

LibreOffice Impress: showing slides randomly

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During the Science Day set up by the [school](#) where I'm working at, an event linked to the wider [Erasmus+ project](#) and involving other European countries - Poland, Cyprus, Portugal, Bulgaria - I thought of designing a didactic-playful activity that included a challenge between two teams, which had to guess the largest number of binary/decimal conversions by subjecting them to 8-bit sequences, that is, a different byte every time.

Each of these bytes appeared in a slide of a classic presentation made using the open source software LibreOffice Impress.

To increase the difficulty of this game, I found myself to deal with the problem of mixing every time the 10 slides I prepared for this activity and then creating a presentation that showed slides no longer *sequentially*, but *randomly*.

The right sequence of steps to make sure any presentation displays your slides in a random order is described as follows:

- **This macro activation procedure must be carried out immediately on all the computers on which you want to view a slide presentation in random order.** Open LibreOffice Impress and refuse to any request of choosing ready-made templates or presentations. Then, by pressing Alt+F12 (or *Tools - Preferences...*) a window will open for general settings. In the first entry labeled as *LibreOffice*, choose the *Security* section. On the right side, select the *Macro Security* button and set a *medium* or *low* value (not recommended). Close the windows by pressing the OK button twice.
- Build all the slides that make up the presentation. Save the document using a name easy to remember (e.g.: *bytes.odp*)
- Open the *Presentation* menu - *Custom Presentation...*
- As a new window opens, press the *New* button
- Then, another window will open, give a name to the personalized presentation (for example: *ShuffledSlides*). Write down this name somewhere, because you'll need it as it'll be necessary to use it later.
- Put on the right side - selecting them first - the existing slides in the slides section selected using the ">>" button. Close the active window pressing the OK button, flag the *Use presentation on custom screen* checkbox and close this last window with the OK button.
- Press ALT+F11 to open the macro management window. Another way to do the same is following the path *Tools - Macro - Macro setup - LibreOffice Basic...*
- To make the macro executable on different computers, in the *Macro from* window, it is advisable to select the file we saved at previous second point (called *bytes.odp*). Thus, press the *New* button.
- Now, a new window opens where you have to specify the name of the macro, for example: *shuffle*
- Delete any message that automatically appears in the right window, such as:

```
REM ***** BASIC *****
```

```
Sub Main
End Sub
```

- "Copy and paste" the following code that will allow you to mix the slides of the presentation (*Credits to FJCCR, moderator of the Apache OpenOffice.org Community forum, who wrote this macro from scratch in 2010*)

WARNING: in one of the last lines shown below, the name of your presentation must be indicated correctly (*ShuffledSlides*), or this will affect the whole process.

```
REM Credit to FJCC
REM moderator of the Apache OpenOffice.org Community forum
REM who wrote this macro from scratch in 2010
```

```
Sub SlideShuffle
oDoc = ThisComponent
DPages = oDoc.getDrawPages
Count = DPages.Count
DIM List(Count-1) as Integer
DIM RndList(Count-1) as Integer
DIM TmpList(Count-1) as Integer
For i = 0 to Count-1
List(i) = i
next i
For x = Count-1 to 0 Step -1
Redim TmpList(x)
RndNum = INT(Rnd*(x+1))
RndList(Count-1-x) = List(RndNum)
If x > 0 then
    If RndNum > 0 then
        For i = 0 to RndNum - 1
            TmpList(i) = List(i)
        next i
    end if
    If RndNum < x then
        For i = RndNum + 1 to x
            TmpList(i-1) = List(i)
        next i
    end if
    Redim List(x-1)
    List() = TmpList()
end if
next x
CustPres = oDoc.getCustomPresentations()
MyCust = CustPres.getByIndex("ShuffledSlides")
SlideCount = MyCust.Count
If SlideCount > 0 then
For x = 0 to SlideCount -1
    MyCust.removeByIndex(x)
next x
end if
For x = 0 to Count-1
    RndSlide = DPages.getByIndex(RndList(x))
```

```
MyCust.insertByIndex(x, RndSlide)
next x

End Sub
```

Save and close the macro creation window and then save the presentation again.

Now we need the slides to be mixed every time the file is opened, that is basically the *shuffle* macro has to be activated every time we open the presentation. To do this, go to the menu *Tools - Customize...* and in the *Events* tab under *Open document* press the button on the right *Macro* and search for the macro created, following the path *byte.odp - Standard - shuffle* followed by OK button.

Save the document, close it completely and try to reopen it again. Now, pressing the F5 key to show the presentation the slides should appear in random order.

Close the document (you will be asked to save, but it is not necessary to do it) and try to reopen the presentation again: the order in which the slides appear should be different to the previous time.

You can use an empty template [here](#) or see the presentation shown during the *Science Day* at [this](#) link.