

Office Suites – Deep Dive for Documents

Consider the following table below of file formats. The fact that **LibreOffice** can IMPORT so many file formats (*or at least attempt to*) is absolutely staggering!!! Formatting issues will almost ALWAYS plague converting one file format to another, but the idea that I can have files from WAYBACK when and still access their contents today is absolutely amazing.



LibreOffice



SoftMaker
Office 2018



WPS
Easy • Collaborative • Joyful

File Format

(Italic = Open Only)

	<u>LibreOffice Writer 6.3</u>	<u>SoftMaker '18 TextMaker</u>	<u>WPS Writer 10.1</u>
	.odt	.odt (OpenDoc)	
	.ott	.ott (OpenDoc Template)	
	<i>.wps (Microsoft Works)</i>	.tmidx/.tmd (Native File Format)	
	<i>.wpt</i>	,tmvx/.tmv (Native Template)	
	<i>.doc (DOS v.1 – 2003 & Mac)</i>	.doc	
	.dot	.dot	
	.rtf	.rtf	
	.txt	.txt	
	.docx	.docx	
	.dotx	.dotx	
	.docx/docm (Open XML)	.docm	
	<i>.dotx/dotm (Open XML)</i>	.dotm	
	.xml		
	.htm/html/xhtml	.htm/html/xhtml	
	.pdf	.pdf	
	<i>.sxw/.stw</i>	.sxw (OpenOffice.org) .psw (PocketWord) .pwd (Pocket Word-Handheld)	
		. -- Attempt any file option	
	.fodt (Flat XML ODF doc)		
	.uot/uof (Unified Office)	.uot/uof	
	<i>.hwp (Hangul WP)</i>		
	<i>.lwp (LotusWord Pro)</i>		
	<i>.602 (T602 Doc)</i>		
	<i>.wpd (WordPerfect)</i>		
	<i>.abw/.zabw (Abi Word)</i>		
	<i>.pages (iWorks)</i>		
	<i>.lrf (eBook)</i>		
	<i>.cwk (ClarisWorks/Apple Works)</i>		
	<i>.fb2/zip (FictionBook)</i>		
	<i>.wri (Microsoft Write)</i>		
	<i>.mw/.mcw (Mac Write)</i>		
	<i>.mwd (Mariner Write – Mac)</i>		
	<i>.pdb (PalmDoc eBook)</i>		
	<i>.sdw (StarOffice)</i>		
	<i>.wn/.nx^d (WriteNow)</i>		

Regarding Formatting Issues, I tested each suite with a medium-complexity document involving styles, font sizing, several images, text boxes, and layouts spanning 4-pages.

LibreOffice 6.3 - Writer



Opening Files Saved in LibreOffice using LibreOffice:

- .docx (OpenOffice XML) - All formatting was preserved. No issues.
- .docx (Microsoft 365) - All formatting was preserved. Again, no issues.
- .doc (Word 97) - Text boxes did not stay aligned. Text boxes lost any background colors. Some pictures moved out of position.
- .odt (Native) – All formatting was preserved. As you would expect, no issues here.

Opening Files Saved in LibreOffice using MS Word 2007:

- .doc – Text boxes retained word-wrapping, but were placed behind/or in front of document text. (*I couldn't tell which*) Text flowed over the top of text in these areas. Some pictures lost their places and ended up on the wrong pages. This was partially influenced, again, by text boxes not being properly displayed.
- .docx (Office365 & OoXML) – 99.8% perfect! Only one image displayed above text (i.e. Floating) obscuring the view of the text behind it. All pictures retained their places, all text boxes retained their places, formatting, and colors. All margins were intact. Very impressive.

Opening Files Created in Rival Office Suites:

- .doc (SoftMaker – TextMaker) - Pictures tended to not retain their places, and many even appeared in the background with text just flowing over them. A few text boxes seemed to also have this issue.
- .docx (SoftMaker – TextMaker) – Imported much better than .doc. Only one image seemed to be in the foreground obscuring the text behind it. All pictures were anchored in their proper places, as were all text boxes.
- .odt (SoftMaker – TextMaker) - Page margins were narrowed, adjusting document wide formatting. All text boxes lost their word-wrapping. Images stayed mostly in their places.
- .doc (WPS - Writer) - Pictures tended to not retain their places, and many even appeared in the background with text just flowing over them. A few text boxes seemed to also have this issue.
- .docx (WPS - Writer) – Imported much better than .doc. Only one image seemed to be in the foreground obscuring the text behind it. All pictures were anchored in their proper places, as were all text boxes.
- .wps (WPS – Writer) – Pictures lost their places and were displayed in the background with text just flowing right over the top of them. This behavior reduced my 4-page document down to 3! Oddly enough, page 1 retained perfect formatting.

NOTES: I think there is something definitely goofy with the way LibreOffice ‘Writes’ to the older Word 97 .doc file format. The text boxes almost universally appear wonky upon opening. There is also fairly pervasive issues with the way LibreOffice ‘Reads’ the older .doc file formatting. Version 6.3 has made the most progress ever in the way it reads .docx formatting... nearly flawless! (*This has come a long way from v.4 & v.5! I could not be more pleased!*) I still can’t be anything but impressed by the

sheer amount of file formats LibreOffice can resurrect intelligible information from! While there are plenty of formatting issues with these older file formats, you cannot gloss over the fact that no other software packages out there will even attempt this, much less do this any better.

The award for File Format Versatility goes to LibreOffice! I rate it 4 stars AND a MOON!!!!

Regarding Formatting Issues, I tested each suite with a medium-complexity document involving styles, font sizing, several images, text boxes, and layouts spanning 4-pages.

SoftMaker 18 – Text Maker



Opening Files Saved in TextMaker using TextMaker:

- .docx (Microsoft 365) - All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .doc (Word 97) - All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .odt (OpenDoc) – 99.8%. Certain quotes (styles) did not preserve their font size.
- .tmdx (Native) - Obviously, 100% perfectly preserved. No issues.

Opening Files Saved in TextMaker using MS Word 2007:

- .doc – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .docx (Office365) – While the formatting of font sizes, text boxes, and images all retained nicely, the actual document text seemed to randomly and frequently join words together. We're talking taking a 2,086 word document and joining it down to 2,000 words. A bit strange.

Opening Files Created in Rival Office Suites:

- .doc (LibreOffice - Writer) - 90% preserved. While it could display where text boxes should be, it could not display any text from the text boxes. The rest of document seemed intact.
- .docx (LibreOffice - Writer) – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .odt (LibreOffice - Writer) - One image lost its cropping. Otherwise 99.8% perfect!
- .doc (WPS - Writer) - All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .docx (WPS - Writer) – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .wps (WPS – Writer) – Not an officially supported format, but tried anyway. 1%, as it could grab the raw text of the 4-page document embedded in 36 pages of gibberish. Good try, anyway.

NOTES: Overall, TextMaker has a lot going for it. While it skips a beat interacting with some of the files created in LibreOffice, it purrs smooth and strong with most everything else. The scope of files it can handle doesn't hold a candle to LibreOffice, but it *DOES* open a bit more than WPS by Kingsoft. The native format is exclusive to TextMaker, and I confess, I've not seen this file format accepted or used anywhere else.

On a side note, there still seems to be a few bugs lurking around the Linux version of this suite. I try not to run Firefox along side TextMaker, as one of these two programs is not playing well with the other, and will lock up my desktop randomly. The UI isn't consistent with the rest of my desktop (*SoftMaker has their own look to their application, and it doesn't look like it is related to any operating system that I could tell.*) Also, while hard to replicate on demand, some things, like rotating images, or auto-saving documents can render the computer frozen for several solid seconds. I'm not sure what that is about, nor how to better narrow down what is going on, or why it happens using SoftMaker Office, and not other programs, aside from Firefox's latest release.

I felt it was strange that it better supported writing to the older Word .doc format than it did the newer .docx format. Combining 87 words of a 2,087 word document was disappointing. Another weird quirk was that, by default, you must spell-check your document manually. You can, I understand, turn this feature to automatically underline misspelled words, except that it did not recognize any of my misspellings.

I like that there are several options for the user interface. It caters to both the reflex Ribbon user as well as the sensible Menu driven work flow. These are available in both Light and Dark variations. Overall, it LOOKS more Microsofty Officey in appearance.

It's strong suite would be in it's formatting of most popular document formats. A good solid choice. I paid \$80 for my copy, and upgrades to newer versions should run around \$50~ish.

NOTE: NOTE: Don't forget, you can also try their 'FreeOffice' version for no charge. Quite a number of the features found in the full version appear in the Free version. (*Which is more than I can say for Microsoft Office 365 web apps*)

Regarding Formatting Issues, I tested each suite with a medium-complexity document involving styles, font sizing, several images, text boxes, and layouts spanning 4-pages.

WPS 10.1 – Writer



Opening Files Saved in WPS using WPS - Writer:

- .docx (Microsoft 365) - All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .doc (Word 97) - All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .wps (Native) – Naturally, 100% compatibility with itself. Just checking, though.

Opening Files Saved in WPS - Writer using MS Word 2007:

- .doc – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .docx (Office365) – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.

Opening Files Created in Rival Office Suites:

- .doc (LibreOffice - Writer) - 97% - Text box issues prevailed. Text appeared outside of the text boxes, while the text boxes themselves remained in proper position. Text boxes lost any background color. Overall document remained correctly formatted and laid out.
- .docx (LibreOffice - Writer) – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .odt (LibreOffice - Writer) - Not officially supported, but thought I'd try. 0% This (4) page document opened over 10,475 pages! Most all of them blank with bits of gibberish. No discernible text could be recovered.
- .doc (SoftMaker - TextMaker) - All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .docx (SoftMaker - TextMaker) – All formatting preserved perfectly 100%. No issues here.
- .odt (SoftMaker – TextMaker) – Not officially supported. 0% readable. Just thousands and thousands of pages of mostly blank gibberish.

NOTES: WPS writer does what it does *expertly*. The grammar in translation to English makes me smile. Obviously, it doesn't exactly flow with the rest of the operating system as far as looks go. But it is a solid, strong, reliable office suite, and while it cannot accept very many file formats, it does focus on the areas that are important. I like that there are several options for the user interface. It caters to both the reflex Ribbon user as well as the sensible Menu driven work flow.

It wins the best Microsoft Office Compatibility award!

PDF RESULTS:

PDF (SoftMaker – Text Maker) - PDF Reader saw all formatting as perfectly preserved.

PDF (LibreOffice) - PDF Reader saw all formatting as perfectly preserved.

PDF (WPS Office) - PDF Reader saw all formatting as perfectly preserved.