

Digital sovereignty

By Frank , 20 April 2026

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Why LibreOffice and open source are the ultimate tools for you

Built on Linux Mint and driven by the ethos of the Free Software Foundation: this article explains why LibreOffice is not merely a free alternative, but a superior creative tool, designed by you, for you.



Introduction: The fork in the road

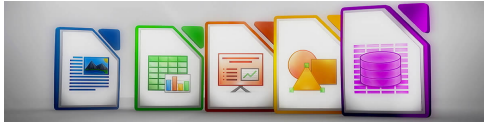
For thirty years, the average computer user has been told a comforting lie: that proprietary software is the only path to professionalism. We were told that if you wanted to write a novel, put together a budget, or create a presentation, you had to pay rent to a distant corporation and always agree to their terms. But there is an alternative. There always has been.

Today I want to talk about that other path. The path where the user is not a consumer, but a participant. Where the software does not control you, but serves you. At the heart of that philosophy lies a remarkable piece of engineering: LibreOffice.

As you read this article on a website built with Drupal (the web's most powerful open source CMS), running on Linux Mint 22.3 Zena (x86_64), you are experiencing digital freedom in real time. Every application I use, from OpenShot Video Editor to VLC for

media, shares a common DNA. But the office suite is where most of us do our work. It is the digital desk. And if that desk is unstable, unchangeable, or owned by someone else, your work is never truly yours.

Let me introduce you to the office suite made by you, for you.



The philosophy of “for you, by you”

LibreOffice’s tagline is deceptively simple: “An open source office suite made by you, for you.” To understand why this matters, we need to look at the license. Many of the tools you see on this system – from BleachBit to Krusader – are protected by the GNU General Public License (GPL), as stewarded by the [Free Software Foundation](https://www.gnu.org/) (FSF). As the FSF notes: “Everyone is permitted to copy and distribute verbatim copies of this license document, but changing it is not allowed.”

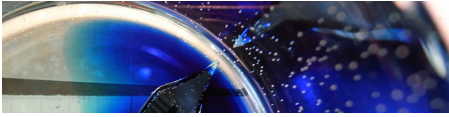
That last clause is the shield.

When a piece of software is “made for you”, it means:

1. You can inspect it. You can trust it, you can look at the code, and your data is safe.
2. You can fix it – updates are always available, and various detailed manuals are available.
3. You can share it. You are legally allowed to give a copy to your neighbour, your school, or your non-profit organisation without fear of a lawsuit.

In an era of AI-driven surveillance and subscription fatigue, LibreOffice stands as a fortress of digital sovereignty. It is the office suite that refuses to lock your documents into a cloud prison.

What exactly do you get?



Writer

Most people think that Writer is just a “Word clone”. It is not. Writer is a typographic tool. It natively supports the OpenDocument Format (ODF) – an international standard (ISO/IEC 26300) trusted by governments. While proprietary formats change with every version, ODF is stable.

- **Styles & Direct Formatting:** Writer has the most robust style management system of any word processor.
- **Master Documents:** Writing a book or a thesis? Master Documents allow you to split a large project into manageable sub-documents.



Calc

- **Pivot Tables:** As powerful as any proprietary version.
- **Open Formula Standard:** No hidden “undocumented” functions. What you see is what you get.
- **Database Ranges:** Connect directly to SQL databases.



Impress

While the world rushes to “presentation AI”, Impress has been quietly integrating with open AI models. Because you are using DeepSeek-R1, you could theoretically generate slide presentations via an API and import them directly into Impress.

- **Vector Graphics:** Native import of SVG files (unlike some suites that rasterise them).
- **Master Slides:** Full control over the slide master.



Draw & Base

- **Draw:** Perfect for editing screenshots taken with Flameshot or Kazam.

Integration with the Linux ecosystem

- **Flameshot & Pix:** You can take a screenshot with Flameshot, annotate it, and drag it directly into a LibreOffice Writer document. No format conversion needed.
- **Okular** (PDF viewer): Need to extract a quote from a PDF? Okular can copy the text, and LibreOffice preserves the formatting.
- **VLC & OpenShot:** Embed a video into a LibreOffice Impress slide. While Microsoft Office relies on proprietary codecs, LibreOffice uses the same FFmpeg backend that powers HandBrake and LosslessCut. If VLC can play it, Impress can present it.
- **Telegram:** Right-click a received document in Telegram, open it with LibreOffice. Edit, save, and send back. No problem.

Getting started

On Linux Mint 22.3 you have three installation options:

Option 1: Easy

```
sudo apt install libreoffice
```

Advantages: Integrated with system updates.

Disadvantages: Slightly older version.

Option 2: Recommended

Use Flathub flatpak install flathub org.libreoffice.

Advantages: Sandboxed, always the latest version, clean removal.

Disadvantages: Slightly larger file size.

Option 3: For frequent travellers

Run LibreOffice from a USB stick.

Why not just use Google Docs or Microsoft 365?



Google Docs is not a document. It is a surveillance tool. Every keystroke is analysed to sell you ads or train AI models.



Microsoft 365 is a rental agreement. Stop paying, and your documents become “read-only” formats.

LibreOffice is free, and it never asks for a subscription. It never forces “cloud storage”. It never analyses your documents.

Open source software used to create this website and its content

Operating system

Platform: linux x86_64 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X86-64>

Distribution: Linux Mint 22.3 Zena - <https://www.linuxmint.com/download.php>

The world's most powerful open source CMS DRUPAL

Community-built and AI-ready, Drupal gives organisations the freedom and flexibility to create digital experiences without boundaries. <https://new.drupal.org/home>

The Free Software Foundation (FSF) is a non-profit organisation with a worldwide mission to promote computer user freedom.

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<https://fsf.org/>

Installed Linux applications

LibreOffice is an open source office suite made by you, for you.

<https://www.libreoffice.org/>

Via Flathub - <https://flathub.org/en>

Buzz - Buzz transcribes and translates offline audio to text using OpenAI's Whisper. Import audio and video files into Buzz and export them as TXT, SRT or VTT files. Buzz supports Whisper, Whisper.cpp, Faster Whisper, Whisper-compatible models from the Hugging Face repository, and the OpenAI Whisper API.

Flameshot - Powerful and easy-to-use screenshot software with a built-in editor featuring advanced capabilities.

HandBrake - HandBrake is a tool for converting video from nearly any format to a selection of modern, widely supported codecs.

Kdenlive - Kdenlive is a video editing application with support for many audio and video formats. It offers advanced editing features, a variety of effects and transitions, colour correction, audio post-production, and subtitle tools. Moreover, it provides the flexibility to render to virtually any format of your choice.

LosslessCut - Simple and ultra-fast cross-platform tool for lossless trimming/cutting of video and audio files. Great for saving space by roughly cutting your large video files from a video camera, GoPro, drone, etc. You can quickly extract the good parts from your videos and discard many gigabytes of data without slow re-encoding and thus without quality loss.

Okular - Okular is a universal document viewer developed by KDE. Okular works on multiple platforms, including, but not limited to, Linux, Windows, Mac OS X, BSD, etc.

OpenShot - OpenShot Video Editor is an award-winning, open-source video editor available on Linux, Mac, Chrome OS and Windows. OpenShot can create stunning videos, films and animations with an easy-to-use interface and a rich set of features.

Pinta - Pinta is a program for editing, drawing, and painting images with a simple yet powerful design. Pinta features a wide range of drawing tools, including freehand, rectangles, circles and lines. Pinta also has more than 35 image effects and the

ability to work with an unlimited number of layers.

Telegram – Pure instant messaging – simple, fast, secure, and synchronised across all your devices. One of the 10 most downloaded apps in the world with over 500 million active users. Telegram is the fastest messaging app on the market, connecting people through a unique, distributed network of data centres around the globe.

Videodownloader – Download videos from websites via a user-friendly interface.

Whisper – Whisper allows you to listen to your microphone through your speakers using Pipewire.

Directly from your Linux application:

Bleachbit - BleachBit removes unnecessary files to free disk space, protects your privacy, and deletes junk, cache, internet history, temporary files, cookies, and broken shortcuts.

Kazam - Kazam provides a well-designed and user-friendly interface for capturing screencasts and screenshots. It can record desktop video and multiple audio streams simultaneously with control over the audio level and the screen area being captured.

Krusader - Krusader is a simple, easy, powerful, two-panel (commander-style) file manager, similar to Midnight Commander (C) or Total Commander (C). It offers all the file management features you could want.

Pix - Pix is an advanced image viewer and browser. It has many useful features, such as browsing file systems, slideshow, image catalogs, web album creation, camera import, burning image CDs, batch file operations, and quick image editing functions like transformation and colour manipulation.

Sound Converter - SoundConverter is a simple application for converting audio files to other formats for the GNOME desktop environment. It can read audio files in any format supported by GStreamer and convert them to Ogg Vorbis, FLAC or WAV format, and also to MP3 when the GStreamer LAME plugin is installed. On this website it is used to convert MP4 to MP3 for creating transcriptions.

Stacer - Monitor your system (CPU, memory, disk) in a graphical (qt) application. Change and monitor your services. Summarise basic system information and show network download/upload speeds/totals.

Tor - Tor is a connection-based anonymous communication system.

VLC - is the media player from the VideoLan project. It plays MPEG, MPEG-2, MPEG-4, DivX, MOV, WMV, QuickTime, WebM, FLAC, MP3, Ogg/Vorbis files, DVDs, VCDs, podcasts, and multimedia streams from various network sources. VLC can also be used as a streaming server.

Artificial Intelligence: DeepSeek, founded in 2023 by Liang Wenfeng, is a Chinese artificial intelligence company that develops open-source large language models (LLMs). Their flagship model, DeepSeek-R1, is gaining popularity for its advanced reasoning capabilities, with performance comparable to OpenAI-o1 in mathematics, code, and general reasoning. In this guide we walk you through installing DeepSeek-R1 on a Linux system, along with key details about the model variants.

<https://www.deepseek.com/en/>

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