The LibreOffice Human Interface Guidelines (HIG)

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Presentation goal

- Introduction what has been done so far
- Presentation of the foundations for UX
- Illustration how the HIG works
- Discussion of issues with advanced patterns

- Overall goal: Attract more people to utilize the HIG
Vision

Every project needs a vision to steer itself in a proper direction.

- Provides a definitive path to achieve objectives as best as possible
- Describes spirit and purpose of a project
- Explains why the world becomes better with the product
- Defines to direction but leaves room for creativity
“Simple for beginners and powerful for experts.”

- Novices can start to work with LO without the need to read a manual
- In every situation the user is confronted with only a few options - but can get all on demand
- Experts will have access to all functionality
- Full access keeps usability first but might need some training
Persona

Personas identify the target users of your application and provide a common understanding among the design and development team.

- are based on empirical data, at best
- describe the target users, giving a clear picture of how they're likely to use the system, and what they'll expect from it.
- includes a concise summary of characteristics of the user, their experience, goals and tasks, pain points, and environmental conditions.
LibreOffice Persona

May I introduce...

Benjamin, Beginner

Eve, Expert

Adrian, Admin

Copyright information have been added to the wiki
Requirements

Next to functional requirements, usability cares about non-functional aspects. Basically effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction but according ISO 9241-110 also

- Suitability
- Self-descriptiveness
- Controllability
- Familiarity
- Robustness
- Individualization
- Learnability
LibreOffice UX Manifesto

LibreOffice focuses on:

- Simplicity by default with full functionality on demand
- Every processing has two ways of access: a very simple way with the core features only and an advanced way with all features
- Consistency over Efficiency
- Users should feel familiar with all tools rather than having specialized apps.
- Usability over Graphical Design
- Form follows function, LibreOffice respects the OS theming.
What we achieved so far

Controls and Patterns

- Provide access to all functions via the menu bar.
- Provide access to most frequently used functions via the tool bar.
- Provide access to context functions via the context menu.
The menu bar provides access to all functions using submenus or cascading menus to structure the content. Users like the persona Ever refer frequently to the menu bar, especially when they are seeking a function for which they know of no other interface. Ensuring that menus are well organized, are worded clearly, and behave correctly is crucial to the user’s ability to explore and access the functionality of the application.

**Organization**

- Provide access to all commands with the main menu.
- Structure the main menu for clarity.
- Do not have more than 10 menu categories within a menu bar. Too many categories are overwhelming and make the menu bar difficult to use.
- Seek to have no more than 20 items within a single level of a menu. Add separators between logical groups within a menu. Organize the menu items into groups of seven or fewer strongly related items.
- Use these standard menu categories if they apply to the application: File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, followed by the application specific item and after that Tools, Window, Help.
- Do not use more than three levels in a menu.
- Sort items according to the frequency at which the entries are used on the first level, but keep logically grouped items together (copy/paste, add/delete, etc.)
- Show icons for the most important items. Do not show any icon if the OS has set this option.

**Text**

- Do not change labels of menu item dynamically.
- Assign shortcut keys to the most frequently used menu items (Ctrl+<Key>).
- For well-known shortcut keys, use standard assignments.
- Use function keys for commands that have a small-scale effect (F2 = Rename).
- Use ctrl key for large-scale effect (Ctrl+S = Save).
- Indicate a function that needs additional information (including a confirmation) by adding an ellipsis at the end of the label (e.g. Save as…).
- Turning on an item in the menu should always enable the option. Negative options create a double negative which can be confusing. For example, use 'Show hidden files' instead of 'Hide hidden files'.
- Use a verb-action combination for the label (e.g. Show ruler, Format image) but adopt this rule for localization.
- Standardize on the verbs used - Show and Hide, Enable and Disable. Refer to the LO [terminology].
- Have an accelerator key with every label. Ideally do not duplicate accelerators in one menu and use the first letter.
HIG on menubar

“The menu bar provides access to all functions using submenus or cascading menus to structure the content. Users like the persona Eve refer frequently to the menu bar, especially when they are seeking a function for which they know of no other interface. Ensuring that menus are well organized, are worded clearly, and behave correctly is crucial to the user’s ability to explore and access the functionality of the application.”
Empirical data

- Guidelines should be based on empirical data

- For example: over 70% of users start data source from menu bar

https://wiki.openoffice.org/wiki/Tracking_results
HIG on toolbar

- Tooltips are essential for controls without labels and have to always get added and with toolbar items. Tooltips should be written so that they are easily understood and informative.

Future enhancement

- Show captions of the item groups underneath the tool bar items.
- Allow flexible spacing between items in order for better structuring of the tool bar.
- Allow captions to appear underneath and right of icons.

References
Where we need more discussion

Controls and Patterns

- Provide access to context properties via the side bar.
- Provide comprehensive access to all features in property dialogs.
Sidebars contain tabs, decks, content and have own configuration.
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- Sidebars aim to provide quick access to most frequently changed options based on context.
- Sidebars are alternatives to floating toolbars.
- Sidebars offer access to all functionality regarding a certain feature.
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- Sidebars aims to provide quick access to most frequently changed options
- Sidebars are alternatives to floating toolbars
- Sidebars offer access to all functionality regarding a certain feature
- Sidebar should be kind of a container for floating panels
Wayne?
Take the foundation serious

Simple for beginners and powerful for experts.
Join the army now...

Google Hangout: every Wednesday
IRC: #libreoffice-design
G+: Libreoffice-design
Twitter: @liboDesign