

Creating DVD Covers Using LibreOffice Draw

by Len Nasman, Bristol Village Ohio Computer Club

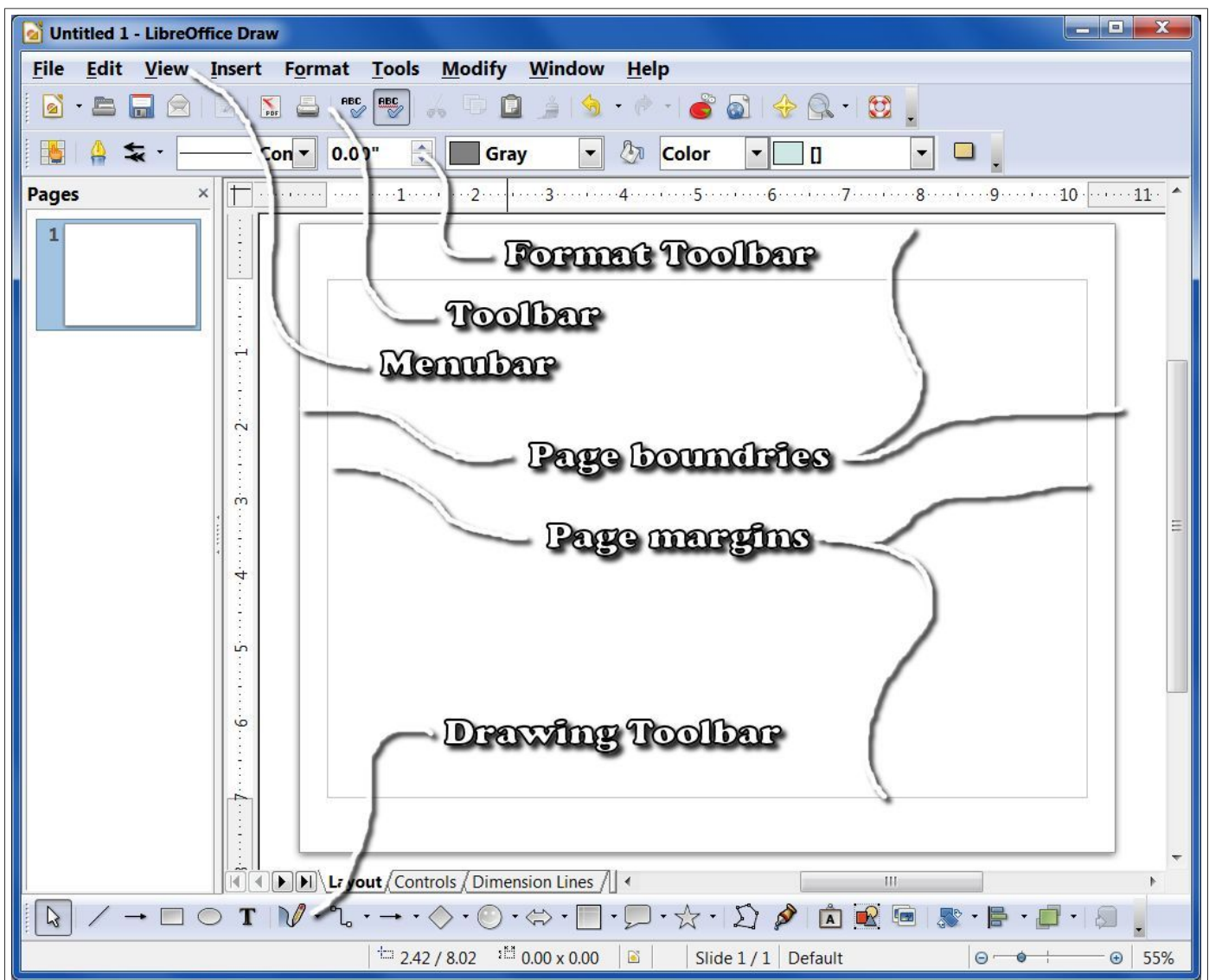
This document is designed to provide instructions for creating 7mm DVD cover inserts using **LibreOffice Draw**. These cases are available in white, black, and other colors.

The cases have a clear plastic layer on the outside that accepts a printed insert. The insert can be divided into 3 panels: front, back, and spine. The front and back panels are 5 inches by 7 inches and the spine is ¼ inch by 7 inches. This makes an unfolded working size of 10 ¼ inches by 7 inches.



Using LibreOffice Draw

✓ __ Open LibreOffice Draw.



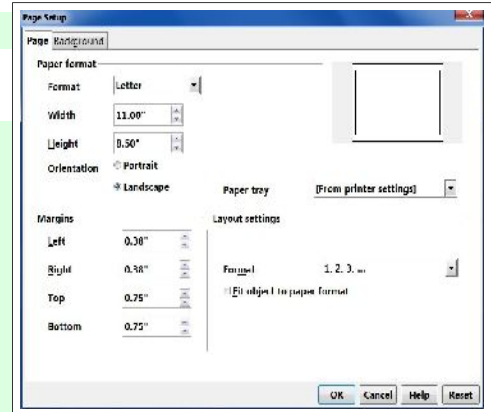
The illustration shows various parts of the LibreOffice Draw display. In the illustration the page orientation has been changes to Landscape, and the margins have been set for the DVD cover design.

Formatting the Page

- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **Format Page**.

This opens the **Page Setup** dialog box.

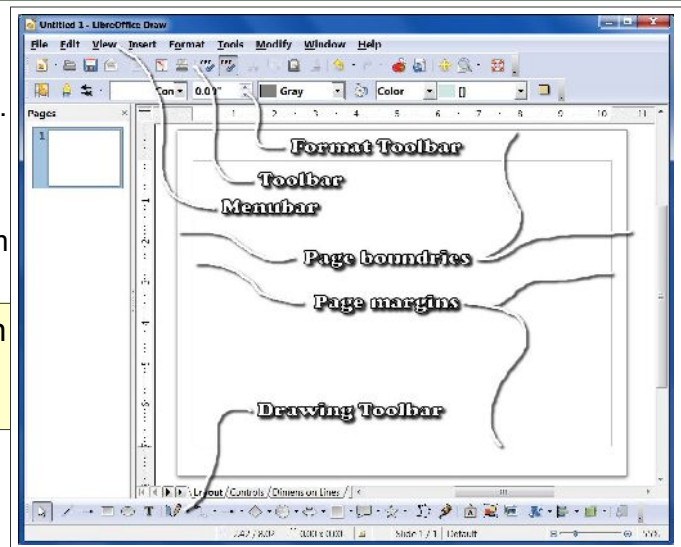
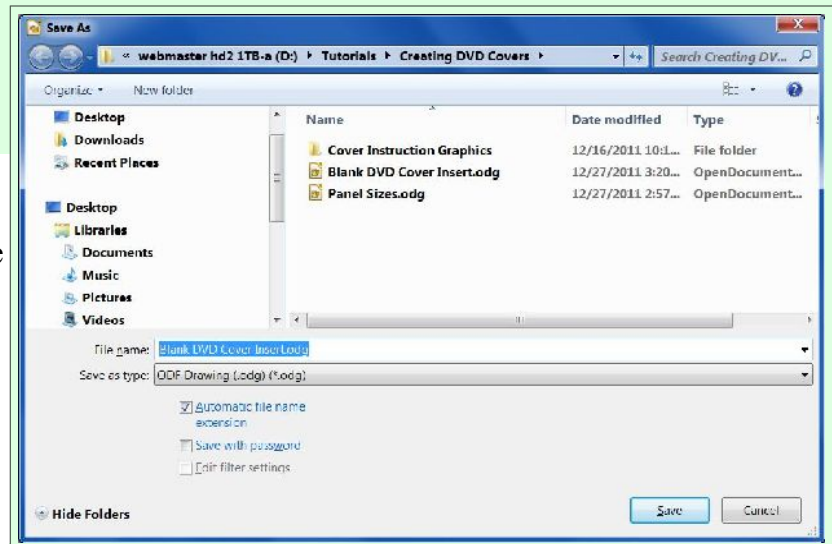
- ✓ In the **Page Setup** dialog box, change the **Orientation** to **Landscape**.
- ✓ Set the **Margins** as follows: **Left and Right to 0.375**, **Top and Bottom to 0.75**. (The system may round the numbers to 0.38.)
- ✓ Select **OK** to apply the new settings and close the dialog box.
- ✓ From the **Menubar**, select **File**, **Save As**, set the desired location for your file, and enter **Blank DVD Cover Insert** as the file name.



The display should now show the new page orientation and margins. Let's do a quick review of the LibreOffice Draw display.

- The **Menubar** provides access to options through pop down lists.
- The **Toolbar** provides a set of standard tools. If you hover the mouse pointer over a tool, a **tool tip** will open that described the function of the tool.
- The **Format Toolbar** is context sensitive. It will change according to the type of object selected. For example when a Text object is selected it will change to a **Text Format Toolbar**.
- The page **borders** and **margins** are shown.
- The **Drawing Toolbar** will appear near the bottom of the display when it is turned on.

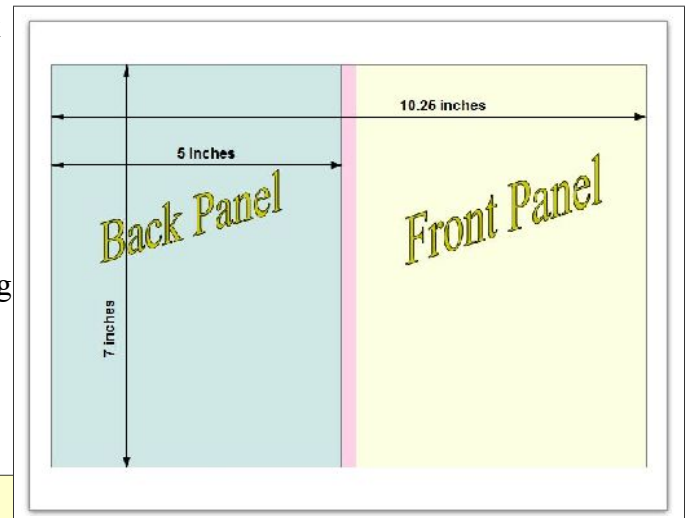
NOTE: If you do not see the **Drawing Toolbar** on your display, from the **Menubar**, select **View**, **Toolbars**, **Drawing**.



The **Toolbar** has an **Undo** tool. This can be a very handy tool to know about while you create new designs.

- ✓ Hover the mouse pointer over the tools on the **Toolbar** and let the **tool tips** show you the tool functions.

The orientation of the cover insert is such that the back panel will be to the left and the front panel will be to the right. The illustration here was created using LibreOffice Draw. It has three different colored rectangles representing the three cover panels. The front and back panels are 5 by 7 inches and the spine is 0.25 inches wide. These panels will fit in the page margins used earlier. The page margin lines will aid in arranging the panels.



Creating Rectangles

Next, rectangles for the three panels will be created.

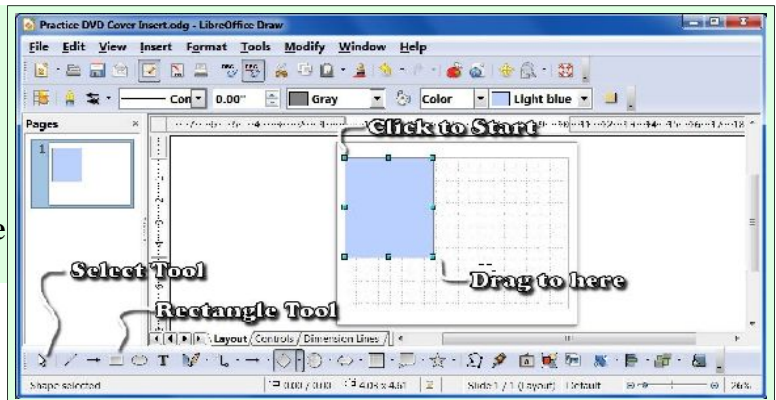
Drag a rectangle means to position the mouse pointer at one corner of where the rectangle will be placed, click and hold the left mouse button down, and **while holding the left mouse button down**, move the mouse pointer to the opposite corner of the rectangle and then release the button.

- ✓ With the *Blank DVD Cover Insert* drawing on the display, select **File, Save As** and enter **Practice DVD Cover** as the file name.

Note: This step preserves the *Blank DVD Cover Insert* drawing as a seed file. When you want to start a new DVD cover drawing, open the *Blank DVD Cover Insert* file and immediately save it with a new file name. This will save having to change the page orientation and margins for new covers every time you want to create a new cover insert.

- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, select the **Rectangle tool**.
- ✓ Position the mouse pointer near the *upper left corner* of the page and drag a rectangle. Do not worry about the exact size of the rectangle. That will be adjusted in the next step.

When you release the mouse button the rectangle will be complete. Unless you click the mouse button at some new point on the display, the rectangle will be selected. When a graphics object is selected grab points will appear at the corners and mid points of the sides of the object.

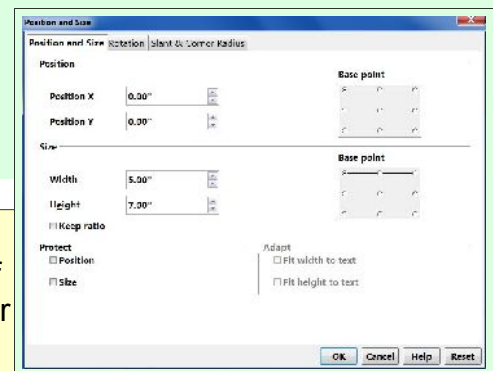
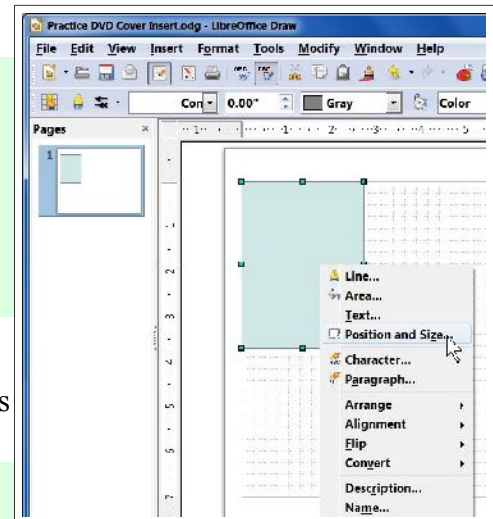


NOTE: If the object you want is not selected, click on the **Select** tool on the **Drawing Toolbar** and then left click on the desired object.

- ✓ With the rectangle selected, *right click* on it and then select the **Position and Size** option from the pop up context menu.
- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, set the **Width** to **5.0** and the **Height** to **7.0**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the **Position and Size** dialog box.

It is possible to drag the grab points at the corners or midpoints of the rectangle to adjust its size. The **Position and Size** dialog box allows for more precise control.

- ✓ Create a second rectangle near the center of the drawing.
- ✓ With the new rectangle selected, *right click* on it and then select the **Position and Size** option from the pop up context menu.
- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, set the **Width** to **0.25** and the **Height** to **7.0**.

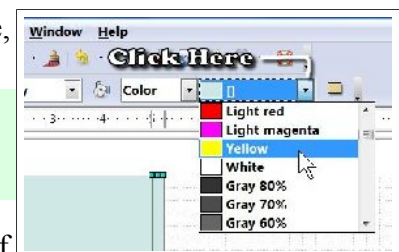


Observe that the **Position and Size** dialog box also provides options for setting the **X** (horizontal) and **Y** (vertical) location of the rectangle. The **Base Point** area of the dialog box allows for control of the point the **X** and **Y** positions are relative to.

- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, make sure the **Base Point** is set to the upper left corner and then set **Position X** to **5.0** and **Position Y** to **0.0**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the **Position and Size** dialog box.

This has created a rectangle for the spine of the cover insert. For this exercise, the color of the spine rectangle will be changed.

- ✓ Be sure that the spine rectangle is selected. In the **Format Toolbar**, click on the small arrow on the right side of the **Color** box and select **Yellow** from the color list.



Next, the same process will be used to create a rectangle for the front panel of the cover insert.

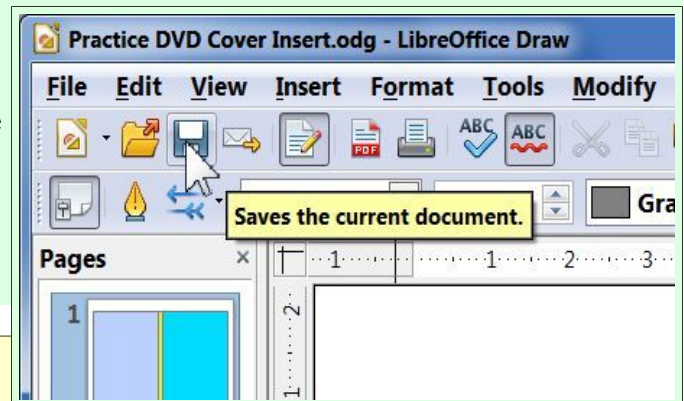
- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, select the **Rectangle** tool.
- ✓ Position the mouse pointer near the *upper right* corner of the page and drag a rectangle.
- ✓ With the new rectangle selected, *right click* on it and then select the **Position and Size** option from the pop up context menu.
- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, set the **Width** to **5.0** and the **Height** to **7.0**.

- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, make sure the **Base Point** is set to the *upper right* corner and then set **Position X** to **10.25** and **Position Y** to **0.0**.

- ✓ Select **OK** to close the **Position and Size** dialog box.

- ✓ Be sure that the front panel rectangle is selected. In the **Format Toolbar**, click on the small arrow on the right side of the **Color** box and select **Blue 8** from the color list.

- ✓ From the **Toolbar**, Select the **Save** tool to preserve the changes to your drawing.



- ✓ **NOTE:** To save changes to your drawing file you can either use **File, Save** from the **Menubar**, or you can left click on the **Save** tool on the **Toolbar**.

- ✓ From the **Menubar**, Select **File, Save As** to create a new drawing file and to preserve the earlier version of your drawing.

- ✓ Enter *Practice DVD Cover Insert – 2* as the file name.

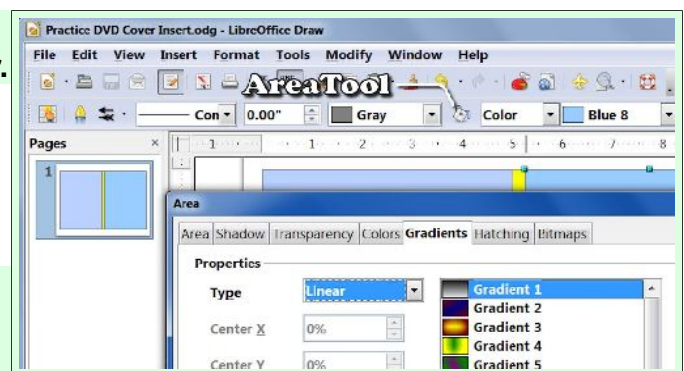
The new version of your drawing will be use to experiment wit different Area fills. If you want to go back to the plain colored rectangle version, you can open the earlier file. Using **File Save As** is a very powerful way to create new DVD covers based on earlier versions.

You should now have three rectangles for the three cover insert panels. If this drawing is printed and trimmed to the page margins, it should fit nicely into a 7mm DVD cover. You should also now know how to change the color of the rectangles. Next, you will see some additional ways to adjust how the area of the rectangles is filled.

Adjusting Area Fill

- ✓ With the front panel rectangle selected, select the **Fill Area Tool** from the **Format Toolbar**.

This opens the **Area** dialog box. The top of the dialog box has a series of tabs used to control various area fill parameters. In the example shown here, the **Gradient** tab has been selected.



- ✓ Select the **Gradients** tab in the **Area** dialog box and use the scroll bar to view the different gradient fill options.

- ✓ Select one of the **Gradient** fill options and then select **OK**.

Your front panel should now have the selected gradient fill. There are a number of different *default* gradient fill options in LibreOffice Draw. However, you are not limited to the default settings. Each gradient fill can be modified. Also, you can create your own gradient fills.

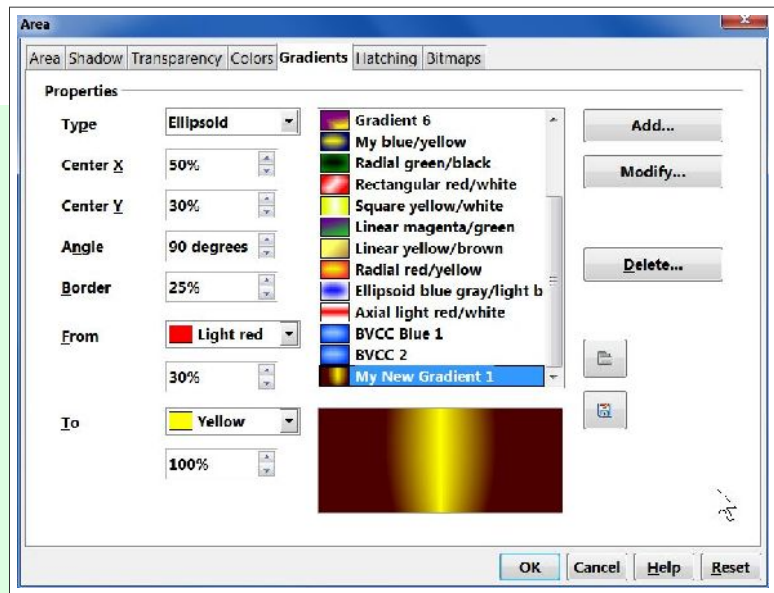
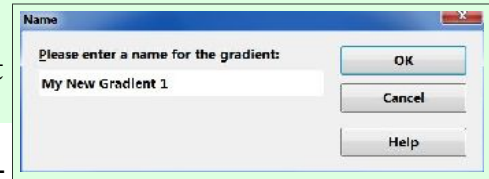
- ✓ With the back panel rectangle selected, select the **Fill Area Tool** from the **Format Toolbar**.

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- ✓ Select the **Gradients** tab in the **Area** dialog box and use the scroll bar to view the different gradient fill options.
- ✓ In the **Area** dialog box, select the **Add** option.
- ✓ Enter **My New Gradient 1** as the name for the new gradient fill and then select **OK**.

Next, you will have the opportunity to experiment with creating a custom gradient fill. You can start with the suggested options and then come back to this later and try your own variations.

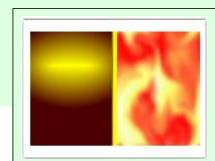
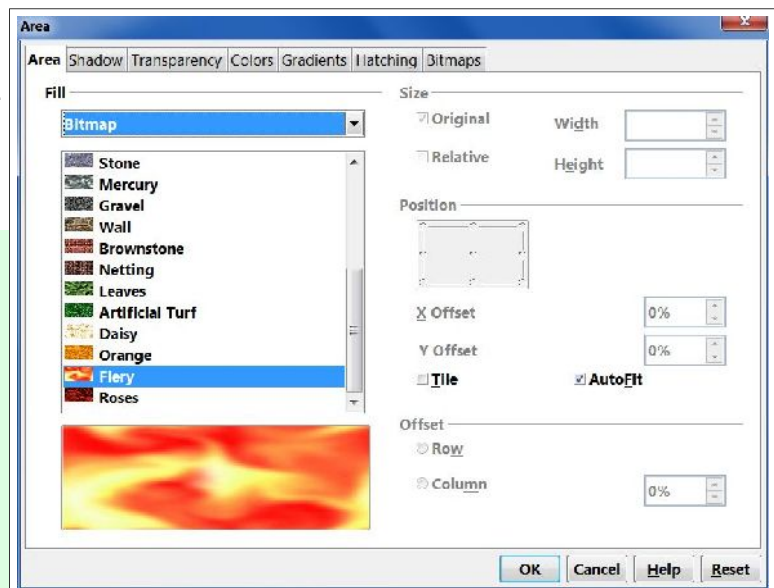
- ✓ In the **Area** dialog box, set the **Type** to **Ellipsoid**.
- ✓ Set the **Center X** to **50%**.
- ✓ Set the **Center Y** to **30%**.
- ✓ Set the **Angle** to **90 degrees**.
- ✓ Set the **Border** to **25%**.
- ✓ Set the **From** color to **Red, 30%**.
- ✓ Set the **To** color to **Yellow, 100%**.
- ✓ Select **OK** and observe your new back cover fill.



Using Bitmaps

LibreOffice Draw includes a collection of bitmaps images that can be used to fill graphic objects. To change the area fill is as simple as selecting an object and then using the Area dialog box.

- ✓ With the *front* panel rectangle selected, select the **Fill Area Tool** from the **Format** Toolbar.
- ✓ In the **Area** dialog box, select the **Area Tab**, then select **Bitmap** as the **Fill** type.
- ✓ In the **Bitmap** list, scroll down and select **Fiery**.
- ✓ Toggle the **Tile** option **OFF** and toggle the **AutoFit** option **ON**.
- ✓ Select **OK** to close the dialog box.



Adding Text

LibreOffice Draw provides a lot of control over text. In this project we will add a simple block of text. Separate tutorials in this series discuss adding 3D text and using the Fontwork Gallery.

- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, select the **Text** tool.
- ✓ **Drag** a text box in the lower part of the *back cover* panel.
- ✓ **Type** the following text:

This is sample text added to the back cover of my practice DVD cover insert. This text uses a bold font and center alignment.

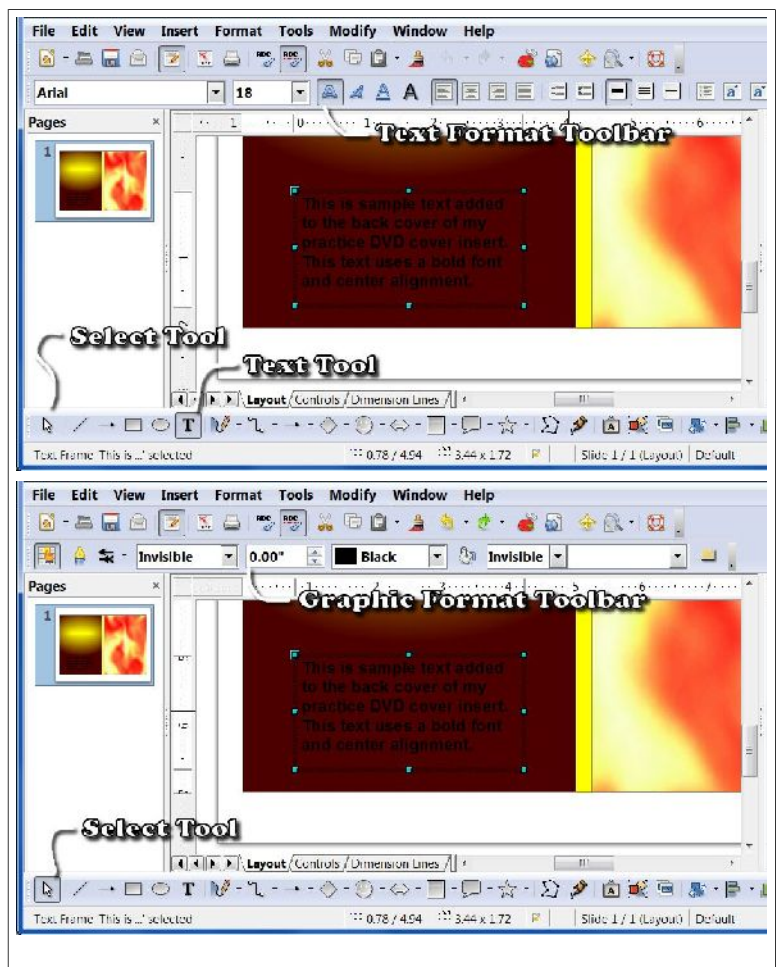
- ✓ **Click** the mouse pointer in an empty area of the drawing to **deselect** the text box.

If you have used the same back cover fill as the example, the text will be hard to read on the dark background. This is easy to fix, however you have to learn about the difference between selecting the text object and selecting the text within a text object.

The trick is to observe the shape of the mouse pointer. When it is over text, it will change to a text cursor.

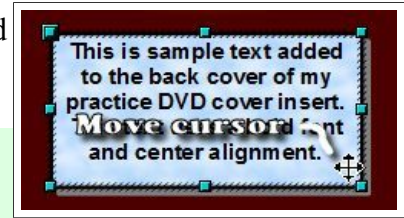
Observe the differences in the two illustrations.

- When a text object is selected and the Text tool is selected, the Text Format Toolbar is active.
- When a text object is selected and the Select tool is selected, the Graphic Format Toolbar is active.
- When the mouse pointer is moved over a text object it will change to a text cursor.
- When the text cursor is visible you can click to place it in the text box for editing text... or you can select text by double or triple clicking the left mouse button.
- When one or more words have been selected using the text cursor, the Text Format Toolbar can be used to change the settings for the selected text.
- When the text object is selected and the Text tool is selected, the Text Format Toolbar will apply changes to all of the text in the text object.
- When the text object is selected and the Select tool is selected, the Graphic Format Toolbar can be used to change object properties such as



area fill, transparency, etc.

The sample text shown here was created by setting the text *font* to Ariel Bold font, and Center Aligned. The text *object* uses a continuous line 0.04 thick, black and a Bitmap Sky area fill with 0% Transparency and a Shadow.



- ✓ To *select* text, move the mouse pointer over the text object until it becomes a text cursor. Then left click in the text box to edit text.
- ✓ To select all text, move the pointer to the border of the text box and click the left mouse button.
- ✓ To move a text object, position the mouse pointer over the edge of the object until the pointer becomes a *double arrow*, then click and drag the object.
- ✓ To resize a text object drag a grab point (grab points are at the corners and mid points of objects) and drag it to a new location.
- ✓ To precisely control the size and location of a text object, *right click* on the *border* of the object and select **Position and Size** from the pop up context menu. Then use the **Position and Size** dialog box to enter exact size and position values.

Creating Spine Text

DVDs lined up on a shelf are easier to identify if they have text on the spine. This is easy to do with LibreOffice Draw. You simply create the desired text object and then rotate the object.

- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, select the **Text** tool.
- ✓ **Drag** a text box on the center part of the page.
- ✓ Type the following text:

This is a spine title

- ✓ Use the **Text Format Toolbar** to center the text.
- ✓ *Right click* on the text object border and select **Position and Size** from the pop up context menu.
- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, select the **Rotation** tab and set the **Rotation Angle** to **270**.
- ✓ In the **Position and Size** dialog box, select the **Position and Size** tab and set the **Width** to **7.0** and the **Height** to **0.25**. Then select **OK**.

The space above and below the text will vary with font style and size. Therefore, you will probably have to fine tune the text position.

- ✓ Use the **mid point grab tools** (or adjust the position in the **Position and Size** dialog box) to make the text aligned with the center of the spine.

Adding Pictures

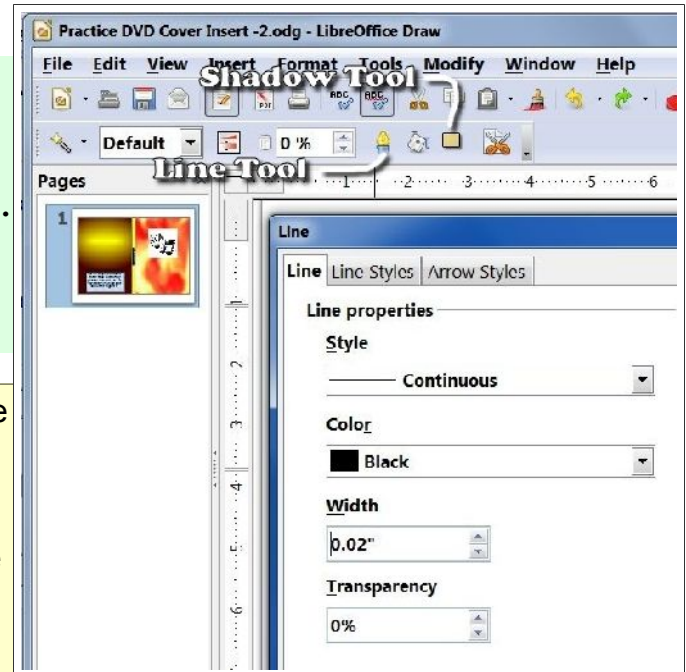
Pictures can be added to LibreOffice Drawings. Once a picture object has been added, the Graphic Format Toolbar tools can be used to enhance its presentation.

- ✓ From the **Drawing Toolbar**, select the **From File** tool.

- ✓ When the picture has been added, use the *size grab tools* and *move cursor* to position your picture.

Some pictures look better with a border and shadow. The Format Toolbar has options for adding these to a picture.

- ✓ With the picture object selected, select the **Line tool** from the **Format Toolbar**.
- ✓ In the **Line dialog box** select the **Continuous** style, **Color Black**, and set the **Width** to **0.02**. Then select **OK** to close the dialog box.
- ✓ With the picture object selected, select the **Shadow tool** from the **Format Toolbar**.



NOTE: As you add objects, you may have trouble selecting the object you want to work on. A good trick to know is that once you have selected an object you can press the **TAB** key to switch between objects. Pressing the **TAB** key will cycle through the objects in the order they were created.

There is also a set of tools in the **Drawing Toolbar** that will send an object in front or in back of other objects.

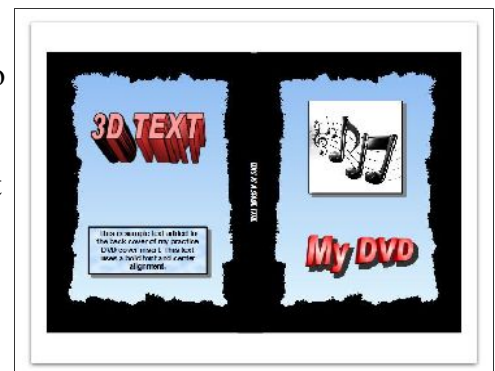


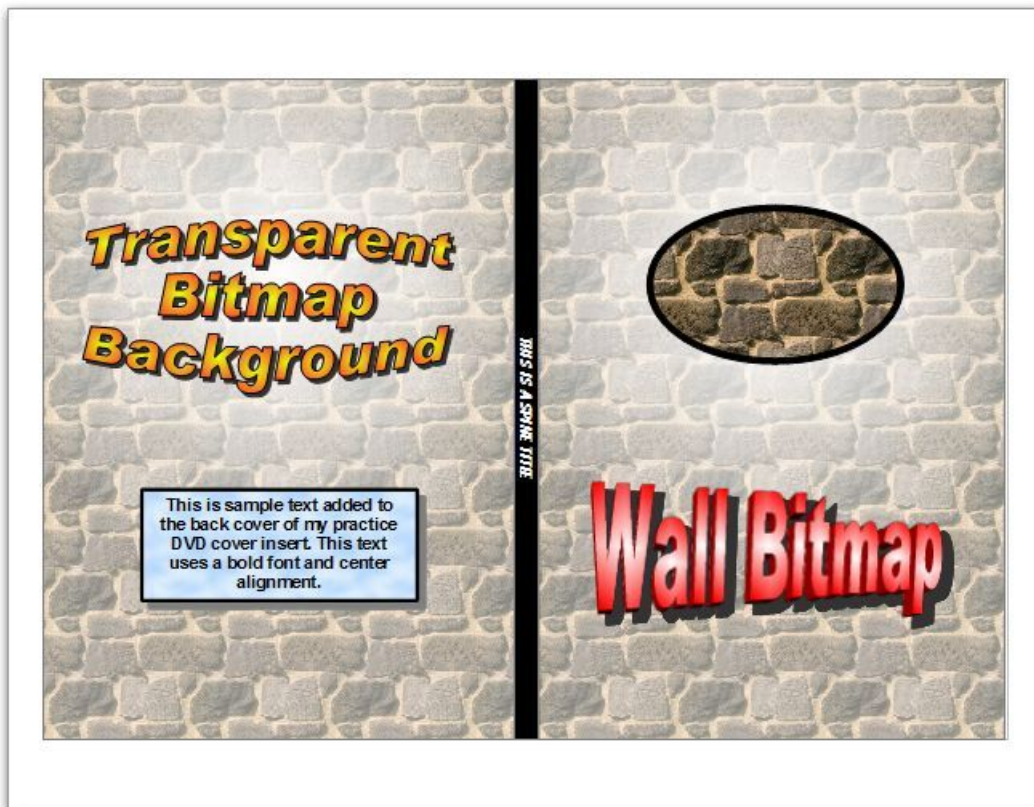
Points to Remember

- The front and back panels can be inserted graphic images instead of rectangles.

The example shown here uses background images that were created with *Paint Shop Pro*. A picture frame with a black border was used so that the edges of the trimmed insert blend in with a black 7mm DVD case. A similar effect could be done by inserting the graphic image onto a black rectangle. The images were flipped horizontally (by right clicking on the image and selecting the Flip option). This results in a **book matched** set of front and back covers. The spine has white text on a black background.

- If the panel background color matches the DVD cover color, the insert will blend in and look a little more professional.





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