IMPROVING TOOLBARS IN LIBREOFFICE
CURRENT CHALLENGES, FUTURE OUTLOOK

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BRUSSELS, FEB 10, 2016
HUMAN INTERFACE GUIDELINES

• Common goal: **Simple for beginners and powerful for experts.**

• From: *Document Foundation design wiki:*
  
  – A *tool bar* is a graphical presentation of commands optimized for fast access.

  – A good menu bar is a comprehensive catalog of all the available top-level commands, whereas a good tool bar gives quick, convenient access to frequently used commands.
CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION I.

- **PROBLEM:** Inflexible layout
  - Single row of widgets
  - No real grouping of widgets
  - Impossible to combine icon vs. text-only vs. icons+text elements in 1 toolbar

- **SOLUTION:** use .ui files to configure toolbars
  - More flexible layout, easier grouping of elements
  - Mockup (by Heiko Tietze):
CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION II.

• **SOLUTION** (cont’d): Show/hide toolbars depending on context
  - Much like in sidebar
  - Working with text => show text formatting options
  - Working with images => show image options
CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION III.

• **PROBLEM:** Too many toolbars
  
  — „When you make all your LibreOffice toolbars available at once, it’s hard to find a space to write in“ – Andy Brandt
CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION IV.

• **PROBLEM** (cont’d): Too many toolbars
  – 39 toolbars in Writer only
    • 2 shown by default
    • The rest pops up depending on context
  – Extensions can come with their own toolbars

• **SOLUTION:** Tabs for different toolbars
  – Increased visibility of toolbars hidden deep in View → Toolbar
  – Extensions toolbars won’t clutter current UI
CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION V.

- How it looks in Zoho Office
NEW TOOLBARS: WORK DONE SO FAR

• Lots of clean-up in framework toolbar managements code
• Parts of it moved to vcl
• Not really feasible to have existing code load .ui files (spaghetti)
• The Plan: reuse parts of sidebar code
  - to load multiple .ui files
  - to implement context sensitivity
OPEN ISSUES AND THOUGHTS

• Should new toolbars be customizable?
  – How far?

• How should sidebar and toolbar play together?
  – They should complement, not compete with each other
  – Toolbar provides access to the most used commands, sidebar to more advanced options
  – Sidebar better for long lists (styles, slide transitions)
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, RANTS, ... ?

(Perhaps also some answers)