

## Discussion comments

### Using LibreOffice Autotext

Sometimes we have a common phrase which we want to easily type, without error, and LibreOffice provides a way to do this, called Autotext.

The idea is to set a short sequence of letters to type, and then call Autotext using the F3 key to expand it to the full sequence.

To define the short sequence, go to Tool → Autotext ..., and select My Autotext. To make sure you can create such a shortcut you must ensure that you are saving it in your local area, so hit the Categories button. In the new window, select My Autotext, and check that the associated path name refers to your local directory. It should start like this: file:///home/YOURNAME ...

Hit OK and return to the previous window.

Now in the Name box, type the text you wish to reproduce. It will suggest a short cut for this text, and it is best to accept its recommendations. Remember what it is, usually the start of the text. Note that the case of the short cut is not relevant, and either will work in use.

Then hit the Autotext... button, and select New. It will then create the short cut as defined by Name and Shortcut.

To use it when typing, put in the shortcut text, and then press the Function key F3. The shortcut will be replaced by the text.

This defines your own personal shortcuts. There are already some shortcuts defined by LibreOffice under the other headings, Business Cards, Only for Templates, and Standard. These can be used immediately. For instance typing 'Si' (without quotes) and hitting F3 gives: Sincerely

Expand the Standard list (click the triangle next to it) for what is already defined.

### First page in LibreOffice document

There is already a way of providing a different style for the first page of a document in LibreOffice. To see it and modify it while in LibreOffice Writer, hit F11 to bring up the list of styles. Then select the Page styles by clicking on the fourth icon from the left at the top of the pane/toolbar. You can now right-click on the relevant style to modify it.

To use the style, when on the relevant page, use F11 to get the style list, select the page styles, and then double click to define the current page in that style.

For example, you may want a header and footer on all pages, except the first, which will contain just a title and author. To do this, first select the default style, and use the Header and Footer tabs to

define the relevant parts of the page. Hit OK to apply it and save the changes for this document only.

Then select First Page, right-click → Modify, and use the same tabs to turn off the header and footer.

Now move to the first page of the document and double click First Page, and it will adapt that style for that page.

## A tip about Thunderbird

Did you know that you can change the address you send from when composing a message, or replying to one?

You may be lucky enough to have a number of different e-mail addresses, but through a common mail provider. Typically, this will be the case if you use a web service for e-mail, rather than your ISP. For example, you have a common address to act as your first contact, and then wish to switch to an address reserved for a particular customer or service. But to reduce the number of actual accounts, you arrange for e-mail messages to mere in your mail server, and then Thunderbird has only one account to visit to collect all the messages. Depending on how this is done, when you reply, you may or may not see the correct address displayed in the From box of the Compose window.

This address can be changed with the little triangle at the right hand end of the box, where you will see your accounts and identities, and can select what you want. You can also select the Customise From Address, and then you can edit the address to whatever you want, for this message only.

Note that this will only be allowed if your mail service provider permits the From address to differ from the login for your outgoing server. Not all do.

## A tip about Firefox

Firefox Multi-Account Containers is an extension that enables you to keep different websites in completely separated parts of the browser, known as containers. This enables you to have more than one account open for the same site. So, for example, you could have open both a private and a business account for, say, Facebook or Amazon, simultaneously. Or you can use it to keep your financial and on-line banking separate from other sites by putting them into a different container.

Separation like this ensures that one site cannot see the cookies and activity conducted on another site at the same time.

It puts a icon on the top bar of three squares and a + sign. Clicking that will show by default four containers you could use for Personal, Work, Banking and Shopping. You can also add others if you feel the need for them. Each one has a different colour, which is used to identify the tabs opened in that container.

When browsing a site, clicking on the icon also gives you the option, via a checkbox, of always opening the site in that container. This would avoid risks of exposing your data to the wrong places.

## Setting up a new Mint install

It is now quite easy to install a Linux Mint system on a new PC. Here's how. Almost all Linux distributions can be managed the same way.

First download the appropriate version of the distribution from the home website of the distribution. In our case that is from <https://linuxmint.com/> and click Download. Save this on your local disk somewhere. The Downloads directory is fine.

Next get a USB memory stick of at least 4GB ready to receive the new distribution.

To copy the distro onto the memory stick requires a special program. It is not a regular copy. On Linux distros, there is a suitable package for writing a USB Image. Under Linux Mint the program is called mintstick, but appears in the menu as USB Image Writer, and is automatically included nowadays when the system is installed.

You should plug in the memory stick first, and then close the file browser window if necessary. Then start USB Image Writer and use the browser to find the file you downloaded. Next use the drop-down in the right hand box to select the correct USB drive. IMPORTANT: Do NOT get this wrong, you could destroy valuable data. It will identify the drives it thinks are suitable clearly, so select with care.

Then click Write. It will show a status bar and when this has finished, you can close the window and unplug the USB drive.

Now get the device you want to install to. While it still switched off, plug in the drive you have just written, and then boot up.

Here there are two possibilities. Either it will detect the drive and bring up the new Mint system on the drive, or it will not. If it does not, then you will have to change the boot order for the device. How you do this is unfortunately unique to each manufacturer, or even model of device, and I can give no more help than that you will have to advise.

When you have booted from the new drive, you will have a temporary system which you can use to test that everything seems to work as expected. You should check especially displays and wifi capabilities. If possible, though, before installing permanently, you should connect to the internet to be certain of a good connection.

When the system stabilises (and running off the USB drive will be slower than off an internal drive), one of the icons is to Install Mint. Double clicking this will start the installation process. You will be asked how it should be distributed, and after a few questions, you will be given a final chance to say no. Up to that point no changes will have been made to the target device. You will be presented with a number of choices, most of which are obvious. One choice is to overwrite the

whole internal drive and install Mint on it. Other options will keep the existing systems present too as a multi-boot machine.

During the installation process, you will have to give it a user name and password, and confirm your location and keyboard layout.

Then wait for it to copy the system to the internal disk, which could be time for a protracted coffee break.

Follow the instructions, and it should just work as expected.