

## FOSS: Mailing labels with OOo [22-May-08]

Remember the importance of accuracy: the correct postal address can usually be checked free at the Royal Mail post code finder at <http://postcode.royalmail.com/>

*You do not need to include a County name provided the Post Town and Postcode are used. Both the latter two items should be in capitals according to Royal Mail guidelines. The 'Locality Name' (the bit after the 'Number of building and name of thoroughfare' line) is not required unless there is a similar name in the Post Town area. The correct addresses according to these guidelines will be found on the site given.*

The key steps are:

- Creating the data source
- Registering a data source
- Printing mailing labels

but you also may need to

- + edit the data source. *It is easy to edit the original spreadsheet table, but remember it is in 'read only' mode while the linking document is open in OOo. Just ensure the latter is closed.*
- + delete the data source! *If you find this barred from deletion check all parts of OOo are closed including the quick-launcher. You may need to 'unregister' the database.*
- + deal with empty fields & with 'multiple line' fields. *To move lines up when a field is empty see the detailed instructions in the 'Writer Guide. To create multiple lines in a cell (which will be handled correctly in the mailmerge procedure) press the Ctrl+Enter keys. This will work only with the text edit cursor inside the cell, not at the input line. So first double-click the cell, then single-click at the text position where you want the line break. [How intuitive is that!]*

My key advice:

- Use OOo 2.4 as mailmerge has been improved in this (and this demo is based on this latest version)
- Don't use the inbuilt helpfile!
- Use the online OOoAuthors\_User\_Manual at [http://wiki.services.openoffice.org/wiki/Documentation/OOoAuthors\\_User\\_Manual/Writer\\_Guide/Using\\_Mail\\_Merge](http://wiki.services.openoffice.org/wiki/Documentation/OOoAuthors_User_Manual/Writer_Guide/Using_Mail_Merge)

My Future steps?

- Develop filtering methods to allow for a variety of outputs from one source of data, either by using 'data' tools or a macro to operate on the spreadsheet; or by using Base direct by writing a query.
- Develop font formatting methods for the labels. The method for this is fully described in the 'Using Mail Merge Guide.
- Use Linux rather than Windows as the operating system, but before this I must be able to to synchronise my Palm PDA with Ubuntu, or with KDE running on my small Asus sub-laptop.
- Register the data directly with OOo from an application such as Outlook Express, Thunderbird, Evolution, etc
- Buy a Casio or Dymo 'label printer'!