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LibreOffice Draw – A PDF Editor in Disguise

By Alan German

In a recent article ([PDF File Editor – Plus!](#)), I discussed using Sejda PDF Editor to modify a PDF file noting that this program has a number of limitations on its use. Now, while the program was adequate for my meagre needs at the time, I decided to seek out a more robust solution for possible future use.

Interestingly, whereas I can normally find freeware and/or open-source software to replicate the tasks performed by any proprietary package, initially this didn't seem to be the case for PDF editors. Almost all of the programs that I identified had significant limitations on their use, were purely web-based, or turned out to be limited-time trial versions. Then I came across a possible solution that was already installed on my system – LibreOffice Draw.

I have used LibreOffice Writer and Calc extensively, on both Linux and Windows platforms, for many years. I have also used Impress for some specific purposes, and have dabbled minimally with Base, but have done very little exploration of the suite's other modules, Draw and Math. So, it came as a pleasant surprise when I found on-line reviews showcasing Draw as a free PDF editor.

My testing of Draw was largely based on the tasks that I previously needed to perform in editing an existing PDF file, namely: adding text to data fields, adding form elements (data entry fields), removing (hiding) the entry to a checked box, and adding a signature to a pre-defined data field. Three of these functions are demonstrated in the following screenshot where the name and date fields have been updated, the “Yes, I agree” checkbox has been blanked, and a signature is in the process of being added to the document.

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Given that Draw is actually a drawing module for the office suite, one might expect that a number of additional tools, providing the ability to include objects such as lines, shapes, and symbols in a document would also be available and indeed this is the case even when editing a PDF file. A wide range of such tools is available in a sidebar, or through the icons and menu items in the program's ribbon interface.

The ability to open PDF files, together with the multiplicity of available drawing tools, make Draw a powerful yet intuitive PDF editor. Many users may already have this package in their toolbox since they have the full LibreOffice suite installed. If not, the program is free and is readily available for downloading and installation on both Windows and Linux systems.

Bottom Line:

LibreOffice (Open source)
Version 7.3.3
The Document Foundation
<https://www.libreoffice.org>



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