

Creating Mailing Labels in Apache™ OpenOffice

We will be using Apache™ OpenOffice, which is available as donation-ware from www.openoffice.org to create mailing labels. Mail merge procedures vary a great deal. The techniques will need to be adapted if you are using something other than OpenOffice. Although snail mail is slowly giving way to email, there are many circumstances where you need to do an old fashioned mailing. That is especially true for the 55+ generation, where internet access and email addresses are not universal.

Purchasing the labels

Buy labels that match your printer. Inkjet labels for inkjets, laser for laser printers. Using an inappropriate type of labels, can cause damage to your printer! Heed any warnings about restrictions regarding refeeding a label sheet into a printer. Use the paper tray/path that your printer manual recommends for labels. The last thing you want to do is have your labels peel off there backing and gum up the works inside your printer!

Guidelines for Creating an Address Book Spreadsheet.

Each row of the spreadsheet represents a record. Each address will occupy one row or record in your spreadsheet.

The data in each column is known as a field. Break fields apart when you create a spreadsheet. It is a lot easier to automatically concatenate (put thing together) than it is to automatically break compound fields apart. For example instead of using Name, consider separating Name into First and Last. Instead of using Address3, use City, State, Country and Postal Code in separate columns. You'll often want to sort a list by Country, Postal Code or Last name and it is so much easier if you create your spreadsheet database with this in mind.

Use the first line of the spreadsheet to give meaningful names to the columns or headers. As a best practice:

- Make each heading name unique.
- Start each header with a letter (i.e. Address1 not 1Address).
- Don't include special characters or spaces in the header name.
- Limit names to 10 characters in length, as some software suites don't support longer field names.
- Use meaningful names that identify the data because when you create your column header, because you will not be able to see the data while you layout your label.
- Adjust the column width so that the widest data field is visible.
- Format the zip code column as text so that leading zeros are visible.
- Format the Print Range to repeat the heading row on each printed page.
- Change the Print Page format to be landscape and be only 1 page wide
- Split the data window so that the headings stay visible data while entering your data.
- Sort the data in the order you want to print.

Exercise Creating a Spreadsheet.

Start OpenOffice

- Open the address book.
 - File->Open>ClassExamples ->Sample Addresses.ods**
- Adjust the column width so that the widest data field is visible
 1. Click on the line between the column labels and drag until the data shows
- Format the zip code column as text so that leading zeros are visible.
 1. Highlight Cells **H2:H100**
 2. Select **Format->Cells** from the menu
 3. On the **General** tab select **Text** from the **Categories**
 4. Press **OK**
 5. Correct the first two zipcodes by adding a leading zero
- Format the Print Range to repeat the heading row on each printed page
 1. Select **Format->Print Range ->Edit** from the menu
 2. In the **Rows to Repeat** area
 3. First box should say –user defined-
 4. Second box should say **\$1**
 5. Click **OK**
- Change the Page layout to be landscape
 1. Select **Format->Page** from the menu
 2. Select the **Sheet** tab
 3. In the **Scale** section change the **scaling mode** to be “fit print ranges to width height”
 4. Change the width in pages to be 1
 5. Change the Height in pages to be 10
 6. Click **OK**
- Split the data window so that the headings stay visible
 1. Scroll to the top of the page
 2. Select cell **A2**
 3. Select **Window->Split** from the menu.
 4. Scroll to the bottom of the spreadsheet.
 5. Add a line with your name and address
- Sort the data in the order you want to work with
 1. Select all the data cells to sort. In this case **A1:L39**. If you don't get all the columns, you'll have mismatched data when your sort is complete!!!.
 2. Select **Data->Sort** from the menu.
 3. Select the **Options** tab
 4. Check the box that say “**Range Includes Labels**”
 5. Select the **Sort Criteria** tab.
 6. Change “Sort by” to be **Last**.
 7. Change “Then by” to say **First**.
 8. Click **OK**.
- **Save your file**
 1. Select **File->Save** from the menu.
- Exit OpenOffice

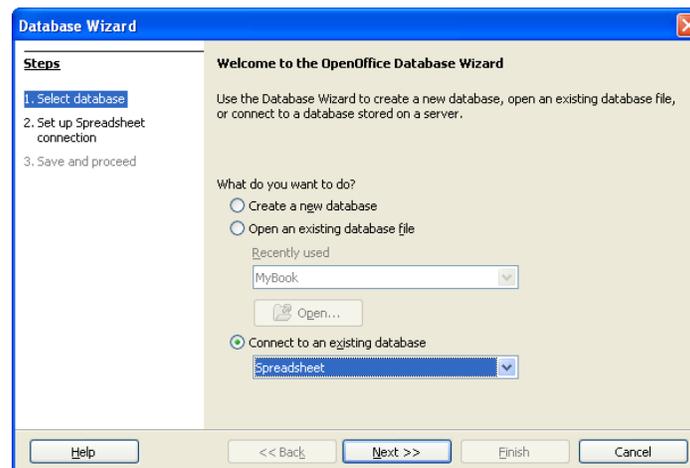
Part 2: Registering a Spreadsheet as a Data Source

OpenOffice is able to use many types of data connections we are using spreadsheets, but other formats including text files, Microsoft® Outlook Address book, Microsoft® Windows Address Book, Microsoft® Access, Microsoft® Access 2007, and Mozilla Thunderbird Address Book are supported as well as more geeky sources such as ADO, ODBC, .MySQL....

We are using a spreadsheet for our database. You edited and saved the “**Sample Address.ods**” spreadsheet. (If you are following along at home, you can download the Sample Address spreadsheet from my website)

Now you need to register the spreadsheet as a data source.

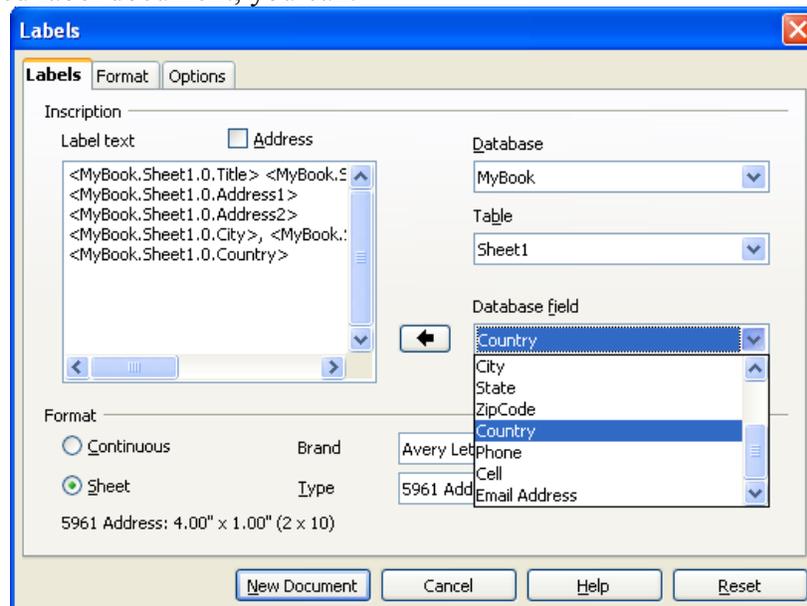
If your data is in a spreadsheet, follow these steps.



1. Choose **File > New > Database**.
2. Select **Connect to an existing database**,
3. Select **Spreadsheet** as the format.
4. Click **Next**.
5. Specify the spreadsheet file. Each sheet in that spreadsheet will be a table in your database.
6. Click **Next**.
7. Unmark the option to open the database for editing. You can open it; you just do not have to.
8. Click **Finish**.
9. Save the data source (aka database) under a name that will help you remember what it is. For class use “**MyBook**”

Part 3. Creating and Printing Labels

1. Once you have got the database set up in OpenOffice you are ready to go.
2. Choose **File > New > Labels**.
3. In the **Labels** tab of the Labels window, select the database you created in step 2.
Note: You are looking for the name of the database you created, which should be “**MyBook**”, not the spreadsheet containing the data.
4. Select a table from the **Table** list. This will be **Sheet1** in our case..
5. Select the first field you want to use from the **Database field** list and click the big arrow in the middle of the window to insert it in the **Label text** field.
6. Use the **Database field** list to insert any other fields you need. Type a space after the field and you can add the next field, such as **Last**. If you want fields on the next line, position the cursor after the last character on the current line, and just press Enter on the keyboard. If you need to change the arrangement later in the created label document, you can.



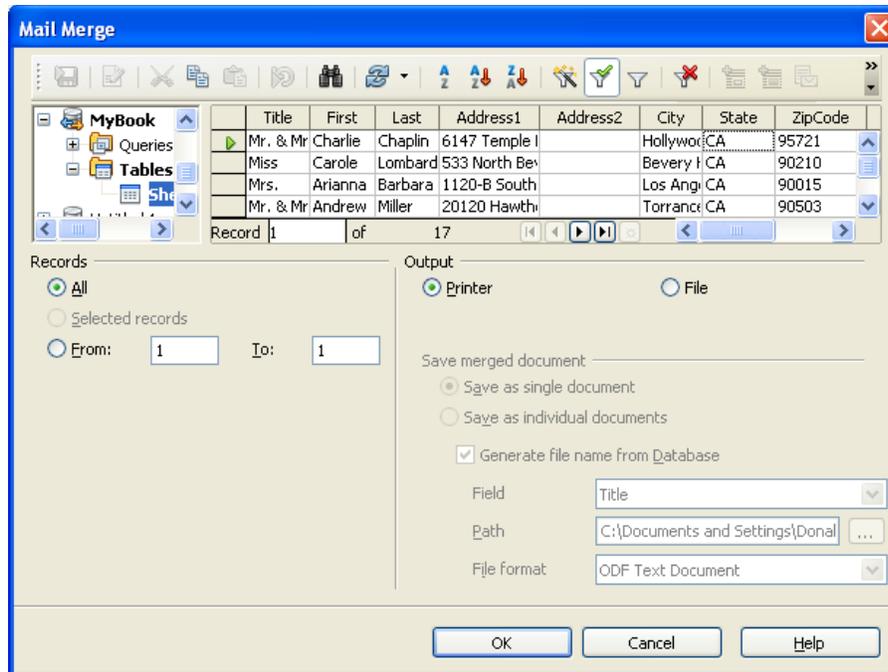
- Select **Title** from the database field, click the arrow, push the spacebar on the keyboard, select **First**, click the arrow, press the spacebar on the keyboard, select **Last**, click the arrow, press the Enter key on the keyboard
- Select **Address1**, click the arrow, press the Enter key.
- Select **Address2**, click the arrow, press the Enter key.
- Select **City**, click the arrow, type a comma (,), press the spacebar, select **State**, click the arrow, press the spacebar, select **ZipCode**, click the arrow, press the Enter key
- Select **Country** click the arrow



Make sure you know the brand, product number and size of the label you are printing on, because all programs will require this information. OpenOffice has options for entering the product number for labels from various companies, in place of entering the label size. This takes the guesswork out of printing and makes it easier for you to print labels correctly. Some label makers also provide their own software for printing labels.

We will assume we are using these Avery 5961 labels that come on 8.5x11 inch stock.

7. In the **Brand** dropdown list, if your Avery labels come on 8.5"x11" sheets, select **Avery Letter Size** as your brand..
8. In the **Type** dropdown list, scroll to the one that matches the packaging on your labels. Choose **5961 Address** as shown on the packaging.
9. Click the **Options** tab.
10. Check the **Synchronize contents** option. This allows you to apply formatting, like a different font or colors or adding graphics, fixing spacing and make those changes apply to all of your labels with the click of a button
11. Click the **Setup** button next to the printer display.
12. Select the printer you want to print to.
13. In the printer options (this will vary according to your operating system) specify the appropriate paper feed or tray. For now, select **Manual Feed**.
14. Click the **New Document** button at the bottom of the window. The labels will appear. You will not see the data, you will see the field.
15. If you need to make changes, like adding spaces, rearranging fields, or changing formatting, do so in the upper left label. Then click **Synchronize Labels** to apply those changes to all labels.
16. Choose **File -> Print**
17. You will see a message asking you whether you want to print a form letter. Click Yes.
18. ! Do not mark a checkbox saying you do not want to see the message again!. This checkbox is gone on OpenOffice 4.0.1, but was a problem in earlier versions



This process often takes a few tries to get it right.. At this point I'd recommend printing to a file instead of the printer. You can then select **File->Open** and then locate the file you just created. That way you won't have to waste any paper trying to get it right.

- 19 Click **File**
- 20 Click **Save as a single file**
- 21 Click **Ok**
- 22 Type a file name in the box provided, let's use **Test** as our file name.
- 23 Click **Save**
- 24 If you are warned that the file already exists, click **Yes** to overwrite any previous versions.

To view your work

1. Select **File->Open**
2. Type in **Test.odt** in the filename box
3. Click **Open**
4. Check your work and close the window.

You can save the label document and just go back to it again when you need to use it again.

You can print to a file and then open that file to see your merged document without actually printing it.

Suppressing Blank Lines

Sometimes our labels have 2 lines in an address, sometimes there isn't a second line. Our form needed to include it, but as a result some of our labels had a blank line.

<Title> <First> <Last>
 <Address1>
 <Address2>
 <City>, <State> <Country> <ZipCode>

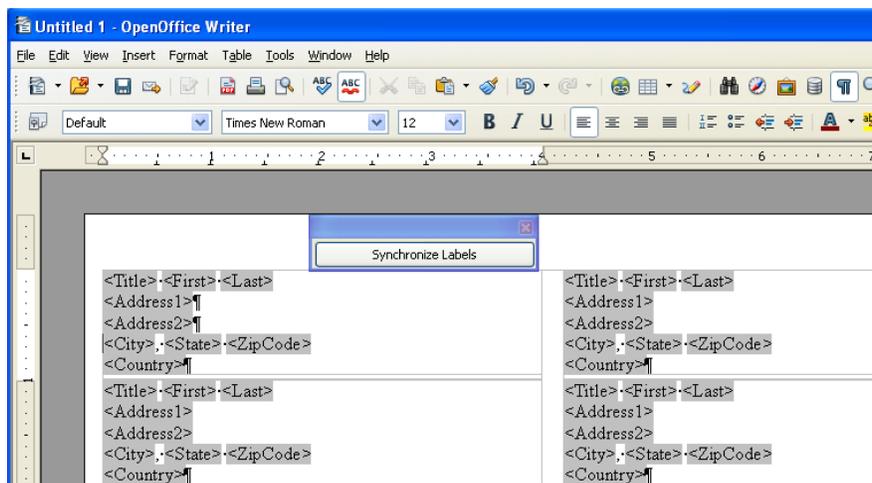
Marilyn Monroe 444 East 57th Street Apartment 13E New York, NY 10022-3515	James Northrup 2201 Broadway New York, NY 10024
---	--

This looks rather sloppy, so we are going to change the label to scrunch up the label, if there is nothing in line 2.

Marilyn Monroe 444 East 57th Street Apartment 13E New York, NY 10022-3515	James Northrup 2201 Broadway New York, NY 10024
---	--

1. If you don't have the Untitled document, with the labels visible, Make sure you have a registered your spreadsheet as a database, and created the label sheet with the **File > New > Labels**, on the previous section. Select your database and tables, insert the fields, and then check the **Synchronize Contents** checkbox on the **Options** tab.. Click **New Document**. The labels will appear.

What we are going to do is replace some soft returns with hard returns as shown here. Take a good look at the picture below. See the ¶ at the end of the Address1 and Address2 line in the upper left label. We are going to put them there on your document..



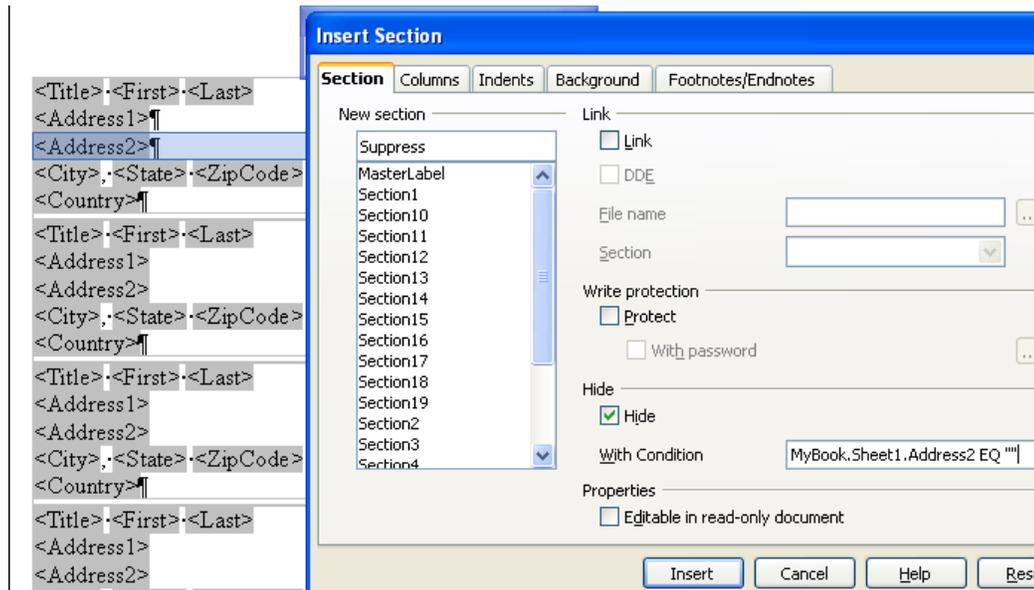
2. Turn on nonprinting characters if they are not on already, by choosing **View > Nonprinting Characters**, or by clicking on the ¶ symbol on the toolbar.

3. Position your cursor after the `<Address1>` then press the **Delete** key, then press the **Enter** key.
4. Position your cursor after the `<Address2>` then press the **Delete** key, then press the **Enter** key.
5. Click the **Synchronize Labels** to update the other labels to be the same.
6. Now that there are the ¶ marks are in place we are going to create a hidden section. In order to do that we need to know the long name of Address2 that contains its databasename, tablename and fieldname. This is going to be case sensitive, that means that you must match the name exactly the way you typed it in. Don't remember what you did?. Just hover over Address2 field and the full name will be revealed. Please note this, because for the next step to work, you will need to type this exactly correctly.
7. Select the `<Address2>`¶ field complete with the ¶. To do this, locate your cursor beginning of the `<City>` line, and drag highlight up to the beginning or the `<Address2>` line .
8. Choose **Insert -> Section** from the menu .
9. Name the new section **Suppress**. Check the **Hide** checkbox . and then fill in the **With Condition** box with the full field name that that you noted in step 6 followed by a space, the letters EQ another space and two quotation marks. If you followed the instructions your with condition should be:

MyBook.Sheet1.Address2 EQ ""

Note: If you are using a data source that allows spaces enclose the field with []

[databasename.tablename.fieldname] EQ ""



Your screen should look like this

10. Click **Insert**.
11. Delete the ¶ that is between the Address 2 line and the City state and zip.
12. Click **Synchronize Labels**.
13. Now print your data, by selecting File->Print

This process often takes a few tries to get it right.. At this point I'd recommend printing to a file instead of the printer. You can then File->Open and then locate the file you just created.. That way you won't have to waste any paper trying to get it right.

14. You will see a message asking you whether you want to print a form letter. Click **Yes**.
15. Click **File**
16. Click **Save as a single file**
17. Click **Ok**
18. Type a file name in the box provided, let's use **Test** as our file name.
19. Click Save
20. If you are warned that the file already exists, click **Yes** to overwrite any previous versions.

To view your work

1. Select **File->Open**
2. Type in **Test.odt** in the filename box
3. Click **Open**
4. Review your work and then close the window

If you need to change the section, select it in the first address and choose **Format > Section**. Select the one named **Suppress** for the master label and make changes, then click **To Make the Data Source (Text File Instructions)**

Printing on the Labels

Practice printing labels on a plain sheet of paper before you print on an actual label sheet. This can save you lot of time, money and frustration. After you setup the label with your text, the next step is to figure out what direction to feed the blank envelopes or label sheets into your printer. Should you feed them face up or down, and which direction should you rotate them? It is easy to determine this by writing an x in the corner on the first sheet of paper in the tray, so you'll know which side is the up depending on if the x is on the printed side or on the back of your test labels. After you print a paper test, place it on top of a blank label sheet and hold them up to a bright light to see if the text aligns to the labels. If it matches you are ready to go except you've got those funky blank lines on your labels that have only 1 address line that we will deal with on the next page.

It is important to know what type of printer you have and the printer's recommendations for paper path.

We have a networked laser printer in the lab.

IMPORTANT Laser Printer Guidelines

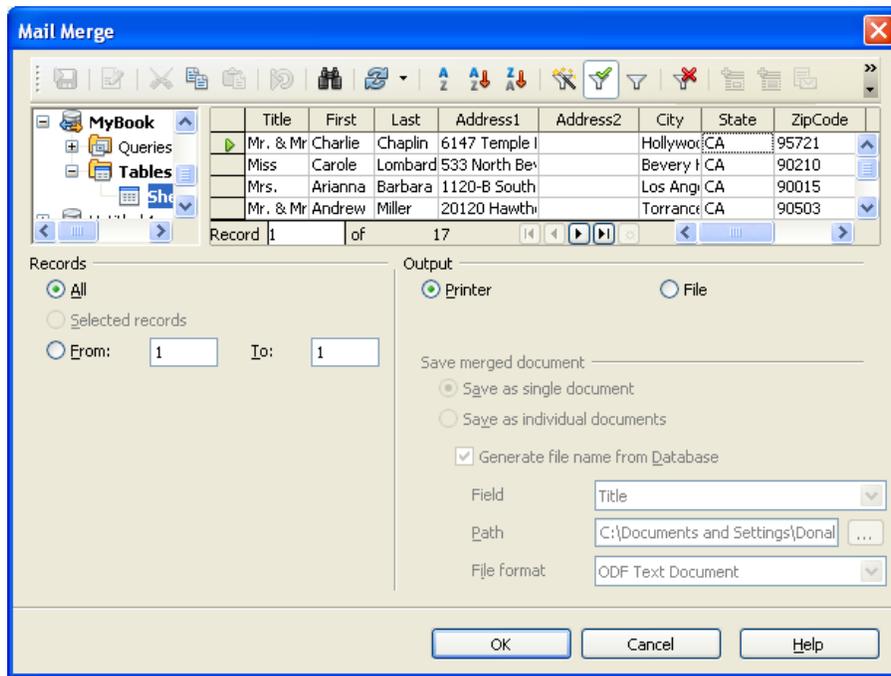
- Only use labels recommended for laser printers.
- Verify that the labels' adhesive material can tolerate fusing temperature of 205°C (400°F) for 0.1 second.
- Make sure that there is no exposed adhesive material between the labels. Exposed areas can cause labels to peel off during printing, which can cause paper jams. Exposed adhesive can also cause damage to printer components.
- Do not feed a sheet of labels through the printer more than once. The adhesive backing is designed for one pass through the printer.
- Do not use labels that are separating from the backing sheet or are wrinkled, bubbled, or otherwise damaged.

Typically labels need to be fed through the route on the printer on a path that the sheet is not bent. Here is the procedure for printing labels with our laser printer

1. Open the front Multi-Purpose Tray and the rear output tray.
2. Load labels in the multi-purpose tray with the print-side up.
3. Adjust the guide to fit the width of the sheet of labels without squeezing them.
4. When you print on labels, select the appropriate paper source, type, and size in the software application.
5. After printing, close the Multi-Purpose Tray and the rear output tray.

Mail Merge Window Controls

Right about now you may be thinking, why not just type out the addresses. The Mail Merge window is a powerful tool. We are going to play with the tools to give you a sense of powerful and how easy these are to use. Remember you got here by printing the labels, and then choosing to process this as a form letter.

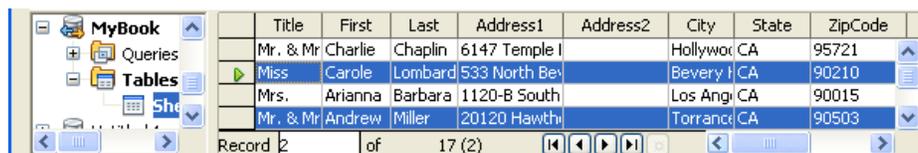


Mail Merge Window

You can see in the Records area that we can print **All** the labels, selected records or a range **From** row x to z.

Selecting a continuous range visually. Click on the gray box at the beginning of the first row you want to print. The line will turn color, indicating it is selected. Scroll down to the last row you want to print. Hold the Shift key down and click on the gray box at the beginning of the last box

OpenOffice also sorts **controlled selection.** Click on the gray box at the beginning of the first row you want to print. The line will turn color, indicating it is selected. Scroll down and hold the **Ctrl** key while you click on the gray box of each row you want to print



Controlled selection

Filters

Filtering is another way to limit which records are going to be printed. The Mail Merge window offers you access to easy to use powerful filters. The little funnels on the toolbar are the filtering tools.



Auto Filter

To use the auto filter, simply click on the value you want to match and then click on the icon.

Exercise:

- Scroll until you find a row where the state is California, "CA",
- Click on a the "CA"
- Then click on the AutoFilter icon on the toolbar
- Boom, only lines with the CA in the state field are available for printing.

Clear Filter

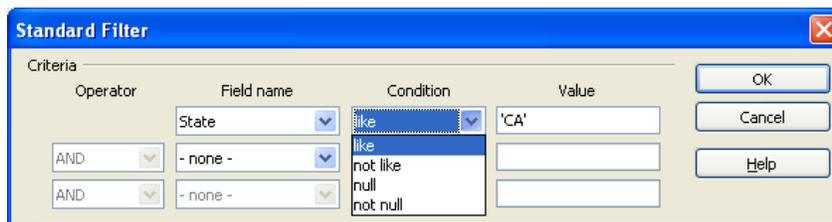
To remove the current filter, simply click on the Clear Filters icon on the toolbar.

Apply Filter

Apply filter toggles the filtered state on and off.

Standard Filter

The standard filter lets you build more complicated filters. It will bring up a **Standard Filter** window where you can build more complicated conditions. Conditions are a little too abstract to cover in the class, but I wanted you to know you have these types of options available to you.



Sorting:

Although people tend to like working with data in alphabetical order, you might want to print labels in some other order. Open Office’s Mail Merge window makes sorting your data very easy.



Ascending Sort

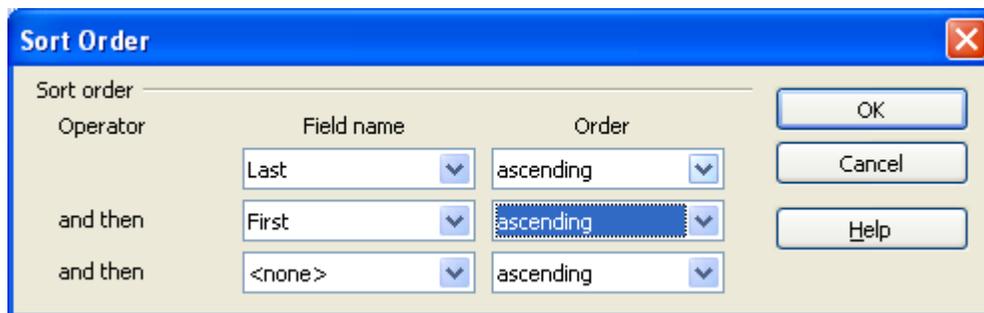
The ascending order sort is probably the most common. Click on the field you want to sort and then click the ascending sort icon. Your rows will be arranged alphabetically by the contents of that column.

Descending Order

The descending order sort, works just like the ascending sort, only the rows are arranged in reverse order from z to a.

Sort

The custom Sort, displays a “Sort Order” dialog window that lets you order your rows based on multiple criteria. For instance the sort shown below lets you arrange rows by last name and then first name.



Sort yields a sort where last name, first name order...

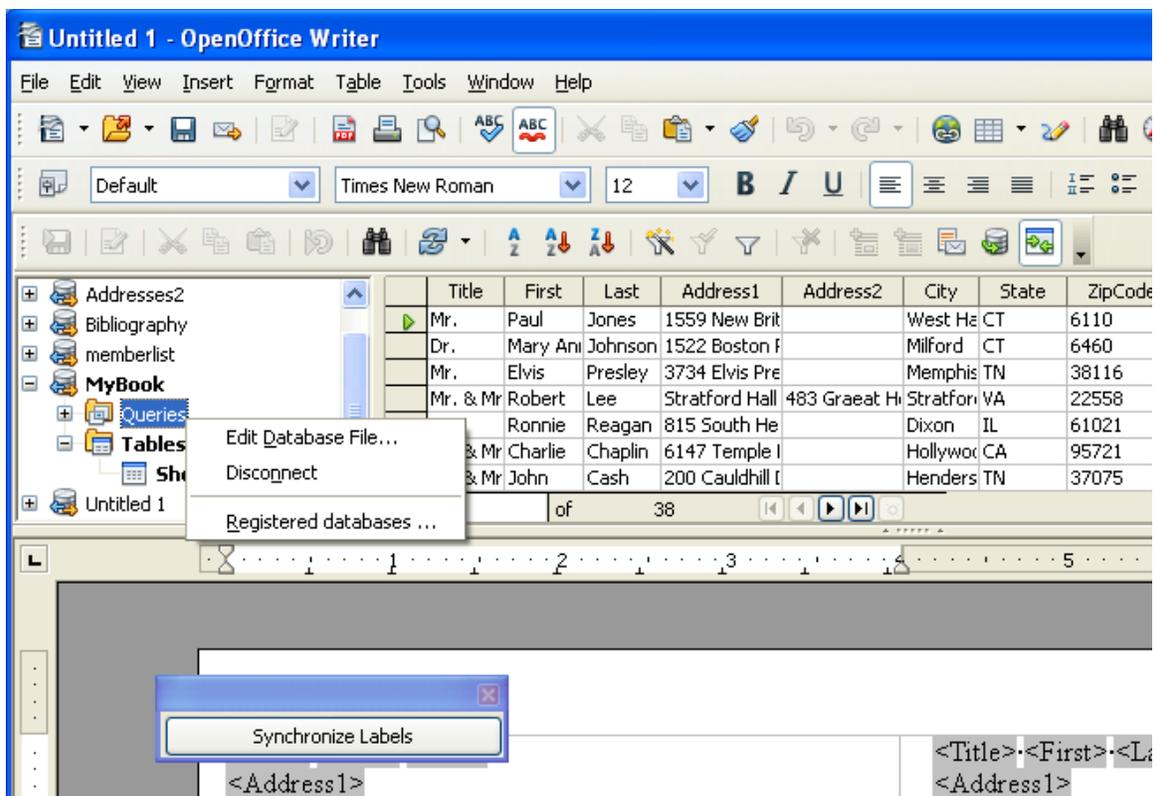
Mary Smith
 Sam Smith.
 Ann Smithe

Bonus material

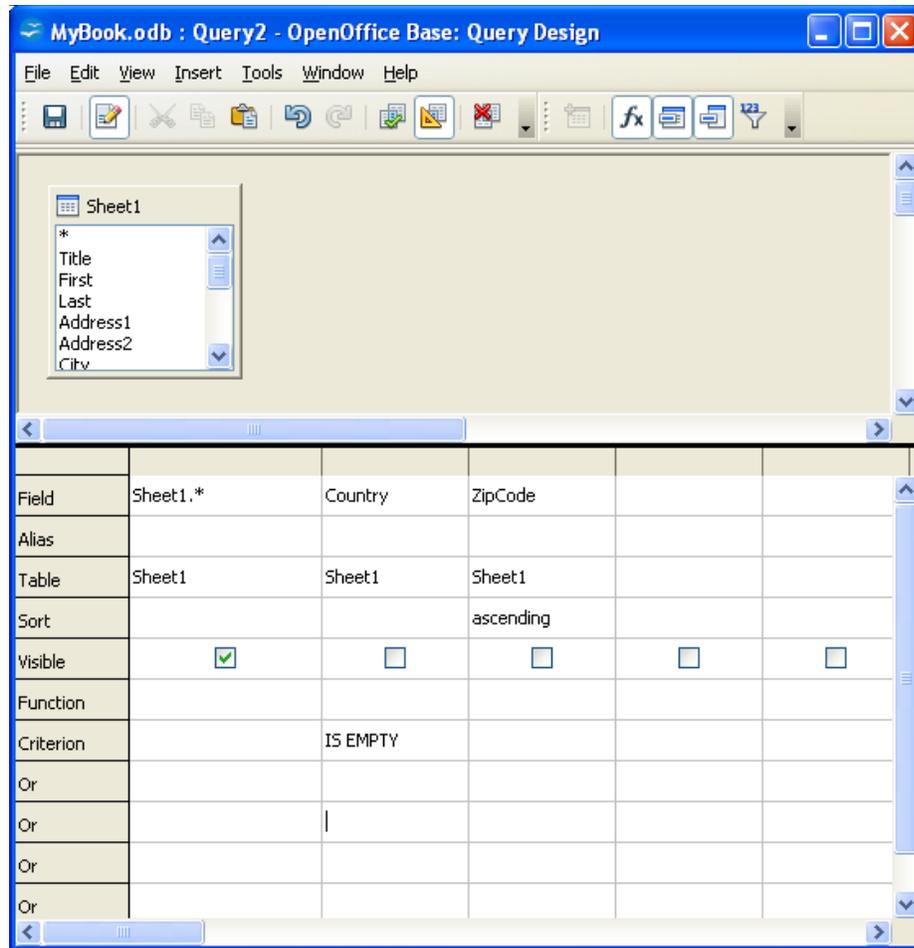
Creating and Saving a Database Query for Mail Merge.

There are many times you'll want to print a subsection of your address book spreadsheet. You can do this from the Mail Merge window as we showed you earlier. If you need to make a huge series of adjustments in the Mail Merge window and you need to do it often, you can automate this process by creating a query. A query is a way of asking the database some questions. A query creates a dynamic list that will change as your data changes.

1. From OpenOffice's text editor press **F4** to open the Database Source window



2. Right click on the Queries folder under your "MyBook" database connection/
3. Click on the **Edit Database File** option
4. Click on the **Queries** icon in the left database panel
5. Click on **Create Query in Design View**. in the Tasks panel
6. In the Add Tables popup, select **Sheet1** and click **Add**



We are going to fill in the sheet exactly as shown above.

8. First column select **Sheet1.*** as the field, that means select all the columns of data and they are visible.
9. The second column has **Country**, is not visible, and has a Criterion of “**IS EMPTY**” so it will show all the rows in the original database that do not have an entry in the country field. (See Help on Queries to see what kind of criteria are allowed)
10. The third column has **ZipCode**, it is not visible, and the Sort order is selected as **ascending**. This will make the results show and print in ZipCode order.
11. Select **File->Save** from the menu.
12. Change the Query name “**USOnly**”
13. Click **OK**
14. Close the window
15. Click Save if asked

Now recreate the labels from the start, except instead of choosing Sheet1 for the table, select "USOnly" as the table name.

1. Select **File ->New->Labels** from the menu
2. Change the database to **MyBook**
3. Change the table to **USOnly**
4. Delete all the label text in the right hand panel
5. Recreate the label as shown in Part 3;
6. Save your labels.

Summary

There you have it. I have just communicated everything I know about creating mailing labels. The techniques you have just mastered also work with form letters and envelopes as well as mailing labels. Mail merge procedures vary greatly from one software package to another, the techniques will need to be adapted if you are using something other than OpenOffice.

Recommended reading:

[Creating Mail Merge Documents From Text/CSV or Spreadsheets](https://wiki.openoffice.org/wiki/Documentation/How_Tos/Creating_Mail_Merge_Documents_From_Text/CSV_or_Spreadsheets)

https://wiki.openoffice.org/wiki/Documentation/How_Tos/Creating_Mail_Merge_Documents_From_Text/CSV_or_Spreadsheets

Videos

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 1 Creating an Managing a Spreadsheet Address Book
<http://youtu.be/Wckq11XA0LA>

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 2 Registering a Database
<http://youtu.be/ZWzCIaNL-48>

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 3 Creating Labels
http://youtu.be/_vIIaOUP_BQ

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 4 Suppressing Blank Address2 Line
<http://youtu.be/NMcTQfiJBF8>

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 5 Mail Merge Controls
<http://youtu.be/EYWDC8giEPo>

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 6 Creating a Query
Comming soon

OpenOffice Mail Merge Labels Part 7 The Envelope Please
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ht7v4HXfkPo>

How would you do this in Microsoft Office 2007 and later
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9x2m_QVs4Y