the information in that paragraph or page. Friends and colleagues are the perfect testers of a document's index, as they're likely to think in ways you don't expect. Get them to try out your index, and if there are any words your readers are scanning through the index for, add another index entry in the appropriate place in your text to help them out.

The index entry window remains open so that you can add multiple entries without having to keep opening the window. This is useful if you prefer to index your work in one go towards the end of development when the bulk of content has been created. By this time, you will be familiar with where the key words will be most useful. If you have closed the window, you can update or delete an index entry by simply right-clicking over the index entry, as we did when updating the index earlier. To change the format of the index, go to the end of your report, and select Indexes and Tables > Indexes and Tables from the Insert menu again. In the Type drop-down list, select Alphabetical Index, delete the title of the index and click OK.

Bibliography

Bibliographies may sound rather specialist, but they're the last requirement for the structured scientific paper we're using as our example. If you do any academic work, for example, then a bibliography is essential. It's basically a list of references at the end of your document linked to the sections within your words that use information from the reference to make a point. Keeping a bibliography up-to-date can be an arduous and time-consuming job, but *Writer* can take much of the pain away. Just don't leave all your references to the last minute. When you're writing your document and you'd like to include a reference you want to add to your bibliography, select Bibliography Database from the Tools menu. This opens an impressive window that should already contain a group of references. This is actually a window running the *OpenOffice.org* database, as the developers would rather use the features provided there than reinvent the wheel needlessly by hard coding another solution.

This database is used to manage the references within your documentation, and it will already include plenty of examples that are used by the *OpenOffice.org* documentation team, and are included as examples of how to enter reference information for your bibliography. To add your own, select Insert > Record from the menu. A new line will be added to the bottom of the table. This database is quite comprehensive, and includes a field for almost anything you might want to note about a publication, but you don't need to fill every field in. Just put something short and snappy to identify the book in the first field, labelled 'Identifier' – it's this that you'll use to insert your reference into your document, so it needs to be both unique and memorable. This short piece of text is also what's going to appear in the body part of your document as the reference to the bibliography, so it also needs to be broadly understandable by your reader. Many scientific publications, however, will use a simple number for each reference, or even Roman Numerals, so

Quick tip

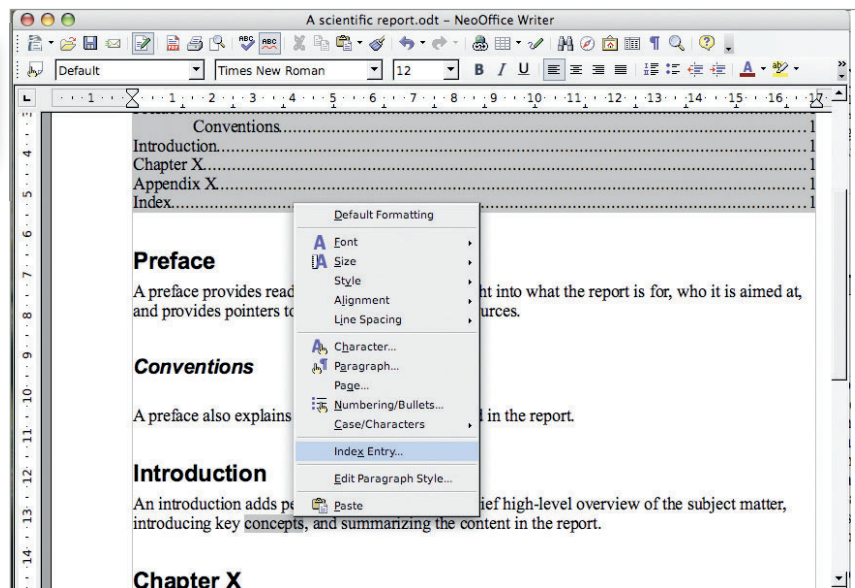
You don't need to highlight a word in *Writer* to be able to add an index entry, you can insert them wherever you have positioned your cursor within the text.

Quick tip

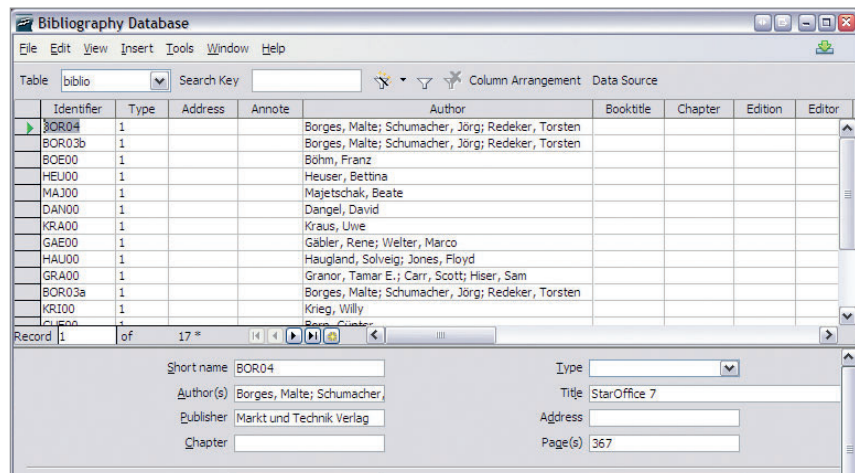
You can update the table of contents and index at the same time by selecting Update > Update All from the Tools menu.

you may need to be guided by the target audience of your document. You can always change the identifier later without going through each reference in your document. You can also use the fields as they appear in the lower half of the window, rather than the database table. The identifier field is listed as 'Short name' here. You will also want to at least put in the authors of the book, the publisher and the ISBN code, so that your readers can find the publication you're referring to. Just close the database window when you've finished.

Now that you've added your publication to the bibliography database, you can insert it into your document by selecting Indexes and Tables > Bibliography Entry from the Insert menu. A small window appears from which you can select the short name identifier you selected for your publication from a drop-down list. When you've selected the one you want to reference, the other details from the database record will also display in the window, so that you can check you've got the correct publication. Clicking OK will insert the reference into your document at the point where your cursor was. A grey block of text with your short name identifier will now appear, and clicking on this will open the Edit Bibliography Entry window again. This is a link to the publication in the database, and it can be copied and pasted along with the surrounding text it references. Now the only thing left to do to complete the bibliography is to add the actual table of references to your document. This works in exactly the same way as the for the table of contents and the index. Move the cursor to the position in the document you want the bibliography to appear, and select Indexes and Tables > Indexes and Tables from the Insert menu. This is the same window we've now used twice before for the index and table of contents, and the bibliography is just considered another table. Change the type to Bibliography and click on OK. You will find the bibliography reference to the publication you just added. **LXF**

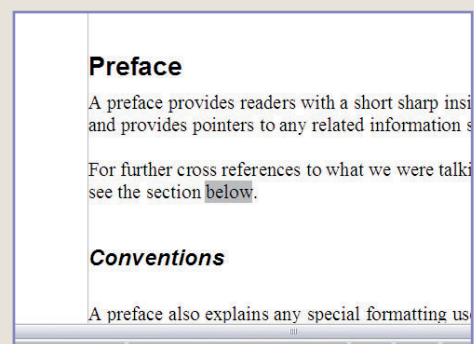
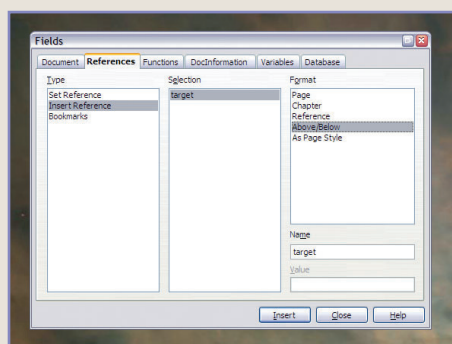
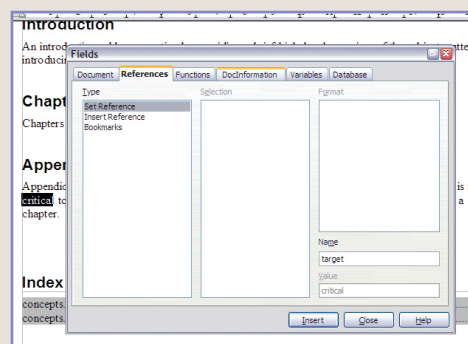


Contextual menus change according to the type of objects you are editing within your document. In this case, it's an entry for the Index.



Writer uses the power of the *OpenOffice.org* database application *Base* to manage the bibliography references within your documents.

Writer: cross references



1 Help readers... and Writers!

Sometimes it's useful to cross-reference text in the document, allowing you (and readers) to jump quickly from one point to another. First select the text that you want to target, then select Cross-reference from the Insert menu. Type a name for your reference in the Name field and click Insert.

2 Navigate your documents

The SetReference list will be updated with your new target. Move the cursor to the where you want the reference. Now change the Type from Set Reference to Insert Reference and make sure your target is still selected and change the format to what you need and click on insert.

3 Get connected

The cross-reference will appear as a block of grey text in your document, and it's content will depend on the format you chose. It might be a page number, for example, or 'above' or 'below'. Clicking on the word will also skip to the target reference you created in the first step of this mini-tutorial.